

Game 7 KENTUCKY

7 p.m., Oct. 12
Lexington, Ky.

BY MATT ROTHENBERG
THE GAMECOCK

Last year, Kentucky head coach Guy Morriss inherited a program shackled by NCAA sanctions brought on by his predecessor, Hal Mumme. The only thing that kept the Wildcats out of the basement in the SEC Eastern Division was a victory against Vanderbilt.

But even though Morriss lost 12 starters from last year's 2-9 team, he remains optimistic about the upcoming campaign.



"Everybody talks about sanctions and all the stuff going on," Morriss said. "We can't control it anyway, so we don't waste a lot of time worrying about it."

"If you're an outside observer, all you've been hearing about is the negative stuff going on and all Kentucky football is gloom and doom. Obviously, we don't feel that way. We feel Kentucky football is in as good a shape as it's been in long time."

This year's offense will once again be run by junior quarterback Jared Lorenzen and feature a multiple-set attack. The 290-pound

Lorenzen threw for nearly 2,200 yards and 19 touchdowns in 2001. Receivers Derek Abney and Tommy Cook plan to flourish in the Wildcats passing attack, while leading rusher Artose Pinner comes back for his senior season. Additionally, three of the five starting offensive linemen will return for 2002.

On the defensive side of the ball, Kentucky returns only four starters this fall. However, the Wildcats will regain the services of linebacker Ronnie Riley, who sat out last season with an injury. The secondary, where safety David Johnson and corners Leonard Burrell and Derrick Tatum return, should provide improved pass coverage.

Morriss, though, would like to build his reserves a little more.

"Our depth is a concern," Morriss said. "It's going to be extremely important that we get through the majority of the season healthy. In the secondary, we've got some young kids with ability but not lot of experience. They'll be tested often. If they can hold up and get some confidence, we may be able to get on a roll in our nonconference schedule."

Kentucky opens up with a tough game against Louisville, but it can win a few of its nonconference games. It will be the SEC schedule that will determine the fate of this club, though. The differences for the Wildcats will be Lorenzen's effectiveness on offense and how quickly the defense gels together. Otherwise, UK fans will have a long wait until basketball season starts.

Game 8 LSU

7 p.m., Oct. 19
Baton Rouge, La.

BY J. KEITH ALLEN
THE GAMECOCK

LSU will not be able to sneak up on anybody this year. After winning its last six games in 2001, including a victory in the Sugar Bowl and an upset win over Tennessee in the SEC title game, the Tigers cracked the top 10, and head coach Nick Saban was rumored for every available coaching job in the country.

LSU starts 2002 ranked in every preseason poll, and Saban has posed a challenge to his troops during summer practice.

"We need to make a decision whether we want to be a flash-in-the-pan one 10-win season, or a standard of a nationally recognized dominant program that wins with consistency and does things the right way," Saban said.

The Tigers lost two key offensive players from its historic 2001 campaign — quarterback Rohan Davey and wideout Josh Reed. Sophomore Matt Mauck will take over at quarterback, and his primary job will be to get the ball into the hands



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

LSU's LaBrandon Toefield rushed for nearly 1,000 yards last season.

of star tailback LaBrandon Toefield. Despite tearing an ACL in the SEC championship game, Toefield is healthy, and he has not missed any practice time this summer.

Linebacker Bradie James moves to the middle and will anchor the Tigers defense in 2002. After racking up more than 100 tackles the two previous seasons, James' primary job will be to quell LSU's penchant for giving up big plays on defense. The

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