

Game 1
BOISE STATE
7 p.m., Sept. 1
Columbia, S.C.

Teams are rated from one to five footballs, with one being poor and five being excellent

The Gamecock rates the opposition...

Passing: ●●●●●
Rushing: ●●●●●
Pass Defense: ●●●●●
Run Defense: ●●●●●
Overall: ●●●●●

2001 projected record: 5-7

Nickname: Broncos

Head Coach: Dan Hawkins (st year)

2000 Record: 10-2 (5-0 Big West)

2000 vs. USC: did not play

BY RICK JOHNSTON
THE GAMECOCK

The Gamecocks open the 2001 football season against the Boise State Broncos this Saturday.

The Broncos are in their first year in the Western Athletic Conference. The Broncos moved to the WAC after the Big West Conference stopped sponsoring football.

Over the past two years, Boise State has won 20 games and snagged two straight victories in the Humanitarian Bowl, played at Bronco Stadium, Boise State's home field.

First-year head coach Dan

Hawkins, who spent the last two seasons as an assistant at Boise State, will be leading the Broncos into battle.

Offense

Boise State boasted the best offense in Division I-A last season. However, they will have to replace quarterback Bart Hendricks, the top-rated quarterback in America last year.

Redshirt sophomore Ryan Dinwiddie, who played sparingly in eight games last season, will replace Hendricks. His favorite targets will be Lou Fanucchi and Jay Swillie.

Over the last six games of the 2000 season, Swillie grabbed 26 receptions, totaling 542 yards and four touchdowns. He earned honorable mention Big West All-Conference honors.

Defense

The Broncos return only three starters from a questionable defense that gave up 20 or more points in seven out of their 12 games.

However, one player who is returning is free safety Quintin Mikell, who was named the Big West's co-defensive player of the year after leading the league with

118 tackles last season.

Outlook

Boise State won't win 10 games again this year. The WAC is definitely a step up from the Big West.

The offense will put up some phenomenal numbers if Dinwiddie hits an early stride. If the Bronco running game steps up, then some pressure will be off of the quarterback.

However, the weakness will be the defense. The Broncos will win only in the games where it can outscore the opponent.

Game 2
at GEORGIA
7:30 p.m., Sept. 8
Athens, Ga.



The Gamecock rates the opposition...

Passing: ●●●●●
Rushing: ●●●●●
Pass Defense: ●●●●●
Run Defense: ●●●●●
Overall: ●●●●●

2001 projected record: 7-4

Nickname: Bulldogs

Head Coach: Mark Richt (1st year)

2000 Record: 8-4 (5-3 SEC)

2000 vs. USC: Lost 21-10 in Columbia

BY PRESTON BAINES
THE GAMECOCK

Georgia comes into the 2001 season with a new coaching staff. Mark Richt comes from his post as offensive coordinator at Florida State to try to return the Dawgs to glory.

While UGA has some questions offensively, Richt believes the team can compete for the conference championship.

"I think these guys will really believe we have a chance if we take one game at a time and believe every time. That's not unrealistic, but I'm not going to sit here and predict a championship," Richt said.

Offense

The Dawgs enter the season still unsettled at quarterback. Plenty of promise is seen in red-shirt freshman David Greene and true freshman D.J. Shockley, but the only game experience comes with walk-on junior Cory Phillips. Phillips went 2-2 in the four games he started last year in

the absence of the injured Quincy Carter.

"I like the way David is learning the system. He was very systematic in how he learned it, seeing it going through progressions on films," Richt remarked.

Richt has tabbed Greene as the first-string quarterback, but the others are almost certain to see playing time.

The Bulldogs' running game is a little suspect. Musa Smith, the leading returning rusher, will edge out Jasper Sanks and Kenny Bailey for the top spot on the depth chart. Smith and Sanks each claimed less than 360 yards last season.

UGA's strength on the offensive side lies in the receiving corps. Terrence Edwards and Damien Gary bring the big-play threat at wide receiver. Tight end Randy McMichael also is a crucial part of the Dawgs' passing game, averaging nearly 15 yards per catch last season.

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Senior Will Witherspoon had a career-high 14 tackles against USC last season. SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Game 3
BOWLING GREEN
7 p.m., Sept. 15
Columbia, S.C.

The Gamecock rates the opposition...

Passing: ●●●●●
Rushing: ●●●●●
Pass Defense: ●●●●●
Run Defense: ●●●●●
Overall: ●●●●●

2001 projected record: 3-8

Nickname: Falcons

Head Coach: Urban Meyer (1st year)

2000 Record: 2-9 (2-6 MAC)

2000 vs. USC: did not play

BY RICK JOHNSTON
THE GAMECOCK

Bowling Green State University comes in for a week three contest against the Gamecocks.

The Falcons, out of the Mid-American Conference, will be led by first-year coach Urban Meyer. One of Meyer's previous coaching stops included a stint at Notre Dame under Lou Holtz.

BGSU is coming off a 2-9 season and is looking to improve with some depth on both sides of the ball.

Offense

A quarterback controversy is the first of Meyer's worries. The job is between junior Andy Sahn, who

was last year's starter until he was injured against Toledo, and sophomore Josh Harris, who had to sacrifice his redshirt against Akron when no healthy running backs were left. Harris is more of a running quarterback, while Sahn is a dropback passer.

Meyer also wants to improve the running game drastically.

"It is our goal to have a 1,200-yard rusher in our offensive system," he said. The Falcons will be returning top rusher in senior John Gibson, who last season rushed for 514 yards and four touchdowns.

Defense

The Falcons return nine

starters on defense. However, last season's defense gave up 20 or more points in nine of its 11 games.

A player to watch will be senior defensive back Chad Long, who played in all 11 games last year and came in second in tackles for the team, notching 88 for the season. Long also notched one interception and one fumble last year.

Outlook

Meyer will need to have his wish for a 1,200-yard rusher come true if he wants any chance to win this year, especially with the brewing quarterback controversy.

Defensively, the returning starters have a lot of improvement

to do, but they can't get much worse. It looks to be another long year in Bowling Green.

Opponents 2001
THE GAMECOCK

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Pictured on cover: USC head coach Lou Holtz leads his team onto the field against Georgia