

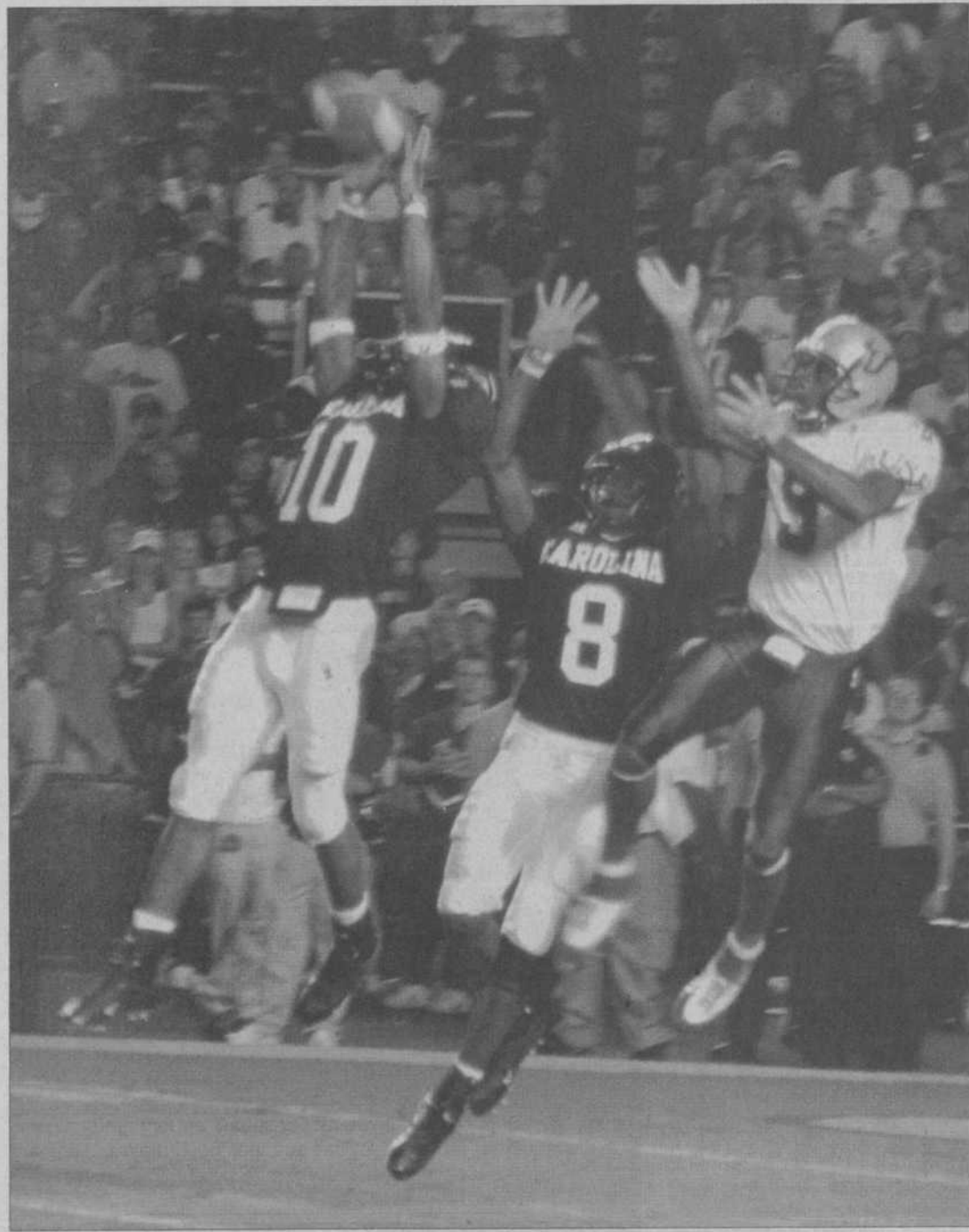


LOU SAID IT
"We're not going to have a quarterback controversy. All we are interested in is winning. We are all Gamecocks."

LOU HOLTZ
HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

34 USC — SOUTH FLORIDA 3

USC breezes past Bulls



CHARLIE DAVENPORT/THE GAMECOCK

Freshman Ko Simpson, left, and sophomore Fred Bennett go up for an attempted interception Saturday against South Florida. Simpson had an interception for the second consecutive week.

By **DANIEL KERR**
THE GAMECOCK

Sophomore quarterback Syvelle Newton, making his first collegiate start, completed 13 of 23 passes for 324 yards and three touchdowns to lead USC to a 34-3 whipping of South Florida Saturday night.

The bulk of Newton's numbers went to junior receiver Troy Williamson, the SEC's leading receiver, who caught five passes for three touchdowns and 210 yards and broke the USC record for most receiving yards in a game set by Zola Davis with 206 in 1998.

The defense also played an excellent game, holding USF to 191 yards of total offense and just three points. Every time the Bulls started moving the ball on offense the drive sputtered when they crossed midfield and got closer to scoring range. Drives to the USC 32, 42, 36 and 42 all ended without points for South Florida. The lone field goal came off the foot of Santiago Grammatica from 47 yards out as time expired in the first half. Head coach Lou Holtz was pleased with the defense's performance.

"We played very well on defense," Holtz said. "We had a great game plan and we executed that well."

USC's ability to make the play was the difference in the ball game as all four of their touchdowns were from at least 14 yards out. The first came after a roughing the kicker penalty prolonged the Gamecock's first drive. Newton then found Williamson on a 56-yard bomb the very next play for the score. In the second quarter shortly after a 32-yard Josh Brown field goal, Newton again connected with Williamson on a 55-yard scoring completion that very much resembled the first. The third quarter saw Cory Boyd

take a pitch at the USF 14, juke a defender, spin out of a tackle and into the end zone for the third Gamecock touchdown of the night. Then in the fourth quarter Williamson broke the yards record on an intermediate route that he took 73 yards for the final score on the nation's then-No. 1 defense.

Syvelle Newton set a record of his own Saturday night. His 324 yards were the most by a USC quarterback making his first start since Bill Troup threw for 318 yards in a 1972 loss to Virginia. South Florida head coach Jim Leavitt was impressed with Newton's first start.

"We knew he could run. We knew he probably could throw, but hadn't thrown much," Leavitt said. "He hadn't played much quarterback and obviously he threw for 6,000 yards tonight."

Quarterback coach Skip Holtz insisted there is no quarterback controversy between Newton and injured starter Dondrial Pinkins.

"Both will play," Skip Holtz said. "We do not have a controversy. What we have is two excellent quarterbacks, and two guys behind them are pretty good, too. We are blessed at that position."

Late in the fourth quarter, redshirt freshman quarterback Blake Mitchell entered the game and completed both his pass attempts for 20 yards. Senior Mike Rathe finished the game for USC's offense. He completed his only pass attempt for 12 yards.

The USC quarterbacks will battle for playing time against the Troy Trojans next week at Williams-Brice Stadium. The Trojans are 2-1 and have posted impressive wins against Marshall and nationally ranked Missouri despite losing 22-18 Saturday to New Mexico State.

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

Letdown avoided by USC's offense

Gamecocks performed well without Pinkins

No one could have written a better script for Saturday night's football game. The Gamecocks did everything they needed to do on the so-called bounce-back game and regained their confidence. Let's give credit where credit is due.

RYAN CLARY

FOURTH-YEAR ELECTRONIC JOURNALISM STUDENT

In case you haven't already heard, Troy Williamson broke a school record with 210 receiving yards. If you looked up the definition of "go-to guy" in the dictionary, Williamson's picture would be there. In three games, he has been the most consistent and dominant player for us. With three touchdowns, each longer than 50 yards, Williamson had another outstanding game and is only getting better.

Syvelle Newton said all week that he was preparing to start and it showed. If you didn't know it was his first career start at quarterback, you wouldn't have known after the game either. Newton played great and showed us what a strong arm he has. He threw for 324 yards and, more importantly, he looked like a leader on the field.

He made good reads and smart decisions all game. His confidence was very obvious and after Saturday's performance, deserves more playing time.

I must admit without Dondrial Pinkins and Demetris Summers I was a little worried about how our offense would look. But 530 yards later, I'm no longer concerned. Sure we were bigger and faster than South Florida's defense, but our offense was out to make a statement and they did.

It would have been easy to give 50 percent all night because honestly we would have won anyway. Give credit to our team because we sure didn't give anything less than 100 percent. We once again showed intensity, heart and enthusiasm.

Defensively, let's look at the obvious first. No touchdowns and only 191 yards given up is very impressive. But once again, we did two things for the third game in a row that were missing from last year.

First of all, we forced turnovers. Ko Simpson continues to be the surprise of the year. His interception was nothing short of incredible.

Second, we're doing what I like to call gang tackling. Not one tackle goes by where we don't have at least three guys in on the hit. Opposing teams better start checking for black marks on their white jerseys with all the hitting we're doing.

On top of our great play, special teams did some good things too. We forced a fumble, and we made two field goals. Plus, we haven't missed an extra point, which by the way Clemson, LSU, Oregon State, Tennessee and quite a few others have. I'd like to stick with Josh Brown on field goals. Make or miss, I think it's important to stick with one guy.

Overall, I was very pleased. We played great and with Pinkins and Summers returning, we will only get better. We will continue to win and will look good doing it.

Newton shines in first collegiate start

By **STEPHEN FASTENAU**
THE GAMECOCK

Despite his success and apparent confidence in the pocket, sophomore quarterback Syvelle Newton did not try to hide the fact that he was nervous in his first start since converting from wide receiver in the spring.

"In front of 80,000 people you're going to be nervous," Newton said.

"That's how it was all week. I tried to say I wasn't, but I was real nervous."

Newton's teammates were somewhat confused by the first play call he delivered in the huddle.

"I went in the huddle and the offensive line was looking at me like 'What are you saying,'" Newton said. "I was a little shaken but after the first play I said 'If the team's going to play, I have to be prepared to play.'"

The sophomore threw for 324 yards, a USC record for a first-time starter, and three touchdowns, while finishing with 39 yards rushing.

As spectacular as his performance was, Newton will likely again be relegated to Pinkins'

backup when the Gamecocks take the field against Troy on Saturday. The difference will be the confidence level of head coach Lou Holtz next time he makes the decision to play Newton.

"I thought Syvelle stepped in and gave us a very big lift," Holtz said.

"Dondrial probably could have played but Syvelle stepped in and did some great things. He had good vision and made some great throws."

Newton's favorite target was receiver Troy Williamson, who leads the SEC in receiving and all-purpose yards.

Other than his touchdown passes, Newton also connected with Noah Whiteside on a 45-yard completion that came just after a questionable intentional grounding penalty and led to a Cory Boyd touchdown. Two dropped passes by Matthew Thomas in the end zone could have boosted Newton's numbers even more. The touchdown passes that were caught put the 78,000 fans in attendance into a frenzy.

Newton and Williamson saved their best for last, connecting on a 73-yard touchdown with 7:44 remaining in the game. The pass

was delivered accurately despite Newton being hit just as he threw.

"I think Syvelle did real good," Williamson said. "He's going to be a good quarterback when the time comes. He did what he had to do for us to win."

Newton produced on the ground as well as in the air. His 39 yards rushing came mainly from busted plays where he scrambled to avoid a sack. Holtz's continuation of employing multiple running backs led to four players averaging over three yards

per carry and freed up Newton to throw the ball deep.

Holtz had few negative things to say about Newton's performance.

"The only thing I fault him on," Holtz said, "was he fumbled the ball on the 6 yard line when we had the chance to put the nail in the coffin. It wasn't just his throwing. He never put the ball in jeopardy. He checked off. He got us in the right plays and he had command."

In the week preceding USC's game against South Florida, Newton likened the situation

between him and fellow quarterback Dondrial Pinkins to two guys sharing the wheel in a long road trip.

Newton made his first ever start as a Gamecock quarterback Saturday after Pinkins sat out with a sore shoulder. After the game, Newton was reminded of his analogy.

"Dondrial is back in the seat," Newton said. "I just woke him up. He's ready to drive again."

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CHARLIE DAVENPORT/THE GAMECOCK

Sophomore quarterback Syvelle Newton slips past a defender in the Gamecocks' 34-3 victory Saturday. Newton completed 13 of 23 passes for 324 yards in his first start as a quarterback.

GAME 3 — STAT BOX

530	Total yards for USC
191	Total yards for USF
210	Receiving Yards by Troy Williamson
324	Passing yards by Syvelle Newton

Remember, Before 5:00 wear GARNET, after 5:00 wear BLACK, darnit!

