

Gamecock offense needs to open up, become less predictable to opposition

SHAWN SINGLETON
new world order

After a short hiding period, the only USC student to be on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list is back with more bitches, gripes and complaints for your viewing pleasure.

And after last Saturday's game, I needed a place to hide away.

My mom called me Sunday to ask, "What's up with the football team?" I replied that I had no clue, but when the fans are calling the plays from the stands, there has got to be something wrong.

The point, and I do have one, is that our team is way too conservative and predictable on offense, and to me, this is the main reason why we're 2-3. By the fourth quarter, I was even calling our offensive plays.

Our offense in the last couple of games has been just that, offensive.

Our defense, which played its hearts out, had four takeaways, and how many points did we gain out of it?

None. In fact, it was negative, because we lost two points on a safety.

On the three possessions that didn't result in the dreaded two-pointer after the turnovers, our first-down plays went as follows — an up-the-middle fullback dive and two swing passes that gained a total of two yards.

Conventional football wisdom tells us that football is played north and south.

You can go east and west until the next millennium, but if you don't go north and south, you won't win.

It also tells us that when your defense gets a turnover, you reward them by going downfield on the first two downs and getting a score, not getting three-and-outs, putting the defense, now frustrated, back on the field.

If you watch teams like Florida, Florida St., Penn St. or Tennessee, when their defense gets turnovers, their offense, smelling blood, goes for the jugular.

Our offense, instead, has given our opponents stays of execution by being

passive in the first two downs, leaving us in third-and-long situations. Now, it's their defense that smells blood.

I can't really blame the players for their offensive ineptitudes.

How about the coaching staff, instead? The players can only run the plays the coaches send from the sidelines.

Memo to Brad Scott — open up the offense, please!

You have to win four of your final six games to finish with a winning record.

Kentucky and Vanderbilt are no longer pushovers, and St. Danny [Ford] always seems to coach best when his teams play us.

This isn't even counting the "Orange Crush" schedule at the end.

This is not an option. Open up the offense, or you may lose that Heinz contract.

Speaking of brainless nimrods, it's about time for me to induct a new member of the Singletonian Hall of Shame with the "U Suck" Award.

The award this week goes to a team that is finally out of the postseason and the fans that have finally shut up because of it.

Yes, I'm talking about the New York Yankees and their fans.

It seems painfully obvious that the Yankees can't win without interference from 12-year-olds or paying off umpires like Rich Garcia.

Bernie Williams' amazing post-season last year was all of a fluke, going 2-19 for the series.

Andy Pettitte showed us that he is not a postseason pitcher for the second straight year. Where was the super-dangerous Tino Martinez in this series?

The truth is, the Yankees were a fluke last season, and all the money and firings that George Steinbrenner could dish out couldn't fix this.

The Marlins are the new "Best Team That Money Can Buy" now.

Kentucky's passing attack concerns Scott

ACHIM HUNT
Coach's Corner

"Well, I thought our football team played hard and competed well against Auburn, especially on the defensive side of the football," Head Football Coach Brad Scott said. "I was impressed with their performance and some of the things that they did in that game. There's no doubt it was a disappointing loss, but it was to a good football team. But, you look at our schedule and we play a lot of good teams. We've got to find a way to play a little bit better."

"Offensively, a lot has been said, but we just are not getting the production there that we certainly expect. And that's our main objective this week. It's to try and develop a little more consistency there, and make a few more first downs to keep some drives alive. I thought that early in the game our

showing on third and short was a big factor in our performance, or lack of performance.

"Defensively, I thought we had our first solid effort against a solid quarterback who can play as good as [Auburn quarterback Dameyune] Craig can play. They spread the field against us pretty well, and we had some good performances out there at some positions. Cecil Caldwell played very well for us out there. Cecil is really helping us with our outside push there."

"I continued to be encouraged by the improvement of our kicking game. I think our special teams were excellent Saturday. Auburn sported one of the best punt and kickoff returners in the conference, and Courtney Leavitt had a great day with an average of over 45 yards per kick. Steve Florio continued his consistency there, and so that's an encouraging sign."

"Looking at our team now, we have six opportunities left this season, and it is my job as head coach to get this football team to make improvements over this second half of the season. We hope that it will begin this week, and yet we have a difficult opponent to play in Kentucky. Not only are they explosive, but they may be the hottest team in the conference. They're playing with a lot of confidence and emotion."

"They really spread that field out a lot, and Tim Couch is a fine quarterback. He throws extremely hard. He gets the ball to his receivers in a hurry, and their offense can throw the ball deep, but they also throw a lot of short, underneath stuff as well. Their running back is real good at running that draw play and catching screen passes."

"They don't always dump the ball off to the running back. Most of the time they run quick-outs to the wide

receivers, and they run the draw play very effectively. But they also throw the ball deep when it's to their advantage. They speed the ball around and move the ball down the field quickly."

"They try to keep you off balance a little bit, as we have to substitute our defensive backs more because they do throw a lot. So we have to be on our toes on defense to be ready to stop their air attack."

"They're coming off, of course, a big win, and there's no doubt that we're catching them at a time when they're playing with a lot of confidence and emotion right now. And that has spilled over to their defense, where now they're playing extremely well and hard. So, we have got a big challenge ahead of us here this week."

North Carolina basketball coach resigns one week before start of practice

ACHIM HUNT Sports Editor

Coach Lebo, a former player of

"As a former player, I'm sad that

olina, but I overwhelmingly support his decision," he said.

can continue the proud tradition of North Carolina basketball.

Coach Smith's retirement is a great loss for the University of North Carolina,

Smith's from 1986-89 was also saddened by the retirement of Smith.

Coach Smith has decided to retire as head basketball coach at North Car-

"As former players, we all feel very confident that Coach [Bill] Guthridge

"We wish him well and hope that now he can see USC play more often.

its basketball program and basketball all in general."

Three years ago, basketball was the only thing to get excited about in the tiny college community of Chapel Hill, N.C.

The University of North Carolina, for the last 36 years, has relied on the expertise of Dean Smith to feed Tar Heel frenzy year-round. As a matter of fact, if Dean Smith had retired three years ago, it would have been a funeral type atmosphere because basketball used to be the heartbeat of UNC.

But with the success of football Head Coach Mack Brown and sophomore All-American defensive back Dre Bly, who was coached by "Big" Lew Johnston of Western Branch High School in Chesapeake, Va., football has gotten a fair share of the Tar Heel faithful's time and energy right now.

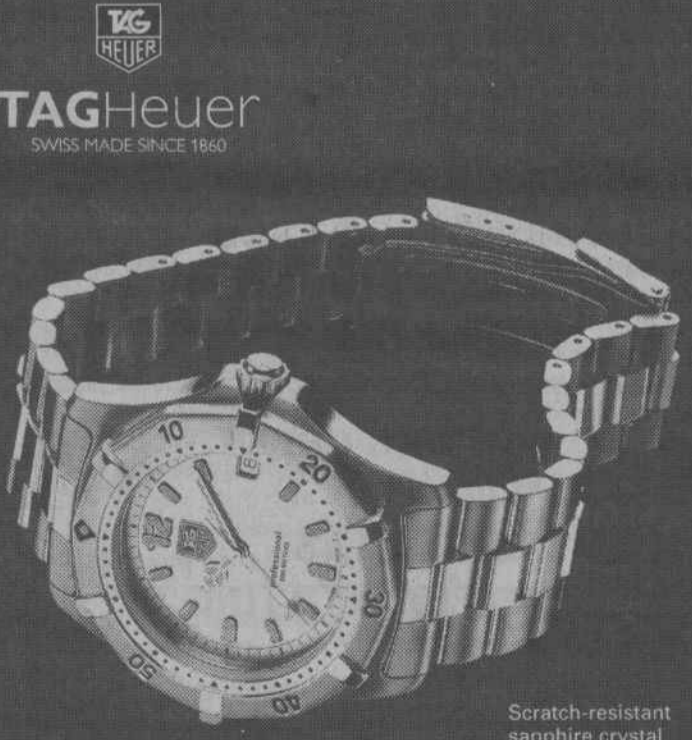
Nonetheless, even the football team's success cannot totally take away the pain of the retirement of Dean Smith.

Last year in the NCAA Tournament, Smith surpassed Kentucky legend Adolf Rupp on the all-time wins list with the Tar Heel's opening-round victory over Fairfield.

The University of South Carolina basketball program has some close ties to the UNC program. Head Coach Eddie Fogler and Assistant Coach Jeff Lebo both graduated from UNC.

"A legend has decided to retire," Fogler said. "The record will speak for itself. It's just incredible. Then factor in an almost perfect graduation rate and an impeccable record within the NCAA, and its mind-boggling."

"Thank you coach. On behalf of all of your players, managers and others who were lucky enough to be part of North Carolina basketball over 36 years as head coach, thank you. We appreciate all you have done for us."



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USC Briefs from staff reports

Rugby

The South Carolina men's rugby squad blanked The Citadel 50-0 Sunday.

In their last two matches, USC has outscored its opponents 84-0 and haven't been scored on in five halves (200 minutes).

Up next for the team is a celebration of the 30th anniversary of USC and Clemson rugby.

In the first match, Carolina alumni will square off against Clemson alumni, followed by South Carolina's match with St. Andrews (N.C.).

Men's Golf

The University of South Carolina men's golf team moved up nine positions and are ranked No. 12 in the latest Mastercard Collegiate Golf Rankings.

Oklahoma St. retained its No. 1 ranking in the polls. Rankings are maintained by the College Golf Foundation.

This move comes after the Gamecock squad opened its season with two successful tournaments last month. Carolina won their first tournament, the Palmetto Classic in Charleston, S.C., and finished a close third to SEC rivals Georgia and Mississippi St. in the Tennessee Tournament of Champions.

This latest poll also marks the debut of freshman Kyle Thompson in the individual rankings. After an impressive playoff victory at the Palmetto Classic and a fourth-place finish at the Tournament of Champions, the Easley, S.C., native ranks 17th nationally.

With a tie for first place at the Palmetto Classic and a Top 10 finish at the Tournament of Champions, sophomore Eric Ecker received 23 votes in the latest poll.

The No. 12 Gamecocks play October 14-15 at the Red River Classic in Dallas, Texas.

Volleyball

The USC volleyball team (11-3, 3-0 SEC), coming off two big wins over SEC Western Division foes last

weekend against LSU and No. 22 Arkansas, face two more Western Division opponents this weekend.

The Bulldogs of Mississippi St. and the Rebels of Ole Miss will come to the Volleyball Competition Facility, otherwise known as "The House that Hudson Built," this weekend as the Gamecocks look to continue their SEC winning streak.

The Gamecocks will look to become 5-0 in the conference for the first time ever.

They face Mississippi St. at 7 p.m. Friday, and they face Mississippi at 2 p.m. Sunday.

Homecoming

This weekend is Homecoming for USC football as they hope to break a two-game losing streak against SEC Eastern Division foe Kentucky.

Head Coach Brad Scott has not fared well in Homecoming games his first three years at the helm of the Gamecocks.

His first year, the Gamecocks lost in Homecoming 56-42 to the East Carolina Pirates, after winning at LSU and improving their record to 4-1.

Scott's second Homecoming game was a little better. The Gamecocks destroyed the hapless Kent Golden Flashes 77-14.

Last year the Gamecocks lost to Mississippi St. 14-10, in a game that served as Carolina's wake-up call last year.

So this week Scott who has had to face some tough opponents on Homecoming here at South Carolina will try to even his record at 2-2 with a big win over a hot Kentucky team that is coming off a big win against SEC power Alabama.

The Wildcats won the game in overtime last weekend in Lexington.

This year's Homecoming game will be just as tough as hot-handed Kentucky quarterback Tim Couch comes to town.

--compiled by Achim Hunt

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