



**University of Missouri 2026 Transfer Portal Signees
by Danny Heitert, S.T.C. Grid Reports**

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Austin Simmons, QB, 6'4", 215, U of Mississippi, Moore Haven H.S., Moore Haven, FL B+

Austin Simmons, the third of seven brothers, was so advanced scholastically that, although scheduled to graduate in 2025, reclassified academically with Florida's high school association to graduate in 2023 at sixteen years of age. Austin originally committed to play football at U of FLA before flipping to OLE MISS. He also had offers from FLA ST, TN, PENN ST, LOUISVILLE, AUB, ARK, GA TECH, and VANDY. Austin redshirted his first season at Ole Miss with no game appearances. As a redshirt freshman in 2024, Simmons played in 9 games as a backup to Jaxon Dart. Austin moved into the starting role as a redshirt sophomore in 2025 and was 2-0 as a starter. Late in the 2025 second game (vs Kentucky), Simmons injured his left ankle. He was replaced by Trinidad Chambliss (a portal transfer from Div II Ferris State) and never recovered the starting QB position...but did graduate in 2025 (in less than three years at Ole Miss) at nineteen years of age. Austin also was a baseball relief pitcher for Ole Miss in 2024, posting a 2-0 record and a 3.21 ERA with 20 strikeouts over the fourteen innings that he pitched. Simmons' performance in a 2024 game (vs GA) and three 2025 games (against GA ST, KY, and CITADEL) infers a stout and athletic left hander with a fluid stroke. He operates smoothly as a QB, without hurrying, making good decisions when to run... but not always throwing on time. In a QB room of flame throwers (Zollers, Sidwar), Simmons is the alpha dog arm. He exhibits a smooth ground-up energy transfer from his stride to his torque...creating effortless power without forced motions. Austin has a relatively low (2:00) release point, but adjusts it to the available passing lanes. His consistent foot cadence sets up his natural hip-to-shoulder throwing base for repeatable accuracy. Simmons displays suddenness from a compact, tension-free throwing path. Simmons can

counter blitzes with his above average linear burst and change of direction...but shows limited make-you-miss maneuverability. His play faking sells well and meshes with his fine execution of ILB-OLB RPO's (run-pass option plays). Austin's accuracy is very good but, like his decision making, degrades noticeably when hurried. Under duress, Simmons' brashness motivates him to throw into tight-to-closed windows. He throws long on time, with good trajectories, and to the landmarks receivers will arrive at. All Simmons' physical gifts are guided by his cool and calm personality who's default mode is cold blood. With two years of eligibility remaining, this transfer quarterback signifies an understanding that "production over potential" is not inscribed in granite...but a guideline that works well with high school recruiting. Simmons represents smart investment of finite budget resources. He answers the question "Is this a quarterback who (when supported by a dynamic RB corp, a strong TE group, a better than average offensive line, and a developmental group of WR's) can compete well against GA, TEX, TEX A&M, OLE MISS, and OKLA?"

Xai Shaun Edwards, RB,5'9",175, Houston Christian U, Clear Springs H.S., Leauge City, TX B
Proven Outside Zone runner with quickness, contact balance, and scant credibility as a pass protector. Edwards played in a Shotgun Pistol attack that utilized 11 personnel groupings. Xai Shaun runs assertively inside without stalling, gets YAC yardage, and plays bigger than he is. When Edwards encounters a pile up at the point of attack, he seamlessly downshifts and transitions smoothly to a lateral slide prior to restarting efficiently. Linear burst is good, not great. Uses strong lower body, forward lean, and fine contact balance to add two yards to most carries. Because Xai Shaun exhibits little interest in pass protecting, he would have to be either the ball carrier or running a route to see the field for an SEC game.

Caleb Goodie, WR, 6'1", 178, U of Cincinnati, Memorial H.S., Port Arthur, TX B+
Swift, sure-handed wide receiver who was a member of a Cincinnati Bearcat trio that worked so well with standout QB Brendan Sorsby (who transferred to Texas Tech). Goodie is used to the ball arriving on time and in stride. Played in a Shotgun Spread attack that typically utilized 11 personnel groupings. Goodie is a fluid long strider who flashed both stride length and stride frequency. Caleb is a sub 4.4 forty yards guy who creates cushion for himself and space for others. Tenacious stalk blocker who likes to mix it up and wire on perimeter defenders until it hurts. Was an important role player for the balanced Cincinnati offense but is able to handle more of the load.

Horatio Fields, WR, 6'3", 190, Auburn University, New Manchester H.S., Douglasville, GA B+
Experienced, strong, and assertive wide receiver who combines clever body positioning, long arms, and magnetic hands to consistently be "open-when-covered". The 2025 season ended in late September due to a broken foot incurred at practice. With his large catch radius, Fields routinely made the high degree of difficulty catches. Excelled with RPO slants and intermediate depth option route hook ups. Fields is a skilled operator against the boundary with deep fades and comeback routes. Fine contact balance neutralizes much of the rolled up corners' muggings. Linear burst is common, change-of-direction is smooth, and tough yards after catch are guaranteed. Tracks in-air balls very well and snags with the most dominant hands since Donovan Olugbode.

Naeshaun Montgomery, WR, 6'1", 189, University of Florida, Miami Central H.S. Miami, FL B+

Potential home run hitter with excellent quick and burst...but needs some fundamental touch ups of his route running and ball skills. Very elusive and effective escaping line of scrimmage jamming. Montgomery has a fluid running style and frustrates after-catch pursuit with his effective weaving. Lack of route precision too often has him drifting into teammates operating spaces. Ball skills are an assortment of good tracking with in-air ball adjustments...but too often catching ball against his body. If Naeshaun possesses the ball with two yards of space, he can kill you. Very willing stalk blocker.

Josh Atkins, OT, 6'4", 310, Arizona State U, Mansfield Timberview H.S., Arlington, TX B+

"Looks can be deceiving" applies this rising-stock blocker. Despite appearing fleshy and Pro Football Focus total season analytics not regarding Atkins' performance as high caliber...he could potentially be Mizzou's second best blocker if he plays like he did in his four November games. Played in a Shotgun Spread attack that primarily utilized 10 personnel packages. Bends and torques well but tends to be too erect. Other than the snapper, Atkins is the first blocker off the ball. Excellent laterally in-line and in open space. Delivers a decent initial pop, keeps feet alive on contact, and usually gets the runner by. Improved functional strength might be the single characteristic that graduates Atkins from "good-to-very good". Has an excellent initial positioning step, pivots fluidly, but needs improvement with his wide hand positioning. Runs well and nails difficult moving targets. Atkins is such a good pull blocker that Chip Lindsay may stress the Counter more. Very adept at in-line combo blocks up to the linebacker level. In pass protection Atkins sets quickly and can re-set against direction-changing Edge defenders. Mirrors effectively and adjusts to stunt games...including deceptive delayed LB blitzes. If Chip Lindsay continues to establish the Outside Zone as the offense's fundamental run play, Atkins' skill package should allow him to.

Luke Work, OL, 6'6", 315, Mississippi State U, Lausanne Collegiate H.S., Memphis, TN B

Rangy blocker with some initial quickness, decent lateral movement, and consistent effort. Smart guy that identifies targets, but has struggles with upper echelon speed. Would be an acceptable swing guard-tackle option, but offensive line position depth needs to make him the second swing option. Played in a Shotgun Spread that primarily utilized 10 personnel groupings. Technique-conscious guy who bends his knees, sinks hip hips, and uses leverage. Provides quick initial positioning stepping, decent lateral agility, but too often gets off-balance and lunges. Adept at pivoting and guiding over-penetrators out of the play. Struggles pulling and finishing on Counters. It would seem that Work's quickness, lateral movement, and effort could make him an accomplished Outside Zone blocker...but in fact he is inconsistent. Needs more lean muscle mass and functional strength to bring his initial pop along. Luke is a better pass blocker than run blocker at this stage. In pass protection, Work can pass set effectively, play the angles smartly, and mirror most Edge defenders...but uber-fast SEC 5-Techniques make him play catch up. Similar to Mitch Walters at the same stage and before he added mass.

Donta Simpson, DT, 6'3", 300, U of Miami, Chaminade-Madonna H.S., Hollywood, FL B+

Quick and athletic 3-Technique who bends easily, has the functional strength to anchor at the point of attack, and sheds huge Power 4 blocking. Thick but flexible DT who easily dips his hips, gets underneath leverage, and uses his hands well. Uses fine functional strength to disengage, swiftly change-of-directions, and burst to the ball. Good in stunt packages (where Simpson favors the inside "rip" technique to by-pass Guards). Good effort pass rusher who pressures the pocket.

Jaden Jones, DE, 6'5", 257, Florida State, Park Crossing H.S., Montgomery, AL B+

Solid running-down, rotational 5-Technique End who provides revved motor gap control...but not more expansive pursuit or pass rush. Although Florida State utilized Jaden as a boundary defensive end, his physical attributes and skill set fits more closely with Mizzou's field-side DE profile. While Jaden has decent quickness, a good initial pop, and fine functional strength...he is neither a twitchy athlete nor an explosive block shedder. Jones disengages run blocks late and his pass rush is through the blocker...not via an athletic drive by. Best case scenario is that Jones becomes part of a running down rotation...worst case is that he provides decent quality depth.

Robert Woodyard, LB, 6'0", 245, Auburn University, Mount Tabor H.S., Winston Salem, NC B+

Attack-style LB with quickness, striking ability, and range who has the characteristics of an any-down defender. Selected Alabama out of high school (over GA, LSU, & OLE MISS...only to flip to Auburn. Woodyard's breakout path was gradual...gaining additional snaps through successive 2022-204 seasons. Last played for the highly respected defensive coordinator D.J. Durkin. Robert played SAM linebacker (aligning to TE-side) in a base 4-2 scheme exhibiting an excellent burst, nimble stop-start and change-of-direction skills. Good in traffic and terrific in pursuit. Typically selects cautious, inside-out, gap-based paths to ball...but can overrun the ball carrier and be baited by play-action. Keeps blockers from his torso, disconnects well, and fills assigned gap with authority. In zone pass coverage, Woodyard's pattern recognition and break on thrown balls is excellent. Robert hangs well in man coverage and can serve as an effective QB Spy in assorted coverages. Closer to transfer LB Tyron Hopper than Josiah Trotter.

Jahlil Florence, CB, 6'1", 190, U of Oregon, Lincoln H.S., San Diego, CA B+

Fine size, linear speed, and polished technique Cornerback...who did it against Power 4 wide receivers. Late bloomer in high school who gathered 25 plus offers before whittling it down to Lincoln Riley & USC or Dan Lanning & Oregon. Initially stood out in high school as an accomplished basketball player....who then tried track & field as a junior...only to run a 10.7 hundred meters. Started nine games for Oregon from 2022 to 2023 but played in nineteen games. Incurred a torn right meniscus at end of the 2023 season that required him to miss the 2024 season...and not recover the starting corner back position in 2025. Florence is a strong long strider with a smooth back peddle that transitions into an easy turn & run. Jahlil plays competitive man coverage whether aligned with a 7 yard cushion or near the line of scrimmage (and in the receiver's grill). In zone pass coverages Florence showed good pattern recognition and breaks on thrown balls. Receivers would be wise to prepare for a ball possession fight once they "receive" it...because Florence insists on hand-to-hand combat to get it himself. In run support Jahlil arrived fast to physically support perimeter runs and use his long arms effectively to play off stalk blocks. More like Drey Norwood than Toriano Pride.

Kensley Loud-Faustin, CB-FS, 5'11", 183, Auburn U, Naples H.S., Naples, FL B+

Athletic and versatile defensive back, whose zone and man pass coverage skills merit important playing time, but lackadaisical run support argues against it. Kensley spent the majority of his snaps at Auburn as a boundary (sometimes Nickel) corner back...but also spent time as the Free Safety in Cover 2 and Cover 3 alignments. Loud-Faustin seemed to lack scheme leverage awareness while at CB while understanding the correct paths to the ball while playing Safety. His foremost skill currently is taking smart and fast closing paths to the ball. However, Kensley's field range and striking ability are negated by unacceptable tackling and lapsing intensity. Kensley really disadvantages himself by not using arms to wrap up ball carriers. This is a correctable deficiency. If Mizzou coaches can rehabilitate the tackling flaw, they will have a very quick and athletic defensive back with something important to offer.

Elijah Dotson, CB, 6'1", 192, University of Michigan, Belleville H.S., Detroit, Mich B+

Missouri is familiar with losing talented freshman, who have played well in first year part time roles, to the Transfer Portal. Although Dotson was not a starter in any game and played late in most games, he is an athletic and cautious corner back who is not baited easily by play-action. Elijah aligned on the widest receiver away from the tight end...varying his depth from 2-to-8 yards depending on down and distance. He is a cautious zone pass defender who stays as deep as the deepest receiver. Dotson's man coverage is best is described as 80-20...he remains an arms length away from his receiver throughout most of the pattern...but at times allows separation at the end of the route. Elijah's ball skills are excellent and he has no problem with contact while run supporting.

JaDon Blair, Safety-Athlete, 6'5", 205, Notre Dame, Mount Tabor H.S., Winston-Salem, NC B+

Intriguing defensive prospect with athleticism and exciting size potential. Needs to be correctly evaluated for various defensive alignments...either on the back end of the defense...or...on the 2nd level. Played both Free & Strong Safety at Mount Tabor H.S, but stayed at Free Safety for Notre Dame. However, the optimum defensive alignment might be MU's "Star" position (which is akin to the Strong Safety spot). Blair is more quick than fast but plays well in open space. Ja Don demonstrates good diagnostics from wherever he aligns, getting lots of deflections with his long arms. Blair takes good paths to the ball, whether run or pass. His ball skills are much better than you typically find in the defensive backfield. If the initial alignment evaluation is right, Mizzou could have a young, fast, and fluid defender with fine ball skills.