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Viking slays dragon as symbol for NKU

New sports mascot has a more aggressive look

By Howard McEwen
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Northern Kentucky University introduced its new mascot - a 6-foot-6 golden-haired, sword-and-shield-wielding Viking - on Tuesday during the men's basketball team's exhibition game against Xavier University.

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"I love the new mascot," said senior Paul Sorrell, who gives the Viking life. "I think it is a better representation of a Norse than the old one."

The previous mascot was a dragon named Hey-U. Drawings showed it as a serpent partially submerged in water. Sorrell said it resembled something less than representative of an aggressive team looking for a win.

"It kind of looked like 'Puff the Magic Dragon.' The suit wasn't very maneuverable and had seen better days," said Sorrell.

Associate Athletic Director Kurt Moeller also thought a change was in order.

"We wanted a mascot that better represented our name Norse," Moeller said.

The Norse raider wearing a team jersey with NKU stamped on its shield was the consensus choice of the several on- and off-campus groups that helped pick the new mascot.

Sorrell was the top choice to be the Viking at the athletic department's Meet the Norse night in October. Besides providing needed height (he's 6-foot-3), he had already demonstrated school spirit by being an NKU cheerleader the past four years.

"I was asked if I would be interested in wearing the costume for Meet the Norse until they could have tryouts," he said. "I liked the outfit so much and had such a good time in it that I asked if I could go ahead and do it for the year."

The Viking is nameless for now. It will be given a moniker later this year when it is put to a student vote.

"I've never been a mascot before, but can't wait to be at all the games," Sorrell said.

The Viking and Sorrell can next be seen when the men's basketball team hosts the University of Findlay on Friday at Regents Hall on campus.

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