



## What's next for Southern Miss men's basketball...

Just a year ago, the Southern Miss men's basketball team finished 25-7 overall and 13-3 in Conference USA under then head coach Donnie Tyndall. Despite losing to Louisiana Tech in the conference tournament and losing to the University of Minnesota in NIT quarterfinals, things looked bright for the Golden Eagle basketball program.

Now, as we see, it has become a total disaster. Let's take a look at the chain of events that took place from losing against Minnesota to the current point in the 2015 basketball season.

In April 2014, coach Donnie Tyndall left Southern Miss to take a job at the University of Tennessee with the men's basketball program. From there, the problems began to start.

### WILTON'S WORD



By Wilton JACKSON

wilton.jackson@eagles.usm.edu

Doc Sadler was hired as the head coach for the Golden Eagles in May, promising great success to our program.

It seemed as if things would continue going in the right direction, but then Aaron Brown transferred to Boston College. Shadell Millinghaus left the team as well, but recently decided to come back. After playing an exhibition game to begin the season, the university was under investigation by the NCAA for allegedly providing improper benefits to athletes.

Then, recently, the athletic department authorized a self-imposed ban to not participate in the conference tournament at the end of season and two additional players in Rasham Suarez and Jeremiah Eason were ruled ineligible by the NCAA.

So, one might say "what's next?" Honestly, the team has reached its lowest point. The program cannot get any worse. Between having a rough season thus far, sitting at 1-10 in the conference, not being able to participate in the conference tournament and having players coming and going, it is very chaotic.

However, things will begin to move forward in a positive direction for the Golden Eagles. Coach Sadler is limited in manpower and talent on the team, but the Golden Eagles are not playing horribly.

In most games, the Golden Eagles remain competitive in the first half, but in the second the players are drained, with some playing 30 to 35 minutes. As a result, the team loses games, not because they are not good enough but because they are not receiving the breaks they need to rest before coming back on the court.

Believe it or not, this makes a difference. It is obvious the team needs more players for offensive production. Overall, the Golden Eagles play exceptional defense but without offensive production, points are not being put on the scoreboard, equating to losses in the standings.

Moving forward, the team will only improve as the season unfolds. Despite being 6-16 overall and dead last in the conference right now, this group of players will learn many lessons of adversity and persistence in terms of growing and developing.

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# KICKED



Mary Alice Weeks/PineBeltSPORTS

**SACRED HEART SENIOR CAINE MARTIN (RIGHT) COMFORTS SOPHOMORE GRANT FALLA** after a loss to Southeast Lauderdale Saturday in the MHSAA Class 1A/2A/3A State Championship in Clinton. The Crusaders outplayed SEL all afternoon but couldn't break through, losing 4-2 in penalty kicks.

## Sacred Heart boys take gut-wrenching State loss in PKs

By Josh Mlot  
josh@PineBeltSPORTS.com

CLINTON — Justice and soccer are not synonymous. On Saturday in the MHSAA Class 1A/2A/3A Boys Soccer State Championship, it may be that the better team didn't win. But the one that found a way did.

Sacred Heart dominated possession and pressure for all 110 minutes of play — regulation,

two overtime periods and two sudden death overtime periods — but it didn't survive the pressure of penalty kicks, as Southeast Lauderdale (22-1) defeated the Crusaders 4-2 in PKs and earned the school's first ever soccer championship at Arrow Field at Clinton High School in Clinton.

"It just didn't click," Sacred Heart head coach Joe Falla said. "It just wasn't our day. It

wasn't our day to hoist the trophy. ... You've got to put the ball in the net. Man, we fought to the bitter end. Unfortunately we came up on the short end of the stick.

"For us, the whole motto has been 'Remember the View.' Here we are where we're accustomed to being — inside the lines playing for a state cham-

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## PRCC edges JCJC on the hardwood

POPLARVILLE — The 16th-ranked Pearl River Community College took sole possession of first place in the men's MACJC South Division regular season derby Monday in M.R. White Coliseum, bashing 12th-ranked and reigning NJCAA national champion Jones County 89-75.

PRCC women, on the other hand, opened the night's action with a hard-fought 76-72 loss to the visiting Lady Bobcats.

The River's men improved to 19-2 overall and 9-2 in division play, while its women dropped to 7-10 and 3-10. JCJC's men are now 15-3 and 8-3, while its women are 13-6 and 7-4.

In the men's game, the Wildcats opened the game with a dominating 24-7 scoring run to build a 17-point lead --- their largest of the first half --- with 11:57 left before the intermission. The Bobcats answered with a 10-2 comeback surge to cut PRCC's lead to 27-17 then outscored their hosts 15-14 the rest of the way to make things

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## Call it what you want, but recognition is due even in disappointment

When victory is had, people like to talk about unsung heroes. Success lends itself to deeming people heroes. Losing does not.

But even if you don't believe in moral victories, not all losses are equal. That much was clear as I watched Sacred Heart take on Southeast Lauderdale in the MHSAA Class 1A/2A/3A Boys Soccer State Championship on Saturday.

No sport lends itself to the nebulous, gray area of not-so-clear defeats than soccer — that was obvious as the Crusaders dominated the game in every aspect measurable outside of the scoreboard before falling in the roll of the dice that is the penalty kick shootout.

There are so many simulta-

neous moving parts in the game that buildup — even near perfect buildup — does not always result in a tangible end product. The moving parts interact in ways that color things gray.

So I walked away after 110 minutes of actual soccer

thinking about some outstanding performances that might go unknown to everyone except those who

played; thinking about whether there could be unsung heroes among bitter frustration.

When you are facing a team that found a way to get to the championship game and keeping them off the board and, essentially, away from the ball, you are doing something right. The key to that for Sacred Heart was the performance of

Carter Andrews and Noah Billingsley, two seniors playing their final game for the Crusaders.

Credit goes to the Sacred

Heart defense as well, as it was perfectly positioned and confident the entire afternoon.

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Mary Alice Weeks/PineBeltSPORTS

**SACRED HEART SENIOR NOAH BILLINGSLEY (right) RACES** Southeast Lauderdale's Dakota Gray to a ball during Saturday's MHSAA Class 1A/2A/3A State Championship.