

Special Report

Basketball Bully

The Mother of all Eustachy-Green Comparisons

As pointed out in the recent USMNEWS.net [study](#) about the *Sagarin Small Colleges + USM Football Poll*, the “inconsistent treatment” by the Martha Saunders administration of USM’s academics and athletics has led to an enormous spotlight being aimed at aspects of the USM athletics programs not widely known by many in the USM family. This *Special Report* continues that focus by comparing the six years of USM men’s basketball under head coach Larry Eustachy to what his predecessor, James Green, was able to accomplish in the six seasons preceding Eustachy. The comparison takes advantage of Jeff Sagarin’s widely acclaimed men’s college basketball power ratings-based national poll. Those familiar with Sagarin’s men’s basketball equations know that they do not include competition by Division I teams against lower division teams. Long-time readers of USMNEWS.net understand that Eustachy has made much of his USM career, such as it is, through matchups against smaller, weaker opponents.

Table 1 – *Eustachy’s Records at USM*

Season	Sagarin Record	Sagarin Ranking	USM Record
2004-05	8-17	123	11-17
2005-06	7-21	256	10-21
2006-07	16-11	115	20-11
2007-08	15-14	109	19-14
2008-09	12-17	144	15-17
2009-10	16-14	123	20-14
TOTALS	74-94	145 (avg)	95-94

As Table 1 above shows, current USM coach Larry Eustachy is credited by Sagarin with an overall record of 74-94 (0.440) over his six seasons at the USM helm. That’s an average annual record of 12.3 wins and 15.7 losses – a dismal situation for USM hoops fans. Eustachy’s highest Sagarin ranking is 109th at the end of the 2007-08 season, one that failed to bring postseason play. The only post-season participation came after 2009-10, when USM lost to Louisiana Tech in the first round of the lowly-regarded CIT. Eustachy’s worst ranking came in at 256th at the end of the 2005-06 season. Over the six years above, Eustachy’s average Sagarin ranking is a troublesome 145th. Interestingly, the USM administration credits Eustachy with 95 total wins, not 74 (see Table 1 above). That is, Eustachy has defeated smaller schools a total of 21 times since taking the helm of the USM men’s basketball program. Thus, his USM-credited record is

95-94 (0.503) over his six years atop the USM program. That's an annual average of 15.8 wins and 15.7 losses.

The section below examines James Green's final six years at the helm of the USM men's basketball program, drawing comparisons to Eustachy's six years in Hattiesburg.

Table 2 - *Green's Final Six Years at USM*

Season	Sagarin Record	Sagarin Ranking	USM Record
1998-99	14-16	123	14-16
1999-00	17-12	88	17-12
2000-01	21-9	45	22-9
2001-02	9-17	189	10-17
2002-03	13-16	158	13-16
2003-04	12-15	154	13-15
TOTALS	86-85	126 (avg)	89-85

As Table 2 above shows, former USM coach James Green is credited by Sagarin with an overall record of 86-85 (0.503) over his last six seasons at the USM helm. That's an average annual record of 14.3 wins and 14.2 losses - a much better performance than his successor, Eustachy, and against much tougher competition. Green's highest ranking was an amazing 45th at the end of the 2000-01 season, one in which USM won the conference championship and advanced to the NIT. Green's worst ranking over this period came in at 189th at the end of the 2001-02 season. This is only 44 spots below Eustachy's *highest ranking* at USM. Over the six years above, Green's average Sagarin ranking is 126th, including a top 100 finish (88th in 1999-00) and a top 50 finish (45th in 2000-01). Lastly, unlike Eustachy, Green competed against *only three smaller schools*, giving him a USM-credited record of 89-85 (0.511).

Interestingly, as in the Fedora-Bower comparison, Eustachy is working off of a much higher salary than Green, and also (1) with a significantly bigger recruiting budget, and (2) in a refurbished Reed-Green Coliseum, complete with loge (luxury) boxes. Still, Green's *Sagarin record* during his last six years at USM, which was 86-85 (0.503), equals Eustachy's record beginning with 2004-05, which is 95-94 (0.503), *against all competition*, including the likes of Spring Hill and Blue Mountain. When will the USM administration wake up and smell hardwood polish regarding Eustachy's six-year run as the USM basketball bully? That's the question that many are now asking.