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Tiger Tracks: Missouri Joins The SEC

(http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/NEWS/tabid/473/Article/228830/tiger-tracks-missouri-joins-the-sec.aspx)

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By: Sean Cartell
SEC Digital Network



COMPLETE MISSOURI COVERAGE AT THE SEC DIGITAL NETWORK

- University Of Missouri: What You Need To Know (http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/NEWS/tabid/473/Article/228828/missouri-what-you-need-to-know.aspx)
- Missouri-SEC Connections: A History (http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/NEWS/tabid/473/Article/228901/missouri-sec-connections-a-history.aspx)
- Homecoming Tradition Traced To Missouri (http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/NEWS/tabid/473/Article/228829/homecoming-tradition-traced-to-missouri.aspx)
- Missouri To The SEC: The Dortch Report (Basketball) (http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/NEWS/tabid/473/Article/228827/missouri-to-the-sec-the-dortch-report.aspx)
- Missouri To The SEC: Barnhart's Take (http://www.secdigitalnetwork.com/NEWS/tabid/473/Article/228826/missouri-to-the-sec-barnharts-take.aspx)

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Given the ever-changing conference paradigm over the past year, the Southeastern Conference has continued to demonstrate its commitment to maintaining its stature as one of the nation's premier conferences by welcoming the University of Missouri as the league's 14th member, Commissioner Mike Slive announced Monday.

Missouri joins Texas A&M University as the league's two new institutions who will begin full membership on July 1, 2012. It is the first expansion of the SEC membership since Arkansas and South Carolina joined the conference in 1992.

Missouri was a charter member of the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association in 1907, which became the Big Six Conference in 1964, the Big Eight Conference in 1964 and the Big 12 Conference in 1996.

Geographically, it is a natural fit as the state of Missouri touches more states (Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee) that currently are home to an SEC institution than any other state that is not in the league's previous 13-member footprint. Like the majority of the cities in the SEC, Columbia, Mo., is a college-centered town with a metropolitan population of 164,283, making it the fifth-largest city in the state of Missouri.

With an enrollment of 32,415, the University of Missouri boasts a strong academic resume, as it is one of only five universities nationwide with law, medicine, veterinary medicine and a research reactor on one campus. Six of Missouri's sports teams last season led the Big 12 in graduation rate for their respective sports.

Culturally, Missouri is as well known for its barbecue, country music, history and rich tradition as the majority of the current states of the SEC.

Missouri is one of only 35 public U.S. universities invited to membership in the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU). It will become the fourth SEC school that is part of the AAU, joining Florida, Texas A&M and Vanderbilt.

Monday's announcement marks just the fourth time in the history of the conference that the SEC will expand its membership. In a landscape that has seemed ever-changing in recent years, the SEC has exemplified stability as 10 of its original 13 members remain.

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The league began as a 13-team league until Sewanee's departure from the conference in 1940. After Georgia Tech's move to independent status in 1964, the league had 11 members before Tulane departed in 1966, leaving the SEC as a 10-team conference for more than two decades.

At the start of the decade of the 1990s, a similar shift in conference alignment allowed Arkansas and South Carolina to join the SEC. The benefits have been nothing short of outstanding.

Soon after joining the league, the Razorbacks claimed the 1994 NCAA Championship in men's basketball and finished as the NCAA runner-up the following year. They made their first appearance in the SEC Championship football game in 1995, appearing again in 2002 and 2006.

The Arkansas women's basketball team made its first-ever Final Four appearance in 1998 before winning the WNIT the next season. The level of track and field in the SEC was quickly raised with the addition of the Razorbacks. Arkansas' men won cross country national titles in 1992, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2000. Men's NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships came every year from 1993-2000 and again in 2003, 2005 and 2006. The men also claimed NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships from 1993-1999 and again in 2003.

South Carolina won the Women's NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championship in 2002, becoming, at the time, just the second different SEC team to claim an NCAA Women's Outdoor Track and Field Championship. The past two seasons have been magical ones for the Gamecocks, as they have captured back-to-back NCAA Championships in baseball and advanced to the SEC Championship game in football for the first time in the program's history.

On September 25, 2011, Texas A&M was announced as the league's 13th member, beginning with the 2012-13 academic year.

Missouri took to the field for the first time in 1890, making it one of the first SEC institutions to begin playing football. Kentucky played a three-game schedule in 1881, but didn't play again until a decade later. Vanderbilt also began its football program in 1890.

Don Faurot was one of the early founders of Missouri athletics, as he was a three-sport standout for the Tigers from 1922-24. He served the school as its football coach from 1935-56 and continued on as the athletics director until 1967. Faurot is known for the creation of the Split-T formation in 1941. The formation's option play still today serves as the basis for many present-day schemes, including the Wishbone, Wingbone, Veer and I-Formation.

Faurot compiled a record of 101-79-10, making the school's first modern-day bowl appearance in 1939 when it advanced to the Orange Bowl. Until 1994, the year prior to his death, Faurot was heavily involved in the annual Blue-Gray football game in Montgomery, Ala.

The Tigers rose to national prominence under head coach Dan Devine in the 1960s, when Devine's winning percentage of .767 was the best in the nation during that decade. In 13 seasons at Missouri, Devine posted a record of 93-37-7 and eight players earned First-Team All-America honors. His 1960 Missouri squad finished with an 11-0 record and defeated Navy 21-14 in the Orange Bowl. The 1965 squad went 8-2-1 and defeated Florida in the Sugar Bowl. The Tigers won the Big Eight Conference in 1960 and 1969 under Devine.

Since 2007, the football Tigers have claimed three Big 12 North Championships. Under current head coach Gary Pinkel, Missouri posted a 12-2 record in 2007 and defeated Arkansas in the Cotton Bowl.

The Tigers began playing basketball in 1906 and enjoyed the greatest amount of success under legendary head coach Norm Stewart from 1967-99. In 32 years, Stewart led Missouri to 634 wins and 333 losses for a .656 winning percentage, the best in program history. Stewart's teams won 20 or more games 17 times, including a school-record 29 wins during the 1988-89 season. He won eight Big Eight Conference championships and six conference tournament titles.

Missouri started competing in the sport of baseball in 1891 and won the College World Series in 1954, marking the school's first national title in any sport. The Tigers have made six CWS appearances in the program's history, including three national runner-up finishes (1952, 1958, 1964).

The Tigers also have had great success in the sport of track and field and won the NCAA Men's Indoor Championship in 1965. The soccer and softball teams have been proficient as of late with soccer winning the 2009 Big 12 Championship and softball claiming that title in 2011.

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