

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY CASE STUDY

Background

Founded in 1865, the University of Kentucky (UK) is the state's collegiate institution with more than 30,500 students—the highest enrollment in Kentucky. The University has 16 colleges and a graduate school as well as the men's and women's intercollegiate athletic squads, the Kentucky Wildcats. The UK Athletics Ticket Office and Development Department work together to manage ticketing and souvenir tickets for Wildcats season ticket holders and fans.

Problem

After 34 years of losing to the University of Florida Gators, the UK football team was poised to beat the Gators at home in a big game on October 2, 2021. However, because they had transitioned to digital ticketing during the COVID pandemic, the UK Athletics Ticket Office and Development Department realized they needed to come up with a solution to give fans a commemorative ticket for the game.

According to LaMontrose Love, Assistant Director of Development, UK Athletics, they were feeling good about the game and started to think about creating a souvenir ticket but didn't want to get ahead of themselves.

"We knew we needed to figure something out in case we won," said Love. "So we started exploring how we could have a commemorative ticket made for this big game."

The UK Ticket Office had previously worked with Weldon, Williams and Lick, Inc. (WW&L) for several years to fulfill their printed ticket orders before making the switch to digital. They had a positive working relationship with the WW&L team and knew the design and product quality would be high.

"When someone mentioned WW&L, I immediately thought it would be like a dream to work with them for a souvenir ticket," said Love. "It was like working with family because we've already established that relationship and know what to expect."

Love and his team saw that other universities had used a souvenir ticket as a solution to mobile tickets that didn't give fans a memento to keep after the game. They knew they needed a souvenir item to commemorate this potentially historic moment in UK Athletics history—beating the Florida Gators at home.

Solution

Once Love saw the demo from WW&L for their Direct Souvenir product, he was sold. They briefly considered going to a local print shop to create the ticket but ultimately decided WW&L offered the best option to meet their needs and budget.

They handled the ticket design in-house with the UK Athletics Creative Services Director, sent the design over to WW&L, and set the wheels in motion.

"The entire process was so easy...there wasn't any setup involved, and there were zero upfront costs," said Love. "I think I even asked them, 'are you sure this is the right price?'"

University of Kentucky

Location:

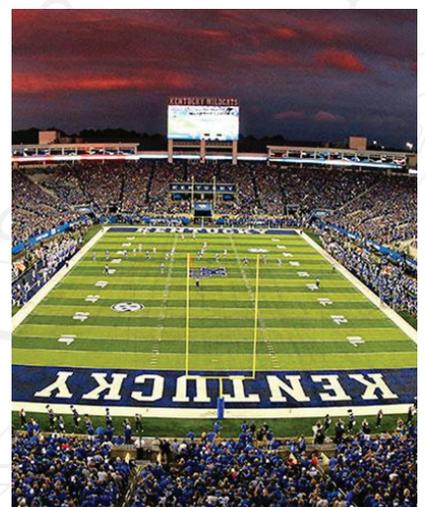
Lexington, Kentucky

Challenge:

- Desired a flexible solution for commemorative tickets when the need arose
- Needed to be able to execute a souvenir ticket in record time

Key Results:

- Created a revenue stream with no up-front costs
- Simple ordering and fast turn-around
- Enhanced patron experience



Because WW&L's Direct Souvenir product is an end-to-end solution, it includes all costs for production, fulfillment, and shipping. Patrons buy the souvenir tickets from a dedicated web portal, facilitating a revenue stream without startup fees.

UK sent out emails to all season ticket holders and other ticket buyers and put the link to purchase the souvenir tickets on the UK Athletics page. And the orders started coming in. Love said they will continue to promote the souvenir ticket through the holidays so people can purchase them as gifts. They also have the ability to set and adjust the price to increase revenue.

"Direct Souvenir is a trick we have in our pocket now," said Love. "We know if there's another big event or game that happens, we can pull the trigger with WW&L and get a quick turnaround for a very special commemorative ticket fans will love."

Outcome

Love and the UK Athletics team have observed several positive outcomes as a result of using WW&L's Direct Souvenir solution:

Revenue Stream with No Upfront Costs

So far, UK fans have placed over a thousand orders for Direct Souvenir Tickets for the UK vs. Florida Gators game. That's profit with no investment on the University's end to set up the product and generate revenue. They only needed to create the artwork for the souvenir ticket designs.

"Knowing now how this all works, I can see there's a pretty phenomenal opportunity," said Love. "If we would've had something ready that night of the big win, we probably would've sold ten times that number, so that's something to think about for future games."

Hassle-Free Ordering and Fast Turn-Around Time

Love was impressed with the quick turnaround time for WW&L's Direct Souvenir Ticket. It was an effortless process on UK's end. Fans could go in through the web portal and place the order, with WW&L handling all aspects of production and fulfillment—from start to finish. The ordering process was hassle-free for patrons too.

"It took them maybe 90 seconds to order the souvenir ticket, so it was cool to know it was going to be easy on our customers," said Love. "Once we sent the ticket design over to WW&L, we could just sit back and watch the magic happen...we were blown away by how easy it was."

Enhanced Patron Experience

WW&L's custom web portal and fully integrated ordering process enhances customer satisfaction and brand engagement and increases fan loyalty. The Direct Souvenir Ticket pulled on the heartstrings of passionate UK fans and gave them a memento to cherish for years to come.

Love said the UK Athletics Department is considering a season commemorative ticket for the future as well as Direct Souvenir Tickets for other sports.

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LaMontrose Love, Assistant Director of Development, UK Athletics

Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc.

Location:

Fort Smith, AR

Ticketing Solutions:

- All in Books
- Badges
- Membership Cards
- Season Sheets
- Souvenir Tickets
- Thermal Tickets
- Wristbands

