

GAME



LOU SAID IT
"... You can say Georgia is a great team, they are ranked number three, and that we fought them down to the wire. That's all irrelevant, we lost the game."

LOU HOLTZ
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

G 20 GEORGIA — USC 16 **C**

USC stopped short

Carolina mistakes black out chances

■ USC didn't capitalize on opportunities against a vulnerable Georgia

Let's face it. Through all the horrible calls and bad breaks, we shot ourselves in the foot time and time again Saturday night. Before we shift the blame, we must look at the missed opportunities.

Let me first say I thought we played pretty well. Individually, I would take 13 of 21 for 200 yards each and every game from Dondrial Pinkins. I'm certainly not saying he couldn't do better, but those are pretty good numbers.

But Pinkins made two big mistakes that we must look back at. His fumble in the fourth quarter was a crucial play that swung the momentum. His interception late in the game ended our chances. However, let me make it clear that Pinkins did not lose the game for us.

Here are some of the missed opportunities that weren't so obvious at the end of the game.

While Ko Simpson had an interception for a touchdown, we dropped two picks that cost us three points and 35 yards.

We missed another field goal. Although I will say a questionable offensive pass interference call caused that.

We failed repeatedly in the second half to move the ball and it kept the defense out there much longer than they should have been.

And finally, when Georgia fumbled the punt return in the first quarter, we got no points in the pursuing drive. When you play the No. 3 team in the country, you must capitalize on their mistakes. We didn't do that Saturday night.

Other factors that didn't help were the poor field position we had all game, Demetris Summers getting injured on the first play and four dropped passes.

But on top of all that, there is a positive to take from this. We played right with the so-called best team in the SEC. Heck, we should have beaten them. Troy Williamson continues to impress everyone and Pinkins threw the ball pretty well.

Now that we've looked at what needed to go first, let's question some of the calls. I already mentioned the offensive pass interference on Cory Boyd, but how about the obvious. After looking at the replay, where on earth was the sideline official marking Pinkins' spot in the fourth quarter? He marked the ball over a yard off.

Also, where were the holding calls? Not one was called all game. You've got to be kidding me.

Finally, I must give a shout out to our defense. For being out there as much as they were, they played outstanding. Time and time again, they made play after play. This game showed a lot of promise and I'm excited about the future. I can't wait until next week.

Listen to **Ryan Clary** and sports editor **Jonathan Hillyard** on "Your Sports Show" every Tuesday night from 6-8 p.m on **WUSC 90.5 FM.**



DAVID STAGG/THE GAMECOCK

USC quarterback Dondrial Pinkins attempts to break through the Georgia defense on a fourth down and one situation late in the fourth quarter at the UGA 11-yard line. Pinkins failed to make the first down, forcing Carolina to turn the ball over on downs. The USC offense was in the red zone twice in the fourth quarter without scoring.

By **STEPHEN DEMEDIS**
THE GAMECOCK

An injury-riddled USC football team (1-1, 0-1) limped off the field Saturday night after a 20-16 come-from-behind win by the No. 3 Georgia Bulldogs (2-0, 1-0). The loss continued the team's trend of losing to ranked teams by narrow margins.

Head coach Lou Holtz wasn't interested in moral victories.

"We lost the football game," Holtz said. "You can say Georgia is a great team, they are ranked number three, and that we fought them down to the wire. That's all irrelevant, we lost the game."

At half time, the Gamecocks held a 16-6 lead over Georgia. Nine of those came from the defense. Linebacker Marcus Lawrence tackled running back Danny Ware in the end zone for a safety on the Bulldogs' first play from scrimmage. Freshman safety Ko Simpson made the first interception of his career and ran 57 yards for a touchdown, increasing USC's lead to 16.

Carolina's other score came after

Georgia missed a 47-yard field goal attempt. On third and five, quarterback Dondrial Pinkins hit receiver Troy Williamson on a slant that resulted in a 65-yard touchdown. Williamson finished the game with three catches, 131 yards and a touchdown, the only points Carolina could score on offense.

While Carolina tried to maintain their 16-point advantage, Georgia slowly moved the ball down the field and chipped away at the deficit. After two field goals, the Bulldogs moved within two scores of the lead.

Midway through the third quarter, Georgia scored its first touchdown on a 12-yard screen pass to backup running back Tyson Browning, bringing the score to 16-13. The Bulldogs took the lead on a 22-yard play action pass to Reggie Brown from quarterback David Greene.

Down by four, USC had three chances to take the lead. With 10 minutes left in the fourth quarter, Carolina drove into the red zone with a nine play, 60-yard drive. On first and 10, Pinkins scrambled for a five-yard gain, but was drilled by two

Georgia defenders and fumbled the ball, which was recovered by Arnold Harrison.

Once again, the Carolina defense kept the team in the game by forcing and recovering a fumble of its own. On the ensuing drive, USC drove to within seven yards of the end zone, but failed on a fourth and one play, turning the ball back over. Carolina's final attempt to score ended when a Pinkins' pass was tipped and then intercepted by Paul Oliver.

USC was severely handicapped in its final three drives. The offense was without scoring threats Demetris Summers and Troy Williamson. Summers injured his ankle on the first play of the game and Williamson was out for the fourth quarter with hamstring cramps. Cory Boyd came on to replace Summers despite an ankle injury of his own and was Carolina's only receiving threat.

Holtz said the loss of Summers limited the offense.

"It affected us big. He is the one guy that can make things happen. He carried the ball twice. It is just different when he runs."

STAT BOX — GAME 2

- 9 Points scored by USC's defense
- 7 Points scored by USC's offense
- 5 USC starters injured by the end of the game
- 2 Number of Demetris Summers carries

Carolina was also without Noah Whiteside. A serious deep threat, Whiteside should have been available to come on in place of Williamson, but was suspended for the game for breaking team rules.

On defense, USC lost two of its best corners, Tremaine Tyler and Jonathan Joseph. Joseph broke his foot in the first quarter and Tyler sustained a pinched nerve in his neck in the third quarter. Both Bulldog touchdowns came after Tyler and Joseph were injured.

Despite the outcome of the game, Holtz realized the odds the

team faced late in the game.

"I was proud of our football team. They overcame a lot of things."

Now Holtz's team not only has to overcome the mental letdown of dropping yet another close game — Carolina lost to Tennessee, Ole Miss and Florida by a combined sum of eight points last year — but also will have to recover physically from the injuries that kept them back in dropping a close one to Georgia.

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

Minter's defense hangs tough against Bulldogs

By **JONATHAN HILLYARD**
THE GAMECOCK

No one can blame Saturday's loss on the Carolina defense, which single-handedly kept the Gamecocks neck and neck with the mighty Bulldogs of Georgia.

After an end of the season collapse of the Carolina defense a year ago, defensive coordinator Rick Minter and his unit proved that this year's squad would not back down to anyone, even Heisman Trophy candidate David Greene and the Georgia offense.

"I'm very proud of how hard our kids played," Minter said. "That's what I promised when I came here is that our kids would go out, play hard and battle to the end."

The defense set the tone for the game immediately, despite the offense's inability to capitalize on a fumble by UGA punt returner Tyson Browning. On the Dog's first play from scrimmage, senior linebacker and leader Marcus Lawrence introduced UGA freshman Danny Ware to the SEC

by leveling him in the end zone for a safety. Lawrence was without a doubt USC's player of the game on defense, totaling 13 tackles and two tackles for losses. In addition to the safety, he also would force a crucial fumble later in the game.

Like last week, the defense dominated the opposition in the first quarter, allowing the defending eastern division champs just 28 yards in the first quarter.

The second quarter yielded much of the same for the Carolina defense. After a USC three-and-out from its own 11, the defense came up big again, this time in the form of a Ko Simpson interception return for a touchdown. The score marked the second consecutive week the Gamecocks have scored a defensive touchdown.

"Ko really showed up to play tonight," sophomore cornerback Fred Bennett said. "I told him that was an All-American play he made and I'm really proud of him."

The freshman from Rock Hill would also save a touchdown later in the quarter, but dropped a

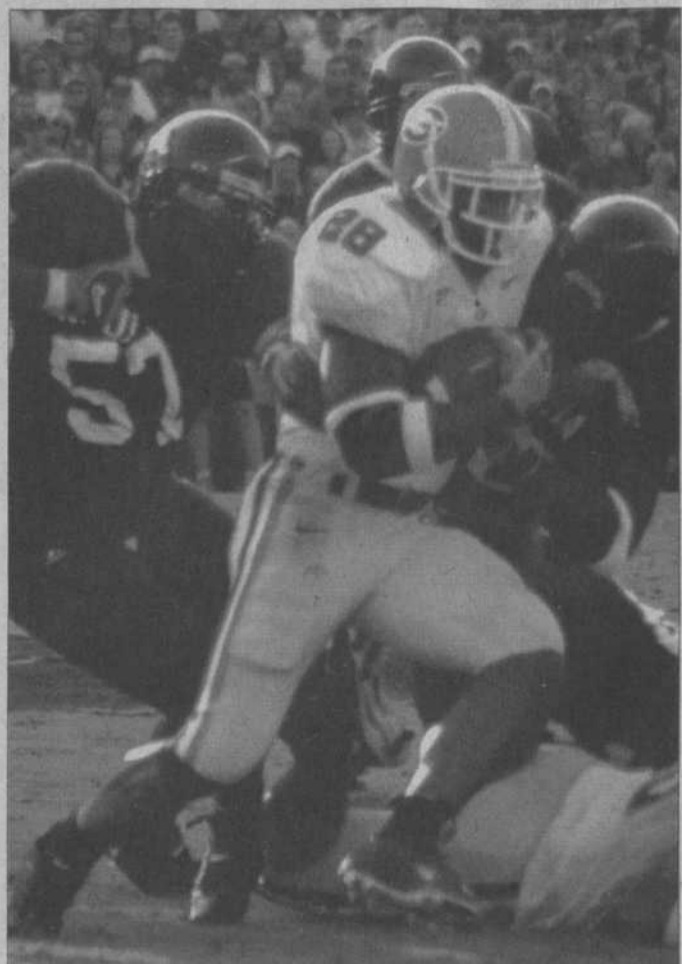
possible interception at the goal line that he would have easily ran 99 yards for another touchdown.

The Georgia offense finally started to click in the second quarter, breaking into the red zone twice late in the half. Here is where the defense showed perhaps the most poise, holding the Bulldogs to a field goal on both occasions and allowing the Gamecocks to enter halftime with a 10-point lead.

The defense, despite allowing two touchdowns and losing two talented cornerbacks in Jonathan Joseph and Tremaine Tyler, continued to answer the call repeatedly in the second half. The Carolina offense, which time after time failed to put points on the board, relied on the defensive unit to keep them in the game and that is exactly what they did.

With approximately seven minutes to go in the game, a Dondrial Pinkins fumble in the red zone seemed to seal the Gamecocks' fate. However, just

◆ Please see **DEFENSE**, page 10



KATIE KIRKLAND/THE GAMECOCK

Freshman running back Danny Ware is trailed by Darrell Shropshire (57) and the rest of the USC defense. Ware was injured at the end of the first half and didn't return.