Tigers 'put their foot down' to snap 7-game skid, get AAC spot

SPORTS, 1B

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

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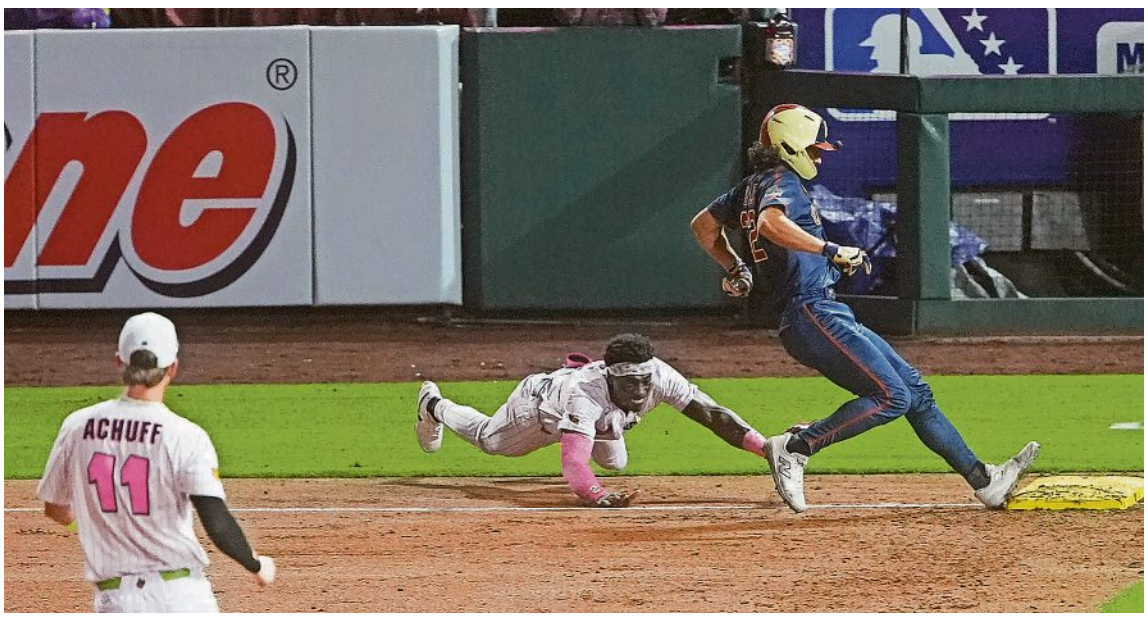
Party Animals players dance with fans to "Swag Surfin" before the Banana Ball game between the Party Animals and the Indianapolis Clowns at AutoZone Park in Memphis on March 7. PHOTOS BY CHRIS DAY/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

Banana Ball takes over AutoZone Park



Clowns' Joe Lytle (22) runs back to second base as Party Animals' Jason Swan (2) dives to try and tag him out during the Banana Ball game between the Party Animals and the Indianapolis Clowns at AutoZone Park in Memphis on March 7.

West TN officials anticipated BlueOval SK layoffs

Corey Davis
Memphis Commercial Appeal
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

West Tennessee officials were not caught off guard by BlueOval SK's decision to trim its workforce months after Korea-based SK On and Ford Motor Co. decided to restructure their U.S. battery manufacturing operation.

Keli McAlister, external affairs director for BlueOval SK, told The Commercial Appeal in an email that 150 positions are being reduced. McAlister added that each team member will receive regular pay and benefits for the next 60 days.

Stanton Mayor Norman Bauer told The Commercial Appeal that during a March 6 morning meeting he, Fayette County Mayor Skip Taylor, Haywood County Mayor David Livingston and Brownsville Mayor Bill Rawls Jr. were all informed by BlueOval SK officials of the pending layoffs, and that none of the officials were shocked.

"None of the four of us were surprised by this announcement," Bauer said."

Bauer said he was not surprised because of the dissolution process under way between Ford and SK ON. The companies reached an agreement in December to restructure their U.S. battery manufacturing joint venture, BlueOval SK. Under the agreement, a Ford subsidiary will take full ownership of the battery plants in Kentucky, while SK On will have full ownership and operate the battery plant in Tennessee.

The agreement is subject to customary regulatory approvals and is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2026.

The dissolution follows the prolonged softness in the EV market and Ford's decision to switch production at BlueOval City to gas-powered trucks rather than the long-anticipated Ford Lightning EV trucks.

Even with some workers being let go, McAlister stated that a core group of employees will be kept to assist with winding down BOSK operations and

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Decision coming soon on xAI permit for Southaven turbines

Neil Strebig
Memphis Commercial Appeal
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

As Elon Musk's artificial intelligence company continues expanding in Memphis and North Mississippi, the company awaits a decision on a permit from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ).

On Feb. 17, the MDEQ held a public hearing regarding an operations permit for 41 turbines at xAI's 2875 Stanton Road power plant in Southaven. MZX Tech LLC, an affiliate of xAI, applied for the application. Arkansas-based Trinity Consultants curated the application on behalf of MZX Tech.

MZX Tech purchased the former Duke Energy site and the surrounding 114 acres on Stanton Road in July 2025. In December, the company purchased an adjacent 104-acre site; the property acquisition included an 810,258-square-foot warehouse at 2400 Stateline Road. In January 2026, xAI and Mississippi elected officials formally announced plans for a third data center at the Stateline Road warehouse called Macrohardrr.

MZX Tech's application for the 41 turbines is for powering its active data center, Colossus 2, at 5420 Tulane Road in Memphis' Whitehaven neighborhood. The Colossus 2 data center is about 200 yards away from the Stateline Road warehouse. Turbines used at the site are expected to power Colossus 2, and the Macrohardrr data center once it is online.

When will MDEQ decide on the permit?

The MDEQ Permit Board is scheduled to meet on March 10 in Jackson, Mississippi. The board will convey and make a final decision on the operations permit.

The Permit Board does have the authority to approve or deny the permit or modify it as neccessary.

The meeting is being held earlier than expected. Following the public hearing on Feb. 17, MDEQ Air Division Chief Jaricus Whitlock said all public comments were to be reviewed and did not expect the Permit Board to meet by

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