

# Sports

## Special teams may give USC profitable 'returns'



This is the third story in a three-part series.  
By ANDREW BORGERT  
Staff Writer

Special teams have always been an overlooked area in football. But thanks, in part, to the heroics of return men like Notre Dame's "Rocket" Ishmail, Michigan's Desmond Howard and Alabama's David Palmer, special teams have changed.

USC has had the luxury of excellent return men in recent years. Both Robert Brooks and Sterling Sharpe were known to rip off an occasional long run on a punt or kickoff.

This season, punt returns will be handled by sophomore Toby Cates and senior Stacy Robinson. Junior

Frank Adams and sophomore Brandon Bennett will take care of the kickoff returns.

Sophomore Marty Simpson will handle the place kicking and punting duties as he takes snaps from newcomer Derrick Gregory, a freshman from Spartanburg.

With all areas of the USC football team examined, it's time to evaluate the opposition for this fall. ■ Georgia is coming off its best season since a fellow named Herschel played there. The difference now is Georgia's excellent passing game. Sophomore Eric Zeier and junior Andre Hastings are among the best passing-receiving combinations in the country, while junior Garrison Hearst provides a quality running back to balance the attack.

■ Arkansas, also rebounding from some previously mediocre seasons, will look to use last year's bowl birth as a springboard for this season. They have quality tight ends



and wide receivers, but their defense must adjust from the pass-oriented Southwest Conference to the running games found in the SEC.

■ East Carolina, last year's Cinderella team, has lost several key players including quarterback Jeff Blake and Head Coach Bill Lewis. Look for the clock to strike midnight this fall.

■ Kentucky, after a disastrous 1991 campaign, has talent at quarterback with sophomore Pookie

Jones. Returning All-SEC kicker Doug Pelfrey also will be returning. With 17 returning starters, the Wildcats should be more competitive.

■ Alabama. Defense, defense, defense. Linebackers abound on this squad, but what's new about that? This could be the best Crimson Tide squad since the national champion team of 1979. Oh yeah, they also have "Rocket" Ishmail clone David Palmer. Ask Colorado about him.

■ Mississippi State was much improved in coach Jackie Sherrill's first year. Senior James "Sleepy" Robinson is an outstanding quarterback, and their defense, ranked fourth in the SEC last year, can be counted on to be good again.

■ Vanderbilt, at one time considered the cream puff of the SEC, is now getting respect, thanks in large part to Coach Gary DiNardo and his option-happy I-bone offense. With quarterback Corey Harris and a sound returning defense, this could be a breakthrough year for the Commodores.

■ Tennessee has lost nine defensive starters and the offensive one-two punch of quarterback Andy Kelly and receiver Carl Pickens, who opted for the NFL after his junior season. This season will feature the running of sophomores James Stewart and Aaron Hayden.

■ Louisiana Tech, who gave USC a shock last year with a 12-12 tie, returns eight offensive starters,

including running back Jason Davis. The Bulldogs also return six defensive starters.

■ Florida is the Big Bad Boy on the Block for USC and the rest of the SEC. There is talent all over this team, starting with quarterback Shane Matthews. Coach Steve Spurrier has to replace defensive tackles Brad Culpepper and Tony McCoy and linebacker Tim Paulk. But overall, this team has tremendous depth and again has enjoyed another great recruiting class. They are the odds-on favorite to win the conference title.

■ Just when you thought the fun was over here comes Clemson. Once again they will be strong defensively and will have a nice running attack with Ronald Williams. There could be a lot more passing in Death Valley this fall with stand-out wide receiver Terry Smith. Of course, who wants to dwell on Clemson right now, anyway?

## Soccer team mixes youth and experience

By ROB RODUSKY  
Assistant Sports Editor

The Gamecock's soccer team is back for the 1992 campaign, and they don't have to prove anything to anyone, according to senior co-captain Chris Crosby.

South Carolina missed out on postseason play in 1991 for the first time in six years despite compiling a 14-5 record. Under the guidance of Head Coach Mark Berson, South Carolina has achieved an outstanding 201-64-22 (.739) mark in the program's 14-year existence.

Missing from last year's squad are five graduated players who compiled a four-year record of 55-17-8 (.738) against the nation's top competition and who participated in three NCAA Tournaments.

With five sophomore starters, South Carolina brings back the nucleus of last year's team. More importantly, the Gamecocks return the experience and talent of 18 lettermen, including senior co-captains Crosby and Ruben Tufino.

"I feel we have a pretty solid framework to build around this year," Berson said.

Up front, the Gamecocks hope to move sophomore Chris Faklaris into a spot vacated by the graduation of Andrew Coggins.

Faklaris was the leading scorer for the U.S. Under-20 National Team. He has tremendous size, 6'3" 175 lbs., and moves extremely well for a big man.

Also returning to the forward position is junior Matt Haiduk. Last year, he scored 19 points on six goals and seven assists.

"Matt is a very dynamic player and is a force. The big obstacle Matt faces is staying healthy," Berson said.

The Gamecocks possess two of the best midfielders in the country in Trufino and sophomore Rob Smith.

"These two are exceptional players and that none in the country can boast as good a two midfielders when they are on top of their

game," Berson said.

On the right flank will be sophomore Bill Baumhoff, who started every match last season.

"He has the versatility to play inside in the midfield and up front," Berson said.

The left side is wide open. Returning lettermen junior Peter Duitsman and junior Bret Kurland will battle for the position.

USC's defensive end seems to be in good shape with most of the positions filled by last year's starters. At stopper, freshman Billy Clifford will get the nod, while junior Helgi Bjorgvinsson anchors the sweeper position.

Berson believes Bjorgvinsson is a dominant player.

"He has tremendous ability on the ground and in the air," Berson said.

Crosby will be the defensive anchor and will handle one of the outside positions, while sophomore Jamie Posnaski will be counted on to play the other side.

The goalkeeper position may be the biggest question mark. Junior David Turner returns with an average of 1.00 saves a game.



Chris Crosby, team co-captain, will have a burden of leadership placed upon his shoulders this soccer season.

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