

MISSOURI TIGERS

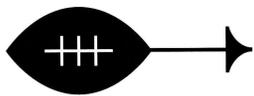


ODDOMATIC

PILOT

A football star reared on the plains of Oklahoma to value toughness, hard work and competitiveness, True Son Barry Odom takes over the controls at Mizzou. Story by Marcus Wilkins • Photo by Rob Hill

ACT LIKE YOU'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE.

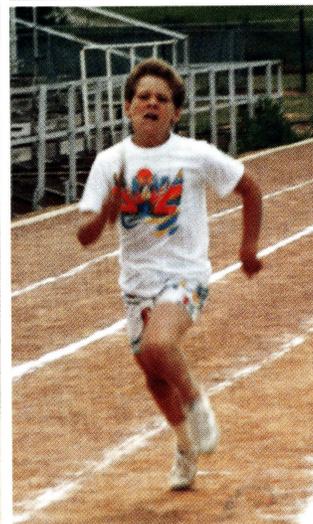
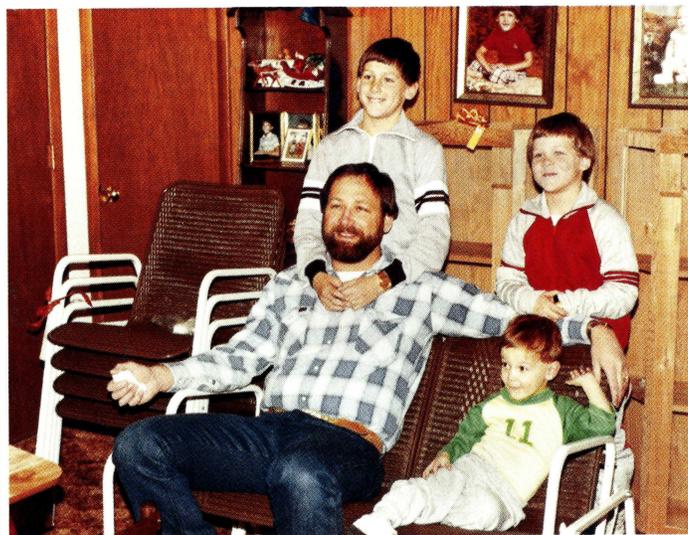


It's practically football scripture for fans of a workmanlike, humble approach to the game. The expression's origin is hazy — some attribute it to Alabama coaching legend Bear Bryant, others to his NFL contemporary Vince Lombardi. Regardless, the ethic might seem old fashioned in this selfie-obsessed era of Snapchat, signing days and scoring celebrations.

As Barry Odom, BS '99, M Ed '04, took the podium July 13, 2016, at SEC Media Days in Hoover, Alabama, he most certainly had *not* been there before. Mizzou's rookie head coach was promoted from defensive coordinator Dec. 4, 2015, following his mentor Gary Pinkel's announcement a month earlier that he would retire due to a lymphoma diagnosis. Odom's moment at the annual press event took place mere hours after Odom learned his boss, Mack Rhoades, would leave his post as director of athletics at MU for the same position at Baylor University.

It was SEC fandom's first chance to witness Odom's enthusiasm, confidence and unflappability. In the topsy-turvy world of college athletics, it's a rare occasion when a 39-year-old first-year coach engenders a sense of stability throughout the program.

"I absolutely know we'll get a great director of athletics, and the things we've done in the past eight months are going to set us up for the next



20 years,” Odom said. “The University of Missouri has been around since 1839, and it’s going to be around a long time. I’m really, really excited about the direction our football program is going.”



TAKING FLIGHT

Barry Stephen Odom grew up in Maysville, Oklahoma, a small farming community known for being the childhood home of aviator Wiley Post, who in 1933 became the first person to fly solo around the world.

When Odom was a child, his mother, Cheryl, was a public school teacher and principal, and his father, Bob, was about as Oklahoman as a person can be — an oilman, cattle farmer and football coach.

Barry and his brothers, the younger Brian and older Brad, played sports nonstop on the family farm, whether it was basketball on the concrete-slab court or football on the homemade gridiron.

“We strung up lights around the basketball goal, and we fenced off the pasture away from the cattle where there was a stand of Bermuda grass that served as a pretty level football field,” Bob says. “The boys were always either playing or working.”

They also attended OU games with their grandfather and watched Sooners stars Troy Aikman, Keith Jackson and Brian Bosworth, whom Brad and Barry tried to emulate by smashing into dead trees.

When Barry wasn’t living and breathing athletics, he was fishing. During one excursion, he and some buddies encountered a man engulfed in a brushfire. They pulled him to safety, and the story landed in the local paper.

“Barry’s not a look-at-me guy,” Brad says. “Today, kids would probably take out their phone and Facebook it or tweet it. It would have been a much bigger deal if Barry *hadn’t* helped him.”

As Barry grew, his superior athleticism was undeniable. As early as age 5, he was dominating his T-ball league. By 10 he was an elite sprinter in his age group and competed in regional track meets. At Maysville High School, he took two state titles in the 400-meter dash. And of course, on the football field, he torched defenses as a tailback and crushed ball carriers as a linebacker.

When Brad went off to college about an hour west at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma, he encouraged the family to relocate so Barry and Brian could pursue a more promising football future at Ada High School, home of the reigning state champions.

“Barry was getting a little bit of recruiting attention but not as much as I thought he should,” Brad says. “I was surprised the family was open to moving. I mean, our grandad was born in

Maysville in 1912.”

The tepid recruiting was likely due to the ACL tear Barry had suffered as a freshman, an injury doctors waited until after high school to surgically repair because he was still growing. But it didn’t slow down Odom, who in 1994 set a school single-season record for touchdowns (39) and once scored five in a single quarter. In his only season at Ada, Odom helped the Cougars win the second of four consecutive state championships.

“When he came to Ada from Maysville, it didn’t take us but one practice to realize what we had,” says Larry McBroom, Ada’s football coach from 1980 to 1995 and again from 2000 to 2003. “It was amazing how hard he worked. It was contagious. The guys around him had to pick up their tempo to stay with him.”

Oklahoma State coach Pat Jones recruited Odom, but when Jones was fired and the new Cowboys coach brought along a different tailback, Odom was left twisting in the prairie wind.

“That’s the way it goes, so I visited Tulsa, Arkansas and Missouri,” says Odom, who was hosted during his campus stay by Faurot Field wall-of-fame running back Brock Olivo, BA ’01. “I really enjoyed (Mizzou coach) Larry Smith. I liked his vision and his plan, and I saw it as an opportunity to get a great education.”



TEST OF TOUGHNESS

The 6-foot-1-inch Odom moved to linebacker at Mizzou, started all four seasons and developed a reputation as a physical defender who could play through virtually any injury. Before his sophomore season, he tore his other ACL and later re-tore the first one. He once slipped on the locker room tile and cut the skin near his eye, requiring stitches before kickoff. During his senior season, he played with a cast to protect torn ligaments in his right hand. He was even hospitalized after a spider bite but still made it onto the field.

“Maybe my body wasn’t meant to play linebacker at this level,” says Odom, laughing. “I had the attitude that I’ve been awarded an opportunity. I had one shot to go be as good as I could be. If it takes toughness, then let’s be tougher than the next guy. That’s still a large part of my approach today. When I come into the office, I want to out-work my opponents.”

Odom graduated with 362 career tackles, currently seventh in program history. Sitting five spots ahead of him on that list with 415 is Demon-tie Cross, who rejoins his former teammate this season as Mizzou’s defensive coordinator.

“Barry was kind of quiet and very businesslike

← Clockwise from left: Even on the dirt basketball court, the Odom boys’ lives revolved around sports in Maysville and Ada, Oklahoma. Father Bob Odom coached football, eldest son Brad played quarterback, Barry played linebacker and running back, and youngest son, Brian, was also a running back. Barry (left) and Brian show off their haul after a successful fishing trip. Farm equipment was a mainstay on the Odom cattle farm. All three Odoms played college football: Brad at East Central University in Ada, Brian at the University of Oklahoma and later Southeast Oklahoma State, and Barry at Mizzou. Barry was a fleet-footed youngster who ran track through high school.

when I first met him,” says Cross, BS BA '97, a former safety who was most recently co-defensive coordinator at Texas Christian University. “You’d think a freshman wouldn’t be able to play in the Big 12, but he took the bull by the horns.”

Small by NFL standards and worn down by college injuries, Odom knew his future would be not in playing professional football but in coaching. After a brief stint as an assistant at Ada High School, he returned to Columbia to take over the Rock Bridge High School head coaching job from Dan Devine Jr. Odom hired former teammate and NFL veteran A.J. Ofodile, BGS '01, as an assistant.

“One of the things he has always had is a great feel for people,” says Ofodile, whom Odom hired again in May 2016, this time as Mizzou’s director of football recruiting operations. “Even as a kid coming up through the program, he has commanded the utmost respect from the people around him.”

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ALWAYS A TIGER

In 2003, Odom returned to Mizzou as a graduate assistant and held various positions — including director of recruiting and safeties coach — for nearly a decade. He took a calculated risk in 2012 and joined the staff at Memphis University where, as defensive coordinator, he improved a squad ranked 117th nationally in total defense to 50th. When Mizzou’s defensive coordinator Dave Steckel left before the 2015 season to take the head coaching job at Missouri State, Pinkel tapped his star pupil.

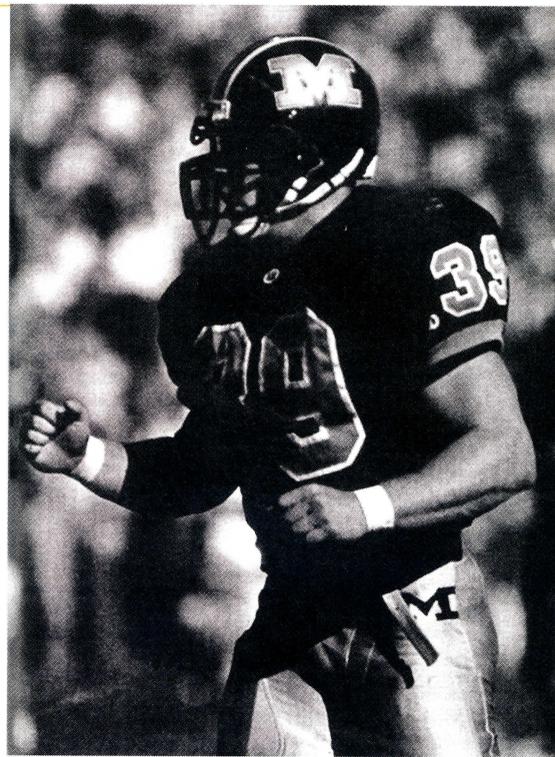
“Barry is a person of great integrity who treats people the right way,” Pinkel says. “He has exceptional leadership skills and people skills, and he will run a tough, disciplined program. At the same time, he cares very much for his players, and it will show.”

The players care for him right back, as evidenced by the viral video of the moment Odom was revealed as the new coach in December 2015. The team erupted in a show of joy, mobbing the young coach, jumping in unison and chanting his name.

“I was really happy to have him back,” says former Mizzou safety Ian Simon. “He always stayed in contact with me throughout the years. He’d always send me a happy birthday text and check to see how I was doing, so it felt like that connection never really went away.”

Staying connected is paramount to Odom, whether it’s with family back in Oklahoma, assistant coaches and student-athletes on the sideline or high school prospects on the recruiting trail.

As alumni, Odom and his wife, Tia, BS Ed



'99, are deeply connected to their alma mater. So much so that when Odom is recruiting for Mizzou, his approach is less a sales pitch than a trip down memory lane.

“I knew when I went in to interview for this job I was going to know more about the University of Missouri — our athletic program, the state of our football team and the institution — than anybody sitting behind the door,” Odom says. “I’m able to point out the great things about our business school or walk through the J-School and point out a couple of the professors I know who are still there. In Jesse Hall, I mention that I was in that provost’s office one time because I didn’t act right in the classroom.”

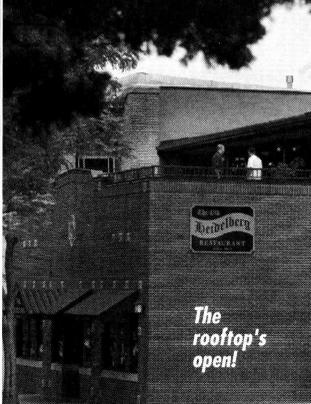
“Recruiting is fun for me because I give the campus tour.”

And why shouldn’t he? After all, he’s been here before. **M**

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A Celebration of Different Stripes

Meet the leaders committed to bringing the community together for the 105th Homecoming | Story by Brittany King

Just weeks after Homecoming 2015 ended, the Mizzou Alumni Association chose three students to take the helm of the 2016 Homecoming Steering Committee. Together, these tri-directors, all Missourians, have led 35 student volunteers in planning what they hope is the most inclusive Homecoming campus has seen. Knowing their peers and alumni love to reminisce about the good old days, the committee thought the theme “A Tail of Tradition” would bridge the gaps among Mizzou generations, encouraging all Tigers to come together and show their stripes.



Elle Miller

California, Missouri
Biochemistry
Senior

Committees: Parade, Traditions, Merchandise and Special Events

Why Mizzou: I have grown up loving the University of Missouri. I have attended basketball camps and sporting events since I was young and always knew Mizzou would become my home.

Favorite HoCo memory: Attending the parade nearly every year. When I was little, the parade meant seeing cool floats and receiving candy, but as I grew older, I saw the parade as a display of what Mizzou would become to me as a student and alumna.

Hardest part about planning HoCo: Being one step ahead. There are a lot of moving parts, so staying on top of everything can be challenging.

Favorite Mizzou memory: Going to Pensacola, Florida, to play in the National Co-Rec Flag Football tournament my sophomore year. That trip is what inspired me to establish a women's team. So, I formed the team, and with the help of Joe Sloan, the senior rec sports coordinator, we

attended the regional tournament at the University of Nebraska. We won and were the first women's flag football team to represent Mizzou at the national tournament.

What I'll miss most about Mizzou: Everything about our beautiful campus, especially the rec center and rec sports. I have made so many incredible friends.

Guilty pleasure: I eat ice cream every day (although I'm not that “guilty” about it).

Dream job: Pediatric dentist. I love interacting with kids, and for the most part, they love me.

Next vacation destination: Australia, to watch the Australian Open

Inspiration: Lori Henderson, a pediatric dentist in Columbia. I have been a patient of hers since I was a child and she has inspired me to choose dentistry as a career.

Best place to eat in CoMo: Murry's

Hidden talents: I used to show livestock — pigs and steers.

What I miss most about home: My 10-year-old sister, Mari

Katelyn Entzeroth

St. Louis, Missouri
Business administration
Senior

Committees: Blood Drive, Public Relations and Talent

Favorite HoCo memory: Spending hours and hours at Hearnes for the 2015

Homecoming Blood Drive. After working on the drive for several months, it was fun to see it all come together and receive support not only from students but also from the Columbia community.

Best class taken at MU: An honors writing-intensive called Business and Society. We discussed a variety of social and business issues and used the Steve Jobs biography as our textbook. Very insightful and engaging course.

Guilty pleasure: *The Office* (especially “Threat Level Midnight”)

Dream job: I would love to work on microfinance and economic development at the World Bank someday.

Why tri-director: Homecoming has the power to bring people together over a common love for Mizzou. I absolutely loved being a member of the committee last year, and I observed many opportunities for growth and change that I wanted to help lead. Not to mention I get to work with our incredible adviser, Aly Friend.

What I'll miss most about MU: The people. From phenomenal teachers and mentors



to my inspiring peers, not a day goes by at MU without my perspective being challenged. There are quite a few world changers at this campus.

Who inspires me: Marianne Lake, CFO of JPMorgan Chase, is a huge source of inspiration. Lake genuinely supports other women in the industry and has led a very impressive career while also raising her children single-handedly. She makes me believe anything is possible.

Celeb I'd love to spend the day with: Barack Obama. I would just love to pick the brain of the President of the United States.

Proudest MU moment: Standing on Jesse's stage on Tap Day next to some of the coolest, most impressive people I have ever had the pleasure of meeting.

What I miss most about home: Family. I have 13 nieces and nephews, and I wish I could spend more time with them.

Ryan Eisenbath

Silex, Missouri
Accounting
Senior

Committees: Campus Decorations, Service and Campus Outreach

Why Mizzou: There was never a doubt in my mind that I would be a Tiger. My two older brothers attended Mizzou, and I fell in love with it at an early age. I knew Mizzou offered the large university opportunities that I sought while also offering the tradition and family atmosphere that could make Columbia



my home away from home.

Hardest part about planning HoCo: Finding the balance between the interests and wants of current students, faculty and alumni.

Favorite HoCo memory: Walking on the field with the rest of the Homecoming Steering Committee

Favorite Mizzou memory: Rushing the field at the conclusion of the football game against Texas A&M my freshman year

Best class taken at MU: Thanks to a great professor, Chris Prestigiaco, my Accounting 2 class convinced me to change my major to accounting.

Proudest MU moment: When I learned that I got tri-director

Go-to study spot on campus: I like to bounce between Ellis Library, the Student Center and Reynolds Alumni Center during test weeks.

Dream job: General manager of the St. Louis Cardinals

Post grad plans: Earn a CPA and work for a public accounting firm

Next vacation destination: Australia. One cannot go through life without holding a koala.

Who inspires me: Anyone with great work ethic, so I'm often inspired by my colleagues, professors and parents.

Best place to eat in CoMo: CC's City Broiler