

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Missouri football's Green-Beckham sets record in win over Kentucky



Missouri receiver Dorial Green-Beckham hauls in his third touchdown catch of the day over Kentucky safety Eric Dixon on Saturday at Commonwealth Stadium in Lexington, Ky. Green-Beckham became the first Tigers' wide receiver to catch 4 touchdowns in a single game. (MISSOURIAN/Kevin Cook)

By [Alexander Smith](#)

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LEXINGTON, Ky. — Dorial Green-Beckham made the game of football look easy on Saturday afternoon, so it's no surprise that afterward, he had an easy answer for a tough question: Can anyone in the country cover him?

“Honestly, not at all,” Green-Beckham said. “I’m a six-six, 230 guy, so that’s just my mindset. I’ve got to go into games thinking, ‘I can’t be stopped.’”

In Missouri’s 48-17 victory over Kentucky, confidence won out.

The true sophomore had by far his best performance as a Tiger on Saturday. A former No. 1 national recruit, Green-Beckham had only one touchdown in his previous five games, but terrorized the Wildcats secondary to the tune of four scores, a new school record.

“It’s an advantage that teams wish they had,” said quarterback Maty Mauk, who tied a school record of his own with five touchdown throws. “It’s kind of scary for a defender to try to match up with a six-six guy that can jump that high.”

How high, exactly? Fans found out in the first quarter, when Green-Beckham followed a 35-yard, one-handed grab with a Randy Moss-like leap for a touchdown in the corner of the end zone.

“When I saw him go up, his hands had to be at least 12 feet in the air,” Mauk said. “It was unbelievable when I saw him go up and get that. I knew he came out and had the mindset that he was going to have a good game.”

The apparent ease of the performance was stunning. Green-Beckham caught just seven passes, but almost every one was a highlight.

The one-handed grab to start the game and the 12-foot ladder climb let the Wildcat defenders know they were in for a beat down.

“There’s a physical mismatch no matter who he’s up against,” coach Gary Pinkel said.

On third-and-10 in the second quarter, Green-Beckham caught a screen and dragged defenders 12 yards for a new set of downs. Later in the drive, Mauk saw his favorite target with one-on-one coverage in the end zone. Despite defensive pass interference, Green-Beckham snagged the ball out of the air for his second score.

“They came out and were playing a lot of man coverage,” offensive coordinator Josh Henson said. “So we just gave him a chance to go up and get it. We talked about it last week: going up to get alley-oops. He did a few times today. It was fun to see.”

The play of the day came in the third quarter. Kentucky blitzed the cornerback on Green-Beckham’s side, which left the safety alone in coverage. Mauk lofted a spiral to the end zone, but it was underthrown. Green-Beckham leaped high and then adjusted. He reached over his defender and trapped the ball against the back of Kentucky safety Eric Dixon's helmet for touchdown No. 3.

His fourth trip to pay dirt — courtesy of a slant route — was the least flashy, but it was still impressive considering he had sprained his ankle in the third quarter. Wearing a protective boot after the game, the offensive star explained his strategy when the ball is in the air.

“I really just forget about the defender,” he said. “I’m thinking about that ball and when it’s going to get there.”

Mauk was still in shock afterward. He recalled a trip down to Springfield, Mo. to see Green-Beckham while both were seniors in high school. They’d never met, but Mauk — then a recent Missouri commit — was visiting his sister and he wanted a glimpse of the nation’s No. 1 football recruit.

“You could just tell when you saw him, the athletic ability he had,” Mauk said. “It was going through my mind all the time: ‘Hey, I’m gonna throw some touchdowns to this guy.’”

Saturday in Lexington, both youngsters wrote their names into the school record book.