

Recap

Memphis earns 10th win of season, defeats Iowa in AutoZone Liberty Bowl

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The University of Memphis Tigers football team earned its 10th win of the season, defeating the Iowa State Cyclones, 36-26, in the AutoZone Liberty Bowl on Saturday, Dec. 29 at Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium in Memphis, Tenn.

With the victory, the Tigers end the year with a record of 10-3, marking just the fifth time in 108 seasons that a Memphis team posted 10 or more wins (2019, 2017, 2014, 1938). Ryan Silverfield is the only head coach in program history with four bowl titles and his 31 career victories is the second-most in Memphis history for a head coach through four seasons.

Tiger quarterback Seth Henigan was named the AutoZone Liberty Bowl MVP and Memphis' Outstanding Offensive Player of the Game after completing 24-of-34 passes for 364 yards and four touchdowns. He also rushed for 27 yards and another score against the Cyclones (7-6).

In the win, Henigan broke the Tigers' single-season completions record (317) and single-season attempts record (475). In addition, he passed Brady White to become the all-time leading passer in program history, now standing alone with 10,773 passing yards in his career. His 3,880 yards passing this season rank him third for a single season.

Linebacker Chandler Martin was named Memphis' Most Outstanding Defensive Player of the Game, totaling a team-best eight tackles, one sack and five tackles for loss. Martin's five tackles for a loss are a Memphis bowl and Liberty Bowl record and are tied for third all-time in program history in a single game.

Offensively, running back Blake Watson tallied his fifth 100-yard rushing game of the season, running for 107 yards on 15 carries to go with three catches for 22 yards. Watson etched his name in the record books with Memphis' all-time great running backs dur-

ing the 2023 season. He ended the year with 1,152 rushing yards (No. 9 in a single season at Memphis) and 1,637 scrimmage yards (rushing and receiving) – the sixth-most ever in a single season by a Tiger.

Wide receiver Roc Taylor had eight catches for a team-high 102 yards for the Tigers, as he recorded his sixth 100-yard receiving game of the season. He became just the fifth player in Memphis history to amass more than 1,000 receiving yards in a season (1,083). He ended the year with 69 receptions – good for ninth-most ever in a season by a Tiger.

Wide receiver Demeer Blankumsee reeled in two catches for 76 yards and a score, while Joseph Scates had three receptions for 75 yards and a touchdown. Tight end Anthony Landphere and running back Sutton Smith each had a receiving score as well for Memphis.

The Tiger defense limited Iowa State to zero rushing yards in the game – a Memphis bowl record and the second fewest allowed in Liberty Bowl history. Entering the game, the Cyclones averaged 129.9 rushing yards per contest.

Linebacker Geoffrey Cantin-Arku had seven tackles and one tackle for loss, while defensive lineman William Whitlow Jr. added a sack.

The bowl victory was the eighth in program history and marked the fourth-straight bowl title for the Tigers after they were named champions of the EasyPost Hawai'i Bowl in 2021 after Hawai'i was unable to participate. Memphis has scored 20 or more points in 27-consecutive games, the longest active streak in the nation.

For complete information on Memphis Tigers Football, visit www.GoTigersGo.com and follow the team's social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Nae'Qwan Tomlin named to weekly AAC Honor Roll

IRVING, Texas, Jan. 1, 2024– The newest Memphis Tiger, Nae'Qwan Tomlin, was named to the American Athletic Conference weekly Honor Roll, the league office announced Monday.

Tomlin was a big factor in Memphis' 81-70 victory over Austin Peay last Saturday.

The Harlem, New York native finished with a monster 15-point, 15-rebound double-double in just 23 minutes off the bench to go along with three blocks.

He shot 5-of-12 from the floor and 4-of-5 from the free throw line. He also led the team with six offensive rebounds.

Tomlin is the first Tiger in at least 16 years to record 15 points and 15 rebounds in 23 minutes or less.

For complete information on Memphis Tiger Men's Basketball, visit www.GoTigersGo.com and follow the team's social media channels on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Hardaway named to Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame nominees ... from sports page 1

blocks per game for the Tigers from 1991 to 1993.

He led Memphis to an Elite Eight in 1992, earned consensus All-America honors in 1993 and was named the Great Midwest Conference Player of the Year in back-to-back seasons.

The guard parlayed his collegiate career into a No. 3 overall pick by the Orlando Magic in the 1993 NBA Draft. He was a four-time NBA All-Star, a three-time All-NBA selection and was named to the All-Rookie team in 1993-94.

In 14 NBA seasons, Hardaway averaged 15.2 points, 4.5 re-

bounds and 5.0 assists per game, while playing in eight NBA playoffs between four teams (Orlando Magic, Phoenix Suns, New York Knicks, Miami Heat).

Hardaway is in his sixth year as head coach of the Memphis Tigers, where he has compiled a 117-54 record with two NCAA Tournament appearances, a NIT Championship, and an American Conference Tournament title.

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TN Titans conclude season with Jaguars at Nissan Stadium ... from sports page 1



In last week's 26-3 loss at Houston, Titans rookie quarterback Will Levis returned to the lineup after missing one start with an ankle injury. However, after attempting only six passes, he left the game in the second quarter due to a foot injury. Ryan Tannehill entered in relief of the injured Levis and completed 16 of 20 passes for 168 yards. He registered a 101.7 passer rating, marking his 47th career game with 20-plus attempts and a passer rating of at least 100.0. It was his 27th such performance since joining the Titans in 2019. Running back Derrick Henry rushed for 42 yards at Houston, and in doing so, he reached the

1,000-yard rushing mark for the fifth time in his career (1,014). He became the 10th player in NFL history to tally at least five seasons with 1,000 rushing yards and 10 rushing touchdowns. Wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins recorded a team-high seven receptions for 72 yards against the Texans. While increasing his totals in his first season in Tennessee to a team-best 68 receptions for 1,011 yards and six touch-

downs, he hit the 1,000-yard mark for the seventh time in his career. With seven more receptions, he will record the team's first 75-catch season since Delanie Walker in 2015 (94).

On the defensive side, outside linebacker Harold Landry III added another sack, bringing his season total to 10.5. With his second career double-digit sack campaign, Landry ranks second on the team and is one sack behind the leader, defensive lineman Denico Autry (11.5).

THE JAGUARS
After suffering four consecutive losses entering last week, the

Jaguars hosted the Carolina Panthers and earned a 26-0 shutout victory. Despite quarterback Trevor Lawrence missing the first game of his career due to injury, backup and Franklin, Tenn., native C.J. Beathard started the contest and led the Jaguars to the win.

Head coach Doug Pederson is attempting to win his second division title in as many campaigns with the Jaguars. The team's division title in 2022 gave him four playoff appearances in six full seasons as a head coach, including when he led the Eagles to three playoff berths and a Super Bowl LII title during his five seasons in Philadelphia (2016-20).

Daryl Johnston to lead football operations and Russ Brandon named president and CEO of newly merged USFL and XFL into United Football League (UFL) from sports page 1

powerful combination of the XFL and USFL – will provide passionate sports fans with an entertaining, innovative, and action-packed season,” Pitaro said. “With compelling storytelling across traditional and digital platforms, fan-friendly innovations, and tremendous reach, this visionary league is well-positioned, and we look forward to our continued collaboration.”

Dany Garcia – Founder, CEO and Chairwoman of The Garcia Companies

“This new venture is possible be-

cause of a shared visionary mindset, a profound passion for the game, and first-hand experience living and creating the opportunities that football makes possible. As a unified spring league, we are able to deepen our commitment to unlocking and surpassing the dreams of our players, coaches, staff and fans. This league represents continued legacy and evolution, and we look forward to building the universe of spring football.”

Dwayne Johnson – Founder and CEO of Seven Bucks Companies

“From day one, our mission has been to expand the game of football and be a league of opportunity, culture and innovation. As we come together to create the UFL, we can build something powerful, exciting and very cool for football fans - a spring league with lasting impact for all the players with a dream to play pro football and the ‘hardest workers in the room’ mentality to make their dreams come true.”

Gerry Cardinale – Founder and Managing Partner of Red-Bird Capital Partners

“When you combine the entertainment and marketing expertise of Dwayne Johnson and Dany Garcia, the broadcast and network reach of FOX and ESPN, and the strategic capital and company building mentality of Red-Bird, there is a tremendous opportunity to achieve something unique – a valuable and scalable live event entertainment platform that will continue to work closely with the NFL on innovation and player development and have a legitimate shot at becoming one of the top professional leagues in the country after the big four.”

Memphis Showboats named one of eight UFL teams for 2024... from sports page 1

John DeFilippo will serve as head coach for the Memphis Showboats this upcoming season. DeFilippo spent last season as head coach of the New Orleans Breakers, going 7-3 in the regular season and falling in the first round of the playoffs to the Birmingham Stallions, 47-22.

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Showboats this upcoming season. DeFilippo spent last season as head coach of the New Orleans Breakers, going 7-3 in the regular season and falling in the first round of the playoffs to the Birmingham Stallions, 47-22.

DeFilippo, born on April 12, 1978, boasts extensive NFL coaching experience prior to the Breakers. Notable roles include quarterbacks coach for the Eagles during their Super Bowl-winning season in 2017 and offensive coordinator for the Vikings in 2018.

His career also includes stints

with the Raiders, Jets, Browns, Jaguars and Bears. A full list of UFL coaches can be found below:

- Skip Holtz (Stallions)
- Bob Stoops (Renegades)
- Curtis Johnson (Roughnecks)
- Reggie Barlow (Defenders)
- John DeFilippo (Showboats)
- Wade Phillips (Brahmas)
- Mike Nolan (Panthers)
- Anthony Becht (Battlehawks)

This news was first announced

by **Dany Garcia** and **Dwayne Johnson** on **ESPN's College GameDay Built by The Home Depot**.

About the United Football League

The United Football League (UFL) is set to launch as the premier spring football platform, formed by the merging of the XFL and USFL in 2024.

The UFL has eight teams in Arlington (TX), Birmingham (AL), Detroit (MI), Houston (TX), San Antonio (TX), Memphis (TN), St. Louis (MO), and Washington D.C.

NRC honors Don Inman for lifetime commitment to conservation, outdoor recreation, and nature

From the Outdoor Wire

The Michigan Natural Resources Commission honored longtime conservationist and retired Michigan Department of Natural Resources Deputy Don Inman with the Thomas L. Washington Award for Lifetime Commitment to Conservation and Outdoor Recreation at its Dec. 14 meeting in Lansing. Among his many accomplishments, Inman, of Presque Isle County, is credited with initiating the drive to develop the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Inman began his DNR career in the early 1970s after earning a Ph.D. in wildlife ecology from Michigan State University and conducting research under Eugene Odum, a pioneer in the field of ecosystem ecology, at the University of Georgia.

In 1974, Inman was charged with developing an environmental impact statement for proposed oil and gas drilling in the Pigeon River Country State Forest as part of his work in the DNR's Environmental Enforcement Division.

“The Pigeon River Country was considered pristine and revered by many. Environmental groups jumped on the bandwagon when oil and gas came on board,” said Inman. “Leases were already in place on the land, so there wasn't



Don Inman

anything that could be done to stop extraction.”

Inman felt compelled to find a way to mitigate the damage that would be caused. His solution was a proposal to use extraction revenues to purchase and preserve new recreational lands.

“Jack Bails, my supervisor, he was the negotiator. He worked with the companies and [then] Gov. Milliken's office and found a way to lessen the impact by giving back to the environment,” said Inman.

By 1976, the idea became a reality with legislative approval of the Kammer Recreation Trust Fund bill, the precursor to today's Natural Resources Trust

Fund. In the last 47 years the Trust Fund has distributed more than \$1.3 billion in grants for over 2,800 projects. “Who would have thought,” Inman chuckled. “Really, who would have thought?”

Inman is quick to credit others, including Bails, Bill Rustem, then executive assistant to Gov. Milliken, and the conservation-minded people of Michigan who called for environmental preservation. “Do you know how many supported this idea? It was like we were riding a wave of good environmental legislation.”

One of those voices was Tom Washington, then executive director of Michigan United Conservation Clubs, for whom the lifetime commitment award is named. During his life, Washington helped build coalitions of conservationists and environmentalists to achieve landmark initiatives that benefit Michigan residents to this day.

What might Washington think of Inman receiving the award? “Tom was a mountain of a guy, in so many ways,” said Inman. “We may have butted heads from time to time, but I think he'd be pretty happy.”

Inman later became chief of the Environmental Enforcement Division and testified as an expert witness for the DNR in several

enforcement court cases. He remained with the DNR for 26 years, retiring in 1997 from the position of deputy director for the Lower Peninsula, but his career in conservation continues. In 1997, he and his wife, Virginia Pierce, co-founded the Michigan Resource Stewards, an organization of environmental resource professionals working to “advance professional stewardship of Michigan's natural resource legacy through sound scientific principles.”

He and Pierce also serve with and continue to support the HeadWaters Land Conservancy, protecting lands in 11 counties in northeast Michigan, including their own 500-acre homestead.

“Don Inman was among the first generation trained in environmental ecology, seeing the bigger picture of interrelationships between natural systems,” said NRC Chairperson Tom Baird. “He brought that perspective to the Department of Natural Resources, embodied it in the push to develop the Natural Resources Trust Fund, and he lives it to this day, working to protect lands and fight for Michigan's environment.”

For more information about the Michigan Natural Resources Commission, visit Michigan.gov/NRC.