

# USC readies for Tigers

By KEVIN ADAMS  
Sports editor

USC's offensive production will have to improve for this Saturday's game against the No. 15 Clemson Tigers, Gamecock head coach Joe Morrison said at his weekly press conference Monday.

Morrison was pleased, however, with the play of the defense and special teams in Saturday's 19-8 win over Navy.

"I thought our special teams and certainly our defensive unit played well," Morrison said, "but we're disappointed we didn't get the ball into the end zone offensively. . . . We certainly need to get some production out of our offense this week up there at Death Valley."

The USC offense has produced just one touchdown in the last four games, including two shutout losses.

The passing game, anchored by junior quarterback Todd Ellis, is one area that needs improvement, Morrison said.

"I think we need to probably throw the ball a little bit more effectively than what we did (against Navy)," said Morrison. "We were 16 for 33 and we certainly would like to have a higher completion rate than that. It just seems like we'd move the ball for a little while, and then all of a sudden we'd kind of get out of synch a little bit and we couldn't get much accomplished."

The problems aren't limited to the passing game, though.

"I don't think you can place the blame in any one area," said Morrison. "When you're not moving the ball, you've got trouble all over. We're going to go back and work on all phases of our offense, and we don't have a great deal of time between now and Saturday, but we certainly expect some improvement between now and then. We have to have a good balance going into this ballgame between the run and the pass."

Morrison blamed most of Ellis' recent problems on opponents using man-under, zone-type defenses, which

results in increased pressure on Ellis from the opposing defensive line.

Morrison, however, said Ellis still has his confidence. "I think he's a confident young man," said Morrison. "I don't think there's a great deal of difference (in his confidence level)."

Looking ahead to Saturday's game with Clemson, Morrison said he's concerned with all phases of the Tiger attack.

"Clemson certainly has an excellent football team and they're playing very, very well right now," he said. "Their offense is putting a lot of points on the board, they're rushing the ball very well. Defensively, it looks like they're playing a lot more coverages in passing situations than they have in the past. They're a very solid football team, offensively, defensively, and certainly with their special teams."

This year's game with Clemson will be just as big as it always is, Morrison said, especially considering the two teams' won-loss records.

"It's a big ballgame for both ballclubs," he said. "Both of us are 8-2 and I know our players will be excited about playing and I'm sure their players will be, too."

Morrison said he was proud of this year's team for becoming only the sixth team in school history to win eight games in one season. Three of those teams have been coached by Morrison.

"I told our ballclub last night I was very, very proud of them because they had accomplished something. . . maybe six other teams had accomplished," said Morrison.

"Out of those six, three of them were in '84, '87, and '88," he said. "So some of those young men have been a part of all that. I think they should feel proud of themselves."

Morrison's record against the Tigers is 2-2-1. At Clemson, Morrison is 1-0-1, including a 22-21 win in 1984 and a 21-21 tie in 1986.



USC's junior running back Harold Green gets wrapped up by a Navy defender in Saturday's 19-8 Gamecock victory.

## USC offense not producing

By DAVE KAY  
Staff writer

Although USC won Saturday's contest against Navy, USC head coach Joe Morrison and the offensive coaching staff have a lot of work ahead of them this week.

The offense, which didn't produce any touchdowns against Navy, has scored one touchdown in the last four games. The 19 points scored against Navy came on a blocked punt

returned for a touchdown and four Collin Mackie field goals.

"We're not getting points on the board like we certainly want to," Morrison said. "We are going to take a close look at that tomorrow, and hopefully we will start getting some offensive production and get some points on the board."

The confidence level of quarterback Todd Ellis seems to have dropped over the last few games, resulting in more conservative play calling by offensive coordinator Al Groh, but Morrison doesn't put all the blame on Ellis.

"Well, he had some drops in there too, but I think you've got to keep pitching; you can't give up."

The offense did have its good points. Although two touchdowns — a 24-yard run by Mike Dingle and a 45-yard pass from Ellis to Robert Brooks — were called back, Ellis said the offense showed improvement, except for the penalties.

"I felt much better about the offense," Ellis said. "We had more balance and very few mental errors. It was just a matter of mistakes on the penalty side."

The Gamecocks had several good opportunities to score inside the Navy 20-yard line, but each time Mackie had to be brought on for the field goal. Ellis denied that the problem is a lack of confidence, but said the team is just not executing properly.

"It's not been a case of being inside the 20-yard line; it's been all over the field that we've had trouble moving the ball," Ellis said.

With the offense obviously not producing, the defense and special teams picked up the slack Saturday. Freshman Antonio Walker blocked a punt in the second quarter and also ran it in for the score. It was Walker's first career college touchdown.

"We played up to our potential today," Walker said about the special team's play. "We blocked well, covered well and basically did everything good today. I feel confident the offense will bounce back next week."

The regular season comes to a close this Saturday with the Gamecocks' annual season-ending clash with Clemson.

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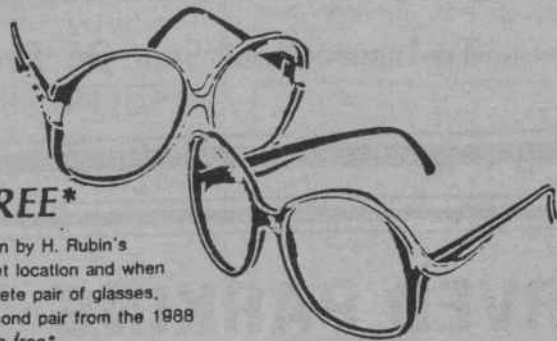
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