

MIZZOU

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Around the Columns

Tigers' dance begins in upstate New York

Last season, the Mizzou men's basketball team tangled with Tigers of a different stripe for their final victory of 2008–09, beating Memphis 102–91 in the Sweet 16. This season, Coach Mike Anderson's squad will square off against the seventh-seeded Clemson Tigers in the East region (Buffalo, N.Y.) of the NCAA Tournament. Tipoff is scheduled for approximately 1:45 p.m. Friday, March 19, 2010. The round one matchup marks back-to-back tournament appearances for Missouri (22–10, 10–6 Big 12), a No. 10 seed with a chance to improve on last season's Elite Eight run.

“Our guys are really excited for the opportunity to play in the Big Dance,” Anderson says. “It's one of the greatest sporting events there is, and to be one of 65 teams is a tribute to our players and the hard work they put in.”

Clemson (21–10, 9–7 ACC) plays a style of basketball similar to Mizzou's up-tempo, high-pressure game. Anderson last faced Clemson as the head coach of the University of Alabama at Birmingham in the Rainbow Classic in Hawaii, where the Blazers knocked off Coach Oliver Purnell's Tigers 78–66, Dec. 21, 2004.



Tipoff for Mizzou's first round game against Clemson is scheduled for approximately 1:45 p.m. Friday, March 19, 2010. Photo by Clay McGlaughlin

“I like that Clemson gets up and down the court,” says Missouri sophomore guard Miguel Paul from Winter Haven, Fla. “They recruited me a lot growing up. We have similar styles, but they don’t get after it quite like we do.”

Mizzou will try to bounce back from a meager finish to its Big 12 season in which the team lost three of its last four games. The Tigers shot just 33.9 percent from the floor in a 75-60 loss to Nebraska and an early Big 12 Tournament exit March 10, 2010, in Kansas City, Mo.

“We just need to get better at the things we already do well,” says sophomore guard Marcus Denmon. “We have 10 returners who have played in the NCAA tournament before. Hopefully we have an advantage, because for most guys, it won’t be a new atmosphere.”

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