

Eagles Collapse in Beef `O' Brady's Bowl

HATTIESBURG – USM exploded to a 14-0 lead early in the 2010 Beef `O' Brady's Bowl in St. Petersburg, FL, on 21-Dec-2010, and led Louisville by 14 points again at 21-7, [only to fall to the Cardinals](#) by a final score of 28-31. USM came into the game with an 8-4 record, facing Louisville from the Big East Conference, which stood at only 6-6. After outscoring UL 21-7 early, Larry Fedora's Eagles were outscored 7-24 over the remainder of the game. With the loss, USM has now lost two consecutive games to end the 2010 season, as well as two consecutive bowl games, including a 2009 New Orleans Bowl loss to Middle Tennessee State.



Louisville players celebrate Beef `O' Brady's victory over USM on 21-Dec-2010.

The game concluded several days for USM in Florida that were not without controversy and other issues. First, the "Beach Bash," a series of contests between USM and Louisville players on 19-Dec-2010 at the Tradewinds Island Resort of St. Pete Beach, had to be cut short (by half) when [officers of the Florida Highway Patrol](#) were called in to cool heated tempers created by aggressive trash-talking between players on the two sides.



Members of the USM football team taunting members of the Louisville squad at the Beach Bash on 19-Dec.

Second, speculation that USM had sold only 3,000 or so tickets to the Bowl was also swirling during the week of the game. With Louisville selling all of its 10,000 tickets-

allotment from Beef 'O' Brady's Bowl officials, including reports that many more were purchased by UL fans through the Bowl office, there was much discussion leading up to kickoff about what was expected to be a significant advantage for UL in terms of fans in attendance. The national telecast by ESPN not only confirmed a tremendous UL fan advantage, it also showed swaths of the domed stadium, that when set up for football seats about as many as USM's M.M. Roberts Stadium, consisting of empty seats, calling into question USM's potential net earnings from this particular event.

Finally, [USM fans continue to criticize](#) Fedora's coaching abilities, comparing this lackluster Eagle team to those of the 1980s and 1990s. With this loss, Fedora falls to only 22-17 since taking the job after the 2007 season. With only a 14-12 record after two years, Fedora was awarded a contract extension and a \$35,000 raise from the Martha Saunders administration of USM before beginning this season. Even with this year's 8-5 overall record, USM is only 4-4 since 9-Oct-2010, including the aforementioned current two-game losing streak.