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12-2-2019

**December 2, 2019**

The Daily Mississippian

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**Recommended Citation**

The Daily Mississippian, "December 2, 2019" (2019). *Daily Mississippian (all digitized issues)*. 37.  
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# LUKE FIRED

**Players talk of leaving after unexpected decision; humiliating loss, disappointing seasons lead fans to embrace change**



FILE PHOTO: TAYLAR TEEL / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Luke was on a recruiting trip when it was announced that he was fired from his position as head coach. Luke failed to reach a winning record in his three seasons as head coach. His overall record was 15-21.

## JOSHUA CLAYTON

thedmsports@gmail.com

Ole Miss announced Sunday night that head football coach Matt Luke was fired, setting off passionate reactions, including players storming out of a team meeting, fans rejoicing and Luke rushing back to Oxford from an Alabama recruiting trip where he learned of the decision.

The Rebels finished the 2019 season on Thanksgiving with a 4-8 record and a 21-20 loss to Mississippi State in which receiver Elijah Moore committed an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty before kicker Luke Logan missed the game-tying extra point in the final seconds. Moore

mimicked a urinating dog in the back of the endzone after scoring a touchdown, pushing the crucial extra-point attempt back 15 yards.

Luke went 15-21 in his three seasons as head coach with an SEC record of 6-18, finishing sixth in the SEC West standings in all three years.

Athletics Director Keith Carter addressed the team on Sunday night in the Manning Center and opened the floor for questions, but shortly after the meeting started, a large group of players including Jerrion Ealy and Tariqious Tisdale abruptly left the room, signaling their disapproval of the decision. Matt Luke was on the road recruiting on Sunday afternoon when the news broke and flew back to Oxford immediately,

according to the players.

“Disappointed, lost really,” junior offensive lineman Chandler Tuitt said after walking out of the meeting. “Y’all made the decisions without even telling us, first of all. So, like, we’re just all lost. Half the team is talking about leaving if Luke leaves. If you clean house again, I don’t think anyone’s going to stay. You’ve got new recruits coming in next week and won’t have a head coach.”

Ole Miss released a statement as the meeting started, citing the lack of forward momentum in the program that continues to see declining ticket sales and growing apathy from the fanbase.

“After evaluating the overall

**SEE LUKE PAGE 4 AND 5**



BILLY SCHUERMAN / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Many players left a team meeting early after Keith Carter announced that Matt Luke would not returned as head coach.



# McCutchen named Chief of Police

**MADDY QUON**  
thedmnews@gmail.com

The Board of Aldermen decided Nov. 26 that Interim Chief of the Oxford Police Department Jeff McCutchen will serve as the next chief of police when current Chief Joey East is to be sworn in as Lafayette County sheriff in January.

Mayor Robyn Tannehill described McCutchen's time as interim chief as a 10-month job interview. She said that both she and the board could not be more proud of how McCutchen has done representing the community.

Tannehill also said that she and the board have complete confidence in McCutchen's ability to lead the Oxford Police Department and serve the Oxford community as the next Chief of Police.

McCutchen said in a statement that he is honored to be the next chief of police to serve Oxford, and he looks forward to building bridges with members of the Oxford community and serving the Oxford community with wisdom and compassion.

# Hudson named Rhodes Scholar

**MADDY QUON**  
thedmnews@gmail.com

Arielle Hudson has been named the University of Mississippi's 27th Rhodes Scholar and is the university's first African American woman to be selected for the scholarship program.

Hudson, a senior English education major, plans to pursue a dual master's degree in comparative social policy and comparative international education before returning to Mississippi to fulfill her five-year teaching requirement as a Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program scholarship recipient.

Besides her work on campus as an Associated Student Body senator and the president of the Black Student Union, Hudson has also volunteered in schools with the Marks Project, a collaborative effort to improve educational opportunities in Quitman County.

After volunteering with the Marks Project, Hudson established a program called Literacy Lets Individuals Gain Height to Success, or Literacy L.I.G.H.T.S. This program has helped provide more than 400 books and reading materials to classrooms and homes in Tunica and Oxford, among other places.

Hudson is the university's second female recipient



PHOTO COURTESY: OLE MISS COMMUNICATIONS

Arielle Hudson was named the University of Mississippi's 27th Rhodes Scholar.

of the Rhodes Scholarship. Last year, general studies and journalism major Jaz Brisack became the university's first female recipient. Brisack is currently at the University of Oxford studying political theory.

The Rhodes Scholarship is one of the most prestigious international fellowships in the world. Each year, 32 students from the United States are selected not only

based on academic achievements, but also on character and potential for leadership in future careers.

Rhodes Scholars have the opportunity to pursue one or more degrees at the University of Oxford in England and will receive tuition, travel, room and board and a living stipend for two years, with a possible third year provided by the Rhodes Trust, named after founder Cecil John Rhodes.

# This week at Ole Miss

**Johnny Neumann Night:** The Ole Miss men's basketball team will play against Butler and will honor Johnny Neumann, a former Ole Miss basketball player who became a professional NBA player and head coach, who died in April.

Time/Location: 6 p.m. on Tuesday at The Pavilion

**Hotty Toddy Holidays:** Student Activities Association is holding the annual Hotty Toddy Holidays celebration complete with holiday crafts, ice skating, pictures with Santa Claus and the lighting of the Christmas tree.

Time/Location: 5-9 p.m. on Wednesday at the Union Plaza

**Holiday Concert:** Watch several university music ensembles perform holiday favorites at the annual Ole Miss Holiday Concert.

Time/Location: 7:30 p.m. on Thursday at the Ford Center

**Friday Free Sketch:** Free sketching materials will be provided by the Lafayette Oxford Foundation for Tomorrow on a first come, first serve basis at the UM Museum for the First Friday Free Sketch.

Time/Location: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Friday at the UM Museum

**Midtown Men Holiday Hits:** The Midtown Men, reuniting stars from the original Broadway cast of Jersey Boys, will ring in the Christmas season with their Holiday Hits show, including both Yuletide classics and rock'n'roll hits from the 1960s. Tickets are available to students for \$40 at the UM box office.

Time/Location: 7:30 p.m. on Saturday at the Ford Center

Don't miss out on anything happening on campus this week.

**Hotty Toddy Holidays**

Wednesday, December 4th      Union Plaza  
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Tree Lighting (6 PM)  
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Multicultural Organizations  
Pictures with Santa  
Ice Skating

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FOOTBALL

# Ole Miss drops Egg Bowl in final seconds

**JOHN MACON GILLESPIE**  
thedmsports@gmail.com

Ole Miss fell 21-20 in the 2019 Egg Bowl thanks to an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty and a missed extra point in the final seconds of Matt Luke's final game as head coach.

Quarterback Matt Corral led the Rebels on their final drive of the game, a drive that included a conversion on 4th-and-24 and a passing touchdown with less than 10 seconds left to cut the score to 21-20. Elijah Moore, who caught the touchdown pass from Corral, was flagged for an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty after lifting his leg to mimic a urinating dog in homage to former wide receiver D.K. Metcalf's touchdown celebration during the 2017 Egg Bowl.

The Rebels were pushed back 15 yards from the typical extra-point distance, and kicker Luke Logan missed the PAT wide right, keeping Ole Miss from a fifth win. Head coach Matt Luke was disappointed with Moore's lapse in judgement.

"(I'm) just disappointed," Luke said. "That's not who we are. We've been a disciplined team all year, and (I'm) just disappointed that happened. Elijah's a good kid. He

just got caught up in the moment." Moore and Logan were not made available to media after the game. Luke's disappointment extended beyond the fateful penalty to the game's end result. With a final record of 4-8, Ole Miss failed to qualify for a bowl game in its first season after a postseason ban, meaning the Rebel seniors never got to have a bowl-game experience.

"I'm disappointed, especially for our seniors," Luke said. "This will be the last time they put on the Ole Miss uniform. I'm sorry it didn't work out for those guys."

John Rhys Plumlee started at quarterback and remained in the game until the fourth quarter when the Ole Miss offense needed a spark after trailing 21-14. Corral threw an interception on his first drive but came back for another possession after a Mississippi State punt.

Corral completed a pass to Braylon Sanders to convert a 4th-and-24, and Ole Miss had life until the Rebels scored to almost tie the game.

"We had kind of gotten into a rut there and felt like we needed to throw it," Luke said. "Matt (Corral) kind of gave us the spark. He made the mistake in the red zone, but (I



REED JONES / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Braylon Sanders totaled 88 yards in the narrow loss to Mississippi State on Thanksgiving.

credit him in battling back and leading us on a touchdown drive."

Luke cited the Rebels' three in that category as the largest reason they lost the game.

"The biggest thing that hurt us were turnovers," Luke said. "We had a couple in the red zone that they were able to capitalize and score off of, and — to me — that was the difference in the game."

Luke was also asked after the game about potential staff changes, but he deferred to evaluating the program from top to bottom this offseason.

"We'll evaluate all of that, but right now, we've just got a bunch

of disappointed guys in that locker room that all wanted to win," Luke said. "Again, we're going to get through this thing together. We're going to go on the road and recruit, and we're going to build this thing. I told them that this isn't the end; it's the beginning."

The elephant in the room concerning Ole Miss' quarterback situation has revolved around whether or not Corral will enter the transfer portal after being supplanted as the starter part way through the season. Offensive coordinator Rich Rodriguez said that he hopes Corral, along with other key players, stay with the

program into next season.

"They're our freshmen; I hope they're all back," Rodriguez said. "This day and age — particularly in the quarterback position — it seems like if guys are young, and there's another guy there, and they don't think they're going to be the guy, then they leave. They haven't said anything to me, but I would love for everyone to stay because they'll all have a role, and I'm not opposed to playing two at a time."

Ole Miss will head into the offseason facing a tough start to its 2020 schedule, opening its slate at a neutral site against the Baylor Bears who sit at 11-1 this season.

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**@OleMissNoProb**

matt luke is gone. my hopes are back. let's get someone in here who can get us where we need to be. hotty toddy

**@av3sduk3**

I think I'm going to become an interim graduate of ole miss so that it just miraculously happens

**@ayoMONEY23**

I've known the kid since the day he arrived on campus and he has done everything the right way! Yes he made a costly decision but don't judge the mans character over it! I stand behind my dog forever

**@therealerob\_3**

Goodness. Ole Miss.... WE ARE BETTER THAN THAT

**@24Hour\_Ent**

Every college football coach in America is gonna show their football team tomorrow a great example of selfish football and it couldn't have come at a more pivotal moment

**@ESPN\_BillC**

That was too much Egg Bowl. That was maximum Egg Bowl.

**@dkm14**

Don't blame him it's a rivalry game

**@JWright929espn**

Ole Miss lost that game because they lost the turnover battle 3-1. However, to try to make the final play about Matt Luke is agenda driven.

**@James3Mitchell**

Postponing my graduation this spring and will be trying out for kicker next year. I will not miss as many kicks as He Who Shall Not Be Named I promise

**@QuincyA18**

Selfish play man you can't put your team in that position

**@dste5**

Matt Luke deserves a lot of credit for keeping things together in 2017, for raising the APR, and for motivating his players and being a role model.

With that said, it's time for change at Ole Miss. Luke wasn't ready for SEC coaching. Handling of offense was atrocious this year

**@RyanHummer11**

Sup @CoachJoeBrady

**@AlexMcDaniel**

keith carter needed a win in the court of public opinion and he just got it



ROGELIO V. SOLIS / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Elijah Moore imitates D.K. Metcalf's "dog peeing" from two years earlier. Moore's celebration caused the penalty that resulted in a missed extra point that cost Ole Miss the game. The Rebels lost to the Bull dogs 21-20 on Thursday in Starkville.

**FOOTBALL COLUMN**

# Lack of discipline was not new under Luke

**JOSHUA CLAYTON**

thedmsports@gmail.com

What has been a strange season for the Ole Miss Rebels was capped off appropriately with possibly the wildest Egg Bowl finish ever, with the Mississippi State Bulldogs missing the Golden Egg in a 21-20 victory on Thanksgiving. Three days later, head coach Matt Luke was fired.

It was a remarkable miscalculation of judgement that topped the list of unimaginable moments unique to this rivalry. Sophomore receiver Elijah Moore did his best impression of 2017 D.K. Metcalf, crawling on all fours before lifting his leg to metaphorically mark his territory after catching a touchdown late in the game and causing penalty flags to fly in the back of the endzone.

There are a handful of things wrong with that particular celebration, but chief among those was the fact that his team was still down one point with a few seconds left and an unreliable placekicker. The 15-yard setback proved costly as junior kicker Luke Logan pushed the game-tying point-after attempt right of the goalposts.

"I apologize to my teammates, coaches and Rebel

Nation for my actions at the end of the game," Moore said in an official statement Friday. "It was an emotional moment, and I deeply regret it. It does not represent who I am or who we are as a team, and I will grow stronger from this mistake."

Obviously, the Egg Bowl loss is not solely on Luke or any single person. Elijah Moore committed the penalty. Logan missed the PAT. The team put themselves in a position to need another miraculous comeback. The bottom line, however, is in Luke's three years as the head coach for the football team, his teams' records have regressed from 6-6 to 5-7 to 4-8 in 2019. NCAA penalties and other factors are in play, but the numbers are the numbers.

While the ugliness of the rivalry is far from one-sided, Luke teams have historically shown a lack of discipline in this game.

"Discipline is a staple of our program as evidenced by being the least penalized team in our league, and we will continue to uphold an uncompromising standard of behavior on and off the field," Luke and Keith Carter said in a joint statement. "In maintaining our team's high level of accountability, we will address the matter, and

disciplinary action will be handled internally."

Ole Miss was able to get by with a close victory in 2017 when Metcalf originated the cursed celebration in Starkville, but had Breland Speaks waving and smiling to the crowd after being ejected from the game for throwing a punch. With the game virtually over in 2018, Matt Corral and the rest of the team were involved in a sideline-clearing scuffle.

Once again, the attention of the college football world were turned toward the state of Mississippi not because of quality football, but because of the distinct brand of circus clownery only the Egg Bowl can offer.

One of the top qualities cited when pulling the interim tag off of Luke was his love for Ole Miss, but has that passion and priority put on the rivalry has come back to bite the Rebels.



FILE PHOTO: MARLEE CRAWFORD / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Wide receiver D.K. Metcalf acts like a dog, resulting in a penalty, after running for a touchdown during the 2017 Egg Bowl at the Davis Wade Stadium in Starkville. Ole Miss defeated MSU 31-28.



**LUKE***continued from page 1*

trajectory of our football program, we did not see enough momentum on the field and determined a change is necessary in order for our student-athletes to compete at the highest level,” Athletics Director Keith Carter said in a statement. “While improvements were evident in certain aspects of the program, we are judged ultimately by our record, and, unfortunately, we did not meet the standard of success that we expect from our program. We will always be grateful to Coach Luke for his leadership, particularly from a recruiting, academic and overall culture standpoint. At the same time, winning is important, and we know that we can compete for championships at Ole Miss.”

Luke was named the interim head coach in 2017 after the resignation of Hugh Freeze, and had the interim tag removed following a 6-6 season and an Egg Bowl win. He served as offensive line and tight end coach from 2002-2005 and co-offensive coordinator from 2012-2016.

After a year of Phil Longo and Wesley McGriff as coordinators, Luke brought Rich Rodriguez and Mike MacIntyre to run the offense and defense. The two high-profile hires were part of a new direction for Ole Miss led by Luke after NCAA sanctions, but 6-6, 5-7 and 4-8 finishes in the last three seasons were not enough for Matt Luke to keep his job for a fourth year.

The 2019 season was defined by missed opportunities for Luke's teams. Wins over teams like Memphis, California, Missouri, Texas A&M and Auburn were in reach for the Rebels, but miscues late in games from both players and the coaching staff put Luke's future at Ole Miss in doubt.

“I want to thank Coach Luke for his devotion to Ole Miss,” Carter said. “His integrity, class and dedication to this program and our student-athletes is unsurpassed, and we will always appreciate how he stepped up at a time when his university needed him the most. We wish him the very best, and he



FILE PHOTO: BILLY SCHUERMAN / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Matt Luke played for the University of Mississippi as a center while in college in the late 80s. Luke was revered for his ability to play through injury.

will always be a cherished member of the Ole Miss family.”

The development is the first major move for Keith Carter, who was named the official athletics director just over a week ago. Ole Miss is the third SEC school to fire its head coach this season with Arkansas and Missouri also looking for new leaders.

Luke's firing was unexpected to both the fanbase and the players, especially after the support the new athletics director showed for the coach during his introductory press conference last Friday.

“I think our football team is headed in a great direction and I'm so excited about coach Luke. He's our coach...,” Carter said during the press conference. “We're excited about where recruiting is and excited about where the future is headed so we're going to get behind coach Luke.”

Following the sudden announcement, Ole Miss will now conduct another search for a head football coach — its second in as many years — while the assistant



BILLY SCHUERMAN / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Many players stormed out of the Manning Center on Sunday night after Keith Carter announced that Matt Luke was relieved of his duties as head coach.

coaches sit and wait.

“A search is underway to find a new head coach who can build a complete program that attracts top talent, develops them as young men and sustains a winning

mentality,” Carter said. “We will be looking for the leadership, energy and commitment to excellence necessary to compete in the Southeastern Conference and galvanize our passionate fan base.”

# PLAYERS REACT

As Ole Miss released its statement officially firing football head coach Matt Luke, Athletics Director Keith Carter was in the team room in the Manning Center to address the team and answer questions. About five minutes after the meeting began, several players started walking out to the parking lot to leave. Most of the players expressed their disapproval with the firing of Matt Luke, but declined to comment. Here's what the players who did talk had to say:

## Freshman defensive lineman Patrick Lucas

“I don't think he should've gotten fired. It doesn't take two years to build up something that you inherit that was full of crap. I came here and bought in to what he was trying to do.”

“I couldn't take it anymore. Hearing that was awful. Yeah, we went 4-8, but we as a team from the inside felt that next year was going to be our year.”

“I don't know what my options are. To the fans, y'all really don't care about us honestly. If we win, they care if we lose; they hate us and bash us. I think we should have the choice to vote for who we follow. We all bought into coach Luke.”

## Junior offensive lineman Chandler Tuitt

“Disappointed, lost really. Y'all made the decisions without even telling us, first of all. So, like, we're just all lost. Half the team is talking about leaving if Luke leaves. If you clear house again, I don't think anyone's going to stay. You've got new recruits coming in next week and won't have a head coach.”

“I love Keith (Carter), but I just didn't want to hear it.”

“There's no program without players. You're basing stuff off the fans, but we don't care about the fans — that much I'm going to be honest with you. We love football, and if you don't want to support us, that's just your fault.”

“I've been here four years, and this is going to be our third coach coming in. You think it's going to be bad now. If this new coach coming in isn't about family, then you're going to lose a lot of players. That's just point blank.”

## Senior defensive back Myles Hartsfield

“It's just tough losing your coach — a dude who actually cared about us and would do anything for us. We put a lot into this as seniors and to find out on Twitter? Come on, son.”

## Freshman quarterback John Rhys Plumlee

“We have a group chat, so we were all texting, and they figured out about it. (The other players) informed me of (Luke's firing).”

**@heyyyscott**

Matt Luke took a tough job, prevented a total collapse of the program, and recruited a bunch of talented players despite adverse circumstances. We joke about him loving Ole Miss, but he does, and this is a tough, tough day for him. I wish him the best, and hope he finds success.

**@taylormade0205**

I'm totally willing to forgive Elijah and Luke Logan if what happened gets Matt Luke fired...

**@jrnaughton21**

I'm raising money for Give Nick Saban \$1B to be Ole Miss HC. Click to Donate

**@GanuchauAdam**

Thank you, @KeithCarterOM

**@RyanHummer11**

THANK YOU @KeithCarterOM. Proving why you're the right man for the job

**@rhurst424**

Matt Luke- live by the #fakepee, die by the #fakepee. Was named permanent HC after DK did it in 2017 Egg Bowl. Fired after Elijah did it in 2019 Egg Bowl. Wild.

**@swayzescrazy**

Good things do happen at Ole Miss. it's been a rough 72 hours but things are looking up

**@OleMissProblems**

Breaking: Glenn Boyce has started a search committee and will eventually make himself the new head coach.

**@BradCarson**

What a crappy, or should I say, piss poor way for the Matt Luke tenure to end.

**@Cole\_Jones0022**

With Matt Luke gone it's time for ole miss to take the next big step by conducting a national search for new coach then hire somebody already on the payroll

**@CRagan\_finsup**

Meanwhile in Oxford! More lit than the GROVE! Matt Luke - Bye. Bye. Bye.

**@ESPnMcGee**

Regardless of your feelings about how they did or the timing of their dismissals, it's always tough seeing the end for guys like Barry Odom and Matt Luke, who had their dream jobs at their alma maters.

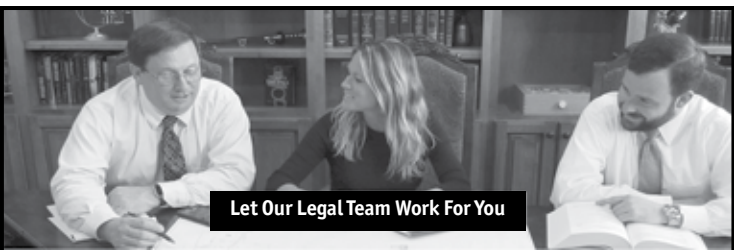
**@jwizzle021**

Moorhead stays in Starkville, Matt Luke is gone... we won the egg bowl!!

**@cameronsoran**

Letting Matt Luke go before giving him a fourth year with what he inherited is like hiring a guy to remodel your house and - once he's gotten rid of all the mold and fixed all the code violations - you fire him before he can start making an actual dream home.





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**ACROSS**

- 1- Gather, harvest;
- 5- Pueblo material;
- 10- Teeny;
- 14- Home of the Bruins;
- 15- Student;
- 16- Eight furlongs;
- 17- Part of the eye;
- 18- Eyeglasses, for short;
- 19- Fuel source;
- 20- Covering for an acorn;
- 22- Orange Bowl site;
- 23- Learned;
- 24- Changes color;
- 26- Tolerated;
- 29- Comforting;
- 33- Chicago hub;
- 34- Accustom;
- 35- Comedian Louis;
- 36- Geek;
- 37- Sphere;
- 38- Lazy, inactive;
- 39- Peer Gynt's mother;
- 40- Watchful;
- 41- Potpourris;
- 42- Change the course of;
- 44- Flat surface;
- 45- Fella;
- 46- Dedicated to the Love;
- 48- Navigators Islands;

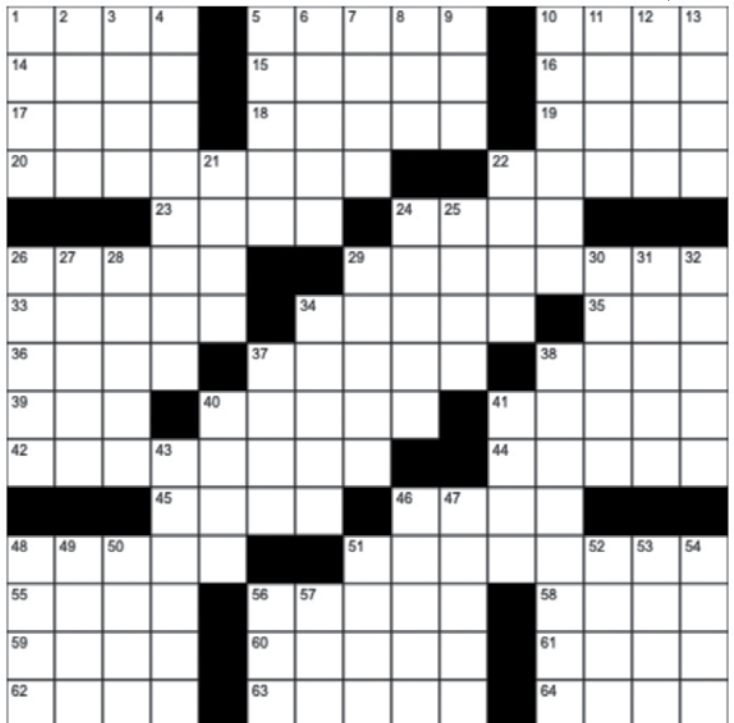
**DOWN**

- 1- Downfall;
- 2- Linen hue;
- 3- Stepped down;
- 4- Language bit for entry;
- 5- Church areas;
- 6- Twofold;
- 7- Autobahn auto;
- 8- Pen name;
- 9- Links luminary Ernie;
- 10- Mischievous;
- 11- \_\_\_ yellow ribbon...;
- 12- Shut with force;
- 13- Abominable snowman;
- 21- Cover up;
- 22- Allot, with "out";
- 24- Distrust;
- 25- Time long past;
- 26- Echolocation;

**SOLUTION TO 11.22.2019 PUZZLE**



- 27- The ones here;
- 28- Paddled;
- 29- Nasal grunt;
- 30- Da Gama destination;
- 31- Thermoplastic yarn;
- 32- V-formation fliers;
- 34- Put into office;
- 37- Secluded valley;
- 38- State in the central United States;
- 40- Grounds;
- 41- Word that can precede sandwich, verdict and prison;
- 43- Outfielder's yell;
- 46- Eye-related;
- 47- Dorothy, to Em;
- 48- "No Ordinary Love" singer;
- 49- Up and \_\_\_!
- 50- Chevalier song;
- 51- Long story;
- 52- Memo phrase;
- 53- Iditarod destination;
- 54- Metric unit of mass;
- 56- I \_\_\_ Rock;
- 57- Child seat?;



Crossword puzzle provided by BestCrosswords.com (www.bestcrosswords.com). Used with permission.

**RECRUITS REACT**

**Will Luke's firing affect recruiting?**

**GRIFFIN NEAL**

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When he was the head coach of an SEC West football team, Matt Luke's most important role was recruiting. Despite taking over at a time when the football program was saddled with NCAA sanctions, namely the loss of scholarships and a two-year bowl ban, Luke made ends meet on the recruiting trail, signing consecutive top-25 classes.

Following the Sunday evening news of Luke's firing, the status of the future recruits' commitments is unclear. While no recruits have decommitted, it wouldn't be extraordinary for them to either re-open their recruitment or decommit entirely in the coming days.

The head coach is often the key figure in selling potential

recruits on a program's vision, and a sudden departure like Luke's will undoubtedly jeopardize upcoming classes.

Before he was fired, Luke's 2020 recruiting class was ranked No. 23 in the country and 10th in the SEC. Luke was fired just 18 days before the early signing period opens, and whoever the university hires as his replacement will face a tough task in assuring recruits that a change in leadership won't affect their status on the team.

On Twitter, recruits from the class of 2020 and beyond weighed in on the university's decision, with most voicing their displeasure with the firing, but also their support for Luke.

De'Rickey Wright, three-star athlete and the player ranked 18th in Alabama tweeted an emoji of a broken

heart.

Kris Abrams-Draine, three-star wide receiver and 21st-ranked player in Alabama tweeted: "WOWWWW" and retweeted a tweet from Ole Miss quarterback Brice Johnson that said, "Coach Luke was a good Coach..Ppl didn't trust the process."

Austin Keys, three-star linebacker and 20th-ranked player in Mississippi tweeted, "man this can't be true..."

Lakevias Daniel, three-star cornerback and 32nd-ranked junior college player in the country, tweeted: "Not Matt Luke mane (broken heart emoji)," and "Mind in a million pieces..."

DeSanto Rollins, three-star defensive tackle and 41st-ranked player in Louisiana retweeted both Austin Keys' and Lakevias Daniel's tweets.

**SUDOKU®**

Puzzles by KrazyDad

	7	1					9	2	
		4							
		2	5				3	1	
			3						6
		3	9		4	1			
4					7				
	7	4				1	3		
							6		
							8	4	

**HOW TO PLAY**

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 with no repeats.

**DIFFICULTY LEVEL**

**INTERMEDIATE**

9	4	8	3	7	2	5	6	1
7	1	6	8	4	5	6	3	2
2	5	3	1	6	9	8	4	7
3	6	2	7	8	1	9	5	4
5	7	4	1	9	6	3	2	8
6	8	4	5	2	3	7	1	6
3	1	3	7	6	4	5	2	8
8	6	5	2	1	7	4	9	3
5	7	9	6	3	8	1	4	2

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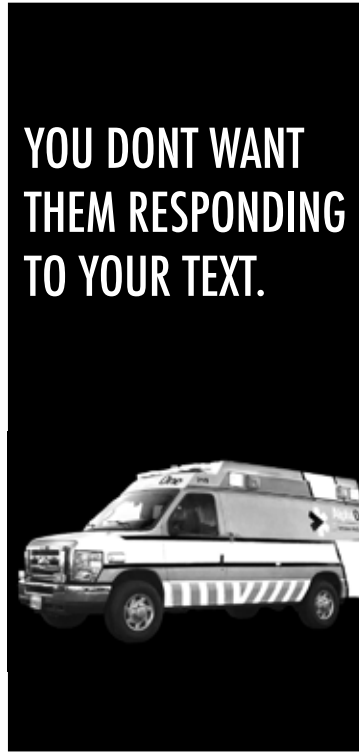
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# OPINION

## *Matt Luke deserved another year*

**LYDIA JOHNSEY**

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FILE PHOTO: BILLY SCHUERMAN / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Matt Luke was hired in 2017 after serving as the interim head coach.

The Egg Bowl left Rebel Nation angry but not surprised, considering it had been one of five losses this season that was a scoring drive away from victory. Now that Ole Miss' losing football season has come to a close, many fans have been calling for the same fate for Matt Luke's Ole Miss coaching career. Last night, Athletics Director Keith Carter announced the end of Luke's time as head coach. This is a mistake.

It's undeniable. Luke has had three sub-par seasons as head coach at Ole Miss. The Rebels have been ranked sixth in the SEC West for all three.

However, in recent history, we have been quick to call for the firing of a coach who fails to produce immediate results. For instance, let's not forget the time we fired Ed Orgeron after three unsuccessful seasons.

Just two weeks ago, we

suffered a loss to LSU, the SEC-leading program, which Orgeron has built since he was fired from the University of Mississippi. We failed to give Orgeron the chance to build his program here, and now we've done the same to Luke.

In the heat of the moment

Thursday, we forgot that Luke's career at Ole Miss began during a time of tumult for Ole Miss football. We had just been placed on a probation period. He was offered the head coaching position before the 2018 season after serving as the interim head coach

following Hugh Freeze's firing. The 2019 recruiting class was his first group unaffected by the plague of NCAA probation.

The 2019 losing season has been different from the past two. There was a substantial gap between the efficiency of the defense and the offense during this season's games. Poorly executed play calls resulting in fumbles and incompletions or interceptions and pick-sixes often were the difference in wins and losses — mistakes Luke would call "the little things" in his post-game press conferences.

The offense was not bad. It was incredibly capable — just highly inexperienced. Much of this year's offensive success has come from the 2019 recruiting class. This season's young offense has revealed raw talent that instills hope for the years to come. The ability of the underclassmen offensive playmakers to execute and compete in SEC match-ups is evident, but the mistakes of these playmakers are the most

obvious and crucial in a game.

With another year of development and experience, Luke could have proven his capability as a coach. We shouldn't have dismissed him before he has a chance to produce a second unhindered recruiting class and use the experience from this year's freshmen to cultivate a winning season.

Ole Miss' 2020 recruiting class is ranked higher than three of the five close-loss teams we faced this year, and it is projected to be the program's second Top-25 recruiting class in a row since the probation period. We should have given Luke time to fine-tune this young talent and build this program. Instead, we will face the consequences of sending our young team through a coaching transition.

*Lydia Johnsey is a freshman international studies major from Fayetteville, Tennessee.*

## *Elijah Moore made a mistake. Have compassion.*

**JOHN HYDRISKO**

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With four seconds left in the Egg Bowl, wide receiver Elijah Moore caught a two-yard touchdown pass, making the score 21-20. He then celebrated in the end zone, miming the act of a dog urinating on a fire hydrant. This warranted a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty that pushed back the Rebels' extra-point attempt to 35 yards. That extra-point attempt failed, and Ole Miss was defeated by Mississippi State.

If you're an Ole Miss fan, there's a good chance that you saw this moment live. There's an even better chance that you've heard talk of this moment. Various national publications have called the moment, among other things, an "all-time sports blunder" and something worthy of infamy. No doubt, Moore's decision in that moment was a blunder, and it might be marked by infamy for as long as it's remembered. His enthusiasm was obviously

misplaced, and his actions were clearly misguided. His choice affected and will continue to affect himself, his team and his school — as he, more than anyone, is well aware.

There is little tenderness in sports and even less in football, and there is little tenderness in talk of sports and even less in talk of football. Of course there must be consequences for poor sportsmanship and the like, but a bit more tenderness, a bit more compassion and a bit more perspective would go a long way in talk about this particular moment.

In that moment, Moore made a mistake. Sure, everybody makes mistakes, but most of us don't make our mistakes in front of 60,000 strangers, and most of us don't make our mistakes on national television. Those circumstances might not excuse — or even explain — his actions. However, those circumstances might instruct how we talk about this particular mistake. When we think about Moore's mistake, we should have the humility

to think also of our own. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone, as it were.

"It is not the critic who counts — not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better." If there were ever a time to revisit Theodore Roosevelt's famous speech, surely this would be such a time. There is a cheap high in criticizing others, but "the credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, who strives valiantly, who errs ... but who does actually strive to do the deeds ... and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

Maybe this is too much to say about a young man who pretended to pee on a football field, but maybe it isn't. At any rate, we would do well to remember that there is a 15-yard penalty for piling on a ball carrier who is already down.

*John Hydrisko is a junior English, philosophy and history triple major from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*



FILE PHOTO: BILLY SCHUERMAN / THE DAILY MISSISSIPPIAN

Elijah Moore (8) stares down an LSU defender during a run in a game earlier this season. Moore has received harsh feedback from the Ole Miss fan base following his actions in the Egg Bowl.

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