

# the 2003 season



49-7	59-13	35-7	17-10	41-6	19-7	33-7	31-7	49-10	27-3	17-14	55-24	34-13	21-14
W	W	W	W	W	L	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
8/30 vs. ULM	9/6 vs. ARI	9/13 vs. WIU	9/20 vs. UGA	9/27 at MSU	10/11 vs. FLA	10/18 at USC	10/25 vs. AUB	11/1 vs. LTU	11/15 at ALA	11/22 at MIS	11/28 vs. ARK	12/6 vs. UGA	1/4/04 vs. OKL

the national champions of college football



# sec champions



## December 6

**Justin Vincent** rushes for an SEC Championship Game record 201 yards in leading LSU to a 34-13 win over Georgia to put the Tigers in the BCS National Championship Game in New Orleans on Jan. 4.

## December 7

It's official... LSU, ranked No. 2 in the BCS standings, will face No. 1-ranked Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl with a shot at the BCS National title on the line.

*"I would like to say how excited we are to have the opportunity to go to the Nokia Sugar Bowl and be in the BCS Championship Game." - LSU coach Nick Saban*

## December 9

Nick Saban, along with offensive tackle **Rodney Reed**, travel to New York for the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame Banquet. Reed is honored as a **National Scholar-Athlete**. Saban learns of his selection as being AP National Coach of the Year.



## December 11

**Nick Saban** named Associated Press National Coach of the Year.

*"Even though I'm accepting the honor, it's for all of the players and coaches and support staff. They all had as big a part in it as I did. I'm very flattered and honored." - LSU coach Nick Saban*

Nick Saban accompanies All-America defensive tackle **Chad Lavalais** to Orlando, Fla., for the ESPN College Football Awards Show. Lavalais is recognized for his spot on the Walter Camp Team.



## December 18

With final exams now over, LSU returns to the practice field as the Tigers begin their preparation for the Sooners.

*"I think you can start preparing for a game too early and I think you can practice too much for a game. I think the thing that you do not want your players to do is getting bored with the preparation or practice too much and then wear them down." - LSU coach Nick Saban*



## December 23

Louisiana Governor-elect **Kathleen Blanco** visits practice, LSU's final workout in Baton Rouge before taking a few days off for Christmas. Blanco addressed the team and was presented a game jersey by team captains **Matt Mauck**, **Michael Clayton** and **Rodney Reed**.



## December 28

With hundreds of fans looking on, **LSU arrives** at the New Orleans Marriott in what resembled a Mardi Gras scene. For the next eight days, the Tigers will call the New Orleans Marriott home as the team will be headquartered at the facility located on Canal Street. After holding their **first practice** in New Orleans, the Tigers relaxed that evening on a **riverboat cruise** aboard the "Creole Queen."



*"It's an honor to be here. I feel good that we took a bus here, because it means that we're only an hour away from home. It's a pleasure to be here, and it's an honor for the state of Louisiana to have its home team playing for the national championship. We've done a lot of things to represent our state well."*

- WR Michael Clayton



## December 29

Despite a 40-minute delay due to Oklahoma's practice running long, LSU finally gets its **first taste of the Superdome** with a two-hour workout at the site of where the National Championship contest will be played. Later that night, LSU players participate in a team function called "**Party at the Dock**".

*"We had a good workout today. We are still looking at several different things on Oklahoma. We know this is a special opportunity and we are going to make the best of it."*

- CB Travis Daniels



## December 30

LSU coach **Nick Saban** meets with **members of the media** at the Hyatt in a formal press conference following practice in the Superdome. Among those people seen at LSU's practice include actor and LSU fan **John Goodman** and former NFL standout **Terrell Buckley**. The Tigers wind down after their third practice in New Orleans with a trip to **Rock-N-Bowl** as players bowled with even a few trying their hand on stage with the band.

*"We're certainly playing a very challenging team in terms of what they do offensively and what kind of skill players they have. Oklahoma certainly does not have many weaknesses. I think our team is the same in a lot of ways in terms of the speed we have, so this should be a great game."*

- LSU coach Nick Saban



## December 31

LSU goes through its fourth workout in New Orleans followed by Tiger offense coordinator Jimbo Fisher, along with five members of the starting lineup on offense, meeting the media at a 2:30 p.m. press conference at the Hyatt. Following LSU's New Year's Eve workout, many members of the squad visited a **local hospital**, bringing LSU gifts to sick children. The children responded by giving each member of the LSU team a personally decorated "**Tiger hat**". There was even one for Coach Saban.

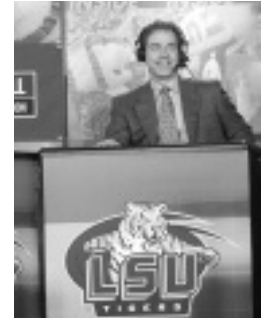
## January 1

LSU ushered in the New Year with a 1:45 practice at the Superdome. The LSU defense gets its turn with the media as coordinator Will Muschamp, along with five defensive standouts, have their press conference at the Hyatt.

*"We had a good week in Baton Rouge before we came to New Orleans and basically, we had 90 percent of our game plan defensively for what we wanted to do, how we wanted to approach the game. We've since polished and hemmed some things up since we've been here."* - **Defensive Coordinator Will Muschamp**

## January 2

It's a busy day for LSU as the Tigers take their **team picture** in the Superdome followed by an hour-long **media session** at the Dome, which was televised live by ESPN News. Then it's off to practice, which is being held 15-minutes away at the New Orleans Saints Practice Facility in Metairie. Among the people in attendance at practice were NFL Hall of Famer and ABC sideline reporter **Lynn Swann**, five-time All-Pro **Kevin Mawae** and New England Patriot **Brian Kinchen**. Later that night, Coach Saban conducts his **radio and television shows** before a live audience at the Sheraton. Saban had one final stop before calling it a day and that was to appear with Terry Bowden and John Saunders on the **ABC set in Jackson Square**. Saban was interviewed at halftime of the Fiesta Bowl.



## January 3

On the eve of the national championship game, the **two head coaches meet** for a joint press conference at the Hyatt at 10:30 a.m. Later that afternoon, the Tigers go through their final on-field preparations for Oklahoma with a closed walk-thru in the Superdome.



## January 4

After 8-days in the Big Easy, it's finally game time as the Tigers and Sooners battle for the BCS National Title at 8 p.m. on ABC. **Jessica Simpson** sings the National Anthem and shortly thereafter LSU leaves little doubt as to who would come out on top as **Justin Vincent** breaks loose on a 64-yard run on the first play of the game.

A defensive struggle for most of the second half, **Marcus Spears'** interception return for a touchdown in the third quarter proves to be the winning points as the Tigers claim their second national title in football, the first in 45 years, with a 21-14 win over Oklahoma. Vincent is named the MVP of the game after rushing for 117 yards and a touchdown. LSU's defense once again rose to the occasion, holding the Sooners potent offensive attack to only 154 total yards, which included just 52 yards on the ground.

*"This is the best team character-wise that I've ever been associated with. I can't tell you how pleased I am that our football team can do something the entire state of Louisiana can be truly proud of."*

- **LSU coach Nick Saban**



# national champions

## January 5

After just a couple hours of sleep, National Champion head coach **Nick Saban** and game MVP **Justin Vincent** address the media in an early morning press conference at the Hyatt.

*"The one thing that I thought about when I woke up this morning was how proud of this football team, the coaching staff and all the people who were associated with this team I am of what they accomplished. But what may go a little unnoticed were the ethical values that this team played with, competed with and set an example for our young people and other competitors. I think that is very important for our sport, and all sports, and I can honestly say that I'm very proud of how this team represented those ethical values on and off the field throughout the season, as well as what they were able to accomplish throughout the season."* - **Nick Saban**

*"When I woke up this morning, I got a phone call from my mom, and when she asked me if this has all set in, I told her that I hadn't really had the chance to look back upon what we accomplished as a team. As far as the season ending, it's been kind of a fairytale season, so many good things happened to us, and nothing surprised me after all the hard work and dedication to the program and the coaches were behind us 100 percent."* - **RB Justin Vincent**



## January 8

The **ADT National Championship Trophy** comes home as the trophy is put on display in the Baton Rouge area for the first time with an appearance at halftime of LSU's women's basketball game against Auburn.



## January 24

It's time to celebrate as LSU fans turn out by the thousands for the **Parade of Champions** in downtown Baton Rouge. In what is believed to be the largest attended parade in the history of Baton Rouge, an estimated 75,000 fans lined the downtown streets to honor the Tigers, who were also joined at the parade by the Southern University football team.



A couple hours later, **25,000 fans** braved a rainy afternoon in Tiger Stadium to once again honor college football's national champions with a ceremony on the LSU campus. The celebration included the presentation of National Coach of the Year trophies to Saban along with the presentation of the Sugar Bowl Trophy, the MacArthur Bowl as well as the ADT National Championship Trophy. The hoisting of the **2003 National Championship flag** in the north endzone capped the activities.



*"When I was a senior in high school, I came to the opening game and the stadium wasn't quite as full and I was a little skeptical where I was going to school. I didn't know where I wanted to go. I was going to go to either Florida State or Miami (Fla.), but I came back to a game when LSU played Tennessee (in 2000). The Tigers won that game in overtime, and I was sitting right up there (pointing) when I saw the 90,000 fans from the stadium charge the field. I knew then that I wanted to be a part of something special. It has been that way since I have been here for three years playing under Coach Saban. It has been an honor, and I speak on behalf of the whole football team in everything we wanted to do, we dedicated to Jeff Boss' family. We were dedicated to success. One of the highlights this season wasn't to win a national championship. That wasn't our goal. Our goal was to play like champions and we did that this year."*

- **WR Michael Clayton**



# the white house



## March 23

LSU and Southern Cal finally meet, however it's not on the gridiron, but in the East Room at the **White House** just prior to taking a picture with **President Bush**.

The Tigers and Trojans were both in Washington D.C. as part of Champions Day at the White House. Among the highlights of the trip for the Tigers was a team picture with President Bush along with the presenting of an LSU national championship jersey by **Rodney Reed** to the President. Before departing Washington D.C., the Tigers toured the Lincoln Memorial.

*"It was great to be here. This was a fantastic experience. This was one of those things that you can't buy. To meet with the President at the White House and to come to Washington D.C. is a great experience and something that this team will remember for the rest of their lives. What makes this special is that it's something that this team earned." - LSU coach Nick Saban*

