BEHIND BECKNER’S LEGACY

Terry Beckner Jr. is known to be reserved, but he’s loyal to those he knows well. That loyalty played a role in his decision to return to Missouri for his senior year.
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### MISSOURI OFFENSE VS. VANDERBILT DEFENSE

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Fast Five with
KEVIN PENDLETON
BY BRENDAN LAVELL

1. What musical artists do you usually choose to relax?
   My dad is a big R&B guy. I'll probably put on a little '90s R&B, a little Ginuwine, a little New Edition, something along those lines. That's my music when I'm cleaning the house. I'll put that on on a Sunday morning after a game when I'm doing my laundry or stuff like that.

2. What's your favorite item of clothing that you own?
   One of the most important things to me now that I have braids is a do-rag. I didn't know how important that was. And since it's getting a little bit chilly, I love my letterman jacket. My letterman jacket is huge to me.

3. Are you a K.C. sports teams guy?
   Yes, absolutely. I've cried and been so happy, more crying when I was younger. But now they're starting to come around, and I'm so excited. The Chiefs, I went to the game when we beat the Carolina Panthers and were 2-14 on the year. And we were excited because we got another win. I take a lot of pride in the city that I'm from and the teams I grew up rooting for, because they're a part of my childhood.

4. If you could be one historical figure for a year, who would it be?
   Barack Obama was huge when I was younger. That was amazing, not only because he was a minority and a president, but just the impact that he had on the nation. His character, the way he treats people, something that reaches far across politics and far beyond just Democrat, Republican, whatever, it's just how to be a good person.

5. What was your favorite subject in high school?
   Two years ago maybe, the SEC did the 'Thank the Teachers' whatever, and they still do that. But I nominated my math teacher back from fifth grade. ... I didn't really like (math) and didn't think it was cool. She made it real awesome for me. I remember this to this day: We were going over fractions and she related fractions to pie. I'm a fat kid. Let's be honest. I love pie. So my eyes were glued on that board. She taught me how to relate math to everyday life. ... I'm glad I bought into it in fifth grade, because it's something that will never leave. It's one of those subjects, I don't have to know complete grammar, everyday stuff like that. But math, you're going to need it all the time. That was my biggest subject thanks to her, Ms. Cindy Jones.

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Missouri bounced back from a last-second loss to Kentucky with a resounding win at then-No. 13 Florida this past week. It was the first victory over a ranked opponent for both Barry Odom and Drew Lock.

Now, Missouri looks to carry that momentum into Saturday’s matchup with Vanderbilt. By now, you know the drill. It’s time for the Impossible Quiz. See what you know about the Vanderbilt Commodores and their hometown — Nashville, Tennessee.

From guitars to sports journalists, and from Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Penn Warren to former Vandy quarterback Jay Cutler, the quiz puts your knowledge about Vanderbilt to the test.

So, how well do you know the Vanderbilt Commodores?

1. The Bicentennial Oak, a tree on the University of Vanderbilt’s campus that is at least 250 years old, is what kind of oak tree?
   - a. Bur
   - b. White
   - c. Willow
   - d. Red

2. Who of the following sports journalists did NOT attend Vanderbilt?
   - a. Skip Bayless
   - b. Grantland Rice
   - c. Clay Travis
   - d. Ivan Maisel

3. How many of Vanderbilt graduate and country artist Dierks Bentley’s singles have peaked at No. 1 on Billboard’s Hot Country Songs and Country Airplay charts?
   - a. 13
   - b. 14
   - c. 17
   - d. 19

4. The guitar company Gibson was founded in Kalamazoo, Michigan, but moved its headquarters to Nashville in what year?
   - a. 1977
   - b. 1984
   - c. 1988
   - d. 1991

5. The AT&T Building, located in Nashville, is the tallest building in Tennessee. How tall is it?
   - a. 535 feet
   - b. 559 feet
   - c. 583 feet
   - d. 617 feet

6. In 2007, current Boston Red Sox pitcher David Price set the Vanderbilt baseball program record for strikeouts in a single season. How many strikeouts did he have that season?
   - a. 187
   - b. 194
   - c. 201
   - d. 203

7. Robert Penn Warren, a Vanderbilt graduate, earned a Pulitzer Prize for “All the King’s Men” in what year?
   - a. 1940
   - b. 1944
   - c. 1947
   - d. 1949

8. Other than Vanderbilt, how many schools in Nashville have NCAA Division I athletic programs?
   - a. 1
   - b. 2
   - c. 3
   - d. 4

9. Jay Cutler holds the Vanderbilt program record for career passing yards. How many yards did he throw for in his four years at the school?
   - a. 8,697
   - b. 9,741
   - c. 9,237
   - d. 10,152

10. Vanderbilt is one of how many Power Five schools that do NOT sponsor women’s volleyball?
    - a. 2
    - b. 3
    - c. 4
    - d. 5

---

**SCHEDULE**

| Sept. 1  | vs. UT Martin, W, 51-14 |
| Sept. 8  | vs. Wyoming, W, 40-13 |
| Sept. 15 | at Purdue, W, 40-37 |
| Sept. 22 | vs. Georgia, L, 43-29 |
| Oct. 6   | at South Carolina, L, 37-35 |
| Oct. 13  | at Alabama, L, 39-10 |
| Oct. 20  | vs. Memphis, W, 65-33 |
| Oct. 27  | vs. Kentucky, L, 15-14 |
| Nov. 3   | at Florida, W, 38-17 |
| Nov. 10  | vs. Vanderbilt |
| Nov. 17  | at Tennessee |
| Nov. 23  | vs. Arkansas |

**ANSWERS:** 1 (A) 2 (D) 3 (C) 4 (B) 5 (B) 6 (A) 7 (C) 8 (C) 9 (A) 10 (A: Oklahoma State)
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Their cell phones wouldn’t stop buzzing even as Terry Beckner Jr. sat on stage at East St. Louis High School behind the table on which he would soon put pen to paper and finalize the biggest decision of his life.

Beckner, who doesn’t care for attention, was ready for it to end. It seemed every coach from every major school in his recruitment was calling his mother, his father or Beckner himself in the hunt to find out which school the five-star recruit had selected.

They would soon learn his choice the same way everyone else did: ESPN.

In front of many cameras and a packed house of hometown supporters, he grabbed the corner of a blue-and-orange pennant: Auburn. Some laughed as he moved it to the side. Then, Beckner reached under the one that read “Florida State” and grabbed a slice of black and gold.

He lifted the Missouri pennant for all to see. The crowd whipped into frenzied cheers. Some of the 20 or so family members alongside him unzipped their jackets to reveal Tigers gear. The hulking defensive lineman stood and saluted briefly, a nod to his community, as tears streamed down his face.

Afterward, he explained his main reason for choosing Missouri.

“I felt like I was at home.”

Family is the driving force in Beckner’s life. His comfort and trust in Missouri and its coaches, as well as its two-hour proximity from his own home in East St. Louis, Illinois, were two of the biggest reasons he picked the Tigers. Beckner is reserved around those he doesn’t know well, but he’s as loyal as they come toward those who have gained his trust.

**Beckner’s first family**

The best aspect of going to college close to home is, of course, living a short drive away from mom’s home cooking. Beckner, whose favorite dishes include cabbage, sweet potatoes and rolls, makes sure to take full advantage.

Before the Tigers’ Oct. 27 loss to then-No. 12 Kentucky, he made a list of food he wanted his parents to prepare for a large postgame family gathering: barbecued pork steak, shishkababs, roasted potatoes, dressing, spaghetti, macaroni and cheese and candied yams.

“Everything he named, he wanted, we cooked,” his mother, Jermaya White-Beckner, said.

Missouri lost a 15-14 heartbreaker, so White-Beckner forced all her negative emotions out before she got to Beckner’s house. That way, she wouldn’t be upset and could focus on being there for her son after the tough loss. He cheered up at the sight of his parents, sister, cousins and hometown friends, and the group ate, joked, played video games and a card game called Court.

Beckner is particularly close with his family. He talks with his sister, Terrisha Beckner (10½ months his junior), and mom everyday, sometimes up to three or four times. White-Beckner will tell him what’s going on back in the city, and Beckner tells her about his classes and practice.

“The son is the mama’s baby,” White-Beckner said. “The daughter is the daddy’s baby.”

“He went off for school, and it’s just like he’s still at home with me.”

Back home among the 27,000 or so residents of East St. Louis, Beckner is already something of a celebrity. For four years, he suited up for the same Flyers football program that Missouri leg-
“Terry’s personality, Terry’s temperament, everything about Terry has progressed into more of an adult since he’s been here. ... You look at Terry, big dude from East St. Louis, and people have their thoughts about that. But you would never know with Terry. Terry’s one in a million.”

DREW LOCK

Missouri quarterback end and Pro Football Hall of Fame tight end Kellen Winslow Sr. once did. Beckner also played three years of basketball at East St. Louis High and ran the first leg of the 4x100-meter relay in track and field during his freshman year.

People are constantly approaching White-Beckner to tell her how much they love her son and what a wonderful person they think he is.

“It takes a village,” White-Beckner said. “And East St. Louis, I guess football is kind of a big thing around here.”

And yet, he’s still just humble Terry Beckner Jr. His mother marvels at the labour of love she’s embarked on raising him.

“If I could have another Terry and I knew he would be just like that, I’d probably have another kid,” she said.

But I ain’t having no more kids. My (younger) brother is 20.”

Beckner’s football family

It took a while for Beckner’s teammates at Missouri to see the side of him his family sees. He mostly kept to himself when he first joined the Tigers and rarely stepped out of his comfort zone.

He was still a hard worker, but wasn’t a locker room leader. But the then-freshman slowly adjusted and soon came to love the team like a second family.

“He’s taken that to another level,” senior Kevin Pendleton said.

“We’re all brothers in that locker room, and he’s one of the main ones who says that and reminds us that we look out for each other and we’re here for each other.”

Beckner has since become one of the team’s go-to leaders. His teammates respect him for saying what needs to be said and practicing what he preaches.

“We can’t fold up and just get beat to a pulp,” redshirt junior Richaud Floyd added. “We had to have a backbone. He gave us that backbone and we went out and won the game.”

Beckner’s message went something like this: “Take advantage of every opportunity you can. Don’t waste anything, because I wish I could be out there. I’d kill to be out there for one more play.”

“We can’t fold up and just get beat to a pulp,” redshirt junior Richaud Floyd added. “We had to have a backbone. He gave us that backbone and we went out and won the game.”

Beckner has since become one of the team’s go-to leaders. His teammates respect him for saying what needs to be said and practicing what he preaches.

Whether it’s in the locker room or on the field, he can always be counted on to remind his teammates what their mindset needs to be and to provide his teammates with encouragement before a big moment, even if it’s simply eye contact, a brief hug or a calm, “Let’s go.”

Running backs coach Cornell Ford, who was Beckner’s primary recruiter, saw the defensive lineman grow more vocal than he’s ever seen him at the start of the 2018 season. After the last practice of summer camp, the senior stood among his teammates and gave an R-rated speech where he told them to get things rolling, stop messing around and play the season the right way.

“I thought, ‘Wow. Look how he’s matured,’” Ford said. “And (he’s) come through and been that kind of leader for us this season. That was good to see, because we needed that. He is the guy on...
Beckner returns for more than football

LOYALTY from PAGE 9C

this football team outside of our quarterback.

Beckner has matured just as much off the field. White-Beckner has noticed the progression simply through the way he talked to her in their daily phone conversations. She was so used to viewing him as her baby to be protected that by the time he was a junior, she often had to step back and think to herself, “This is really my son?”

As Beckner has matured, players and coaches have seen more of his personality, too. He’s not always as serious as he seems to those on the outside.

“He loves everybody,” senior Terez Hall said. “He ain’t all mean. He might look mean on the field, but you can easily talk to him. So if you see him, say ‘hey,’ stop and try to talk to him. He’s really cool. He ain’t going to bite you.”

“Terry’s personality, Terry’s temperament, everything about Terry has progressed into more of an adult since he’s been here,” senior Drew Lock added. “There’s a lot of factors that go into it, but Terry is one of the better teammates we have right now, definitely a leader on the team. ... You look at Terry, big dude from East St. Louis, and people have their thoughts about that. But you would never know with Terry. Terry’s one in a million.”

Another decision

This time last year, it seemed like everyone thought the defensive lineman would declare early for the NFL Draft — that is, everyone except his teammates. One day around midseason, some players were hanging out at his place and one asked if he was going to come back.

“Y’all ain’t got nothing to worry about,” Beckner said.

He officially announced his decision to return for his senior season on Dec. 1, just one week after the end of the regular season. While Beckner cited his lack of physical and mental readiness as one reason for his decision (he did have two seasons cut short by time-intensive injuries), the ability to earn a degree and build a program legacy with his “brothers” were just as important.

“I want to see greatness come back to this program,” the senior said. “It’s a great program, and we’ve been working and striving to get it back right.”

Beckner is more concerned with helping his team win games than he is with his individual draft stock, yet he knows the NFL is right around the corner. He’s been dreaming of life as a pro football player since he was 5 years old. On Oct. 29, he tweeted a picture of himself in warmup gear with the text, “Mind on millions mama need a new crib.”

“I know he’s always going to do that and I tell him all the time, ‘Just worry about you,’” White-Beckner said. “Continue to keep making me proud. Worry about mama later. I’m going to still be mama.”

Beckner can’t help it. Looking out for those he considers family, whether it be athletic, geographic or biological, just comes naturally.

Supervising editor is Michael Knisley: knisleym@missouri.edu, 882-5729.
WELCOME TO COLUMBIA

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Adams built by relationships from back home

BY ELI LEDERMAN
sports@columbiamissourian.com

Symbols of home — those spots around a city or town that elicit an emotional response after a long time away — can take on many different forms. Sometimes they’re physical places — be it a park, an old storefront or even a particular stretch of road that initiates feelings of belonging and nostalgia that signal you’ve returned. Sometimes it’s less tangible, like a smell or a specific memory that triggers it all.

Whatever it is — in that place or that moment — quite simply, you’re home.

For Missouri right tackle Paul Adams — who hails from the Nashville, Tennessee, suburb of Bellevue — those places are Corner Pub in the Woods and Las Palmas. The former is a sports bar known for its onion rings, the latter a family-friendly local chain that serves strong margaritas and “consistent” Mexican food.

But the fare is not what makes those restaurants special to the 6-foot-6, 315-pound lineman. It’s the people.

“I’ve known the workers since I was in like seventh grade,” Adams said. “I know the managers and everyone else; they’re great people. They make them the little hometown spots you love going to.”

Close connections like the ones he has at the pair of Nashville-area restaurants are common for Adams in his city, and when he speaks about his hometown, it’s with a distinct level of veneration. From tight friendships with former classmates and
teammates at Christ Presbyterian Academy — the K-12 private school he attended for 13 years — to deep ties with former coaches and mentors, the Tigers’ friendly and outgoing blocker has held on to his roots in the Music City.

The relationships have kept Adams’ heart close to home since he left it for Missouri five years ago, and as he reflects on his links back to Nashville ahead of his final game against Vanderbilt, the hometown team, the redshirt senior is keenly aware of what they’ve done for him over the course of his college career. He knows that it’s those connections, and the positive traits he’s drawn from them, that built him into the player he is today.

“In the places where I’ve been, they’ve been so good to me. Whether it’s my high school coaches or because I’m just a kid from Nashville, people have always been so good to me. They’ve always been so good to me,” Adams said. “I’ve got a really good support system back home.”

At Christ Presbyterian, Ingle Martin and his coaching staff first came across Adams as a 6-foot-2, 175-pound high school sophomore. Even then, with the future Southeastern Conference offensive lineman far from his current stature, Martin and his fellow coaches knew Adams had high potential. In the relatively scrappy underclassmen, they saw elite footwork, a diverse skill set and a frame that would fill out. His physical tools were never in doubt. Yet Adams’ physical makeup wasn’t what impressed Martin most. While other members of his coaching staff became enamored, rightly so, by the lineman’s potential as a player, Martin watched how Adams interacted with his teammates. He approached every single one of them with a level of compassion and understanding Martin had seldom seen before. Adams had something special.

While he grew into his body and the Division I football offers piled in, Adams developed into an elite leader for the Lions. He saw the value in the friendships made and built bonds with his teammates off the field that carried onto it. By his senior season, Adams was a vocal conductor on three different teams at Christ Presbyterian, serving as a crucial chemistry-builder on the soccer and basketball teams. No matter what uniform he was in, Adams’ knack for setting the tone and connecting with teammates always shined through.

“He’s always been someone who handles people with grace and kindness; he’s someone they trust. He handles people with grace and kindness,” Martin said. “He’s always been someone who handles people with grace and kindness.”

The same leadership skills that set Adams apart in high school quickly helped him thrive when he arrived in Columbia. He jelled immediately with quarterback Drew Lock and the rest of the offense. He became a voice in the locker room, always toeing the line of being a friend and teammate. With the tightknit offensive line, a unit that allowed the fewest sacks in the SEC in 2017, Adams became the ringleader of the group’s shenanigans. Every Thursday, when the O-line heads to G&D Pizzeria for karaoke, it’s Adams running the show.

Each of the last two seasons, he was voted team captain, an accomplishment Adams ranks among his greatest — just below the relationships he’s found in his time at Missouri.

The right tackle from Nashville will kick off the final three-game stretch of his college career Saturday against the program he grew up just miles away from. As he heads into his final days with the Tigers, it’s those relationships, the ones he’s so acutely developed in his five years on campus, that he is still holding on to.

“He’s always been someone who cares for everyone around him,” Martin said. “He cares deeply for his teammates. He cares for his coaches. He cares for the community he’s a part of.”

“It’s why he’s truly flourished at Missouri.”

Football will not last forever, and the accomplishments at Missouri will fade eventually. But the friendships made here, Adams knows, will last just like the ones back home.

Supervising editor is Eric Lee.
Commodores come to Columbia in need of a win

BY ELI LEDERMAN

Not long after the last one, Missouri head coach Barry Odom was thinking about the next one.

Standing at the podium after the Tigers’ 38-17 win over then-No. 13 Florida last Saturday, his first win over a ranked opponent in three years on the job, Odom’s attention quickly turned to Missouri’s forthcoming opponent.

“Vanderbilt didn’t play today,” Odom said. “They’ve got a jump on us. We’ve got to put this week behind us and go to work.”

Rested and hungry after a bye week in Week 10, the Commodores (4-5, 1-4 Southeastern Conference) come to Columbia with an extra week of preparation for a Missouri team looking to build off its biggest victory in nearly five seasons. The meeting will be the 11th all-time between the SEC East foes and seventh since Missouri joined the league.

Standing at the podium after the Tigers’ 38-17 win over then-No. 13 Florida last Saturday, his first win over a ranked opponent in three years on the job, Odom’s attention quickly turned to Missouri’s forthcoming opponent.

The Tigers got their season back on the rails with the victory over the Gators a week ago. Vanderbilt is still in search of that bounce-back win. But unless the team that challenged the Fighting Irish or Kentucky shows up Saturday, it’s not likely to come.

In 2018, Vanderbilt has leaned heavily on its offense to put points on the board to make up for a defense that’s struggling to keep quality opponents out of the end zone. That offensive reliance is the reason the Commodores enter the weekend one game under .500; the 25.6 points per game they’re averaging just isn’t cutting it.

That offense is led by senior quarterback Kyle Shurmur, the son of New York Giants head coach Pat Shurmur. Completing 60 percent of his passes with 58 catches for 632 yards and six touchdowns. The 5-foot-10, 215-pounder will be the next in what has been a long line of challenging tests for Missouri’s rushing defense that ranks 25th in the nation, allowing 128 yards per game. With eight touchdowns and 6.8 yards per carry average, the Commodores to control time of possession. Two weeks ago, in a 45-31 win over Arkansas, Vaughn broke the game open, rushing for 172 yards and three touchdowns. The 5-foot-10, 215-pound runner will be the next in what has been a long line of challenging tests for Missouri’s rushing defense that ranks 25th in the nation, allowing 128 yards per game.

On the other side of the ball, Vanderbilt excels in the turnover department. With seven interceptions and nine forced fumbles, the Commodores have wreaked havoc on opposing offenses that struggle to hold onto the football.

Although Vanderbilt has often come out on top in the turnover margin, it hasn’t consistently kept teams off the scoreboard. SEC opponents are averaging 32 points per game against its defense, totaling nearly 200 yards a game. That will be a welcome sight for Missouri’s trio of Damarea Crockett, Larry Rountree III and Tyler Badie, who together are averaging 176 yards in nine games this fall. Whoever offensive coordinator Derek Dooley chooses to lean on in Week 11 will be presented with lots of opportunities.

The Commodores have done a better job defending through the air — holding opposing quarterbacks to an average of 215 yards — but outside of its meeting with Georgia, Vanderbilt hasn’t faced a passing attack like Missouri’s. Drew Lock torched Florida a week ago, and with Emanuel Hall back on the field, the Tigers will look to put up a similar show in front of the home crowd.

The game will kick off at 11 a.m. Saturday and will be broadcast on SEC Network.

Supervising editor is Eric Lee.
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