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## Harlem Globetrotters to show skills in game at Diddle

By JACKSON FRENCH [jfrench@bgdailynews.com](mailto:jfrench@bgdailynews.com) 16 hrs ago

The Harlem Globetrotters will bring the antics and showmanship that have made them a worldwide sensation to Bowling Green.

The Globetrotters will play their longtime foes, the Washington Generals, at 7 p.m. Monday at E.A. Diddle Arena at Western Kentucky University.

Orlando “El Gato” Melendez, the first Puerto Rican Globetrotter, said anyone coming to the game can expect an energetic show loaded with the trick shots and jaw-dropping athleticism for which the Globetrotters are known.

“It’s so much fun,” he said. “You could be playing 150 games in a row and you go out there and the kids fill you up with so much energy.”

Melendez’s nickname, which is Spanish for “the cat,” comes from one day when numerous cats followed him through the field he ran through to get to the nearest basketball court, which was two miles from his home in Juana Diaz, Puerto Rico. “We’re a baseball country, so we don’t have a lot of basketball courts,” he said.

Melendez said a piece of ham fell out of the sandwich he was eating on the way to the court, which drew several nearby cats that followed him all the way to the court.

Though credited as a forward on his official bio, Melendez said he covers every position in the course of a typical exhibition game. “With the Globetrotters, we don’t focus just on one position,” he said.

In addition to the game with the Generals, the show at Diddle Arena will also feature displays of showmanship from the Fying Globies, a separate group of performers that uses trampolines to execute a series of over-the-top dunks. “They get so high above the rim that it’s amazing to watch,” Melendez said.

Melendez has maintained a busy touring schedule with the Globetrotters, having performed in 73 countries over the course of five years.

“It’s a hard job. It’s a lifestyle, pretty much,” he said. “You’re carrying the torch of earlier Globetrotters. For us to go and keep doing this, it’s a very special thing.”

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He said being a part of the happy memories the team creates for children in the audience at every show gives Melendez the energy he needs to be a Globetrotter.

“For me to create those memories for those kids is a great feeling,” he said.

– *Tickets start at \$18 and can be bought at [face book.com/events/912367832247494/](https://www.facebook.com/events/912367832247494/) or at [ticketmaster.com/WKU-E-A-Diddle-Arena-tickets-Bowling-Green/venue/222267](https://www.ticketmaster.com/WKU-E-A-Diddle-Arena-tickets-Bowling-Green/venue/222267).*

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