



MISSISSIPPI STATE FOOTBALL POSTGAME NOTES

Mississippi State vs. Louisiana

August 31, 2019 | Mercedes-Benz Superdome | New Orleans, La.

Team Notes

- MSU's game captains were QB **Tommy Stevens**, P/H **Kody Schexnayder**, S **Brian Cole II**, LB **Erroll Thompson** and 73 **Darryl Williams**.
- Louisiana won the toss and elected to defer. MSU received the opening kickoff.
- Today's attendance was 22,440.
- Bulldogs making their first career starts (8 – 4 defense, 4 offense): DE **Chauncey Rivers**, DT **Jaden Crumedy**, DT **Fabien Lovett**, DE **Marquiss Spencer**; LT **Tyre Phillips**, LG **Dareuan Parker**, WR **Cameron Gardner**, QB **Tommy Stevens**.
- Bulldogs making their first career appearances (10): CB **Martin Emerson Jr.**, CB **Jarrian Jones**, WR **JaVonta Payton**, QB **Tommy Stevens**, WR **Isaiah Zuber**, S **Collin Duncan**, S **Aadreekis Conner**, S **Fred Peters**, OL **LaQuinston Sharp**, LS **Paul Blackwell**.
- Today's game kicked off the 120th season of MSU football.
- State extended its streak of consecutive wins against non-conference teams during the regular season to 10.
- MSU improved to 5-1 in the all-time series against Louisiana (series began in 1908) winning its fifth straight.
- State improved to 11-8 all-time in games played in domes/retractable roof stadiums: 1-0 in Astrodome, 1-0 in Carrier Dome, 1-3 in Georgia Dome, 0-1 in NRG Stadium, **7-2 in Superdome**, and 1-0 in Tropicana Field.
- MSU improved to 30-4-2 all-time against current Sun Belt Conference squads: Arkansas State (15-0-1), Louisiana (5-1), UL-Monroe (4-1-1), Troy (4-1), and South Alabama (2-1).
- The Bulldogs have won eight of their last nine over the Sun Belt with today's win (Last loss was on Sept. 3, 2016 to South Alabama, 21-20, in Starkville).
- State improved to 85-33-2 in season openers, winning its third straight. MSU is 2-0 in season openers under head coach **Joe Moorhead**.
- **Joe Moorhead** improved to 6-0 in season openers as a head coach.
- Today's game marked the 10th straight year MSU has played a game in an NFL stadium.
- State earned its 43rd win since the start of the 2014 season. Heading into today's game, the 42 wins during that span ranked fourth in the SEC.

Offense

- State generated 400+ yards of total offense for the eighth time under head coach **Joe Moorhead**.
- MSU rushed for 200+ yards for the 26th time since 2016 and is 21-5 in those games.
 - The Bulldogs have topped 200 yards on the ground in nine of their last 14 games.
- QB **Tommy Stevens** started for the first time in his college career. It was his first start at any level since Nov. 7, 2014 in high school.
 - For the game, Stevens was 20-of-30 passing for 236 yards and two touchdowns and rushed 11 times for 37 yards and one touchdown.
 - In the first half, Stevens went 10-of-16 passing for 127 yards and scored a touchdown both passing (31-yard pass) and rushing (4-yard run).
 - Stevens had touchdown passes of 31 yards (Osirus Mitchell) and 12 yards (Austin Williams).
- MSU's game-opening drive was six plays for 74 yards, ending in a 31-yard touchdown pass from QB **Tommy Stevens** to WR **Osirus Mitchell**. The drive last 2 minutes and 33 seconds. State has scored on the first drive of the game each of the last two seasons.
- WR **Osirus Mitchell's** touchdown catch on the game-opening drive was his first since Nov. 17, 2018 vs. Arkansas. He led the team in receiving yards (88) on six catches, including one touchdown.
- RB **Kylin Hill** had a game-high 197 yards rushing on 27 carries and found the end zone on the ground one time.
 - Hill had 130 rushing yards on 17 carries (7.6 ypc) in the first half. He broke a run of 20 yards on the first play of the game and added four runs of 12+ yards later in the half.
 - Hill scored on a 7-yard carry on MSU's opening drive of the second half. He had 38 yards on five carries during the scoring drive.



- Hill has found the end zone at least once on the ground or through the air in each of the last three games.
- Today was Hill's fourth career 100-yard rushing game and his first since the 2018 Egg Bowl at Ole Miss (108 yards) on Nov. 22, 2018, and his second highest rushing yardage in a single game (career high is 211 at K-State on Sept. 8, 2018).
- RB **Nick Gibson** scored his third career rushing touchdown on an 8-yard run in the second quarter. It was his first score on the ground since Nov. 17, 2018 vs. Arkansas.
- WR **Austin Williams** caught a 12-yard TD pass from QB **Tommy Stevens** to give MSU a 35-14 lead early in the fourth quarter. It was Williams' fourth touchdown catch of his career and his first since hauling in a pair of TD passes vs. Arkansas on Nov. 17, 2018.

Defense

- Preseason All-American and Jim Thorpe Award candidate CB **Cameron Dantzler** recorded an interception on Louisiana's first offensive play of the game. It was Dantzler's fourth career interception and his first since he had one at LSU on Oct. 20, 2018. Each of Dantzler's last two interceptions have come in his home state of Louisiana.
- With CB Cameron Dantzler's first-quarter interception, State extended its streak of consecutive games with a pickoff to eight (13 in last 14 games) as well as its streak of consecutive games with a turnover to 17.
- MSU recovered two Louisiana fumbles in the first half. S **Brian Cole II** recovered and returned a backward pass to MSU's 48-yard line on Louisiana's second drive of the game. It was Cole's first career fumble recovery.
- MSU allowed its first touchdown of the game (3-yard rush) on Louisiana's fourth drive late in the first quarter. It was the first time State allowed a rushing score since the first quarter at Alabama on Nov. 10, 2018.
- MSU extended its streak of consecutive games with at least one sack to 23.
- S **Jaquarius Landrews** led the Bulldogs in tackles during the first half (5).

Special Teams

- P **Tucker Day** downed both of his punts at Louisiana's 1-yard line.
 - Day's first punt of the game early in the fourth quarter was 42 yards.
 - Day's second punt came later in the fourth quarter and went 48 yards.
- WR **Malik Dear** returned a punt 40 yards to Louisiana's 12-yard line at the 13:14 mark in the fourth quarter. QB **Tommy Stevens** threw a 12-yard touchdown pass to WR **Austin Williams** on the next play.

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TEAM GAME NOTES

- Louisiana drops to 15-34 in openers
- Louisiana moves to an official 2-3 in games played in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome
- Moves to 0-45 all-time against SEC teams
- Most points scored against a Power 5 (28) since at Kentucky on Sept. 5, 2015.
- Most yards against a Power 5 opponent (431) since Nov. 11, 2017 against Ole Miss.

INDIVIDUAL GAME NOTES

Levi Lewis

- Made his fourth career start. First since Nov. 25, 2017 against Georgia Southern.
- First game with a passing and rushing touchdown in his career.
- Set a career high in passing yards with 267 yards and passing completions with 24.

Ja'Marcus Bradley

- With his receptions today, he now owns a 28-game reception streak.
- 15th career game with 50 or more receiving yards.

Elijah Mitchell

- Scored the 22nd touchdown of his career.

Stevie Artigue

- Stevie Artigue scored his first point since Nov. 25, 2017 against Georgia Southern.
- With his four points today, Stevie Artigue is eight points away from being 8th all-time in Louisiana scoring.

Michael Jacquet III

- Recorded first career sack and forced fumble.

Nick Ralston

- Recorded his first receiving touchdown since November 10, 2018 against UCLA (played for Arizona State).

Jamal Bell

- Set a career high in receiving yards with 113.
- Set a career high in receptions with 8.
- First time in his career he went over 100 yards.
- Third player in the last two seasons to record a 100-yard receiving game. (Others Elijah Mitchell and Bam Jackson.

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Mississippi State Head Coach Joe Moorehead

Opening Statement

"First off, I'm excited to get our first win of the season. We talked about playing 12 one-game seasons with a one win at a time mentality. To have the opportunity to be in this excellent venue and be indoors against a good opponent, I think you have to tip your hat to coach Napier and his staff. That's a good football team. Won the division last year and picked to win it again. They did some real nice things on offense and moved the ball around. But, we're certainly excited to be 1-0."

"I talked to the kids last night about having a planned response to success and adversity. We had a bunch of guys go down throughout the course of the game but there was a bunch of guys who stepped up and made big plays. Evans Wilkerson played center most of the second half and LaQuinston Sharp went in there. The guys on defense challenged the guys on special teams to make a play and they had a long punt return and two punts pinned at the one. What we want to do offensively is strike a balance with our ability to run the ball and pass the ball successfully. I think we took a positive step forward in that regard. Aside from the one turnover, we protected it pretty well. Defensively, I think we bent but we didn't really break. I told the guys after the game Jeffery Simmons, Montez Sweat and Jonathan Abrams aren't coming back and we are not that defense. We need to find our own identity and find a way to make plays. At the end of the day it's not about one phase or one unit, it's about us playing together as a team. It's going to be old school Mississippi State Football, and we are going to have to find a way on a weekly basis to fight, scratch and claw like junkyard dogs to find a way to win football games. I think we did that today and we'll learn off it tomorrow and start getting ready for Southern Miss."

On Kylin Hill...

"I think we saw that in flashes last year. We got him healthy and he's feeling really good. He had an excellent training camp and we talked about a possibility of a 200-yard game in the pregame meal and he was three yards short. I think he's one of the premier backs in the conference and the country and I think he showed that today."

On Tommy Stevens...

"I was texting with Tommy last night and said you've been working for this opportunity for your whole life and the last few years. I want you to go out there play loose and have fun. For a guy go out there and make his first start, I was very excited for him. Like I said, it was a good positive step for the rest of the year."

Louisiana Head Coach Billy Napier

"Well I want everyone to know how proud I am of our football team. I think we have a group of men in there that are made of the right stuff. Tremendous intangibles. I thought they played with tremendous effort. There was a great level of belief out there that we could accomplish that and win that game. We were tough. We were physically tough. We were mentally tough. The area we have to improve is discipline. I felt like we were a little sloppy a times periodically. We didn't handle some of the situations in the game well. When you turn the football over and you have undisciplined penalties, those are things you can control, whether it's the player or the coach. I take total responsibility for that. Myself and our staff are going to get that right. That's not the type of football team we want to be. I going to tell you something, there's a lot of good out there now. That is a really good opponent. Time will tell how good they are. But, we certainly an SEC West opponent had that on the ropes. You can't help but say the old adage, that the first way you win is you don't beat yourself. I think that applies. There are going to be so many lessons for our young football team. We played a lot of young players. I looked out up there and there would be some guys that showed up here a couple months ago and we've got work to do. The key here is, how are we going to respond. We certainly responded the right way at times on the football field, and I think that speaks to the leadership that we have on our football team. We have to coach them better. We need to play with more discipline and have more poise. I am going to execute better and play the situations better, but I'm proud of our players. I do think there is any doubt from anyone who watched up play last year that we made significant improvement. Lot of good out there and a lot of lessons for our football team going forward. We've got to learn for our mistakes, make adjustment and continue to stick together. All of our goals are intact going forward and we'll turn the page to Liberty tomorrow."