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MIZZOU

Can't Dodge Rams

The Tigers bow out of the 2013 NCAA Tournament.



Junior guard Phil Pressey takes a forearm to the face from Colorado State's Wes Eikmeier.

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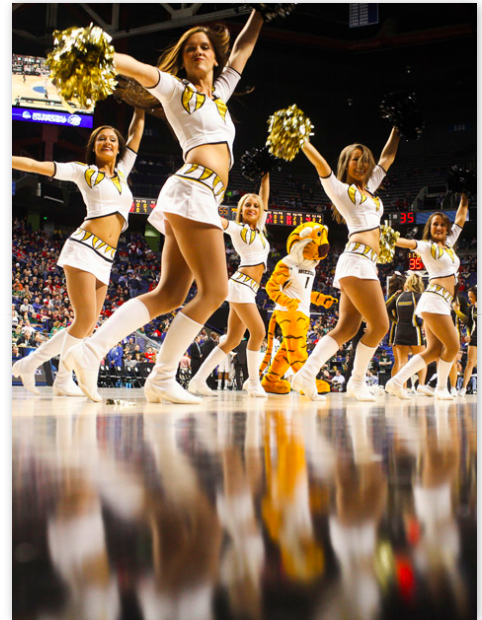
Is it a green curse?

For the second consecutive season, Mizzou entered the NCAA Tournament facing an emerald-clad bunch in its opening round and came away blue. This time it was the Colorado State Rams sending the Tigers home from Lexington, Ky., 84–72.

Missouri, as a heavy favorite in 2012, fell to Norfolk State 86–84 in a matchup between seeds Nos. 2 and 15. The Tigers entered the 2013 tourney as a No. 9 seed, but losing to a No. 8 didn't make the early exit any easier.

“We didn't end it the way we wanted to,” says senior forward Alex Oriakhi, who played in his final game as a Missouri Tiger. “I said if we don't find a way to finish games, we're going to go home.”

Missouri struggled to close out tight contests throughout the regular season, its inaugural campaign in the SEC. With narrow road losses at UCLA, LSU, Arkansas, Kentucky, Texas A&M and Tennessee, Mizzou grasped for signature wins despite a 17–0 home record.



The Golden Girls perform during a TV time out.

This one wasn't nearly as close. The Tigers took an early 2–0 lead when senior forward Laurence Bowers hit a short hook shot. The Rams answered with a short jumper of their own and, with a three pointer by Wes Eikmeier at the 18:36 mark, grabbed a lead they would never relinquish.

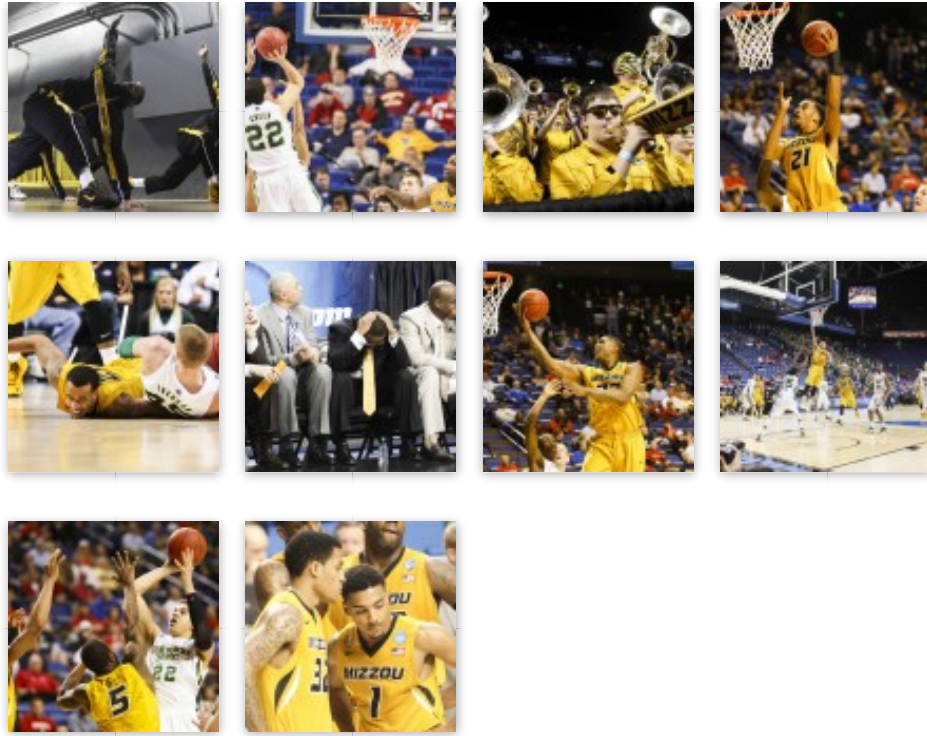


Bowers gives a final high five to a fan in his last game as a Missouri Tiger.

Led by senior guard Dorian Green, who paced all scorers with 26, Colorado State's lead ballooned to as much as 13 in the first half and 17 in the second half. Mizzou cut the lead to four to start the second half after a three point shot from sophomore guard Jabari Brown and a layup by junior guard Phil Pressey.

But the difference in the game was on the glass. Billed as a showdown between two good rebounding teams, the Rams had a decided 42–19 advantage.

“Colorado State's a good team and a veteran club,” says head Coach Frank Haith who finishes his second season at MU. “Sometimes when you lose basketball games, the other team can play well, and they played very well.”



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