

How much will getting to “the Next Level” in Athletics Cost?

A Guest Study

Much has been said on this website and in the local media about how much money Southern Miss spends on athletics (about \$19 million per year), and how good, or not so good, Southern Miss’s sports teams perform on the fields and courts of competition. This guest study combines the two issues into one by examining the cost per sports victory during (1) the 2008-09 academic year, (2) the 2009-10 academic year, and (3) the 2008-09 and 2009-10 academic years combined. The sports victories numbers are available on this website, thanks to the “Banner Year” reports that come out from time to time.

The cost per sports victory calculations are included in TABLE I below. They are similar for both academic years, at about \$87,000 per sports victory.

TABLE I

Academic Year	Cost per Sports Victory
2008-09	\$87,557
2009-10	\$86,099
Both Years	\$86,818

Most of the Southern Miss fans that I know want the Southern Miss Golden Eagles athletics program to rise to “the next level”. Over the two years in Table 1 above, Southern Miss sports teams won a total of 440 times. This seems impressive, but it’s not. The Golden Eagles lost 482 games and matches over the same time. That means the Eagles won less than 48% of the time they played. The question for Southern Miss is: what is “the next level”? Let’s investigate some scenarios.

TABLE II sets up some “the next level” scenarios, using a 450 game/match academic year, the 2008-09 budget figures, and starting with a 50% winning %.

TABLE II

“the next level”	Extra Cost of Getting There	Necessary Budget Increase %
50%	\$700,325	3.7%
55%	\$2,670,358	14.1%
60%	\$4,640,390	24.4%

None of the Eagles I know would consider 50% “the next level”, yet it would take an additional \$700,000 to get to that level, whatever you want to call it. This would mean that Mr. Richard Giannini would need a 3.7% budget increase. Would 55% be the next level? I don’t think so, and even this would cost more than \$2.6 million, or 14.1% more money that Mr. Giannini now has. I do think 60% overall is something Eagles supporters might think is “the next level”. Look how much more getting there would cost!

What has Southern been getting for the money it has already been spending? Let’s take a look at that, using 2009-10 wins and costs, in Table III.

TABLE III

Opponent	No. Wins Against	Money Spent on Win(s)
Alcorn State	6	\$516,594
Arkansas-Little Rock	2	\$172,198
Arkansas State	1	\$86,099

Barry	1	\$86,099
Belmont	5	\$430,495
Bowling Green State	1	\$86,099
Cal-State Bakersfield	1	\$86,099
Central Arkansas	1	\$86,099
DePauw	1	\$86,099
Dillard	1	\$86,099
Eastern Illinois	1	\$86,099
Florida A&M	2	\$172,198
High Point	1	\$86,099
Jackson State	11	\$947,089
Jacksonville	2	\$172,198
Jacksonville State	1	\$86,099
Kentucky Wesleyan	1	\$86,099
Kennesaw State	1	\$86,099
Lamar	1	\$86,099
LeMoyne	1	\$86,099
Liberty	1	\$86,099
Louisiana-Lafayette	6	\$516,594
Louisiana-Monroe	6	\$516,594
Louisiana Tech	3	\$258,297
Loyola N.O.	1	\$86,099
McNeese State	2	\$172,198
Mercer	2	\$172,198
Mississippi Valley State	2	\$172,198
Missouri State	3	\$258,297
Montana State	1	\$86,099
Murray State	2	\$172,198
New Orleans	5	\$430,495
Nicholls State	5	\$430,495
N.C.-Greensboro	1	\$86,099
Northwestern LA State	4	\$344,396
Oral Roberts	1	\$86,099
Prairie View A&M	1	\$86,099
Saint Mary's	2	\$172,198
Sam Houston State	1	\$86,099
South Alabama	7	\$602,693
Southeastern Louisiana	5	\$430,495
Southern	2	\$172,198
Spring Hill	1	\$86,099
Tennessee State	1	\$86,099
Texas-Arlington	2	\$172,198
Texas-Dallas	1	\$86,099
Texas State	1	\$86,099
Troy	1	\$86,099
West Florida	3	\$258,297
Western Kentucky	1	\$86,099
William Carey	3	\$258,297
TOTALS	119	\$10,245,781

It may be a shock to you, but the Eagles gained 119 wins in 2009-10 against the smaller programs listed above. These wins accounted for more than 53% of all Eagle victories that year, and Southern Miss spent well over \$10 million achieving these wins. Want particulars? Why is Southern Miss spending \$950,000 to defeat Jackson State 11 times each year? Southern Miss spent \$1,635,881 beating Mississippi's three historically black universities (Jackson State, Alcorn, Valley) a total of 19 times last year. To beat historically black universities throughout the south about 30 times, Southern Miss spent well over \$2 million in 2009-10. Why is Southern spending about \$250,000 to beat William Carey 3 times each year? Better yet, why spend about \$500,000 each year defeating Belmont, and about \$400,000 each year beating up on Nicholls State?

These questions are hard to answer.

USMNEWS.net Note: *Readers who are interested in this guest study may also find [USM's \\$2 Million Bruline](#) of interest.*