READY FOR REDEMPTION

» Missouri looks to end its season with a win against Oklahoma State
A DREAM SEASON » PAGE 4

Missouri surprised many with unlikely wins and an improbable run at an SEC Championship. Here’s a game-by-game account of Missouri’s 2013 season.

LOOKING BACK » PAGE 17

Missouri last played in the Cotton Bowl six years ago. We recap five of the Cotton Bowl’s signature moments.

COPELAND’S CRANIUM » PAGE 19

In the final installment, Max Copeland leaves the jokes at the door.
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A SEASON TO REMEMBER

From a 5-0 record in nonconference play to a pair of road wins in two of the SEC’s toughest environments, Missouri made an improbable run at an SEC Championship in 2013. Here’s a game-by-game account of Missouri’s 2013 season.

BY ALEXANDER SMITH AND MATTHEW FAIRBURN

AUG. 31: MISSOURI 58 — MURRAY STATE 14

JOSEY AWARDED GAME BALL

The 2013 season almost got off to a disastrous start for Missouri. Murray State had a 14-13 lead after one quarter. Early touchdown drives of 59 and 83 yards gave the Tigers an early scare, but things quickly turned around.

In his first game back from a knee injury that cost him his entire 2012 season, Missouri running back Henry Josey ran for a 68-yard touchdown, contributing to 45 unanswered points for the Tigers in a 58-14 win over Murray State.

After the game, Missouri coach Gary Pinkel did something he doesn’t normally do. He awarded a game ball, and Josey was the obvious recipient.

“You don’t think this guy is important to my team?” Pinkel said. “That was real cool to see.”

SEPT. 7: MISSOURI 38 — TOLEDO 23

A GOLDEN PLAY

The lasting memory from the Tigers’ 38-23 win over the Toledo Rockets was defensive tackle Markus Golden sprinting 70 yards for a touchdown. The redshirt junior from St. Louis kicked off his 2013 coming-out party by intercepting Toledo quarterback Terrance Owens and returning it for a touchdown to put the Tigers up 15 points in the third quarter.

“I’ve been preparing for this,” Golden said. “When I picked it off, the first thing that popped into my head was, ‘Just go score.’”

The Rockets would mount a comeback, however, and the score was an uncomfortable 24-23 late in the third before Henry Josey scored from one yard out. Marcus Murphy added an eight-yard scoring run during the fourth quarter to finish the scoring.

Senior captain and linebacker Andrew Wilson was called for targeting in the third quarter after he hit a defenseless Toledo receiver with his forearm. Wilson was the first Tiger called for the new NCAA penalty and had to sit out the rest of the game, as well as the first half of Missouri’s next game against Indiana.
SEPT. 21: MISSOURI 45 — INDIANA 28

TIGERS DOMINATE IN FIRST AWAY GAME

After starting the season 2-0, Missouri hit the road for the first time to take on Indiana. The Tigers were just as dominant there as they were at home. At the end of a back-and-forth first half, defensive end Kony Ealy provided a pivotal play, intercepting Indiana quarterback Nate Sudfeld and returning it 45 yards for a touchdown to give Missouri a 28-14 lead.

In the second half, Missouri’s offense cruised. Quarterback James Franklin threw a pair of interceptions in the first half, but he rebounded to pile up more than 400 total yards and three touchdowns, his most productive game since 2011.

Franklin wasn’t fazed by the early struggles. He kept challenging Indiana’s defense and attempted a total of 47 passes in the game.

“It’s just a mentality thing really,” Franklin said. “I know being sad isn’t going to change anything, so I move on to the next play.”

The strong second half pushed Missouri to 3-0 and three wins away from bowl eligibility.
With the Tigers’ blowout win over the Red Wolves, Gary Pinkel picked up his 94th career victory as the head coach at Missouri. That total tied him with the legendary Dan Devine for second-best all-time.

“I don’t get real caught up in that stuff,” Pinkel said. “To be named with him is a tremendous honor.”

For the second straight home game, the Tigers had trouble putting away an inferior opponent. The Red Wolves managed to stay within one score until five minutes remained in the game.

But Missouri’s star quarterback ignited the Tigers. James Franklin capped off the Tigers’ final two scoring drives with a 9-yard touchdown run and a touchdown pass to sophomore Dorial Green-Beckham.
OCT. 5: MISSOURI 51 — VANDERBILT 28

TIGERS GET FIRST CONFERENCE WIN

Missouri still needed to prove itself when it went to Nashville, Tenn., to play Vanderbilt. A 4-0 start to the season for Missouri didn’t mean much without a conference win to its name.

A 51-28 win over Vanderbilt was a start toward earning the respect Missouri wanted following a 5-7 2012 season. Missouri’s offense was once again the story. Quarterback James Franklin threw four touchdowns, and running back Henry Josey ran for two of his own, helping the Tigers runaway with the win.

By the time the fourth quarter rolled around, Missouri fans dominated Vanderbilt Stadium, the bright yellow-gold shirts far outnumbered the dull gold of Vanderbilt. Not only did Missouri show it was ready for the SEC schedule, its fans showed their willingness to travel.

“Man, doesn’t this feel like we’re at home?” Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham said after the game.

Missouri football players celebrate after their 51-28 win over Vanderbilt in Nashville. The Tigers improved to 5-0 on the season and picked up their first Southeastern Conference win.
The Tigers had not beaten a Top 10 team on the road in 32 years when they arrived in Athens. The Bulldogs were ranked No. 7 in the nation and coming off a season in which they were one play away from the National Championship game.

Nevertheless, the Tigers built up an early lead and then blew the game open in the second quarter, when Shane Ray stripped Bulldogs quarterback Aaron Murray and Michael Sam returned it for a touchdown to give Missouri an 18-point lead.

But Georgia battled back. Murray tossed two touchdowns to narrow the Tigers' lead to two points. Then, disaster struck for Missouri.

Quarterback James Franklin scrambled left to throw the ball out of bounds but his right shoulder separated when he was hit by two defensive linemen.

Redshirt freshman Maty Mauk was thrust into a pressure situation, and he responded by picking up a first down with a run on the next play. Two more Missouri touchdowns — a trick-play touchdown pass by Bud Sasser and a diving score by Henry Josey — allowed the Tigers to escape Athens with a huge win. But a cloud lingered over the team after Franklin's injury. Some national outlets reported that the senior's career was over, but Missouri refused to release a statement until later in the week.

Regardless, it was time for Mauk to step up.
In the week leading up to Missouri’s game against Florida, redshirt freshman Maty Mauk was the center of attention. A crowd of reporters huddled around him at the team’s media day on Monday. How would Mauk perform in his first career start?

Mauk answered that question quickly, tossing a 50-yard strike down the sideline to L'Damian Washington to open the game. The play set the tone for a dominant, 36-17 win. Missouri improved to 7-0.

Playing without James Franklin and E.J. Gaines, Missouri picked up where it left off against Georgia in front of the first Memorial Stadium sellout crowd of the season. There were ups and downs. Mauk nearly had a few passes intercepted, and Henry Josey had a brief injury scare. But big plays from both helped excite the 67,124 in attendance.

With time ticking away in the fourth quarter, Missouri fans began to do the “Gator Chomp” and sing “We Will Rock You.” A 7-0 start to the season set up an unexpected marquee matchup on Homecoming. Missouri would take on South Carolina with a chance to take a commanding lead in the SEC East Division.

“We have a special opportunity,” Missouri center Evan Boehm said. “It’s not given. It’s earned.”
A STUNNING LOSS

This one will hurt for a long time. Missouri’s dream of an undefeated season was still well intact in the fourth quarter. The Tigers held a 17-0 lead over the Gamecocks, and an 8-0 season start was a near certainty. But Connor Shaw had other plans. The banged-up South Carolina senior—who completed his final 20 passes in a 31-10 win over Missouri the year before—burned Missouri when he entered the game late in the third and scored 17 unanswered points to send the game to overtime.

The sellout Homecoming crowd was stunned, but hope still remained. Mauk led a quick touchdown drive to start the extra period, and the defense forced Shaw into a 4th-and-goal from the 15-yard-line. In a play that Missouri fans will try to erase from their memories for years to come, Shaw examined the field and lofted the ball to a receiver running a corner route to the right side of the end zone. Caught. Touchdown.

“We thought we had it,” defensive end Kony Ealy said.

Things only got worse from there. The Gamecocks kicked a field goal in the second overtime, and Tigers kicker Andrew Baggett hit the left upright on a failed 24-yard attempt that shocked a national audience. The undefeated season was gone, and the road to the SEC Championship was now an extremely tough one.

Which direction would Missouri take? Would the loss to South Carolina derail the season or would Missouri realize that all its goals were still attainable?

“Why in the world would you ever even be thinking about last week’s game when there’s so much out there?” Pinkel asked. “There’s no common sense there. Are you kidding me? We’re 7-1, 3-1 in the league. We’ve got four games left in November. I’ll take that the rest of my career. Forever.”

Missouri didn’t look as if it was thinking about South Carolina. The Tigers got back to what they do best and ran the football. Missouri rushed for more than 300 yards, including the first 100-yard rushing game of Maty Mauk’s career. Mauk also threw three touchdowns. After losing to South Carolina, Missouri needed four straight wins to finish the season in order to win the SEC East. A 31-3 romping of Tennessee was the first step.

MISSOURI FOCUSES ON THE FUTURE
Maty Mauk’s final game as a starter was spectacular — the redshirt freshman tied a school record with five touchdown throws — but the unquestioned star was Dorial Green-Beckham. The No. 1 high school recruit in the nation one year earlier, Green-Beckham made Wildcat defensive backs look silly all afternoon.

The receiver seemed to out-do himself on every catch. First, he snagged a 35-yard pass with one hand down the left sideline and then finished the drive with a Randy Moss-esque leaping grab in the corner of the end zone.

“When I saw him go up, his hands had to be at least 12 feet in the air,” Mauk said. “It was unbelievable when I saw him go up and get that.”

Green-Beckham had only seven catches on the day, but four of them were touchdowns. The sophomore made SportsCenter’s “Top 10” that night for his third touchdown: an underthrown ball that he trapped against the helmet of Kentucky’s Eric Dixon.

The four scores were a new school record.

After the game, Green-Beckham was asked if anyone in the country could cover him.

“Honestly, not at all,” he said. “I’m a 6-6, 230-pound guy, so that’s just my mindset. I’ve got to go into games thinking, ‘I can’t be stopped.’”

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Missouri’s trip to Ole Miss was supposed to be a test. With anticipation already mounting for Missouri’s home finale against Johnny Manziel and Texas A&M, the Tigers had to take care of business in Oxford, Miss., to make that game relevant.

They did just that. In James Franklin’s first game back from injury, Missouri’s defense gave him plenty of help. Two key goal-line stands thwarted the Ole Miss offense and gave Missouri a comfortable lead throughout the game. A week after the Rebels set a school record with 751 yards of offense, the Tigers held them to 10 points in a 24-10 win.

“What do you say about your defense?” Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said. “This is a very potent offensive football team. We battled and did some great things in critical situations.”
There was plenty of anticipation when the Aggies came to town. Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel was likely playing his final regular season game, and a win for the Tigers meant a trip to Atlanta.

But it was redshirt junior running back Henry Josey who stole the show. Josey, who missed the entire 2012 season with a devastating knee injury, came through when Missouri needed him most. The game was tied 21-21 with little more than three minutes left. Offensive coordinator Josh Henson called a handoff that he later said was simply intended to pick up the two yards needed for a first down.

Instead, Josey blew past the Texas A&M defense for the game-winning 57-yard touchdown. And after the defense held Manziel one more time, the Tigers were officially headed to Atlanta.

“You have twelve (games) that’s guaranteed,” receiver L’Damian Washington said. “That’s it. Why would you aim to be average? Nobody average is ever remembered. You have to aim big.”

After the final whistle, the Missouri crowd rushed the field to celebrate with the team as Ray Charles’ “Georgia On My Mind” blared over the sound system.
In just its second year in the league, Missouri had a shot at the Southeastern Conference Championship. Missouri and Auburn went from a combined 2-14 in SEC play in 2012 to playing each other in the SEC Championship Game.

The first half in Atlanta was a frantic, back-and-forth affair that set the stage for the highest scoring game in SEC Championship Game history. Auburn led Missouri 28-27 at halftime, but the second half was even more wide open.

Missouri’s offense slowed down a bit in the second half, but Auburn never stopped. In total, the two teams combined for more than 1,200 total yards and more than 100 points in the game. Auburn finished with more than 500 yards of rushing, including 304 yards on 46 carries from Tre Mason.

“I feel like some of y’all could have run through the holes out there,” cornerback E.J. Gaines told reporters.

Even though Auburn quarterback Nick Marshall only attempted 11 passes, Auburn cruised to a 59-42 win and earned a trip to the BCS National Championship. Missouri was left wondering what could have been.

“We’ll be back, that’s all I can say about that,” Dorial Green-Beckham said. “We’ll just be back. I believe in all the guys. They’re going to try to make their way back to being here. It’s a good start for right now. We know what it feels like to be here. We just need to get our respect the way it should be.”
THE FIVE BEST MOMENTS

Missouri has several Cotton Bowl memories, but where do they fit in with the rest of the Cotton Bowl’s signature moments?

STORY BY ALEX SMITH

Missouri played in the Cotton Bowl just six years ago, but much has changed in Dallas since then.

The bowl game is no longer played at the venerable Cotton Bowl stadium, but rather it is played at North America’s most luxurious football venue. Some call it the “Jerry Dome” (after its creator, Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones). Some call it the “Death Star,” thanks to its relative likeness to the ominous space station in “Star Wars.”

No matter the nickname, AT&T Stadium is quite the site. The futuristic sports hub looms over the Dallas suburb of Arlington. It is home to the five-time Super Bowl-champion Cowboys, but it has also been the Cotton Bowl site since 2010.

The game, which brought in 87,025 attendees last January out of a possible 105,000, is on perhaps the biggest stage of any non-BCS bowl. The stadium’s trademark 160-foot-wide hanging Jumbotron is the most obvious proof that everything is bigger in Texas.

When Missouri players ran around the artificial turf field on Monday, they couldn’t look away from the giant video boards. A team crushed with disappointment after December’s Southeastern Conference Championship was perfectly smitten with its new destination.

“If you’re not in the national championship,” Gary Pinkel said to his team the day after the Cotton Bowl announcement, “this is where you want to be.”

Despite all of this newfangled technology, the Cotton Bowl is one of the most tradition-filled college football games of the year. Friday will be the 78th annual game, and the Tigers will be looking to add their own signature pawprint to the contest.

Here are five of the Cotton Bowl’s most

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Tony Temple rushes with the ball during the first quarter of the Cotton Bowl game against Arkansas in 2007. Temple scored two touchdowns before halftime.
The 2007 game between Missouri and Arkansas was billed as an offensive battle, with Arkansas running backs Darren McFadden (a Heisman finalist) and Felix Jones expected to steal the show on the ground.

Tigers redshirt junior Tony Temple racked up 159 yards and two touchdowns in the first half of an eventual Tigers’ 38-7 blowout, but he injured his hamstring in the third quarter and would’ve missed the rest of the game if coach Gary Pinkel hadn’t realized Temple was just 24 yards away from the Cotton Bowl record (Dicky Maegle, 265).

In the final run of his college career, Temple half-ran, half-limped through the Razorbacks defense for a 40-yard touchdown to set the new bowl record with 281 yards on the ground. His teammates helped carry him off the field when it was clear he couldn’t make it on his own, and the victory celebration was officially on with little more than eight minutes left.

Texas quarterback Bobby Layne would go on to be named to the 1950s NFL decade team and inducted into the pro football hall of fame, but his college career at Texas was also spectacular.

Perhaps his finest moment wearing a Longhorns uniform came against Missouri in the 1946 Cotton Bowl. The 19-year-old quarterback ran for four touchdowns, threw two more and successfully attempted four out of five extra points.

“The eyes of Texas were proudly focused Wednesday upon 19 year old Bobby Layne,” stated the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel the next day. “The kid who won a football game all by himself.”

Long before Johnny Manziel and Nick Saban, the Texas A&M Aggies and Alabama Crimson Tide played a classic at the Cotton Bowl in 1968.

The No. 8 Tide, led by Bear Bryant, appeared to be a mismatch for Gene Stallings (a Bryant disciple at A&M) and the unranked Aggies. The back and forth contest featured a surprising pass-heavy game plan by A&M and out-of-character moments from the Tide, including one big play during which Alabama only had 10 men on the defense.

After a scoreless fourth quarter, the Aggies emerged victorious, and the legendary Bryant greeted Stallings by lifting him off the ground, a gesture that will forever be etched in bowl lore.

Before Tony Temple’s record rushing day, Dicky Maegle was the holder of the Cotton Bowl’s single-game rushing record with 265 yards.

One run in particular was quickly legendary. With Maegle’s Rice offense backed up on its own five-yard-line, he took the handoff and broke free from the Tide defense. As he neared midfield, Alabama’s Tommy Lewis made the tackle.

“Problem was, Lewis wasn’t on the field at the beginning of the play. In fact, he had jumped off the bench and ran around teammates on the sideline to make the illegal play.

The referees awarded Maegle with a 95-yard touchdown, and Rice went on to win 28-6. The play still stands as the longest in Cotton Bowl history.

Thanks to an ice storm in Dallas, the wind chill during the 1979 game was minus 6 degrees. Houston owned the first three quarters, and Notre Dame quarterback Joe Montana was held out for most of the third quarter with a subnormal body temperature.

But Montana returned in the fourth and began chipping away at a 34-12 deficit. After the Irish returned a blocked punt for a touchdown with 7:25 left, Montana completed the two-point conversion. Then, he ran in a 2-yard score and completed another two-pointer with 4:15 left.

Down 34-28, the Irish got the ball one more time. With the ball on the Houston 8-yard-line and no time remaining, Montana fired the winning touchdown to Kris Haines, and Notre Dame pulled off the incredible comeback in the greatest Cotton Bowl game to date.
THE FINAL CHAPTER:
COPELAND’S CRANIUM

For the past few months, we’ve wondered if Missouri guard Max Copeland was being serious in his rants about government conspiracies, Halloween and his teammates. But in the final installment of Copeland’s Cranium, he leaves the jokes at the door.

I have this idea that football will die, and then there will be this football renaissance. I’ve always said the purest form of football is just a bunch of dirty, mean dudes just getting together in a vacant lot and beating the hell out of each other with crappy equipment. I think that’s how the re-genesis would happen after football is gone.

My biggest issue with the whole concussion/mental health thing in football? The actual statistics. If you compare the population of football players to the general population, our depression and suicide rates are so much lower. I think it’s lots of causation versus correlation going on there.

The reason we love this game is because of the risk. You’re sacrificing your body for a grander common goal. It is metaphorical for going to war. It’s not going to war, but it’s a metaphor for it. Our minds and bodies and hormones respond accordingly.

They’re telling the president, “Oh, I’d never let my kids play football.” They’re making us sound like we’re all a bunch of idiots. I knew this job was dangerous when I took it. That’s why I like doing it because it’s dangerous. That’s how you get that rush, man. You’re putting yourself on the line for the guy next to you. But then I’ve got some guy I’ve never met wearing a suit or some tweed jacket with leather patches on the elbows saying, “These guys don’t know what they’re doing. It’s too dangerous for them.” So they’re trying to pass all this legislation and make all these big fusses over our health. I take offense and issue to that because I am in charge of my health. That’s my call. I get to decide what I’m going to do, and you don’t get to tell me.

Ben Franklin said, people who sacrifice their liberty for the sake of safety will get both and deserve neither. That’s how you get that rush, man.

Missouri offensive lineman Max Copeland celebrates after the Tigers’ 51-28 win against Vanderbilt on Oct. 5.

I knew this job was dangerous when I took it. That’s why I like doing it because it’s dangerous. That’s how you get that rush, man. Then I’ve got some guy I’ve never met wearing a suit or some tweed jacket with leather patches on the elbows saying, “These guys don’t know what they’re doing. It’s too dangerous for them.” So they’re trying to pass all this legislation and make all these big fusses over our health. I take offense and issue to that because I’m in charge of my health. That’s my call. I get to decide what I’m going to do, and you don’t get to tell me.

Ben Franklin said, people who sacrifice their liberty for the sake of safety will get both and deserve neither. That’s how it feels to me, which might be overdramatic, but it truly feels that way. I don’t like someone coming in who doesn’t understand our game telling us what to do. To me, that’s oppressive.

In the last two years, two people have died in the X Games. Not from a subsequent suicide from depression. No, they died doing their sport. People saw it on TV. People watched them die. Are you hearing any talks of legislation to get the X Games out? No, you don’t hear a peep. You know why? ‘Cause there’s not a lot of money in the X Games. They’re not getting football-type ratings.

Now football, that’s where the money is. People would love to make a name for themselves to watch that burn. You want to take a shot at Goliath. If you can’t make it better, you want to watch it burn. There’s a lot of those people coming out of the woodwork, and they’re trying to kill our game.

Most people don’t understand this lifestyle. It’s special. It’s something you can’t explain. Even people you didn’t play football with can understand everything that you go through. It’s a universal brotherhood. If you meet someone else who played football at the same level, you understand each other at an almost intimate level.

If my 10-year-old asked me to play football, I would’ve been waiting 10 long years to hear him say it because I’d be trying so hard not to push him into it. I wouldn’t be disappointed if my son didn’t want to play football, but my heart would be broken. I know the danger, and I would make sure my son knows the danger, but that would just make him more serious about (a) using good fundamentals and (b) how great this game is.

Most of the things I’ve learned about being a man came from football. Just showing up to work every day. Boys do what they want to do, but men do what they got to do. People have this image of football players as highly gifted monsters that just show up on Saturdays, beat the crap out of each other and then go out and party all week. I feel like there’s probably a general consensus that that’s what football is about.

It’s a unit of people who care about each other. Their goals are more important than your individual needs. Football taught me that, and I think it’s going to translate well into life past this.
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