

I'm Always Homesick on Game Day

By Heather Carreen Watson

Next month will mark five years since I left Lexington. The cities where I've subsequently lived have offered many fine amenities — the fantastic dining of Louisville's Bardstown Road, the wonderful shopping in Nashville (seriously, there are both a Louis Vuitton and a Tiffany *in the mall*) — but they just aren't *home*. Most days, I consider Lexington an adorable college town where I spent a happy decade. On Game Day, however, Lexington is the only place I want to be, no matter where I physically *am*.

In many ways, watching televised games from home is preferable. I mean, my beau and I have a 60-inch HDTV and a home theater system. We can sit on the couch in our sweats, drink a glass of wine, pet the dog and watch the game without having to worry about parking spots or obnoxious seat-mates or bad tickets. There aren't lines to the restroom. We can order an entire pizza for the price of a reheated Papa John's slice at the game.

I only make it back to Lexington a few times a year now and find the familiar (coconut chicken fingers from DeSha's or Sawyer's incomparable cheeseburgers) increasingly juxtaposed with the new (the CentrePointe hole has left McCarthy's looking naked, exposed, and embarrassingly respectable—and there seem to be a whole new set of bars and lunch joints springing up to accommodate the denizens of the new courthouses).

I now live in a city where people are more excited to see Keith-and-Nicole at the movies than Anita Madden at Dudley's.

A dubious athlete sighting isn't the age-old conundrum of "am I honored to sit behind Mel Turpin or do I want to sit behind someone short so I can actually see the game?"; rather, it's "was that a Titan in the Bentley at the last red light?"

I'll take Anita and Mel any day. ■

Southern Voices

UK's next home game is January 21 at Rupp v. Auburn.

Floyd County native Heather C. Watson is a writer, Kentucky Basketball fan, and volunteer. She holds degrees from Transylvania University and the University of Kentucky and lives in Nashville with her fiancé, Bob, and their Labrador Retriever, Max. She is currently training for her second half-marathon.

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If the telecast is on ESPN, then the quality of the HD signal is so high that we can actually pick out our friends from their lower-arena seats.

But it isn't always a strong ESPN-HD feed; more often it's a muddy Raycom broadcast or "VER—neLundquist" 's oddly phrased announcing on CBS. Seeing our friends on TV isn't the same as running into them in the Hyatt lobby.

And those \$6 watered-down Cokes are pretty damn good in their Rupp Arena plastic cups.

Of all the sights at a UK basketball game, though, the thing I miss the most are my very favorite fans: the Mamaws and Papaws. You know the ones: the 70- and 80-somethings who have driven up from the more rural counties in their head-to-toe Wildcat gear and can call the game with more alacrity and accuracy than most D1 coaching staffs.

They may look like they should be on an oxygen tank, but they are quite spry and nimble as they mimic double-dribble, traveling or possession. They have loved this team for a lifetime, and are thrilled to be watching from their upper-arena seats. They've lived through the championships and the scandals, the best coach (Rupp) and the worst (that Sutton fella); they can recall the lineups of the past and are always optimistic about next year's recruits.

Today, I'm watching from home and dreaming of the Bluegrass.

