



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY  
**FOOTBALL**

Mississippi State vs. LSU  
Thursday, August 30, 2007  
Davis Wade Stadium at Scott Field  
Starkville, Miss.

## TEAM

- Tonight's captains were senior defensive lineman **Titus Brown**, senior offensive lineman **Royce Blackledge** and junior linebacker **Jamar Chaney**.
- LSU won the coin toss and deferred to the second half.
- Tonight's attendance was 50,112.
- The last time MSU lost back-to-back shutout season openers was 1929 (L, 0-7 to Henderson Brown) and 1930 (L, 0-14 to Southwestern). State's last time to record back-to-back season opener losses to conference opponents came in 1966 (Georgia, 17-20) and 1967 (at Georgia, 0-30).

## INDIVIDUAL

- Sophomore wide receiver **Brandon McRae**, sophomore running back **Christian Ducre'**, junior linebacker **Dominic Douglas**, sophomore defensive back **Anthony Johnson**, sophomore defensive back **Marcus Washington**, senior defensive lineman **Avery Hannibal**, junior defensive lineman **Cortez McCraney** and junior defensive lineman **Jessie Bowman** made their first career starts.
- In addition to the eight first-time starters, eight other Bulldogs saw action in their first career game for the Maroon and White - freshman defensive back **Zach Smith**, redshirt freshman snapper **Aaron Feld**, junior defensive back **Jasper O'Quinn**, junior wide receiver **Co-Eric Riley**, junior defensive back **Chris Nance**, junior defensive lineman **Jimmie Holmes**, freshman linebacker **Karlin Brown** and freshman quarterback **Wesley Carroll**.
- Junior quarterback **Michael Henig's** six interceptions tied Max Stainbrook's individual school record (vs. Cincinnati, 1949). It also ties the modern game team record (vs. Cincinnati, 1949 and vs. Arkansas, 2003).
- MSU's longest reception of the game was a 45-yard pass to senior wide receiver **Tony Burks** from Henig.
- With his 86 yards recorded on kickoff returns this evening, junior returner **Derek Pegues** moves into fifth on the MSU career list for kickoff return yardage. He passes Fred Reid who tallied 1,303 yards from 2001-04. Pegues is now tied with Reid for fifth on the all-time list with 61 career kickoff returns.

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### Mississippi State Head Coach Sylvester Croom Postgame Quotes

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#### *Opening Comments...*

"First, I want to congratulate Coach Les Miles and his football team, and I wish them the best of luck for the rest of the season. I told the players after the game my feelings about them have not changed, and I still believe we are going to be a good football team before this season is over with. I am particularly proud of our defense and how they played in the first half. We had several guys, such as Tim Bailey and Jimmie Holmes, who we have not seen play much and we were not quite sure what they could do, but they proved themselves tonight. Bottom line, we thought we could be in the football game late into the second half, but with seven turnovers that is never going to happen. They gave us a lot of problems with their multitude of blitzes and it gave our offense some problems. Our protection was good in the first-half, but we had some problems finishing plays. With our offensive struggles, it kept our defense with their backs against the wall the entire game. Special teams was much improved, which I anticipated. We are disappointed, especially to end up with a final score such as that, but that was due to us turning the football over. We will give the players the weekend off and comeback Monday and start preparing for Tulane."

#### *On Michael Henig...*

"I think it was obvious that it was not the best game for Mike. He would be the first to admit that he did not play well. It is possible he might have been trying to make the play happen when it wasn't there. We have done very well in practice and just missed some key plays tonight, which lead to unfortunate turnovers."

#### *On the rain...*

"It had no factor on us. We practice with a wet football all the time. We soak the ball in water occasionally to help prepare us for these types of situations. You are going to have to play in the rain sometime, but you are still going to have to play the football game, and there is no room for using that as an excuse."

#### *On the last touchdown of the first-half...*

"It was deflating for us, but that is what happens when you turn the ball over quickly and that far into your own territory. It is always tough to give up a touchdown that late in the half."

#### *On playing conservatively...*

"I came into this game with my mind made up, that we were not going to play conservative football when we crossed 50-yard line and were out of field goal range. LSU is not a team that you are going to beat by playing conservative football. We had some plays designed to try and make some things happen for us, and we just struggled executing those plays tonight."

#### *On the offensive line...*

"The only time I ever thought the offensive line hurts us was when we missed our blocking assignments. Physically, I thought we matched up very well with LSU, and stayed after them the entire game, particularly in the first-half when our coverage was very good, especially blocking against guys like (Tyson) Jackson and (Glenn) Dorsey."

#### *On team's morale...*

"I became concerned with the team, because they had played so hard and wanted to win so badly. After we got in the dressing room and talked to them, I realized they had their heads on straight and my feelings about these guys have not changed one bit. With leaders like Titus Brown stepping up and giving our guys the confidence they need lets me know that this team has good leadership."

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**LSU Head Coach Les Miles Postgame Quotes**

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*On the game...*

“Early on it was a hard fought game and I have to give credit to a very well coached Mississippi State team. I think we played well, we didn’t make mistakes on offense, but our defense forced a lot of turnovers and our kicking game played very well. I think this Mississippi State football team is very talented and will win a lot of ball games this year. They certainly gained our respect in preparation and we knew we had to come in and play well and we did play well. Anytime you start with an opening game victory it feels more important because it takes your summer conditioning into account. This game was tremendously important one. I commend our coaches, our players, they prepared and they played wonderfully. Anytime you play a game where all three phases play particularly well, you have a chance to play pretty well. We didn’t play our best in particular phases at certain times and we’re obviously going to have to get better and we understand that; having a defense that was dominant from start to finish, getting the ball back for us and obviously not turning the ball over on offense. I really feel that Matt Flynn, in his first start, managed the game well and put us in good position by making good throws, and moving with his feet. He was certainly a key to our effort. All in all, it was a nice first start. It makes our next game so much more important.”

*On Virginia Tech next week...*

“We understand it’s Virginia Tech and we turn to them very aggressively now. We understand that they are a quality football team and that they are coming off a terrible tragedy. I am certain they will play emotional football. We have to improve, we have work to do, but all in all it was a great day.”

*On a slow offensive start...*

“Give Mississippi State some credit, they played hard and they moved around a little bit more than they had done in the past and had a good plan. There are also some new adjustments whenever you put a new offense on the field, a new quarterback who played very well, and a couple new offensive linemen and it was a good one to get under our belts.”

*On the offensive line adjustments in the second half...*

“Some of those guys were a little bit nervous and we can understand that, but hopefully we can get past those first game jitters and get some real quality play.”

*On Matt Flynn’s composure...*

“He moves very well in the pocket. He avoids negative yardage and makes good plays with the ball in his hand.”

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**Mississippi State Player Postgame Quotes**

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***Quarterback Michael Henig...***

*Opening comment...*

"I just want to start by saying that I am the quarterback of this team and I came out and made some mistakes tonight. We are better than that as a team. I just have to pick my game up, come back next weekend and play better. We have to come back and build on the family atmosphere that we have."

*On what happened in the game...*

"It was just one of those nights. I had good protection and I know it but it was just one of those nights. I really do not know what else to say. I just have to go back, watch the film and come back to practice and get better."

*On confidence level and bouncing back after the game...*

"First of all, going into the game, we are a tight knit family and it is a completely different atmosphere in the locker room. We knew we were going to play a tough team tonight and we knew that for a fact. Win, lose or draw we were going to play 100 percent. The defense played a heck of a game and we did not give them good field position. They were on the field entirely too long and we did not help them."

***Cornerback Derek Pegues...***

*On getting cramps...*

"I just got cramps in both of my calves that put me down the rest of the game."

*On first half...*

"We played a pretty good first half. We had a couple of chances to get off the field but we did not take advantage of those. (Early) Doucet made some great catches and we just could not stop them on second and third down. (Matt) Flynn made some good plays and put them in a position to make some plays."

*On momentum in first half...*

"It was pretty hard to keep the momentum going. It wore down on us but we still continued to fight. The three and outs hurt. It is a long season and we will not give up and continue to fight."

***Defensive End Titus Brown...***

*On LSU's last score of the first half...*

"It did not bother our confidence that much. The thing that hurt was that it is hard to bounce back after the field position that they had. When they had good field position, they took advantage of it."

*On the rest of the season...*

"Nobody was perfect tonight. We still have confidence in Mike (Henig) and we just have to keep fighting."

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**LSU Player Postgame Quotes**

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***Quarterback Matt Flynn***

*On the adjustments made during halftime...*

“We didn’t make any adjustments at all. We knew that the plays were going to come; we just had to execute them. We went out there and moved the ball. We really didn’t make that many adjustments.”

*On being nervous about the first game of the season...*

“I think there was a period that we had to become comfortable, but it was messy out there. It might not have looked like it but it was messy out there. It was wet out there. Everybody was soaked, the ball was soaked. Everything was soaked. It was tough to put some yards together but we went out there and we kept fighting and that’s a credit to this LSU team.”

***Strong Safety Craig Steltz***

*On his interceptions...*

“It was a lot of luck. You have to be in the right place at the right time. There’s a lot of experience in our secondary and coach put us in the right spot.”

*On looking timid in the beginning of the game...*

“There were some formations that we haven’t had the opportunity to practice. But as long as we are out there communicating, everything is going to be alright.”

*On the part the defense played in the game...*

“Well that goes back to Glen Dorsey and Tyson Jackson. They were putting great pressure on the quarterback and he was throwing balls out into our secondary and we catch them. It’s just giving our offense another opportunity to score a touchdown.”