

Meltdown Continues

MORE AND MORE FANS CALLING FOR AD'S OUSTER

With USM's 3-Nov-2012 Homecoming loss to the foundering UAB Blazers, more and more members of the USM family are calling for the replacement of current USM athletics director Jeff Hammond. Many of these are reminding others in the family that Hammond's current contract expires after this fiscal year, so that replacing him will be about as convenient as replacing a Division-I athletics director can be in today's world of intercollegiate athletics.



Of course, calls for Ellis Johnson's ouster have been heard for weeks now. With the 19 to 27 loss to UAB, a game that the Eagles led at halftime by a score of 16 to 0, takes both USM's 2012 record, and Johnson's overall record at USM, to a disturbing 0-9 (i.e., 0 wins and 9 losses). With a trip to Dallas to play the SMU Mustangs on 10-Nov-2012, an 0-10 start to both records seems inevitable at this point.

The week leading up to this past Saturday's homecoming game was strange enough, including what many USM fans believe to be some [very irrational and embarrassing public comments](#) from P.W. Underwood, a former USM head football coach. Underwood praised Johnson's performance thus far, while criticizing Johnson's predecessor, Larry Fedora, whose 2011 USM team went 12-2, including a C-USA Championship and a victory in the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl over Nevada. Underwood's odd rant, which hit the airwaves of a radio call-in show, was almost immediately ridiculed by fan sites such as [www.fireellisjohnson.com](#), as shown by the insert below.



The public ridicule of Johnson is now reaching epic proportions. USM's home, M.M. Roberts Stadium, was more empty than full during Saturday's loss to UAB. Fan angst can now be seen at home games, such as the display of homemade signs at a recent game (see below, left). Other web

sites, such as the [@fakEllisJohnson](#) Twitter account, have posted more humorous takes on the situation (see below, right).



Although it is not difficult to see, with a record of 0-9 thus far, why Johnson is feeling the heat in and around Hattiesburg these days. As for Hammond, USM athletics' record for 2012-13, as of 11:59 pm on 3-Nov-2012, which is captured below, tells the story of the hot seat.

Sport	Wins	Losses	Ties	Batting Avg
Football	0	9	0	0.000
Soccer	4	12	1	0.265
Volleyball	8	17	0	0.320
<i>Overall</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0.245</i>

With the institution searching for a new president, and its athletics department dealing with a deficit between \$1 million and \$1.5 million, it will be an interesting ride for USM fans between now and 31-Dec-2012.