

TK

TIGER KICKOFF // Published by the Columbia Missourian
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SOUTHEAST MISSOURI AT MISSOURI » 3 P.M. FRIDAY
TV: SEC NETWORK ALTERNATE **RADIO: TIGER NETWORK**

EVAN BOEHM – MISSOURI'S IRON MAN, FUNNY MAN

40 CONSECUTIVE GAMES AND HE STILL HAS DOUBTERS, BUT THE MISSOURI CENTER AND COACH'S SON FACES THEM, SOMETIMES HUMOROUSLY.

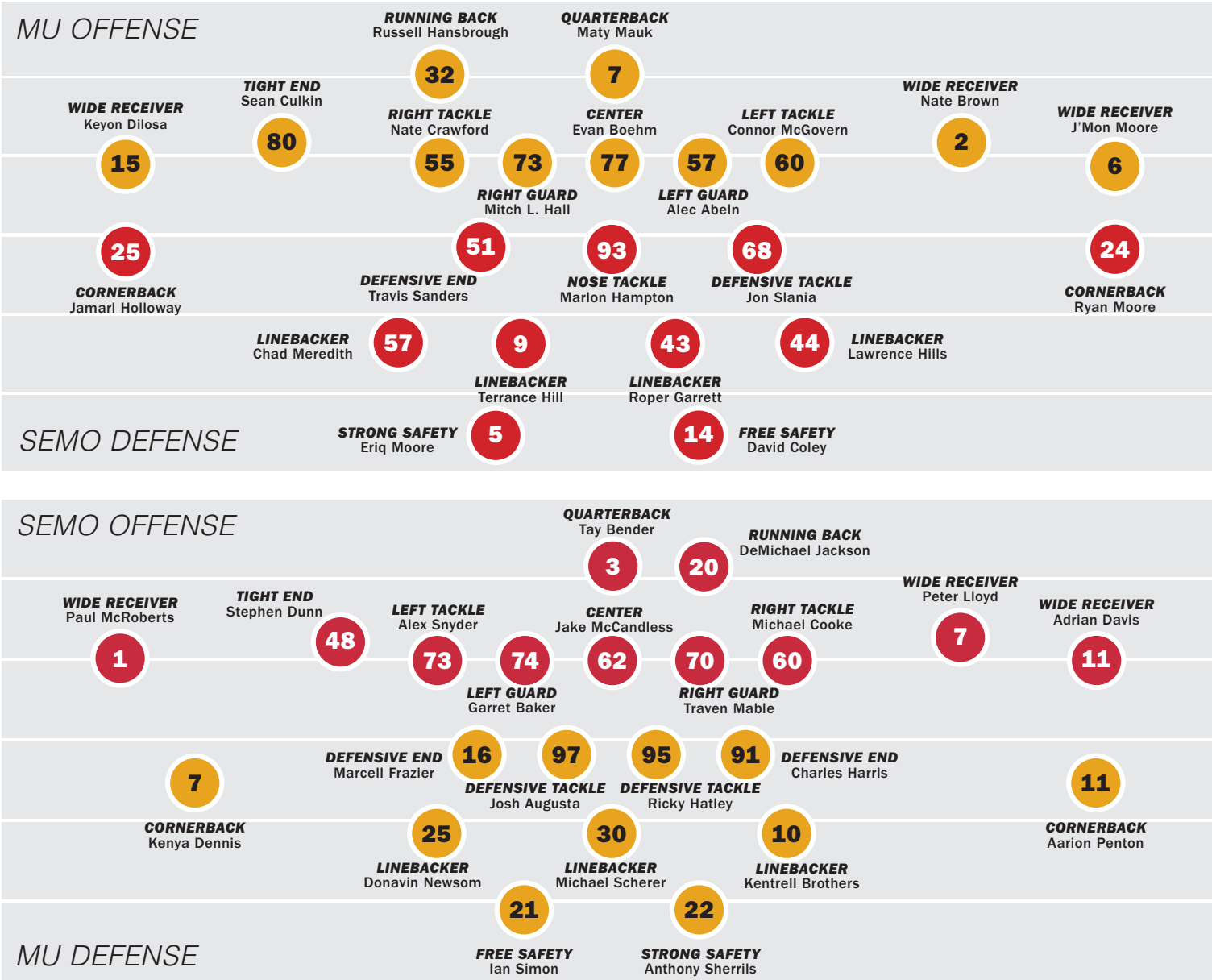
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**TODDLERS
TO TIGERS
PAGE 13**

STARTING LINEUPS

MISSOURI SOUTHEAST MISSOURI



TIGER KICKOFF

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DEPTH CHART » MISSOURI

OFFENSE			DEFENSE		
	1ST STRING	2ND STRING		1ST STRING	2ND STRING
QB	Maty Mauk	Drew Lock	DE	Marcell Frazier	Walter Brady
RB	Russell Hansbrough	Ish Witter	DT	Josh Augusta	Terry Beckner, Jr.
WR1	J'Mon Moore	Emanuel Hall	DT	Ricky Hatley	A.J. Logan
WR2	Nate Brown	Thomas Richard	DE	Charles Harris	Nate Howard
WR3	Keyon Dilosa	DeSean Blair	SLB	Donavin Newsom	Clarence Green
TE	Sean Culkin	Jason Reese	MLB	Michael Scherer	Brandon Lee
LT	Connor McGovern	Paul Adams	WLB	Kentrell Brothers	Joey Burkett
LG	Alec Abeln	Taylor Chappell	CB1	Kenya Dennis	John Gibson
C	Evan Boehm	Brad McNulty	CB2	Aarion Penton	Logan Cheadle
RG	Mitch L. Hall	Kevin Pendleton	SS	Anthony Sherrills	Thomas Wilson
RT	Nate Crawford	Malik Cuellar	FS	Ian Simon	Tavon Ross

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 » SOUTHEAST MISSOURI

PUNTER (46) Alex Knight
SNAPPER (59) Wade Wright
KICK RETURNER (20) DeMichael Jackson
PUNT RETURNER (7) Peter Lloyd
KICKER (35) Ryan McCrum
HOLDER (16) Tyler Manne

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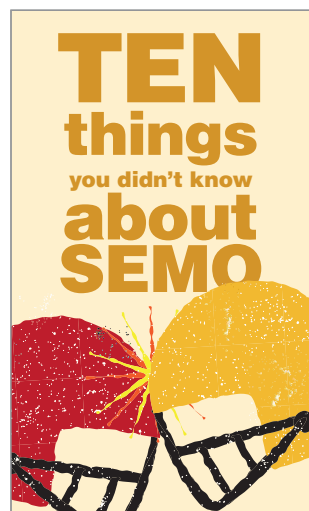


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WHAT'S INSIDE



BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW ...

Test your knowledge on all things SEMO, including which radio talk show host attended the school for two semesters?

06



TODDLERS TO TIGERS

Don't let the photo deceive you, the kid in this throwback is not playing collegiate soccer. Can you guess who it is?

13



WEARING A ROCK M

Championship rings have different meanings for the multitude of players, coaches, staff members and even the MU chancellor who receive them.

14

SCHEDULE

09/05	VS. SOUTHEAST MISSOURI	3:00 P.M.
09/12	@ ARKANSAS STATE	6:00 P.M.
FAMILY WEEKEND/TIGER STRIPE		
09/19	VS. CONNECTICUT	11:00 A.M.
09/26	@ KENTUCKY	TBA
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	TBA
11/14	VS. BYU (ARROWHEAD STADIUM)	TBA
BLACKOUT		
11/21	VS. TENNESSEE	TBA
11/27	@ ARKANSAS	1:30 P.M.

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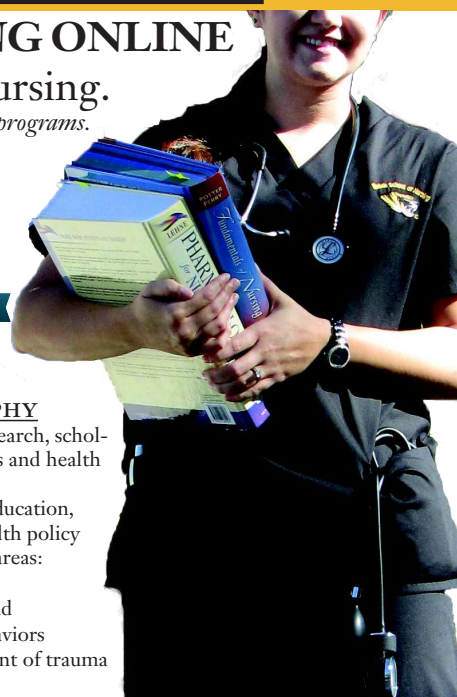
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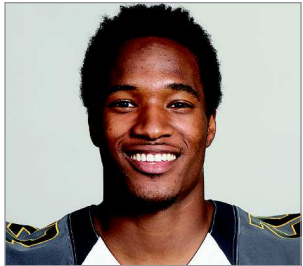
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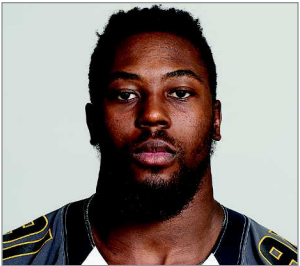
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FAST FIVE

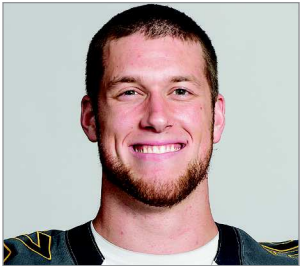
Missouri hasn't faced a team from its own state since 2008, so there's no better time to ask five players (two from Kansas City, two from St. Louis and one from Jefferson City) about the place they call home. **By MICHAEL MANDELL**



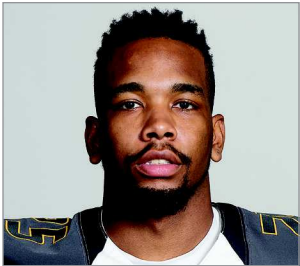
ANTHONY SHERRILLS
SAFETY



CHARLES HARRIS
DEFENSIVE END



CLAYTON ECHARD
TIGHT END



DONAVIN NEWSOM
LINEBACKER



JOEY BURKETT
LINEBACKER

WHAT'S SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT YOUR HOMETOWN OR HIGH SCHOOL?

"I'm the only one who's played football for Mizzou from my high school."
(Kansas City, Hogan Prep)

"Tech N9ne did a music video (For the Mo) in our high school. I'm a big fan of (him)."
(Kansas City, Lincoln College Prep)

"That's where Six Flags is. That's all anyone says."
(Eureka)

"Our high school coach (Bob Bunton) just won his 100th game with the team."
(St. Louis, Parkway North)

"We've won 10 state championships in football."
(Jefferson City)

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO VISIT IN MISSOURI?

"Kansas City will always be the best because of the Plaza, but I like going to St. Louis, too. I'm a big city guy."

"I like going to the College Basketball Experience in Kansas City. You feel like you're actually in college playing basketball."

"Downtown St. Louis. It's a really fun atmosphere."

"Honestly, it's probably Columbia. I love being around this campus with my teammates. I love Mizzou a lot."

"I would say St. Louis. Being at Busch Stadium to watch the Cardinals play is awesome."

HOW PASSIONATE ARE PEOPLE ABOUT MIZZOU IN YOUR HOMETOWN?

"People love Mizzou. Marcus Denmon came here, and he's a big Kansas City guy. Mizzou is the state's team."

"I've got people calling me every day about the BYU game (on Nov. 14) and tickets and stuff. People rave about Mizzou, especially the Kansas City natives who can come to Mizzou and represent."

"It's a big high school town. ... There are so many people supporting me and Mizzou at the next level. I always have people coming up and talking to me about that."

"They love it. Everywhere I go, I see Mizzou flags and people wearing Tiger clothes."

"It's pretty big. So many people there drive to Faurot on Saturdays to watch the games. I did that when I was younger."

WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC ARTIST FROM MISSOURI?

"Easily Tech N9ne."

"Like I said, I'm Tech N9ne all the way."

"Nelly. He's the man."

"I'd definitely have to go with Nelly. He's from St. Louis."

"That's really tough. I honestly can't decide between Nelly and Tech N9ne."

ROYALS OR CARDINALS?

"I'm a Royals, Chiefs and LeBron James fan."

"Royals every time. We get into it about that in the locker room."

"Cards. It has to be. I'd be kicked out of my hometown if I said otherwise."

"Cardinals. That's the way it is in St. Louis."

"I'd have to say the Cardinals. I cheer for the Royals whenever they aren't playing the Cardinals, but it's the Cardinals when I have to choose."

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

The Missouri football team begins its 2015 season this weekend, and the Tigers have their sights set on their first opponent: Southeast Missouri State.

To get yourself ready for the game, test your knowledge on the team that everybody calls “SEMO.” You might be surprised how much you know — or don’t know. **By MICHAEL MANDELL**

1 Which radio talk show host attended Southeast Missouri State for two semesters?

- A Howard Stern
- B Rush Limbaugh
- C Colin Cowherd
- D Dan Le Batard

2 Which street in Columbia is named after a former Southeast Missouri State University president?

- A Vandiver Drive
- B Nifong Boulevard
- C Rollins Street
- D Worley Street

3 Southeast Missouri State is located in Cape Girardeau. What 2014 movie was filmed in Cape Girardeau?

- A “22 Jump Street”
- B “Neighbors”
- C “Nightcrawler”
- D “Gone Girl”

4 What is Cape Girardeau’s nickname?

- A “Paris of the Plains”
- B “The Bluff City”
- C “Flower Box City”
- D “City of Roses”

5 What was the Southeast Missouri State football team’s previous mascot?

- A Braves
- B Indians
- C Hawks
- D Chiefs

6 Rick Ray, Southeast Missouri State’s men’s basketball coach, previously coached which of Missouri’s fellow Southeastern Conference teams?

- A Alabama
- B Mississippi State
- C Mississippi
- D Tennessee

7 Southeast Missouri State’s football team played rival Southern Illinois at which professional sports stadium in 2013?

- A Arrowhead Stadium (Kansas City Chiefs)
- B Kauffman Stadium (Kansas City Royals)
- C Edward Jones Dome (St. Louis Rams)
- D Busch Stadium (St. Louis Cardinals)

8 Southeast Missouri State was founded as a school that trained whom?

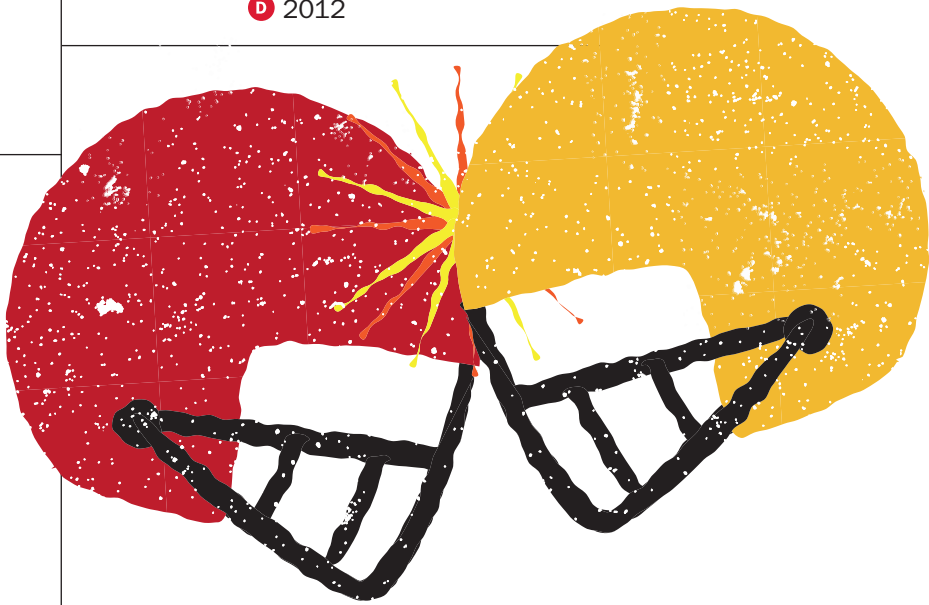
- A Engineers
- B Mechanics
- C Musicians
- D Teachers

9 Former Southeast Missouri State offensive lineman Dan Connolly recently won the Super Bowl with which team?

- A New England Patriots
- B Green Bay Packers
- C Seattle Seahawks
- D New York Giants

10 Southeast Missouri State was Missouri’s last in-state opponent. When did the teams last play?

- A 1995
- B 2004
- C 2008
- D 2012



Answers

1. Answer: B. Limbaugh’s grandfather, Rush Limbaugh Sr., was editor for the school’s student newspaper during the 1911-12 school year.
2. Answer: A. Willard Duncan Vandiver served as the school’s president from 1893 to 1897. He is also credited with popularizing the term “Show-Me State” during his time as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives.
3. Answer: D. The movie is set in the fictional town of North Carthage, Missouri.
4. Answer: D. The city was given the nickname because of a stretch of roses that once adorned U.S. 61.
5. Answer: B. The school changed its mascot from the Indians (men’s sports) and Otahkians (women’s sports) in 2005.
6. Answer: B. Ray’s final two victories with Mississippi State came against the Tigers, whom his Bulldogs beat 77-74 on Feb. 14 and 52-43 on March 7.
7. Answer: D. The field stretched from foul pole to foul pole in the outfield. Because part of the infield dirt overlapped the lower part of the gridiron, both teams’ sidelines were on the same side of the field.
8. Answer: D. The university was founded as Southeast Missouri State Normal School in 1873.
9. Answer: A. Connolly and the Patriots beat former Missouri offensive lineman Justin Britt and the Seahawks in Super Bowl XLIX. No Missouri player has won one since Chase Daniel won Super Bowl XLIV with the New Orleans Saints on Feb. 7, 2010.
10. Answer: C. Chase Daniel threw more touchdown passes (three) than incompletions (one) in a 52-3 Missouri victory on Sept. 6, 2008.

WELCOME TO COLUMBIA

BLACK AND GOLD IS JUST THE BEGINNING

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A match made in EVAN

By AARON REISS

Sweat drenched Evan Boehm. It was the perfect time for a hug. After a fall camp practice, Boehm, one of Missouri's football captains, removed his shoulder pads and crept behind a teammate who was giving a TV interview. Boehm hooked his arms underneath his teammate's shoulders. An awkward, gross embrace. Smiles crossed the faces of reporters and other Tigers.

Unless you know him, it's hard to reconcile this moment with the one that happened right before it — when Boehm lectured teammates for 10 minutes post-practice.

He can be serious, typically for three hours every Saturday or at meetings with Missouri's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, of which Boehm is the co-president.

He can be a joker, like when he lifted weights in thigh-hugging denim short-shorts and a ripped blue and white flannel shirt — an outfit that seems to be out of the Village People's catalog. Instagram jackpot.

When his younger brother, Tyler Boehm, posted a video on social media of a football hitting Evan in his crotch during a fall practice, the video went viral and landed on ESPN. Evan was the person who first showed his younger brother the clip.

The burly 310-pounder likes to laugh at himself. Missouri fans laugh with him. He's one of their favorites.

Evan goes from funny man to serious player to team leader as quickly as he can push a defender off the line of scrimmage. He said he has a "switch." He's needed it to find success and combat doubters. ▶

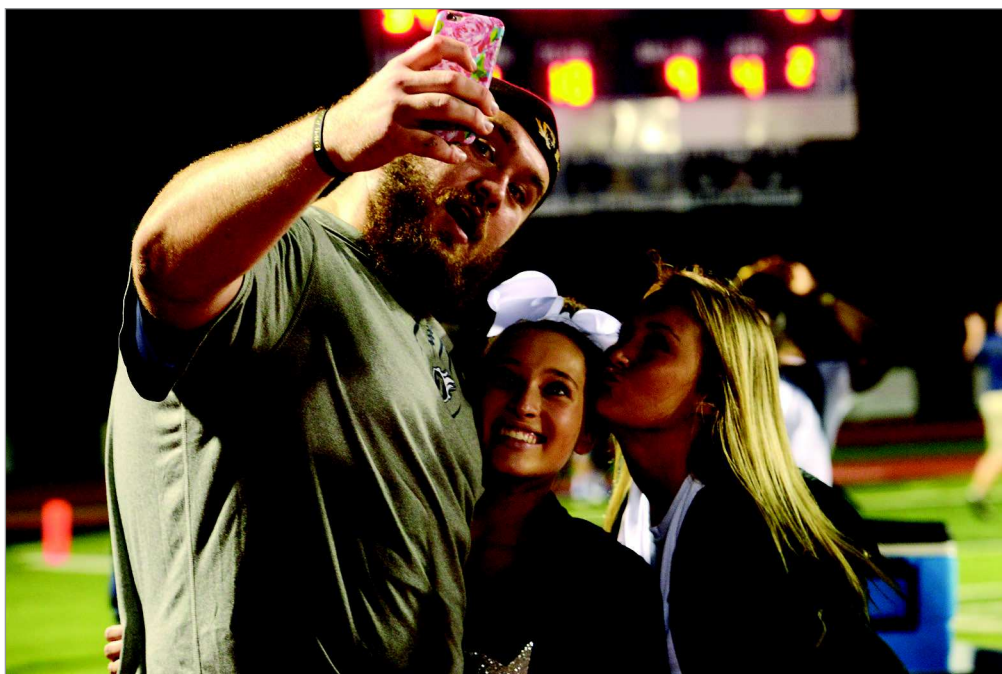
KATIE HOGSETT/Missourian



Lee Summit West's Head Coach Royce Boehm, father of MU offensive lineman Evan Boehm, coached his son in high school. With it came whispers of favoritism. KAYLA WOLF/Missourian

Missouri offensive lineman Evan Boehm visited his alma mater, Lee's Summit West High School, to watch his brother Tyler Boehm, an LSW senior linebacker, and his father, Royce Boehm, head coach, compete against Park Hill South on Aug. 28. LSW won 34-21, and Boehm received plenty of photo requests.

KAYLA WOLF
Missourian



Many athletes claim a similar trait. Really, most of us do. We show different sides to co-workers and close friends.

But what makes Evan different is how he changes in an instant. During Missouri games, he likes to joke on the sidelines. After that fall practice, he needed no cooldown time before clowning a teammate on TV.

Following his father

If you watch Evan Boehm's father coach, you understand where the trait comes from.

During the second quarter of the Lee's Summit West home opener last week, Royce Boehm looked away from a play to say hello to Evan. A moment later, the Titans' head coach snarled after one of his players made a poor decision on the field.

"Be smart," Royce said.

Evan grew up at his father's practices and games, first at Lee's Summit North, where Royce coached the defensive line, and then at Lee's Summit West. He watched his dad switch from joking to focused. Evan learned to interact with people much older than him, players and coaches.

Evan thinks this ability to adapt is responsible for much of his success: the All-Southeastern Conference honors, the captain status, the fact he's started every game of his college career thus far.

He locks in to earn teammates respect. He fools around to earn their friendship.

"It's a delicate thing because some guys can't do it," Missouri left tackle Connor McGovern said. "Some guys can't go from laughing and then two seconds later strap on their helmet."

"I think it's definitely a genetic thing."

But here's the other side to that narrative, which is equally important: Growing up with "Coach Dad" can be difficult. During his Missouri career, Evan has relished success separate from the judgments he faced in Lee's Summit.

Life as the coach's son

The walls of Lee's Summit West gym, the "Home of Evan Boehm," are made of bone-white brick.

A banner commemorates Boehm's 2011 Thomas A. Simone Award, given to the best high school football player in the greater Kansas City area. He was the first offensive lineman to win it. There's a ➤



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picture of him on the banner — clean-shaven, no tattoos, no smile. Four words are printed above the photo.

“Home of Evan Boehm.”

Tyler Boehm hates when he hears those words. People say them as a joke.

“Everyone just says, ‘Oh, this is the ‘Home of Evan Boehm,’” because there’s a banner hanging over there,” said the younger Boehm, a senior at Lee’s Summit West. “If you look on the other side (of the gym), there’s a ton more banners of people over there that they don’t make fun of.”

It might be odd to think of now: Evan disliked. His family said he’s always been a jokester, a guy with no issue posting videos of himself dancing to holiday music. He and fellow Missouri offensive linemen did that in 2013, branded as “Christmas Thursday.” Missouri fans watched those videos thousands of times.

Evan didn’t used to feel that embrace at Lee’s Summit West.

“It is tough being a coach’s son,” Royce Boehm said. “You take a lot of crap for it.”

Evan started in high school as a freshman, just as he’d later do at Missouri. Royce resisted putting his son in the starting lineup, friends of the coach said, but his son’s talent was undeniable.

Evan received his first college football scholarship offer — from Missouri — the summer between eighth grade and his freshman year. During summer workouts, on the first day in pads, a 14-year-old Evan went

one-on-one against a senior defensive lineman.

Evan won easily.

“Royce,” Titans offensive line coach Chris Barrows said, “he’s ready.”

The father gave his son a silver practice jersey, the kind given to varsity offensive players. And then Evan dealt with the jealousy and cold shoulders of teammates.

“I was a varsity wrestler and won state because of my dad,” Evan said, echoing some peers’ view of him. “I was a varsity discus and shot put thrower because of my dad. I was on varsity football because of my dad. Nobody really took time to look and say, ‘There’s the skill.’ When I got my first scholarship, that was because of my dad, too.”

It wasn’t easy for Dad to navigate, either.

One day, Evan needed assistance with his shoulder pads. “Hey, Dad, can you help me fix this?” he asked. Royce glared and stormed away.

“You can’t call him ‘Dad?’” Evan wondered. “What can you call him?”

Royce has since eased on the policy. Tyler calls him ‘Dad’ on the field. And Royce eventually let Evan use ‘Coach Dad.’

Evan said now he understands his father’s reasoning: ‘Coach’ diminished notions of nepotism.

Evan did his part to squash thoughts of favoritism as well. In football, he received three First-Team All-State nods and helped Lee’s Summit West to a 2010 state title. He also won state championships in ➤



KAYLA WOLF/Missourian

Evan Boehm talks to LSW wrestling coach Ethan Hauck Aug. 28 at Lee Summit West High School.



HOURS

North -
M - W 11am - 10pm
Th - Sa 11am - 10:30pm
Sunday 11am - 8pm

Downtown -
M - W 11am - Midnight
Th - Sa 11am - 2am
Sunday 11am - 8pm

South -
M - W 11am - 10pm
Th - Sa 11am - 10:30pm
Sunday 11am - 8pm



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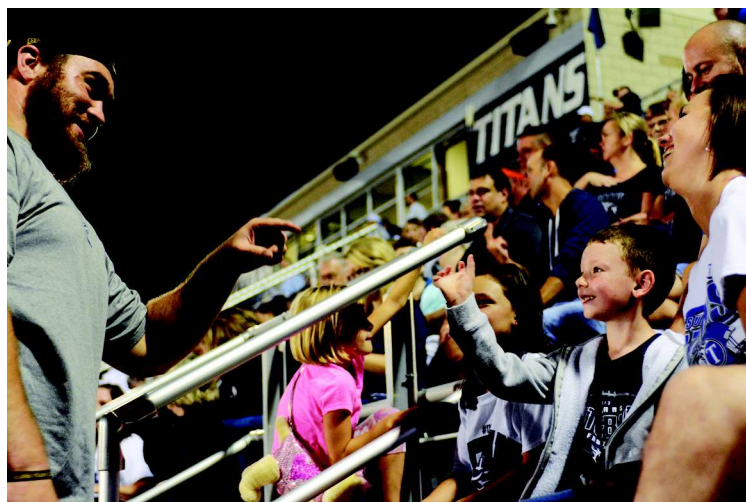
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Boehm chats with a young fan at on Aug. 28 at Lee's Summit West High School Boehm helped the school to a state title in 2010.

KAYLA WOLF
Missourian



wrestling and track and field.

"He just proved them wrong on the field," said Debbie Katzfey, the athletics director at Lee's Summit West and a long-time friend of the Boehm family.

The number of doubters dwindled, though some remain, enough of them to bother Tyler with those words: "Home of Evan Boehm."

Out of Dad's shadow

Chris Barrows' back tattoo used to be bright and gold. Now it's pale and yellow.

Still, it gave Evan Boehm inspiration.

Evan swam with the Lee's Summit West offensive line coach one day when he saw the tattoo on the coach's back: a tiger paw with Barrows' former football number inside of it. A symbol to remember the coach's playing days at Missouri.

Evan decided he wanted something similar: an old-school logo of Truman the Tiger wearing a sailor hat with a block M.

To make sure he'd like it on his body, Boehm set the illustration as the background on his phone and ordered a custom phone case of the drawing.

After a few months, he got Truman inked on his left pec. Permanent, just as Boehm has been in the Tigers' starting lineup.

He's started 40 consecutive games, and if he continues the streak for another 11, he'll hold the program record. He, an offensive lineman, graced the team's 2015 media guide cover — solo.

The tattoo is only skin deep. But the reasoning behind it, and ultimately the reason Boehm is such a visible figure in Columbia, is deeper.

Boehm threw himself into the college experience in part to prove something: He can be a productive player, a fan favorite and a leader in the athletic community without Dad.

The 120-plus miles from Lee's Summit to Columbia was far enough that Boehm could prove his independence, but close enough that his family could easily see him every Saturday. And, he said, he'd be visi-

ble to many of his doubters.

So yeah, he's done it all. Consider SAAC, the student-athlete outreach group. When Boehm's first presidential bid was unsuccessful, he ran again. The second time, he won on a co-president platform with wrestler Willie Miklus.

"Everybody respects him so much," Miklus said. "Everybody loves him."

From coach's son to star

There are, of course, still doubters. Like the man who harassed Boehm during a family dinner at Shakespeare's after Missouri lost to Indiana in 2014. The coaches who voted him third-team preseason All-SEC after putting him preseason second-team the year before. The wide-ranging draft projections that still, after 40 consecutive starts, can't nail down when an NFL team will pick Evan Boehm.

Boehm must keep cutting them down.

Midway through the second quarter of the Lee's Summit West football game, Boehm was on TV again. He wasn't delivering a sweaty hug this time. He was the focus, even with the game going on.

He handled his interview with poise, as he always does. He went from joking with friends to fielding questions from a reporter. Boehm smiled and told the TV reporter he enjoyed being back to watch his younger brother play. He said how excited he was for Missouri's upcoming season.

"You're getting pretty good at those," his former wrestling coach leaned in and said to him afterward.

"I'm trying," Boehm said.

There was a celebrity aura to Boehm. A group of teenage girls screeched as they approached him in a peppy pack.

Kids asked if he could sign their shirts. They stared eagerly up at him.

They were young: five, six, seven.

To them, Evan Boehm isn't a coach's son. He is a star.

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

Boehm on the road to becoming Missouri's newest ironman

By MICHAEL MANDELL

No Missouri football player has seen the field more than Evan Boehm during the school's three-year tenure in the Southeastern Conference. The 6-foot-3, 310-pound senior from Lee's Summit has started in all 40 of the Tigers' games since 2012, and he has a shot at breaking a school record.

If Boehm starts Missouri's first 11 games this season, he would set the school mark for consecutive games played — currently held by tight end Martin Rucker, offensive lineman Adam Spieker and defensive back Carl Gettis. Missouri has 12 regular-season games on its schedule and could also play in the SEC title game, as well as a bowl game.

Since coach Gary Pinkel arrived in 2001, four players have started every game of a four-year career:

- Rucker (50 games from 2004-07)
- Spieker (50 games from 2004-07)
- Quarterback Brad Smith (48 games from 2002-05)



SARAH BELL/Missourian

■ Offensive lineman A.J. Ricker (47 games from 2000-03, although 2000 was spent with Larry Smith as coach).

No other Missouri player since 1948 has accomplished such a feat. Records prior to that year, though, are inconclusive. No player who finished his career before then could have played more than 40 non-bowl games, an important caveat considering that the NCAA didn't record statistics for bowls until 2003.

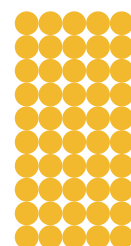
Supervising editor is Mark Selig: sports@columbiainmissourian.com, 882-5730.

STARTING STREAKS

If he consecutively starts every game this year, Evan Boehm would join an exclusive group of Missouri players. Since 1948, only four players have started every game of their career.

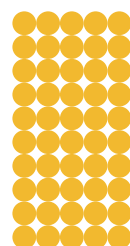
FOUR-YEAR PLAYERS TO NEVER MISS A START SINCE 1948

50



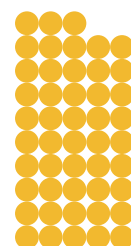
ADAM SPIEKER
'04-'07

50



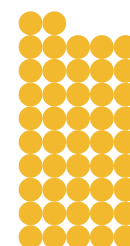
MARTIN RUCKER
'04-'07

48



BRAD SMITH
'02-'05

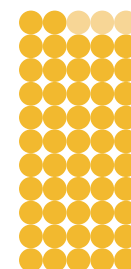
47



A.J. RICKER
'00-'03

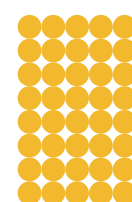
EVAN BOEHM'S STREAK

52-55



EVAN BOEHM
'12-'15
(If he starts entire year)

40



EVAN BOEHM
'12-PRESENT

BRENDAN WRAY/Missourian

TODDLERS TO TIGERS

Missouri's senior placekicker, **Andrew Baggett**, was on a different field as a child until his teen years when the challenge of playing football was next in a line of headstrong endeavors. **By JACOB BOGAGE**

Andrew Baggett didn't want help with his homework as a kid. He didn't want help with Cub Scout projects or soccer, either.

"He was very headstrong and dedicated," his mother, Kim Baggett said. "He could do it himself."

Even from an early age, Andrew Baggett, Missouri's senior placekicker, was independent and steadfastly loyal, his mother said.

He started Cub Scouts as just another after-school activity but hung on until he became an Eagle Scout at age 16.

Playing soccer started the same way. By his teen years, he darted toward football because it was another challenge he could take on.

"He wasn't intense, but he was very focused, and somehow he juggled it all and got it all done," his mother said. That's Scouts once a week, soccer or football practice twice a week, games on the weekends and a campout every month or so. Somehow the calendar worked out.

"When he set his mind to something," she said, "he did it."

She misses the days when

a whole troop of Cub Scouts or soccer players piled into her car on the way to meetings or practices or games. She could just listen, she said, and learn about her son and his friends.

Nearly a dozen of them started Cub Scouts together and attained their Eagle rank about the same time.

"You learn a lot when you put a whole bunch of Boy Scouts together," she said.

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



Courtesy of KIM BAGGETT

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KATIE HOGSETT/Missourian

A Missouri football Southeastern Conference/Citrus Bowl championship ring sits in Gary Pinkel's ring case. Pinkel said he wore the ring for 48 hours before storing it in the case in his office.

When Missouri football receives rings, it's more than just jewelry

How much do Missouri's championship rings cost? Who has the biggest finger on the team? Public documents reveal the details. **By MARK SELIG**

We are a culture fascinated by rings.

Rings symbolize commitment to a spouse, completion of academics, success in athletics.

But it wasn't always that way.

When baseball teams won World Series 100-some-odd years ago, they celebrated with a championship pocket watch or pin. Then, in 1923, the New York Giants flashed the first-ever championship ring.

In the 1930s, championship rings became a tradition. That tradition rings true today, with teams receiving pricey finger jewelry for everything from the Super Bowl to the Citrus Bowl.

Yes, even Missouri, after winning the weaker half of the Southeastern Conference and then prevailing in a bowl game few kids dream of playing, clinched a sparkly reward.

The Tigers' rings lack the gravitas (and diamond count) of a Super Bowl ring, but there's still a finger and a story behind each one.

At SEC media day, Missouri cornerback Kenya Dennis wore an all-black suit, a Tiger pin on his lapel and a chunky ring on his right hand. Until another fancy function, the

ring will stay home.

"It's scary to have it on when you're not doing anything important," Dennis said.

Scary because it's expensive.

According to an invoice acquired by the Missourian, the Tigers spent \$40,808 on rings and pendants for the players, staff, administration and wives. Each ring cost \$168, which actually seems like a bargain, considering you have to lay out \$199.97 for a replica on eBay (and an extra \$29.99 if you're extravagant enough customize it).

Who receives the real thing? You don't need to score a touchdown or even play a single snap to earn a ring at Missouri.

14 graduate assistants

14 student assistants

8 team managers

5 GA trainers

5 equipment managers

2 chaplains

2 video directors

The guy in charge of the grounds crew

The dining hall manager

The ticketing director

The PR guy

They all got rings.

Also in on the bling were Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, President Tim Wolfe, the coaching staff, strength coaches, trainers, athletics administrators and multi-

media director Kathryn Lucchesi. At size 7, Lucchesi owns the distinction of "Mizzou Football's Smallest Finger." She asked for a ring rather than a pendant that the other women, mostly wives, receive.

Did we forget anybody? Just 121 players on the roster.

A bunch of large men with mostly large fingers.

The average male fits into a size 10-12, which is roughly the diameter of a penny to a nickel.

Not all Missouri football players are average, such as Evan Boehm. The offensive lineman's size 17 ring is the biggest on the team. His ring finger's diameter is closer in size to a presidential dollar than it is to a quarter.

Still, that's nothing compared to William "Refrigerator" Perry, the famously fat former Chicago Bear who wore size 25 after winning Super Bowl XX. He auctioned that ring this summer and netted \$203,000.

Missouri players, it seems, aren't looking for profit. Two pawn shop owners in Columbia said they've never housed a Mizzou football ring. Dan Trim, owner of Tiger Pawn, said a basketball ring was on loan at his store roughly 15 years ago. No fan got a chance to purchase it, though, because the player came back to retrieve his ring for the cost of the loan plus interest.

Boehm's big rings (Missouri also awarded its team after the 2013 season) don't leave his room.

"When I wake up and I turn my light on, ➤

they blind me because they're so shiny," he said.

Boehm is patient when he receives a ring. A tradition dating back to his state titles at Lee's Summit West High School, Boehm leaves his ring in its Jostens box and gets his first glimpse of it when he's with his family. He'll wear it to special occasions, otherwise it's just eye candy.

Fellow offensive lineman Connor McGovern doesn't don his size 16 1/2 ring often, either. He's not a jewelry guy. He said his wrists are so large that he can't wear standard watches.

For some, rings are decoration. For others, stowed-away keepsakes.

As a kid, running back Russell Hansbrough lost a necklace with his number on it — a gift from his grandmother — and now he's afraid to misplace more gold. So he gave his ring to his mother as soon as he could.

Kentrell Brothers did the same. When the future professional linebacker buys his first house, he'll put the rings on display with his high school football and basketball ones, he said.

Perhaps no Tiger is more strategic about his ring-wearing than coach Gary Pinkel, who lets his ring hug his finger for 48 hours before storing it in a case in his office.

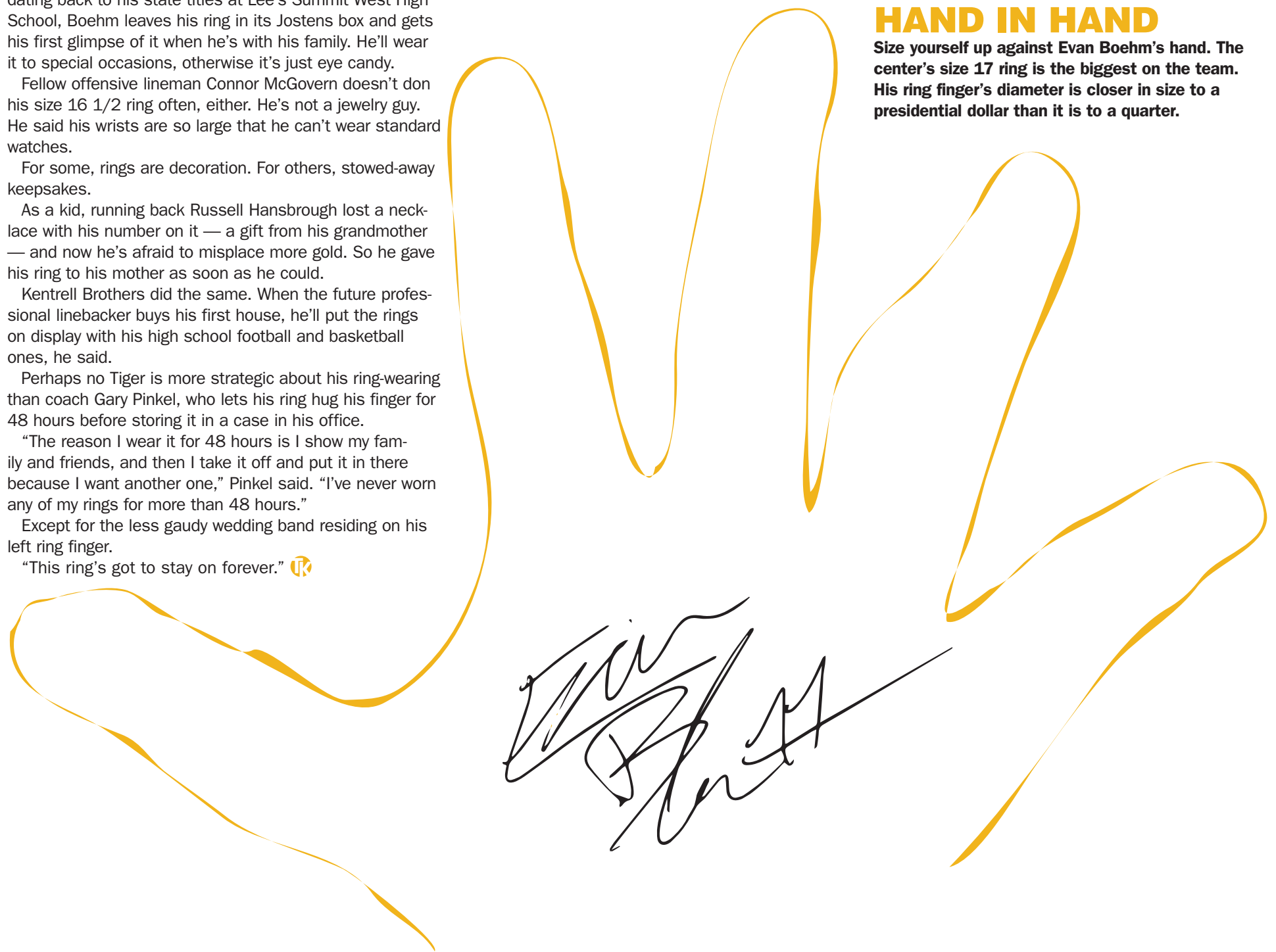
"The reason I wear it for 48 hours is I show my family and friends, and then I take it off and put it in there because I want another one," Pinkel said. "I've never worn any of my rings for more than 48 hours."

Except for the less gaudy wedding band residing on his left ring finger.

"This ring's got to stay on forever." 

HAND IN HAND

Size yourself up against Evan Boehm's hand. The center's size 17 ring is the biggest on the team. His ring finger's diameter is closer in size to a presidential dollar than it is to a quarter.



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