

**Athletics Administration and Boosters
RG-026**

ABSTRACT

Athletics Administration encompasses all operational functions for NKU athletics, including business management, communications, marketing and development. The bulk of the Athletics Administration and Boosters records (1971-2014) consists of press releases; newspaper clippings; publications; and memorabilia, including the Hey-U mascot costume.

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Creators: Athletics Administration, Booster members

Span Dates: 1971-2014

Extent: 27.8 cubic feet (54 boxes), 146 megabytes, 1 oversized mascot costume

Languages: The materials are in English.

Repository Location: Eva G. Farris Special Collections and Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights, Kentucky

ACCESS POINTS

Subjects:

College sports--Management
Northern Kentucky State College--sports--management
Northern Kentucky University--sports--management

Names:

Northern Kentucky State College. Athletics
Northern Kentucky University. Athletics Administration
Northern Kentucky University. Intercollegiate Athletics

Places:

Highland Heights (Ky.)
Campbell County (Ky.)
Kentucky, Northern

RELATED MATERIALS

Separated Materials: All loose photographs moved to RG-047 University Photographs.

Related Archival Materials: RG-025 Intercollegiate Athletics, finding aid available; RG-027 Sport Programs; RG-047 University Photographs.

ADMINISTRATIVE/BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

In 1968, the University of Kentucky Northern Community College in Covington, Kentucky, officially transitioned to an independent college, Northern Kentucky State College (NKSC). In 1976, it gained university status and became Northern Kentucky University (NKU).

The Highland Heights campus opened in the fall of 1972 with two buildings, Nunn and Regents Halls. Regents Hall contained a multipurpose gymnasium and housed the Athletic department. As the university and the Athletic department grew, the Athletics' offices also occupied the Albright Health Center (open 1984), the Bank of Kentucky Center/BB&T Arena (open 2008) and the Soccer Complex (open 2010).

The Intercollegiate Athletics division began as the Northern Kentucky State College Athletics department under the Student Affairs division in 1971. It continued to report to Student Affairs, with a few brief exceptions of direct reports to the President, until the University obtained NCAA Division I status in 2012. It then became a separate division containing Intercollegiate Athletics (Director of Athletics' office), Administration, and Sport Programs. The division reports directly to the President.

In 1973, NKSC received full accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and became eligible for membership in national athletic associations. The university has held memberships in National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes (NAIA), Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Divisions I, II and III.

During the early 1980's, the university experienced major budget cuts of over \$3.4 million or 15 percent in fifteen months.¹ These cuts resulted in major

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reductions in the Athletics Department budget, causing the university to eliminate individual sports – Men’s and Women’s Tennis, Men’s Cross Country and Men’s Golf teams for the 1981-1982 and 1982-1983 seasons. These team eliminations also caused the university to fall below the NCAA requirement of six men’s teams, forcing NKU to drop their men’s NCAA membership and compete in the NAIA. NKU resumed its membership in the NCAA after the reinstatement of all teams in 1983-1984.

Major changes in the AIAW caused the women’s teams to change their national association to the NCAA. “The Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women was founded in 1971 to govern collegiate women’s athletics and to administer national championships. After the 1981-1982 academic year, the AIAW discontinued sponsorship of national championships. NKU left the AIAW following the 1979-1980 academic year to become a member of the NCAA, but slow-pitch softball would still compete in the AIAW until after the 1982 season.”²

National Associations

Men’s National Affiliation

1974	NAIA & NCAA – full membership ³
1974-1982	NCAA Division II
1982-1985	NAIA
1985-2012	NCAA Division II
2012-2020	NCAA Division I

Women’s National Affiliation

1974-1977	AIAW Small College
1977-1981	AIAW Large College (slow pitch softball continued to compete in AIAW through 1982 season)
1981-2012	NCAA Division II
2012-2020	NCAA Division I

Conference Memberships

1974-2009	Kentucky Women’s Intercollegiate Conference (women only)
1985-2012	Great Lakes Valley Conference (GLVC) (men and women)
2012-2015	Atlantic Sun Conference
2015-2020	Horizon League

Athletics Administration

Athletics Administration formed as a separate unit when Intercollegiate Athletics moved from a unit reporting to Student Affairs to its own separate division in September 2012. The transition to NCAA Division I status brought considerable growth and increased demands upon the business operations of NKU athletics.

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This unit's responsibilities include the business management, development and promotions operations of NKU athletics. The departments include: Business and Finance; Communications and Media Relations; Compliance and Student-Athlete Services; Development; Marketing, Promotion and Ticketing; Operations and Event Management; and Sports Medicine and Risk Management.

Mascot/Nicknames

The process of choosing a mascot/nickname began before there were sport programs at NKSC/NKU. A brief article in *The Northerner* announced a contest to pick a school mascot.⁴ In January 1971, the results were announced. A total of 397 out of 1,700 students voted and the name Norsemen won with 181 votes.⁵

The addition of women's sports in 1974 led to the additional nickname of Norsewomen. During the 1980's both Norsewomen and Lady Norse were used. The usage slowly evolved until in 1989 only Lady Norse remained in use. By the 2000, a final evolution occurred and one nickname referred to all NKU athletes and fans - Norse.

Costumed Mascot

The selection of Norsemen by the students as the university's mascot nickname soon expanded to include appearances of a costumed mascot. In March 1973, the NKSC cheerleading clinic posting included the possibility of selecting a male mascot.⁶ By early April, NKSC had its first Norseman mascot, Dave Bailey.⁷ The Norseman mascot dressed to resemble a Viking. In addition, a Snoopy mascot (Julie Thoeman) made appearances at women's sports events.⁸ Through the years various students continued to cheer teams as the Norseman mascot, the function moving from a cheerleading function to a Student Government responsibility.⁹

In 1983, campus colors and the mascot were a much-debated subject. From 1983 to 1985 the campus surveyed and discussed the possibilities. One proposed change to the Huskies encountered student opposition and NKU continued on as the Norsemen and Norsewomen. Between 1989-1991, the issue of school colors and the mascot reappeared with Vikings being brought up as a possible alternative. Again, the proposed change met opposition. In November 1992, a new mascot, a seven-foot-tall green dragon, was introduced to campus. A naming contest resulted in the name Hey-U. Hey-U served as the NKU mascot for thirteen years.

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In 2005 the university needed to replace the worn-out mascot costume and it wanted to replace the costume with a better match to the Norse name. The result? The new mascot Victor E. Viking. Victor is a fierce looking, blond haired Viking. In 2017, he won the *USA Today* March Madness best mascot ranking when the Men's Basketball team played in their first Division I NCAA tournament.¹⁰

Cheerleading (1971-2020)

The NKU Cheerleaders promote school spirit and support for NKU, and encourage positive crowd participation at Norse athletic events.

Achievements

Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Small Coed Division II National Champions 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010

Drill Team – Golden Girls (Fall 1971-1989)

The NKSC/NKU Golden Girls performed at basketball games halftime, marched in parades, and attended many campus events.

Dance Team (1994-2020)

As part of the NKU school spirit program, the NKU Dance Team supports the athletic teams and, entertains and promotes the University. They perform at designated men's/women's soccer and volleyball games, as well as all home men's/women's basketball games.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Athletics Administration and Boosters RG-026 consists solely of business administrative records accumulated from the very beginning of Northern Kentucky University's intercollegiate athletics.

These records document the business management, development and promotion operations of NKU athletics. This is an open record group (RG) meaning new additions to the collection are expected to occur.

The collection has five series: Business and Finance Records; Communications Records; Compliance and Student-Athlete Services Records; Development Records; and Marketing, Promotion and Ticketing Records.

Series I, Business and Finance Records (1987-2011), contains permanent administrative records.

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Series II, Communications Records (1974-2011), contains press releases, newsletters, Athletics' history publications and newspaper clippings. The "NKU Norse Athletics, 1971-2011" is a forty-year summary written by long time Sports Information employee Don Owen. Organized chronologically, each year has one page of accomplishments and a representative photo.

Series III, Compliance and Student-Athlete Services Records (1987-1989), contains scholarship records.

Series IV, Development Records (1975-2014, undated), contains fundraising, alumni events and, Hall of Fame induction and award records and plaques. A sampling of physical plaques maintained, digital copies of all plaques available.

Subseries 1: Boosters Files, contains administrative records, handbooks, annual reports, newsletters, correspondence, brochures, stationary and memorabilia.

Series V, Marketing, Promotion and Ticketing Records (1971-2010, undated), contains the NKU Fight Song and Golden Girls (drill team) scrapbook.

Subseries 1: Memorabilia, contains a variety of objects of historical interest marketed, produced or promoted by the Marketing, Promotion and Ticketing Department. Items include mascots and mascot related items, and general promotional items, including bobbleheads.

SYSTEM OF ARRANGEMENT

The Athletics Administration and Boosters records are arranged in five series based on the organizational structure of Athletics Administration: **I. Business and Finance Records, II. Communications Records, III. Compliance and Student-Athlete Services Records, IV. Development Records and V. Marketing, Promotion and Ticketing Records.** Series IV and V contain subseries. Series II is arranged hierarchically; the remaining series and subseries are arranged alphabetically.

CONTAINER LISTING

Description	Date/Date Span	Box
Series I: Business and Finance Records		
Budget records	1978-1982	388
Travel policy	1992	388

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NCAA Regional Tournament, NKU hosted - Participants Manual	1995	388
Series II: Communications Records		
Press releases	1973, 1976, 1979, 1981, 1986, 1988-2005-2009, 2012	948-956
Historical reports	1982, 2010-2011, 2020	291
Sports Information reports/proposals	1978	291
Sports Information planning calendar	undated, circa 1993-1994	291
Newspaper clippings	1973-2008	O/S 210, 212-214, 454-456, 468-475, 960-961, 1427-1432, 1568
Memorabilia: press conference backdrop	c. 1998-2000	1569
Series III: Compliance and Student-Athlete Services Records		
Recruitment publications	1981-1991	453
Student Handbook	2011-2012	453
NCAA compliance brochure	2008	453
Series IV: Development Records		
Newsletters	1987	386
Women's Walk brochures	1993, 1999-2014	386
Stationary	2008	386
Sports camp brochures, certificates	1980-2011	446
Sports camp poster	1984	O/S 209
Hall of Fame banquet induction invitations, programs	1999-2011	1580
Hall of Fame inductees plaque images	1997-2007	1580
Giving opportunities brochures	undated, 2000-2009	
Memorabilia: Hall of Fame inductees' plaques	1997-2007	1570
Memorabilia: Hall of Fame inductees' plaques, digital images only	1997-2007	Digital-see archives staff

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Memorabilia: Hall of Fame Jane Meier induction nameplate/autographed Women's 2000-2003 team basketball	2011	336
Women's Walk t-shirt	1993	349
<i>Subseries 1: Boosters Files</i>		
Minutes	1987, 1992-2002	1579
Administrative records	1991-1994	1579
Handbooks	1993-1994, 2001-2002, 2013-2014	1579
Annual reports	1992-1993, 1997-2013	447
Newsletters	1974-1975, 1984-1986, 1991-1997, 2003 2017	308
Correspondence	1973-1987	308
Brochures	1974-2012	308
Brochures, Kids Club	2009	308
Norsemen decals, membership card	1973-1974, early 1980's	308
Stationary	2008-2009	308
Memorabilia – Norse Athletics Club mug	undated	183
Series V: Marketing, Promotion and Ticketing Records		
Fight Song lyrics	1975	387
Fight Song digital recording	2009	Digital-see archives staff
Division 1 promotion, Dreamers Welcome/Atlantic Sun	2012	DVD Box 161
VIP Presidential All Sports pass	1984-1986	387
Basketball season tickets promotion	2009-2013	387
Viking illustration logo	circa 1977	387
Stationary	2008-2009	387
Golden Girls scrapbook: newspaper clippings, photographs, calendars	1971-1979	959
<i>Subseries 1: Memorabilia</i>		
Bobbleheads	2002-2010	181
Candy bar wrapper-Mr. Good Guy/Ken Shields	undated	182
Mascot Hey-U costume	1992-2005	O/S 947

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Mascot Hey-U paraphernalia	circa 1992-2005	186
Mascot Hey-U costume boots	circa 1992-2005	651
Megaphones-Hey-U and Liberty Mutual sponsor	undated	182
Mini promotional basketball	1979-1980	182
Norse banner	circa 1992-2005	O/S 395
Norse helmet flag	2016	O/S 612
Norse throw blanket	2007	O/S 220
Norsemen license plate	undated	182
T-shirts	undated	185
T-shirt-Votruba dude, wrestling	post 2007	184
T-shirt-last game Regents Hall	2009	336
Victor zipper clip and pin	post 2007	182
Victor pennant	post 2005	185

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ACQUISITION AND APPRAISAL

Immediate Source of Acquisition: Transfers from Intercollegiate Athletics, Athletics Administration. Prior to 2007, transfers not accessioned. Accessions: NKU2007-529, NKU2018-012, NKU2019-003.

NOTES

Processing Information: Processed by Vicki Cooper, 2020.

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Endnotes

1. Northern Kentucky University Board of Regents Minutes, October 10, 1981, 5, <https://dspace.nku.edu/handle/11216/3168>.
2. "NKU Norse Athletics, 1971-2011," 19, RG-026 Athletics Administration and Boosters, Schlachter University Archives, W. Frank Steely Library, Northern Kentucky University, Highland Heights.
3. Northern Kentucky University Board of Regents Minutes, January 4, 1973, 3, <https://dspace.nku.edu/handle/11216/3168>.
4. "Pick the Mascot," *The Northerner*, August 26, 1970, 4, https://dspace.nku.edu/bitstream/handle/11216/2322/Northerner_1970_08_26_ocr.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
5. Debbie Rose, "Norsemen?" *The Northerner*, January 29, 1971, 2, https://dspace.nku.edu/bitstream/handle/11216/2326/Northerner_1971_01_29_ocr.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
6. "Cheerleading Clinic Set," *The Northerner*, March 16, 1973, 6, https://dspace.nku.edu/bitstream/handle/11216/275/Northerner_1973_03_16.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
7. "Cheerleaders Chosen," *The Northerner*, April 27, 1973, 6, https://dspace.nku.edu/bitstream/handle/11216/249/Northerner_1973_04_27.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
8. "Norsewomen Mascot," *The Northerner*, February 18, 1977, 5, https://dspace.nku.edu/bitstream/handle/11216/356/Northerner_1977_02_18.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.
9. Karen Merk, "Student Government Candidates Express Views," *The Northerner*, April 7, 1982, 1, <http://hdl.handle.net/11216/502>.
10. Charles Curtis, "Ranking All 68 NCAA Tournament Teams by Mascot," *USA Today*, March 13, 2017, <https://ftw.usatoday.com/2017/03/ncaa-tournament-2017-march-madness-bracket-best-mascots-ranking-list>.

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