

Spring has Sprung on USM Athletics

\$1 Million Deficit not Only Concern of Golden Eagles

• An Editorial from Susan Green-Lewis •

With word that the USM athletics department is facing [an audit](#) to determine the source(s) of a more-than-\$1 million [deficit](#), as [well as](#) two [harassment](#) issues, it might seem to [the casual observer](#) that things cannot get [any worse](#) for Golden Eagles sports team. That appearance, however, would be off base, as the spring [sports seasons](#) are coming to a close and some troubling results are being [recorded](#). This begins with the USM baseball program, which has long been the crown jewel of the athletics department. As of 8-May-2012, the Golden Eagles stand at a disappointing 25-22 (0.532), the worst record on the Pete Taylor Park diamond in a number of years. Just three years into the Scott Berry regime sees the Eagles' overall record at only 100-65 (0.606), for a season average of 33.3 wins and 21.7 losses (with a few contests remaining in the third of these three seasons). Long-time readers of USMNEWS.net will recall that Berry's first season at the helm was preceded by USM's only trip to the College World Series in Omaha. That came under former coach Corky Palmer. As of 8-May-2012, the USM Rating Percentage Index (RPI), which is used to determine the post-season field of teams, is only 0.5167, putting the Eagles in 114th-place nationally. As it now stands, USM will not participate in the NCAA baseball tournament for the first time in several years. How much money will *this* cost?

The second year of the Ki Kroll reign over the USM men's tennis program ended with a 9-15 (0.375) record. This may seem dismal to readers, however it comes on the heels of a 3-19 (0.136) record in Kroll's first season at the helm. Still, an overall record of 12-34 (0.261) leaves little hope for the future. Kroll's counterpart on the women's tennis side, Raynie Theis, led the Lady Eagles to a Kroll-like 3-19 (0.136) record in spring of 2012. Theis just completed her third season, one that began [under a cloud](#). Both of these coaches were hired by [outgoing USM president](#) Martha Saunders, as was Berry.

Both of USM's golf teams finished their 2012 seasons with sub-0.500 records – 24-35-1 (0.408) on the [women's side](#), and 26-61 (0.299) on the men's side. Fortunately for [Saunders](#), Eagles athletics supporters can't blame the head coaching hires in these two cases on her administration. The same cannot be said, however, for the Lady Eagles softball program, [now under the direction](#) of *co-head coaches* Kirsten Voak and Jon Malgradi. These two follow Howard Dobson, whose four-year tenure was one of the worst in USM history. Under Dobson, the Lady Eagles went 93-124-2 (0.429), including a record of 17-38 (0.309) in his fourth and final season in 2011. Despite Dobson being the perfect coach (act) for Voak/Malgradi to follow, this year's version of Lady Eagles softball is only 13-33 (0.283) at the moment. The good news is that the 2012 regular season is over. The bad news is that the Lady Eagles qualified, as the last seed, for the 2012 C-USA Tournament. There they open with Tulsa, the #1-ranked team in C-USA. If the Lady Eagles lose, their 2012 season will end at 13-34 (0.277). One has to wonder where "the bottom" is at that point, and [how much more money](#) having two coaches requires, especially when the two coaches seem to underperform their lone predecessor. All that's left is wrapping up the 2012 spring (outdoor) seasons for men's and women's track and field. These teams are led by Kevin Stephen, another Saunders hire. Their 2012 winter (indoor) records were only 1-5 (0.167) and 3-7-1 (0.318), respectively. Stephen's overall record at USM, across both teams, is only 37-101-1 (0.270), which is above the 0.265 performance level so far during 2012. Thus, there is not a lot of reason for hope on the track or on the field in 2012 and beyond.