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WKU swinging into November Homecoming

By Jake McMahon Special to the Daily News
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Western Kentucky University will travel back to the 1920s Nov. 14-16 as the university celebrates this year's "Roaring Red" Homecoming.

WKU's mid-November Homecoming is something out of the ordinary for the school as the event is usually planned for October. Director of Student Activities Charley Pride said the later date is directly attributed to WKU football's schedule as the Hilltoppers do not play a Saturday home game in October.

The events on the day of Homecoming will also see a change this year with an earlier kickoff time than usual. WKU's game against Louisiana Tech is set for an 11 a.m. kickoff, pushing this year's Homecoming events up to an 8 a.m. start.

"That's the first time I've seen it that I can remember it (being) that early. It's usually a 3 or 4 o'clock game," Pride said. "It affects a lot of the planning of what we're doing that day."

The events on Nov. 16 will start early. The "Festival of Friends" tailgate will begin at 8 a.m. in the "Campus Area," according to the event schedule. Other events on the day include the Homecoming Candidate Pinning Ceremony at 9 a.m. and the NPHC Step Show at 6 p.m. at The Capitol.

The Homecoming Queen Coronation will take place at halftime of the football game.

"It's just a great day. It's just fun seeing all the people. Most people are excited," Pride said. "It's just fun."

While Saturday has a packed schedule, Pride said Friday, Nov. 15 "starts all the big stuff." The annual Homecoming Parade is set for a 5 p.m. start in downtown Bowling Green. Following the parade will be the "Big Red's Roar" pep rally in Fountain Square.

Pride said the "Roaring Red" theme will be primarily seen in the floats presented at the Homecoming parade as they will all be themed around the 1920s. He said the floats will primarily be put together by the university's Greek groups.

"You got layers of leadership. You got to get people to show up ... Some of the skills our students are getting by building a Homecoming float people would never think of," Pride said of the process of building the floats. "They're actually learning skills about how to get along with other people."

To kick off the full weekend, the WKU Alumni Association is set to host the Hilltopper Excellence Awards at the Knicely Conference Center.

The event "will honor the outstanding achievements of WKU alumni and benefactors, including the introduction of the 33rd class of the Hall of Distinguished Alumni," according to the Alumni Association website.

A full schedule of WKU's Homecoming events can be found at <https://www.wku.edu/sao/saohomecoming.php>.