

Pep Talk

By Stephen Guilfoyle



Worries of family and home do not hamper play of Rush

It's been a long time since George Rush scored a touchdown.

When he was playing for Stratford High School in Goose Creek in the fall of 1985 was the last time, to be exact.

But he changed that Saturday when he took a Todd Ellis pass and fought his way into the end zone from five yards out.

But Rush was battling more than Georgia Tech defenders to make his first collegiate touchdown.

He wasn't able to prepare for the game with most of his teammates Friday, a day he spent in a car with three other teammates. Rush, along with Ken Farrell, Mike Dingle and Harold Green, were heading to the Lowcountry.

Hurricane Hugo had deposited part of a tree into the extra room of his parent's home.

Margaret Rush, his mother, was alone in the house and was crying when she saw him, Rush said Monday.

George Rush, his father, was working since before the storm hit. He is a technician and mechanic with Santee Cooper, a power cooperative in the Lowcountry.

The younger Rush said his father came back and they, with the help of some neighbors, pushed the tree off the side of the house. He was on top of the house and saw a sight. Bent, broken trees that were the path of the main brunt of Hugo in Stratford.

Rush went because he couldn't get through to his mother after the storm. He found out later that she too was trying to call him.

"The things we saw on the way there . . . we really didn't expect it to be as bad as it was . . . and as we got closer, it got worse," Rush said of his drive down. "We heard it was bad, but . . .

"I saw houses . . . there was a trailer that was destroyed totally; the family was sitting out in the yard, and I was thinking, 'That could be my house,'" he said.

Rush's mother spent the storm in the house, first waiting in one of the hallways and then getting in between the washer and the dryer.

It didn't help his preparation for the game.

"I wasn't sure whether I would be able to perform; I thought I might be too tuckered after . . . we moved that one tree out," Rush said. "I really didn't think I'd be prepared."

They left early Friday morning for Goose Creek. They returned around 10:30 p.m. the same night.

Rush was thinking about the house most of the day, but said, "I forgot about it once the pregame preparations started; I was concentrating on the game plan. I kept coming back to it during the game, thinking it could have been worse."

He made five catches in one game, which is almost a third of the total number he made this past season.

This past season, he made 16 catches for 237 yards, his longest being a 31-yard reception against Virginia Tech. He also returned a kickoff for 24 yards in 1988.

This season, Rush is playing H-back. When USC has one runningback behind Ellis, the offense calls for either two tight ends and two receivers, or two receivers, one tight end and one H-back, who goes in motion across the field before the snap to unbalance the defense, or stays on the line and goes about five or six yards after the snap. He is a possession receiver.

Rush also works on the punt coverage team and has popped the punt returner with a couple of strong hits in the Virginia Tech and Duke games.

In the three previous games, Rush had only caught four passes for 31 yards. Then, one day after seeing how Hugo unmercifully destroyed or damaged his home and others homes, he equals those stats in one game and also scores his first touchdown.

If the Gamecocks need a player of the week, it's George Rush.

He listened to his heart when it told him his place was with his family, then cleared his head of his emotions as best he could and turned in a great performance on the field.

Goff praises speed of Gamecocks

By STEPHEN GUILFOYLE
Staff Writer

During Sparky Woods' weekly press conference, someone remarked that first year Georgia head coach Ray Goff must have learned more than football from his mentor, former Georgia coach Vince Dooley.

From the way Goff talked, one might think that Georgia won't have a prayer when the Gamecocks go down to Athens, Ga., this weekend.

Dooley was always one to talk down his chances, despite the fact that Georgia has always been a traditional power on the national football scene.

" . . . they got Eddie Miller out there, who runs a 4.23/40; we ain't got nobody close to that. Our little ole corners, if they run a 4.6 we'll be lucky," Goff said.

When told that Georgia's offense is ranked 97th among Division I-A schools, Goff asked how many Division I-A schools were in that ranking.

When told there are 105 Division I-A schools, he said, "Well,



Ray Goff

we ain't doing too good then are we? . . . I'm going to have to talk to our offensive coaches about that."

Georgia, he added, has only scored three touchdowns in two games.

One might think Georgia lost those two games, with the way he talks.

But he deemphasized the fact that Georgia's defense has not allowed one touchdown in either of those games and has won both.

"We said at the beginning of the season that we would have to win games with our defense and our

kicking game," he said.

Georgia has done that so far.

The defense is only allowing field goals, and Georgia's placekicker has hit six of them.

One real problem Goff mentioned was injuries. Three Georgia runningbacks, tailback Rodney Hampton and fullbacks Alphonso Ellis and Brian Cleveland, as well as inside linebacker Curt Douglas, have all suffered injuries and their status for the game is questionable.

But other than those four players, Georgia is a healthy team, Goff said.

USC will be the biggest challenge for the Bulldogs this season, he said.

The Gamecocks have a great tailback and a great quarterback and the entire team has great speed, he said.

"I don't know about the depth, but our kids play hard," Goff said.

Goff said he was stunned when he saw the scouting report list that Ellis has attempted about 1,200 passes already this season.

"We ain't thrown 1,200 passes in 25 years," he said. "So you got a great quarterback. And Harold

Green, our scout compared him to a cross between Tim Worley and Rodney Hampton. If he's like both of those two, it's going to be tough."

Baylor wasn't as tough as the Georgia coaches thought they might be, and Mississippi State had a great running attack that Georgia's defense was able to shut down and force, by getting ahead early, into passing more.

He discounted the revenge factor for the game. "I don't think revenge has a dang thing to do with it when you get in there between the lines."

But the Gamecocks upset Georgia this past season 23-10 in what USC quarterback Todd Ellis said was a case of the better team losing to a better executed game plan.

Goff was named head coach of Georgia this past season, when Dooley announced his retirement. He is 2-0 since taking over the Bulldogs.

As a side note, Goff was a former USC assistant head coach who coached USC runningbacks, including Heisman Trophy winner George Rogers.



JULIE BOUCHILLON/The Gamecock

USC runningback Harold Green will be an integral part of the Gamecock offense in their match with Georgia this weekend. Green has averaged 117.5 yards a game this season. . .

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