

WEEK ONE  
STEPHEN F AUSTIN AT MISSISSIPPI STATE

STARKVILLE, Miss. -- One of the biggest reasons Joe Moorhead was hired at Mississippi State was his reputation for building offenses that can score points in a hurry.

It took exactly one play for that offense to get the fun started in Starkville.

Keytaon Thompson threw a short pass to Kylin Hill that ended with a 53-yard touchdown, setting the stage for the 18th-ranked Bulldogs lopsided 63-6 victory over Stephen F. Austin on Saturday night in the season opener.

"That was pretty cool," Moorhead said with a laugh.

"I don't think we could have scripted a better start," Thompson said.

Thompson threw for 364 yards and five touchdowns and also ran for 109 yards and two touchdowns. Moorhead's playbook showed some of the downfield passing prowess he's promised over the past months. The Bulldogs had completions of 53, 84, 27 and 30 yards for touchdowns.

Thompson, a 6-foot-4, 225-pound sophomore, made his second career start. He was pressed into action after senior Nick Fitzgerald was suspended for the season opener for a "violation of team policy" that Moorhead said happened in March.

The Bulldogs appeared unfazed by that bit of adversity and the program won its 14th straight game over an opponent from the Football Championship Subdivision level.

Mississippi State's offense had success from the moment it stepped on the field. The first play was Thompson's short swing pass to Hill, who knifed through Stephen F. Austin's defense and ran nearly untouched for the season-opening score.

Hill said the blocking was nearly perfect.

"I've got the easy part," Hill said. "Just run."

Later in the first quarter, Thompson found a completely uncovered Osirus Mitchell for an 84-yard touchdown, which was the longest pass completion for the Bulldogs in 14 years. Thompson said Mitchell was so open he had to look twice to make sure he wasn't missing a defender.

"It looked like he dropped out of a helicopter back there," Thompson said.

Mississippi State built a 35-3 lead by halftime, gaining 400 total yards. The second half was much less impressive, but by then the outcome wasn't in doubt.

"Great to get our first win and get off on the right foot," Moorhead said. "Thought we did some very good things on offense, defense and special teams. But certainly a lot to clean up moving forward."

Stephen F. Austin made two field goals. The Lumberjacks had 254 total yards. Foster Sawyer was 10 of 27 passing for 147 yards.

**THE TAKEAWAY**

Mississippi State was expected to win big and that's exactly what happened. Thompson made some good throws in his second career start -- though the 13 for 31 completion rate wasn't ideal -- and provides the Bulldogs with some depth at quarterback. Moorhead has already said that Fitzgerald will start next weekend against Kansas State. The defense was good as expected. Montez Sweat had two sacks, one season after leading the SEC with 10 1/2 sacks.

"We're big and we're disruptive," Mississippi State defensive tackle Jeffery Simmons said. "With all that strength and power we're able to drive everyone back."

Stephen F. Austin was overmatched and also had some big coverage busts that led to the lopsided result. The Lumberjacks will hope for better results when they go back to FCS-level play next weekend.

"We gave up some big plays on mental errors," Stephen F. Austin coach Jeff Byrd said. "Anytime you have a quarterback run element like that, it really stretches you. It makes you play assignment football, and we were obviously outmanned."

**A LITTLE INCONSISTENT**

One of the few bad parts of Mississippi State's performance was Thompson's inconsistent throwing accuracy. He opened the second half with eight straight incompletions. Moorhead said that's something that needs to be fixed, but the good news is he was making the correct reads.

"It was a right church, wrong pew thing," Moorhead said.

|              |           |           |           |           |           |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Final</b> | <b>1</b>  | <b>2</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>4</b>  | <b>T</b>  |
| <b>SFA</b>   | <b>0</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>3</b>  | <b>0</b>  | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>MSST</b>  | <b>21</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>63</b> |

**Scoring Summary** -----

|  | SFA | MSST |
|--|-----|------|
| <b>FIRST QUARTER</b>   |     |      |
| TD 13:10<br>Kylin Hill 53 Yd pass from Keytaon Thompson (Jace Christmann Kick)     | 0   | 7    |
| 1 play, 53 yards, 0:00   |     |      |
| TD 5:29<br>Keytaon Thompson 9 Yd Run (Jace Christmann Kick)                        | 0   | 14   |
| 5 plays, 19 yards, 2:46  |     |      |
| TD 3:44<br>Osirus Mitchell 84 Yd pass from Keytaon Thompson (Jace Christmann Kick) | 0   | 21   |
| 1 play, 84 yards, 0:00   |     |      |
| <b>SECOND QUARTER</b>  |     |      |
| FG 13:01<br>Storm Ruiz 36 Yd Field Goal  | 3   | 21   |
| 15 plays, 63 yards, 5:33   |     |      |
| TD 9:53<br>Aeris Williams 27 Yd pass from Keytaon Thompson (Jace Christmann Kick)  | 3   | 28   |
| 9 plays, 65 yards, 3:08  |     |      |
| TD 1:01<br>Dontea Jones 17 Yd pass from Keytaon Thompson (Jace Christmann Kick)    | 3   | 35   |
| 13 plays, 91 yards, 4:55   |     |      |
| <b>THIRD QUARTER</b>   |     |      |
| FG 6:55<br>Storm Ruiz 33 Yd Field Goal   | 6   | 35   |
| 8 plays, 47 yards, 2:03  |     |      |
| TD 6:03<br>Osirus Mitchell 30 Yd pass from Keytaon Thompson (Jordan Lawless Kick)  | 6   | 42   |
| 3 plays, 40 yards, 0:00  |     |      |
| TD 2:06<br>Kylin Hill 6 Yd Run (Jace Christmann Kick)                              | 6   | 49   |
| 5 plays, 66 yards, 2:28  |     |      |
| <b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>  |     |      |
| TD 14:50<br>Keytaon Thompson 25 Yd Run (Jordan Lawless Kick)                       | 6   | 56   |
| 2 plays, 48 yards, 0:00  |     |      |
| TD 1:37<br>Dontavian Lee 5 Yd Run (Jordan Lawless Kick)                            | 6   | 63   |
| 8 plays, 57 yards, 4:46  |     |      |

| Team Stats        | SF    | MSU   |
|-------------------|-------|-------|
| First Downs       | 16    | 25    |
| Total Yards       | 254   | 618   |
| Total Plays       | 78    | 71    |
| Avg Gain Per Play | 3.3   | 8.7   |
| Net Yards Rushing | 77    | 220   |
| Rushes            | 41    | 37    |
| Yards Per Rush    | 1.9   | 5.9   |
| Net Yards Passing | 177   | 398   |
| Comp-Att          | 15-37 | 15-34 |
| Yards Per Pass    | 4.8   | 11.7  |
| Times Sacked      | 0     | 4     |
| Yds Lost To Sacks | 0     | -29   |
| Interceptions     | 1     | 0     |
| Punts             | 9     | 3     |
| Punt Average      | 38.4  | 41.0  |
| Penalties         | 9     | 7     |
| Penalty Yards     | 56    | 80    |
| Fumbles           | 1     | 2     |
| Fumbles Lost      | 0     | 0     |

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

| SF                  | Rush | Yds | Avg  | Long | TD |
|---------------------|------|-----|------|------|----|
| 32 Jamall Shaw      | 6    | 31  | 5.2  | 16   | 0  |
| 28 Thomas Hutchings | 3    | 27  | 9.0  | 10   | 0  |
| 29 Josh McGowen     | 5    | 23  | 4.6  | 9    | 0  |
| 25 Jae'Lon Oglesby  | 8    | 22  | 2.8  | 18   | 0  |
| 11 Josh Covey       | 5    | 6   | 1.2  | 6    | 0  |
| 20 Dominic Williams | 10   | -5  | -0.5 | 3    | 0  |
| 12 Foster Sawyer    | 3    | -23 | -7.7 | 0    | 0  |
| Mississippi St.     | Rush | Yds | Avg  | Long | TD |
| 10 Keytaon Thompson | 10   | 109 | 10.9 | 25   | 2  |
| 8 Kylin Hill        | 9    | 50  | 5.6  | 16   | 1  |
| 28 Dontavian Lee    | 6    | 29  | 4.8  | 9    | 1  |
| 14 Jalen Mayden     | 5    | 22  | 4.4  | 14   | 0  |
| 21 Nick Gibson      | 2    | 21  | 10.5 | 20   | 0  |
| 26 Aeris Williams   | 2    | 15  | 7.5  | 10   | 0  |
| 17 Logan Burnett    | 1    | 3   | 3.0  | 3    | 0  |

**PASSING**

| SF                  | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A  | TD | Int | QBRat |
|---------------------|------|-----|-----|------|----|-----|-------|
| 12 Foster Sawyer    | 10   | 27  | 147 | 5.4  | 0  | 0   | 82.8  |
| 11 Josh Covey       | 3    | 4   | 22  | 5.5  | 0  | 0   | 121.2 |
| 10 Jake Blumrick    | 2    | 6   | 8   | 1.3  | 0  | 1   | 11.2  |
| MSST                | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A  | TD | Int | QBRat |
| 10 Keytaon Thompson | 13   | 31  | 364 | 11.7 | 5  | 0   | 193.8 |
| 17 Logan Burnett    | 1    | 1   | 25  | 25.0 | 0  | 0   | 310.0 |
| 14 Jalen Mayden     | 1    | 2   | 9   | 4.5  | 0  | 0   | 87.8  |

**RECEIVING**

| SF                   | Rec | Yds | Avg  | Long | TD |
|----------------------|-----|-----|------|------|----|
| 80 Tamrick Pace      | 5   | 73  | 14.6 | 24   | 0  |
| 87 Allen Arclies III | 2   | 42  | 21.0 | 26   | 0  |
| 5 Terian Goree       | 2   | 31  | 15.5 | 18   | 0  |
| 2 Frank Iheanacho    | 2   | 16  | 8.0  | 11   | 0  |
| 28 Thomas Hutchings  | 1   | 7   | 7.0  | 7    | 0  |
| 89 Bryce Wempa       | 1   | 4   | 4.0  | 4    | 0  |
| 22 Josh Thompson     | 1   | 1   | 1.0  | 1    | 0  |
| Mississippi St.      | Rec | Yds | Avg  | Long | TD |
| 87 Osirus Mitchell   | 2   | 114 | 57.0 | 84   | 2  |
| 8 Kylin Hill         | 1   | 53  | 53.0 | 53   | 1  |
| 1 Stephen Guidry     | 1   | 39  | 39.0 | 39   | 0  |
| 81 Justin Johnson    | 1   | 34  | 34.0 | 34   | 0  |
| 85 Austin Williams   | 2   | 30  | 15.0 | 21   | 0  |
| 26 Aeris Williams    | 1   | 27  | 27.0 | 27   | 1  |
| 3 Devonta Jason      | 1   | 25  | 25.0 | 25   | 0  |
| 23 Keith Mixon       | 2   | 21  | 10.5 | 23   | 0  |
| 4 Dedrick Thomas     | 1   | 20  | 20.0 | 20   | 0  |
| 84 Dontea Jones      | 1   | 17  | 17.0 | 17   | 1  |
| 82 Farrod Green      | 1   | 9   | 9.0  | 9    | 0  |
| 21 Nick Gibson       | 1   | 9   | 9.0  | 9    | 0  |