The Gamecock Sports Extra

Clemson looks to dethrone FSU

GAME 11

NOVEMBER 18 AT CLEMSON 1 P.M.

With convincing wins over Virginia and North Carolina in the 1999, the Clemson football team is anything but a surprise team, a title given to them throughout the past year.

Now, they are more of a threat.
Standing as perhaps the Atlantic
Coast Conference's most improved
team, the Clemson Tigers went from a
3-8 regular season record in 1998 to a
6-5 record in 1999. With a second place
finish in the ACC and a Peach Bowl appearance, the Tigers ended their season
in 16th place in the Sagarin poll.

With the return of 17 of 24 starters and 52 letterman, the surprise has been taken out of Tommy Bowden's program. Clemson returns eight starters from an offense that gained 403 yards a game in 1999, the third highest average in school history. Bowden and offensive coordinator Rich Rodriguez will welcome back players who accounted for 90 percent of the rushing yardage, 85

BY SHANNON ROOK
THE GAMECOCK

percent of the offensive touchdowns, 66 percent of total offense and 61 percent of the reception yardage.

Included in the eight will be five offensive starting linemen led by firstteam Academic All-American Kyle



Scott faces his former team in Death Valley this season.

Young and honorable mention All-ACC tackle Akil Smith. Quarterback Brandon Streeter went down with an injury which will keep him from finishing his final year. In his place, Woodrow Dantzler will look to add to his five starts from last season. Dantzler gained 2,094 yards of total offense for the Tigers,

which placed him 30th in the nation for that category in 1999. He also added 588 rushing yards in 146 attempts, with four touchdowns.

Alongside Gardner will be Justin Watts, who started nine of 12 games last year. His 35-yard catch against Virginia helped give Bowden his first win over a top 20 team as Clemson's head coach. Pat Cyrgalis and Jason LeMay will lead the Tigers at the tight end. Cyrgalis made the move from running back to tight end last fall and responded with 12 receptions for 152 yards and two touchdowns.

Defensive Player of the Year by the Atlantic Coast Sportswriters Association. The defensive line will be led by returning second-team All-ACC tackle Terry Jolly. Recording 58 tackles in the 1999 season, with 10 for losses, Jolly is ranked among the top 15 defensive tackles in the nation by the Sporting News.

Alex Ardley will be back on the corner to add to his 62 tackles from last season. First-year sophomore Brian Mance is one of the more inexperienced players on the defense, with only 49 plays under his belt will join him. With years of leadership and a much more experienced team, the Tigers will look towards another improved season.

This time, with no surprises.

FLORIDA

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be junior Gerard Warren alongside seniors Buck Gurley and Derrick Chambers.

"Inside we're a little bit different than a year ago. We feel like we've got some depth, where a year ago we didn't when

we had to go the entire season basically with three guys, sometimes four when we were healthy," said Hoke.

"We moved Derrick Chambers back inside, which is a good move for him. It's probably his most natural position, but we were thin at end last season and had to move him out there. Gerard Warren can be very good inside for us. He and Buck Gurley, who is also back, had fine seasons last year."

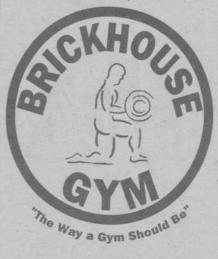
From the linebacker spot, the Gators will be short on experience with the loss of Eugene McCaslin and Keith Kelsey, both who are trying to latch onto NFL teams. But the team's mainstay will continue to be junior Andra Davis who was second in tackles with 109 at middle linebacker.

The tough spot for Spurrier and Co. will be deciding who will play at the offensive guard spots. Vying for action will be senior Leon Hires and juniors Tommy Hillard, Erik Strange and Thomas Moody.

The running game will consist of several athletes, but sophomore Earnest Graham is expected to start the majority of the contests. His lead back will be senior fullback Rod Frazier.

The toughest position for Florida to fill will be at wide receiver. The Gators currently have seven wide receivers on NFL rosters and last year lost their two starters to professional football and one to Olympic track dreams.

Florida will host USC on November 11 at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium at Florida Field in Gainesville. The Gators lead the serious 14-3-3 including wins in the last nine contests. The Gamecocks have never defeated Florida on the road.



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