Mistakes Took Heavey Toll On Southern

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Offensive tackle Porter Mitchell picked a terrible time for his first college penalty.
Actually the Southern Mississippi lineman didn't chose the mistake. It came about as a freak accident.
Nevertheless when an official saw Mitchell move too far downfield, an ineligible receiver penalty cost Southern Miss a touchdown in the waning minutes of the first half.
"I just fired out and blocked a guy," moaned the tackle after the game. "I came up and expected the ball to be gone. Then I stood up and saw the quarterback still rolling. The official was starting at me. It was just bad news.
"I hope I can forget it," he added. "That's the first time in college ball I've had a penalty called on me."
Mitchell's mistake cost the Eagles one score, but Coach Bobby Collins' judgement may have hurt the Southern Miss cause even more.

On a fourth and one situation at the Hokie 17, the Eagle coach tasted the flavor of a touchdown over a field goal. But he lost and got no points in return.
"I was surprised early in the game when Southern Miss didn't go for the three points," said Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe.
At least one Eagle joined in the coach's surprise at the decision.
"I was really expecting us to go for the field goal," explained nose guard Thad Dillard. "It really hurt us. Especially on that touchdown when I saw the flag, my heart almost burnt."

But most Southern Miss players agree with their coach's choice.
"I think the first down was most important," argued tailback Ben Garry, "because we needed six points on the board."
Coach Collins, on the other hand, saw the play as an opportunity for ten points.
"If we scored, our chances of getting back into field goal range were good," explained the former Tech defensive backfield coach. "The thing that went through my mind was that we needed ten points."
Collins felt, in his words, "the game of inches," was decided when Tech nabbed a fourth quarter first down on a fake field goal. Within minutes the Hokies scored.
"We cautioned our kids," he said. "Then when we saw the holder (quarterback Mitchell Barnes) we were screaming."
Unfortunately for Collins few players heard his crys. Not even flanker Boo Smith who was on the sidelines, noticed any warning.
"When they had the fake field goal," said the flanker, "I think that's what broke our backs. From the sidelines, I didn't hear the coaches screaming, 'fake field goal.' I wasn't expecting it because that guy (patekicker Paul Engle) could kick it and he had the wind behind him."
But nose guard Dillard agreed with his coach saying, "We were expecting the fake field goal. It was just one of those things."