

IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

Opening-week upsets, rivalries set stage for key matchups as season kicks into gear

After week of stunners, shockers, football fans should prepare for unpredictable ride to Pasadena

TCU pulled off a stunning victory against Oklahoma on Saturday with a 17-10 win in Norman. For all the talk about this being the year Texas would finally beat Oklahoma, who would have thought it would be Texas Christian taking the Sooners down?

Last week's marquee matchup was Monday's Florida State-Miami showdown. The Seminoles had lost six straight close games to the Hurricanes. This one was ugly from an offensive perspective, but the Noles finally put a notch in the victory column.



Todd Green
Graduate student in sports and entertainment management

Miami lost the game but found a quarterback in the impressive Kyle Wright. The Noles won the game with one of the most impressive displays of defense in recent memory. The FSU quarterback situation is far from settled. The Noles' offense was lackluster with the exception of a talented running back corps, and FSU fans will surely be calling for a lot more playing time for backup quarterback Xavier Lee.

Texas A&M had high hopes for the 2005 season, but six field goals later the Clemson Tigers were celebrating a victory against the Aggies. Clemson's new-look offense was able to move the ball effectively but just couldn't get in the end zone. Clemson will be looking to take the momentum from its thrilling 25-24 victory into the ACC schedule starting Saturday against Maryland.

First-year Notre Dame coach Charlie Weis gave the Irish faithful exactly what they wanted in his debut against Pittsburgh. Notre Dame racked up impressive offensive statistics with more than 500 yards of total offense in the 42-21 victory. Quarterback Brady Quinn and running back Darius Walker make a dangerous double threat. Next up for the Irish is a date in the "Big House."

Week 2

Sept. 10, 2005, is a date that Texas and Ohio State fans have had circled on their calendars since it was announced that the two schools would play for the first time ever. It is amazing that these two storied programs have yet to meet on the gridiron, and fitting that both are ranked in the top five for this clash of two college football titans.

Texas heads to the Horseshoe with Heisman hopeful quarterback Vince Young. Young has worked hard on his pass efficiency in the offseason, scary given that he will also be the best running back on the field. The Longhorns beat up on Louisiana Lafayette last week, 60-3.

Ohio State handled in-state foe Miami of Ohio in convincing fashion, 34-14. Ted Ginn Jr. is Ohio State's main playmaker. Ginn catches passes, punts and kicks, and he can score touchdowns doing all three. Ginn makes this matchup a contest of opposing Heisman candidates, and both will be looking to outdo the other.

Prediction: Texas 34 Ohio State 17

The "Big House" will be rocking when the Notre Dame Fighting Irish head to Ann Arbor on Saturday, and Michigan will surely be reminded of a disappointing loss to Notre Dame in South Bend last year.

Michigan quietly went 7-1 in the Big Ten last year with a 9-3 overall record. They did this with a freshman at quarterback in Chad Henne, and a freshman running back, Mike Hart, who rushed for 1,455 yards, second in Big Ten history for a freshman. This talented tandem, combined with an always-potent receiving corps, have the Wolverines on many prognosticators' lists of potential national championship contenders.

That will all be for not if they can't get past the new-look Notre Dame squad. Notre Dame is looking to prove they can once again return to national prominence. This remains to be seen, but last week's performance against Pittsburgh will surely have the Michigan faithful wondering.

Prediction: Michigan 27 Notre Dame 24

LSU was forced to cancel its opening week contest against North Texas because of Hurricane Katrina. The Tigers will be tested this weekend, as their first game was moved to Arizona State, where they'll take on the No. 15 Sun Devils.

Much of LSU's campus, including many of the athletic facilities, has been turned into relief shelters for hurricane victims. The roar of rescue helicopters, coming and going to the disaster area, is commonplace above the LSU practice field. Several LSU players have opened their apartments to people displaced by the storm.

With such a tumultuous situation, it is amazing to think this team could even concentrate on football. But make no mistake, to the state of Louisiana, football still matters. The Tigers are ready to play.

Offensive tackle Andrew Whitworth put it into perspective at LSU's weekly news conference.

"You want to do anything you can to bring some inspiration to them and to uplift them and make them feel proud, and that's what we try to do. They do that for us when we play football. People support you and inspire you to play, and we have to do that for them in a tough time like this. We have to do everything

we can to inspire people to be uplifted and to understand they can still have pride in where they're from," Whitworth said.

The Sun Devils are a talented football team, but on this night, LSU will have an entire state on its side.

Prediction: LSU 28 ASU 17

Other notable games
Clemson at Maryland: The Tigers take a No. 25 ranking into College Park, where they are 1-point underdogs.

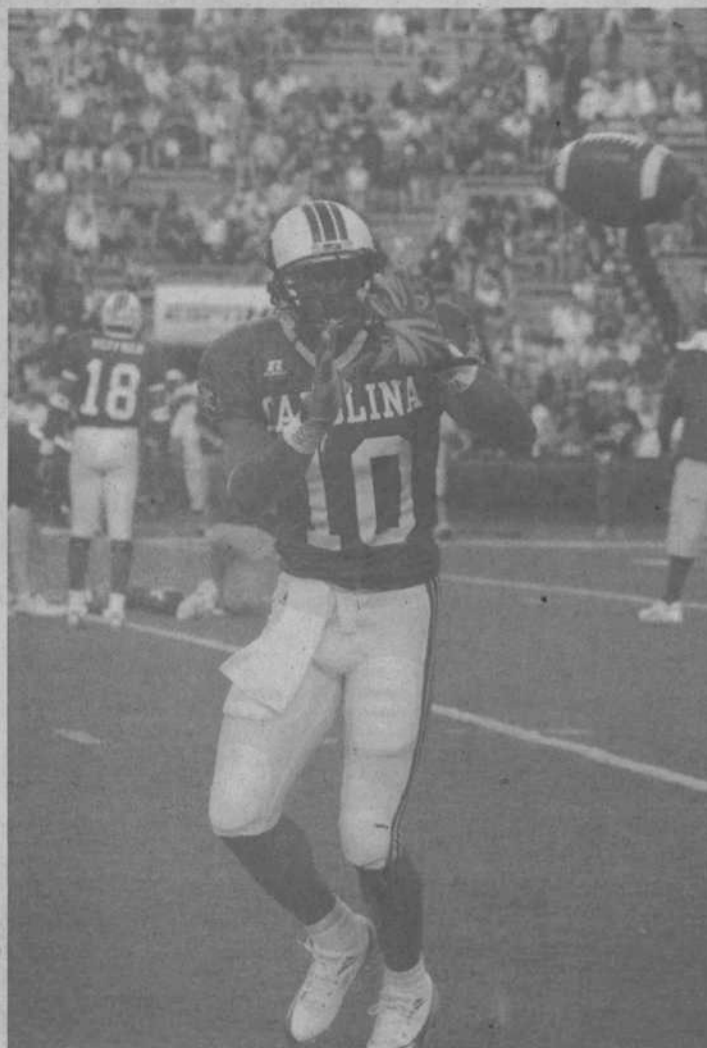
Prediction: Clemson 31 Maryland 6

Southern Miss at Alabama: Brody Croyle is back after an ACL injury that cut short his 2004 season.

Prediction: Upset special — Southern Miss 17 Alabama 13

By the way, I was a perfect 6-0 on predictions last week. Corso better watch his back. I'm gunning for his job.

Simpson spearheads defense



Katie Kirkland / THE GAMECOCK

Sophomore rover Ko Simpson warms up in drills before last week's game. Simpson was a preseason All-America First Team pick.

SEC award winner out to prove rookie season was no fluke

Miquel Jacobs
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Only a sophomore on a team expected to be a middle of the pack contender, he has already become the face of the program. Looked over in recruiting during his senior season at Rock Hill High School, he became SEC Freshman of the Year and was named to the Freshman All-American Team after

committing to USC. Now, all eyes are on Ko Simpson as he has been tabbed the No. 1 free safety in America.

"Coming out (of high school), I wasn't really recruited," Simpson said. "A lot of schools passed on me, and then I was grayshirted. I came out here with something on my back, and I had to prove myself, and I did it."

He proved himself from the moment he began spring practice for the first time in 2004 under former coach Lou Holtz. With the graduation of NFL draft pick Dunta Robinson, Simpson impressed the coaches immediately,

earning a starting spot in his first collegiate game at Vanderbilt and keeping it throughout the season.

Playing in a pivotal defensive position, the SEC began to take notice of the freshman in the second week, when ESPN GameDay came to Columbia to broadcast the USC-Georgia football game on a national stage. Georgia quarterback David Greene became the first future NFL quarterback to throw Simpson an interception, returned 57 yards for a touchdown.

Matt Jones, Chris Leak and Erik Ainge also threw a pick each, along with quarterbacks from Alabama and South Florida to give Ko a league-leading six interceptions on the year, the No. 3 mark in the nation and the most for a Gamecock since Arturo Freeman stole six passes in 1997.

His greatest in-season recognition came following the Arkansas game in which he was named SEC Defensive Player of the Week after a 57-yard fumble recovery for a touchdown and an interception. After including his 61 tackles (No. 2 on the team) and team-leading six pass breakups and three fumble recoveries, it is easy to see why he has been featured in Sports Illustrated, ESPN The Magazine, The Sporting News and nearly every other college sports magazine covering the Southeast. Yet nothing seems to faze the shy, quiet kid from upstate.

"I never expected (to get awards) this early, but you've got to run with it quickly," Simpson said. "It's big, but (football's) all about the team. I don't like to put all of that preseason stuff all on me. I'm just trying to come out here and win ballgames and

SIMPSON • B4

Green's Heisman Watch List

1. Matt Leinart

Southern California
Quarterback

2. Reggie Bush

Southern California
Running Back

3. Vince Young

Texas
Quarterback

4. Mike Hart

Michigan
Running Back

5. Ted Ginn, Jr.

Ohio State
Running Back

Green's Top 10 College Football Picks

1. Southern California

2. Michigan

3. Texas

4. Virginia Tech

5. Georgia

6. Ohio State

7. Tennessee

8. Florida

9. Iowa

10. LSU

Graphics by Laura-Joyce Gough / THE GAMECOCK

CAMPUS RECREATION

INTRAMURAL SPORTS

September Events

Co-Rec Softball

Registration 9/12 - 9/14

Captain's Meeting 9/14 @ 9:00 PM

Play Begins 9/18

All team sport registration takes place in the WFC Lobby from 4-8 PM.

3 on 3 Basketball Tournament

Registration Ends 9/15

Tournament 9/18

Racquetball Ladder

Registration Ends 9/30

Tournament 9/6

Tennis Tournament

Registration Ends 9/29

Tournament 10/2

* To register for these tournaments, send an E-mail to the Intramural Sports Director, sdjones@gwm.sc.edu and include your name, E-mail address and phone number.

<http://campusrec.sc.edu>

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