

BREAKING NEWS ... BREAKING NEWS ... BREAKING NEWS

MARTEZ SMITH MAY BE PARALYZED

UPDATE TO EVENTS SURROUNDING THREE USM FOOTBALL PLAYERS SHOT AT NIGHTCLUB

[WPAT-TV in Jackson](#) is reporting that James Smith, the grandfather of Martez Smith, one of the three USM football players who were shot at about 1:30 a.m. on 14-Nov-2010 outside of a Hattiesburg nightclub, has spoken with his son, who relayed the news to James that Martez is unable to move his legs. A “tearful” James Smith said he has known since 14-Nov that his grandson may be paralyzed from the gunshot wound he sustained earlier that day.

Meanwhile, USM president Martha Saunders has just released the following communication to all USM students, faculty, and staff:

To the Southern Miss community,

By now you probably know of the shooting incident which occurred Sunday morning involving three of our students.

About 1:30 a.m. yesterday, students Martez Smith, Deddrick Jones and Tim Green were shot at an off-campus club. According to police, all three students - who are interdisciplinary studies majors and members of the Golden Eagle football team - were unarmed.

I visited with the injured players and their families at the hospital Sunday. At this very stressful time our thoughts and prayers are for these young men and their families. The injuries of Martez and Deddrick are significant. We are doing all we can to support these students and their families. Our concern is also for the other team members and USM students who, no doubt, are impacted by the weekend events.

The Hattiesburg Police Department is leading the investigation into the shooting and is being assisted by our University Police Department, the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation and a task force from the U.S. Marshals Service.

The Office of University Communications will keep the campus community advised as new information becomes available.

Martha Saunders
President

In the e-mail above, Saunders continues to refer to the three players’ gunshot “wounds” as “injuries,” though she admits that situations pertaining to both Smith and Deddrick Jones,

another of the three USM players who was shot outside of the Hunt Club in Hattiesburg, “are significant.” This type of news is consistent with James Smith’s description for *WPAT-TV*. News that Jones is also facing “significant” health issues is new, and has not yet been reported by state or national media outlets who are covering this episode.

Meanwhile, *The Hattiesburg American*’s [Patrick Magee reports in the 15-Nov-2010 issue of the paper](#) that USM head coach Larry Fedora’s football program continues to be tarnished by gun-related incidents. In Sept-2008, USM linebacker Korey Williams “had his jaw broken when he was struck in the face with a bottle in a melee outside of Club Palace” during the early morning hours, and that Williams and other USM football players were “followed . . . back to their 38th Avenue [apartment] complex, where approximately eight police cruisers later responded to reports of gunfire.” Saunders attributed the incident to a “gang from the Coast” at that time, which is what sources tell USMNEWS.net may be occurring again now, with reports that the Hunt Club incident could be gang-related. Also, in Feb-2009 USM star running back Damion Fletcher was arrested for discharging a firearm at his own apartment complex. Fletcher pleaded guilty to his charge and served six months on probation.

Finally, sources are reporting that USM’s Wesley Campus Ministry is holding a prayer vigil tonight (15-Nov-2010), beginning at 5:00 p.m. The event will be held at the campus’ Wesley Center on Montague, and it is open to the public.