MORE THAN FOOTBALL
Odom instills values off the field

Missouri vs. Memphis, 3:00 p.m. (SECN) — October 20, 2018
Fast Five: Wide receiver Johnathon Johnson talks about wanting to be a Memphis Tiger and his Christmas wish list

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MISSOURI USES ODOM’S TIES TO RECRUIT IN ENEMY TERRITORY

“Memphis is an obvious spot for us that we have to be good in. There’s a ton of talent there. We feel like we can go in there and get some good players out of that city.”

A.J. OFODILE
Missouri receivers coach

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10 impossible questions about Memphis

1. Which former president helped found the city of Memphis?

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MISSOURI
Kicker: Tucker McCann 19
Punter: Corey Fatony 26
Long snapper: Drew Wise 51

MEMPHIS
Kicker: Riley Patterson 36
Punter: Adam Williams 48
Long snapper: Treysen Neal 33

STARTERS

MISSOURI
Damarea Cockett 16
Drew Lock 3

MEMPHIS
Jalen Knox 9
Albert Okwuegbunam 81

WIDE RECEIVER

MISSOURI
Damarea Cockett 16
Drew Lock 3

MEMPHIS
Jalen Knox 9
Albert Okwuegbunam 81

SAFE

MISSOURI
La'Andre Thomas 12
Tyrez Lindsey 22

MEMPHIS
Tito Windham 24
Trey Williams 93

MEMPHIS OFFENSE VS. MISSOURI DEFENSE

MEMPHIS
Darnell Henderson 8
Brady White 3

WIDE RECEIVER

MISSOURI
Damarea Cockett 16
Drew Lock 3

MEMPHIS
Jalen Knox 9
Albert Okwuegbunam 81

SAFE

MISSOURI
La'Andre Thomas 12
Tyrez Lindsey 22

MEMPHIS
Tito Windham 24
Trey Williams 93
Fast Five with
JOHNATHON JOHNSON
BY BRENDAN LAVELL

What's your favorite Memphis-style dish?
I'm going to go basic with barbecue. Pulled pork or rib sandwich or something.

Are you a Grizzlies fan or a fan of another NBA team?
I like to keep it on the low. I'm a Grizzlies fan at heart, (but) I like LeBron. Who's your favorite player on the Grizzlies? I got to go with Mike Conley.

Do you enjoy the Memphis music scene?
I do sometimes. They're big on blues. If you go downtown, nine times out of 10 you're going to hear a lot of blues.

When you were little, what was the first thing you wanted to be when you grew up?
A Memphis Tiger. My little league team was the Tigers and everything we used to do was based off the Memphis Tiger theme. We had the same uniforms, the same mascot, and any time (Memphis) had a homecoming game, we'd get free tickets to the game. I knew since I was 6 that I wanted to be a Memphis Tiger. Now, I'm a Tiger.

What's your favorite holiday?
Got to be Christmas. What are you hoping for this year? Bowl game.

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FATHER FIGURE, COUNSELOR, LIFE SAVER:
The human side of Coach Odom

BY BRENDAN LAVELL • Missourian

Jarrell Harrison needed guidance. The former Missouri safety wasn’t playing football anymore and was struggling to find direction in his post-athletic life. On top of that, his brother had just received a lengthy prison sentence.

Harrison could only think of one person to call: a former position coach he hadn’t played for in three years.

Barry Odom picked up the phone immediately and sounded excited, if a little surprised, to hear from his one-time pupil.

The young man talked about his life. Odom listened. Eventually, the coach offered him the words he needed to hear.

“Jarrell,” Odom started, “you know, the decisions that our family members make don’t define us.”

Then, he invited Harrison to visit him at Memphis, where he was serving as defensive coordinator. Harrison left Wyoming in an instant. A three-day Greyhound trip later, he was sitting in on coaches’ meetings, hanging out with Odom’s wife and two sons and soaking up advice from his former teacher.

“He kind of talked me off the ledge for those three or four days,” Harrison said. “That was huge for me. He didn’t have to do that. He didn’t have to invite me out to Memphis to his house. I wasn’t playing for him anymore.”

Odom told Harrison, who was interested in coaching, that he could have a bright future. All Harrison needed to do was make the right choices day in and day out. He admits the advice sounds clichéd, yet it had a profound impact on his life.

One year later, he became the defensive backs coach at Las Vegas High School. Now, he coaches defensive backs and special teams at Division II Adams State in Alamosa, Colorado.

“I don’t care if (Odom) never wins another game,” Harrison said, five years after that rock-bottom phase. “He’ll be one of the greatest men I’ve ever met.”

Finding a man better suited to represent the University of Missouri than “true son” Odom would be a difficult task. He played linebacker for the Tigers from 1996-99 and served as captain his senior year. This marks his 13th season covering seven different
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DURING HIS CAREER, ODOM HAS HELPED SHAPE YOUNG MEN

ODOM from PAGE 6C positions in two stints as a member of Missouri's coaching staff. Players love him. By just about every account, he's tirelessly devoted to both the success of his football team and the development of character in his athletes.

But college football isn't scripted to be a feel-good story. It's a lucrative business ruled by television, boosters and the almighty dollar. Winning is the only form of job security.

After three straight losses to open Southeastern Conference play, some have begun to question if Odom's job is in jeopardy. In his first two seasons, he went 1-12 against Power 5 opponents that finished with a winning record, and he hasn't fared any better in 2018 with his most talented roster yet.

Half a season remains for Odom's team to demonstrate progress. There will be at least two more chances, against Kentucky and Florida, for the quality win that might solidify his position. If he doesn't improve on last year's 7-6 record, however, a portion of the Tigers' fan base will call for athletic director Jim Sterk to relieve the coach of his dream job. It's impossible to say whether Missouri would have the ability to hire someone who can quickly return the program to SEC East contention.

But one thing is certain: If coaches were evaluated solely on their skills as mentors, father figures and molders of men, Odom would be the program's leader for years to come.

Building young men

Ian Simon first met Odom on an official visit to Missouri. He wasn't the primary recruiter, but he did coach Simon's position group at the time.

Simon introduced himself, and Odom gave him an "extremely firm" handshake as he stared him in the eyes. The young athlete was a little intimidated by the gruff coach.

"He just has this look on his face like, 'Don't mess with me,'" Simon said. "Not too many coaches, when I was first getting recruited, were like that. Most of them were big smiles, 'Hey, nice to meet you.' Blah blah blah.' Coach Odom, I don't want to say he was an a-hole or anything like that, he was really nice, but it wasn't overly-dramatic excited to see this kid from Mansfield, Texas. It was, 'Hey, nice to meet you. I'm Coach Odom.'"

Missouri men's basketball coach Cuonzo Martin has a reputation as a straight-shooter, from prospective recruits all the way up through his upperclassmen leaders. According to Odom's former players, the Tigers' football coach holds a similar philosophy of honesty with his athletes, which means his praise is always genuine.

Simon remembers sitting in the hallway with cornerbacks and other safeties just outside their respective positional meeting rooms for his first end-of-fall camp, one-on-one conference. He was nervous — the kind of nervous that causes your heart to drop with each thud and makes every footstep forward seem impossible. The 10-foot walk into the meeting room stretched for an eternity. Simon took a seat by the door, as far from his coach as possible. Odom flashed a big smile and encouraged the safety to pull up to his desk.

"That smile made me feel a little better even though he crushed my heart a few seconds later," Simon said.

He was going to receive a redshirt despite rotating with first- and second-string units throughout camp. Odom told him he was close to making the cut. He was proud of him. Simon simply needed one more year to get a little faster, a little stronger.

"I haven't talked about that in forever, but I remember that," Simon said. "He kept it 100 from Day 1. So when he said that, I knew he meant it and I knew it was heartfelt."

When Harrison arrived at Missouri in 2009 via City College of San Francisco, he didn't understand the demands of college football or the importance of being on time. The safety had never been held accountable on a consistent basis. Odom provided that not by bailing his athlete out when he needed help, but by giving him the tools or advice to figure it out on his own.

"That's what helps you become a man of integrity, being held accountable by people you appreciate and love," Harrison said. "He wants to build young men. (Without Odom,) I would probably still be someone who thought the world revolved around him. ... What (Odom has) done in my life can't be quantified in words."

"I wasn't perfect," former Missouri and Memphis cornerback Robert Stellies added. "But for the most part, I was a kid who tried to do things the right way. It seemed like that wasn't valued to many people outside my household. Seeing him reassure me, 'No, these things are important. They have a place both on the field and off,' (was huge)."

After a tough loss in 2011, someone posted a "For Sale" sign in Odom's yard under the cover of darkness. No one knew about it until the next day, following a film meeting, when the coach's frustration built up and finally burst through in the middle of an unrelated conversation.

"That sent him over the deep end," Simon said.

Odom ranted about the importance of avoiding cowardice. Whoever planted the sign attacked a man trying to provide for his family and did not have the courage to do it to his face while he was at home. That, in his eyes, was the despicable part. In practice the next day, Odom showed extra energy and passion as he worked off the frustration.

To this day, Simon still thinks of that rant.

Flexible coaching

Odom was the Missouri safeties coach in 2010 when Kenji Jackson was a junior. During a scorching August two-a-day practice, Jackson accidentally dragged the ball carrier to the ground in a non-tackle drill. In a matter of seconds, Odom was in the player's ear, giving him an obscenity-laced chewing out.

"Coach, I'm just trying to make plays for you!" Jackson yelled back, adding one or two expletives of his own. "I'm just trying to do my job for you!"

Odom read the situation, turned and walked away. When the safeties dispersed from their on-field meeting at the end of practice, Jackson stayed behind.

"Coach, can I talk you real quick?" he asked.

The safety started bawling. He knew he had crossed a line...

"Kenji, it's all good," Odom said. "It was the heat of the moment. Things like that happen."

Jackson apologized, and Odom's forgiveness helped ease the athlete's mind.

"He knew I didn't mean him any disrespect," Jackson said. "I lost my cool.
Odom allows players to be themselves so long as they're striving to reach their coach's standard of preparation and effort, unlike some coaches who view athletes as cogs to be sanded and conformed to a strict culture. Every athlete is unique, and Odom understood that before he even became a coach.

Jackson fell in love with the man when he was still a director of football operations in 2008. Odom was personable, even bubbly. He always asked Jackson how his day had been and how his family was doing.

“If I had something going on, he was always there to listen,” Jackson said. “He was concerned about me (as) more than just a player. He made me feel like I had more worth. It wasn’t like I was a piece of meat to help them win football games.”

Odom’s passion for the game became obvious as soon as he took over as safeties coach in 2009. Harrison said he’s never met anyone who worked harder to prepare his players. His “mind-blowing” enthusiasm proved to be infectious among his pupils.

He only yelled occasionally in his first year or two on the job. Odom could get his point across just as easily at a lower volume. All it took was a “C’mon, you’re better than that,” and players knew they had let their coach down. Odom grew more vocal, in both correcting and congratulating, by the time Simon joined the team in 2011.

“We definitely took on his identity,” Simon said. “We would smack each other, and Coach Odom would get so fired up. Whenever we laid a wide receiver out, man, he was the first person over there to congratulate you.”

**A father figure and support system**

After three years at Missouri, Steeples didn’t feel fulfilled. It wasn’t that he didn’t love playing for the Tigers—he did, and he had a great role in the defense. Simply put, the cornerback felt he’d be better-suited to tap into his potential at another program.

Memphis hired Odom as its defensive coordinator that very offseason ahead of the 2012 season. Steeples remembered receiving four offers out of high school. Out of those four, suddenly, coaches from three of those schools—Missouri, Ole Miss and Wake Forest—were on the staff at Memphis.

“If those aren’t three clear signs that this isn’t some divine intervention to go check it out,” Steeples said. “That’s what really sold me on it.”

While Missouri was an older team with more established leaders, Memphis was young and buried in a rebuild, providing opportunity for Steeples to help lead a defense.

He took a visit. The challenge of helping build a program appealed to him and many of his conversations with the coaching staff revolved around character, which impressed him. Of course, it was a scary leap. But he trusted Odom, one of his favorite coaches.

Steeples had the best season of his career at Memphis, launching him to the NFL, where he played a little over two seasons.

“T was a much better player when I had a coach that believed in me,” Steeples said. “Sometimes, as a player, you get to a point where you may see yourself in a certain light. ... He changed...”

Please see **ODOM**, page A10C
Passion for his players earns Odom the Tigers’ admiration

my college football career. And he’s a huge reason I was able to make it to the next level.”

As Missouri’s safeties coach, Odom cultivated an open atmosphere through position group dinners at his house. Many players lived far from home while playing with the Tigers and didn’t get to visit family on Thanksgiving. The coach served as a father figure for many of his players.

Conversations ranged from summer activities to funny stories to the occasional tale from Odom’s playing days, such as the time he was flattened by an Oklahoma running back. They talked about everything except present-day college football. That stayed at practice.

During his junior season, Jackson started dating an athlete from Missouri’s swimming and diving team. Jackson felt confident about his knowledge of the defense, so he stepped down his level of preparation to spend more time with her. Naturally, his performance started to slip. Jackson knew he needed to devote more time to football, so he waited until he and Odom were alone in the safety meeting room to ask for his advice.

“Kenji,” the coach started, “there’s two things that will forever be undefeated in life: They’re women and alcohol. They’ve never been beaten. When you put them together, they never lose.”

Odom’s advice provided a life lesson for Jackson: Women would not take priority over his craft. He refocused his attention to football. His girlfriend would just have to deal with it.

Like Odom, Steeples is now a head coach at his alma mater: De Smet Jesuit High School in Creve Coeur, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. Before every game, he receives a good luck text from Odom. Afterward, he receives another text with “nuggets of wisdom,” win or lose. Odom and Steeples even exchange letters from time to time.

This season, De Smet is 6-2 and ranked fifth in the state.

“True Son’

Although Odom rarely talked about his own playing days, Harrison could tell how much pride he took in coaching at Missouri.

“When he would talk to us about what it means to play at Missouri and what it means to him, you could see in his eyes how special that place is to him,” Harrison said.

Don’t take his word for it. Just read what Odom had to say in the press release announcing his hiring.

“It’s something I’ve thought about for a long time as I’ve made my various stops leading up to this point. I understand the responsibility we have to not only carry on the tradition of excellence that Gary Pinkel has built here but also to help this program reach new heights. Mizzou means the world to me and to my family, and we couldn’t be more proud and excited to be in this position.”

Mack Rhoades, the athletic director at the time, mentioned the post as Odom’s “dream job” during his introductory press conference at Mizzou Arena.

The way Odom was received inside the Tigers’ auditorium as a team representative announced to the players gathered inside that their new head coach was about to walk in the door. The athletes let out “oohs” and “ahs” of intrigue, not unlike the sounds middle schoolers make when a classmate gets sent to the principal’s office.

“We ready?” he asked as he walked through the door.

The cheer was thundering. One, then two, then three, then a mob of players circled Odom, embracing him as the hoots and hollers continued for 25 seconds before turning into chants of “Barry! Barry!”

Tiger athletes love Odom, and for good reason. He’s passionate, driven and cares deeply for his players.

But it’s been a while since Missouri has celebrated like they did on that December day. Fans are hungry for the kind of victory that sparks locker room mini-parties and makes waves nationally.

If it doesn’t come soon enough, Odom’s personal homecoming will finish without a storybook ending.

Supervising editor is Eric Lee.
Memphis no easy task for Tigers

BY ELI LEDERMAN
sports@columbiamissourian.com

The last time Missouri stepped onto its home turf at Memorial Stadium, it held a record of 3-0. It was Sept. 22.

The Tigers lost by two scores that afternoon to then-No. 2 Georgia. Two weeks later, after a bye, Missouri fell again, this time in the dying seconds of a tumultuous, rain-soaked affair at South Carolina. Then the Tigers traveled to Tuscaloosa, where they were chopped up by the machine that is No. 1 Alabama, 39-10.

Missouri comes home to Columbia this weekend now sitting at 3-3 and licking its wounds ahead of a visit from the Memphis Tigers (4-3) on Saturday afternoon. The meeting at Memorial Stadium will be the first between the two teams since 1999, with Missouri holding the all-time series lead 2-1. Missouri enters the matchup as a 9.5-point favorite over the visiting Tigers.

Barry Odom and Co. will look to jump back into the win column against a familiar opponent for Missouri's head coach. Odom spent three seasons in Memphis as a defensive coordinator under then-head coach Justin Fuente and still holds strong relationships with many in and around the team. On Tuesday, he expressed fondness and gratitude for the school and team he was a part of from 2012-14.

“It made me a better coach,” Odom said. “It was a really good place to me and my family, and the American Athletic Conference is one that I hold in very high regard.”

In Memphis, Missouri faces a squad that has been inconsistent this fall, but carries the potential to deliver an upset. It's lost twice to opponents with losing records — Navy and Tulane — but a week ago took the No. 10 UCF Golden Knights — led by former Missouri offensive coordinator Josh Heupel — to the wire, falling 31-30 at home.

If the Tigers are to put an end to their losing streak this week, it will start defensively with limiting the production of Darrell Henderson. Memphis' slippery running back has 13 touchdowns this fall and is rushing for nearly 162 yards per game, using his elusive speed to torture opposing defenses. Henderson has eclipsed 150 rushing yards in all but two games in 2018 and has been the driving force for an offense that is averaging 40.2 points game, good for No. 10 in the nation.

Missouri ranks 22nd in the country at stopping the run, allowing just 120.2 yards per game on the ground. A week ago in Tuscaloosa, the Tigers' front-seven limited a lethal Crimson Tide rushing attack to 184 yards, about 30 yards less than Alabama's average rushing yards per game. Missouri has stopped the run well so far, and doing so again Saturday will go a long way in keeping Memphis and its offense off the scoreboard.

Under center, Memphis junior quarterback Brady White complements Henderson well. The California product has thrown 15 touchdowns and a shade over 250 yards per game in 2018, and is completing more than 67 percent of his passes on the year.

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October 19-20, 2018 // Columbia Missourian // Tiger Kickoff // 11
Memphis connection: Odom turning the Bluff City into recruiting hub for Missouri

BY ELI LEDERMAN
Missourian

It’s no secret that Barry Odom has ties with Missouri’s Homecoming opponent. Missouri’s 41-year-old head coach spent three years with Memphis as a defensive coordinator under Justin Fuente from 2012-14, and he still holds strong connections with folks in the Bluff City.

With Memphis coming to Columbia on Saturday, there has been much talk about the friendships Odom still holds with people such as athletic director Tom Bowen and others who were a part of the team during his time in Memphis and of the affinity and gratitude Odom continues to feel toward the place he and his family called home for several seasons.

“There are a lot of memories from there and the people in the community,” he said Tuesday. “It was a great place for me and my family to live and build lasting relationships.”

But of all Odom’s connections to Memphis that have been discussed this week, one of the most important — to Odom’s job at least — has gone largely overlooked: the relationships he established with local high school coaches in Memphis; the ones Odom and his staff now come back to as they recruit out of the city.

According to SB Nation’s Alex Kirshner, the state of Tennessee had the ninth-highest percentage of blue-chip high school prospects in the United States for the Class of 2018, making it one of the most talent-rich states in the country. Within Tennessee’s class for that year, 10 percent of its top 30 prospects, according to 247Sports, hailed from the city of Memphis.

In both 2019 and 2020, that number will rise to 33 percent.

The talent in Memphis is part of the reason Missouri has picked up its recruitment in the area since Odom took over in 2015. In Memphis, Odom and his staff don’t see a recruiting hub that is untapped — plenty of Power 5 schools pick players from the area — but one that is not oversaturated either. With a relative proximity to Columbia, and the connections Odom holds there, Memphis is a place Missouri’s staff knows it can dig its claws into and recruit out of successfully.

“Memphis is an obvious spot for us that we have to be good in,” A.J. Ofodile, former director of recruiting and current Missouri receivers coach, said. “There’s a ton of talent there. We feel like we can go in there and get some good players out of that city.”

On its current roster, Missouri has just three Memphis products: wide receiver Johnathon Johnson, linebacker Aubrey Miller Jr. and freshman running back Tyler Badie. Johnson was recruited by former Missouri head coach Gary Pinkel.

Please see CONNECT, page 13C
Miller and Badie have given the Tigers mixed results; the former has yet to break through in his time with Missouri, while the latter has been a surprise star in his rookie season.

Moving forward, Missouri will look to tap deeper into Memphis' talent pool.

Coaches like Brian Stewart, who coached Badie at Memphis’ Briarcrest Christian School, have seen the increased presence Missouri has taken in the city. As Odom and his staff have used the relationships established by Missouri’s head coach to get into the schools and in touch with the top players in the city, Stewart has been impressed with the way the Tigers go about recruiting.

Stewart watched last winter as Missouri running backs coach Cornell Ford pursued Badie’s signature. In Badie’s recruitment, a series of issues made him as elusive to meet with as he is on the football field. Ford, Stewart says, was relentless, working to reschedule visits and get face time with the 5-foot-9 running back. Ford showed that he and the Tigers cared, which ultimately convinced Badie to flip on the University of Memphis and come to Columbia.

What makes Missouri unique to Stewart is what it has to offer players in the area. For the most part, powerhouses like Alabama and Georgia are not knocking on doors in Memphis. So when the Tigers come around offering the chance to play Southeastern Conference football, it jumps off the page.

“It’s an opportunity for kids,” Stewart said. “All of a sudden an SEC school comes along and pays them some attention. Now they’ve got a chance to go compete against those schools that looked past them.”

Johnson, who graduated from Memphis’ Melrose High School, has been doing his part in selling Missouri to players back home, too. The redshirt junior is aware of how much talent his hometown holds in its small radius. Over his years in Columbia, Johnson has been selling his coaches on players from the area almost as much as he’s sold those players on his school.

In recent newcomers like Miller and Badie, Johnson is excited by the trend of Memphis recruits coming to Missouri, and he hopes it’s something that continues. “I’m happy that I’m starting to see them make their way here.” Johnson said. “When they see me up here, getting playing time and finding success, it makes them want to come up here too.”

There’s plenty of high-quality talent for Missouri’s coaching staff to check out in Memphis. When Saturday’s game comes to an end, the battle between the Tigers and visitors won’t end there. As Missouri further inhabits the recruiting scene in Memphis, the two schools will continue to fight one another, more often on the recruiting trail than on the field. 

Supervising editor is Eric Lee.
After starting the season 3-0, Missouri has dropped its last three games heading into Saturday’s Homecoming matchup with Memphis. Most recently, Missouri fell to No. 1 Alabama. Barry Odom and Co. hope to get back on track against the visiting Tigers, who went toe-to-toe with No. 10 UCF a week ago.

As always, the Impossible Quiz is here to test your knowledge of Missouri’s opponents. From a former president to an NBA MVP, and from Elvis Presley to Memphis International Airport, the quiz is in top form for Homecoming.

So, how well do you know the Memphis Tigers?

1. Which former president helped found the city of Memphis?
   a. John Quincy Adams
   b. Andrew Jackson
   c. James K. Polk
   d. Zachary Taylor

2. Which of the following was NOT a former name of the University of Memphis?
   a. West Tennessee State University
   b. Memphis State College
   c. West Tennessee State Normal School
   d. Memphis State University

3. Both Memphis and Missouri use the nickname “Tigers.” How many Division I football programs, both FBS and FCS, use “Tigers” as their nickname?
   a. 6
   b. 17
   c. 9
   d. 12

4. Missouri head coach Barry Odom was the defensive coordinator at Memphis from 2012-14. How many total turnovers did Memphis force in Odom’s three years on staff?
   a. 72
   b. 59
   c. 63
   d. 68

5. New England Patriots kicker Stephen Gostkowski played at Memphis. What is his career-long field goal in the NFL?
   a. 59
   b. 60
   c. 61
   d. 62

6. Former Memphis basketball player Derrick Rose won the NBA MVP in 2011. How many triple-doubles did he have that season?
   a. 1
   b. 3
   c. 7
   d. 10

7. In what year did Missouri men’s basketball play Memphis in the Sweet Sixteen of the NCAA Tournament?
   a. 1980
   b. 1994
   c. 2002
   d. 2009

8. Former Memphis baseball player Dan Uggla made how many MLB All-Star games in his career?
   a. 4
   b. 5
   c. 2
   d. 3

9. Memphis International Airport is the world’s second busiest cargo airport. How many metric tons were shipped through the airport in 2017?
   a. 4,117,647
   b. 4,336,753
   c. 4,609,732
   d. 5,001,298

10. Elvis Presley, who lived a bulk of his life in Memphis, holds the record for the most platinum albums. How many did he earn?
    a. 67
    b. 45
    c. 62
    d. 78

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| 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 | |
| Oct. 27 | vs. Memphis |
| Nov. 3 | vs. Kentucky |
| Nov. 10 | at Florida |
| Nov. 17 | vs. Vanderbilt |
| Nov. 23 | at Tennessee |
| | vs. Arkansas |
Missouri RBs key to run over Memphis

MEMPHIS from PAGE 11C

interception. The Memphis gunslinger won’t test Missouri’s secondary in the ways that Alabama’s Tua Tagovailoa did, but he isn’t prone to turning the ball over. He keeps Memphis’ offense on the field and can burn a defense that places too much of its attention on the shifty Henderson.

Although opposing teams have struggled to contain Memphis’ high-scoring offense, they’ve found ways to keep up with the Tigers by finding the holes in their defense.

Memphis ranks near the bottom of the NCAA in rushing defense, allowing 171 yards per game and 15 rushing touchdowns on the season. The Tigers’ weak run defense should spell good things to come for Missouri’s running back trio of Larry Rountree III, Damarea Crockett and Tyler Badie, each of whom has found his place in the team’s potent rushing attack. Whichever back offensive coordinator Derek Dooley chooses to most heavily deploy, the Tigers should run well Saturday.

Memphis has been better defending through the air, holding opponents under 200 passing yards each game, but will face its toughest test yet in limiting Missouri quarterback Drew Lock. The Tigers’ senior passer has come down to earth after a blazing start to the season and will enter this matchup once again without his top target, Emanuel Hall. But despite his recent struggles, the NFL-bound Lock poses problems each week for opposing defenses and heads into his final Homecoming game looking to break out of a slump.

On his home field and with the potential returns of veteran wideouts Richaud Floyd and Nate Brown, Lock will be as well-equipped as he’s been of late as he looks to kick off the second half of his senior season strong. Memphis defensive backs beware.

Saturday’s game is set to kickoff at 3 p.m., and the game will be broadcast on SEC Network.

Supervising editor is Eric Lee.
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