

Game 9
TENNESSEE
 1 p.m., Nov. 2
 Columbia, S.C.

BY J. KEITH ALLEN
 THE GAMECOCK

One quarter of one game should not define a season, but that is precisely what happened to Tennessee in 2001. The Volunteers were ranked No. 2 in the country and were heavily favored against LSU in the SEC Championship. A victory meant a trip to Pasadena and the chance to play for the national championship in the Rose Bowl. Instead, they collapsed in the fourth quarter, and LSU rallied to win the game, 31-20.

With Steve Spurrier now patrolling NFL sidelines, many pundits are anointing The Vols preseason favorites in the SEC. Head coach Phillip Fulmer is confident despite last season's implosion, and this year's preseason pressure.

"We have a lot of high expectations at our place," Fulmer said. "That doesn't change, but as always, we've got to play the games."

Quarterback Casey Clausen will again lead the Tennessee offense with 20 starts

under his belt. Clausen will look to last year's freshman sensation, wide receiver Kelley Washington, to have another big season in 2002. Washington caught 64 passes for 1,010 yards and five touchdowns last year in his first season in Knoxville.

Fulmer is delighted with Washington's offseason progress, and he projects a bright future for the Vols receiver.

"It's phenomenal what he was able to accomplish last year," Fulmer said. "He has had a great spring and summer; he has some lofty goals set for himself as for what he wants to accomplish after college football."

Despite losing all four starting linemen from 2001, including three players picked in the first three rounds of the NFL Draft, the Volunteers' defense will again be a bright spot this season. Fulmer has replaced his depleted line with seniors, all of whom have already seen significant playing time for Tennessee. The defense will be anchored by linebacker Eddie Moore, who had a team-high 81 tackles in 2001.

The Vols open their season with five games in Knoxville before heading to Athens for a crucial SEC matchup with Georgia on Nov. 12. They come to Columbia on Nov. 2 before a game against defending national champion Miami. Clausen promised he and his Volunteers will not overlook any opponent in 2002, and he feels there will not be a repeat of the LSU game.

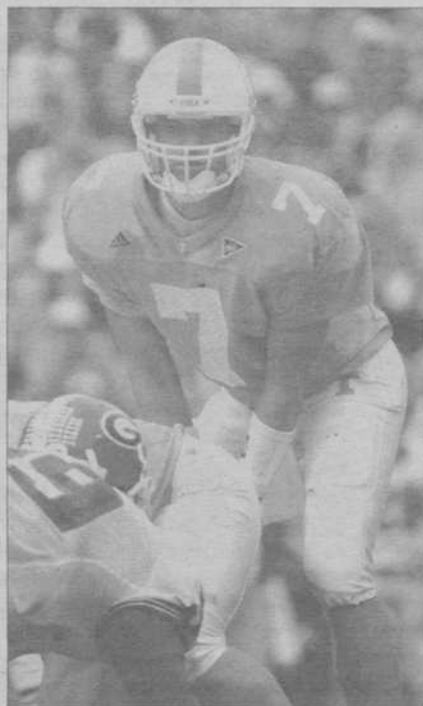


PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Quarterback Casey Clausen will be the focal point of the Tennessee offense this season.

"Getting that close to playing for a national championship and not getting there was probably the hardest thing," Clausen said. "We just didn't get it done. We have to go out there this season and get after it."

Game 10
ARKANSAS
 1 p.m., Nov. 9
 Columbia, S.C.

BY MATT ROTHENBERG
 THE GAMECOCK

Arkansas head coach Houston Nutt wanted to bring his players to prison to let them see first-hand the consequences of the choices they make in life.

Prison might have been an easier option than playing in the SEC.

Nutt returns for his fourth season with the Razorbacks, who finished with a .500 conference record last season.

With 13 starters returning, Arkansas should have just as much of a chance of winning the Western Division title as any other team.

The Hogs will have the first week off, but that doesn't mean Nutt is forgetting the challenges ahead.

"We have speed, good speed on our football team," Nutt said. "Problem is the SEC, every time you look at other end of field, you feel like 'man, how we gonna make a first down today?' I'll say that against any SEC team. We're in one of the greatest



♦ RAZORBACKS, SEE PAGE 9

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