

FRIDAY FOOTBALL PREVIEW

USC looks to bite Dogs back

*Mark my words:
 We will beat UGA*

■ This season bears striking resemblance to the 2000 campaign

For those Gamecock fans who haven't been around this program for awhile, don't worry. The explanation is coming.

But for those of us who have been USC through-and-true all our lives, we know that *deja vu* is and Carolina football is not always a pleasant thing. Except this weekend.

Let me explain.

In 2000, the USC football program had something to prove. After coming off an 0-11 season and 21 straight losses, the Gamecocks played New Mexico

State like they had something to prove.

USC put up 31 points on the Aggies in a home shutout that brought the streak and

the goal posts down.

In 2004, the football team still has something to prove after back-to-back 5-7 seasons. USC played Vanderbilt on the road and put up 31 points against the Commodores to start off the season 1-0.

Willie Offord helped cap off the huge win for the Gamecocks with a long run on a fumble for a defensive score in the 2000 opener. Jamacia Jackson dotted the "i" in USC's win with his interception return for a touchdown to start the season Saturday.

In 2000, Carolina had a highly touted sophomore running back in Derek Watson, who was looking to show the nation he was one of the best in the country after a less-than-stellar freshmen

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KATIE KIRKLAND/THE GAMECOCK

USC safety Jamacia Jackson prances into the endzone after intercepting a Jay Cutler pass and returning it 98 yards for a touchdown Saturday against Vanderbilt.

By **TODD GREEN**
 THE GAMECOCK

This Saturday at 5:30 p.m., the Gamecocks host the nation's No. 3 team, the Georgia Bulldogs, in a nationally televised ESPN game. Already there have been unsubstantiated Lee Corso sightings all over campus as the ESPN GameDay crew comes to Columbia to make Williams-Brice Stadium the center of the college football universe.

The Bulldogs come to town with six preseason ALL-SEC players. Their offense is led by Heisman hopeful David Greene, an experienced offensive line and a big-play threat at wide receiver in Fred Gibson. Freshman running back Danny Ware rushed for 135 yards and three scores last week for the Bulldogs.

The Georgia defense is loaded with talent. Bulldog defensive lineman David Pollack spends more time in the offensive

backfield than most running backs. On the surface, this Georgia squad, coming off of a 48-28 win over Georgia Southern, should have no problem defeating the Gamecocks.

But as Lee Corso often says, "Not so fast my friend." There are still 60 minutes of football to be played in this one, and a win on the road in SEC country, especially in a place like Williams-Brice Stadium, is no easy task. Just ask Russ Tanner, junior starting center

for the Bulldogs.

"We know what we are going up against," Tanner said. "Their stadium is one of the loudest we will play in. Their fans really know how to make a great atmosphere."

This game is a big one for the Gamecocks, who started the season with an impressive 31-6 victory against SEC foe Vanderbilt. A win over the Bulldogs would put the Gamecocks in position to challenge for the SEC East title.

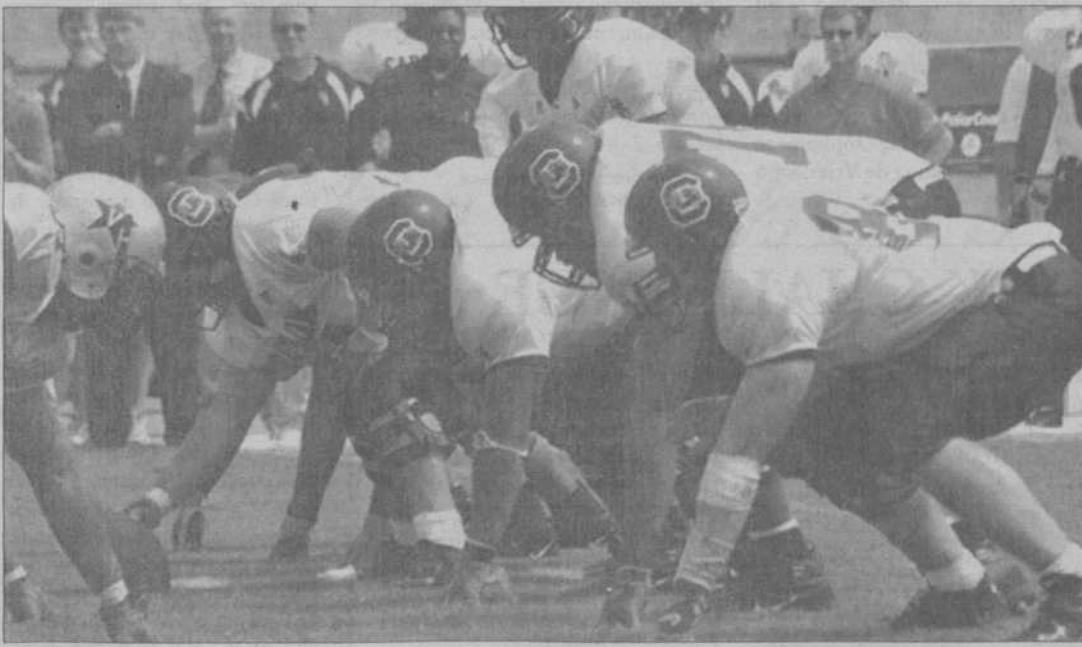
Head coach Lou Holtz is no stranger to preparing a team for a big game and will have his squad ready for the task of playing one of the nation's best teams.

"I do expect our players to play hard, I do not expect them to be intimidated," Holtz said.

The key to this game will be in keeping the star-studded Georgia offense off the field. To do this, the Gamecock offense will have to

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KATIE KIRKLAND/THE GAMECOCK

The Carolina offensive line prepares for a snap Saturday against Vanderbilt. The Gamecocks dominated the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball, racking up 269 rushing yards to the Commodores' 36.

Georgia freshman RB adds to loaded offense

By **STEPHEN DEMEDIS**
 THE GAMECOCK

Coming into this weekend's game, USC defensive coordinator Rick Minter has the formidable task of stopping one of the country's most prolific passing games in Georgia's air born attack, but that might not be his number one priority. Last year, Georgia quarterback David Greene passed for 208 yards and two touchdowns against USC before giving way to backup DJ Shockley. But this year, Georgia's offense could be carried on the legs of freshman running back Danny Ware.

Last week, in the team's opener, the 6-foot-1-inch back scorched the Georgia Southern defense for 135 yards and three touchdowns. By starting the game, Ware became the first freshman at UGA to start in the opener since 1943, and since then, Georgia has had many solid collegiate backs, including Herschel Walker, Terrell Davis and Robert Edwards. But Ware has the rare speed which none of those ball carriers possessed.

"Georgia has always had good backs and they have always had productive backs, but not the breakaway back that Ware is," head coach Lou Holtz said. "He brings a completely different look to your defense because of his explosiveness."

Ware came to Georgia from the Hargrave Military Academy and spent the spring season practicing with the team. He moved up the depth chart when projected starter Gregg Lumpkin was lost for the year due to injury.

Georgia head coach Mark Richt was not taken back with the success his new offensive weapon had in week one.

"It didn't surprise me that he

played great," Richt said. "That's how he's been practicing. He's just a big back who has great balance, changes directions well and breaks tackles."

Ware's early success came against a Division I-AA school. A week later, he has to face a South Carolina defense that prides itself in its ability to stop the run. The Gamecocks held Vanderbilt to 36 rushing yards last week in their season opener.

Carolina's concern is that Ware is just the newest starter in an offense that is star-laden and explosive. Greene is a frontrunner in the Heisman race and a preseason candidate for the Unitas Award, awarded to the nation's top quarterback. His starting receivers, Fred Gibson and Reggie Brown, are two of the SEC's best. The emergence of Ware only adds to the arsenal Richt has at his disposal.

Ware "has exceptional quickness and that is the type of back you fear the most," Holtz said. "Georgia has a great offensive line. But when you've got David Greene and their receivers, be it

Gibson or Brown, etc., and they spread you out and turn Ware loose and pop him into the secondary, then that is when problems occur."

The emergence of Ware complicates things for the Carolina defense. With the attention of the front seven focusing on the him, the pressure on a young and inexperienced secondary greatly increases. If the safeties are brought up to support the run defense, corners Jonathan Joseph, Tremaine Tyler and Fred Bennett will be forced to play man-to-man against two of the best in only their second start.

In the same regard, it will only be Ware's second start. This has led Richt to realistically announce that other backs on Georgia's roster will see time sparing Ware. Regardless, the South Carolina defense will have its hands full trying to contain Ware the 15 to 20 times, or more, he carries the ball.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu



ROB CARR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Georgia Southern's James Young, left, tries to bring down UGA running back Danny Ware during Saturday's game in Athens, Ga.

Gamecocks' success to hinge on veteran offensive line play

By **STEPHEN FASTENAU**
 THE GAMECOCK

It's one thing to run the ball on a perennial bottom dweller in the SEC such as Vanderbilt, but it will be another thing to run on one of the most formidable defenses in the country, which is what USC will try to do when it takes on No. 3 Georgia this Saturday.

The Bulldogs' imposing defensive front seven are led by senior end David Pollack, who is on numerous preseason award lists. While the Gamecocks would still like to center their offense on the run, quarterbacks' coach Skip Holtz knows they will not likely be able to run the ball 57 times as they did at Vanderbilt.

"This is not a game — with the front seven Georgia has — where we can line up and say we are going to run the ball every down," Holtz said. "You have to try and keep this

"We are going to have to throw the ball and utilize misdirection by using all kinds of different runs, screens and passes."

SKIP HOLTZ
 QUARTERBACKS COACH

defense off balance."

USC did a good job keeping Vanderbilt off-balance last week, rushing for 269 yards by using a variety of weapons. The offensive line dominated the game, a facet which Holtz said should be there each week.

"We're looking for the offensive line to set the tone for the next 10 games," Holtz said. "When you have the leaders we do up front and the upperclassmen we do, you are starting to feel a little bit better

about things."

Georgia Southern had success running the ball against Georgia last week, racking up 191 yards and four touchdowns. The statistic likely means nothing to USC, however, as the majority of the production came after the game was out of reach, and Georgia Southern executes a triple option, a different offensive style than the Gamecocks.

The Bulldogs will be more prepared for the revamped USC running attack, having seen film of the Gamecocks' game against Vanderbilt. The Gamecock coaches know they will need to mix it up this week in order to win.

"We are going to have to throw the ball and utilize misdirection by using all kinds of different runs, screens and passes," Holtz said.

Holtz should be more confident

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