

Cries of racism turn lawsuit into another ridiculous mess

Thompson's attorney shouldn't use race card to beat burglary rap

As an avid reader of all news regarding Gamecock sports, it is no surprise that I came across an article in Saturday's issue of The State newspaper concerning subpoenas being issued to football coach Steve Spurrier and his staff. Interested, I read about the foolishness surrounding the case of former football players claiming unfair treatment in the criminal charges filed against them, but it was mention of one trial possibly being thrown out on grounds of racial discrimination that topped them all.

Columbia attorney Miquel Jacobs representing former USC football player Moe Thompson on burglary charges, filed the motion to drop the case based on incomprehensible comparisons that do nothing but cast another dark shadow on the controversial topic of racial discrimination in America.



Miquel Jacobs
third-year public relations student

For those who haven't followed the legal problems of the university, recall the past two events that Pride is basing his motion upon. On Oct. 11, 2004, The Gamecock reported that the ball atop the Maxcy Monument on the Horseshoe had been stolen, similar to a Sept. 15, 1954, prank.

Three days later, the ball was returned without authorities tracking down the culprits and personally telling them the morality in returning the property. Apparently, the USCPD and administration also acknowledged the event as a college prank, probably by what was taken and in its swift return, by dishing out 15 hours of community service to the guilty students.

In the case of Thompson, he and former teammate Kevin Mainord were arrested for allegedly breaking into two apartments in East Quad on Feb. 23 and stealing electronics equipment. Mainord turned himself in shortly after, but Thompson waited six days of his "spring break" before surrendering March 9.

To take the objective view, first consider the similarities and basis of Pride's motion. According to court documents, the incident was a prank that Thompson and several teammates attempted to pull on other players upon returning to East Quad following a night of "celebrating and partying," which seems probable given USC's men's basketball team lost an 80-72 decision to Tennessee just hours before the alleged thefts.

Ben Springer, one of the white students responsible for the Maxcy prank, told The Gamecock on Nov. 12 that at around 2

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CAROLINA FOOTBALL
Offense sputters in scrimmage

Joseph leads defensive dominance in Tuesday night's weather-delayed game simulation

Alex Riley
ASSISTANT SPORTS WRITER

A cloudy skyline and bright-bolted display of lightning weren't the only thing that slowed the USC scrimmage on Tuesday night. Shoddy quarterback play, paired with a strong-headed defensive secondary grounded the Gamecock aerial assault.

"It wasn't real pretty for the offensive guys," football coach Steve Spurrier said. "We'll regroup, watch tape and see if we can get better."

"It was a struggle. The protection wasn't real super, the receivers dropped a bunch, we under threw a bunch, over threw a bunch. Couldn't hold a completion could we?"

The team took the field with the intent of playing a regular scrimmage, practicing as if it were a real game time. But Mother Nature halted progress after just 10 plays, finishing with a 64-yard field goal attempt by freshmen Ryan Succop that failed to split the sticks.

When play resumed after a 55-minute delay, sophomore Blake Mitchell guided the offense to a series of first downs, but failed to finish the drive.

When the first-team offense faced the first-team defense, the results were less than stellar. Sophomore linebacker Mike West had a ball bounce off his chest plate that could have been a defensive score, while defensive lineman senior Chris Tucker came up with a sack.

It took moving the offense inside the 20-yard line before the offense could score, as freshmen Mike Davis punched in the first Gamecock touchdown on a seven-yard run.

Sophomore Travis Lee brought home the second offensive score of the night, hauling in a short pass from Mitchell.

After a few more plays with Davis in the back field, fellow freshmen Bobby Wallace took hold of the running, scoring on consecutive runs around the 10-yard line.

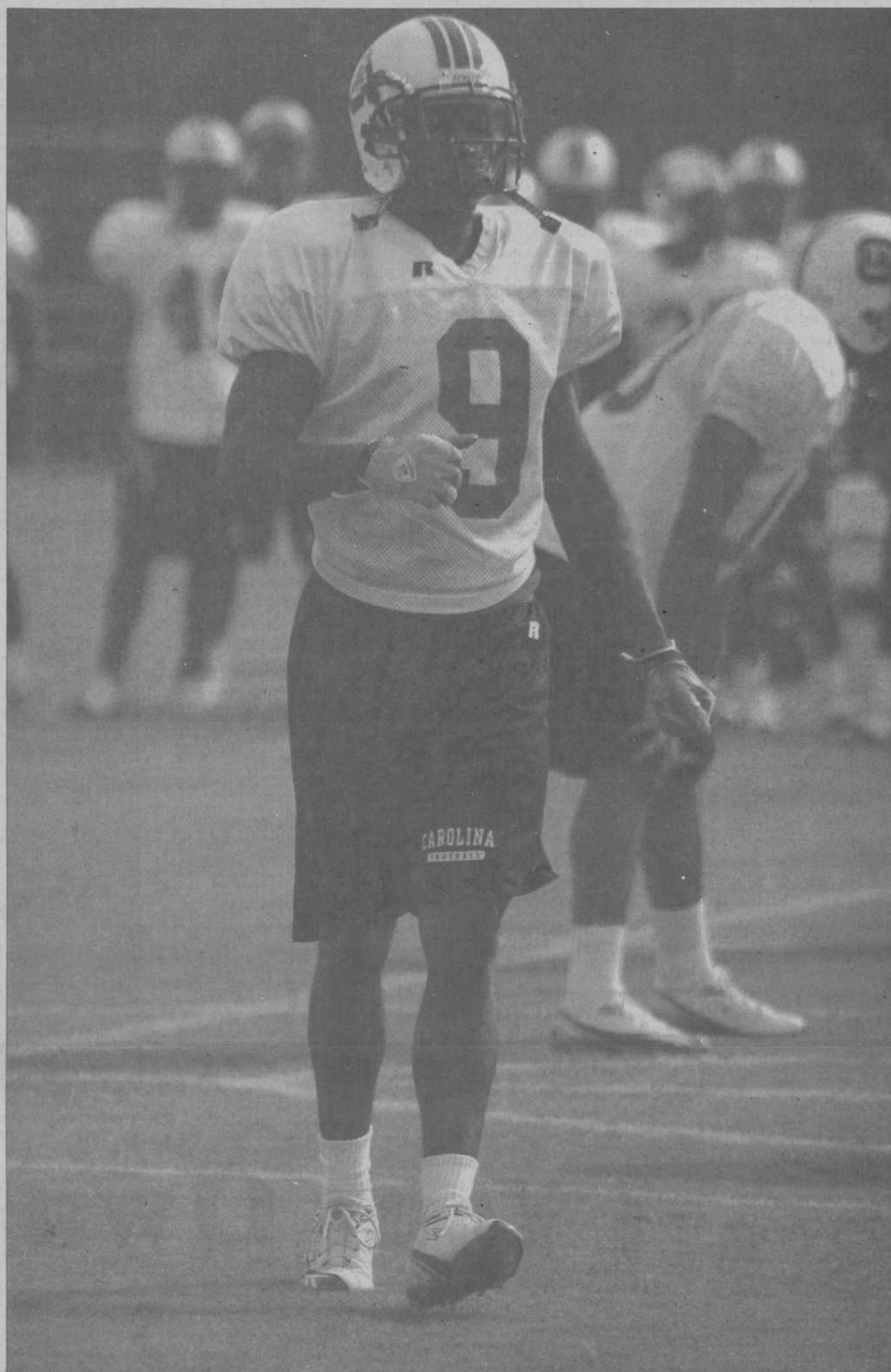
"All I needed was a little hole. I seen it and I hit it," Wallace said.

Mitchell squeezed a touchdown pass to Davis between two defensive backs, while Davis rushed for another score on the next set of downs.

Defense finally took hold, as freshmen Jeremy Ware picked off freshmen Cade Thompson for the first of many interceptions for the secondary over the night.

The next score of the night came from the defensive side of the ball, as sophomore walk-on cornerback Aubrey McKay wrapped his hands around an option pitch from quarterback freshmen Antonio Heffner and returned it 75-yards for a touchdown.

The defensive secondary got its biggest boost of the night from freshmen Jonathan Joseph, who picked off a fade on the first play then proceeded to snag a strike down



Katie Kirkland / THE GAMECOCK

Junior cornerback Jonathan Joseph warms up in a practice earlier this summer. Joseph snagged two interceptions Tuesday.

the middle of the field on the next play, leaving the offense with a bad taste in its mouth.

"We had a bunch of blitzing up front which put a lot of pressure on the quarterback," Joseph said. "And he didn't have much time to get the ball off. So, therefore, we were in position to make a play on the ball and have a chance to get an interception."

Lee hauled in the final offensive score of the night on a tipped pass, closing out a lackluster showing from the offense.

The kicking game showed poise, as freshmen Ryan Succop, senior Josh Brown, and freshmen Jordan Dobbs each hit field goals of 32 and 44, with Brown hitting the only attempt from 50 yards out.

"We won't play like this (in the opener). Hopefully I'm smart enough not to try to throw. If we can't throw we'll run up the middle and punt. And if our defense can play this well, and we can win 13-10 that's what we'll do is try to win."

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@gum.sc.edu

COUNTDOWN TO KICKOFF: 8 DAYS

In a little more than a week, the Steve Spurrier era will officially begin at USC, as the Gamecocks play host to the Central Florida Golden Knights. To provide Carolina fans the most in-depth Gamecock coverage, Gamecock Sports will publish the **Friday Football Blitz**, an in-depth special section released the day before every USC football game. Check out the first installment Aug. 31 for the latest news, statistics, analysis and a full-page action pinup.

Odom's first impression gives basketball positive outlook in 2005-2006



Katie Kirkland / THE GAMECOCK

Senior guard Tarence Kinsey holds off a defender in the Gamecocks' March NIT win against the Georgetown Hoyas.

Jonathan Hillyard
SPORTS EDITOR

USC coach Dave Odom's initial remarks about his 2005-2006 Gamecock basketball team included positive phrases that aren't exactly typical of the fifth-year head coach.

In a news conference, Odom introduced his defending NIT champions, saying, "We've got as much depth on this team, at least on paper, as any team I've coached in quite a while."

The team returns three seniors and five juniors to a squad that finished with another 20-win season in 2005.

"We've got to make it happen," Odom said, "but I think the time is now."

Four newcomers will join the Gamecocks this season, all over 6-feet-5-inches tall. Ousmane Konate, entering USC this season as a sophomore, will provide Carolina with its first true center in recent years.

"He's all of 6-9, 290 (pounds)," Odom

said when describing Konate.

The big man who spent the last year at Redlands Junior College in Oklahoma attended Laurinburg Prep High School in Laurinburg, N.C. According to Scout.com, Konate's high school coach called him the most talented on a team loaded with division I-A prospects.

Joining Konate in the front court will be junior Keving Palacios, who arrives at USC via Eastern Oklahoma State Junior College. At 6 feet 8 inches and 250 pounds, Palacios will provide depth down low behind senior Antoine Tisby, junior Brandon Wallace and Konate. Palacios is a Venezuela native, but attended high school at St. Benedict Sprep in Newark, N.J.

Coming to Columbia by way of Fullerton College in California is junior Bryce Sheldon, projected as a forward. At 6 feet 5 inches, Sheldon will not tower over anyone in the SEC, but his 200-pound build will give him a muscle advantage over much of his competition.

The only guard Odom adds to this year's roster is Augusta, Ga., native Dominique Archie. Odom spoke repeatedly about his expectations from Archie, the Gamecocks' only freshman in 2005-2006. The 6-foot-7-inch guard should see significant playing time in his first year at USC.

However, guard play proved to be a strong point late last season, and Odom has high hopes for his backcourt again this year.

"At the beginning of last year I was hoping Tre Kelley could be a quality SEC guard, but at the end of last year I think he was as good as any guard in our league on any given night," Odom said. "He's ready for that. I have no questions about our guard play."

Returning for USC at point guard is Kelley, who will be joined by seniors Rocky Trice and Tarence Kinsey, as well as sophomores Stephen McDowell and Dwayne Day. McDowell impressed a number of his counterparts this summer

USC BASKETBALL
Newcomers

#5 Dominique Archie
#24 Ousmane Konate
#20 Keving Palacios
#4 Bryce Sheldon

Graphic illustration by Laura-Joyce Gough

in Germany, Odom said, when he averaged 31 points a game on a summer team comprised of numerous SEC and a few Clemson players.

After a strong finish last season, academic eligibility was an issue for now-

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