

MALACHI

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special needs.

“It’s an incredible honor to be a part of this team. It’s something I’ve prided myself on ever since I was a kid, and something my parents have instilled in me is always doing what you can to give back to the community,” Kattus said. “We have a four-year window to do so.”

He said patients at the Kentucky Children’s Hospital “make his day” by showing how “happy and excited they are” to see Kattus and several other UK players. He also said participating in Dancing with the Stars got him out of his “comfort zone” while raising money for special causes.

“I am blessed to be here and just want to give back to the community as much as I can,” Kattus said.

The tight end has also been giving back a lot to the football team. Going into the South Carolina game, Kattus is the team’s leading receiver with eight catches for 112 yards and one score.

“I think there’s been a lot of good and there’s been some ups and downs (through three games). We have a really big game coming up at South Carolina,” Kattus said. “I think we’ll be ready to go for that Saturday.”

Kattus was glad UK had an open date last week. He went to Clemson over the weekend to watch his youngest brother play. He also knew it was a good time to let his body rest



(UK ATHLETICS PHOTO)

Croatian Andrija Jelavic has a personality that BBN Tonight’s Keith Farmer believes will adapt well to being part of Big Blue Nation.

and give younger players some needed practice reps. He said offensive coordinator Bush Hamdan told his players last week to go to a movie or hang with friends.

“Just something to take a little bit of stress off,” Kattus said. “I think it’s really important nowadays with the landscape of college sports to take care of yourself mentally.

JELAVIC KNOWS WHAT IT MEANS TO WEAR BLUE AND WHITE

Kentucky coach Mark Pope shared earlier that he had a recruiting call with Andrija Jelavic when the Croatian standout cried talking about getting a chance to play for the Wildcats. Jelavic confirmed to Keith Farmer of WLEX-TV BBN Tonight

that it was not a hard recruiting battle for Pope.

“I played a game and I was really good, and that’s when the Kentucky rumor started to spread,” the 6-foot-11 freshman told Farmer. “At one point, my agent told me, ‘Kentucky is interested in you.’ Since that moment, we knew we wanted Kentucky.

“The moment Mark Pope called me and said that he wanted me to be a part of this team this year and everything, I instantly said, ‘Yes, I want to be here.’ We didn’t even talk about the details and everything. I instantly committed.”

Jelavic said Pope told him to tell his agent, Misko Raznatovic, that he wanted to commit.

“I told him and I instantly committed. I didn’t even talk to the other college coaches. So Mark Pope was the first and only coach I spoke to about that,” Jelavic said on BBN Tonight.

Kentucky basketball is a brand that Jelavic knew well even in Croatia.

“Everyone knows about Kentucky — the name, the legacy, everything. It was for real,” Jelavic said. “When a big name like that wants you to be part of it, it’s a dream come true.

“The moment I heard that name, I wanted to be part of this organization, and just talking to Mark Pope confirmed it. I instantly saw what kind of man he is, what kind of

coach he is. It was just one of the most easy decisions in my life.”

Jelavic averaged 11, 7.4 rebounds and 1.5 assists per game last season for Mega Superbet in the Adriatic League. He’s already 21 years old, has been playing professional basketball and impressed BBN Tonight’s Farmer with his maturity.

“I didn’t really know what to expect going into the interview but the word that comes to mind is mature. He gives the vibes of being a very mature kid,” Farmer said. “I think he will be able to handle everything at Kentucky pretty smoothly. He seems pretty grounded and understands what all goes along with being at Kentucky.

“I think he will thrive off the attention at Kentucky. He said that he actually loved doing interviews and was totally into it. He’s very well spoken and very easy to understand. I am excited to see him play and how he does because he is a very likable young man.”

VOLLEYBALL CATS KEEP CLAIMING BIG WINS

Kentucky volleyball coach Craig Skinner knew what his team’s win at No. 3 Louisville last week meant to Big Blue fans, especially since the Cats had won the last four rivalry matchups.

“Our fans love this rivalry, and Big Blue Nation, I’m sure, was jumping up and down in front of their TVs if they weren’t here,” Skinner said after the five-set win. “We always say in our program, ‘We play for

something way bigger than ourselves.’

“A rivalry match is more about our people that follow us all year long. And the fans across the country that may not know volleyball as well, I’m sure they’re happy today, too.”

It was also a good way for Skinner to start against new Louisville coach Dan Meske, who took over after Dani Busboom Kelly left for Nebraska after Louisville reached the 2024 national title game. It was also pleasing because Skinner got key contributions from reserves Ava Sarafa, Jordyn Dailey and Molly Berezowitz.

“I learned a lot about the people that weren’t starters tonight,” Skinner said. “I learned that they were going to make a difference when they came in the match. When you’re called upon, you’re ready. We’re going to have way more opportunities going forward in these situations.”

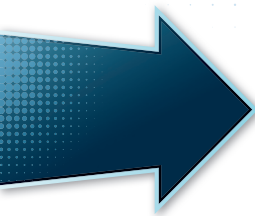
Kentucky had lost 14 straight matchups against non conference teams ranked in the top 10 but now has wins over Penn State, SMU and Louisville, all top 10 teams, this season even though it has only one senior — Eva Hudson — on the roster.

Kentucky took a 7-2 record — the Cats lost to No. 1 Nebraska in five sets and No. 5 Pittsburgh — into Southeastern Conference play this week where it will also eventually face No. 2 Texas, No. 14 Texas A&M, No. 15

See **MALACHI**, 10A



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