

## M-CLUB ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SPORTS HALL OF FAME

# JIM (PEANUTS) DAVENPORT

**FOOTBALL: 1952-1954**

*Inducted: April 27, 1968*



Jim (Peanuts) Davenport was one of the greatest if not greatest two sport athlete in the history of Southern Miss athletics. As a standout quarterback and defensive back on the football team and as a second baseman and shortstop on the baseball squad, some of Davenport's accomplishments at the school to this day are still unequalled.

What made Davenport so successful during his football career (lettered in 1952, 1953 & 1954) and his baseball career (lettered in 1952, 1953 & 1954) was his confidence on the field that he could make the play his team would need to win a game, his "riverboat gambler mentality" that allowed him to take charge in difficult situations and the incredible athletic tools that he possessed that left coaches, fans and players alike in awe of the Siluria, Alabama native.

Davenport made his debut with Southern during the 1952 season and as a reserve at quarterback he completed nine of 17 passes for 127 yards and a touchdown. He would also see action that season at

defensive back and as a valuable member of the special teams on a team that would post a 10-2 record and advance to the Sun Bowl in El Paso, Texas, where they would meet The College of the Pacific.

He would move in as an alternate starter during the 1953 campaign, sharing the quarterbacking duties with fellow Hall of Famer Billy Jarrell. Davenport's 1953 statistics would see him complete 35 of 79 passes for a team high 503 yards and four touchdowns. On defense he would rank second on the team in interceptions with three and rank among the team's leading tacklers. He would also punt six times that season for a 30.0 average and connect on four of eight extra points.

That 1953 team with Davenport leading the way would record a 9-2 record and advance for a second straight year to the Sun Bowl, playing Texas-El Paso that season. That team scored 266 points during the regular season and held its opponents to just 85.

1954 would see Davenport sharing the quarterbacking duties with Hall of Famer George Herring and completing 33 of 67 passes for 482 yards and two touchdowns, while leading the team to a 6-4 record. He would make his fourth career interception that season, punt 18 times for a 36.6 yard average and return a couple of kickoffs for a 20.5 yard average.

Davenport would elect to sign a professional baseball contract with the San Francisco Giants following the 1954 campaign and go on to a lengthy career in major league baseball, establishing himself as one of the games best infielders.

At Southern Miss he was a three-year regular on the baseball team, hitting .340 as a freshman and hitting an incredible .439 in his final season in 1954. The final two teams that Davenport played on at Southern Miss combined for a 19-3 record.

Few athletes in the history of Southern Miss have excelled in two sports the way Davenport did and combined with his success on the baseball diamond following his college career; make it easy to see why "Peanuts" earned his spot in the Southern Miss Sports Hall of Fame.

Davenport was inducted into the Mississippi Sports Hall of Fame in 1983.

