

Football team prepares for spring game

BY CHRIS FOY
THE GAMECOCK

The USC football team held its final practice Tuesday in preparation for Saturday's annual spring game. The team had a two and a half hour workout at Williams-Brice Stadium and the team's practice field.

The main areas of focus were on the kicking game and improving on mistakes made in last Saturday's practice.

The team concluded with a passing-game scrimmage.

The spring game will feature the team's No. 1 offense and No. 2 defense against the rest of the squad. This was done so that the offensive lines and the defensive backfields work together as one unit, according to Holtz.

Holtz was unsure if the team with the No. 1 defense and the No. 2 offense would be given a lead. "The second team said they

didn't want a lead," Holtz said. "We'll have to see what happens."

Holtz believes the two biggest concerns for his team right now are the defensive's inability to stop the run on a consistent basis and the wide receivers' inconsistency in getting open and catching the football.

Of all the positions on the team, Holtz said that wide receiver is the greatest problem.

"We need some players to come through, that's for sure," Holtz said. "Most of the other positions are pretty well set."

As far as the quarterback position goes, Holtz is happy with the progress of No. 1 quarterback Corey Jenkins.

"When Corey makes a mistake now, he recognizes it," Holtz said. "His biggest flaw is that sometimes he doesn't plant his toe properly when he's throwing the ball. Early in the spring, he was treading water thinking he was

going to move to another position. But he's a quarterback, that's for sure."

One problem heading into the game, however, is that the Gamecocks are banged up. Receivers Ryan Brewer, Matthew Thomas and Michael Ages are expected to miss the game because of injuries, and offensive lineman Na'shan Goddard and linebacker Lenny Williams are both listed as questionable.

But, despite the injuries, Holtz wants to treat Saturday like a real game as much as possible.

There will be adjustments, however, as the defense will be limited on the amount of blitzing they will do. There might also be restrictions on the kicking game.

Next season, Holtz would like to have two spring games. One would have the No. 1 squads vs. the No. 2's, and the other would have a team draft.

If you're going ...

WHAT: USC spring game
WHEN: 1 p.m. Wednesday
WHERE: Williams-Brice Stadium
ADMISSION: Free for students with a valid ID.

But for the time being, Holtz is more concerned about getting a quality team together before the season.

"We're not a very good team right now," Holtz said. "But, I didn't think we would be, coming out of spring. We've got a lot of improving to do."

Kickoff on Saturday will be at 1 p.m. at Williams-Brice Stadium. All students will be admitted for free with a valid student ID.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@hotmail.com

S.C. State not waiting on Watson

BY PETE IACOBELLI
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORANGEBURG — South Carolina State coach Buddy Pough doesn't expect to see Derek Watson, one of his former USC players, running the ball next season for the Bulldogs.

Pough said Thursday he had heard reports that Watson, the troubled tailback kicked off the Gamecocks after his arrest for marijuana possession in January, was strongly considering the NFL's supplemental draft in July instead of continuing his college football career.

"That seems to be an idea that's being delivered to him by some mediums," Pough said. "If that were to happen, then I wish him the best of luck under the circumstances."

Talk had been that if Watson could get his academics and other things in order to transfer, he might land at Division I-AA South Carolina State with Pough, his position coach the past three years with the Gamecocks.

Watson could play his senior year without sitting out a season, as he would if he went to an NCAA Division I-A team.

Pough kept the speculation going, stopping in at Watson's trial in Greenville last month to show support. Pough left before a jury of six found Watson guilty of marijuana possession — effectively ending Watson's chances of returning to USC.

Watson was given a 30-day suspended sentence and ordered to perform 240 hours of community service. Watson's attorney, Beattie Ashmore, said he's signed up to fulfill his sentence.

"Right now, Derek's getting a lot of advice about his future and keeping his options open," Ashmore said.

USC coach Lou Holtz, who lured the former South Carolina "Mr. Football" to the Gamecocks instead of Tennessee three years ago, said this week on the statewide radio show, Sports Talk, that when they chatted a couple of weeks ago, Watson was considering the supplemental draft.

Watson has rushed for 1,684 yards and 16 touchdowns the past two seasons.

The NFL supplemental draft is for players who can't return to their college or who missed the deadline to declare for the regular draft.

Pough, in his first season at South Carolina State, said Watson's presence might disrupt bonds he has built with his new team since being hired in December.

"It's a tough thing for us chemistry-wise, too, because I promised the kids when I came in here that I'd give them the chance to carry the load," Pough said. "Especially a guy like Trevin."

Trevin Smith came to USC in 2000 as an all-state tailback from Berkeley High. He played in the backfield his freshman year and was switched to the secondary in the following spring before landing back on offense.



Watson

Stars

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in my career; he was the only coach in college to give me a chance to play out of high school," Everett said. "To see what he saw in me, and to take me along the way he did ... he's the best college coach in America, in my opinion."

The two were reunited at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia, where Tanner was an assistant coach and Everett was the starting shortstop on the U.S. baseball team, which won gold.

Everett's busy schedule means that his medal spends much of the time under lock and key, however.

"My gold medal is in a safety deposit box back home, because I'm traveling right now ... but it stays in a display case whenever I'm at home, because people like to see it," Everett said. "I'm proud of it; it was a great accomplishment for me."

Everett already has endured the time-honored tradition of rookie hazing, which included wearing a Hooters waitress outfit for the duration of a flight from Chicago to Houston.

"It's something I hope everyone gets to experience, because it means you're in the big leagues," he joked.

Even though Everett has emerged as a bona fide major leaguer, he is still a 'lifelong Gamecock at heart.

"I keep in touch with Coach Tanner regularly, and I like to have the bragging rights for the Gamecocks — especially if they're beating Clemson, because that's what I want them to do," he said.

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Baseball

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and one walk to the last 25 batters he has faced.

"I'm pitching pretty good," Spigner said. "The defense is making great plays behind me, and I just want to go out there and contribute."

USC head coach Ray Tanner agreed that Spigner has played well.

He had a "great game tonight; he is pitching well for us," Tanner said. "The last two performances have been great. I feel good about having another guy we can count on."

Carolina now heads to Nashville for a three-game series against conference foe Vanderbilt. The Commodores (15-12, 3-7 SEC) are coming off a 6-5 win against Austin Peay. Vandy dropped three games last weekend against Ole Miss on the road, however, which snapped a

four-game winning streak.

The Commodores are led by first baseman Sean Luellwitz's .342 batting average, six home runs and 28 RBIs.

"They are a quality team and a difficult challenge," Tanner said.

The first game of the series is set for an 8 p.m. start at Hawkins Field.

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BRIEFLY

Track teams win eight events at home

The USC track and field teams came home Wednesday to play host to the 2002 South Carolina State Collegiate Track and Field. The USC men finished second and won five events, while the women finished fourth and won three events.

Corey Taylor had the most impressive showing for USC, as he ran an NCAA provisional qualifying mark of 13.74 seconds in the 110-meter hurdles. Jarred Johnson won the 400-meter hurdles with a time of 52.65. Mark Howell won the men's 3,000-meter steeplechase with a time of 10 minutes, 9.11 seconds.

The USC 100-meter relay team also won with a time of 40.54, and Thomas Lewis won the 400 meters with a time of 48.42.

On the women's side, Heather Nisbet won the javelin competition with a mark of 34.37 meters. Khalilah Carpenter won the 100 with a time of 11.58, and Sheneka Griffin won the 800 meters with a time of 2:18.61.

The Gamecocks will next travel to Knoxville, Tenn., for the Sea Ray Relays.

Third place at stake in SEC tennis match

With a share of third place in the SEC on the line, the 20th-ranked USC women's tennis team plays host to 10th-ranked Tennessee on Sunday afternoon at 1 p.m. The Lady Gamecocks (13-5, 6-3 SEC) trail the Lady Vols by just one match as the SEC regular season winds down.

Following Sunday's match, USC plays just once more — against top-ranked Florida — before opening play in the SEC Tournament from April 18-21. The tournament will be in Columbia.

Tennessee (16-6, 7-2) is coming off a 6-1 loss to Florida. The Lady Vols are just 2-2 in their last four matches.

Carolina, with a win, would record its seventh SEC win. It would mark the fourth time in 11 SEC seasons that the Lady Gamecocks have won at least seven matches.

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