



MISSISSIPPI REBELS

SEC - West Division

Rebels' Offense Will Be Must Watch TV

In each of the past two seasons Lane Kiffin has had the Rebels with a top 10 ranking in the CFP rankings at some point during the season. In 2021 the Rebels claimed ten victories and were ranked as high as #8 following an Egg Bowl victory over Mississippi State and their lone losses were on the road against #1 Alabama and #18 Auburn. Last season Kiffin took advantage of an easy first half schedule and Ole Miss was 7-0 and ranked #7 in the country. They took a road trip to Baton Rouge and the perfect season was quickly spoiled in a 45-20 humbling defeat where the Tigers had 500 yards of total offense. Defensive inconsistencies continued and what started as a 7-0 season took an ugly 1-5 turn including a discouraging loss to Texas Tech in the Texas Bowl. Not only did Kiffin just miss out on taking out his former mentor Saban but he also dropped lost the Egg Bowl for the first time in his Ole Miss coaching career.

Despite the disappointing end to the season, the Rebels arrive with lofty expectations ahead of the 2023 season. Kiffin's high octane offense has scored well over 30 points per game in each of his three seasons and he managed to poach defensive coordinator Pete Golding away from Alabama to sure up a unit that has stalled out the team's progress at times. The schedule provides several monumental tests but Kiffin and the Rebels are as confident as always.

Quarterback battles take all shapes and forms. Some programs suffer through battles where neither option is truly capable of being a starter but that doesn't seem to be the case in Oxford. **Jaxson Dart** threw for nearly 3,000 yards last season after transferring in from USC but that didn't stop the Ole Miss staff from bringing in **Spencer Sanders** from Oklahoma State. Sanders has nearly 10,000 career passing yards and has recorded 2,000 yards or more in each of his four seasons as a starter. He can be mistake prone and even hot-headed at times but the overall talent is undeniable and he's close to 2,000 career rushing yards, too. His 2021 Oklahoma State team fell literally two inches short of a College Football Playoff appearance. Dart won a quarterback battle with Luke Altmeyer last year and is more familiar with Kiffin's offense but both players should get an opportunity to run some drives especially with Mercer as the opening opponent. **Walker Howard** may not see the field much this season but his recruiting billing points to him being the Rebels' quarterback of the future.

The real star of the offense is last year's freshman sensation **Quinshon Judkins**. Judkins ran for an astonishing 1,567 yards and left many a defender in his wake. He broke various school records and scored 16 touchdowns. Zach Evans was his running mate who added 936 yards and 9 touchdowns but has since been drafted. There's two ways to look at Evans' departure. The first way to look at it is that Judkins could see even more carries than the 274 he received last season and his production will increase even more. The other way to look at it is that there is no longer an ultra-reliable option to bring in when Judkins needs a break, although **Ulysses Bentley** will try to assume that role. The reality of the situation is probably a mix of both schools of thought and Dart (614 yards) or Sanders will be big contributors in the run game, too. Kiffin hit a home run in the portal with wide receiver **Zakhari Franklin** who is fresh off back-to-back 1,000 yard seasons with UTSA. **Jordan Watkins** and **Dayton Wade** are also back at wideout and tight end **Caden Prieskorn** was first team All-AAC with Memphis last season. Kiffin also bolstered the offensive line with transfers and the offense should soar in 2023.

Seven returners are back on defense but the top four tacklers are gone. This unit wore down as the season went along but new coaching should inject confidence and players like **Cedric Johnson** and **JJ Pegues** should assert their dominance on the defensive line. Transfers dot the roster and could provide an immediate fix. Several of these transfers like **Monty Montgomery** (Louisville), **Zamari Walton** (UCF), and **Isheem Young** (Iowa State) started for multiple seasons at their old program. If these players pan out Ole Miss will see immediate improvement on defense.

The Bottom Line: Time will tell how well Kiffin's transfer portal class pans out but early indications are that the additions will be very impactful. I expect Ole Miss to have better staying power this year but trips to both Alabama and Georgia are brutal. The Rebels also draw a unique road trip to the defending Cotton Bowl champions Tulane and play the Egg Bowl on the road. However, this team will be capable of springing an upset at any time.

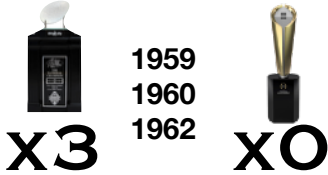
Projection: 9-3 (3rd in SEC West)

2022 Statistics

Points Scored	Rush Yards	Pass Yards	Turnover Margin
33.5	256.6	239.8	-1
29th in FBS	3rd in FBS	59th in FBS	T-76th in FBS
Points Allowed	Rush YDS Allowed	Pass YDS Allowed	M
25.5	168.0	219.8	
57th in FBS	90th in FBS	55th in FBS	

MISSISSIPPI BIO

National Championships - 3



SEC Championships: 6
(Last: 1963)

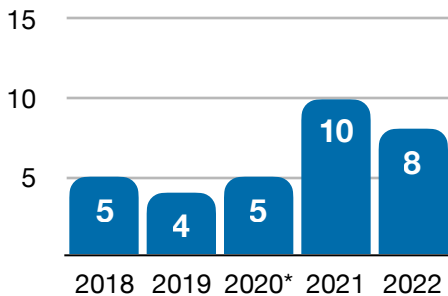
Location: Oxford, MS

All-Time Record: 639-522-34

2022 Results: 8-5
Lost in Texas Bowl







Head Coach: Lane Kiffin
4th Year (23-13)

5-YEAR WIN TREND



Vaught-Hemingway Stadium (64,038)

2023 Mississippi Schedule

Week	Date	Team
1	Sat, Sept 2	 vs. Mercer
2	Sat, Sept 9	 @ Tulane
3	Sat, Sept 16	 vs. Georgia Tech
4	Sat, Sept 23	 @ Alabama
5	Sat, Sept 30	 vs. LSU
6	Sat, Oct 7	 vs. Arkansas
7	Bye Week	
8	Sat, Oct 21	 @ Auburn
9	Sat, Oct 28	 vs. Vanderbilt
10	Sat, Nov 4	 vs. Texas A&M
11	Sat, Nov 11	 @ Georgia
12	Sat, Nov 18	 vs. ULM
13	Thu, Nov 23	 @ Mississippi St.

Conference Games in Bold

KEY GAMES

Sat, Sept 23: @ Alabama - The Rebels are one of just two teams to beat Nick Saban and the Tide in Tuscaloosa. Kiffin was a former Alabama OC and current Mississippi DC Golding came from Alabama so these coaching staffs know each other quite well.

Sat, Nov 11: @ Georgia - Two former Saban assistants meet as head coaches for the first time. The Rebels travel to Athens for the first time since 2012 when the Bulldogs extended their win streak (since broken) in the series to ten games.

Thu, Nov 23: @ Mississippi State - No season is truly successful in Oxford without a win in the Egg Bowl. Last year the Rebels drove 99 yards in the closing minutes only to miss the game-tying 2-pt conversion.

KEY PLAYERS

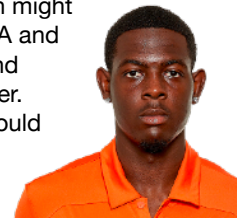
Quinshon Judkins - RB



The 46th ranked running back from the class of 2023 (via 24/7 Sports) far exceeded his billing and quickly became one of college football's best quarterbacks. He rattled off a school record 1,567 yards and 16 touchdowns and actually seemed to gain strength as the season moved along. He added two 200-yard performances against Texas A&M and Arkansas and he scored twice against the vaunted Alabama defense.

Zakhari Franklin - WR

Kiffin brought in a lot of transfers but Franklin might be the most impactful. He was a star at UTSA and collected 37 touchdowns and 3,348 yards and leaves as the school's all-time leading receiver. Franklin should transition seamlessly and should be the perfect fit in Kiffin's high-paced offense. Don't be surprised if he's the top pass catcher for the Rebels.



2022 RESULTS (8-5)

Troy (W 28-10)
 Central Arkansas (W 59-3)
 @ Georgia Tech (W 42-0)
 Tulsa (W 35-27)
 Kentucky (W 22-19)
 @ Vanderbilt (W 52-28)
 Auburn (W 48-34)
 @ LSU (L 20-45)
 @ Texas A&M (W 31-28)
 Alabama (L 24-30)
 @ Arkansas (L 27-42)
 @ Mississippi State (L 22-24)
 Texas Tech (L 25-42)

Ole Miss

RECRUITING

2023 Class Ranking

28th

(Via 24/7 Sports)