



POSTGAME NOTES

GAME 11 • #16 MISSISSIPPI STATE (8-3, 4-3 SEC) AT ARKANSAS (4-7, 1-6 SEC) • NOV. 18, 2017 • RAZORBACK STADIUM

TEAM NOTABLES

- Mississippi State won the toss and elected to defer until the second half. MSU has won the toss eight times over its 11 games this season.
- Running back Nick Gibson made his first-career start against the Razorbacks. He is the 12th first-time starter this season and the sixth on offense.
- For the first time this season, MSU lost a fumble on offense as Nick Gibson fumbled on the first play of State's second drive of the game, breaking a streak of 496 consecutive carries without losing a fumble on offense.
- With today's victory, head coach Dan Mullen earned his 69th victory of his tenure and is just six away from tying Jackie Sherrill's school-record mark of 75 wins.
- The victory cut Arkansas lead in the all-time series to 16-11-1. The road team has now won the last three meetings.
- The win earned MSU its fifth eight-win season under Dan Mullen, which ties Allyn McKeen for the most ever by an MSU coach.
- Facing a 14-0 deficit after the first quarter, the victory ties for the second-largest comeback for MSU. The Bulldogs have overcome a 14-point deficit on eight previous occasions. The last came on Nov. 22, 2008 versus Arkansas. MSU went on to win that contest by a final score of 31-28.
- MSU's senior class have now won 33 games, which ties the 2000 senior class for the third-winningest class in MSU history.
- Today's attendance was 64,153.

PLAYER NOTABLES

- During MSU's first offensive drive, Nick Fitzgerald fumbled for the first time this season to break a streak of 179 consecutive carries without a fumble by the quarterback.
- Fitzgerald cut Arkansas lead to 14-7 with 5:17 remaining in the first half with an 18-yard rushing touchdown. It was the 33rd rushing score of his career and the 14th of the season. Fitzgerald is now tied for fourth on MSU's single-season rushing touchdowns charts with Dak Prescott (2014), Anthony Dixon (2007) and Harry Furman (1907).
- Aeris Williams locked the game at 14-14 with an 8-yard score with 2:18 remaining in the first half. The score was his fifth of the season, which sets a career high. Williams totaled 71 yards and a touchdown on 19 carries to average 3.7 yards per carry. He also reeled in two passes for 27 yards receiving.
- With 3:57 remaining in the fourth quarter, Fitzgerald hit Reggie Todd for a 37-yard touchdown to tie the game at 21-21. The touchdown was the first of Todd's career. Fitzgerald gave MSU its 27-21 lead with a 6-yard touchdown pass to Dedrick Thomas with 17 seconds remaining in the game.
- Nick Fitzgerald totaled 101 yards rushing and 153 yards passing to grab 254 yards of total offense. Fitzgerald added three scores - two passing and one rushing. Today was the sixth time this season that Nick Fitzgerald has rushed for 100 yards and the 14th time of his career.
- Fitzgerald passes Derrick Taite (1993-96) for third all-time in MSU history as he has now thrown for 39 career touchdowns. He also has 15 touchdowns this season, tying Don Smith (1985) for sixth in MSU single-season history.
- Reggie Todd matched his career high with three catches for a career-high 50 yards against Arkansas.
- Montez Sweat set a career-high with 2.5 sacks to bring his season total to 9.0, which ties Tyrone Keys (1979), Billy Jackson (1982) and Preston Smith (2014) for ninth on MSU's single-season chart.
- Defensively, Cameron Dantzler set a career high with four tackles, while Chris Rayford set a season high with four tackles.
- Trailing by a touchdown with 1:08 remaining in the third quarter, Jonhnathan Abram forced his first-career fumble that was scooped up by Marquiss Spencer, his second recovery of the season.
- With 1:42 left in the first quarter, Jace Christmann attempted and missed a 46-yard field goal. It was his first miss of the 2017 season. Christmann's 9-for-10 start to the season is the best by a MSU kicker since Westin Graves opened the 2015 season connecting on his first nine attempts.
- Christmann went 3-for-3 on PAT attempts against Arkansas to bring his total to 36-for-36 on the season. His 36 made PATs ties Derek DePasquale (2011) and Vic Nickles (1974) for sixth in MSU single-season history.



VS



RAZORBACKS 2017 FOOTBALL

ARKANSAS VS MISSISSIPPI STATE • NOVEMBER 18, 2017

DONALD W. REYNOLDS RAZORBACK STADIUM • FAYETTEVILLE, ARK.

POSTGAME NOTES: No. 16 MISSISSIPPI STATE 28, ARKANSAS 21

GENERAL NOTES

- Attendance: 64,153
- Arkansas' captains were Austin Allen, Santos Ramirez, Frank Ragnow and Kevin Richardson II.
- Flag Holders: United States - Kendrick Jackson; Arkansas - Jack Kraus
- Mississippi State won the opening coin toss and deferred its option to the second half. Arkansas received the opening kick.

TEAM NOTES

OFFENSE

- After recovering a muffed punt following its opening drive, Arkansas went 3-plays, 36-yards to take the early 7-0 lead.
- Used a 10-play, 75-yard drive on its first possession of the second half to take a 21-14 lead.
- Arkansas has 19 drives of 10+ plays this season. The Razorbacks have scored a TD on 15 of its 18 drives of 10+ plays.
- Went 2-for-2 inside the red zone with two touchdowns.
- The Razorbacks are 26-of-28 in the red zone over the last nine games, scoring 22 touchdowns and four field goals.

DEFENSE

- On State's second offensive possession, McTelvin Agim forced his second fumble of the game, as Briston Guidry recovered it in the endzone for a touchdown.
- It was the Bulldogs first offensive lost fumble of the season.
- The fumble recovered for a touchdown was Arkansas' third defensive score this season, all fumbles.
- Arkansas held Mississippi State to 130 total yards of offense in the first half, forcing two fumbles, 2.0 sacks and 5.0 tackles for loss.
- It's 5.0 tackles for loss in the first half is more than any game total since the Texas A&M game, when Arkansas recorded 5.0 tackles for loss the entire game.
- Arkansas tied its season high in TFL's with 6.0. Mississippi State came into the game giving up the second fewest tackles for loss in the SEC, fifth in the country.

PLAYER NOTES

DL McTelvin Agim

- On Mississippi State's first offensive possession, Agim recorded two tackles, one 6-yard sack and a forced his first career fumble to hold the Bulldogs to a three-and-out.
- It is Agim's second full sack of the season, fourth of his career.
- On State's second drive, Agim forced his second fumble of the game, being recovered by DL Briston Guidry for a touchdown in the endzone.
- Agim finished with nine tackles, one sack, 2.5 tackles for loss and two forced fumbles.
- His nine tackles and one sack both tie a career high, while his 2.5 tackles for loss and two forced fumbles set a new career mark.

QB Austin Allen

- Allen went 11-of-17 or 119 yards.

DB Kamren Curl

- Curl broke up a third-down passing attempt on State's first possession of the second half, forcing a fourth-down attempt that was not converted.
- It is Curl's eighth PBU this season.

LB Dre Greenlaw

- Led the team with 10 total tackles, to bring his season total to 92.
- Greenlaw has five double-digit tackle games, three coming against SEC teams, four against Power 5 opponents.

DL Briston Guidry

- Recovered a fumble in the endzone to give Arkansas the 14-0 lead.
- It was Guidry's second recovery of the season.

LB De'Jon Harris

- Recorded eight tackles to bring his season total to 101.
- He is the first Razorback since Brooks Ellis in 2015 to record 100 tackles in a season.
- Arkansas has had a linebacker record 100 tackles or more in a season in three of the last four years.

WR Jordan Jones

- Tied for the team lead in receptions with two, going for 20 yards.
- Both receptions resulted in a first down.

LB Grant Morgan

- Recorded his first career sack, dropping Mississippi State quarterback Nick Fitzgerald 9-yards to force a punt.
- It is Morgan's second full tackle for loss of the season.
- Morgan finished with 2.0 tackles for loss, bringing his season total to 3.5.

TE Jeremy Patton

- Hauled in one reception for 10 yards and a first down.
- Over the last three games, he has eight receptions for 103 yards.

LB Randy Ramsey

- Tallied seven total tackles, one half for loss, one pass break up and one quarterback hurry.
- He has three games of six-plus tackles against SEC opponents this season.

WR Deon Stewart

- Led Arkansas in receiving with two receptions for 44 yards, both resulting in first downs.

WR De'Vion Warren

- Returned one kick for 20 yards.
- Over the past five games, Warren has tallied 460 return yards on 16 returns for an average of 28.9 yards per return.
- His 686 return yards this season ranks third in school history, trailing on Dennis Johnson in 2008 (905) and 2009 (1,031).

RB Devwah Whaley

- Rushed 12 times for 21 yards and one touchdown.
- Capped off a 10-play, 75-yard drive with a 1-yard score.
- Whaley has a rushing touchdown in four of the last five games, including three straight.
- He has scored a touchdown in five straight games (rushing - 4, receiving - 1).
- His third-quarter TD rush, tied Razorback running back David Williams for the team lead in rushing touchdowns this season with six each.

RB David Williams

- Led Arkansas in rushing with 75 yards on the ground on eight attempts and one touchdown.
- Accounted for 16 yards and a touchdown on Arkansas' 3-play, 36-yard drive to take the early 7-0 lead.
- Williams' is tied with Whaley for the team lead in rushing scores with six this season.



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POSTGAME QUOTES: MISSISSIPPI STATE HEAD COACH DAN MULLEN

On the touchdown to tie the game at 21...

"He ran a perfect route. I think it was third down and to that point, we had been trying to run the ball and pound away. They started crowding the line of scrimmage and so you get one-on-one's when that happens. We thought we could get good protection on the play and we did. Everybody filled to try and stop the run. Fitzgerald, after missing a couple of throws in the game, I think, threw a strike on that one."

On if there was a hangover from the Alabama game...

"I don't think so. We had great week of preparation. It's late in the season and you come out to a tough environment on a windy and cold day. The ball didn't bounce our way all game long. When we evaluate the film, every coach and player can say this can be better. I thought our guys were ready to go, they had a great attitude all week. We're playing a tough team on the road in November in the SEC. It's tough to win that way."

On quarterback Nick Fitzgerald's game...

"I think it shows his maturity that when he has a tough game, he can bounce back late and make big plays. I'm sure he's frustrated as the game goes on, but just play the next play. Maturity was probably the best part of his performance today."



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POSTGAME QUOTES: ARKANSAS HEAD COACH BRET BIELEMA

Opening Statement ...

"Unfortunately came up short. The part that our guys did from last Sunday to where we are today, we knew they were going to give their very best to get a victory out there today. Prepared all week. Obviously a lot of noise going on and everything but they just stayed focused on the task at hand.

I really give my hat to Mississippi State to come back and get the victory and earn it. Two tough games for them back-to-back. Our guys really played with great energy, great composure.

Did a lot of things during the course of the week to get us to where we were. They really I think bought into everything we asked them to do. I couldn't be more proud of where they are at. Very, very upset locker room, very emotional. Guys got a lot invested in today's game and to come up short is tough.

Injury-wise, just kind of piecing it together. Unfortunately just a lot of guys. Hjalte (Froholdt) bless his heart, tried to go out there today and just couldn't maintain it, sustain it. He did everything he could to get back out there. It was just an ankle injury. He couldn't push off.

And Zach Rogers, they told us he was going to be out; he came out, obviously got cleared by the doctors but gave us everything he could and short number there on the offensive line.

And maybe Devwah (Whaley) really got hit pretty good there on that boundary shot and knocked him out and was concussed, so obviously had to pull him out.

And then just a couple guys during course of the game got banged up but went back in. Austin Allen, I know it's getting down to the end for him here, and I know he was going to do everything he could to be back out there. He rallied and got back out.

But other than that, I don't think anything's overly serious. We'll have a lot better feeling tomorrow.

We have one week, short week, obviously with a game on Friday. So we have a tremendous amount of work starting tomorrow and some things we've already done in preparation for Missouri. So this is always a unique prep just because they have classes Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. We'll go a little bit early and Thursday will be day before the game. Everybody else celebrating turkey day.

I think our guys will lock in. A little bit of solace that we can win at home and have an opportunity to get to a victory for that senior class walking out. Not a lot of guys in the class but a lot of really, really good people and a lot of players that we've grown a lot with and battled through a lot.

So it's going to be an exciting week and I think our guys will answer for."

Q. You said the "outside noise." This is a two-part question. First, do you feel like if the season was going in a different direction, there wouldn't be all of that outside noise? And second, the fourth down call to go for it instead of punt the ball there late.

"So outside noise, obviously with Jeff's (Long) announcement on Wednesday, there's going to be. But it's probably easier when people, once you're in the room to realize it really wasn't hard for -- a lot of guys, including myself, are close to Jeff. It's kind of one of those moments, you take a deep breath, realize what happened.

I thought the way that our players, not only our players but a lot of student athletes reached out to Jeff and said things wasn't surprising, but also heartwarming I'm sure for him. Makes you feel like you're doing right by the kids at least.

The idea to go for it on fourth, we had run the part during the course of the game earlier, we had run two similar fourth down or goal line situations where we run a play that looks just like it. We never run the play-action pass off of it.

Unfortunately J-Nance (Jonathan Nance) was the guy that was supposed to be in there and he had to get brought out because of the injury. Thought we had a real good shot. We made a decision at halftime that the next critical down, short yardage, we were going to go for it. We said the night before, last night, we're going to go do everything we can to win this game. We're going to do everything we can to keep swinging, keep fighting and obviously that was an example of it."

Q. Coaches seemed displeased about something on that play, as well. You got some bounces, hit off a guy's back and kicked ball down to the one. Did you feel like it was going to be your day based on those type of plays?

"There were. You talking about the fumble with David (Williams)? And obviously there are a couple that went against us, too.

There are some plays that -- but you can't sit around and wait for breaks. You have to create your breaks. The guys were battling again. Again, I think you get breaks when you start playing and playing really hard and playing really physical and I think our guys did that."

Q. Have you been given any indication from above as to how Jeff's firing affects you and what is your concern level right now for your future?

"No. Haven't -- obviously I've had conversations with Julie (Cromer Peoples), but nothing with reflection to other than just try to do everything we could to win this game, do everything we can to win the next game. We have recruits in town, do our best to get ready for recruiting season and the year ahead of us.

My anxiety or thoughts or feelings are not any different from week one to where we are now. As a head coach, you may not believe that but it's really the way I operate. For the guys that know me, I line up and do my job. There are things that are all around you that really take that thinking out of your hands.

That's why you have a coaching style, you have a faith, you have a belief, you have a coaching staff, you have players that you've recruited, you have contracts, you have everything around you that don't make you think like that. I get why we have to, and I get, Jeff was my boss. I get it -- or the next level from me in administration. But it's really not difficult to think of anything other than our players."

Q. When did Dylan Hays move back to offense and what did you think of the defense?

"Dylan moved back probably three weeks ago, I think had we officially lost Frank (Ragnow), if I'm not mistaken. I could be wrong. That week was when we were low on numbers. A couple guys were in question, so we moved Dylan back to offense. I know it's been at least three weeks.

The defense, they came out, they were fired up. Huge turnovers in the first half that had a huge impact on the game. That's what we're preaching to our guys. Not to overstate the obvious, but when you make plays, good things happen, and great energy.

It carries over to the entire defense. Obviously the flip side of it when they created turnovers, and then on the bad snap with the punt there to get that deep shadow. But I thought second half, guys came in, we rebooted and did some things a little bit different the second half to give us a chance, and just running out of dogs. I mean, running out of people to get out there.

We've been unfortunately very, very -- certain guys at certain positions, but if we can't overcome a lot at the same position. There's a point there we are down to our third string center, and I don't think I've ever had that in my coaching career and that's kind of the glue of everything you've got on offense."

Q. Sosa (Agim) again, seemed to come out with a surge?

"Sosa has grown every game. He's obviously very, very talented player. But maturity-wise, I think that's the part that's exciting for our guys. You see this morning, again, so we have the way we dismiss the guys for pregame meal, it's like, seniors, and there's literally like seven guys that sit up that travels with us. I right away called juniors, and I yelled, sophomores and two third, it's like half, two thirds of the room stands up and goes, and he's in that sophomore class. There's a lot of talent around him. He's understanding the big picture really, really well.

I think you saw that first turnover, he just saw that he had a chance to track it and hit it, and I think Briston (Guidry) came up with it, the redshirt freshman. Briston was pretty emotional after the game. I know he had a lot invested. He came up and said something to me before the game. I knew he was into it. It was good."

Q. Just looking back, you talked about being close and --

"I didn't say that. I know you like to play with that word, but I didn't say it."

Q. What's that?

"I didn't say it was close."

Q. Sorry, about looking back over the season, I know you said a couple times that things, you're getting close or whatever and you've been optimistic. Can you kind of sum up what this year has been like

"Yeah, this was a case in point today. Put a lot of time, a lot of effort and our guys believed in the way the game started, you saw they have every intention of not only just expecting or playing to win, expecting to win. You know, they do so many positive things.

Made a couple guys that made plays in the first half, rebounded in the second half after that momentum swung. You know, I did share with those guys because I made the point on Sunday, this team, everybody watching last Saturday night, Mississippi State played Alabama down to the wire and unfortunately they lost at the end of the game to a team that's ranked No. 1 in the country.

So coming into this week, we knew where they were playing at and now we get down to the very final drive and the flipside of it happens to us. So it's just how delicate that winning edge is and the ability to pull through in those moments.

I think our guys are learning some valuable life lessons. It's just whether or not they want to choose to learn from them. They are. They will come back. They will practice this week and they will be ready to play and give everything they can for Missouri."

Q. When you're in the fourth quarter like that and you're at home, and you expect to probably have more fans, could it have made a difference if the stadium was a little bit more full?

"You might want to ask the kids that. I didn't feel that. I thought our guys were really, really fired up. There was great energy on the sidelines. I really don't turn around and look at the stands other than obviously when you're walking in. But I don't know what the announced crowd was or anything like that. I have no idea.

But fans were there. Thank you very much. It was a good game. Hopefully they want a win just as bad as we do. The ones that showed up today are the ones that are strong in faith and I appreciate it."

Q. The fourth and two pass, is (LaMichael) Pettway, that deep ball, is that the first option there?

"There's a couple."

Q. What gave you confidence you could hit that?

"So that's, again, that's a play off several times this year when we've been in short yardage situations or after a big play where we run -- you know, one scored earlier for a touchdown, and there's one, I believe it was the second touchdown, we ran the same play.

So it's a run play-action pass off of it. Again, we really felt good about the call. Made the decision to run with it. You know, there's a variety of guys that could run that route but it was, again, probably just a little bit on execution, as well as the throw. We were hoping to get a call on the other guy by the official, too, but obviously didn't happen."

Q. Cole (Kelley) was in the stands in the student section today. Do you have an update on what may transpire with him?

"Cole Kelly, yeah, he came in on Sunday. We had a lengthy conversation. Monday, after I talked to administration and told them what the plan was, was going to go through some protocol that he has to go through within the university.

Biggest thing I want him to do, this is a huge learning curve, learning moment for him. He has such a bright future and has so many positive things in front of him. Saw him a couple times during the course of the week. When we suspend a player, we don't remove him from anything other than football. He's got full use -- obviously he's got a turf-toe; he's obviously getting treatment every day. Full use of the academic facilities. Dining is available in the Jones Center.

I know he was down during the course of the week. Had some communication with him, but if he checks all the boxes that I asked him to check before this week was over, which I think he's done, seen him making contact with all the people he has to, he'll be back with us on Sunday and be able to engage with us last week."

Q. What did Briston (Guidry) say to you?

"Before the game? Just "Get this one, Coach." Came up and gave me a big hug. Briston is a neat kid. He's a guy we offered early on and very emotional player, and a guy that I think has grown a lot. He's just been here two years, but the growth that he's had beyond football is absolutely awesome. That's the stuff that you get into it for."

Q. I know you wanted to give Ty (Storey) some reps. What was the call or the mindset behind putting him in on third?

"Yeah, there was a play, it was actually something that we had repped going way back when Cole was there and when Cole wasn't there, a couple weeks ago when we didn't know if he was going to be healthy, you know. So Ty had run all those reps.

But that play right there, they gave us a different stem at the last moment. We should have had some guys blocking down and would have made the play bounce to the outside.

But Ty has had probably, the last two weeks of practice here, been very, very clean. He's a guy that has a lot invested and has been waiting for his opportunities, so we really wanted to try to give him a rep out there today. The way the first play worked, made us hesitant to go back to it."

Q. I know you still have one more game left this season, but if you look back, where did it starting to wrong?

"That's probably a good question. Too much focused on what's happened probably to give you the best answer.

I know as you go through a season as a head coach, you always just kind of take the week that just happened and the week in front of you. You don't really have a chance to sit down and look at, hey, this happened, this happened, this didn't happen. I would say three things probably jump out.

Obviously when we weren't able to convert and do things in the second half, offense, defense, gave us issues when we were able to do it, we had success. You know, I'm not going to sit up here and poor-boy injuries, but there was injuries that had a huge effect on not just the field, but the locker room. The way we do things, when your seniors and your juniors and guys in this positions that are some of your best leaders on the field, are also your best voices, and to take that out of it is very, very difficult.

And then you know, just as this league is, the SEC and the SEC West in particular, it's merciless, once you're into it, there's no reprieve. There's no -- every game is going to be a struggle.

And obviously this week with Missouri, you look at where they were at earlier in the year, I don't know if they played yet even today. I know they have Vanderbilt. In this league, it's literally survive each week in advance, I think whether you're in first place or last place, I think that's kind of where everybody's at."