

Sports

Mitchell quits Williamson to start Saturday



File photo

Senior Wright Mitchell resigned his scholarship with the Gamecock football program. He was 29 for 55 pass attempts and 242 yards with two interceptions.

By **TIM THORSEN**
Sports Editor

Senior Wright Mitchell quit the Gamecock football team after meeting with head coach Sparky Woods Monday night.

Mitchell, USC's starting quarterback since the first week of the season, resigned his scholarship after Woods said redshirt freshman Blake Williamson would be the starting quarterback against Alabama Saturday.

"We talked a long time," Woods told The State. "I tried to make it clear it's not his fault we're 0-4, and that we're trying to get something generated."

"I thought we had a very good conversation. When he left, he told me he didn't know what he was going to do."

Mitchell, who was graduated from USC in May, had one year of NCAA eligibility left and decided

to return to USC.

In his fifth season at USC, Mitchell wanted to become the starting quarterback after backing up former quarterback Bobby Fuller for two years.

"We're disappointed that Wright Mitchell has chose to make this decision," Woods said. "He is an important member of our football team and we wanted him to stay with our program."

"Wright is a fine young man and we wish him the best in all that he does. I would hope that he would continue his education in graduate school."

For the 1992 season, Mitchell completed 29 of 55 passes for 242 yards with two interceptions. In his 14 career games at quarterback, Mitchell completed 53 of 99 passes for 540 yards. He had not been intercepted prior to this year.

Ironically enough, it was Mitchell's second overall intercep-

tion in Saturday's game against Kentucky which led to Williamson's ascension to the starter's spot.

"We believe we need to make a change at quarterback. We've had a difficult time getting the ball into the end zone and we are going to do everything we can to change that in hopes of picking up our offensive production," Woods said.

With Mitchell's resignation, true freshman Steve Tanehill has risen to the number two spot behind Williamson. Eric McDowell, a red shirt sophomore, will be the third-stringer.

In the past four games, Williamson, 6-foot-2 and 190 pounds, completed 11 passes out of 31 attempts for 101 yards. He has thrown for one touchdown, while giving up three interceptions.

He is a former all-state selection from T.L. Hanna High School.

Woods wants TD's, victory

By **ROB RODUSKY**
Assistant Sports Editor

The USC football team is not ready to quit yet, according to Head Coach Sparky Woods.

"They are frustrated and disappointed, but they have maintained a focus and are clinging together," Woods said.

At Monday's weekly press conference at Williams-Brice Stadium, Woods commented on the play of redshirt freshman quarterback Blake Williamson, who came off the bench to replace senior Wright Mitchell.

"He did things well. He made some good decisions. I am impressed with his poise," Woods said.

Mitchell, in a surprise move, quit the team Monday.

Woods also stressed the Gamecocks inability to put the ball in the endzone.

"We must convert on plays we're not converting on. The receivers are not being as elusive and getting open," he said.

The offensive line performance was not satisfying but showed improvement, Woods said.

Woods did offer praise for some areas of the team. "I think the runningbacks ran with the ball hard. The most impressive part was the blocking. Brandon Bennett especially."

Players who were cited for their effective play against Kentucky Saturday were sophomore defensive end David Turnipseed, junior linebacker Eric Brown, senior nose guard Cedric Bembery, outside linebacker Ernest Dixon and freshmen linebackers Eric Sullivan and Benji Young.

Woods said the Gamecocks

are taking a reverse role compared to teams in the past.

"We are effective in the defense, but not in the offense as compared to year's past with (Robert) Brooks and (Eddie) Miller. If I had to choose, I would rather struggle on the offensive side of the ball rather than the defensive."

The Gamecocks will face the ninth-ranked Alabama Crimson Tide this Saturday in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Woods said Alabama's defense, which is ranked first nationally, has impressed him.

"They do have a great defense that allows only 143 yards in total offense," he said. "The key is their team speed. They have great cover people and are hard to trick. They are quicker than Arkansas. Their defense is similar to Clemson's."

Since both teams have trouble scoring, does Woods expect a low scoring affair?

"We must be in the game until the fourth quarter. It is going to be close or they are going to beat us really badly," he said.

Former Clemson coach hired by Razorbacks

Danny Ford moves to Arkansas

By **TONY SANTORI**
Staff Writer

In a surprise move Monday, former Clemson Head Coach Danny Ford was hired by the Arkansas Razorbacks football team as a special assistant coach.

Ford, who led the Tigers to the 1981 National Championship in 1981, will help with the Razorback offensive front. Ford will work under Arkansas interim head coach Joe Kines.

Ironically, Ford and Kines worked together at Clemson in 1977 and 1978. Ford served as offensive line coach while Kines took the helm of the defensive line.

"He (Ford) worked with the offense and I worked with the defense," Kines said. "He had to rebuild the offensive line and said he needed help. I did."

"Sunday, I called him and said I was calling in the chips. I wanted him to return the favor," Kines said.

Kines has guided the Razorbacks to a 1-2 record since the resignation of former coach Jack Crowe, who quit after Arkansas' opening week 10-3 loss to the Citadel.

Kines squad has struggled on offense against both Memphis State and Alabama scoring only 17 points in the two outings. Hence, the call for help went to Ford.

Under Ford's tenure, Clemson won five ACC Championships and ran up an impressive 96-29-4 mark over an 11-year span. His teams also won six bowl games and in went 41 consecutive weeks without leaving the Associated Press Top 20 rankings.

Ford left Clemson amid contro-

versy in 1990 after an NCAA investigation uncovered 14 rules violations and were placed on one-year probation. Ford's name was cleared in the scandal and the remaining five years on his contract were bought out by Clemson at over \$1 million a year.

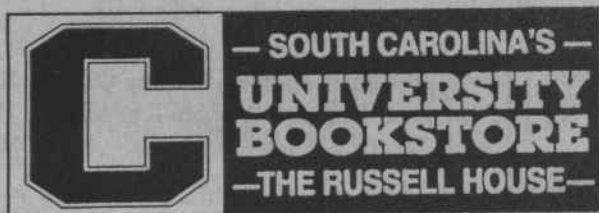
Ford's official title at Arkansas will be Consulting Assistant Coach.

"He's not coming here to coach a position. He's coming to help regain what we've had at Arkansas and what he had at Clemson," Kines said. "He's agreed to be here for the next 10 weeks to help us through the remainder of the football season."

In 1981, Ford was named as National Coach of the Year making him, at 33, the youngest coach ever to receive the honor.

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