

# SOUTHERN MISS GOLDEN EAGLES

## POSITION OUTLOOK FOR 2009



QB Austin Davis

**QUARTERBACKS** - When I think of SM's QB position I, of course, think back to their most famous alum, Brett Favre, who is the Golden Eagles' career passing leader. In 2005 Dustin Almond set the single season yardage mark with 2,860 (54.8%) and a 23-12 ratio. SM QB's threw for 161 ypg in '06 (56.1%) and in '07 just 188 (57.1%). Due to injuries, rFr Martevius Young got a start vs Rice but broke his leg on the 3rd play. Young, who has a powerful arm and is very mobile, had the 3 career snaps for SM QB's heading into 2008 and he battled rFr Austin Davis. Davis started and set numerous school single season records throwing for 3,128 (57.5%) with a 23-8 ratio and was the #2 rusher with 508 (3.3). He set school records with 461 pass yds vs Rice and 5 rushing TD's vs UAB. He also broke the school record for TD passes by a frosh previously held by Favre (16). Davis also earned MVP of the bowl. Young played in just 3 (2 att). This year battling for the backup spot are Young, Fedora recruit Bret Jefcoat (PS#108) and true frosh Chris Campbell (PS#92). Davis is already one of CUSA's top QB's.

**RUNNING BACKS** - In 2006 true frosh Damien Fletcher broke Derrick Nix's frosh rushing record with 1,388 (5.0) which was the 2nd highest total in school history behind Sam DeJarnette (1,545 in '82). Fletcher's rapid rise was aided by the other top 4 RB's either quitting or being injured. In '07 Fletcher rushed for a school record 1,586 (5.4) with his top backup being Tory Harrison who had 393 (4.1). True frosh VJ Floyd (5'10" 186 Jr) was the #3 RB (93, 3.9). Harrison (6'1" 188) was susp in the spring but ret'd and was the backup again LY. Fletcher opened with 222 (10.6) vs UL and 260 (7.6) vs UTEP. After two more 100 yard efforts, Fletcher was inj'd vs UAB and Harrison rushed for 137 (6.9) while Floyd added 114 (5.4). Fletcher was out vs UCF and Floyd led the RB's with 66 (3.9) after Harrison was injured. Fletcher rushed for 1,313 and avg a super 6.0 ypc and is already the school's all-time career leading rusher. This year they lose Bubba Kirksey (118, 5.4) and FB Josh Barton (3 st). Added to the mix are true frosh Kendrick Hardy (PS#16), Tracy

Lampley (PS#86), Kameron Roan (5'8" 160 Jr) and Ken Meeks (5'6" 185 So). Fletcher should have his best season yet as a senior and Hardy will have an impact as a VHT true.

**RECEIVERS** - Dropped passes plagued this unit for years including those by Shawn Nelson who was already the career leading receiving TE here going into 2008. SM not only had their top 2 back in Nelson and Torris Magee (632, 14.4 in '07) but got the tremendous addition of 6'6" DeAndre Brown (PS#7) who draws comparisons to Randy Moss. Magee was injured early and had 10 rec in 2 starts, but quit the team midway. Nelson had his best season finishing with 557 (10.5) while Gerald Baptiste (283, 10.1 in '07) added 460 (13.1). Brown lived up to his VHT billing with 1,117 (16.7) earning 1st Tm CUSA before a gruesome broken tibia in the bowl. He missed the spring but should be 100% in fall. This year they lose TE Nelson (12 st, #4DC BUF), Magee, Ed Morgan (8 st, 14 rec) and Chris Rhoden (2 rec). Despite the loss of 2 of their 4 starters, Brown's presence makes this one of CUSA's premier receiving units and they add PS#16JC Justin Jordan.

**OFFENSIVE LINE** - In '06 SM had 4 starters returning up front (84 career starts) and former HC Bower said SM had a chance to be as good as ever on the O-line. As you would expect, it was the first time they had over 4.0 ypc rush since Bower took over in '91 at 4.4 (5.4% sacks). In '07 they had to replace 3 starters (all multi-year). They got a huge addition in Miss St transfer Calvin Wilson (PS#37, 353 lbs) who started the last 9 at LT (HM CUSA). RT Ryan McKee did not allow a sack (2nd Tm CUSA). The rush totals surprisingly improved to 202 ypg (4.6) with just 5.8% sacks. Last year they had to replace 3 starters but their 45 career starts (#94 in FBS) were actually more than '07 (39 car st). OL coach Chris Kapilovic did a fine job in '08 as SM improved to 4.7 ypc (192 ypg) while allowing 29 sacks (6.3%). Kapilovic does not rotate OL's with the 5 starters basically playing the entire game as only 7 saw significant time LY. The great news for SM is that 5 of the 7 return and the only losses are LG Wesley Housley (5 st, 12 car st) and McKee (13 st, 3Y str). Calvin Wilson was susp'd for 2 and never regained his spot but should be back in good graces and this unit is much more experienced than LY.

**DEFENSIVE LINE** - SM is known for its strong rush D's but surprisingly in Bower's final six years, they allowed 3.8 ypc or higher five times. In 2007 they had six seniors in the DL 2 deep including all 4 starters and yielded 134 ypg (3.8) while the D had 28 sacks. Naturally, the losses were heavy last year. Nine different players earned starts with 7 of them consisting of 1 true, 2 rFr, 3 soph and a JUCO. Surprisingly they only allowed 140 ypg rush although their 4.2 ypc was the worst since 2004 and the D had just 20 sacks. This year they lose Eric Phillips (8 st, 11 tkl) and Demar Dotson (1 st, 4 tkl). Since the top 7 tacklers from the D-line are back (4 of them had 7+ starts), I count them as having 4 returning starters making them vastly more experienced than LY.

**LINEBACKERS** - SM LB's were named CUSA Def POY for 3 straight years from 2003-'05. After Gerald McRath "only" earned 3rd Tm CUSA in '06, he was the CUSA Def POY in '07. Last year SM had McRath (#1 tkl'r) and Tokumbo Abanikanda (#6) returning but lost 1 starter (#7 tkl'r). McRath was 1st Tm CUSA and led with 137 tackles but opted to leave early for the NFL draft (13 st, 9.5 tfl, #4DC TEN). Also gone this year is Abanikanda (12 st, #2 tkl'r, 11 tfl) and Jerome Lyons (6 tkl). Two near-VHT's are in this group in Corey Williams (PS#63) and Martez Smith (PS#65) and they add Ole Miss transfer Scottie Williams (PS#97) and JUCO Hendrick Leverette (IFS). True frosh Jamie Collins is PS#31QB. I like the talent of this group, but with the loss of their top 2 tacklers, there figures to be a drop-off.

**DEFENSIVE BACKS** - SM's lowest finish in my pass D rankings from 1995-2004 was #41! An injury plagued unit in '05 slipped to #70. They had to replace 2 starters in '06 but moved up

to #9. In '07 they had to replace both starting CB's and SM slipped to #47. Last year they had to replace two starters. Chico Hunter took over the SS spot but was lost (knee inj) after 9. SM dropped some to #51. This year they lose CB Eddie Willingham (5 st, 20 tkl) and Jamison Hughes (1 tkl) but basically have 4 returning starters (7 w/st exp) including 2nd Tm CUSA SF Eddie Hicks. Not listed below are John Green (6'0" 222 Sr), Kevin Thompson (6'0" 189 Jr) and Cladarius Jefferson (6'1" 180 rFr).

**SPECIAL TEAMS** - Former HC Bower almost always had a fine ST unit. In his last 4 years they finished #25, #23, #84 and #43. In Fedora's first year the unit finished #87 as missed FG's may have cost the team another 2 or 3 wins. Justin Estes hit 15 of 22 FG's (long 43) in '07 but he and Britt Barefoot combined to hit just 13 of 22 FG's (long 46) LY. Barefoot avg'd 42.5 (37.0 net) in '07 but dropped to 40.6 (30.7 team net) in '08 (14 TB on 71 KO). They had to replace their top 2 returnmen and those units were average. This year they lose Barefoot but everyone else is back including their top gunner, Martez Smith, so I look for a move up in my ST rankings.

**COACHES** - Jeff Bower was a SM alum and spent 17 years here as the head man. They went to a bowl game in 10 of his last 11 years. SM was one of just 5 teams in the NCAA that had 14 straight winning seasons heading into last season (Florida, Fla St, Mich, VT). Bower was forced to resign prior to the bowl in '07. The new HC last year was Larry Fedora who was the OC at Okla St from 2005-'07 and the OC at Florida in '04. Under Fedora, OSU was balanced in '07 avg 243 ypg both rushing and passing. Fedora's OC is Darrell Wyatt who was Arizona's WR ch and passing game coo'r in '07. The DC is Todd Bradford who was the LB coach at Okla St (prev 3Y). He has 21 years coaching experience (8 diff sch) and was the OC at BYU for 2 years. Both coordinators return for their 2nd season.

## PHIL'S FORECAST

Jeff Bower spent 29 years here either as an asst or head coach and was forced to resign after his 17th season as HC. In the first four years of CUSA play, SM was an outstanding 21-2 but in the next 3 stunningly lost 9 out of 22 league games. They rebounded to go 8-0 in the CUSA in '03 and after a couple of 5-3 CUSA finishes, won CUSA East with a 6-2 record in '06 but came up short in the title game vs Houston. It was actually the first time in 5 years they had outgained league foes (+29.6 ypg). In 2007 SM was the preseason favorite to win the CUSA title but they surprisingly finished 4th in the East. They were +69.6 ypg (2nd best East). They went 4-0 on the road in CUSA play and came up just short vs #20 Cincy in the bowl. Fedora inherited just 10 ret starters (fewest CUSA). Last year MM Roberts Stadium underwent a \$31.5 ml expansion and capacity was increased by 3,000. It appeared they were headed for their first losing season in 14 years as the team suffered its first 5 game losing streak since 1976. They did set a school all record drawing 180,475 (30,079 per gm). SM opened the year with a 51-21 win over UL. Then after an expected loss to Auburn, they were outgained 447-348 by Ark St but won 27-24. They lost their 3rd and 4th straight CUSA HG's to Marshall and UTEP by 7 and 3, the latter in 2 OT's then were whipped by Boise. Rice led 45-26 with SM getting a couple of late scores. Memphis was down to their #3 QB but beat SM 36-30 with the Tigers having a 516-416 yd edge. It was the first time ever SM had four CUSA losses (0-4) and their 2-6 start was their worst S/93. Amazingly SM swept their final 4 blowing out UAB 70-14, topping UCF on the road then beating an injury-plagued EC team at home, 21-3. In the season finale SMU was without their top 2 WR's. In the bowl, Troy led 27-17 in the 4Q but a 4th & 2, 35 yd TD pass with 7:20 left kept SM alive and they got the comeback win to avoid a losing season. On the negative side they benefited from +13 in TO's (pg 312). On the positive side they are now in the 2nd year of Fedora's system and have a more veteran team with 19 ret starters and 2 of their key off players in '08 (QB Davis & WR Brown) were both Fr LY. Despite a 4-4 record, SM was +99.3 (best East). Two of my

9 sets of power ratings call for SM to go 12-0 this year which means they are a prime contender to be '09's BCS-buster.

## OFFENSE 2009 PROJECTED STARTING LINEUP DEFENSE

**QB 12 AUSTIN DAVIS SO.** 6-2 206 PS#285. 13 st, 3128 (58%) 23-8 ratio, 508 rush LY.  
**RB 25 DAMION FLETCHER SR.** 5-10 177 PS#166. 1st Tm CUSA '06 & '08. 1388 (5.0) true. 1586 (5.4) '07. 1313 (6.0) LY. Kendrick Hardy PS#16. Desmond Johnson (5'11" 188 rFr) PS#141.  
**WR 6 FREDDIE PARHAM SR.** 6-0 172 PS#44JC. 6 st, 173 (9.1) LY. Josh Hurd (6'0" 220 Jr).  
**WR 5 DeANDRE BROWN SO.** 6-2 228 PS#7. 7 st, 1st Tm CUSA, 1117 (16.7) LY. Quentin Pierce (5'11" 163 Jr) PS#158. William Spight (5'10" 167 So) 2 rec. Montrez Mosley (5'9" 178 Jr).  
**WR 88 GERALD BAPTISTE SR.** 6-0 182 PS#194. 22 st, 743 (11.8) 2Y. Justin Jordan PS#16JC. Jordan McNair (6'3" 172 rFr). Deon Hodges (6'2" 204 Jr). JJ Smith (6'1" 203 Sr). Jamie Wheat (6'2" 219 rFr).  
**TE 10 Jonathan Massey Jr.** 6-3 251 PS#21. 2 st, 50 (12.5) LY. Leroy Banks (6'3" 230 Sr) PS#417JC. 87 (17.4) LY. David Rue (6'5" 253 Jr) PS#200JC. Kane Wommack (6'0" 223 Sr).  
**C 59 CAMERON ZIPP JR.** 6-1 297 PS#170. 3 gm '07. 13st C LY. Austin Quattrochi (6'3" 270 rFr) PS#326. Kyle Clark (6'0" 265 So). LS Cody Tawater (6'3" 232 Sr) HM CUSA.  
**RG 71 RYAN HEBERT SR.** 6-5 310 PS#196. 13 st rFr LY. HM CUSA. '07 Brennan Houston (6'4" 314 Sr) PS#49JC. 11 gm. James Brady (6'4" 253 So). Jacob Johnson (6'1" 290 rFr).  
**LG 88 MICAH BROWN SR.** 6-2 287 1 st RG, 6 gm '07. 8 st, 12 gm LY. RJ Brown (6'3" 301 Sr) PS#124JC. 9 gm LY. Alex Michael (6'2" 310 Jr) PS#221. 13 gm LY. Joe Duhan (6'2" 308 rFr).  
**RT 72 CALVIN WILSON SR.** 6-6 353 PS#37. 1 st RT true. 9 st LT, HM CUSA '07. 5 st LT, 10 gm LY. Ben Schoenberger (6'5" 293 So) PS#103JC. Jonathan Guerry (6'4" 290 Fr) PS#175.  
**LT 78 KYLE BURKHART SR.** 6-5 290 PS#148JC. 8st LY. 12 gm LY. Trevor Newsom (6'8" 276 Jr) PS#175JC. Dyron White (6'5" 309 rFr) PS#295. Nathaniel Worrell PS#305.  
**K 13 Justin Estes Jr.** 5-9 151 PS#75. 15-22 FG L/43 as true, HM CUSA. 4-7 FG LY, L/45, 9-9 ypc. Daniel Hrapmann (5'9" 152 So) PS#32. Dylan Lanphere (6'3" 193 Jr).

**DE 61 DEDDRICK JONES SO.** 6-3 242 PS#265. 8 st, 20 tkl, 3.5 tfl LY. Terrance Pope (6'3" 275 So) PS#393. 14 tkl LY. David Boyce (6'6" 248 Jr) PS#86. 3 tfl. Andrew Burns (6'4" 248 So) 5 tkl.  
**NT 95 ANTHONY GRAY JR.** 6-0 301 PS#258. 2nd Tm CUSA, 7 starts, 29 tkl, 7.5 tfl LY.  
**DE 45 ROSHAAD BYRD JR.** 6-3 247 PS#54LB. 8 tkl '07. 13 st, 29 tkl, 3.5 tfl LY. Corrado Lar (6'2" 243 So). 21 tkl, 5 sk LY. Terrance Conner (6'3" 234 Sr) PS#160JC. 3 tkl.  
**SLB 33 Scottie Williams So.** 6-3 222 PS#97. Ole Miss trans. Ronnie Thornton (6'3" 230 So) PS#391. 4 tkl. Jamie Collins (6'3" 210 Fr) PS#31QB. Tim Green (6'3" 200 So) 2 tkl.  
**MLB 42 Corey Williams So.** 6-2 228 PS#63. 4 st (inj) 24 tkl, 4 tfl LY. Hendrick Leverette (5'10" 221 Jr) PS#151JC. IFS. Jeremy Snowden (6'3" 197 So) PS#241. 6 tkl.  
**WLB 82 MARTEZ SMITH JR.** 6-0 211 PS#65. 7 tkl '07. 8 st, 59 tkl, 6 tfl, 2 pbu, 1 int LY. Brandon Davis (6'1" 200 Sr) PS#162. 31 gm, 15 tkl 3Y. Will Martin (6'0" 201 Fr) PS#123.  
**CB 20 CJ BAILEY JR.** 5-10 189 PS#103. 11 st, 40 tkl, 10 pbu, 2 int '07. 13 st, 36 tkl, 5 pd LY. Michael McGee (5'10" 181 Sr) 52 tkl, 3 tfl, 5 pbu. Martez Thompson PS#174.  
**CB 12 ANDRE WATSON SR.** 5-10 180 PS#133JC. 7 st, 32 tkl, 3 pbu, 3 int LY. Gerald West (5'11" 175 Fr) PS#88. Marcal Robinson (6'0" 175 rFr) PS#117. Deron Wilson PS#164.  
**SS 30 CHICO HUNTER JR.** 6-0 195 PS#190. 10 st, 87 tkl, 6 pbu 2Y. Justin Wilson (5'11" 187 Jr) PS#294. 8 st, 62 tkl, 11 pbu, 6 int 2Y. Micah Pellerin (6'1" 183 So) 5 tkl, 11 gm LY.  
**FS 19 EDDIE HICKS SR.** 6-2 183 13 st, 84 tkl, 8 pd '07. 2nd Tm CUSA LY, 13 st, 64 tkl, 4 int. Kendrick Presley (6'2" 188 So) PS#63. 9 tkl true. Cameron O'Neal (6'0" 206 So) 15 tkl.  
**P 3 Bret Jefcoat rFr.** 6-1 200 PS#108QB. Dylan Lanphere (6'3" 193 Jr). Justin Estes (5'9" 151 Jr) 19-29 FG, long 45 2Y. Daniel Hrapmann (5'9" 152 So) PS#32.

## TOP NEWCOMERS FOR 2009

WR Justin Jordan 5-11 190 PS#16JC  
 RB Kendrick Hardy 6-0 200 PS#16  
 LB Jamie Collins 6-3 210 PS#31QB  
 OL Ben Schoenberger 6-5 293 PS#103JC  
 WR Jacoby Bell 6-3 210 PS#69  
 DB Gerald West 5-11 175 PS#88  
 RB Tracy Lampton 5-9 170 PS#86  
 WR Mujahid Assad 6-1 184 PS#89  
 LB Hendrick Leverette 5-10 221 PS#151JC  
 LB Will Martin 6-0 201 PS#123  
 OL Trevor Newsom 6-8 276 PS#175JC  
 TE David Rue 6-5 253 PS#200JC  
 DB Deron Wilson 5-10 167 PS#164  
 DB Martez Thompson 6-1 180 PS#174  
 OL Jonathan Guerry 6-4 290 PS#175  
 QB Chris Campbell 6-2 180 PS#92  
 DB Jerrion Johnson 6-1 195 PS#204  
 DB Alex Smith 5-11 175 PS#226  
 TE Ryan Hanks 6-5 235 PS#73  
 OL Nathaniel Worrell 6-5 265 PS#305  
 OL Ed Preston 6-4 287 PS#366  
 RB Troy Hulbert 6-0 166 PS#795JC  
 WR Montrez Mosley 5-9 178 PS#796JC  
 DL Octavius Thomas 6-3 230 PS#477

