

Foundaton set for Gamecocks' future successes



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Columnist

tory over UGA, but it was not to be. Taneyhill threw over the middle to an apparently open Brandon Bennett, but Georgia's Corey Johnson came out of nowhere to pick the pass off, and Georgia won 24-21.

The next week, the Arkansas Razorbacks, complete with country boy Danny Ford, ventured into Williams-Brice Stadium to try to hand Carolina its second straight loss. The fans, undaunted, showed up in droves to witness the contest (71,452).

Defense was the name of the game as the Gamecocks forced four turnovers and blocked two kicks. At the end of the game, coach Brad Scott earned his first victory as Carolina shut out Dippin' Danny's Razorbacks 14-0.

The next week, Carolina made it two in a row with a dominating 31-6 victory. The Cocks overcame a sluggish first half and scored 24 unanswered points in the second half to beat the Bulldogs.

USC made its first road trip of the season in a trip to Lexington, Ky., for a conference clash against the Wildcats of Kentucky. Still haunted by the fourth quarter breakdown of the year before, the Gamecocks were determined not to fall short again.

Carolina, in impressive fashion, came through big time in the critical final quarter, scoring 13 unanswered points. Bennett scampered 29 yards around left end for a touchdown with 13:58 left in the game, and it was all over when Taneyhill connected with Monty Means for a 52-yard touchdown on third and 18 with 3:38 left in the game. Final score: USC 23, UK 9.

In the next game, USC tried to continue its winning ways and newfound fourth quarter succes when it journeyed to Baton Rouge, La., to face the LSU Tigers.

The Tigers were enduring the pain of the previous week's loss to Auburn, in which quarterback Jamie Howard threw around 3,543 interceptions and

Auburn came back to win the game.

In monsoon conditions, Carolina fell behind early but faught hard and was nose to nose with the Tigers late in the game.

With LSU winning 17-12, Stanley Pritcett went in from one to give USC its fourth straight and Brad Scott a great birthday present.

The next week against East Carolina, the dreaded "Chicken Curse" made an unwelcome appearance at Williams-Brice. The Pirates jumped out to an amazing 27-0 lead, and it proved to be impossible for Carolina to overcome.

Carolina closed the gap to 27-21 in the third quarter, and it appeared that Carolina would take over; however, on this day, the Pirates were able to answer every Gamecock rally, as they won 56-42.

The next week, Carolina looked to rebound from the shocker as Mississippi State came into town. With virtually all of USC's defensive line injured, the Bulldogs' mammoth offensive line pounded Carolina's defense, running up 217 rushing yards.

Carolina fell behind in the third quarter, came back and took the lead; however, there was still time for the Bulldogs, and Chris Jones' 26-yard touchdown reception with 1:04 left sent Carolina fans home despondent.

After a much-needed 19-16 win at Vanderbilt, USC returned home for a clash with the Tennessee Volunteers.

In front of 74,200, the Vols put on a clinic, racing to a 24-3 lead to end the first half. Carolina's comeback came up short, and the Vols left town with a 31-22 win.

After an expected loss at Florida, it was time for The Game.

In front of the largest crowd ever to see a football game in the state of South Carolina, the Gamecocks dominated the second half and coasted to a 33-7 victory.

The play of the day (and perhaps the

century) came when Brandon Bennett took the second half kickoff and threw the ball across the field to Reggie Richardson. Richardson bolted 85 yards to the Clemson 6 before being tripped up by his own player.

Bennett took the ball in on the next play, and the rout was on. After the game, thousands of Carolina fans joined players to perform the second annual "Tiger Stomp" at midfield. Mostly assured of a bowl appearance, Carolina fans had reason to party.

On Jan. 2, 1995, history took place in Miami as the South Carolina Gamecocks etched their names forever in the record books by winning the first bowl game in the school's history with an emotional 24-21 win over West Virginia at the Carquest Bowl.

No words are necessary for this one except: Seniors, thank you, for your sacrifices have and will forever continue to bring unlimited successes for USC football.

Well, it would take about four more pages of this newspaper to sum up the rest of the happenings of the USC sports world, but I'll try to put it in a nutshell.

Basically, things are looking up, and that's a vast understatement. Our football and basketball teams are right around the corner, but just as important is the fact that our other sports are reaching pinnacles never reached before.

Our soccer team can teach a lesson or two about tradition, our men's tennis and softball teams are at powerhouse status, and our women's volleyball team is making great strides in the SEC.

Just as we so religiously make the trek to Williams-Brice and Frank McGuire, we must also remember to support the other sports as they work just as hard for their successes.

Well, it's been a pleasure this year, and I truly hope you all have a happy, safe summer. See ya in Athens.

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