

KENTUCKY POSTGAME NOTES

No. 25/20 Kentucky vs. No. 17/16 Iowa
Vrbo Citrus Bowl
Orlando, Fla., Camping World Stadium
January 1, 2022

FINAL SCORE: Kentucky 20, Iowa 17

Team Records and Series Information

Kentucky concludes the season with a 10-3 record. Iowa ends the season at 10-4.
This was the first meeting between the teams.

Kentucky in Bowl Games

Kentucky made a school-record sixth straight bowl appearance, breaking the mark of five straight following the 2006-10 seasons.

Kentucky is 12-9 in bowl games and has won a school-record four a row.

All four bowl wins have been by seven points or less.

This was the third time during UK's four bowl win streak that the Wildcats clinched the game with a turnover in the final minute –

2019 Citrus Bowl, Chris Oats fumble recovery on the final play

2019 Belk Bowl, Jordan Wright fumble recovery and touchdown return on the final play

2021 Citrus Bowl, DeAndre Square interception with 48 seconds left.

Kentucky is 2-0 in the Vrbo Citrus Bowl, also winning on January 1, 2019.

What the Wins Means for Kentucky

Kentucky has won 16 consecutive non-conference games, the longest active streak in the nation.

Kentucky and Iowa had entered the game tied with 15 straight non-league wins.

Kentucky's fourth-straight bowl win is a school record, breaking the record of three straight previously accomplished on two occasions.

The Sugar Bowl and Cotton Bowl following the 1950 and 1951 seasons, followed by a win in the 1976 Peach Bowl

2006 and '07 Music City Bowls and the Liberty Bowl following the 2008 season.

Kentucky is 10-3 for the first time since 2018. This is the fourth time in school history that UK has won at least 10, along with 1950 (11-1), 1977 (10-1) and 2018.

This is the first time that UK has had at least eight total victories (including bowls) three times in a four-year span since 1949-52.

Kentucky defeated two ranked opponents this season, also No. 10/9 Florida. This is the third time in the last four seasons that UK has defeated at least two ranked opponents in the same year, also 2018 and 2020.

This is the first time that UK has won its season finale four years in a row since 1898-1901.

This was Coach Mark Stoops' 59th win as UK head coach. Paul "Bear" Bryant holds the school record with 60 victories.

Stoops is now 59-53 at Kentucky. After two games of the 2016 season, his record was 12-26 but has gone 47-27 (.635) since.

Stoops extended his school record for most total games coached at UK (112).

Stoops is in his ninth season as head coach of the Wildcats, tying Fran Curci (1973-81) for most seasons as head coach at UK.

Team Notes

Since 2016, UK is 20-8 (.714) in games decided by seven points or less, including 5-1 this season. UK is 10-0 this season when keeping the opponent under 30 points. UK has won 12 in a row when keeping the opponent under 30.

Kentucky scored a touchdown on its opening possession, the eighth time this season that UK has scored on its first possession of the game.

Kentucky intercepted three passes today, tying the UK bowl record set last year vs. North Carolina State in the TaxSlayer Gator Bowl.

Entering the game next to last in the nation in turnover margin at minus-13, UK was plus two today.

"The Drive" – part two

For the second time in the last three seasons, the Wildcats put together a magnificent scoring drive to win the game.

In the 2019 Belk Bowl, quarterback Lynn Bowden Jr. engineered a magnificent 18-play, 85-yard drive that took eight minutes and 10 seconds off the clock, ending with a 13-yard touchdown pass to Josh Ali with 15 seconds remaining for the go-ahead score vs. Virginia Tech.

This year, it was QB Will Levis' turn, with the help of Wan'Dale Robinson and Chris Rodriguez.

After Abule Adadi-Fitzgerald and DeAndre Square stopped Iowa on third-and-one at the Iowa 45-yard line, the Hawkeyes punted to the end zone and the Wildcats took over on their own 20-yard line with 3:31 on the clock and no timeouts remaining.

Levis drove his team 80 yards in eight plays, the first 79 yards of which were courtesy of Robinson -- a 17-yard reception on third-and-10, then a 10-yard reception for a first down, followed by a 52-yard catch-and-run that went to the one-yard line.

After a five-yard penalty sent the Wildcats back to the six, Rodriguez took a handoff around left end, broke a tackle at the nine-yard line, then plowed through multiple tacklers for the game-winning touchdown with 1:48 remaining.

The 80-yard, eight-play effort took 1:43 off the clock.

Player Notes

- Junior quarterback Will Levis completed 17 of 28 passes for 233 yards and one touchdown. He rushed for 28 yards but because of five sacks, ended up with a net minus-11 rushing yards.

He has 3,202 yards total offense this season, the seventh player in school history to reach 3,000 yards total offense in a season.

- Junior running back Chris Rodriguez Jr. rushed 20 times for 107 yards, including the game-winning touchdown on a six-yard run with 1:48 remaining. He scored both of UK's touchdowns, the first coming on a five-yard pass reception on UK's first possession of the game.

It is his ninth 100-yard rushing game of the season, breaking the school record set by Artose Pinner in 2002.

It is his 15th 100-yard game of his career, third place in school history.

It is his fifth consecutive 100-yard game, third-longest streak in school history.

He has 1,379 yards this season, moving past Mark Higgs (1,278 in 1987) and Benny Snell Jr. (1,333 in 2017) for fifth place on the UK single-season list.

He has 2,740 career rushing yards, moving past George Adams (2,648) for sixth place on the UK career rushing list.

He has 26 career rushing touchdowns, tying Sonny Collins and Moe Williams for second place on the UK career list.

- Junior wide receiver Wan'Dale Robinson caught 10 passes for 170 yards, both of which are UK bowl records.

He has 1,334 receiving yards this year, breaking the record of 1,311 yards by Craig Yeast in 1998.

He has 104 catches this season, becoming the first player in UK history with 100 catches in a season.

He becomes the sixth player in SEC history to catch at least 100 passes in a season, including Mississippi State's Makai Polk this season.

It is his sixth 100-yard game of the season, second place on the UK single-season list.

Although he has played only one season at UK, he ranks 17th in school history in receiving yardage.

- Senior linebacker Jordan Wright led the Wildcats with 10 tackles, including one for loss, and tipped the pass that led to D'Eryk Jackson's interception.

- Senior linebaker DeAndre Square had two tackles in the first half. Sustaining an ankle injury, he did not return in the second half until midway through the fourth quarter. He finished with six stops, plus the game-clinching interception with 1:48 remaining – his first pickoff of the season and second of his career.

- Cornerback Quandre Mosely intercepted an end zone bomb on the final play of the first half. It is his second interception of the season, third as a Wildcat.

- Senior kicker Matt Ruffolo made all four of his kicks today, two field goals and two extra points.

He has made 81.3 percent of his field goals during his career (26 of 32), the third-highest percentage in school history.

He made 54 extra points this season, breaking the school record of 51 set by Lones Seiber in 2007.

- Making first time starts at UK today were junior offensive guard Quintin Wilson, redshirt freshman Tre'Vonn Rybka and sophomore linebacker D'Eryk Jackson.

In the second quarter, Jackson got the second interception of his career off a tip by Jordan Wright. The interception set up a field goal. He also made a career-high seven tackles.

- Because of injuries, Covid-19 and contact tracing, UK was without six starters today – LT Dare Rosenthal, RG Eli Cox, WR Josh Ali, DT Octavious Oxendine, DE Josh Paschal and LB Jacquez Jones, plus key reserves WR Josh Ali, RB Kavosiey Smoke, LB J.J. Weaver, LB Trevin Wallace and LB Marquez Bemby.

- Game captains today were Wan'Dale Robinson, Josh Paschal, Marquan McCall and Darian Kinnard.