Johnny Football will be the second reigning Heisman winner ever to play in Columbia. It’s up to Missouri to prevent Manziel from taking away its title hopes.
**STARTING LINEUPS**

**MU OFFENSE**

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**DEPTCH CHART // MISSOURI**

**DEFENSE**

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**SPECIAL TEAMS // MISSOURI**

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**SPECIAL TEAMS // TEXAS A&M**

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INSIDE

IT’S DO-OR-DIE TIME FOR COPELAND
Max Copeland says he will be totally focused on football on Saturday. It’s time to leave everything on the field for Senior Night.

MANZIEL HOGS THE SPOTLIGHT
He grabs national attention with his mesmerizing talent and confounding behavior. This week, Manziel is Missouri’s top priority too.

FAST FIVE WITH JUSTIN BRITT
The fifth-year senior left tackle talks about his post-graduate degree and the best quarterback in college football.

SCHEDULE

MILITARY APPRECIATION DAY
08/31 VS. MURRAY STATE  W, 58-14
09/07 VS. TOLEDO  W, 38-23
09/21 @ INDIANA  W, 45-28

FAMILY WEEKEND
09/28 VS. ARKANSAS STATE  W, 41-19
10/05 @ VANDERBILT  W, 51-28
10/12 @ GEORGIA  W, 41-26

GOLD RUSH
10/19 vs. FLORIDA  W, 36-17
10/26 vs. SOUTH CAROLINA  L, 27-24, 2OT
11/02 vs. TENNESSEE  W, 31-3
11/09 @ KENTUCKY  W, 48-17
11/23 @ OLE MISS  W, 24-10

BLACKOUT
11/30 vs. TEXAS A&M  6:45 P.M.

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Before every home game, Max Copeland sounds off on whatever is on his mind. This week, the Missouri offensive lineman reflects on his outlandish career with the Tigers and tells readers the last song he wants to listen to before he dies.

**AS TOLD TO ALEXANDER SMITH**

On Saturday, it’s not Senior Night. It’s A&M night. Yeah, my parents will be on the field. As insensitive as this sounds, I’m gonna zone them out. My dad’s going to be crying so hard, I know it, and my mom will hold it together.

But I’d be totally lying if I told you I wasn’t thinking, “Dang, dude, what were you doing three years ago?” We’d be training so hard. When you’re not playing, you’re training. Just thinking about what it’s going to be like to be out there.

I had so many mornings where you just wake up and there’s puke in your hair like, “Oh, dude, we gotta wrap this workout up.”

It’s funny to think about those times when I was sitting alone in my single dorm room just eating chicken breasts and watching film. Like, “I just want it so bad.” It feels like a thousand years ago, but at the same time, it feels like last week.

There was so much uncertainty and fear in those first three years. I was putting everything I possibly had into it, and I wasn’t sure what the return was gonna be. People tell you, “hard work always pays off,” but the truth is, hard work’s just your ante.

Life’s a poker hand. Hard work is your ante. It just gets you into the hand. You might be dealt a crap hand, but you already spent your ante. You better play it well, you know?

I tried to jump in the stands after the game last week. I was too fat. I got halfway up and fell, and then was like, “Okay, I have to go. Bye.”

I’m going to work as hard as I can this week to make sure it’s good closure for me. The metaphor has always been that football is life. The one interesting aspect of that analogy is the death. Everyone will die at some point, and you don’t know when. This is one of those things that you know is your last ride on Faurot. At least I know when it’s happening. None of us know when we’re gonna die in a football context, but to know that it’ll be my last time there, it’ll give me a big shot of extra mojo.

In 10 years, I hope Missouri fans thought I was a true son and that I wore the Tiger head on my helmet proudly. Everything else, that’s up to them. Probably that I smell bad and they could hear my music through my headphones.

Missouri offensive lineman Max Copeland high fives fans after defeating the Florida Gators on Oct. 18 at Memorial Stadium.
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On Saturday, all eyes will be on Johnny Manziel. It’s up to Missouri to stop him and Texas A&M from destroying its hopes of reaching the SEC Championship.
Johnny Manziel did whatever he wanted against Missouri in 2012.

It was as if the Texas A&M quarterback was a video game character. He changed direction in a flash, wiggling in between Missouri defenders to dart down the field for chunks of rushing yardage. He avoided Missouri pass rushers as if they were moving in slow motion. He kept plays alive by scrambling left and right, making downfield throws look easy. Manziel didn't look like a freshman any more.

The points came in a hurry. By the end of the second quarter, the No. 9 Aggies were up 42-0, the crowd at Kyle Field was unruly, and the Missouri sideline was deflated.

Manziel could have stopped there, and the events that followed wouldn't have changed. But he didn't stop. He kept running around the field and making every throw look easy.

By the end of the night, Manziel had tortured Missouri players and coaches. On his final play of the night before being taken out of the game, Manziel appeared to be stuffed by Missouri's defensive line. Instead, he fought through multiple tackles and reached the ball over the goal line for a touchdown.

The scoreboard read 59-23 in favor of Texas A&M, and Manziel had piled up 439 total yards and five touchdowns. Mercifully, he returned to the sideline, removed his helmet and took a seat on the bench for the rest of the night. He couldn't stop smiling.

Missouri would score another touchdown, but it didn't matter. The season was over for the Tigers, while it was just beginning for Manziel.

Texas A&M and Missouri's debut seasons in the Southeastern Conference couldn't have been much different, and a lot of it had to do with Manziel.

Craig Kuligowski doesn't like to think about that game. Missouri's defensive line coach remembers the feeling as he walked off Kyle Field last year. He remembers feeling sad, not even angry, just empty and sad. Then he remembers going to get something to eat and seeing the highlights of the game on ESPN. One particular play made it hard for him to keep his food down.

“One of the plays went like 12 seconds or something,” Kuligowski recalled in disbelief.

Manziel danced around the pocket, avoiding tacklers as if they were statues. He made his way out of the pocket to the right side of the field and lobbing a touchdown pass to a wide open Uzoma Nwachukwu.

Reluctantly, Kuligowski went back to watch last year's game again in preparation of Missouri's game against Texas A&M on Saturday. Missouri's coaching staff isn't focused on it. In fact, defensive coordinator Dave Steckel says he won't even go back and watch it. He's seen it enough already.

“I think anytime things happen when you go out and get your ass kicked, you go back and evaluate — hopefully if you're a competitor — so the next time you go out it doesn't happen to you.”

More than anything, Missouri left College Station, Texas, humiliated last year.

“The thing that was so embarrassing about that was we had so many missed tackles,” Steckel said. “We make those tackles. Everybody's singing a different song right now.”

Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel scrambles as LSU defensive end Jermauria Rasco tries to tackle him during the game’s first half in Baton Rouge, La., on Nov. 23.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
James Franklin had two recordings waiting on his DVR when he returned to Columbia from Oxford, Miss., last weekend. The first was Missouri's win over Ole Miss. The second, LSU's win over Texas A&M in which LSU made Johnny Football look human for the first time all season.

Franklin always does this. He returns home from Missouri's game, sometimes late at night, and watches football. Usually, it's homework. He records his own team's game and then he records Missouri's next opponent. Saturday night was a little different. Franklin turned into a fan watching Manziel play.

"He is a playmaker," Franklin said. "He will scramble around, and he will see someone down field and make some good throws. He has had some good runs. He is just explosive in every play, and you don't know what is going to happen. It's pretty cool to watch."

Even in an off-game for Manziel, Franklin couldn't help but admire the reigning Heisman Trophy winner, who still has a shot at repeating the honor this season. Last season, Manziel racked up a mind-boggling 5,116 total yards and 47 total touchdowns. In 2013, six more than he threw in 2012, and if he gathers 170 passing answers at media day on Monday. It's simple in its premise but much harder in the execution.

"We want to tackle him," Kuligowski said. "That's our job. If he passes the ball, we want to hit him and tackle him. If he runs the ball, we want to hit him and tackle him. We've gone around about a thousand different ways, but it's as simple as that."

Poor tackling was what led to the embarrassment of last year's blowout loss. Tackling was a running theme throughout Steckel's answers at media day on Monday. It's simple in its premise but much harder in the execution.

"Football is blocking, catching, running, beating your gap, tackling, being where you're supposed to be," Steckel said. "It's the easiest game to know; it's the hardest game to play."

Johnny Football is simple. Texas A&M's offense is simple. At least, that's what Steckel thinks. He's not trying to be disrespectful. It's just what he's seen on video. He doesn't expect to be surprised by anything he sees Saturday. "They're not really complicated; they're exact," Steckel said.

Nobody stops Manziel. Nick Saban and Alabama couldn't do it.

Neither Auburn. That's the wrong word, Steckel says. Rather, it's about slowing him down.

One team does have Manziel's number. Two years in a row, Louisiana State University has managed to slow down Manziel like no other team in the country. So there must be a blueprint, right?

"I think LSU did a great job of executing their game plan," Steckel said. "But if you study the video, I don't think their game plan was much different than anybody else's."

It's too late in the season for Missouri to drastically change what it does on defense. The Tigers can't introduce new coverages in practice or invent ways to slow down the most dynamic quarterback in college football. It doesn't work like that.

Neither does Steckel. His intensity level is cranked up, just like it always is. The bags under his eyes are proof. He worries about everything, watches as much film as time will allow and drills it all into his players.

"Stec is going to be Stec, man," linebacker Darvin Ruise said. "Stec is always focused, driven. Everything is important. Everything he does is important. That's how he'll take a Murray State, and that's how he'll take a Texas A&M, so there's no difference in our game plan."

That's especially important this week. No matter how you slice it, stopping Manziel is incredibly simple and seemingly impossible all at the same time.

"We want to tackle him," Kuligowski said. "That's our job. If he passes the ball, we want to hit him and tackle him. If he runs the ball, we want to hit him and tackle him. We've gone around about a thousand different ways, but it's as simple as that."

Missouri hopes Manziel doesn't find that kind of success. He'll be the best football player on the field, and when he visits Columbia, he will be the most famous person in town. His Heisman-winning season transformed him from a football star to a national celebrity. Every move he made in the off-season was scrutinized.

Every tweet he sent out, every party he went to, every NBA game celebrity. Every move he made in the off-season was scrutinized.

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HERE ARE A FEW OF THE PLAYERS’ MOST HUMOROUS, THOUGHTFUL AND INTERESTING TWEETS

@BIGBOEHMTHEORY
EVAN BOEHM
CHRISTMAS MUSIC ON THE RADIO IN COMO!!!!! Santa Clause is coming to town!!!!!
Nov. 18

@DARVINRUISE12
DARVIN RUISE
Daddy just called me and gave me a whole breakdown about Ole Miss...he swear he a D-Coordinator lol
Nov. 16

@CANTST0P_94
MARVIN FOSTER
I’m in my home bundled up like an Eskimo b/c the heater refuses to comply with team rules.TX ppl aren’t built for this. #struggle #caveman
Nov. 13

@M_WHITE17
MATT WHITE
Here come all of my teammates “anyone still stuck in como?”tweets... Let the thirst be with you!
Nov. 24

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10 THINGS YOU DIDN’T KNOW ABOUT

JOHNNY FOOTBALL

He’s the youngest Heisman winner of all time, and he’s been in quite a bit of trouble off the field. But what else do you need to know about Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel before he comes to Columbia?

BY ALEXANDER SMITH

10 He almost transferred before his Heisman Trophy season.

Texas A&M initially suspended Manziel for the entire 2012 season after learning of his arrest for an alcohol-related incident. The Dallas Morning News reported that, if the season-long suspension had stood, Manziel “would have felt it was necessary to transfer.” After an appeals process, the school revoked the suspension, and Manziel went on to become the youngest Heisman Trophy winner ever.

8 He was supposed to be an Oregon Duck.

In-state powerhouse Texas wanted Manziel to play defensive back. Oregon offered him a scholarship with the possibility that he could find playing time at quarterback. Manziel verbally committed to the Ducks, but switched to Texas A&M after visiting College Station three consecutive weekends in fall 2010. “The comfort level at A&M was great,” he told KENS 5 San Antonio at the time. “On a scale of 1 to 10, it was probably an 11.”

9 His family is stinkin’ rich.

Last year, when Johnny Football was seen living it up with celebrities and taking expensive vacations, many called for an NCAA investigation into the quarterback’s financial life. Was he receiving improper benefits? But several stories soon broke about the long line of money in the Manziel family that began with Johnny Football’s great-grandfather, a man who went into the oil business with Jack Dempsey and came out a millionaire.

“If you’re doing anything that costs money or anything else,” Manziel told My San Antonio, “people want to make a controversy out of that. They can’t come to grips with the fact that I’ve been blessed with family members or whatever who’ve had these (financial) opportunities, and I’ve always been able to do this.”

7 He is “Brett Favre on a motorcycle.”

That’s what one rival high school coach called Manziel back in 2010, when the senior quarterback racked up more than 5,000 yards of total offense at Tivy High. In December of that year, MaxPreps also proclaimed, “Johnny Manziel is already a Texas legend.”
His autograph costs at least $80.

That’s the lowest set price for a piece of signed merchandise (a small photograph) on eBay. Prices ranged from there to well over $500. Manziel came under fire earlier this season for allegedly receiving money for his autograph. There was no denying the fact that his John Hancock was (and still is) everywhere on the open market, but the NCAA couldn’t prove enough to warrant a lengthy suspension. He missed the first half of A&M’s first game this season.

His best friend worries people ... a lot.

Nate Fitch is perhaps the biggest enigma in college football. Manziel’s high school buddy — self-christened “Uncle Nate” — has several labels, including “advisor,” “confidant,” and “business manager.” The 21-year-old has been Manziel’s right-hand man, and constantly shows up in photos when Johnny Football is meeting famous people or doing extravagant things.

When the autograph scandal broke, many pointed fingers at Uncle Nate. He was rumored to be the man behind the deals that put Manziel in that position. Look no further than Johnny Football’s own mother for confirmation that Fitch is not exactly trustworthy.

“Michelle expressed hope that eventually Fitch would find his way out of her son’s life,” ESPN reported, “just as he found his way in.”

Tom Brady called him a “turd.”

Sort of. After Manziel’s on-field antics against Rice to open the season (he feigned signing autographs and tossing money), Fox Sports 1 asked New England’s future Hall-of-Fame quarterback what he thought. “Football’s a physical game,” Brady replied. “And as [Patriots owner Robert Kraft] would say, ‘If you’re a turd, it’s going to come back to you.’”

There is a horse named after him.

“Johnny Football” is a two-year-old colt owned by Casner Racing. One of the owner’s veterinarians — a Texas A&M grad — suggested it. He has made one career start, in which he finished dead last.

He is expected to announce the end of his college career soon...

Texas A&M coach Kevin Sumlin told ESPN radio that an announcement on Manziel’s future will come in the next month before the team’s bowl game. Many NFL draft experts have Johnny Football pegged as a first-round prospect, and several reports have stated that Manziel’s family is unhappy with the environment at Texas A&M. “We will have that discussion after the Missouri game,” Sumlin said. “Certainly during the bowl preparation. I’m sure the announcement will be made at that time.”

...But there is a chance he returns for another year.

Uncle Nate sent Texas A&M fans into a tizzy with a pair of tweets on Nov. 9.

“I can’t wait for next season...” he tweeted before retweeting “So the National Championship is in Dallas next year right?” Perhaps Nate was trolling the masses, but the messages were a glimmer of hope for Aggies supporters thirsting for another year of Johnny Football.

Missouri fans stand with this June headline from Texas A&M’s student newspaper: “Johnny, be gone.”

DAVID J. PHILLIP/ The Associated Press
This August, Missouri offensive lineman Justin Britt was busy juggling fatherhood with football and shaking off the effects of a 2012 knee injury. We caught up with him before the biggest game of his life to talk about movies, school and wrestling.

What was the most recent movie you watched?
“Saving Private Ryan.” The whole thing’s good. My favorite part is where they’re at that point where they have a plan to blow the bridge and all that. When they find Private Ryan, that’s my favorite part.

Who has the best quarterback in college football (besides Missouri)?
Missouri State. (Former Missouri quarterback) Ashton Gla-\nsen is the best. He was probably one of my best friends here. I remember he went golfing a lot. I didn’t go. I wasn’t that good.

What is the best Missouri tradition?
Besides having the ‘Rock M,’ I think the it’s the Waltz. But also the ‘M-I-Z, Z-O-U.’ That never gets old.

Please explain your post-graduate degree in “positive coach”:
It’s sort of like sports psychology. It teaches you how to understand your athletes in different situations. I want to coach, so it’s something I feel like would be good to get a degree in.

If you could play one sport besides football, what would it be?
Wrestling. I was an All-American in high school. I’m athletic. I’m very flexible, so it’s hard to get me down. Big but quick. I can surprise you. I’ll just act like we’re gonna stand up all day, then I’ll give him a fake with my hand to his head, then I’ll shoot in on him and take him down.
Whether you’re at the game or tailgating at home, count on Schnucks for a winning lineup!

You’ll find fresh choices for tailgating at Schnucks Columbia! Pick up our delicious golden fried or baked chicken or party sandwiches in our Deli Department. Check out our walk-in Beer Cooler for your favorite beverages. Don’t forget our fresh storemade brats, kabobs or loaded burgers for grilling. Go Tigers!
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