

When did all this happen?

When did all this happen? is a desperate effort by USM football fans to understand how and why their football team became the worst in the nation. Currently zero wins and twenty losses (0-20) for the past year and a half.

We've seen this kind of analysis. Published some of them, too. It's constructive, from time to time, to review assessments about [When did all this happen?](#) Let's take a look at some of the excerpts.

eaglefever

Post #4610

Denver

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Re: When Did All This Happen???

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It began in 1999.

That's when UAB joined C-USA and ended our recruiting lifeline in Alabama.

Now the almost ready for big time recruits in Alabama go to UAB and Troy and, some, to South Alabama.

We were always an anomaly.

For five decades we thrived under a set of circumstances that no longer exist.

1. USM was Alabama's third big time school. Quality athletes that did not get scholarships to Alabama and Auburn came to USM. There were a dozen or so high school coaches in Alabama that were USM grads. We had a steady flow of very good players out of Alabama. That's not true anymore. We are no longer on the radar among quality players out of Alabama. To a much lesser extent, this is also true in Louisiana. The difference is that Louisiana always had some strong mid-major programs while Alabama didn't.

2.

There was a time when high school football in the State of Mississippi was as good as any other state in the southern U.S. That's not true anymore. Mississippi high school teams can't compete with schools of similar size in surrounding states. Keeping Mississippi high school football players academically qualified is a full-time job. I'm not saying Mississippi isn't producing some NFL potential players, but I am saying there is not enough of them to field one college team capable of playing in the Top 25.

3. The college football landscape is completely changed from where it was in 2000. The big programs

have gotten bigger and more exclusive. Now they are simply playing at a different level.

The period 2000 to 2005 was the turning point for USM. All the schools at our level that we traditionally beat made their move. We failed. Schools we had dominated for most of the post WWII era simply passed us by. It is now clear we had devastating internal personnel issues that were ripping us apart in addition to the obstacles listed in my points 1 and 2. By the time we realized we had been left behind...it was too late to fix the problem.

Anyone who watched us play from 2000 to 2005 could see the storyline emerging. We were not beating good teams with winning records.

2000 8-4 4 wins against schools with winning record (USF, Tulane, UAB, TCU had winning records that year)
2001 6-5 1 win against a school with winning record (UAB)
2002 7-6 0 wins against schools with winning record
2003 9-4 4 wins against schools with winning record (Memphis, USF, TCU, Houston)
2004 7-5 2 wins against schools with winning record (UAB, North Texas)
2005 7-5 1 win against schools with winning record (UCF)

73 games

12 wins against teams with a winning record.

The two wins against TCU are the standout wins among those schools with winning records although wins over Alabama, OK State, and Nebraska (all of whom had losing records) occurred during that span.

The reason I used the 2000 - 2005 time span is because that was the time span in which the other schools in the conference that went "big time" made their move at precisely the same time our ties to Alabama recruiting were being cut. *We even lost three games to Memphis during a critical five-year span.* We did not beat Louisville. We went 2-2 with Cincinnati, losing our last game to them 52 - 14 (does that score look familiar?).

Bottom line...We didn't make a move when we needed to. We adjusted too late and when we did adjust, we hired a guy who failed to find recruits who could keep it going. If we are to succeed in the future, someone will be forced to

find a new way to do it. The old formula that carried us for 50 years won't work in the future. The Internet prevents us from finding sleepers like Reggie and Bret and the Nix Brothers and a long list of fantastic linebackers and D linemen. The 2011 team was a legit Top 25 team, but repeating that is a dream. It was an anomaly. The guy "eaglefever" is an absolute traitor to everything USM.
11/3 5:21 PM | IP: Logged

Aub Bry

Redshirt
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^^^yep^^^
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BR Eagle

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Baton Rouge
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Re: When Did All This Happen???

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Excellent points eaglefever.
But the question is....Where do you go from here? We can't turn back the clock, so we have to move forward and get it right this time....if that is even possible??

Suggestions?
Viva Las Vegas
11/3 8:31 PM | IP: Logged

DCEAGLES

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Washington D.C.
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Re: When Did All This Happen???

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Excellent analysis Eaglefever. The future fans of Southern Miss football will not be burdened by the expectations of being a Top 25 team, or going to a good bowl at the end of the season, or even of being giant killers. I don't realistically see those things happening again either for the reasons pointed out. I see the future Southern Miss football fan base as being much smaller than it was in 2011, but more tighter knit, like fans of Appalachian State....
11/3 10:37 PM | IP: Logged

Beemer Boy

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Great analysis, Eaglefever. What happened to Mississippi high school football?
11/4 10:16 AM | IP: Logged

eaglefever

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Denver
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I'll get into a lot of trouble.

BUT

In much of the state there is a general deterioration of the public school system.

1. There are counties where the school system is the only employer in the county and lots of others where the school system is the largest employer in the county. Many of those systems have elected superintendents, which makes the school district nothing but a patronage system. School teachers (and coaches) are not chosen because they are competent. They are chosen because they can deliver votes when the school district superintendent is chosen. In some school districts the school board members are elected, and many of the same dynamics are in place, but to a lesser degree.

2. There is a huge culture in the state in which there is no family structure. There may be as many as 60% of students in some school districts who do not have fathers in their home, maybe 80%. That problem is growing worse. With no family structure, education is at a standstill and graduation rates plummet.

The culture that produced so many great football players in Mississippi in the past is gone...well...with the wind.

There are still some great athletes in public and private schools, but the leadership needed to enhance their abilities is either non existent or faces obstacles that either can't be overcome or that can be overcome only by taking so much time and attention that the primary mission is compromised.

But...but...but EF, Alabama doesn't seem to be having a problem...blah...blah...blah

The demographics in Mississippi are unique to Mississippi. Alabama has 4.8 million people, Mississippi has 2.9 million people. The issues I presented in #1 and #2 above does not apply in Alabama. The guy "eaglefever" is an absolute traitor to everything USM.
11/4 12:02 PM | IP: Logged

fiveagles



Starter
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Re: When Did All This Happen???

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wow eagle fever that was well written and well thought out. I think you nailed it. I told somebody the other day we used to get those alabama boys that weren't good enough for alabama and Auburn whip peoples tails.

11/4 12:54 PM | IP: Logged

DCEAGLES

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EagleFever's hypothesis for "What happened to the Southern Miss

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football program?" appears to be the leading contender so far...
11/4 5:33 PM | IP: Logged

The question that should be asked is, should USM continue to squander hundreds of millions on Big Money college sports?