

Pep Talk

By David Caraviello



Lack of an up-tempo offense reason Price went to Sooners

October 15th has come and gone, so basketball practice among NCAA schools is in full swing.

Over in Carolina Coliseum, the black and white Converse are all laced up, George Felton is convinced he has the worst team in Division I, and Barry Manning and Joe Rhett are already tired from running windprints.

Yet amidst the preseason hype and confusion, something seems to be missing. Something important. Like Brent Price.

Remember him? Short little country kid who ran the point like a well-oiled machine and could shoot like a loaded 12-gauge from three-point land. A great floor leader; what he lacked in speed he made up for in accuracy. He was to be the staple of the Gamecock offensive attack for the next two years.

That is, until this past summer. Brent Price had an excellent chance of following in his brother Mark's footsteps. He would have been an All-American by his senior year. He would have been drafted. And he would have played in the NBA.

But on one warm summer day in Enid, Oklahoma, he decided to give it all up. He would transfer. Price hastily made his decision, packed up and left Columbia, leaving George Felton, his fellow Gamecocks and the state of South Carolina in shock.

But that's old news. What's left for the flabbergasted students of USC to do is to decipher why the Trifecta Kid skipped town.

Everybody's first impulse was to say Price was homesick. The Prices are an extremely tight and religious family, and maybe Brent just couldn't stand being 1,500 miles away from home. It seemed like a perfectly legitimate reason at first, but later on we found it was only the tip of the iceberg.

The answer to Price's departure lay not in Enid, but here in Columbia. As it turns out, Price was unhappy with Felton's offensive strategy. Price wanted a more up-tempo offense so he could shoot more, and he felt Felton's system wasn't geared for a point guard who wanted to shoot a lot.

So he left and transferred to Oklahoma. A team that has no proven point guard and scores nearly 200 points a game. The most up-tempo team in the country.

But the reason Price wanted to shoot more was not because he was selfish. It was because of his brother.

Mark Price is currently an All-Star guard for the Cleveland Cavaliers and was an All-American during his four years at Georgia Tech.

Brent was constantly being compared to Mark in everything he did, so there was a tremendous amount of pressure on Brent to live up to everyone's expectations, which were simple: that he score as many points as Mark. We didn't have Brent Price on our team; we had Mark's little brother.

Mark Price was a prolific scorer and Bobby Cremins built his offense around him. If Mark wanted to shoot, he did. And he scored a lot of points.

So to live up to everyone's expectations, Brent would have to shoot as much as Mark did. Yet he felt Felton's offense wouldn't let him. Also, being as far away from home as he was may have made the pressure that much harder for Brent to handle.

So he transferred to a school with a high-scoring offense in Oklahoma. Brent will sit out a year and return to the hardwood as a senior. And under Billy Tubbs' offensive scheme, he will score points. Lots of them.

Maybe even as many as Mark.

Simian improving with more play

By CHRIS SILVESTRI
Sports Editor

Even for one of the nation's elite college tennis players, it takes a while to get back into the swing of things.

Senior Gamecock tennis player Stephane Simian, of Lyon, France, has competed in three tournaments this school year and says he didn't play well until this past tournament.

"I played in three tournaments," said Simian, who is ranked fifth in the nation among college players. "I didn't do too well in the first two; I lost in the quarterfinals. I played well in the last tournament and reached the semifinals. It took a couple of tournaments to get back on track."

Simian advanced to the semifinals in his most recent tournament in Athens, Ga., before losing in three sets to freshman Jonathan



Stephane Simian

Stark of Stanford. Stark was the U.S. Open Junior Champion this past year.

Simian's next competition will be in the South Carolina Invitational in Columbia this weekend, and because of his recent good play, Simian says he is confident about this tournament.

"The more I'm playing, the better I'm playing, and with the people in Columbia (at this tournament) watching, I want to do really well," Simian said.

With the loss of the number one, three and four members of this past year's highly successful Gamecock squad, a big question facing the men's team for this year is whether they can do as well.

"We lost a whole bunch of experience from last year," Simian said. "But we've got a bunch of new guys coming that should fit into the team well. We'll be a Top 10 team for sure."

Simian, who stands 6 feet, 4 inches tall, tries to use his height to his advantage on the court by playing a serve and volley game.

"Definitely the strongest part of my game is the serve and volley," said Simian, who picked up 42 points in international play this

year and is now ranked 384th in the world. "My net game is pretty much the best part of my game. I still have a little trouble from the baseline, though. I try to compensate for that by coming to the net as much as possible."

Simian and USC head coach Kent DeMars have been trying to improve his baseline game.

"We've been working hard on my consistency from the baseline," Simian said. "Last year when I came here I wasn't a real good player. In the first four months I was here, he (DeMars) helped my game very much. He brings out a lot of confidence in me."

Simian's future goals include entering the professional ranks, but graduating is at the top of the list of his priorities.

"I'm thinking about graduating first and then getting into the pro circuit," Simian said.

Miller's presence key to USC defense

By STEPHEN GUILFOYLE
Staff Writer

There are two noticeable things about USC defensive end Corey Miller at first glance — his arms.

His arms are huge. Standing next to Miller in a contest of impressive biceps, triceps and quadriceps, Miller makes Conan the Barbarian look like a wimp.

Miller is big — 6 feet 2 inches tall, 245 pounds.

He's also strong. This summer, he bench pressed 400 pounds.

On top of all that, Miller is fast.

He makes USC's defense work. It was designed around Miller's unique talents, USC defensive coordinator Rick Whitt said.

"Putting Corey at that spot enables us to play defense the way

we do," Whitt said.

Or, as head coach Sparky Woods puts it, "If Corey got hurt, we'd have to go hunting a totally different way."

The way the Gamecocks hunt is for Miller to contain the tight end, then go after the quarterback. His position requires him to be the Gamecocks' sackmaster, which brings us to his smile. Miller always smiles when he talks about sacks.

In the opener against Duke, Miller had two solo tackles and one quarterback pressure.

But no sacks.

He improved against Virginia Tech, getting one solo tackle, assisting in five more.

But no sacks. In the third game against West

Virginia, Miller again improved, getting five solo tackles, assisting in three others, causing one fumble and sacking Mountaineer quarterback Major Harris, something he said this summer he really wanted to do.

But in that game, it didn't matter. One sack does not a pass rush make, and the USC coaches were saying at that point that if things didn't get better, the season would be bleak for the Gamecocks.

That was before the Georgia Tech game, before the USC coaches made a few adjustments to the defensive schemes.

And the Corey Miller the coaches had praised this summer blossomed.

"He's got the agility and the ability," Whitt had said. "He's big

enough and strong enough so that he won't get knocked off the line, and he's fast enough to get behind the line quick enough to do some damage."

Since the West Virginia game, Miller has come on like a budding Lawrence Taylor, the NFL sackmaster.

He had three solo tackles against Georgia Tech, one tackle for a loss, one assist and one sack. But the rest of the line was helping him out, and USC had its first solid, defensive effort of the season.

Against Georgia, Miller had six solo tackles, one for a loss, assisted in five others, pressured the quarterback twice, recovered one fumble and had two sacks. After Miller got the first sack in that game, USC nose guard Tim High also got two sacks, with another defender adding a fifth.

That's a pass rush.

And the coaches rated his game against East Carolina as his best — five solo tackles, two assists, one tackle for a loss, one fumble caused, four quarterback pressures and two sacks.

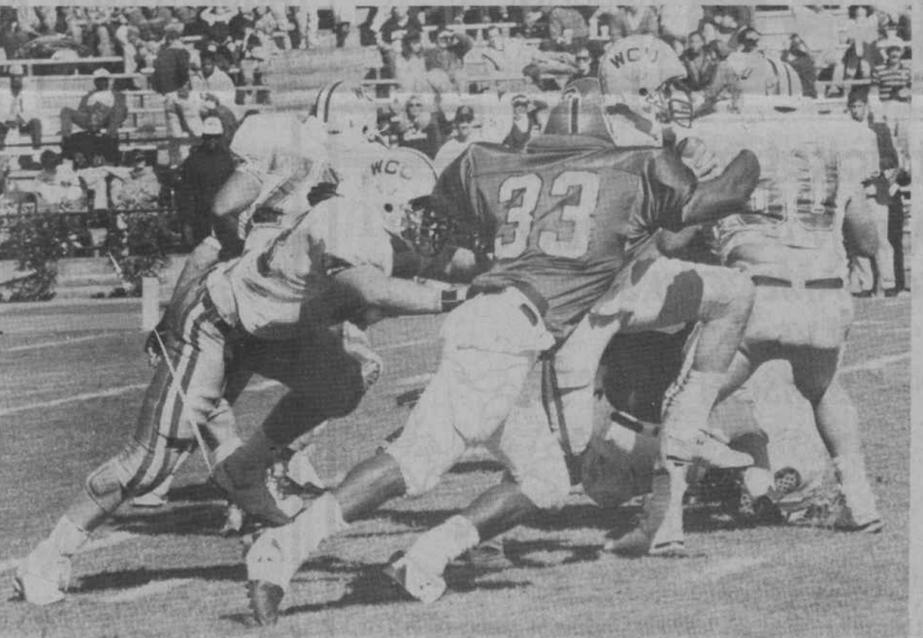
One of those sacks was exciting to watch. Miller jumped through the line and caught the East Carolina quarterback for a major loss.

Miller said he just loves to get behind the line of scrimmage and find the quarterback still clutching the ball. Then he can take those huge arms of his and hurl the quarterback to the ground.

It's a special feeling, he said. "I don't know, with me, my eyes get kind of big because I know a big play is about to happen," he said.

A quarterback notices three things about Corey Miller. First and second, he notices those arms as they hurl him to the ground.

Then the quarterback may or may not notice Miller grinning a slightly disarming grin because he's doing what he does best. What he likes best.



TEDDY LEPP/The Gamecock

USC defensive lineman Corey Miller closes in on one of the Catamounts in this past Saturday's 24-3 victory. Miller and the defense face a stiff test this week when they meet No. 20 N.C. State.

AP Top 25

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Notre Dame (56)	7-0-0	1,496	1
2. Miami, Fla. (3)	6-0-0	1,424	2
3. Colorado (1)	7-0-0	1,379	3
4. Nebraska	7-0-0	1,295	4
5. Michigan	5-1-0	1,234	5
6. Alabama	6-0-0	1,217	10
7. Pittsburgh	5-0-1	1,117	8
8. Illinois	5-1-0	997	13
9. Florida St.	5-2-0	961	14
10. Southern Cal	5-2-0	917	9
11. Tennessee	5-1-0	853	6
12. Houston	5-1-0	814	16
13. Arkansas	5-1-0	683	7
14. Penn St.	5-1-0	651	17
15. West Virginia	5-1-1	612	18
16. Auburn	4-2-0	538	11
17. Arizona	5-2-0	535	22
18. Brigham Young	6-1-0	443	21
19. Florida	6-1-0	436	20
20. N.C. State	6-1-0	313	12
21. Texas A & M	5-2-0	300	23
22. Clemson	6-2-0	266	—
23. Washington St.	6-2-0	246	15
24. Texas	4-2-0	211	—
25. USC	5-1-1	183	24

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