

TK



TIGER KICKOFF

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CONNECTICUT AT MISSOURI

11 A.M. SATURDAY

TV: ESPN

RADIO: TIGER NETWORK,

SIRIUS 115, XM 191

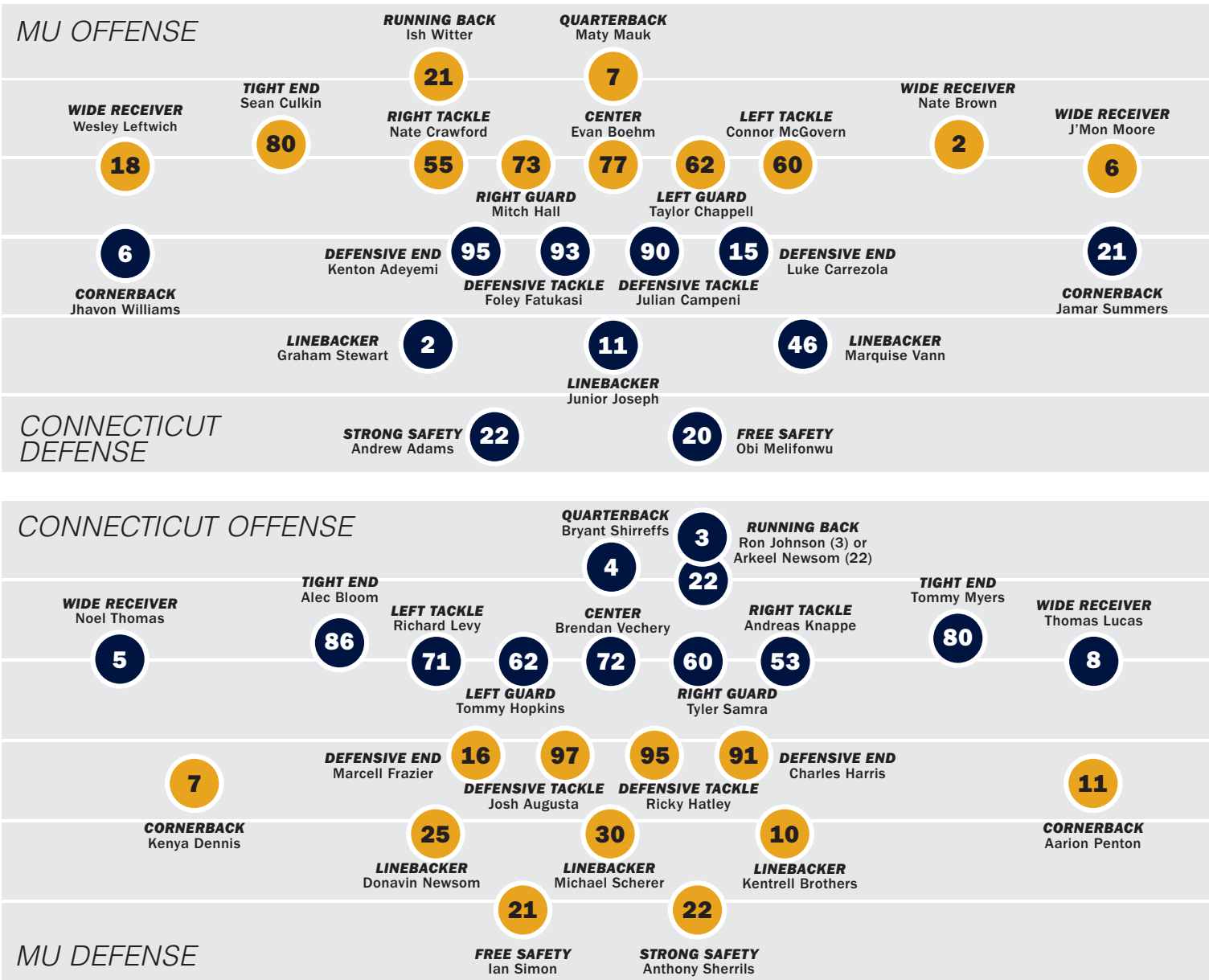


MAKING #MIZZOU MADE

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PROGRAMS DO MORE NOW
THAN EVER TO BRAND THEMSELVES. PAGE 8

STARTING LINEUPS

MISSOURI CONNECTICUT



TIGER KICKOFF

SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Bowers

ASSISTANT
SPORTS EDITOR
Mark Selig

DIRECTOR OF
PHOTOGRAPHY
Brian Kratzer

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS
OF PHOTOGRAPHY
Abby Connolly
Jenny Justus

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Brendan Wray

COVER ILLUSTRATION
Blake Nelson

REPORTERS
Jacob Bogage
Michael Mandell
Aaron Reiss

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Online: columbia missourian.com/sports

Follow us on Twitter: @CoMoSports

Email: sports@columbiamissourian.com

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DEPTH CHART » MISSOURI

OFFENSE

	1ST STRING	2ND STRING
QB	Maty Mauk	Drew Lock
RB	Ish Witter	Tyler Hunt
WR1	J'Mon Moore	DeSean Blair
WR2	Nate Brown	Thomas Richard
WR3	Wesley Leftwich	Keyon Dilosa
TE	Sean Culkin	Jason Reese
LT	Connor McGovern	Paul Adams
LG	Taylor Chappell	Alec Abeln
C	Evan Boehm	Brad McNulty
RG	Mitch Hall	Kevin Pendleton
RT	Nate Crawford	Malik Cuellar

DEFENSE

	1ST STRING	2ND STRING
DE	Marcell Frazier	Walter Brady
DT	Josh Augusta	Terry Beckner, Jr.
DT	Ricky Hatley	A.J. Logan
DE	Charles Harris	Nate Howard
SLB	Donavin Newsom	Clarence Green
MLB	Michael Scherer	Brandon Lee
WLB	Kentrell Brothers	Joey Burkett
CB1	Kenya Dennis	John Gibson
CB2	Aarion Penton	Logan Cheadle
SS	Anthony Sherrills	Thomas Wilson
FS	Ian Simon	Cortland Browning

SPECIAL TEAMS » MISSOURI

PUNTER (26) Corey Fatony
PLACEKICKER (99) Andrew Baggett
HOLDER (9) Eddie Printz
LONG SNAPPER (86) Jake Hurrell
KICK RETURNER (22) Anthony Sherrills
PUNT RETURNER (11) Aarion Penton

SPECIAL TEAMS » CONNECTICUT

PUNTER (42) Justin Wain
PLACEKICKER (17) Bobby Puyol
KICK RETURNER (22) Arkeel Newsome
PUNT RETURNER (18) Brian Lemelle
KICKOFF (40) Michael Tarbutt
HOLDER (14) Tim Boyle
LONGSNAPPER (66) Dominick Manco

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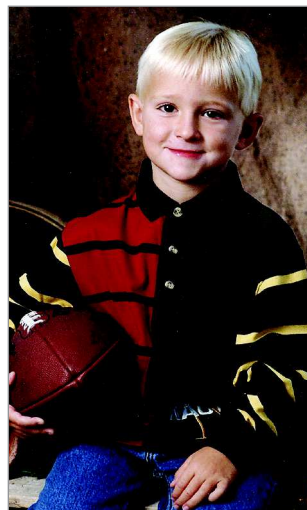
WHAT'S INSIDE



CONNECT(ICUT) THE DOTS

Think you know everything there is to know about Connecticut? Think again. Study up on the opponent with our quiz.

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TODDLERS TO TIGERS

This future Missouri linebacker and poetry fan loved to learn, and picked up an appreciation of classic rock from his dad.

13



'HERE FOR THE MAKING'

Six hours with Gary Pinkel and one commercial later, Tristan Kunkler is the poster child of the "Mizzou Made" slogan.

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SCHEDULE

09/05	VS. SOUTHEAST MISSOURI	W 34-3
09/12	@ ARKANSAS STATE	W 27-20
FAMILY WEEKEND/TIGER STRIPE		
09/19	VS. CONNECTICUT	11 A.M.
09/26	@ KENTUCKY	6 OR 6:30 P.M.
GOLD RUSH/MILITARY APPRECIATION		
10/03	VS. SOUTH CAROLINA	TBA
HOMECOMING		
10/10	VS. FLORIDA	TBA
10/17	@ GEORGIA	TBA
10/24	@ VANDERBILT	TBA
11/05	VS. MISSISSIPPI STATE	8 P.M.
11/14	VS. BYU (ARROWHEAD STADIUM)	TBA
BLACKOUT		
11/21	VS. TENNESSEE	TBA
11/27	@ ARKANSAS	1:30 P.M.

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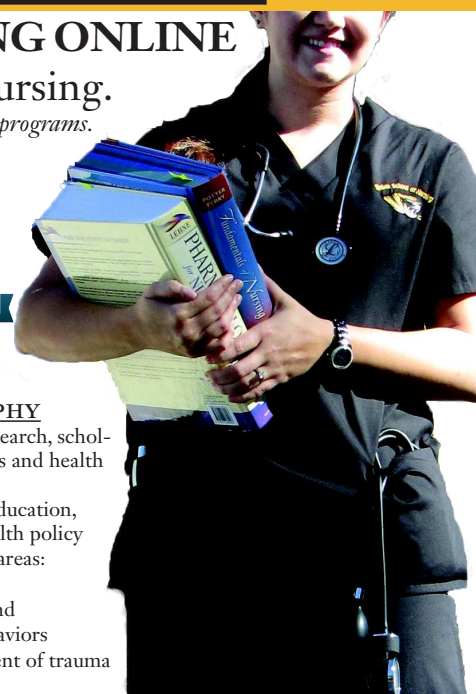
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FAST FIVE

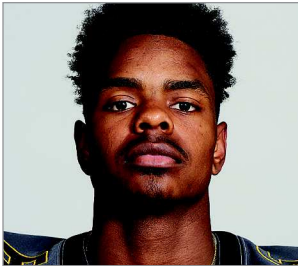
This weekend is Family Weekend, and countless MU parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents will visit the campus. For this week's Fast Five, we asked five Missouri players about their families. **By MICHAEL MANDELL**



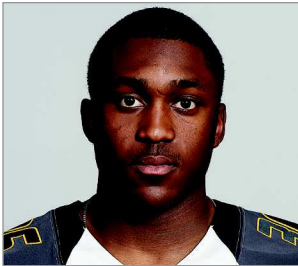
CAM HILTON
DEFENSIVE BACK



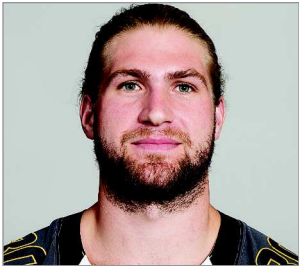
KENTRELL BROTHERS
LINEBACKER



J'MON MOORE
WIDE RECIEVER



MORGAN STEWARD
TAILBACK



SEAN CULKIN
TIGHT END

IF THE MISSOURI FOOTBALL TEAM WERE A FAMILY, WHO'D BE THE DAD?

"It'd probably be Ian (Simon) and Evan (Boehm). Two captains."

"Probably Connor (McGovern), because he's the strongest and the meanest."

"I have to give it to Evan (Boehm). ... Evan's my boy, man. He's going to get the best out of you every day."

"That's hard. ... It'd be Taylor Chappell, probably."

"Brad McNulty. I just feel like he'd be the dad."

OTHER THAN YOURSELF, WHO'S THE BEST FOOTBALL PLAYER IN YOUR FAMILY?

"My cousin, Jordon Hardwick. He plays for Miami of Ohio. He's a freshman like me."

"Probably my little brother, Richard Brothers. There's really not too many football players in our family."

"Might be my cousin, Darwin Kidsy. He goes to North Texas. That's my boy right there. He's pretty good. He can ball, definitely."

"That'd be my little nephew (Kaydin). He just turned seven in July. He's wearing my number and just started tackle football."

"My brother (Ryan Culkin). He played at Liberty University."

WHERE DO YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS SIT DURING GAMES?

"We only get four tickets, so four of my family sat in the family area with all the parents. The rest bought tickets and sat near the entrance where we run through the tunnel."

"Most of the time, they're out by the 50. They get as close as they can get."

"My mom has to sit close. ... She can see, but it's better for her to sit up close. I can definitely hear her no matter where she's sitting."

"They sit a bit higher, above the student section."

"They just always sit in the family section. I don't have much family that can make it to come to all the games."

WHO'S THE BIGGEST MISSOURI FAN IN YOUR FAMILY?

"All of them now, now that I play for Mizzou. Definitely my mom."

"Definitely my mom. We didn't know too much about Mizzou before we got here, but she's definitely a huge fan now."

"That's a hard one. Biggest Mizzou fan might be my auntie, Auntie Susan."

"I have a cousin named Thomas. He's always wearing Mizzou stuff, so I'd probably say him."

"It's kind of cool how it spread. My brother's married to a Canadian, and I've got a huge fan base in Canada. My dad is definitely the biggest, but it's fun how Canadians get into it."

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE THING TO DO WITH FAMILY MEMBERS WHEN THEY COME TO COLUMBIA?

"Just probably go out to eat and hang out. It's good seeing them. We went to G&D's (after the first home game), me and Drew Lock's family."

"We like to go eat after the game. ... Texas Roadhouse is my favorite."

"We hang, man. Just chill. We chill, catch a movie. Sometimes we might go to St. Louis, go to one of those outlets out there. We like to shop, know what I'm saying?"

"It'd probably just be going back home and being able to relax after a game."

"My roommate's got some property up in Higbee, so we like to go there and hang out."

10 things you didn't know about Connecticut (or do you?)

After beating Arkansas State on Sept. 12, the Missouri football team will return home Saturday to face Connecticut. Before kickoff, test your knowledge of the Tigers' next opponent and the state it represents. **By MICHAEL MANDELL**

1 The University of Connecticut holds an annual event known as "Oozeball," a tournament in which students play one of the following sports in the mud. Which one?

- A Football
- B Volleyball
- C Kickball
- D Soccer



2 As a state, Connecticut is ranked higher than any other in the union in which category?

- A Per capita income
- B Crude oil production
- C Life expectancy
- D Literacy

3 Which tasty food was first created in Connecticut?

- A Hot dogs
- B Hamburgers
- C Strip steaks
- D Ice cream sandwiches

4 Like many schools with animals for nicknames, Connecticut uses a live husky for its mascot. What's its name?

- A Ruff
- B Steel
- C Husk
- D Jonathan



5 In 2013, the University of Connecticut was named No. 1 in the country in which category?

- A Student body diversity
- B Environmental responsibility
- C Alumni holding CEO positions
- D Nobel Prize winners

6 The University of Connecticut is located in Storrs. In 2005, Storrs received which interesting distinction from Slate.com?

- A "Best Place to Start an Avocado Farm"
- B "Best Place to Avoid Death Due to Natural Disaster"
- C "Best Place to Become a Bicycle Salesperson"
- D "Best Fishing Spot in New England"

7 In which season did the Connecticut men's basketball team fail to win the national championship?

- A 1999
- B 2006
- C 2011
- D 2014

8 Speaking of national championships, Connecticut has more than any other school in which sport?

- A Men's basketball
- B Women's basketball
- C Women's soccer
- D Softball

9 Which "Saturday Night Live" star graduated from Connecticut?

- A Will Ferrell
- B Vanessa Bayer
- C Amy Poehler
- D Bobby Moynihan



10 The university's sports teams call themselves the Huskies, but Connecticut's official state animal is which of the following?

- A Giraffe
- B Lobster
- C Sperm whale
- D Red fox

Answers

1. Answer: B. Oozeball has been held every year since 1984 and is the longest-running mud volleyball tournament in the country. The winning team receives \$300.
2. Answer: A. The average Connecticut resident made \$37,892 annually between 2009 and 2013. In comparison, Missouri's average of \$25,649 per person ranked No. 33 in the nation during that time.
3. Answer: B. New Haven, Connecticut restaurant Louis' Lunch served the first hamburger in 1900. According to local legend, the sandwich was born when a restaurant patron walked in and told owner Louis Lassen he wanted meat he could eat on the go. Lassen stuffed ground steak between two pieces of bread to create the iconic American entrée we know today.
4. Answer: D. Jonathan has been the Huskies' mascot since 1934. The current Jonathan, Jonathan XIV, was born Oct. 5, 2013, and became the mascot Jan. 29, 2014.
5. Answer: B. Connecticut beat out more than 2,000 schools around the world to be named the Sierra Club's "Coolest School."
6. Answer: B. Slate.com cited Storrs' relative distance from shore (about 50 miles), easy accessibility to a major city (Hartford, Connecticut) and lower likelihood of snow than other parts of New England among the various reasons for the ranking.
7. Answer: B. The Huskies have won national championships in 1999, 2004, 2011 and 2014. Although the team was a No. 1 seed in 2006, it lost to No. 11 seed George Mason in the Elite Eight.
8. Answer: B. The Huskies have won 10 titles under coach Geno Auriemma. They also set an NCAA record with 90 straight wins from Nov. 16, 2008, to Dec. 30, 2010.
9. Answer: D. Moynihan, who graduated from Connecticut in 1999, has been featured on SNL since 2008.
10. Answer: C. The sperm whale was named the state animal in 1975. Sperm whales can grow to be 70 feet long and can weigh up to 60 tons.

WELCOME TO COLUMBIA

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How Mizzou was made

BY JACOB BOGAGE

Kat Lucchesi hustled down the stairs at the Mizzou Athletic Training Complex, offered a firm handshake while clutching an iPhone in the other hand, and apologized for running a couple minutes late. Her office was a mess, she said, and she was prepping something for “Coach.”

She glanced back down at the phone and then to her watch and slid into a theater chair in the football team room. She took one more glance at the phone before setting it face down on the floor.

Lucchesi is the football team’s multimedia director, a marketing role that also contributes to coach Gary Pinkel’s recruiting efforts. She’s in charge of the team’s Web page and blog on GaryPinke.com. She commands the team’s numerous social media accounts, produces highlight videos, directs content, contributes to public relations initiatives and more. As such, Lucchesi often needs to be glued to her iPhone.

She used to teach multimedia journalism classes and vowed to her students she wouldn’t look at her phone during class if they didn’t look at theirs. With one notable exception: if Coach calls.

So, how many hours in a day is she on her iPhone?

“All the time,” she said as she glanced down at the phone on the floor. Aside from staff meetings. “Coach doesn’t let us take it in there.”

Pinkel and the football program basically created Lucchesi’s position in 2009. She had just graduated from MU with a journalism degree. As a student, she worked at KOMU 8 as a sports reporter, producing a segment called “This Week in Mizzou Football.”

The Tigers wanted to expand their Web presence and pegged a savvy, young content producer who knew the team and the technology.

With the shifting plate tectonics of college football realignment, Lucchesi’s job expanded.

Texas in 2011 launched the Longhorn Network, its own television channel, holding the network over the Big 12 Conference’s head as a ransom not to leave.

Texas A&M, unable to bear its bitter rival’s monetary accomplishment, bolted for the Southeastern Conference, which asked Missouri to join to give the conference an even number of teams.

The Tigers obliged. The first round of conference realignment concluded. Kat Lucchesi was tasked with running a multimedia department in a new era of big-money college football. ➔

Mizzou makes its identity

Realignment touched off a high-speed chase for college football programs to rebrand themselves and reinvest in their identities.

Missouri, a charter member of the Big 8, now had to introduce itself to a host of SEC frenemies that were unfamiliar with what the Columns are doing on the quad or why exactly MU insists on calling itself “Mizzou.”

Athletics, namely football, are a primary touchpoint for how millions of people learn about an institution. Take, for example, this reporter, who saw a Tiger football game on television during his latter high school years and did a Google search to learn more about MU. Presto: five years later, here he is.

“It’s building name recognition and, as you know, they’re no longer attracting students from (just) St. Louis and local towns,” said Allen Adamson, chairman of the brand consulting firm Landor and an author of several books on branding. “There’s a global marketplace for American education. You’re not going to be on Mizzou’s mailing list if you’re sitting in Abu Dhabi, but you’re competing for the same spot.”

And though folks in Abu Dhabi might not be watching American football, they might see a viral video of Missouri offensive linemen twerking at practice, a clip Lucchesi posted during 2014 training camp. It made it on SportsCenter’s “Not Top 10” plays of the week and has tens of thousands of views.

By the way, that was “Coach’s” idea, Lucchesi said.

It’s building name recognition and, as you know, they’re no longer attracting students from (just) St. Louis and local towns. There’s a global marketplace for American education. You’re not going to be on Mizzou’s mailing list if you’re sitting in Abu Dhabi, but you’re competing for the same spot.”

ALLEN ADAMSON, chairman of the brand consulting firm Landor

No, not the twerking. But he came into a team meeting and told each position group they would dance to either start or end each practice over the summer, “and Kat’s going to record it and put it on YouTube.”

It demonstrates the characteristics the team wants to promote online. The Tigers are family oriented and have a positive attitude, traits Lucchesi said she wants to publicize.

Some content the team promotes has those messages, among others, built in.

Such as *accountability*. “GP (Gary Pinkel) reiterates how important it is to be positive with his players when coaching,” the team’s @MizzouFootball account tweeted during Pinkel’s Monday press conference.

And *leadership by example*. A blog post titled “The Law of the Playmaker,” preaches the importance of getting the ball in the hands of the players who want it and deserve to have it.

In 2013, the football team wanted one big tent to unite all of these qualities. The NFL Draft was nearing and the Tigers had a surefire first-round pick in

defensive tackle Sheldon Richardson. So Lucchesi convened a meeting to answer one question: how do we spin this for Mizzou?

The answer: create a catchphrase. That was the birth of “Mizzou Made,” a term that has since overflowed into the everyday parlance of athletics officials and even Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon.

MU in recent years experimented with different slogans like “One Mizzou” to represent the department and the rest of the school. “Mizzou on the Move” and “Mizzou Unleashed” are others athletics has used. The wrestling program has its own slogan, Tiger Style, that defines its mat mentality.

All of this helps brand a program — and helps sell T-shirts. Who wouldn’t want to be Mizzou Made?

“Mizzou has had just recently, it’s safe to say, they’ve had some success,” said Kenji Jackson, the safeties coach at Missouri State and former Tiger defensive captain who sat in on that fateful meeting as a graduate assistant who worked in recruiting and communications. ➤

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Kat Lucchesi stands in front of Missouri football players at Faurot Field with her trusty smartphone in hand. Lucchesi takes the phone everywhere and uses it often — except in staff meetings.

“That’s allowed the program, the campus, the state of Missouri to have more exposure,” he added. “And you tag the ‘Mizzou Made’ label on that, it certainly doesn’t hurt the school and the state.”

From an athletics marketing perspective, the campaign works. Adamson, from the marketing firm, compared Missouri football’s marketing material to that of the New York Yankees, the quintessential American sports franchise.

“I think they’re slicker than most professional sports teams,” he said. “I think they’re playing a professional-level branding game with a college team.”

The importance of the brand

The impact of that brand identity is profound, branding experts say. See a cool YouTube video (like the one the Tigers take the field to), and you might be more apt to buy a T-shirt. Or maybe, for those out of SEC country, you’ll enhance your cable or satellite TV subscription to include the SEC Network.

After all, it was that whole Longhorn Network mess that energized college football’s branding war.

“(TV contracts) are changing the game, no pun intended, for colleges because they’re sitting on these huge assets,” Adamson said.

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high school football players. Each week the Tigers tweet the uniform combination they'll wear in the upcoming game. Cool jerseys and helmets might be enough to sway a recruit their way.

"The most noticeable thing for me, because you gotta keep in mind you're dealing with 17- and 18-year-olds, they like to see the equipment, the helmets, the cleats. They want to see the fun stuff," said Jackson, who spent 2014 as a recruiting assistant at Northwestern.

The Northwestern Wildcats, who signed with Under Armour in 2012, saw a bump in interest because of their new look, he said.

"Some of those kids, they're raised in a household where they're a little more mature where you can see the big picture," Jackson said. "Other kids, they want to know what they can get their hands on in a month or two."

Deep down, said Lucchesi, "Everything we do comes back to recruiting."

Exhibit A: Slapping the Mizzou Made moniker on alums who are NFL players. If Arizona Cardinals linebacker Sean Weatherspoon has a big game on Sunday, he's "Mizzou Made."

Did Chase Daniel throw a touchdown in a preseason game? Mizzou Made.

Jeremy Maclin signed with the Kansas City Chiefs? A Mizzou Made legend comes home.

Coaches can use promotional material — including blog posts and high-light tapes — to lure recruits of a specific area. Maclin in Kansas City could soon help Missouri land a kid from the city.

"Yes, you want to win football games, but you have to recruit well to win football games," Lucchesi said. "And to recruit well, you have to have a good name out there overall."

Other programs use similar techniques, Jackson said. It's touched off a social media arms race. On one hand, that gives potential student athletes more access to information than ever before. On the other, teams have more control over what information gets out to recruits about their universities.

If Tiger recruiters don't want a player to know about Aldon Smith, a once-prized Tiger defensive end who can't seem to find his way out of the police blotter, Missouri marketers won't write about him or include him in photo galleries of MU alums in the NFL.

"It's almost like 'don't ask don't tell,'" Jackson said. "If a kid's not asking about it, why would we tell them? Why expose a weakness?"

Well, Missouri wouldn't. It's in the business of good news. That's why Lucchesi's phone buzzes with news about Marcus Murphy, who's found a role for the New Orleans Saints as a rookie.

Or five text messages from Michael Sam — the gay SEC defensive player of the year who applauded his teammates for the atmosphere they created. You know, family oriented. Positive attitude.

"We've got something new coming up with him," Lucchesi said. "Want me to turn my phone off for now?"

Supervising editor is Mark Selig: sports@columbiamissourian.com, 882-5730. 

Kat Lucchesi is the Missouri football team's multimedia director. Part of her job is to help brand Missouri as a place and a team that high school players want to join.

JENN SMITH
MU Football

KAT LUCCHESI

MISSOURI FOOTBALL'S MULTIMEDIA DIRECTOR



TODDLERS TO TIGERS

As a toddler, **Alec Abeln** loved to learn. Today, he's a business major who loves poetry and is working toward an English minor. **By AARON REISS**

Alec Abeln always had a theme of the day.

Think about frogs. Really, really, really think about them.

If that was the theme that day, that was the task the Missouri offensive lineman's parents assigned him as a boy.

He and his father would talk about the amphibians on the way to school. Then, while at school, Abeln would look out for things related to frogs: green objects, people hopping, maybe even actual frogs.

"Alec, he just embraced it," his mother, Julie Abeln, said. "Whatever it was, he just took it and ran with it."

That, his mother said, signifies who Alec Abeln was and is: inquisitive. As a toddler, he loved to learn. Today, he's a business major who is studying for an English minor. He

likes poetry.

Julie Abeln said she could read to her son for hours. He'd fire questions at her with each page turned. Alec also liked to work on jigsaw puzzles — as many as 500 pieces — a hobby of his dad's, Douglas Abeln.

Another interest he picked up from his dad? Classic rock. It often dominated the conversation during their drives to school. Today, Abeln plays the piano, violin and guitar.

"You ask him any song, any band, any musician, who was the backup — blah blah — and he'll know it," Julie Abeln said of her son. "He, of course, loves, you know, The Boss. He's a huge Bruce (Springsteen) fan."

Julie Abeln is a former Truman the Tiger, and she raised her son in a St. Louis house filled with Missou-

ri memorabilia. His friends made a game of counting how many Missouri decorations they could find in the home.

Alec had a bit of wit as a boy, too — even if he didn't know it.

One day, returning from school, his brother talked back to their mother.

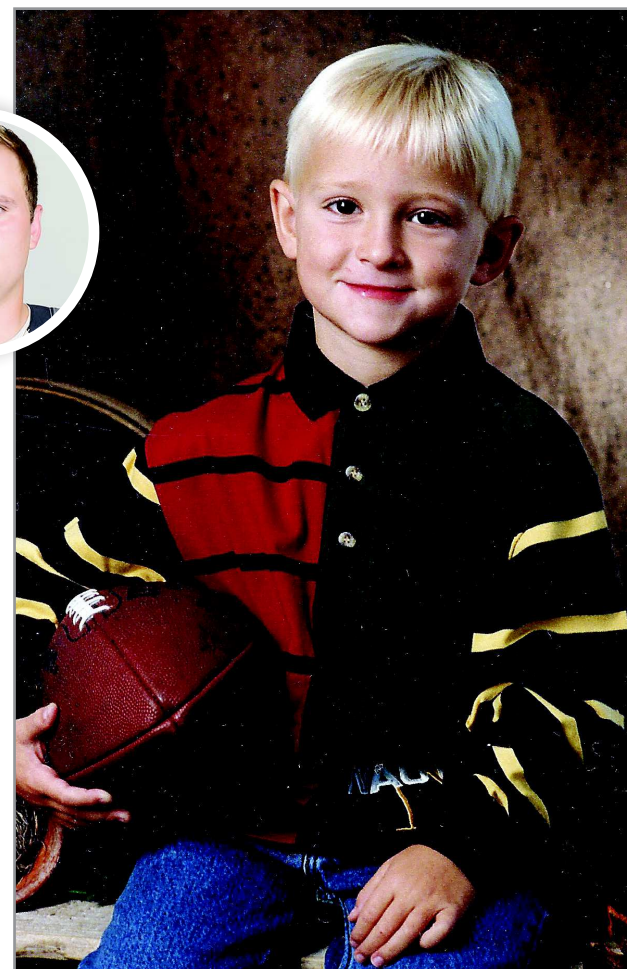
"Ryan," the mom said, "stop being such a smart-aleck."

"Mom," Alec chimed in, "don't you mean smart-Ryan?"

The now 6-foot-3, 290-pound Missouri Tiger smiled at the memory.

"I thought the smart-aleck only applied to me at that time," he said.

Supervising editor is Mark Selig: sports@columbiamissourian.com, 882-5730.



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HALEE ROCK/Missourian

Tristan Kunkler gets noticed around Columbia now, after he acted in a Missouri football commercial with Gary Pinkel. In the spot, he said he was ready for the Missouri football team. Tristan is wearing the jersey he received as part of his payment.

'COACH, I'D LIKE TO SIGN UP FOR THE TEAM.'



MIZZOU NETWORK/YouTube

Tristan Kunkler appears in a commercial with Pinkel. The commercial took six hours to shoot, and Tristan said the hardest parts were standing still and repeating lines "over and over and over and over and over and over again." See the "Mizzou Made" ad online at <http://bit.ly/1Y9Pc08>.

Meet the youngest Tigers spokesman for 'Mizzou Made'

Perhaps you've seen the bit: A young boy walks into Pinkel's office with drumline music accompanying him. **By AARON REISS**

Five words embarrass the cute 7-year-old boy from Columbia.

"I'm here for the making."

People approach Tristan Kunkler and say that phrase. It's meant as a form of flattery. It's Tristan's pivotal line from a 30-second Missouri football commercial.

One woman — a stranger in a Walmart aisle — recited the line to Tristan and told him it was her favorite spot on TV.

"Oh, man," he replied. Then he hid behind his mom.

This is what happens when you make a commercial with arguably the most famous man in Columbia: coach Gary Pinkel.

Perhaps you've seen the bit: Tristan walks into Pinkel's office, a drumline soundtrack accompanying him. With authority, he says, "Coach, I'd like to sign up for the team." As Pinkel looks up from a stack of papers on his desk the boy crosses his arms and gives the Tigers' coach a stare.

After a bit of back and forth, the boy asks Pinkel if he's ever heard of "Mizzou Made."

"Rings a bell," the coach replies.

"Well, I'm here for the making," Tristan says with oomph, placing his hands on his hips as the drumline begins again.

Missouri's message is sent: Tiger football is family friendly and has a catchphrase to boot.

"Mizzou Made" is the athletics department's slogan, which is meant to show the program's ability to turn good athletes into stars.

Tristan, interviewed at his home a couple months after he filmed the commercial, said he doesn't know what "Mizzou Made" even means. He's not a huge football fan; he doesn't like the tackling.

He's a true actor in that sense — he's able to play the role of a boy who dreams of suiting up for Pinkel and the Tigers. And he'd gladly do so again, he said, as long as he receives the same compensation: \$50, the No. 7 Missouri jersey he wore in the commercial and a signed football from Pinkel.

His mother, Katie Kunkler, said the black No. 7 jersey — similar but a bit smaller than the one quarterback Maty Mauk wears — is her son's favorite shirt. But Tristan needed help

from his mom and brother, Anthony, to remember who wears that jersey for the Tigers.

"Oh, the quarterback," Tristan said. "It could be a girl, too."

"He's got a person he likes, he loves, at church," 8-year-old Anthony said. "Her name is Maddie."

"No! You love her, too!" the younger brother replied. "I can tell you that. I don't love her. I like her."

Young love. As fickle as an on-the-run throw by Maty Mauk.

While Tristan might be a novice on Missouri sports he does know a thing or two about acting.

Tristan occasionally participates in Tryps Kids, a youth theater institute at Stephens College. This summer, Jill Womack, the founder and executive artistic director of the program, received a casting request for a Missouri football commercial. The specifics: a boy, roughly 7 to 9 years old. She sent emails to four or five families with children she thought best fit the bill. The boy needed to be talented, but he also needed to be able to focus.

Tristan did that well. During the six-hour shoot, Pinkel told his mom, "Man, your kids are better behaved than our football players sometimes." Tristan said the hardest parts were standing still and repeating lines "over and over and over and over and over and over again."

One line took particular practice. Tristan had to tell Pinkel his fake measurements, the supposed intangibles of a "Mizzou Made" player.

"How about 6-3, 220 pounds with a 3.6 grade average?" he said. Tristan is too young to know what a GPA is, but he aced the scene after plenty of practice.

His mom plans to take him to an acting agency in Kansas City soon. Maybe more commercials are in his future.

"God, he's so cute," Womack, the Tryps director said of Tristan while watching the commercial.

Then his co-star delivered a line.

"Coach Pinkel's pretty dang good in this, too," she said. "I'd cast him."

Supervising editor is Mark Selig: sports@columbiamissourian.com, 882-5730.

http://GaryPinkel.com/

Pinkel's biggest trade: a ticket for a Web address

The story of GaryPinkel.com began with a computer developer who purchased the domain name the day Pinkel was hired to coach the Missouri football team. **By MICHAEL MANDELL**

The Missouri football team had just hired its fourth coach in 14 years, and Nick Witthaus got an idea.

The 1992 Missouri graduate had seen a low point in Tiger football history — the team went 12-30-2 during his time in school — and one could forgive Missouri fans for having doubts that the team's next coach, an unheralded



NICK WITTHAUS

48-year-old from Toledo, Ohio, would turn the program around. But Witthaus saw an opportunity that only a self-described "computer geek" might: On Nov. 30, 2000, the very day Missouri hired Gary Pinkel, Witthaus bought GaryPinkel.com.

"Being the computer geek that I am, the first thing I did when they announced he was the guy was search to see if anyone else owned the domain name," Witthaus said. "When I found that it was available, I went ahead and bought it right there. It was pretty easy to get."

It was easy for Witthaus financially, too; the domain name cost just \$10 per year. He registered the name on 000Domains.com and left the Web page blank.

Witthaus thought an MU representative would eventually approach him about taking over the website. He said he didn't intend to sell it, but he also didn't want just anyone to get ahold of it or to see Pinkel or Missouri deal with a domain name battle.

"Around that time (the year 2000), there was this whole thing where people were buying domain names left and right," said David Reid, who founded the fan site TigerBoard.com in 1995 and worked with Witthaus in the website's early years. Witthaus is now the sole owner of TigerBoard.com. "He didn't want anybody else, like a KU fan, perhaps, taking it over and doing something with it."

Witthaus waited. And he waited. And still, no one from Missouri asked about taking over GaryPinkel.com. He planned to let the website stay unused until someone came forward, and he left it blank for that reason.

Then, in May 2013, Witthaus' phone rang. Tim Worstell, an MU rep and an acquaintance of Witthaus, told him that Missouri wanted GaryPinkel.com for team purposes. Worstell, who now runs the website, also told Witthaus that Pinkel wanted to meet him.

Several days before the 2013 season-opener, Witthaus walked into Pinkel's office to discuss transferring control of the website. Pinkel offered him two season tickets. Witthaus

Being the computer geek that I am, the first thing I did when they announced he was the guy was search to see if anyone else owned the domain name."

NICK WITTHAUS

Original owner of GaryPinkel.com

accepted.

"I didn't really expect that to happen, but I was more than happy to have them," said Witthaus, "... Those were really good seats, too. They were about halfway up on the alumni side on the 50-yard line."

After sitting through those games with bad Missouri teams during college, for Witthaus, being able to sit in a prime location for a 2013 season in which the Tigers went 12-2 and won the Southeastern Conference Eastern Division title for the first time was a welcome change.

The Tigers won as many games that season as they did throughout Witthaus' college career.

"It was a fun ride," Witthaus said of that season. "I'm thankful to have been able to see it live."

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