

OLE MISS RECRUITMENT OF TOMASZ GIELO

Spring 2015

A Brief Recruiting Campaign Overview

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TARGET PUBLICS

- Tomasz Gielo is a graduate transfer from Liberty University, he is eligible to play immediately.
- Ole Miss is recruiting Tomasz to play power forward for his final year of eligibility in 2015-2016, and he is the TP for this campaign.

OBJECTIVES

- Convince Tomasz Gielo to go on a visit to Ole Miss.
- Convince Tomasz Gielo to commit to Ole Miss to play in the 2015-16 season.

RESEARCH

- *On-court Player Profile*
 - Gielo is a 6'9" "stretch 4", or a big man that primarily plays from the three point line.
 - Averaged 12.0 PPG on 40% shooting (40% from 3P) in seven games at Liberty in the 2014-15 before a stress fracture in his right foot ended his season.¹
 - In his previous full season, Gielo averaged 10.9 PPG on 46% shooting, including 40% from the 3 point line on 3 attempts per game, along with 6 rebounds per game.
- *Off-court player profile*
 - Gielo is a very strong Christian, and will be mainly recruited by assistant coach Todd Abernethy, who is also a very strong Christian.
 - Gielo is also considering Boise State, and plans to take an official visit there.
 - A native of Szczecin, Poland. Abernethy (primary recruiter) played professional basketball in Poland before moving to coaching.
- *Player Preferences*
 - Tomasz loves Ole Miss guard Stefan Moody, and thinks he will play off him well.
 - Winning now is very important to Gielo.
 - While Gielo is under-the-radar as an NBA prospect, Ole Miss assistant coaches believe he has a chance to make an NBA roster.
- *Comparing Ole Miss to Boise State (primary competition)*
 - Ole Miss de facto starting center Dwight Coleby is transferring to Kansas, forcing Ole Miss forward Sebastian Saiz to move to the center spot, leaving the "4 spot" open for Gielo.

¹ <https://www.liberty.edu/flames/index.cfm?PID=36963&newsID=14084>

- Boise State returns several key players at Gielo's position (James Webb and Nick Duncan are the two leading returning scorers, both at Gielo's primary position.)²
- Ole Miss went 21-13 in 2014-15, including a berth in the 2015 NCAA Tournament, falling in the round of 64 to Xavier.³
- Boise State went 25-9 in previous season, losing to Dayton in the NCAA "first four."⁴
- Ole Miss is a roster is typically filled with International talent. Current roster includes players from Spain and Venezuela. Roster in previous years featured players from Bahamas, Estonia, Australia, and Puerto Rico.
- Boise State's roster features zero returning players from international schools. The previous season's roster featured one player from Australia.
- Ole Miss plays in Southeastern Conference, which has own national television network featured in 90 million homes when it launched in 2014.⁵
- Boise State plays in Mountain West Conference, which has no such network.

STRATEGY

Key Messages

- **START RIGHT AWAY**
 - Ole Miss is in need of a power forward ready to play right away.
 - Gielo only has one year of eligibility left, so it is important for him to receive ample playing time to make most of final year.
 - Primary competition has several players at Gielo's position ready to compete for playing time.
 - Ole Miss has history of success utilizing grad transfers (MJ Rhett and Terence Smith played key roles on 2015 tournament team)
- **STRONG INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE**
 - Ole Miss' roster features several international players, and is a multicultural locker room that has players that know what it is like to be far from home.
- **PLAY WITH MOODY**
 - Stefan Moody is a guard that complements Gielo's play style.
 - Moody was first team All-SEC last year, and lead the Rebels in scoring.
 - Moody will draw in the defense, and provide ample "kick out" opportunities for Gielo to receive open looks from the three point line.
- **READY TO WIN RIGHT NOW**
 - Ole Miss is coming off of an NCAA Tournament berth, 2 of their 3 best players are returning, and have had a winning season in every season since 2006-07.
- **WORLD CLASS STAGE, WORLD-CLASS FACILITIES**

² <https://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/schools/boise-state/2015.html>

³ <https://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/schools/mississippi/2015.html>

⁴ <https://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/boxscores/2015-03-18-boise-state.html>

⁵ https://www.al.com/sports/2015/08/how_the_sec_network_became_a_n.html

- The Southeastern Conference is a “Power 5” conference, featuring some of the premiere talent in the country.
- The SEC sent 5 of their 14 teams to the NCAA Tournament in 2015, and 3 more made the National Invitational Tournament (NIT)
 - Mountain West (Boise State’s conference) only sent 3 teams to NCAA Tournament.
- 10 of 60 picks in 2019 NBA Draft from SEC.
- Home of SEC Network, which is in 90 million homes (mentioned before)
- Ole Miss has a state-of-the-art practice facility, and a \$100M arena opening in January of 2016.

Tactics

- Full on graphic blitz of key messages for Gielo.
 - One graphic every other day emphasizing a KM.
- Phone calls from Abernethy to build relationship.
- Schedule official visit to Ole Miss campus.
- Official visit.
 - Campus tour.
 - Film room session.
 - Meet the coaches and teammates (room with Stefan Moody.)
 - Night on town square.
- NO SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS (at the time) ALLOWED PER NCAA RULES

BUDGET

- Handled by superiors. I do not have access to that information.

TIMELINE

- 4/15/2015: Tomasz Gielo announces departure from Liberty University
 - Todd Abernethy makes initial call to gauge interest
 - Find out he is considering many schools, but Ole Miss and Boise State are top 2
- 4/16/2015: Abernethy meets with Barnhouse to outline key messages (as seen above) for recruitment and how to visualize them.
- 4/17/2015: First graphic emphasizing playing time
- 4/18/2015: Visit scheduled for 4/28/2015
- 4/19/2015: “Eminem graphic” produced (One shot to finish your career, go to a place where you can show off)
- 4/21/2015: Graphic showcasing new basketball arena Gielo could help open
- 4/23/2015: “Transfer U”: Showcase success of previous grad transfers
- 4/25/2015: “Play with Moody” graphic
- 4/27/2015: SEC Network graphic
- 4/28-30/2015: Tomasz Goes on Visit

- 5/1/2015: “thank you for visiting” graphic
- 5/3/2015: “Starting Lineup” graphic
- 5/5/2015: “SEC Competition” graphic
- 5/7/2015: “Pro Rebels” Graphic
- 5/9/2015: Second “Moody” Graphic
- 5/11/2015: “Oxford number one college town” graphic
- 5/13/2015: “SEC Draft Picks” graphic
- 5/15/2015: “You’re our top priority”
- 5/17/2015: “One chance to win” graphic
- 5/18/2015: *Tomasz Gielo Commits to Ole Miss*

Evaluation:

- Tomasz Gielo went on an visit. Objective 1 secured.
- Tomasz Gielo committed to play for Ole Miss. Objective 2 secured.

Most of the time, recruitments of prospective student athletes can last as long as 3-4 years. The graduate transfer cycle often allows only one month of recruitment. That is why it is imperative to organize key messages and tactics so that your program is ready to pitch to a prospect that one may not have time to build a relationship with.

Abernethy’s experience playing in Poland, as well as the Christian connection is something that more than likely helped in his recruitment. However, finding out about Gielo’s faith took research. Other research that influenced key messages included Boise State’s oversaturated front court, as well as key exposure numbers regarding the SEC compared to the Mountain West.

Ole Miss emphasized their positives and took advantage of key connections (such as Abernethy’s playing experience in Poland) to provide strategic messages towards Gielo to help accelerate building the relationship, which ultimately ended in his commitment.

Gielo played the stretch 4 for Ole Miss in the 2015-16 season, overcoming an early injury to average 10.6 PPG, 3.3 RPG on 46% shooting (38% from 3)⁶ in his one year at Ole Miss. Making good on our pitches of being used as a stretch 4, over half of Gielo’s field goal attempts came from the three-point line.

The 2015-16 Ole Miss Rebels had injury struggles with their top 3 players (Gielo, Moody, and Sebastian Saiz), but still finished 20-12. However, the Rebels failed to make the postseason.

⁶ <https://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/schools/mississippi/2016.html>

Gielo played a large role in the 2016 recruitment of Polish national team teammate Dominik Olejniczak, indicating the positive relationship between Ole Miss and Gielo. We used Gielo as an example of successful grad transfers to future grad transfer commits Cullen Neal and Markel Crawford.

Following his Ole Miss career, Tomasz Gielo⁷ signed a summer league deal with the Philadelphia 76ers, and now plays for Iberostar Tenerife⁸ in the Spanish ACB with former Ole Miss teammate Sebastian Saiz.

⁷ <https://thesixersense.com/2016/07/01/philadelphia-76ers-summer-league-adds-tomasz-gielo/>

⁸ <http://www.acb.com/redaccion.php?id=142158>