STEPPING UP
Barry Odom finally gets his chance to run the show.
### DEPTH CHART

#### MU OFFENSE VS. GEORGIA DEFENSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Missouri</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide Receiver</td>
<td>J’Mon Moore</td>
<td>Johnathan Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Back</td>
<td>Alex Ross</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterback</td>
<td>Drew Lock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Tackle</td>
<td>Paul Adams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>Samson Bailey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Tackle</td>
<td>Tyler Howell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Guard</td>
<td>Alec Abein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Guard</td>
<td>Kevin Pendleton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tight End</td>
<td>Sean Culkin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide Receiver</td>
<td>Emanuel Hall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### MU DEFENSE VS. GEORGIA OFFENSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Missouri</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide Receiver</td>
<td>Terry Godwin</td>
<td>Jayson Stanley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running Back</td>
<td>Nick Chubb</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterback</td>
<td>Greyson Lambert</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fullback</td>
<td>Christian Payne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Tackle</td>
<td>Greg Pyke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center</td>
<td>Brandon Kublanow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Tackle</td>
<td>Tyler Catalina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right Guard</td>
<td>Lamont Gaillard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Guard</td>
<td>Isaiah Wynn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive End</td>
<td>Charles Harris</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive Guard</td>
<td>Rickey Hatley</td>
<td>A.J. Logan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defensive Tackle</td>
<td>Jordan Harold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corner Back</td>
<td>John Gibson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linebacker</td>
<td>Joey Burkett</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linebacker</td>
<td>Michael Scherer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linebacker</td>
<td>Donavin Newsom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corner Back</td>
<td>Aarion Penton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SPECIAL TEAMS

#### MISSOURI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Missouri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punter</td>
<td>Corey Fatony (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placemaker</td>
<td>Tucker McCann (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holder</td>
<td>Jake Brents (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Snapper</td>
<td>Jake Hurrell (86)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kick Returner</td>
<td>Alex Ross (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punt Returner</td>
<td>Johnathan Johnson (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### GEORGIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Punter</td>
<td>Marshall Long (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placemaker</td>
<td>William Ham (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holder</td>
<td>Brice Ramsey (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Snapper</td>
<td>Trent Frix (69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kick Returner</td>
<td>Reggi Davis (81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punt Returner</td>
<td>Isaiah McKenzie (16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### MISSOURI INJURIES

- (7) Nate Brown, ankle
- (50) Darvis Holmes, shoulder
- (65) Tanner Owen, undisclosed medical

### TIGER KICKOFF

Sports Editor
Greg Bowers

Assistant Sports Editors
Jaime Dunaway
Brooks Holton
Jonathan McKay

Director of Photography
Brian Kratzer

Assistant Directors of Photography
Adam Vogler
Katie Grunik

Design Editor
Brady Jones

Creative Director
Allison Mann

Cover Photography
Evan Cobb

Reporters
Colton Pouncy
Brad Almquist

Tiger Kickoff is published every Friday before a Missouri home football game. Look for the special edition before home games and an expanded sports section before away games.

Follow us on Twitter:
@CoMoSports

Email: sports@columbiamissourian.com

Columbia Missourian
Our offices are located at 221 S. Eighth St., Columbia, MO 65201
Circulation: 882-5700
Newsroom: 882-5720
Sports: 882-5726
On the Web:
columbiamissourian.com

On Air
TV: SEC Network alternate
Radio: KTGR/1580 AM
KCMQ/96.7 FM
We have a Place for You!

Sign a lease get a $800 VISA GIFT CARD + We’ll waive the $200 SERVICE FEE

*Certain restrictions apply. While supplies last.

Apply online today! ReserveAtColumbia.com

2500 Old Highway 63 South | Columbia, MO 65201 | 573.256.7344
What’s Inside

6 Feeding an athletes appetite
Have you ever wondered what a 300 pound offensive lineman’s diet is like? Missouri’s head chef Stephen Evans knows exactly what kind of food, and how much those guys like to eat.

8 Odom steps into his new role
Barry Odom’s been around Missouri for a long time. First as a player, then as an administrator, finally as an assistant. Now, 14 years into his relationship with Missouri, he is the head coach.

14 How much do you know?
Impossible Quiz : Georgia Edition
The bulldog is well known as Georgia’s mascot, but has it always been that way or did it start as a different animal?

Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09/03</td>
<td>AT WEST VIRGINIA</td>
<td>L 11-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/10</td>
<td>VS. EASTERN MICHIGAN</td>
<td>W 61-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/17</td>
<td>VS. GEORGIA</td>
<td>6:30 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PARENTS WEEKEND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/24</td>
<td>VS. DELAWARE STATE</td>
<td>3:00 P.M.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/01</td>
<td>AT LSU</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>AT FLORIDA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22</td>
<td>VS. MIDDLE TENNESSEE</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>VS. KENTUCKY</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/05</td>
<td>AT SOUTH CAROLINA</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>VS. VANDERBILT</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>AT TENNESSEE</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>VS. ARKANSAS</td>
<td>1:30 P.M.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stop in at Aardvarx where you are free to be.. fun, loud, crazy, or hip..whatever defines YOU. We have everything you need to express yourself.

Since 1968

17 N. 10th St.
Downtown Columbia
874-8600

Mon-Sat: 10am - 8pm
Sun: Noon - 5pm

T-Shirts, Clothing, Candles, Incense, Posters, Tapestries, Tobacco, Smoking Accessories, Jewelry, Body Jewelry, Tarot Cards, Crystals & Much More!
Fast Five

Missouri will take on the Georgia Bulldogs on Saturday to start SEC play. See which Missouri player favors Georgia’s mascot as these Tigers talk favorite dog breeds, musicians and fried chicken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who’s the bulldog of Mizzou football?</th>
<th>What is your favorite type of dog?</th>
<th>What is your favorite soft drink?</th>
<th>What is your favorite chicken restaurant?</th>
<th>Who is your favorite Georgia musician?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnathon Johnson</td>
<td>“I’ll say Terez Hall.”</td>
<td>“I like bulldogs.”</td>
<td>“Sprite.”</td>
<td>“My favorite one? There’s a lot of them. I’m trying to think... I’ll say Gucci Mane.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide receiver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Adams</td>
<td>“Adam Ploudre.”</td>
<td>“Golden retriever.”</td>
<td>“Popeyes.”</td>
<td>“I’m a fan of Migos, but you got to go with Ludacris as well.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive lineman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive lineman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Missouri will take on the Georgia Bulldogs on Saturday to start SEC play. See which Missouri player favors Georgia’s mascot as these Tigers talk favorite dog breeds, musicians and fried chicken.

MIZ-HOU!

Something for everyone...

Proud Partner with [RE Cork]
dedicated to recycling cork and giving it new life in sustainable footwear + other upcycled product

HAPPY HOUR
Everyday 3pm-7pm
Sun-Thurs 9pm-Close

Houlihan’s
2541 Broadway Bluffs Drive | (573) 815-7210
Sunday: 11am-10pm
Monday-Thursday: 11am-11pm
Friday-Saturday: 11am-12am
By Brad Almquist

Feeding 600 athletes isn’t the simplest task.

Each day, around 4:30 a.m., several cooks sporting black Missouri shirts arrive at the Mizzou Athletics Training Complex. They unlock the doors, flick on the lights and start preparing food for the imminent flood of hungry athletes.

The stoves are heated, and the inventories of condiments are restocked. The cooks zoom past loaded shelves of baked potatoes, frozen vegetables and tortillas. In a large back room, piles of sliced bread sit on shelves. Ground cinnamon, Hungarian-style paprika and dozens of other flavors are placed next to the grill.

Though no athlete is in sight, the chefs are hard at work. A couple hours go by, and offensive lineman Paul Adams drops in for his usual omelette. Adams visits his favorite cook, Chris Harrison, who knows the lineman’s order by heart. The two smile and bump knuckles. Harrison whips up Adams’ massive omelette filled with bacon, spinach, mixed peppers, tomatoes and steak.

Harrison inscribes his daily message on Adams’ plastic to-go box: “Go Mizzou! No. 77, have a great week.”

Head chef Stephen Evans typically doesn’t show up until 10:30 a.m., but he relies on 40 part-time and three full-time cooks to help run the kitchen. Half of Evans’ day is spent preparing food, and the other half consists of planning future menus. He has to account for all types of athletes and tastes, but maintaining nutritional value is his highest priority.

Each month, Evans wipes the menu clean and writes a new one. He assigns different foods to specific days, but he rarely repeats the same entree twice. Taco Tuesdays are a constant.

Steak is a popular choice, so he incorporates it at least six times per semester.

Each entree follows a specific cuisine, whether it is a Thanksgiving, Greek, Indian or Italian theme. Two entree options are provided every night.

“You should be able to come here at any point and find something you like,” Evans said. “You shouldn’t leave hungry.”

Once 11 a.m. hits, hordes of athletes fill the cafeteria. Most of the football players walk to the grill line, where the cooks stack double cheeseburger after double cheeseburger onto plates. Other players opt for pasta, corn on the cob and bread.

One thing is certain: there is no shortage of food.

On steak night, Evans orders seven 45-pound cases of steaks. They rarely run out, accomplishing Evans’ goal of no food going to waste.

Two years ago, the NCAA passed a rule that allows student-athletes to eat unlimited amounts of food, in “an effort to meet the nutritional needs of all student-athletes,” according to the official NCAA website. Prior to the ruling, athletes could only eat three meals per day.

Redshirt junior Alec Abeln loathed the old ruling. Now, he eats whenever he pleases. Often times, he scoops loads of food into a plastic to-go box so he can eat while watching film.

“They had a mac and cheese day, where there was sausage and other stuff on the side,” Abeln said. “I had an entire box of just mac ‘n’ cheese. It was disgusting.”

Abeln’s fellow offensive linemen also have taken advantage of the NCAA ruling. Redshirt sophomore Samson Bailey has gained 60 pounds since coming to Missouri, the result of relentless weight-lifting and nonstop eating.

“Sam hates food now,” Abeln said. “That’s the thing, you come in here loving food, then by the time it’s over, you still love food, but the volume of it just makes you sick sometimes.”

Abeln and Adams, two of Missouri’s offensive linemen, are food experts. When he isn’t eating omelettes, Adams indulges in the cafeteria’s pepperoni pizza, which he said is incredible.

On road trips, the two linemen lounge in their hotel room and watch the Food Network on Friday nights before game day. Guy Fieri’s “Diners, Drive-ins and Dives” is their favorite show.

Every time a new dish is made on the show, Abeln and Adams grade it. Adams has noticed a trend in Abeln’s system:

“Anything that is remotely healthy, (Abeln) is like, ‘Nah, that’s not that good,’” Adams said.

Abeln avoids the vegetable section, unless corn on the cob or green beans are available. He loves the chicken tetrazzini dish. If he sees an entree that doesn’t fit his tastes, he simply grabs a couple of burgers for the road.

Abeln, who weighs 305 pounds, plans to slim down to his desired weight of 230 pounds after he is done with football. For now, he eats four meals per day. He counts his daily calories, which he estimates at about 5,000 to 6,000 per day.

The 315-pound Adams does not.

“I try not counting calories because it can be a scary number,” Adams said with a laugh.

Evans talks with Adams and other Missouri football players frequently, whether about food, football or life in general. It makes Evans’ day when a player compliments his dish.

On Saturdays, Evans leaves his kitchen and traverses across Providence Road to Memorial Stadium. He attends every Missouri home football game. Evans sits above the student section and peers down at the field with a wide smile.

“You see these guys over the years get huge, and it’s like dang, I remember three years ago he came in and was small,” Evans said.

“Down in the weight room, they build monsters, but it’s my job to feed them.”
**Hours**

**North**
- M - W 11am - 10pm
- Th - Sa 11am - 10:30pm
- Sunday 11am - 8pm

**Downtown**
- M - W 11am - Midnight
- Th - Sa 11am - 2am
- Sunday 11am - 8pm

**North**
3890 Rangeline St. 115
573-228-9844
10 Minutes from Downtown

**Downtown**
33 North 9th Street.
573-449-8788

www.lasiestamex.com
ODOM TAKES A NEW APPROACH

By Brad Almquist

Missouri football players anxiously watched the doorway. Whoever walked through would be their new head coach.

They crowded into the media room, with progressive elevated seating, and grew quiet after a few seconds had passed.

Then Barry Odom entered.

A resounding explosion followed. Players dressed in black hoodies and Missouri jackets kept from their seats and enveloped their new leader. Applause, cheers and a gigantic crowd would be their new head coach.

They hadn’t been this delighted in recent years. Odom also noticeably different from Pinkel’s former system. Odom replaced almost everyone on Pinkel’s staff after his predecessor retired.

“Barry! Barry! Barry!” Missouri fans roared, and the players responded well to the change.

Last spring, Odom actively engaged with players on the field during the team’s spring game. They locked eyes, as Pinkel formerly watched spring games in the press box. During each kickoff, Odom winked at the kicker, observed the play, then snapped his hands in support as the ball soared through the air. Occasionally, he would stop the scrimmage, despite the constant flow of people in and out of the coaching point.

Odom, a Pinkel product, not a duplicate

Odom had been head coach at Appalachian State and defensive coordinator at the University of Memphis. Odom had been a part of the resurgence of Missouri football since enrolling as an undergrad.

He served under Pinkel in nearly every role imaginable, so Missouri reached new heights after a long period of irrelevance. Odom first played linebacker, then held administrative roles, coached the safeties and finally led the defensive unit under Pinkel. Though he is only 39 years old, he has already been standing part of the program.

Yet he isn’t a direct reflection of his predecessor.

“I want to take what (Pinkel) did, the platform, the blueprint and keep a lot of that intact but also infuse some new ideas,” Odom said in a news conference.

The Bluejays were his own version of the Bluejays. Odom’s style, the ways of crafting that blueprint, are already noticeably different from Pinkel’s former system.

A Pinkel product, a direct one, Too bad. Odom wanted something different, something fresh. Odom brought a different style, a different blueprint.

Odom’s style, the ways of crafting that blueprint, are already noticeably different from Pinkel’s former system. Odom replaced almost everyone on Pinkel’s staff after his predecessor retired.

“Barry! Barry! Barry!” Missouri fans roared, and the players responded well to the change.

Since we’re in the beginning of the Odom era, we have to start around and operating around practice, yelling at us, motivating us for whatever it takes to get better that day,” said Pinkel, standing from his locker and observing practice. Odombdd hands on his knees and converses with players. He traverses from drill to drill, yelling words of encouragement, “You guys are doing everything properly.

“Barry has brought a different feel,” backup linebacker Mario Sanders said. “We are responding well to the change.”

Toughness wins

Toughness was Odom’s only option.

He never had the NFL size. Standing at roughly 6-foot-tall, Odom stepped onto the Missouri campus in 1993 as a three-star recruit from Oklahoma, but the Missouri coaching staff Kevin Rees. Too bad. Odom wanted something different, something fresh. Odom brought a different style, a different blueprint.

He treated everything as Missouri-relevant. Despitea brief stint as a high school assistant, he had everything under control.

“We didn’t settle for being content as it gets,” tight end Sean Culkin said.

A few weeks into camp, some of the team’s seniors thought practice would be canceled in favor of going to the pool. Two days later, they were in full effect. It was a hot and muggy day, an atmosphere that called for a refreshing dip.

“We don’t want to be there,” senior defensive end Jordan Elliott said. “We don’t want to be droning on and on. We just want to have fun. We want to have a little banter. We want to keep it light.”

Columbia Missourian
Missouri football players anxiously watched the doorway. Whoever walked through would be their new head coach.

Then Barry Odom entered.

A reasoning explosion followed. Players dressed in black hoodies and grew quiet after a few seconds had passed. Missouri football players anxiously watched the doorway. Whoever walked through would be their new head coach. The players needed stability. Odom, who knew the Missouri program as well as anyone, could provide it.

"Barry! Barry! Barry!" Missouri players chanted on Dec. 3, 2015, when Odom was appointed head coach.

They hadn't been this delighted in months. Less than a month before Odom's arrival, the Missouri program was in a crisis.

Injustice. A disappointing 5-7 finish in 2015. A boycott of all football activities in April of 2016. A coach who had everything under control.

This was his dream job.

"I want to take what (Pinkel) did, the platform, the blueprint and keep a lot of that intact but also infuse some new ideas," Odom said in a news conference. "The blueprint he referred to is winning. Aresolutely different from Pinkel's former system. Odom replaced almost everyone on Pinkel's staff after launching his own coaching search. The first year head coach waited months for full practice, something his predecessor stepped along in recent years. Odom also consistently emphasized the concept of open-competition, regardless of age or accolades.

A Pinkel product, not a duplicate.

Though he is only 39 years old, Odom has been a longstanding part of the Missouri football since 1996. Odom first enrolled as an undergraduate student at the University of Memphis in 1995 as a walk-on defensive back. Odom was appointed head coach.

"Coach Odom is as straight as business as it gets," tight end Marvin Zanders said. "We are responding well to the change."

Toughness wins.

"I never had the NFL size," Odom said. "Standing at roughly 6 feet tall, Odom stepped onto the Missouri campus in 1995 as a defensive back. He had 103 tackles his freshman season. From 1996-1999, he recorded 362 tackles, which currently ranks seventh all time in Missouri history.

Then again, lacking size was hardly an excuse for a guy who won two track state championships in high school, which currently ranks seventh all time in Missouri history.

Barry Odom watches from the sideline during the fourth quarter of Missouri's home opener against Eastern Michigan on Saturday.
Once a player, now a player’s coach

Football is Odom’s passion, but it doesn’t consume him.

On the Tuesday before Odom’s first game as Missouri head coach, players cycled in and out of the Mizzou Athletic Training Complex to eat lunch, watch film and lift weights. Redshirt sophomore Paul Adams stopped in for a bite to eat.

Odom, smiling widely, surprised the 315-pound offensive lineman. He squatted down and jokingly shouted, “Are you ready?”

“Yeah,” Adams said laughing. “And I can see you are ready too!”

“He’s a really cool guy,” Adams said about Odom. “The last thing he wants to talk about (off the field) is football. He really just asks how you are (off the field).”

Odom, smiling widely, canceled practice and sent the team to the movie theater. He walked through the tunnel, where an anxious locker room waited. Senior captain Michael Scherer awarded Odom with the game ball and the recurring “Barry” chant reverberated.

“Barry!” Odom said about the locker room reaction. “You see all the hard work he has put in, and (the win) finally came and shown what he has done.”

After the game, Odom held a stoic expression that hardly resembled a coach that just earned his first win. Odom acknowledged his offense’s production but said his team has plenty of room to improve.

He loathes the word “potential,” and instead speaks of “opportunity.” After all, this is the opportunity Odom has waited for a long time. “Driving into work every day, I get one shot at this,” Odom said. “I got a lot of people counting on me to get it right.”

There won’t be a day ever that I will forget that.”
When the tailgating is over and the game clock expires, don’t let the fun stop! Time and time again, visitors are delightfully surprised by what Columbia has to offer. From picturesque parks and clever cuisine to amazing art and superb shopping, visitors find that Columbia is ‘surprisingly sophisticated.’

We like to think of Columbia as a cool neighborhood in a big city, with a young vibe, an active buzz and an engaged community. We’re also a friendly and welcoming community with a thriving downtown and an abundance of cultural opportunities.

We’re Columbia... What You Unexpect!

VisitColumbiaMO.com
For a brief moment, time froze. As the crowd roared with anticipation, Missouri wide receiver Johnathon Johnson took the field. He stood near midfield, hovering around the Missouri logo. Fans, eager to watch their football team take on Eastern Michigan, observed Johnson as he prepared for a punt return. His eyes focused on the ball, but his mind was focused on the end zone. He tried to sync his thoughts with his actions, but two elements weren’t on the same page. Johnson dropped ball. But almost instantly, a new opportunity arose.

A decision. Instead of falling on top of the ball and accepting his predicament, perhaps a safer option, Johnson scooped it up. In a split-second, he accelerated up the field, passing his teammates standing on the sideline. He made a few cuts and reversed field to create space for himself, following his blockers and picking up yards at a blazing pace. Along the way, Eastern Michigan defenders struggled to put an end to his run.

They couldn’t stop him. Johnson scored his first career touchdown, untouched on his way to the end zone for a 54-yard punt return. “It was scramble mode,” Johnson said of his electrifying play. “I had to pick it back up. I knew I had muffed it, so I was just trying to pick it back up.”

The play was special for Johnson in couple of ways. Sure, it was the redshirt freshman’s first career touchdown. It was a moment he got to share with his family watching in the crowd and back in his hometown of Memphis, Tennessee. But the play also symbolizes “His competitive drive is going to draw an attitude of toughness. He wants to be on the field at all times.”

—Randy Baines

Through injury and self-doubt, Johnathon Johnson rediscovered his love for football

By Colton Pouncy

Missouri wide receiver Johnathon Johnson pumps up the crowd during the first quarter against Eastern Michigan on Saturday.
the long road Johnson traveled to get to where he is today. Just like the ball, Johnson had a decision to make. Pick up his life, or settle for what was to come.

The Competitive Drive
Randy Baines saw it coming.

As Johnson’s youth football coach, Baines had a front row seat to watch electrifying plays week in and week out. Baines said there isn’t enough time in the day for him to describe each and every jaw-dropping moment Johnson produced in his years of coaching him. But he narrowed it down to one.

Baines took his team from Memphis to Lake Buena Vista, Florida, for an AAU tournament. Some of the best programs in the country were in attendance. Johnson, 12 years old at the time, couldn’t wait to suit up for his team, until he pulled a hamstring in warmups.

“He couldn’t walk the day before the game,” Baines said. “We had to carry him to the bedroom, carry him to the shower, carry him back to bed, carry him to the breakfast. He had a lot of football left in him so I didn’t want him to tear his leg up.”

When it came time for the game, Johnson begged his coaches to let him play. Baines was hesitant, but eventually, he gave in. Johnson rewarded his coaches’ decision with an opening kickoff return for a touchdown.

“His competitive drive is going to draw an attitude of toughness,” Baines said. “He wants to be on the field at all times.”

Baines was a second father figure to Johnson. He helped Johnson discover his competitive drive and desire to be great.

The Turning Point
In the fall of 2015, Johnson began his true freshman season. Impressing his coaches early on, Johnson was given an opportunity to prove his worth. His speed and quickness were reasons why many thought he was the natural heir to do-it-all returner Marcus Murphy, who now plays for the New Orleans Saints.

During a scrimmage last fall, Johnson broke out for a 70-yard gain. His explosiveness was on display, but what followed led to a different side of his character on display.

Johnson was tackled from behind and injured on the play. He tore several ligaments in his ankle and needed surgery. He was forced to redshirt. He spent the year rehabbing his injury.

His mother, Gwen Johnson, said she saw the pain her son endured. An assortment of emotions arose during the stage Johnson’s life. Frustration, self-doubt, a questioned love of football altogether.

Johnson was named a starting wide receiver by head coach Barry Odom. It might’ve been a surprise to those outside of the program, but not within.

Against Eastern Michigan, Johnson became the first FBS player since 2001 to record a punt return touchdown, a receiving touchdown and over 100 yards in the same game. As a result, he was named Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Week. It was Johnson’s first defining moment on the team but he wouldn’t be here without his support staff, and his decision to persevere through a rough patch of his life.

“I learned one thing,” Johnson said. “To just stay up on myself, don’t ever ever give up on myself, even when I’m down. I just have to stay positive and keep moving forward.”

The Resilient Return
The comeback was officially complete.

Before Missouri’s first game against West Virginia, Johnson was named a starting wide receiver by head coach Barry Odom. It might’ve been a surprise to those outside of the program, but not within.

As Johnson’s youth football coach, Baines had a front row seat to watch electrifying plays week in and week out. Baines said there isn’t enough time in the day for him to describe each and every jaw-dropping moment Johnson produced in his years of coaching him. But he narrowed it down to one.

Baines took his team from Memphis to Lake Buena Vista, Florida, for an AAU tournament. Some of the best programs in the country were in attendance. Johnson, 12 years old at the time, couldn’t wait to suit up for his team, until he pulled a hamstring in warmups.

“He couldn’t walk the day before the game,” Baines said. “We had to carry him to the bedroom, carry him to the shower, carry him back to bed, carry him to the breakfast. He had a lot of football left in him so I didn’t want him to tear his leg up.”

When it came time for the game, Johnson begged his coaches to let him play. Baines was hesitant, but eventually, he gave in. Johnson rewarded his coaches’ decision with an opening kickoff return for a touchdown.

“His competitive drive is going to draw an attitude of toughness,” Baines said. “He wants to be on the field at all times.”

Baines was a second father figure to Johnson. He helped Johnson discover his competitive drive and desire to be great.

The Turning Point
In the fall of 2015, Johnson began his true freshman season. Impressing his coaches early on, Johnson was given an opportunity to prove his worth. His speed and quickness were reasons why many thought he was the natural heir to do-it-all returner Marcus Murphy, who now plays for the New Orleans Saints.

During a scrimmage last fall, Johnson broke out for a 70-yard gain. His explosiveness was on display, but what followed led to a different side of his character on display.

Johnson was tackled from behind and injured on the play. He tore several ligaments in his ankle and needed surgery. He was forced to redshirt. He spent the year rehabbing his injury.

His mother, Gwen Johnson, said she saw the pain her son endured. An assortment of emotions arose during the stage Johnson’s life. Frustration, self-doubt, a questioned love of football altogether.

Johnson was named a starting wide receiver by head coach Barry Odom. It might’ve been a surprise to those outside of the program, but not within.

Against Eastern Michigan, Johnson became the first FBS player since 2001 to record a punt return touchdown, a receiving touchdown and over 100 yards in the same game. As a result, he was named Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Week. It was Johnson’s first defining moment on the team but he wouldn’t be here without his support staff, and his decision to persevere through a rough patch of his life.

“I learned one thing,” Johnson said. “To just stay up on myself, don’t ever ever give up on myself, even when I’m down. I just have to stay positive and keep moving forward.”

The Resilient Return
The comeback was officially complete.

Before Missouri’s first game against West Virginia, Johnson was named a starting wide receiver by head coach Barry Odom. It might’ve been a surprise to those outside of the program, but not within.

Against Eastern Michigan, Johnson became the first FBS player since 2001 to record a punt return touchdown, a receiving touchdown and over 100 yards in the same game. As a result, he was named Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Week. It was Johnson’s first defining moment on the team but he wouldn’t be here without his support staff, and his decision to persevere through a rough patch of his life.

“I learned one thing,” Johnson said. “To just stay up on myself, don’t ever ever give up on myself, even when I’m down. I just have to stay positive and keep moving forward.”

The Competitive Drive

Randy Baines saw it coming.

As Johnson’s youth football coach, Baines had a front row seat to watch electrifying plays week in and week out. Baines said there isn’t enough time in the day for him to describe each and every jaw-dropping moment Johnson produced in his years of coaching him. But he narrowed it down to one.

Baines took his team from Memphis to Lake Buena Vista, Florida, for an AAU tournament. Some of the best programs in the country were in attendance. Johnson, 12 years old at the time, couldn’t wait to suit up for his team, until he pulled a hamstring in warmups.

“When I made up my mind on his talents, but knew he needed to be the one to make the choice.

After a week, he made up his mind. He’d spent too much of his life to walk away without seeing things through. So, he picked up the ball and moved forward.

The Resilient Return
The comeback was officially complete.

Before Missouri’s first game against West Virginia, Johnson was named a starting wide receiver by head coach Barry Odom. It might’ve been a surprise to those outside of the program, but not within.

Against Eastern Michigan, Johnson became the first FBS player since 2001 to record a punt return touchdown, a receiving touchdown and over 100 yards in the same game. As a result, he was named Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Week. It was Johnson’s first defining moment on the team but he wouldn’t be here without his support staff, and his decision to persevere through a rough patch of his life.

“I learned one thing,” Johnson said. “To just stay up on myself, don’t ever ever give up on myself, even when I’m down. I just have to stay positive and keep moving forward.”
After a 61-21 romp over Eastern Michigan, Missouri begins SEC play Saturday night against Georgia. How well do you know the Peach State? Your results from this impossibly hard quiz probably won’t be peachy.

1. Which Athens-based restaurant was named “best place for a slice of pizza” by the Athens Banner-Herald?
   A. Your Pie
   B. Mellow Mushroom
   C. Peppino’s Pizza
   D. Ted’s Most Best

2. Abraham Baldwin was the first president of the University of Georgia. What year was he elected?
   A. 1786
   B. 1785
   C. 1842
   D. 1805

3. Which city is known as the “Athens of the South?”
   A. Athens, Georgia
   B. Athens, Mississippi
   C. Athens, Tennessee
   D. Nashville, Tennessee

4. What is the official state mineral of Georgia?
   A. Sillimanite
   B. Staurolite
   C. Rhodochrosite
   D. Hematite

5. Herschel Walker holds the Georgia record for rushing yards by a freshman. Who is second?
   A. Knowshon Moreno
   B. Nick Chubb
   C. Todd Gurley
   D. Keith Henderson

6. What animal was the first official mascot of the University of Georgia?
   A. Bulldog
   B. Goat
   C. Tiger
   D. Bear

7. How many All-American has Georgia football produced?
   A. 70
   B. 64
   C. 82
   D. 73

8. What is the state bird of Georgia?
   A. Brown Thrasher
   B. Mockingbird
   C. Willow Goldfinch
   D. Hawk

9. Brasstown Bald Mountain is the highest point in Georgia. How high is its elevation point?
   A. 4,498 feet
   B. 4,231 feet
   C. 4,784 feet
   D. 4,987 feet

10. How many students were enrolled at Georgia in 1819?
    A. 980
    B. 72
    C. 161
    D. 7

TODDdlERS TO TIGERS

Paul Adams is the focal point of his family

By Colton Pouncy

Paul Adams plays right tackle for Missouri, but he's always been the center of his family.

As the second of three children, Adams was born smack dab in the middle of his siblings. Growing up, he played all types of sports: football, basketball, soccer, baseball, you name it.

“He was very active,” said Ashley Adams, Paul’s mother. “That’s kind of what kept him busy and headed in the right direction.”

His mother said she always needed to keep an eye on Paul when he was a kid. If she didn’t, he’d accidentally walk into a pool or rearrange her kitchen when she wasn’t looking.

“You couldn’t take your eyes off of him,” she said.

Sports kept his mother busy, too. She traveled from gym to gym and stadium to stadium all around the Nashville area for her son’s year-round sporting events, but she said she didn’t mind it.

“My best memories involve sitting in the stands,” she said. “It was always something around sports.”

Adams’ older sister, Morgan, got married this past summer. Adams only had one free weekend available outside of football, so she had to plan her wedding around her brother’s schedule.

His sister said she didn’t mind, either.

At 6-foot-6, Adams is by far the tallest in his family. In fact, Adams is a good 4 inches taller than the next closest in his family. It’s hard to explain exactly where his height comes from, but it makes him unique within his family.

His stature as a starting offensive lineman at a Southeastern Conference program means lots of traveling and schedule adjustments. But to his family, it’s all worth it because of the love they share for him, and who he is as a person.

“He didn’t need to be the center of attention,” his mother said. “He’s just (a) real easy-going guy. I think that’s why he does well along the offensive line. He doesn’t have to be the star of the show.

“That’s just his personality,” she said.
we feed

TIGER FANS!

Whether you’re at the game or tailgating at home, team up with Schnucks!

Pick up our delicious golden fried chicken or party sandwiches in our Deli Department. Check out our fresh storemade brats, kabobs or loaded burgers for grilling. And, don’t forget our walk-in Beer Cooler with your favorite craft brews. Go Tigers!

Schnucks
1400 Forum Blvd.
(573) 446-2800
schnucks.com