

## Hammond Put His Head On The Block With Your Money

In Hattiesburg America's "Officials look to protect USM's interests in Monken contract," [January 5, 2013](#), Athletic Director Jeff Hammond put his head on the block. He is quoted as saying, "we did" get "the right guy." He was referring to USM's new football coach, Todd Monken. And what are the implications, if Monken is "the right guy"? Well, that's an easy question to answer.

What will constitute being "the right guy"? What will constitute Monken not being "the right guy"? What happens if Monken is not "the right guy"? I suspect that Johnson was touted as "the right guy" before last season.

It is clear that Hammond is gambling. And he has no choice, really. But the HA article seemed ... well, from a certain perspective, silly.

Mississippi is inhabited by many, many people who don't make hundreds of thousands a year. How stupid it must sound to them that USM is paying millions in taxpayer and student dollars to football coaches to support football programs that lose money, year in and year out. So much money, so much effort, so much preoccupation by very expensive administrators. What about educating the kids who are working hard and, in far too many cases, borrowing tens of thousands of dollars to attend USM?

Well, can you imagine what people who are footing the very expensive bill for the football team might think about the recent incompetent coach contracts?

Tweaking the contract may seem... well, silly. Tweaking the contract so that USM doesn't get stiffed, again, for millions, unless Monken fails. What Lucas and Hammond are doing is gambling. Once again they are gambling with millions in dollars in students and Mississippi taxpayers money. The contract tweak will not protect USM from four years of performance like it got for four years from Johnson. The tweaked contract does not protect USM if Monken fails and then can't get another coaching job. What if Lucas' and Hammond's gamble loses. What the hey, it's not their money. It's your's.

What are the odds that Monken will fail and not be able to get another job (even the offset may require USM to pay millions)? A jolly good bet, from Lucas' and Hammond's perspective. They're real gamblers -- with your money.