

# Money for Nothing

## *Could USM Run Its Soccer Program Another Way?*

Since the Martha Saunders administration's attempts to deal with the \$15 million FY 2012 budget cut, a number of reports here at USMNEWS.net have [shined a spotlight](#) on the athletics side of USM. One [theme](#) in this series of reports has been the woeful performance of USM's soccer program under head coach Scott Ebke. Ebke, a Saunders hire, has won only 12 times since coming to USM after the 2007 season. Table 1 below lists Ebke's wins for 2008, 2009, and thus far for 2010.

Table 1 – *Scott Ebke's First Two Years*

Year	Wins
2008	South Alabama Northwestern State – LA Arkansas – Little Rock Mississippi Valley State UAB
2009	Nicholls State Southeastern Louisiana Murray State Mississippi Valley State
2010*	Mississippi Valley State Jackson State Northwestern State – LA

\* partial season

As Table 1 above indicates, Ebke's wins have dropped from five in 2008, to four in 2009, and, finally, to only three thus far in 2010. Of these 12 wins, three have come against Mississippi Valley State, and an additional two have come against Northwestern State of Louisiana. If victories against Jackson State and Nicholls State are added, then seven of Ebke's 12 wins since the beginning of 2008 are accounted for by these small, relatively local programs.

With only 12 wins since the beginning of 2008, and against relatively weak programs, one has to wonder what value Ebke is adding to USM's own soccer program. Sources say that Ebke's wins have come against programs that USM has been able to beat with any of its previous head coaches. To some, all a USM coach has to do to defeat these schools is to roll the ball out and let the players play. If so, wouldn't it have been possible to allow some – perhaps only two – of the recently terminated USM faculty to share coaching responsibilities, which would primarily be in the form of supervising the assistant soccer coaches. With course releases and committee work amnesty, two faculty could cover these fall duties. The beauty of such a plan is that it would (1) save the institution the expense of Ebke's salary and benefits, *and* (2) save some of the academic programs slated for elimination, such as religion. With so few wins currently coming each year, it's difficult to envision any *real* costs of such a proposal.