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Missouri's women's basketball enjoys creative support from the Mini-Mizzou Band

BY TAYLOR VORTHERMS Dec 17, 2012



Simmons gets support from Mini-Mizzou Band

Kile Brewer

COLUMBIA — At Mizzou Arena, among the fans scattered across the mostly empty stands, one face sticks out.

It's Kyley Simmons.

Her blond curls fall meticulously over her shoulders, her posed smile is unfaltering, and her eyes gaze at the Missouri women's basketball team playing below. Her face is still and plastered to a slab of cardboard about 3-feet high.

Behind the oversized cutout is Mini-Mizzou Band member Tony Eggert.

"These games don't have the most fantastic turnouts," Eggert said. "So I've decided to become a super fan."

Earlier in the season, Eggert printed out the poster of Simmons' face at the Arts & Science computer lab. Since then, Simmons has been present both on the court and with the band.

Why Simmons?

“Because she’s attractive,” Eggert said without pause. “And she’s a pretty good basketball player.”

The 5-foot-7 guard has collected at least one steal in each of Missouri’s past five games, and she ranks third in the Southeastern Conference for her 2.85 assist to turnover ratio.

“I have no idea who he is,” Simmons said, laughing. “The band — they are great supporters. They’re the only ones in our student section half the time.”

With bright lights reflecting off their instruments, band members stand in a block of gold in the bleachers section allotted for students. In Missouri’s game against Southern Illinois on Sunday, Simmons’ face appeared on the big screen. Through a circle cut out over her mouth, Eggert played his mellophone from behind the cardboard poster.

“I don’t know if it was a good idea yet, but it seemed funny at the time,” Eggert said. “Now, there is a permanent hole in the thing. I’ll have to make more posters.”

Eggert and his friends said they plan to make posters of the other Tigers players’ faces to bring to games.

“I just thought it was dumb,” Eggert said. “I didn’t really know anyone noticed it.”

But Simmons did, and the thought of her face waving wildly in the stands triggers a genuine smile not captured in her photo.

“It means a lot,” Simmons said. “Just because they’re holding up my face doesn’t mean they’re just supporting me.”

The Tigers have won their past five games and have scored more than 90 points in the past three. They lead the nation in 3-pointers with an average of 10 made per game.

“People are like ‘oh, women’s basketball — whatever.’ But it’s fun to follow, and they’re doing really well,” Eggert said. “I wish more people would come out and support them.”

Taylor Vortherms