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Ellis Johnson Fired After One Season at USM

HATTIESBURG – Multiple [news reports](#) out of Hattiesburg on 27-Nov-2012 informed the USM community that its first year football coach Ellis Johnson has been fired after just a single season at USM. These [reports indicate](#) that first year athletics director Jeff Hammond informed Johnson at about 11:30 am on 27-Nov that he would not be retained for a second season at USM. Hammond's decision was supported by interim USM president Aubrey Lucas, who told *The Hattiesburg American* "[a]thletics is entertaining, it's theater. And when people quit buying tickets to go see the play, something has to happen. It's always unfortunate. We have to be aware of what athletics is bringing in and not bringing in. You were at the last home games, and were aware that our crowds were decreasing dramatically, and that tailgating – which had been so energetic and happy at the beginning of the season – was almost non-existent at our last home game. So, there was obviously a psychological dimension to what was happening."



According to the contract USM and Johnson agreed to about a year ago, USM will pay Johnson **\$2.1 million** over the next three years. That agreement equates to a *monthly payment* by USM of **\$58,333** over the next 36 months. As has been reported here at USMNEWS.net on many occasions, Johnson was winless, at 0-12, in his first and now only season at USM. A number of media outlets are reporting that with last year's team under Larry Fedora going 12-2, the 2012 season at USM marked the steepest year-to-year decline in the history of college football.