

University of Kentucky Football Media Conference

Friday, August 1, 2025

Lexington, Kentucky, USA

Mitch Barnhart

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll turn it over to Mitch Barnhart.

MITCH BARNHART: Appreciate it, Tony. Appreciate it. A few things we would like to acknowledge on the front end. A couple of folks that have retired from following college sports. Rick Bozich, great 50-year career from Louisville, and just want to congratulate him on a wonderful career. John Clay from the Lexington Harold Leader was inducted into the United States Basketball Writers Hall of Fame, and John obviously has been a writer here since my time at Kentucky. So congratulations to John. I hope they great retirements.

While we're acknowledging folks, I also want to remember those that have passed away that we've lost. Chuck Perry was a great photographer for our program and was around us an awful lot. If you came to any sporting event at Kentucky, you saw Chuck. He was an amazing friend for many and just a wonderful human being, and we will miss him.

In the last year we also lost Lonnie Demery and Oscar Woodall. We want to acknowledge that and thank them for their time and wish their families the best and our condolences to them.

While I'm doing that and acknowledging people, let me acknowledge Tony Neely, who was put in the College Sports Communicators Hall of Fame, and congratulate him on that. I know he doesn't want me to say anything about that, but we should do that while we're here. We celebrated him this summer, and that was a lot of fun to be able to do that.

We're at the start of football training camp. The fall athletics UK season is here. I want to thank you for helping to get our team's stories told and get the words and the names out there for our folks as we begin. We look forward to the Big Blue Nation coming back to our campus in the days and weeks to come. Many of our teams have been here all summer. It's really, really an exciting time to be back on campus.

We're proud of the economic impact our athletics events continually make from football games in this community is a huge part of that. We know that our football program has an impact on the community, and excited to continue to grow that. We've got an incredible schedule this fall, so it will be another exciting fall in Lexington. With the weather today, it sure feels a little bit like fall compared to what we've been having.

Everybody is invited to fan day tomorrow, a free up-close look at this year's football team. We love the face-to-face interactions between the coaches, players, and fans that days like tomorrow provide. The BBN's passion is amazing and is a big part of what makes UK athletics so special, and we're grateful for the fan support that we have.

Last season didn't meet the expectations that we wanted to have, and it's sharpened our focus for the year ahead. There's no question about that. Today I want to focus on the opportunities that our staff, Coach Stoops and his staff and the team have worked their way over the offseason to get back to where we want to be. We've been there before, and we'll respond, and I'm confident that this team and our coaching staff is ready to go.

They've embraced the changes, have reset, building some momentum for the upcoming season. We had a top-10 transfer portal class and top-25 recruiting class. We look forward to the start of the season and cheering our team on.

We had practice yesterday. It was spirited. It was great, great enthusiasm. It was fun to watch. A lot of new faces. I think over 50 new faces on our team. So as sort of the world and college athletics as we see it, we're seeing rosters and teams on all sports change at about 40% to 50% rate of new folks coming in and out of your program.

In a time with much change, a change we're embracing, we focus on two things we've always talked about: education and competition. That hasn't changed. That won't change. There's an old saying that, "Methods are many, and principles are few. Your methods always change. Your principles never do." Our principles have been around those two pillars, and they will continue to do that.



On the education front, our student-athletes completed last spring 26 straight semesters. We've been above a 3.0 GPA, and it was above a 3.4. They continue to excel in the classroom. I'm super proud of what they've done in continuing to pursue degrees and finding a way to make an impact in the community as they leave our campus. That's really important.

We had 149 student-athletes earn degrees or certifications last year, and we had three academic All-Americans last year out of our program. So it's super important that we continue to emphasize that.

In this new year we're adding 80 scholarships to our program, so in the new settlement and the new world that we're in we're adding 80 scholarships. Our rosters change a little bit in our 23 sports. They will change based upon the settlement and based upon the new roster limits. That will challenge us a little bit. They'll go from 650, 670 athletes to just over 500 in those roster changes, but with that, we're also able to change the way we do scholarships. So we're able to add 80 scholarships, which about \$50 million of new scholarships will be going to our student-athletes in an opportunity for them to either take advantage of the revenue sharing or the scholarships, and that will be really, really important. All of our programs are benefiting in the new era, and we think that was really, really important.

Putting diplomas in the hands will continue to be a focus for us alongside putting the championship rings on fingers. We've talked about that for many, many years. Those are our focus: Diplomas in hands and rings on fingers.

Other fall sports, not just football, are kicking into gear. I want to make sure we acknowledge that. Coach Skinner's volleyball team, we've won eight straight SEC Championships and had a national championship in that run, if you will remember, and we look forward to the return of the SEC volleyball tournament, which will be new to the SEC this year. We'll have the SEC volleyball tournament for the first time since I've been at Kentucky that we've had an SEC volleyball tournament. It's been talked about for years. They'll bring that back in late number there will be an SEC volleyball tournament.

Obviously Coach Skinner had an incredible run. He's been coach of the year multiple times, and we are the preseason favorite to win the league. That makes it really hard. Everyone is focused on knocking you off that seat. I know that our team is ready. They've had a good summer and ready to go and looking forward to having them get started again.

We're also excited about another free admission

opportunity. All of our men's, women's soccer games at The Bell will be free this year. It's a little bit of a change to what we've done in the past, so all that will be free. We encourage fans to get out and have an opportunity to watch our soccer teams.

Coach Fabiano and the women's soccer team is coming off the program's first NCAA appearance in a decade. They beat West Virginia in the first round last year to secure our first win in a long time in the NAACAs, and looking to build on that. He just continues to grow our program. Excited about where he is.

Johan Cedergren and our men's soccer team, we all know that the great history. He's had multiple conference championships and trying to regroup and get going where we get back. Tough league, and he's got a tough, tough schedule. He's won multiple championships, and he's ready to go. They're excited to get going. Cross-country is also starting, and we'll work our way into that as we get into this fall.

As we head into the new season, the landscape of college athletics continues to shift. Here at UK and in the SEC we've been anticipating many of the changes. We've got great leadership in Birmingham from Greg Sankey, and I'm thankful for that. Got great leadership on our campus from Dr. Capilouto and our university administration, and they've been very, very helpful for us as we try to navigate the new landscape. Thankful for that as well.

Many universities are looking for answers. We strengthened our longstanding partnership with the university. We've been partners for a long time. We did some things to support the university and some times where they needed our help. I'm thankful they've come alongside us to help us in times when we've needed some help. We are going through this.

We've obviously got a lot of things on our plate with the change that started July 1st, and so we like to talk a little bit about partner equity, and it's a real thing. Our campus has been very supportive of us.

You saw the change to the Champions Blue LLC, which allows UC Athletics to dynamically face the challenges that we have in front of us, and that's been really important for us.

Among many investments for the future of our program is what we've put in football, and you will see a little bit. You heard a little bit about that. \$15 million into the maintenance of Kroger Field. Just some things to make sure that the stadium remains safe and make sure it remains in top shape, and we can't let it drift. I don't want it



to get to a spot where it's broken down and we're struggling. We want to make sure that it's safe and our fans have a good experience.

\$13 million into the corner suites and the elevators, again, to renovate those and make sure that we can sell those and make sure they're a big part of what we have in our revenue package for the stadium. Very important.

Then \$8 million in initial design to look at some premium space and some end zone club space on the west end as well as our Wi-Fi system and trying to create something in that. Not an inexpensive project in any way, shape, or form, so we've begun a design phase for that working our way. So significant investment in football as we continue to make sure that as we go into the new five to ten-year period of college athletics that we've got revenue streams that are coming.

Many headlines around college sports these days. Off the field, we don't want to shy away from those being important. That's a piece of the puzzle. I'll close with a story that I'm reminded of. I've told this many times to our teams.

My wife and I travel a little bit, and go down to get away sometimes. There's an old country road down in South Carolina, and there's a Kentucky flag that hangs on the tree of this house when we drive by it, and I told my wife one day, We're going to stop and meet those folks and find out who they are. So we did.

I took some UK stuff, and we pulled up and we were thankful that we weren't attacked by a dog or anything coming around the corner. That was super good. We got out and had a chance to spend some time talking to those folks. They came out, and we visited with them a little bit.

They were an elderly couple and huge fans. They're from eastern Kentucky. They just happen to be transplants. They didn't know who we were, and we certainly didn't tell them. We just sat and chatted about UK Athletics for a good long time.

The one thing they wanted me to know was that the Cats were playing next Tuesday night in basketball, and it was really important that we won. I say that just to remind us that 90% or 95% of our fans don't really understand all the things that are going on in the world of litigation and all of the things in the settlement and what's going on federally or what's going on in the legislative world or within the conference office. They know one thing. They know that their team, and that's the Kentucky Wildcats, is going to play on a certain date and a certain time, and they're going to watch it on TV. They sure hope that their team, the Big

Blue, comes out on top. So really, really important.

It was great as we got in the truck and drove off. It was a great reminder just to be thankful for our fan base, all ages, all places. It was really a fun time. We'll hopefully visit them again and have an opportunity to chat with them again, but they were just a great reminder as we sort of walk into these conversations.

So with that, I'll close and glad to follow up with anything that anyone wants to talk about.

Q. (Off microphone) There have been speculation now because of that and what they are. Are you ready to get fans some more clarity on exactly --

MITCH BARNHART: The speculation is wonderful. I think that not only do the fans want to know, but our opponents want to know. So I think we're going to sort of keep it fluid with us and keep it inside our framework. I will say this, our coaches are pleased with where we are and what we're doing, and I think that's the beauty of this cap system that we're in is that it is pretty fluid from season to season, from sport to sport, and it can change.

To sit here and say we're going to focus and put this number on that, it may change by the time we get to the end of the semester. It may change by the time we get to the end of the year based upon rosters, based upon who is in your program and who is not in your program. So we want to be really thoughtful about how we do that, and we think our best advantage in being able to help our coaches in the best way possible is to be really, really nimble in what we do, and we can only do that, we think, if we structure it this way.

We've worked really closely. Kevin Sargent and Cody Weber are two guys that are working really hard in our compliance area. I'm not sure if that's the right term for that anymore, but strategically they're working really, really hard to make sure that our coaches get what they need and that we are able to respond in a fashion that gives us best advantage in terms of recruiting and bringing the right people to our roster.

As long as our coaches are engaged and happy and having good conversations with recruits, we feel really comfortable with just keeping it inside our family.

Q. You said it's going to be fluid. Is there a hard number for football or men's basketball that you're not going to dip below?

MITCH BARNHART: Again, I think the number from the settlement perspective grows every year. It grows by 4%



every year, so that number of \$20.5 million will go by 4%. Then there will be two look-ins over the next ten years that the plaintiffs can come in and they can ask for a look-in every two times in that ten-year period of time to make sure that the revenues in all of college athletics are being accurately depicted. So that number is going to continue to grow, and we'll just continue to sort of move within our program.

Coach Stoops and I have had a great. Coach Pope, Coach Brooks. I think we talked about it. Baseball. We've worked with volleyball, women's basketball. I think we just want to be able to respond the right way.

So hard number, I don't know do anybody any good. Being really responsive to what we need is really, really important.

Q. You say a lot is changing in the conference. Going to the Southwest Conference or SEC, will we add more additions, subtractions in the conference in the next few years?

MITCH BARNHART: I don't ever say, never say never. I think if you would have said five years ago that the Big Ten would be 18 schools and that the SEC would be 16 and the Big 12 -- I'm not sure where they're at. I think they're at 16 as well. Who would have thought that? I don't think anybody would have thought that.

I think there's always change, and we keep talking about that at a pretty high level in different areas. You've got conversations in Washington D.C., federally. You've got conversations amongst the commissioners, among the CFP, among the FBS. So never say never to change. We'll be ready to respond to it, but I think our focus for what we're doing, we've got to make sure that, number one, from the Southeastern Conference perspective we're paying attention to the environment and the landscape within our teams and then making sure that at Kentucky we're ready to respond to what's going on in the world of college athletics.

Q. These rosters were set, basketball, football, but I think most of the programs had their rosters set under NIL. That was the primary roster-building tool. You have \$20 million of revenue share this year. Can you roll that money over? Is that part of the plan to kind of supplement for years to come?

MITCH BARNHART: So your \$20 million is offset by scholarships. So you've got a \$2.5 million offset, which means you've really got \$18 million to use for this coming year. It's who is on your roster and how that -- so there is movement in all of that, and when you bring people into

your program and when you sign your people and when they actually show up on your campuses. It's a pretty fluid deal. That's why I said, it's really fluid.

We want to make sure we're really intelligent about how we do that, agreements that we sign, those NIL -- the NILs we sign for their scholarships and their revenue share agreements or their contracts. Those have all got to be done very strategically, and that's why our compliance -- our compliance office has done a portion of this for years. Think about the equivalency scholarships we've used in our non-full scholarship sports. It's the same premise, if you will, as using those. So who is coming onto your roster in an equivalency scholarship and how you use that scholarship and break it up -- that full scholarship, is it two 50s? Is it three 30s? That kind of thing. We're trying to be thoughtful about how we do it.

You can't use unused money. The money is the same. The cap is still \$18 million. Wherever you fall in \$18 million, you have to find a way to use it strategically.

Q. It's a "use it or lose it" sort of thing?

MITCH BARNHART: Yes, you don't get to carry. If you only use \$15 million, the next year you don't get the \$3 million added to it, correct.

Q. What does a successful offseason look like?

MITCH BARNHART: We got to get better. We've got to fight and find our way to some more wins in a really, really difficult schedule. I was looking at our schedule the other day, and they said that -- I've heard everybody say that we've got the second or third most difficult schedule in the SEC. I've heard fifth or sixth. Regardless, if you look at the schedule, it's a difficult schedule.

Mark and I are chatting the other day and just talking about literally you go week to week, and you take one week at a time. Don't try and get ahead of it. I've always loved when people start giving prognostications. Well, if this is a game that they can win now. Well, you don't know who is going to be available injury-wise or roster-wise at this point in time for either team. You play with what you have and move on to the next one.

We've been in this spot before, John. We've been in this spot where we're coming off tough moments where we didn't get what we wanted to do, and Mark is really, really good at fighting through adversity. So I've been so pleased with how hard our staff has worked, the way our players have worked, the roster we have in place.

I was at practice yesterday again. Enthusiastic group of



guys bouncing around, and I know it's early in the fall camp, and everybody is bouncing around, right? I love the enthusiasm of our team. I've been at a couple team meetings with them. They're fully engaged, ready to go, and Mark uses the term "locked in." They seem pretty locked in.

Obviously we have to do it on the field, and our league is unforgiving. It is an unforgiving place to play football, but we've got to find a way to get better. You know me well enough to know I'm not going to sit here and say, it's this number of wins, it's this number of things. I'm not doing that. I've never done that. I'm not going to start doing that now.

We've been a place that's embraced our coaches. We've got a longevity with our coaches, and we've never overreacted to things. Maybe that's something that people don't particularly like about me. I'm not particularly caring at this point, so anyway (laughing)...

Q. Oklahoma has announced that it's going to revenue share with six of its teams. Has Kentucky's revenue sharing reached that level?

MITCH BARNHART: I mention Thad, Mark. I mentioned football, obviously men's basketball, women's basketball. We've had some revenue share with baseball. Softball has participated in that and volleyball. We've got six.

As I said, adding 80 scholarships, I thought Coach Mingione was talking to his team. He said, you're going to participate in one of two ways. You're either getting some revenue share or you're getting part of a new scholarship. Baseball scholarships went up significantly. They were getting 11.7 scholarships. They're now getting I think 24, 25 scholarships. That's 13 additional scholarships.

So those young men -- and if the roster is only 34, which is what baseball's roster is, you might get a couple of designated athletes. It might be 36 or 37. Most people are either participating in rev share or scholarships. There's benefit. In this settlement there's approximately 24 -- \$23, \$24, \$25 million of new benefits for our student-athletes.

Keep in mind, that is all new expense with no revenue attached to it. So that is where the LLC has been super important for us to be able to have them come alongside us and say, okay, there's \$30 million of expenses spread out over 23 sports trying to find a way to make that work. But yeah, we've got those six aligned.

That doesn't mean that in the future that others won't be able to -- we won't be able to do something. That's why not having hard numbers for each of our programs, now we

can move. Okay, maybe this year this team doesn't need quite as much, so we can help someone else over here. We think that's an intelligent way to do that.

We're in the first month of this thing. Literally the first month. For anybody to sit in front of a group and say, I've got all the answers after four weeks, good for you, good for you. I mean, I don't know that we have -- we've talked about a decade's worth of change that has happened in the last six to ten months of college athletics.

The change that has occurred has been massive. We don't even have a governance structure in place really, to be honest with you. So you're asking people to say, hey, this is absolutely a highway or the pathway we're supposed to go down. I don't think that's a reality in anybody's world. There's going to be a clunkiness to it and a getting started piece to all of this, and hopefully the waters will smooth a little bit, but it is going to be a little bit clunky at the beginning.

You have coaches coming out and saying the NIL piece of NIL Go is not working. You have others saying it's working fine, it's working fine. You have the revenue cap is working this way. Really? So everyone is in the weeds, and everyone understands exactly what's going on.

I've been in the middle of those conversations for ten months, 12 months, and it's a lot. It is an absolute lot, and I'm thankful for people that want to jump alongside federal legislation and help out. Anybody that wants to help, that would be awesome. That would be great if we can get an alignment and get people to help. That would be great. But to sit here and be critical of the system that's only been in place for four weeks, really, really difficult.

So we've got to find a way through it and just gently walk through this thing and let it smooth itself out. I think there's a lot of really good people working at this thing, and I'm thankful for that. We've got a lot of folks trying hard.

Q. You have the football conference schedule. Do you have any clarity on when maybe there was a deadline for when we're going to find out what the 2026 schedule is? Where does that stand?

MITCH BARNHART: There's no mystery in where I stand on eight-nine. Eight is better for Kentucky. We'll have the athletic directors in our league, obviously there's financial components to it. There's competitive components to it. There's components to it as it relates to our ability to have seven home games or eight home games.

We've been fortunate about every two-plus years we've

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been able to have eight home games because Mark Hill does an unbelievable job of scheduling with our football staff of putting things together for us to be able to have eight home football games. If we have nine conference games, the chances of doing something like that get a little bit harder for us. So the eight-nine conversation is difficult, and it's a good conversation in the room. There's an economic component as it relates to television for sure.

So I think that decision is going to obviously come pretty quickly. We have athletic directors meetings in August. There's probably a pretty good chance that's on the docket. Then some decision comes out of all that. If we go to nine, that means every other year we have five conference games on the road and four conference games at home. You only have three nonconference games. Then when you begin to do the math of how all that comes together for Kentucky, and that's where we've got to be really thoughtful about what we do. It's a conversation that's got to come to a head here fairly quickly.

Q. Just a minute ago you touched on federally maybe help. You saw the edict from the president that came out about no pay for play. Do you feel the future is something federally to kind of mandate how the NCAA works?

MITCH BARNHART: I don't know that. I said just earlier, I think there's a lot of people trying to help, and that's awesome. You know, I've had multiple conversations, been to Washington D.C., I don't know, three, four times here in the last ten months. We've been in the hallways. We've had conversations on the phone with our state representatives in D.C. The president has had conversations with commissioners. There's been executive orders. There's been things that have said -- all of that is great conversation. If we can hopefully dial it into some help where we're all sort of on the same hymn book would be awesome, but it's difficult. It is difficult.

There are so many perspectives. You have four conferences that are all across the country, and that's never been something that's been aligned. I've been in this thing for 43 years. I've never seen all of the power conferences aligned on conversations where. They come at them from different perspectives.

I think everybody makes it out to be something different for college sports than it is for the NFL or the NBA or Major League Baseball. There are some things that they've got we certainly don't have, including anti-trust exemptions. All of that is fine. When you think about small market, big markets and West Coast versus East Coast and those kind of things and all those things, they're remarkably different. Those owners all come at it from a different perspective.

They've got just a couple of things that are different from us. We don't have that yet.

Maybe over time it gets to that spot where we have some of that help, but the essence of college sports is uniquely different than it is anywhere else in anything else. We provide Olympians for our countries and for other international countries. We provide opportunities for women's sports that are uniquely different than anything else, and you can argue there's other professional sports leagues. There's nothing that has the visibility or the competitiveness that college sports does for women's sports.

You look at what we've done for the sport of baseball, although very few schools make money in baseball. The platform of college baseball is remarkable, and it's all fed through the lens of the Southeastern Conference, the Big 12, the ACC, and then how we bring all of that together is really, really important. So we don't want to lose that.

I'm disappointed. We had 675 student-athletes last year on our rosters. We're going to be down to about 525, 530. We lost 145 kids for our program. That breaks my heart. Those are 145 kids that had a chance to come in and experience a locker room and go do some really, really cool things in life. They might not have been NFL'ers or NBA'ers or WNBA'ers, but they had an opportunity to be in a locker room and experience that. That disappoints me.

Having said that, I want to make sure we preserve the 23 sports and the 500 we still have left in our program and we grow them as best we possibly can.

Q. Would it be better just to instead of the federal legislation just to have a collectively bargained agreement in place? I know it's on the level of professional sports, but it seems like we're in that territory now.

MITCH BARNHART: I think there's lots of state pieces to that that are really difficult for everyone to get past. You've got state laws. We've got to get all of our states talking at the same time. We don't need one state walking off and going to a set rules and then having some other state saying competitively I can't allow that state to do that. I'm going to do that over here. We sort of have that going on right now.

We need everyone to say, Okay, we're all going to be in the same space to start with. I don't think we can get to the space you're talking about if we don't have that to begin with. We're going to have to find some continuity in those conversations.



Q. You've been at this for a while, as you said. You spent most of this time here talking about legislation and budgets and NIL and the portal and all that. You got into this line of work for whatever reason, but I can't imagine this is what you signed up for. You've got coaches, established coaches, walking away. This is the most tumultuous time really in the history of college sports. I'm curious, what keeps you going?

MITCH BARNHART: I think it goes back to the piece for me when I walk into a room with our student-athletes and they're getting ready to compete. I love that. I had a chance to go to three practices, three and a half. I watched some individual workouts yesterday. I went to football practice and had a chance to go watch our two basketball teams work out for a bit yesterday. That's all you do, right, walk around and go to practice. That's all we do, but I wanted to see our kids compete because that is the reminder for me as to what's important and what we do.

I go back to my conversation about that couple that we visited. That's the reality. We were getting ready to play Duke in basketball the following Tuesday when I met them, and she goes, You know we play Duke on Tuesday? I said, Really? Wow, that's good to remember.

I say that because that's the special part about what we have in college athletics, a unique ability to walk into a room with young people that love what they play, and I love that. I love watching kids get their degrees who we maybe didn't think could get a degree. I could list tons of them that walked across the stage and got a degree.

You say, Well, that's really nice, Mr. Barnhart, that's a wonderful thing to say. It's true. I find joy in that. I find joy in the winning, not in the losing. I find joy in the winning.

There was one of our coaches had a competitive practice session and was reminding everybody, it is about winning. It is about winning. This is not an intramural activity. I like that part.

Having said that, we're in some really choppy waters. Really choppy waters. We're trying to find our way through it. I think it's important that we try and smooth the waters for the next generations, a couple of generations to see if we can find a way to help them maintain the opportunities we have. All my kids participated in college sports. My wife and I had an opportunity to be at a place where we had a chance to experience that as well. We know how important it is.

It is important. It's important in this community. I go back to we had 400 events on this campus last year. 400 events on this campus. Where is Scotty? That guy in the

back helped us run 400 events. My staff worked relentlessly.

Why is that important? It's important to the people we put the events on for. Guess who else it was also important for? This community. This community benefitted economically in a lot of different ways: hotels, restaurants, gas stations, grocery stores. People benefitted. It's important for us to be strong so this community can be strong. We're a part of a really, really cool piece in this deal, really cool piece. The horse industry, really neat with Keeneland. The Bourbon Trail has become a part of the tourism piece of this place. Then throw Kentucky Athletics in the middle of all that. There's a reason people come. It's a pretty cool deal. We're thankful to be a part of that, but it's important on a lot of fronts that we're successful, so we want to do that.

We benefit everyone. Sort of the rising tide piece, raises all of it, and that's part of our responsibility. It is a responsibility, and we do feel that.

Q. The SEC has its own football scholarship limit within the settlement. Is there any (indiscernible) in terms of the other sports as far as what you are doing as a league?

MITCH BARNHART: Yeah, there is. There are. There are. We're sort of in the settlement. The settlement has defined most of that for us, John. The SEC is the 85, and those are 85 -- keep in mind, those can be 85 partials now. So you can say, hey, I've got the last 20 guys on my roster. I'm going to take those last ten scholarships and break them up and make them partials if you wanted to, just like we did in every other sport. You couldn't do that in the previous days, but you can now.

Football is a little unique in that we're at 85, and some other conferences are different numbers, and that may change over time. I don't know how that's going to play out. Again, we're four weeks in, but I think our rosters are pretty set. Our coaches are fully aware.

Again, many of our rosters benefited from this thing. I point to baseball. Although their overall roster number is less, their scholarship number is significantly greater. Softball, significantly greater in scholarships. Track and field, more scholarships, but the roster number for track and field is smaller.

It's really fascinating, and it's a puzzle that we're putting together. I think our people have done an amazing job, and I go back to our staff. The culmination of activity for our staff from whether it's an event, normal procedural thing that we go through to the transition from the litigation

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

and all of that, the settlement, really, really difficult, really complicated, to the transition to the LLC, really complicated. Not easy. Everybody is, Well, you just change names. No, we didn't. There's a lot to that.

I'm thankful, super thankful, for that. Having said that, you bring a way of doing your work for a good number of years, and now you're aligning it a little bit differently, and we're having conversations that will be fine. It's no different than any locker room you have. You bring new folks into the locker room. You've got to find a way to make sure the family gets all synced up and make sure they're on the same page. We're getting there. We're getting there. I'm thankful for Dr. Monday and his staff and my team, but it's been an awful lot the last six, eight months.

I'm really, really, really proud of our group. Our K Fund Group and the fundraising efforts that they've had, incredible. Our marketing group, our events, and operations facilities. It's been a lot. Anybody go to that concert we had this summer -- this spring? Yeah, that didn't just roll out and happen. Those folks were putting in 100-hour weeks trying to get the stage ready. That wasn't an athletic event, right? It wasn't our event, but it was. It was big for the community. Everyone had a great time. It was an awesome concert. Beautiful night in Kroger Field. We're going to do it nine times a year. I'm kidding. We're not. We're not. We're not.

Q. Over the last few months a lot of these programs are talking about measures to add more revenue. The last month you talked about having K projects and potentially entertainment districts. How do those two -- it seems like you're spending more money, but you also need more money. How does that balance?

MITCH BARNHART: I think you have to find things -- the things that you're going to spend money on have an ability to produce revenue, and so we think the west end zone expansion for our club spaces has a chance to do that. Wi-Fi has a chance to help us with that. There are some things you have to do because you can't afford just to sit here and let things deteriorate.

If I let the steel structure in our stadium deteriorate, that's a problem. We don't want to do that. That's a safety issue. We have to make sure we maintain our stadium. You don't want things to deteriorate to a spot where all of a sudden the expense to fix them has become so great it becomes not smart. So we're going to work really hard at that.

But all the decisions we're going to try and make, you have to weigh them in terms of ongoing maintenance and operation. Does it function, and does it produce revenue for you on the other side? We've got some really cool

thoughts in terms of the way we want to produce some revenue.

We also want to find new buckets. Most athletic departments have five buckets. They have tickets. They have fundraising. They have concessions and souvenirs, contracts, your Nikes and Gatorades and things like that, your JMIs, those contracts. Then the last one is your conference revenue sharing from your television. Those are the five buckets that have generally occurred for most schools.

How can you add three or four more buckets as you go forward? That's our goal. Let's put two or three more buckets out there and fill those up and that's where the LLC comes alongside us and helps us with some new thoughts. Maybe gives us some flexibility and some things, some areas that we can get into that might not be specifically athletics-related, but give us the ability to create revenue to do that differently without straining the folks that have been so good to us and showing up in our stadiums and our arenas. We're trying to keep those as best we can at a reasonable rate. Okay. Thanks. Appreciate it. Thanks for your time, guys.

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