

‘Lurking About’

USM Fans React to ‘Meltdown at Marshall, 2011’

In what some are now referring to as “Meltdown at Marshall, 2011,” head coach Larry Fedora’s USM Golden Eagles blew a 17-3 lead at Marshall on 10-September-2011, losing in the final moments to the Thundering Herd by a score of 20-26. With the loss, the Eagles fell to 1-1 on the young 2011 season, and are now #81 in the Sagarin ratings, just one spot better than FCS-level University of Richmond. Interestingly, Marshall is now ranked only 87th even with the win over USM, while USM’s opening-day opponent, Louisiana Tech is only 104th, after struggling to beat (in overtime) FCS-level opponent Central Arkansas in week two.

As expected, USM’s disappointing showing in West Virginia has message boards at southernmiss.rivals.com humming with complaints, doomsday predictions, and a multitude of calls to fire Fedora, who is only 23-18 overall since coming to USM. Among the recently-created threads on *The District* [fan board](#) are those entitled:

- “Now do you believe me?”
- “It needs to be said . . .”
- “Honest (Hard) Question”
- “The end of the line . . .”
- “Don’t know what to say . . .”
- “Bring Bower Back!”
- “It’s time to ask the real hard questions”
- “This loss couldn’t happen at a worse time”
- “Fedora reminds me of Obama . . .”
- “Stick a fork in us”
- “Now, don’t be negative. No negativity allowed. The Attack is coming.”

What is posted within these threads is, in most cases, self-explanatory (in terms of the above). The last one in particular is a biting sarcastic reference to Fedora’s very first USM press conference, wherein he explained to Eagles fans, and to the individual who hired him – USM president Martha Saunders – that he would be attacking at every moment in every game while at USM.


Invoking Saunders’ name, as is done above, may perhaps remind readers of the 2011 Fall Convocation speech made by Saunders just two days before (on 8-September-2011) “Meltdown at Marshall, 2011.” There, Saunders bizarrely addressed those who “lurk about” sports message boards propagating rumors and innuendo about how USM will be left out of the room when the dust settles on conference realignments that are now taking place in Division 1 college football. According to Saunders, Eagles fans should rest assured that USM will always compete at the highest level of NCAA athletics. Saunders added that (1) winning, (2) integrity, (3) facilities, and (4) fan base are the hallmarks of USM, and they represent what will keep USM at the table. Unfortunately for Saunders, the USM fan base agrees with USMNEWS.net sources, who point out that USM is powerless when it comes to shaping the landscape of college football (athletics). One of *The District*’s more respected posters, RowdyRoost, authored the thread above entitled “The end of the line . . .” Here’s how RowdyRoost sees things shaking out:

RowdyRoost [BGN Pro Poster](#) [Post #4650](#) [MyFanPage](#) [Add Buddy](#) [Ignore](#) **The end of the line...** [Reply](#)

Folks... I hate to say it... but the end of the line is in sight.

The BCS ruined college football. With the ongoing conference alignment changes it put us on a time limit to make huge waves. Without a large market... we had to totally depend on our "on-field" results to get ourselves into position. Even then... nothing was guaranteed. Bottom line is that we failed. We were up against the wall and desperately needed an undefeated season (or run undefeated through C-USA for a championship) in order to stay relevant. We haven't done so. We hoped Fedora would take us to the next level that Bower could not. Unfortunately, he couldn't either.

I graduated from another school but adopted Southern Miss as my own (grew up a Southern Miss fan). I've invested a lot of my energy and emotion. But, now I realize that the environment of college football has changed too much. It's simply becoming another "pro" sport. And Southern Miss simply isn't going to have a seat at that table.



RowdyRoost's thread has been viewed more than 250 times, and every reply has been complimentary of RR's logic and conclusions. Of course, Saunders would disagree. In harping on (1) winning, Saunders failed to mention that Fedora is only 23-18 (0.561) since coming to USM, including a Conference-USA record of only 14-11 (0.420), and a bowl record of 1-2 (0.333). In closing out this report, the insert below shows how several USM fans say, via Facebook, they feel about the current football situation:



Michael Jenkins Looks like Southern Miss was all hype this year. 2 straight undisciplined games against bad teams.
6 hours ago

Shawn Potter It's really getting old.
6 hours ago

Randy Davidson getting? Its been old
6 hours ago

Scott Harbison It's damn hard to be a Southern Miss fan.
6 hours ago

Dennis Cochran The Eagles seem to be a great team...in their own minds. I'm greatly disappointed.
6 hours ago