Mizzou will be the center of the college football universe Saturday

By MIKE DeARMOND

COLUMBIA | While satisfying a ravenous hunger at a downtown bar and grill that will rock and roar starting Friday when the homecoming crowds roll in, Adam Lodes bounces on his bar stool.

The University of Missouri is about to become the center of the college football universe — at least for one day.

Homecoming is always a big party, and Saturday’s game against unbeaten Oklahoma makes it even bigger. But the hype is further heightened by the arrival of ESPN’s “College GameDay,” a three-hour nationally televised preview show that travels around the country to what is deemed the best matchup of the week.

With an average of 2 million viewers, the show begins the Saturday college football ritual, and in 48 hours its spotlight will be on this town.

Against a frenzied backdrop of thousands of wild- and bleary-eyed fans, the show will be beamed live from the Francis Quadrangle in front of the historic Columns. Students with homemade signs will jostle for position behind the stage where the broadcast panelists sit starting at 8 a.m. The crowning moment comes when longtime analyst Lee Corso dons the mascot headgear of the team he predicts will emerge victorious, with the accompanying cheers or jeers.

“Everyone around the world,” Lodes proclaimed, “not just the nation, is watching. This is Columbia, Missouri!”

Well, maybe not the whole world, but by the time the Tigers and Sooners kick off at 7 p.m. in Memorial Stadium, Mizzou will certainly have a chance to impress the nation.

Missouri has lost 19 of its last 20 games against Oklahoma, including two crushing defeats in the 2007 and 2008 Big 12 championship games. The Sooners come to Columbia as the No. 1 team in the Bowl Championship Series, which determines the national champion. But the Tigers are 6-0 and ranked 11th in the BCS standings, and they could enter the national-title discussion with a victory today.
"That’s insane," Lodes said. "We’ve never had a game like that here in I don’t know how many years."

Lodes, an MU student, attended "GameDay" at Arrowhead Stadium in 2007, before the Tigers beat Kansas in the ultimate Border War game that pushed Mizzou to No. 1 in the nation.

“It’s hard to hear,” Lodes said. “You’re basically just screaming and yelling and having a good time.”

Homecoming, of course, always makes for an outrageous weekend. Missouri claims it invented the tradition. Having a few sports celebrities in town will be a nice bonus.

Just a couple of blocks up the street from the Columns, at venerable pool hall and burger joint Booches, co-owner Charlie Kurre says they’ll be prepared. As usual.

“There’s always a line out the door,” Kurre said. “It’s just going to be a longer line.”

Football Saturdays are certainly busier than the rest, even without the added attention. In terms of meat, Kurre said, it is also the difference between selling 150 pounds and 300 pounds of hamburgers, the signature menu item.

“Is the sun up at night?” Kurre cracked. “That’s what it is, night and day.”

Some accommodations have been made for the show, which ends at 11 a.m. The homecoming parade will start at noon, rain or shine, instead of 9 a.m.

There will be a dry run for "GameDay" and downtown on Friday. Starting at noon, some of the "GameDay" crew will be at the Quad, taping interviews and preparing. For the sports-savvy, they’re all household names: Erin Andrews, Chris Fowler, Kirk Herbstreit, Desmond Howard and Corso. The curious may wander over then.

But after that, MU officials won’t open access to the Quad until 3:30 a.m. Saturday. Don’t arrive earlier than that --- no camping will be allowed Friday night and Saturday morning.

This is the first time "GameDay" has come to Columbia; MU officials are hoping for a crowd that will eclipse the record of 15,808 at Nebraska.

The show started in a studio in 1987, but when it hit the campus for a Florida State-Notre Dame game in 1993, ESPN knew it had come upon something special. Now "GameDay" has a monster presence, with schools longing to be part of the festivities and angry when they believe they’ve been snubbed. Auburn fans are none too pleased this week that their showdown with LSU, in another battle of unbeaten, wasn’t chosen for the broadcast.

“It’s really grown into something nobody anticipated would happen back in 1993,” coordinating producer Michael Fountain said. “It’s become a cultural phenomenon.”
The MU-Oklahoma game jumped on the radar early last week. When each team won easily this past Saturday, Fountain started to get that good vibe and consulted with ESPN executives.

“It’s a call I look forward to making because of the reaction,” Fountain said of notifying the schools chosen. “They’re thrilled, and it gets you energized.”

And the benefits are incalculable. In a sense, “GameDay” gives a football team a stamp of approval. You’re good enough to receive the attention.

“The exposure is just phenomenal,” MU coach Gary Pinkel said. “We don’t have a bank account big enough to get this kind of exposure.”

Not only will the game be broadcast to a national audience, but for three hours on Saturday morning, Missouri won’t share a setting with anybody. It will be the Quad, the Columns and a healthy dose of Truman the Tiger.

Pinkel won’t be in attendance, however. The coaches and players will be ensconced at a local hotel. Meetings and focus time take priority here.

Center Tim Barnes said he would not watch. “You don’t want to sit there and listen to how good you are,” he said. “Or, well, ‘This is how they could get heat.’”

Missouri quarterback Blaine Gabbert — coming off a 361-yard, three-touchdown passing day in last Saturday’s victory at Texas A&M -- repeats something his coach has said.

“The ‘GameDay’ bus is here this weekend,” Gabbert said. “You keep winning, it will be around a lot more.”

On campus:

•8-11 a.m.: ESPN’s “College GameDay” is broadcast live.

•9:30 a.m.: Fans of the women’s basketball team can gather at Brewer Field House to watch new coach Robin Pingeton’s first MU squad hoop it up from 9:30 to 11. A free pancake breakfast will be served from 10 a.m. to noon.

•Noon: Homecoming parade.

•2:30 p.m.: At Mizzou Arena, men’s basketball coach Mike Anderson will open the doors to a full-bore practice session.

Game kickoff: Set for 7 p.m.

Forecast: Showers and thunderstorms likely Saturday, with a high near 70.
ESPN "GameDay"
Debuted: 1987

Debuted on campus: 1993 (Notre Dame)

Most campus appearances, entering this year: Ohio State, 12

Missouri appearances: 4

2007: at Oklahoma, L 41-31

2007: vs. Kansas at Arrowhead Stadium, W 36-28

2007: vs. Oklahoma in Big 12 championship at San Antonio, L 38-17

2008: at Texas, L 56-31

The Star's Blair Kerkhoff contributed to this report.
Campus Chatter

Deaton: Wear gold, brace for crowds

By Janese Silvey

Posted October 20, 2010 at 11:22 a.m.

Chancellor Brady Deaton released this Homecoming message that calls for Mizzou fans to wear gold, participate and expect crowds:

Homecoming message

The University of Missouri is recognized as the birthplace of the Homecoming tradition, and this week we observe its 99th anniversary. This tradition and all of the related events are part of the fabric of our university community and the communities we serve throughout the state.

Thousands of alumni from around the world will return to Columbia to recall their special experiences and to learn about today’s Mizzou as one of the nation’s leading land-grant research universities.

Homecoming Week will feature many events, including the dedication of the MU Student Center at 3 p.m. on Friday. Campus Decorations from 6 to 10 p.m., the Homecoming Parade which begins at noon on Saturday with Grand Marshal Russ Mitchell of CBS News, and Mizzou vs. Oklahoma with kickoff at 7 p.m. that evening.

Because we always seek opportunities to showcase our extraordinary campus, we are fortunate for our football team’s success and that Mizzou has been selected by ESPN to host this week’s College GameDay. This program is viewed by millions of Americans each week throughout the football season. ESPN will produce the show live from Francis Quadrangle on Saturday, Oct. 23, from 8 to 11 a.m. We anticipate an audience in the thousands as students, staff, faculty, alumni and other fans join in this production. The Columns and Jesse Hall will provide the backdrop for viewers who will see one of the heartland’s great institutions and the symbol of public higher education in Missouri.

I hope many of you will participate in various Homecoming activities. If you do, please wear gold, provide a warm welcome to our campus guests, and join us Saturday on the Quad for GameDay (access to the Quad opens at 3:30 a.m.). Nebraska has set the GameDay attendance record at 15,808; Francis Quadrangle capacity is 24,000. We also will cheer on the team at Tiger Walk when our student-athletes cross the Providence Road pedestrian bridge on their way to the stadium at 4:45 p.m.
We know that events such as this attract large audiences to our campus and present unique challenges; access to the campus and parking garages will be particularly crowded before and during the Saturday events. I ask your patience, understanding and support as we welcome ESPN and alumni and celebrate our students' outstanding leadership in staging our Homecoming celebration, "Tradition Set in Stone."


Thank you. Go Tigers! Brady J. Deaton, Chancellor

A Homecoming schedule and more information is here.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

COLUMN: How to prepare for (and survive) ESPN's 'College GameDay'

By Tom Reaves Capp
October 20, 2010 | 3:42 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — On Oct. 9, while I was cheering on the Tigers at Faurot Field, I received some excellent news.

Alex Graf, a manager for the Wisconsin Badgers football team and one of my best friends, called to tell me that ESPN's "College GameDay" was coming to Madison, Wis., on Oct. 16 for the Wisconsin vs. Ohio State game.

I had been planning on going to that game since spring, so news that "College GameDay" was going to be in town increased the excitement of the road trip.

For those who don't know, "College GameDay" is a weekly ritual for college football fans. Every week the "GameDay" gang — Chris Fowler, Lee Corso, Kirk Herbstreit and friends — travel to the site of the biggest game in college football for that week.

As an avid watcher, I was not going to miss my chance to see "College GameDay" at Camp Randall Stadium — the home of the Badgers.

This guide is to help you prepare for (and survive) "GameDay" at MU.

Get as sleepy as Friday night.

If you plan to get up early for "GameDay," make sure you go to bed reasonably early. Friday night usually doesn't require a curfew, but if you plan on making it through the entire show, you will need adequate rest.

There is always something to do in Madison on the weekends, but my friends and I stayed in and rested up because we knew that if we had gone out, there was no way we would have made it to "GameDay" early.
When we woke up at 6 a.m. to leave for the set, all I brought to eat along the way was a bag of puppy chow. Bad idea. Camp Randall didn't have any food available, so I was pretty hungry by the end.

The Francis Quadrangle at MU is going to open at 3:30 a.m. If you plan to attend that early, make sure you eat before you get there. Or else stay hungry.

Bring something to entertain yourself, or bring entertaining friends.

If you watch "GameDay," you might have noticed that the crowd is shown before and after commercial breaks. For the most part, the cameras are focused on the anchors or showing a pre-taped segment for the show. Also, it can be hard at times to hear what the anchors are saying, and you might not know what's going on.

It's pretty sweet to see the crowd on the video board, but know that there will be times when you're not sure what your role is in the crowd.

At times I found myself not knowing what to do, so make sure to bring something to kill time. I know that my iPhone was useful, especially during commercial time when nothing was happening.

If you're going to make a sign, make sure it's appropriate (enough).

When we got to the gate, there were two security guards checking signs. Because this wasn't a Mizzou game, most of the security guards didn't understand what my "M-I-Z F-K-U" sign meant. I was able to get past about four security guards until the one at the front asked me what the "F" stood for. Unfortunately, the sign was taken away.

"GameDay" is concerned about what the signs say. I recall seeing a security guard inside our area checking every single sign, just in case a sign did slip through the cracks.

If you want to make a sign that would insult Oklahoma, make sure it's clever. One of my favorite signs at "GameDay" in Madison was a picture of LeBron James saying, "Don't worry, I hate Ohio, too."
Tailgating is a symbol that defines college football. There is nothing better than hanging out with your best friends at Lot X on a Saturday.

"Game Day" might seem like an extra opportunity to extend tailgating from early morning to late afternoon, but in my opinion, it is definitely not worth it.

Remember, if you plan on getting there early, you will be standing around for hours. If you have been heavily drinking, the chances of not passing out before the game are very slim.

My advice is to save that atmosphere until after the show. If you plan on pre-gaming, make sure to schedule a nap after "Game Day" and before tailgating.

The "College Game Day" experience is definitely something I recommend. If you love the Tigers, college football, ESPN and the "Game Day" crew, it's a definite must for Saturday morning.

Tom Reaves Capp is a junior journalism major from Madison, Wis. He covers city government and other local issues for the Missourian.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MizzouDiversity Summit addresses achievements, concerns

By Megan Cassidy
October 20, 2010 | 10:34 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — MU Chancellor Brady Deaton acknowledged the school’s “checkered past” regarding diversity relations in his opening statements at the 2010 MizzouDiversity Summit at Memorial Union on Wednesday night.

Deaton said that in the past the university was on the “wrong side” of legal battles involving gay rights and race relations and noted that the first black applicant to the university was denied entrance.

“We’re not responsible for the sins of the past, but that doesn’t excuse them,” Deaton said. “We still have much to accomplish.”

The theme of the school’s second biannual summit built upon Deaton’s words and encouraged students, faculty and staff to “(take) ownership for an inclusive campus,” according to Roger L. Worthington, assistant deputy chancellor and chief diversity officer at MU.

The chancellor highlighted an abridged list of developments that have been made since the last summit in May of 2008. Some advancements included a new veterans support center, two new organizations created for students with disabilities and the inclusion of gender-neutral bathrooms in new facilities as part of the university’s LGBTQ initiative.

Deaton mentioned that this year’s freshmen class was not only the largest but also the most ethnically diverse. According to the progress report, this year’s incoming class grew 8.9 percent more than last year’s class, while the number of minority students grew by 32.6 percent to 1,034 students.
Deaton and other panelists then addressed some areas of continuing concern at the university and underscored domestic partner benefits as an ongoing battle for members of the school's faculty and staff.

Last year, the results of a faculty-staff benefit survey showed that while 35 percent of respondents were strongly in favor of domestic partner benefits, a matching 35 percent were strongly opposed.

"Of those 35 percent, only one or two percent would take advantage of the benefits, since many partners work and have their own benefits," said Leona Rubin, chairwoman of MU's Faculty Council. "It's not about money; it's a social issue."

MU is one of eight universities in the 63 Association of American Universities member schools without domestic partner coverage.

The panel then opened a question and answer session for attendees, addressing concerns raised by students, faculty and staff.

MU sophomore Taylor Dukes asked the panel what was being done for the needs of LGBTQ freshmen housing. She emphasized that while it is awkward for homosexual students to room with a member of their own sex, it is often too expensive to live in a one-bedroom suite. Another MU student asked what the school was doing about the Dream Act, a proposed legislation that would help undocumented immigrants enroll in college.

The panel had little to say about either concern as both involve legal issues beyond the panel's control.

Worthington concluded the panel on an optimistic note, promising that the school would identify these and other "salient issues."

"For the next two years," Worthington said. "We are going to work on the very difficult issues you all have raised tonight."
New report: colleges more diverse, but racial gaps persist

By ERIC GORSKI, The Associated Press
October 20, 2010 | 12:08 p.m. CDT

While U.S. colleges have grown more racially diverse in recent years, minority students — especially Hispanics — still lag on key measures of academic progress, a new report says.

Those findings were released Wednesday in a biannual report card on minority educational attainment by the American Council on Education, with financial backing from the GE Foundation.

Overall, postsecondary educational achievement has flatlined, meaning today's young adults are no better educated than the baby-boomer generation, the report concludes.

"Equality in education for all Americans remains a somewhat elusive goal that we must strive to reach," said ACE president Molly Corbett Broad.

The report pays special attention to the nation's estimated 47 million Hispanics, including what it describes as an overlooked population in education policy — Hispanic immigrant adults.

Hispanics made the largest gains and narrowed gaps with whites and blacks on high school completion from 1988 to 2008. Report author Mikiyung Ryu called it "impressive progress." Yet Hispanics still have the lowest high school completion rates of any group, at 70 percent.

When it comes to college, the Hispanic record is similarly mixed. In 2008, 28 percent of traditional college-age Hispanics were in college, up from 17 percent two decades earlier.
But other racial groups made greater gains, and an enrollment gap that has whites ahead of Hispanics has widened. Young Hispanic men are lagging farther behind young Hispanic women.

"I appreciate it isn't a doomsday piece, like we see so much in data, like a crisis," said Deborah Santiago, vice president of policy and research for Excelencia in Education, which advocates for Hispanic college success. "But it does start to articulate where we really need to act."

In a special essay on Hispanics, the report notes that Hispanic immigrant adults' degree attainment is 14 percent, compared with U.S.-born Hispanics at 25 percent. It urges greater investment in alternative education and training programs to better serve that demographic.

Frank Alvarez, president and CEO of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, questioned the emphasis on immigrants.

"The issue of immigration status detracts from the main theme — getting the community as a whole, a major subsection of the American population, to become college-going," Alvarez said.

ACE officials say the focus is warranted given Hispanics' importance in trying to raise U.S. college completion rates and compete in the global economy.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Jerry Litton foundation gives to MU

By The Associated Press
October 20, 2010 | 11:42 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — A foundation honoring the late Missouri Congressman Jerry Litton has created a $250,000 endowment at MU.

Litton and his family were killed in a plane crash on the night he won the Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in 1976.

The donation from the family's memorial foundation will finance several endeavors at Litton's alma mater in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

The university said it will include a lecture series, a fellowship for faculty entrepreneurial activities and scholarships for students to develop leadership skills. Funds will also be used for a fellowship to help students gain farm policy-making experience.
Economists explain their views on the earnings tax

BY DAVID NICKLAUS • dnicklaus@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8213 | Posted: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 10:41 am

The National Association for Business Economics' Gateway chapter billed Tuesday's event as a debate on the St. Louis earnings tax, but one of the participants begged to differ.

Joseph Haslag, a University of Missouri economist who has written studies critical of earnings taxes, said he didn't have any fundamental disagreement with his debate opponent, St. Louis University economist Jack Strauss. Rather, he told the NABE audience of about 30 people:

What you've got this evening are two distinct questions and two separate answers. ... We have two different variables in the regressions that we're running, and if you have two different variables you're explaining two different things.

Haslag's study looked at whether an earnings tax affects the way a metro economy is divided between city and suburbs. Strauss compared cities that have earnings tax to cities that don't, and found that the earnings tax didn't explain differences in growth.

Strauss found that history -- especially the size of a city's manufacturing base -- was far more important. Many old industrial cities have earnings taxes, he said, so people tend to confuse the manufacturing effect with an earnings-tax effect:

Because of what has happened over the last 30 years in manufacturing, cities that used to do well in manufacturing have crashed.

... This is kind of a red-herring issue, the earnings tax. We should focus on what's important for economic growth.

Haslag, while maintaining that he didn't disagree with Strauss' work, did talk about the implications of his own research. He noted the large number of tall office buildings in suburban Clayton, where the forum was held, and said:

Why does Clayton look the way it does? Maybe one contributing factor -- not the only one -- is that St. Louis has an earnings tax.
Strauss criticized the backers of Proposition A, which would require St. Louis and Kansas City voters to reauthorize their earnings taxes every five years, for not proposing an alternative source of revenue:

The city stands to lose 31 percent of its revenue, and it is going to be hard to make up that revenue in any other way. The city's going to be stuck with a large debt and probably have to fire hundreds of workers unless we come up with a viable alternative.

Haslag responded that dozens of other cities manage to balance their budgets without an earnings tax.

If the city were to eliminate the earnings tax, there's going to be some leadership that has to happen. It can't be viewed as being an impossibility. There are hundreds of cities around the world that don't rely on these taxes.

So, in the end, it did sound a lot like a debate. For more on these two views of the earnings tax, read this commentary piece by Strauss and a co-author, this rebuttal by Haslag or this column I wrote in March.