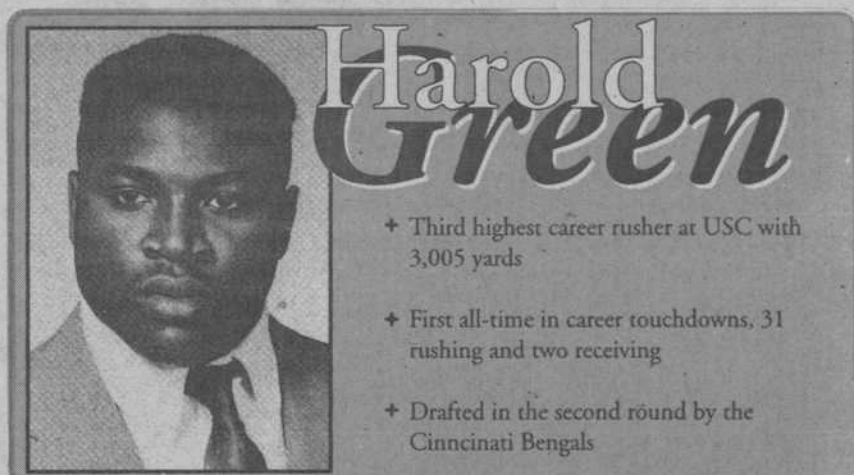


GAMECOCK GREATS

HAROLD GREEN

Even though he didn't run out of I-formation, Green became one of USC's most prolific rushers



- + Third highest career rusher at USC with 3,005 yards
- + First all-time in career touchdowns, 31 rushing and two receiving
- + Drafted in the second round by the Cincinnati Bengals

Graphic illustration by Laura-Joyce Gough / THE GAMECOCK

'I decided for me it was time to step back and evaluate the good things that had happened to me in my career thus far. Being able to play in a Pro Bowl, play in a Super Bowl and go out primarily on your own terms.'

"I think everybody complemented each other based upon that we did have an extensive amount of talent," Green said. "With of course Sterling (Sharpe) being at the forefront because of what he was exposed to putting him into such a system. We had a wealth of backs; Keith Bing, who was our designated undersized fullback, was probably our unsung hero with what he brought to our team and what he has done for me as far as us being a tandem in the backfield.

"Defensively, Joe Lee Dunn and a defense that had just reckless abandonment."

"We always felt we had the opportunity to get the ball and score. Just basing it from the talent everybody knew we had with Todd (Ellis) being at the helm and having 85 percent of your plays being back in the pocket and throwing the ball, that's what the run and shoot did.

"I'm not regretful by any means that that system came into play. It was just an explosive offense," Green said.

Will all the talent on the Gamecock roster, Green and the Gamecocks posted three winning seasons from 1987 to 1989, including back-to-back 8-4 campaigns.

Even while running the fun and shoot, Green managed to become one of the most dominate running backs in the nation, posting a 1,022-yard season in 1987, making him only one of five Gamecocks to ever top the 1,000-yard mark in a season.

During that 1987 campaign, Green posted 15 touchdowns, the highest ever rushed for by a USC player in a single season, a record that stands today.

Following up that performance wouldn't be easy, but Green did just that two seasons later when he ran for 989 yards during his senior season, the 10th-best season total in Carolina history.

All the success brought a lot of spotlight to the running back who earned East-West Shrine and All-South Independent Honors to close out his career.

When the 1990 NFL Draft came knocking, Green was considered one of the best running backs up for grabs, as the Cincinnati Bengals took him in the second round with the 38th overall pick.

Green would play six years with the Bengals, including his best season numbers-wise in 1992 when he rushed for 1,170 yards and earned Pro-Bowl Honors.

After a one-year stint with the Rams in 1996, Green finished his career with the Atlanta Falcons.

"I was drafted in the second round, the same round that drafted a quarterback named Boomer Esiason who ought to be a hall of fame quarterback," Green said. "Every rookie came in during that '90s era, and it was always 'Rookie, earn your keep.' You didn't get paid the escalated dollars guys are earning now."

Green's final season with the Falcons produced some of his lowest totals as far as statistics, but one of his most cherished memories as his finale was against the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXXIII.

"Most importantly for me, what got me there was going to continue to work ethic and attitude and sustaining longevity for nine years and would have been 10 years of course. I decided for me it was time to step back and evaluate the good things that had happened to me in my career thus far. Being able to play in a Pro Bowl, play in a Super Bowl and go out primarily on your own terms."

More than 15 years removed from his last run at Williams-Brice, Green is still a major name throughout the Gamecock rushing records.

His 3,005 career rushing yards is still good enough for third all-time in USC history behind only Brandon Bennett and George Rogers.

His 11 100-yard game tally is tied for second in school history and his 33 career touchdowns ties him with Rogers for best all-time.

Already a USC Hall of Fame member, Green was also selected to the 100th Anniversary All-Time USC football team in 1992.

"Records are made to be broken," Green said. "It doesn't really dawn on me that holding records is going to be my legacy. People always come up and tell me 'You're going to be in the state hall of fame some day, just hold.'"

"And you know what? It doesn't matter to me. If I don't, I don't. If I do, great."

Following his retirement, Green came back to the Capitol City and became part of a group of former players who ran a local car dealership as well as a dealership in Pittsburgh.

He also is involved with USC, working with athletes on their academic standards.

"Being actively involved through the university athletics program through academics has always been a plight for me in a sense that I would mentor," Green said. "That's something that is ongoing for me. I continue to do that to this day."

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

Photo courtesy of Mike Sufran
USC running back Harold Green played in a Super Bowl and Pro Bowl during his professional career with the Cincinnati Bengals, Atlanta Falcons and St. Louis Rams.

When he came to Carolina, Harold Green was told the Gamecock offense would consist of mostly I-formation running plays. The self-proclaimed Army brat who graduated from Stratford High thought coach Joe Morrison's offense would consist of the traditional running plays he had grown accustomed to in high school.

Alex Riley

ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Green's decision to attend the university wasn't that hard of a choice.

"A lot of southeastern schools took an interest in my abilities and athleticism," Green said. "I wanted to be a Florida Gator originally. That was until they were on probation. That ruled out Florida. Georgia, Vince Dooley wanted me to be a linebacker. Ruled out Georgia. Visited Clemson. Didn't like Danny Ford chewing tobacco, particularly during my official visit. So, decided to rule out Clemson."

What Green arrived to was a Morrison-led coaching staff steeped

in experience and a roster loaded in talent, while Morrison himself, the man fans consider the best coach in USC history, continued to work his magic inside Williams-Brice.

"(Morrison) was one of the best coaches I've ever had," Green said. "Very adamant about what he was doing and coaching. Former players make the best coaches, it goes without saying."

"He treated us a little more on a professional level."

Green's teammates were nothing short of some of the best talent to ever pass through the Gamecock program.

"I was lied to," Green said with a laugh. "I was told we were going to be in the I-formation. They were going to pitch it Harold right, Harold left, Harold off tackle, left-right."

"Players in the backfield involved in the passing game. And when I got here my freshman year, we were looking at film of Canadian football. They had four receivers, one back, sometimes five receivers, no back." Even though the system was new,