

No Postseason in 2011 for Eustachy's Eagles

HATTIESBURG – By the time last week's 2011 C-USA Tournament rolled around, conventional wisdom was that Larry Eustachy's Golden Eagles had played themselves *out* of any chance at an at-large bid to the 68-team 2011 NCAA Tournament. That was because the Eagles ended the 2010-11 season with a series of losses, concluding the regular season with a record of only 18-9 against Division I competition. After going 1-1 in the C-USA Tournament, including a third loss to Memphis, many Eagles fans began wondering if an invite to the 32-team National Invitation Tournament (NIT) was jeopardized by the floundering finish to the 2010-11 season.

All of Eagles fans' fears were realized on 13-Mar-2011 when the NCAA Tournament and NIT Tournament fields were completed without any mention of USM. As a result, USM Internet message boards lit up with rage, disappointment, and more ire directed toward Eustachy, who has failed to reach either of the top two national post-season tournaments in his seven years at the helm. The frustration was later compounded, at least for many fans, when the [USM athletics administration announced](#) that it had declined invitations to participate in either the 2011 College Basketball Invitational (CBI) or the 2011 CollegeInsider.com Tournament (CIT). USM reached the latter of these in 2010, when it was defeated by Louisiana Tech in the first round. Although Eustachy cites academics concerns for declining these two tournament bids, sources tell USMNEWS.net that participations in these tournaments actually *cost institutions money*, and offer little-to-no prestige in the process.

The 2010-11 version of the USM Eagles is widely regarded as Eustachy's finest group since coming to Hattiesburg seven seasons ago, and star senior Gary Flowers is believed to be the best player USM has had in perhaps two decades. Even with these advantages, Eustachy managed only 19 wins against Division I opponents, a result sources say justifies the snubs from the NCAA and NIT selection committees. In fact, sources tell USMNEWS.net that USM's [penchant](#), under Eustachy, for scheduling Division II and lower division opponents likely causes consternation among these selection committees, which is perhaps the main reason his USM teams have not been among the 100 or so teams selected for the NCAA and NIT tournaments. While Eustachy's overall record at USM is now 117-104 (0.529), it is only 96-104 (0.480) against Division I competitors.