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IN OUR OPINION

Simple gesture stirs tensions before game

Shake hands and come out fighting? Forget about it. A pre-game handshake between members of USC and Clemson's football squads Saturday is a pointless attempt to remind fans and players of the lowest point in a more than 100-year-old rivalry.

While such a gesture is commendable in both schools' efforts to make a more healthy atmosphere in this sometimes brutal rivalry, this measure is wholly empty, symbolic of lowered expectations and watered-down intensity.

We don't — no, can't — believe another brawl will erupt this year. With the bright glare of national attention on Steve Spurrier and his surprisingly effective first-year stint as coach, another slugfest would be the cruel pinch that wakes us from a dream-like season.

Let this rivalry bring out our most primal instincts to win — without crossing the line into thuggish assault.

The players know this. They have to. That Spurrier has imbued his team with the sportsmanlike conduct that comes with the limelight remains to be seen — getting doused with a Gatorade cooler after beating

Florida might have been a slight overreaction — but the ol' ball coach has proved he doesn't stand for rule-breakers.

Both teams were disciplined for last year's infamous brawl — our bowl-less 2004 season is a constant reminder of that — and the sour conclusion to Lou Holtz's career should be left in the past.

And while a brawl is less likely than seeing Cockey strutting about in an orange jersey, all it would take is one revved-up idiot on either side to slap a hand away mid-shake. Why even entertain the outside chance of another Battle Royale?

The only due respect we should give each other is to refrain from sucker punches and groin kicks. Aside from that, let the criticisms, barbs and trash-talking fly. Let this rivalry bring out our most primal instincts to win — without crossing the line into thuggish assault.

By the way, go Cocks.



Cartoon courtesy of KRT Campus

Rivalry means more than hating hillbillies

Annual state matchup allows fans to reflect on great USC tradition

As we approach another Clemson/Carolina weekend here in Columbia, it's easy to lose sight of what's important. So often as fans we get caught up in the atmosphere of game day and miss the real point of the game.

Everyone knows Clemson sucks.

It's easy to point out even the cutest Southern girl looks ugly in a pair of orange overalls. And who doesn't laugh when a guy walks by wearing a purple-and-orange striped shirt, game day or not? And what diehard Carolina fan doesn't enjoy ticking off the numerous NCAA violations Clemson's 1981 "championship" team was cited for? And talk about lack of imagination, how lousy a mascot is a tiger? Off the top of my head, in 10 seconds I can name Princeton, LSU, Auburn, Memphis, Grambling State, Jackson State and Missouri who are all much better "tigers" than Clemson (and that's totally leaving out the Idaho State Bengals who are practically tigers).

Honestly, I can understand the tendency to couch the game in terms of how much everyone hates Clemson. As proof, here's a rehash of a phone conversation I had with a friend while at the



JACOB DAVIS
Third-year print journalism student

Clemson/Carolina game held in Clemson last year.

Me: Dude, I'm lost. I have no idea where I am or where you are.

Friend: Describe some land marks, what are you around?

Me: Um ... there's some trees.

Friend: What else?

Me: Um ... grass ... shrubs ... some cows ... some more trees.

Friend: That doesn't help me.

Me: I don't know what to tell you dude. That's all there is.

Yes, it's easy to see how Clemson is just another backwater of degeneracy making the rest of our otherwise proud state look bad. I mean honestly, is there any need for any college east of Nebraska to have "agricultural science" as a major?

No, Clemson/Carolina weekend isn't about how bad Clemson sucks but rather how awesome we are. It's about the proud traditions we have here at Carolina.

Like defending Steve Taneyhill's mullet. Like wishing ESPN would dump Michael Irvin and bring back Sterling Sharpe. Like arguing "The Heisman" should be renamed "The Rogers." Like explaining to a Clemson fan that they do not, in fact bleed

orange but garnet. Like screaming at the television when one of the announcers refers to Southern Cal as "USC" when our university was founded half a century before California was even a state.

But USC and Clemson football is even more than the game.

It's wrapping the tin foil that was on the potato salad around the rabbit ears of your black and white to pick up Jefferson Pilot's broadcast. It's watching a little kid play catch with his dad. It's seeing three or four generations of one family are gathered together for one special day. It's having the best time possible with 80,000 of your closest friends.

So don't give Clemson the satisfaction of your hate. Leave them to their cow tipping and moonshining. When you see them around town Saturday, greet them with the cordial Southern hospitality one expects from residents of the civilized areas of South Carolina. There's no reason to harass, attack or kill them. After all, they're Clemson fans. They're already dead inside.

So sit back and enjoy the game, secure in the knowledge that you are a Gamecock and a part of the best university in South Carolina.

Gamecocks, Tigers can break mold, fall in love

Special girl belongs to enemy, but pure hatred of school continues

Last November, I wrote a column about a certain South Carolina institution that made



CHASE STOUDENMIRE
Second-year history student

fun of, among other things, its appearance, intellect and usefulness to society. Don't get me wrong; I'm not about to take any of that back. But I'm going to take a different look at our drunken

redheaded step-cousin of a university, Clemson.

If you ever casually search Facebook for the word "Clemson," you'll find more than 50 groups making fun of them in one way or another. "Breathe if you hate Clemson." "People who think Clemson should be blown up with a fissionable atomic bomb."

Think about it — there are more Clemson hate groups than liberal and conservative hate groups combined. I would imagine that Clemson's administration might find that disturbing if they found out.

Good thing they can't read. Or count.

More interestingly however, you'll find three groups specifically for people who are — shockingly enough — romantically involved with one of them Tiger folk. Step aside, Romeo and Juliet. We're taking forbidden love to a whole new level.

How could this happen? I mean, there are some things in life that just don't belong together. Plaids and stripes. Ashlee Simpson and microphones. Gamecocks and Tigers.

This phenomenon causes me to ask several questions. Do we hate the school because of the people, or do we hate the people because of the school? Is it better to love a beast than to love nothing at all? Is Lauren Bowden single? Where's my digital camera?

These are some of the many things that I don't know. But now, in a moment of vulnerability, I'm going to share with you what I do know. For the past four months, I've been living with a huge skeleton in my closet.

I love a Tiger — and I'm not talking about the one on your box of Frosted Flakes.

I come from a public school in South Carolina. For kids like me, we basically have two options upon graduation. Half of us go to Carolina, and the leftovers go to Clemson.

Every now and then, one of the good ones slips through the cracks and ends up wearing orange. It's unfortunate, but it happens.

Accordingly, for most South Carolinians, this weekend brings much more than a football game. It gives us an opportunity to see some old friends, some new enemies and some future spouses. To be honest, a lot of us hate the Tigers almost as much as we love them.

Regardless of who wins, I'm kinda glad to have these visitors around for a few days. With that said, I hope my Gamecocks go out Saturday and pound the living crap out of their precious little kitty cats in orange.

Rivals sure stink at book learnin' and such

When Carolina seems bad, think about those illiterate Upstate hicks

After the spectacular failures of the Kansas fiasco, it strikes a writer that there's nowhere else you could ever possibly go.

There's literally no further down. You can dig and dig, but Kansas is the bottom end of the spectrum of rubbish. And now I'm supposed to follow it up with something.

But then after my metaphorical digging, I saw the light. It was a garish, conflicting color that made my eyes want to bleed. An unholy combination of purple and orange that left me crying inside.

Yes, that digging leads you to the upstate of South Carolina, at a place that the good person dare not speak. A land of dread, a land of misery, a land of overpaid football coaches.

USC faces off with its rivals in two different sports this weekend, with the men's rugby team playing Friday night and the football team playing Saturday. The Blatt and Williams-Brice Stadium will be the two venues of contest.

Accepting the success of the unholy orange-and-purple wearers in sports is a bitter pill to swallow. But some people (especially their students) forget



AARON BRAZIER
Third-year philosophy student

it's a degree-awarding establishment as well.

That university we dare not name for fear of the death of our firstborn has many proud successes academically. Why, just last year their literary rate jumped up a marvelous 10 percent to 35 percent. More than a quarter of their students can also use a knife and fork.

On the other hand, that's a misleading statistic because they don't use them correctly.

Our good friends up north have even started talking about opening a degree program in cow tipping to rival Oklahoma State. Their vast success in animal feces analysis (zoology, as the civilized world calls it) is fantastic, and their nanotechnology program might rival USC's someday — if they can find their little critters!

Other statistics include the fact that they just bought an old Amiga computer from a thrift store, thus doubling their computing ability. They've even started to introduce English classes. If only they didn't learn it all from old

copies of an almanac.

Their philosophy department is known locally as "that there place where people think good." Yes, it's colloquially charming, but so is okra. And philosophy is not okra.

That university whose existence makes one question the existence of God does amazingly have students who have nice things to say. Or at least I think they do, because trying to figure out the verbal diarrhea is a serious exercise for a native English speaker. Frankly, the sight of a degree-wielding farmer scares the living daylights out of me in the first place.

Basically, I'm supporting the rugby and football teams this weekend because our university rocks. It's not perfect and never will be, but look at our rivals. Come on. Think about it. Think about what they wear, by choice as well. People elect to go to this forsaken university, too. They elect to. They choose to. God help us.

We will end the season with good records in the two mentioned sports, but we all have something good to say here. USC would never sink so low as to drug our players to win a national championship. Garnet and black looks much prettier on a person, too.

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CORRECTIONS

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