

# MISSISSIPPI STATE

## FOOTBALL

### 2024 POSTGAME NOTES & QUOTES

#### Mississippi State 56, Eastern Kentucky 7

Game	01
Date	Aug. 31, 2024
Location	Starkville, Miss.
Stadium	Davis Wade Stadium (Scott Field)
Kickoff Time	5:03 p.m. CT
End Time	8:18 p.m. CT
Total Time	3:15
Attendance	48,724
Weather	84 degrees & cloudy with rain
TV	SECN+ / ESPN+
Records	
Mississippi State	1-0 Overall 0-0 SEC
Eastern Kentucky	0-1 Overall 0-0 UAC

Score By Quarter	1	2	3	4	OT	F
Eastern Kentucky	0	7	0	0	-	7
Mississippi State	14	21	7	14	-	56

#### Series History vs. Eastern Kentucky

- Mississippi State leads the all-time series 1-0
- First meeting in Starkville ... MSU leads 1-0 when the game is played in Starkville

#### GENERAL NOTES

- » Game Captains: Hayes Hammond (LS), Hunter Washington (S), Seydou Traore (TE)
- » Coin Toss: Mississippi State won the toss & elected to receive
- » Uniform Combo (Record): White (H) / Maroon (J) / White (P) | (1-0)
- » Today's game marked the first-ever meeting between Mississippi State and Eastern Kentucky
- » This was just the 11th time in State's 125 seasons of football that they played a game in the month of August.
- » Head Coach Jeff Lebbey coached his first game on the sideline since he was a student assistant at Oklahoma.

#### TEAM NOTES

- » Mississippi State has scored in 45 consecutive games dating back to Oct. 21, 2020
- » Mississippi State improved to 90-33-2 all-time in season openers. This was State's eighth straight season-opening victory.
- » Head coach Jeff Lebbey won his first career game as a head coach. Coach Lebbey becomes the seventh straight MSU head coach to win their State debut.
- » The Bulldogs have won 10 straight non-conference games dating back to Sept. 3, 2022. Since 2017, Mississippi State is 26-5 in non-conference games.
- » The Bulldogs have won 12 straight home games against non-conference opponents dating back to Nov. 23, 2019.
- » State extended its winning streak over FCS opponents to 19 consecutive wins, and by holding ECU to under 10 points, MSU has now held 11 opponents to under 10 points during this stretch.
- » Mississippi State has scored in 45 consecutive games dating back to Oct. 21, 2020.
- » Blake Shapen's 65-yard touchdown strike to Jordan Mosley tied the Bulldogs longest scoring play from the 2023 season and tied the second-longest offensive scoring play since Oct. 1, 2022, against Texas A&M.
- » State scored 35 points in the first half, the most points in a half since Nov. 19, 2022, against ETSU.
- » State's six touchdowns scored by six different players is tied for the most in a single game since Nov. 19, 2022, against East Tennessee State.
- » State scored 56 points the most in a game since they scored 56 against ETSU in 2022.
- » Mississippi State had 18 freshman play including 15 true freshmen, 23 non-freshmen newcomers also played in today's game.

#### OFFENSIVE NOTES

- » Blake Shapen hit Jordan Mosley down the sideline for a 65-yard touchdown in the first quarter. This was Shapen's first touchdown pass as a Bulldog.
- » Jordan Mosley's 65-yard touchdown reception was his longest career reception, and second touchdown grab of his career.
- » Kevin Coleman made his first career grab as a Bulldog during the second drive of the game.
- » Blake Shapen ran in a touchdown from four yards out in the first quarter for his first rushing touchdown at State.
- » Creed Whittemore ran a reverse 41 yards to the endzone in the second quarter. Whittemore has now scored a rushing touchdown in back-to-back season openers for the Bulldogs.
- » Blake Shapen found Kevin Coleman in the back of the endzone for a 23-yard score in the second quarter. This was Coleman's first touchdown grab as a Bulldog.
- » Blake Shapen completed a 54-yard pass to Mario Craver for a touchdown in the second quarter. The touchdown was also the first grab in Craver's career.
- » Davon Booth ran in his first touchdown for the Maroon & White from one yard out in the third quarter.
- » Shapen's 247 passing yards were the most in a debut since K.J. Costello (623 yards) on Sept. 26, 2020, at LSU.
- » Blake Shapen has now thrown a touchdown pass in 12 straight games dating back to Nov. 19, 2022. Shapen has also thrown for over 200 yards in eight of his last nine starts.
- » Jordan Mosley had a career-high 104 receiving yards in the game. He came into the game with 95 career receiving yards. Mosley's 104 yards are the 126th all-time 100-yard receiving game in program history.

## DEFENSIVE NOTES

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- » Defensive players who made their first career starts (4): Isaac Smith, Kelley Jones, Brylan Lanier, Kedrick Bingley-Jones.
- » Elijah Cannon intercepted a pass and ran it back for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter. The pick was the first of his career and came in his first career game.
- » Calvin Dinkins recorded his first career sack.
- » Isaac Smith, Brylan Lanier, Sulaiman Kpaka, Hunter Washington, Branden Jennings, and Zakari Tillman all set new career-highs in tackles.
- » This is the sixth time in the past five seasons that MSU has held an opponent under 10 points in a game.
- » This is the second straight time the Bulldogs have held an opponent under 10 points in the season opener.

## SPECIAL TEAMS NOTES

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- » Hayes Hammond has served as the team's long snapper in 27 straight games dating back to Nov. 25, 2021.
- » In the fourth quarter JP Purvis blocked a punt and Mario Craver returned it for a touchdown, this marks the second straight year where Mississippi State has returned a blocked punt for a touchdown in the opening game.
- » The Bulldogs recorded their most total return yards in a game since at least 2010.

## HEAD COACH JEFF LEBBY QUOTES

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### *On overall performance of game, good and teachable moments*

"I think there was a whole lot of good. Proud of our guys for their energy and their competitive spirit, the toughness they played with but there are so many things to clean up I think that's the biggest takeaway is that you got a chance to go win the way we won but we are going to need to play better, play cleaner and that's what we are going to look forward to as we get back into it."

### *On energy of the team*

"I think our guys understand that we want to have fun doing it every single day. Every single Saturday we want to have fun. You get so few opportunities at this thing and to have the ability to come out and open the season at home, our energy should've been through the roof, and we should've played as if we were having fun. That was the expectation. Again, I love where our guys are mentally and how much we've come together in a short amount of time, and we are going to need that as we get going later on in the season."

### *On Isaac Smith's performance*

"I saw a guy playing the game the way it's supposed to be played. A guy that is violent when he gets to the football, he is playing incredibly hard, has plenty of things to clean up but, that part of it is evident. If we can get 11 guys every single snap playing in that way, I think we have a chance to get done what we are trying to get done."

## PLAYER QUOTES

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### **QB Blake Shapen**

#### *On how the team played in the season opener*

"I feel like it was a good day for us. There were obviously some things that we can clean up and get better at, but I feel like overall it was a good start to the season."

#### *On how it felt playing with the new group of players for the first time*

"I'm just thankful for this opportunity at a new place at Mississippi State, and I know a lot of other guys feel that way and it was fun to be able to come out together for the first time and play at Davis Wade. It was an exciting time for us and something that we were looking forward to and now it's under our belt."

### **S Isaac Smith**

#### *On having a good game after a frustrating last season*

"It was great. You know, just coming off the season I had last year and, getting to go out there today and do what I did on the defensive side of the ball, I think we held them to 3.9 yards, average. It was big for me coming out here and being able to play, fly around and have fun today, it feels so good."

#### *On communicating on defense to make big plays*

"That was one of our biggest things, talking about pregame and communication on all sides of every position during the game. I feel like as a whole our defensive staff and our coach, Coach Bourne, emphasized that communication and playing our man and doing our own job was a key role tonight. Yeah, communication was the main thing. We kept that the main thing."

### **LB Brandon Jennings**

#### *On effort in the game*

"Our defense is very versatile; we are asked to do a lot. I really like it. We get to play all over the ball, it puts us in different variations."

#### *On the linebackers and defensive backs making a lot of big plays*

"We knew what they were going to try and come out and do. They were trying to gut us and hit us with cuts, but we were prepared. We just came out and executed tonight."

**WR Jordan Mosley***On the experience of the game*

"It's kind of surreal. I'm blessed to be in this position. I give all the glory to God. I thank my teammates, and everybody that put trust in me to go out there and make plays. The football part is easy, the preparation is the hard part."

*On his touchdown reception*

"It was crazy. He was flat footed, and I just ran past him and looked up and the ball was in the air. Everything slowed down. I didn't really know what to do when I went to the end zone. I kind of hopped around. It was a great moment to have my family here and all my friends to share that moment with me. It was awesome."