

Gamecocks deserve praise for efforts despite loss against favored Tigers

Although it is never pleasant to lose to Clemson, the Gamecocks can be proud of the effort put forth Saturday against the heavily favored Tiger football team. Rather than dwelling on missed opportunities and "what might have been," USC fans should appreciate the many outstanding performances at Death Valley by players and coaches alike.

● **Mike Dingle** ran the football like a 6-foot-3-inch, 245-pound tailback should. Playing his best game since Virginia Tech, Dingle ran strong and hard throughout. Dingle's touchdown in the fourth quarter was the only one scored against Clemson's defense in Memorial Stadium all season.

● **Ricky Ferguson** blocked a Chris Gardocki punt in the first quarter to set up a Collin Mackie field goal. The blocked punt was the first in Gardocki's Clemson career.

● **Bralyn Bennett** recovered the punt blocked by Ferguson. The ever-hustling Bennett also recovered a blocked punt against N.C. State.

● **Patrick Blackwell** was named USC's outstanding lineman in the game. Blackwell's inspired play set the tone for a rejuvenated Gamecock defense, as he recorded one sack and two tackles for losses.

● **Bobby Fuller** showed his usual cool and courage, enduring several vicious hits and constant

pounding from the Tiger defense. After the game, Clemson linebacker Levon Kirkland praised Fuller's ability to get up time after time after taking hard hits.

● **Leon Harris** was in on six tackles and had USC's only interception.

● **Patrick Hinton**, in his final Clemson game, had ten tackles, two for losses.

● **Leroy Jeter** continued his unselfish play, throwing the key block on Dingle's touchdown run. Jeter never gets any ink, but always plays hard at fullback.

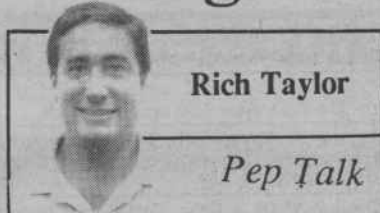
● **Ken Watson** is another fullback whose efforts go virtually unnoticed. Although he gets the ball more than Jeter, blocking is still his greatest contribution. Watson played a nice game Saturday.

● **Shannon Jones** made his presence known on special teams, accounting for three tackles and lots of enthusiasm.

● **Bru Pender**, another special teams force, recovered the ball on Clemson's botched kickoff return.

● **Collin Mackie** kicked three field goals to account for nine of USC's 15 points.

● **Cedric Surratt** played tough at cornerback, making four tackles, one for a loss. He has been USC's best player in the secondary over the past three games.



Rich Taylor

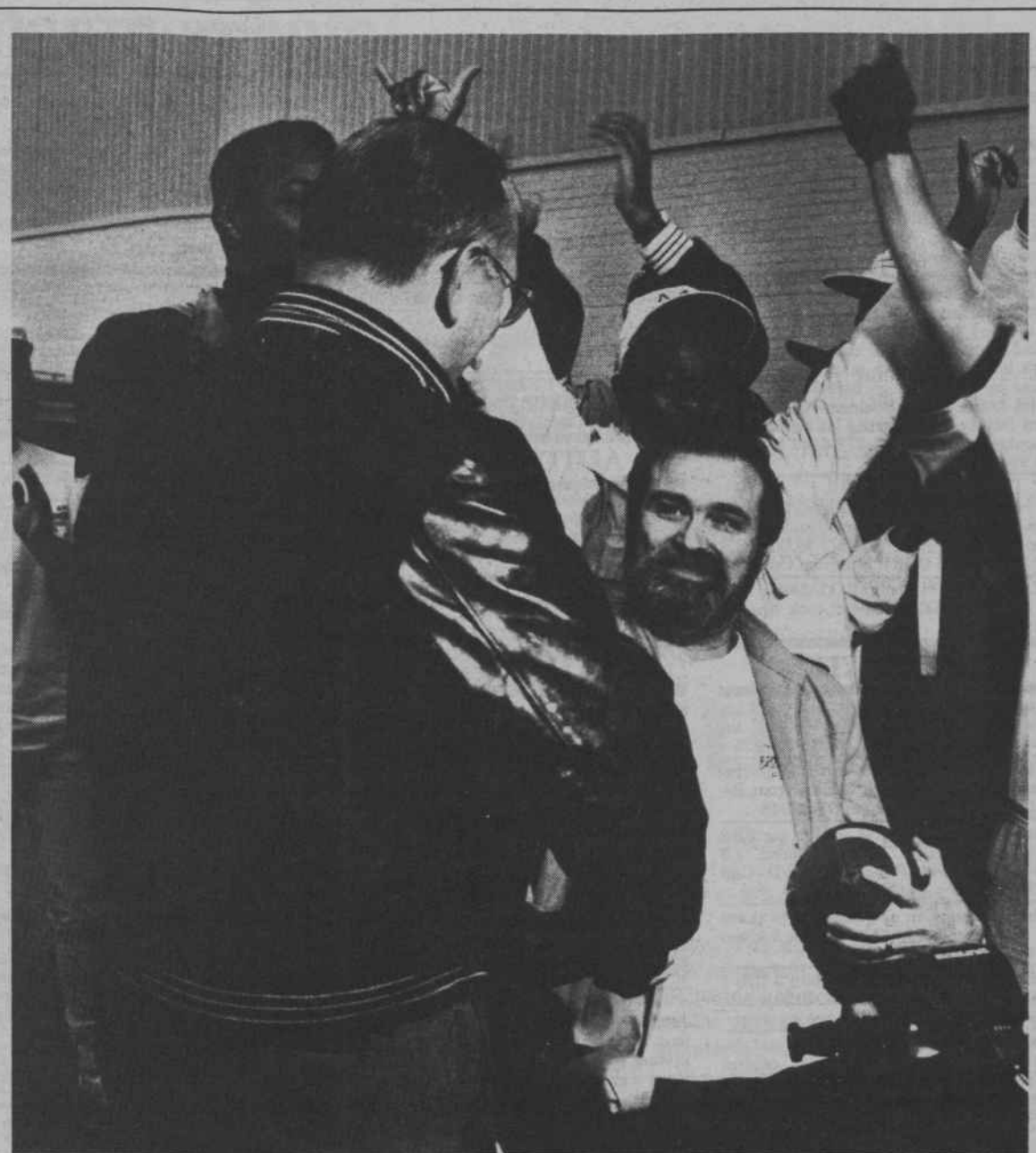
Pep Talk

● **Robert Brooks** caught four passes for 82 yards and returned three kickoffs for 93 more. USC is a different (and lesser) team when he is out of the lineup.

● **Jerry Inman** played a fine game at cornerback. The converted wide receiver has been a great addition to the defensive backfield.

● **Coach Sparky Woods** deserves the greatest praise of all. He added several wrinkles to both the offensive and defensive schemes that helped make a close game out of what many thought would be a blowout. But most importantly, Woods had his players fired-up and believing they would win the game. He and his staff are to be commended for their job in preparing the 'Cocks for Clemson, although they will have to wait one more year for their first win against the Tigers.

The entire Gamecock squad deserves a pat on the back for fighting hard and almost pulling an upset against a superior Clemson team. As Woods said after the game, USC has bridged the gap separating the two teams a year ago. It's only a matter of time before a Clemson win over Carolina will be considered an upset, not a foregone conclusion.



Renee Meyer/The Gamecock

Running for a cause

USC Athletic Director King Dixon hands the USC-Clemson game ball to Bob Bailey of the Multiple Sclerosis Society to begin the Game Ball Run. The brothers of Delta Upsilon and Alpha Phi Alpha fraternities ran the ball from Columbia to Clemson Friday.

Gamecocks fall to Wolfpack in NCAA second round, 3-1

From Staff Reports

The seniors on this year's USC soccer team advanced to the NCAA tournament for the fourth straight year.

But for the fourth straight time, they will return without a national title.

The Gamecocks fell in the second round of the NCAA soccer tournament to ACC champ N.C. State 3-1 Sunday in Raleigh. They end the season at 14-5-2 giving head coach Mark Berson his seventh straight winning season at USC.

The Gamecocks scored first, just over eight minutes into the match. Junior Ruben Tufino, off of an assist from Jeff Love, gave USC an early 1-0 lead over the South Region top seed Wolfpack.

The lead lasted until the 38:28 mark when N.C. State midfielder Dario Brose notched the first of three assists to Alex Sanchez, who scored the equalizer. The game went into the second stanza deadlocked at one.

With less than 25 minutes left, Brose hooked up with Tom Tanner, who scored the first of two goals, to give the Wolfpack a 2-1 lead.

Tanner added an insurance goal at the 79:19 mark off of Brose's third assist to end the Gamecocks' NCAA title hopes.

The Wolfpack victory sets up an All-ACC South Region final. N.C. State awaits the winner of the Virginia-North Carolina match. The winner will advance to the Final Four.

The Gamecocks have four All-America candidates in Clark Brisson (eight goals, eight assists), Andrew Coggins (10 goals, five assists) and defenders Tommy Loeber and Mike Gosselin.



File photo

USC senior Mike Gosselin pursues an Erskine player in last season's 5-2 overtime win. The Gamecocks fell in the second round of the NCAA soccer tournament Sunday to N.C. State 3-1.

Football

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"It was pretty darn big," Hatfield said. "Arlington Nunn comes in there, (it) looked like Brooks was open and Nunn made a diving play to stop it."

The USC defense kept Clemson from marching downfield and dwindling any further time off the clock but Gardocki hit a booming 78-yard punt and the Gamecocks weren't able to muster another offensive threat.

"They (USC) did a good job in establishing their confidence in their game plan. We were very thankful to be ahead when the game ended," Hatfield said.

The win improved the Tigers to

9-2 on the season. After the game, Clemson accepted an invitation to play in the Hall of Fame Bowl in Tampa, Fla., on New Year's Day.

The Gamecocks dropped to 5-5 on the season but get one more chance to rebound with a win as they play host to the West Virginia Mountaineers Thanksgiving night in a nationally televised game on ESPN. A win could give the Gamecocks a shot at playing in the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La., on Dec. 15.

"I think going to any bowl is good if they are still interested in us," Corey Miller said. "We are going to go out and try to win regardless if they are or not."

SPORTS BRIEFS

USC volleyball team falls in Metro

The USC volleyball team was defeated in the first round of the Metro Conference volleyball tournament over the weekend in Louisville, Ky.

The Lady Gamecocks fell to Cincinnati 3-1 on Friday in the first round of the tournament.

USC won the first match 15-8, but the Lady Bearcats rallied for three wins, 15-11, 15-7 and 15-10. It was the second loss to the Bearcats this season. Cincinnati defeated USC 3-1 on Sept. 29.

The Gamecocks end the 1990 season with a record of 23-14.

USC pondering bowl status conflict

The bowl status for USC was still up in the air as *The Gamecock* went to press. The university's decision is based on conflicts with the exam schedule.

Representatives from the Independence Bowl are interested in having USC play in the Dec. 15 game if the Gamecocks beat West Virginia on Thanksgiving night. There is a conflict with the date of the bowl game because it falls in the middle of USC's exam schedule.

USC declined an invitation to play in last year's Independence Bowl for the same reason.

USC Athletic Director King Dixon and Interim President Arthur Smith are considering how many players would have to rearrange exam schedules to play in the game.

A decision was to be made Sunday.

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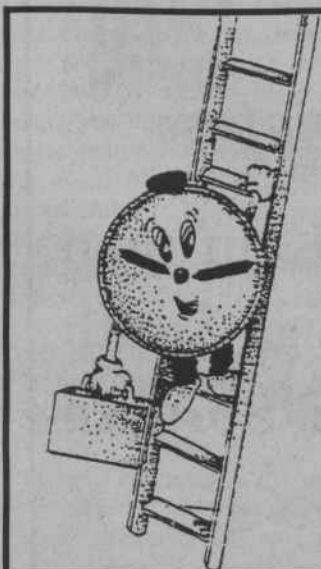
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