

GamecockCentral.com's

GAMEDAYGUIDE

PRESEASON EDITION



**WHAT'S
INSIDE**

POSITION BATTLES | SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS
TV SCHEDULE | FRESHMAN FOCUS
COMMITMENT LIST | MARQUEE GAMES
ALL-OPPONENT TEAM

COVER DESIGN BY TREY ASBELLE

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Date	Opponent	Time	TV
Sep. 3	North Carolina*	6:00	
Sep. 12	Kentucky	7:30	
Sep. 19	at Georgia	6:00	
Sep. 26	UCF	TBA	TBA
Oct. 3	at Missouri	TBA	TBA
Oct. 10	LSU	TBA	TBA
Oct. 17	Vanderbilt	TBA	TBA
Oct. 31	at Texas A&M	TBA	TBA
Nov. 7	at Tennessee	TBA	TBA
Nov. 14	Florida	TBA	TBA
Nov. 21	The Citadel	TBA	TBA
Nov. 28	Clemson	TBA	TBA

*at Bank of America Stadium (Charlotte)

OFFENSIVE GUARD

by Chris Clark

USC has to complete a task that seems nearly impossible in replacing one of the best left guards in the country, A.J. Cann. It's not likely that USC has anyone on the roster that will be able to replicate Cann's production and leadership, but a good player is needed to man that important spot and create some stability. Cody Waldrop has played both guard and center during his time at USC and is currently listed on the depth chart as a starter, a depth chart that is certainly not a set lineup by any means. Redshirt freshman Donell Stanley has done very well since arriving at South Carolina and although he has no in-game experience, has a chance to win the job depending on his play in preseason camp.



L to R: Senior OL **Mike Matulis** | Freshman OL **Donell Stanley** | Photos by Chris Gillespie

A wildcard would be Mike Matulis, who won the right guard job in preseason last season before going down with injury. Matulis is listed on the depth chart at right tackle, but could also play a guard position inside if needed. This will be an interesting battle to watch, with the most likely candidates being Waldrop or Stanley at this moment.

QUARTERBACK

by Wes Mitchell



L to R: (RS) Jr. Perry Orth | Fr. Lorenzo Nunez | (RS) So. Connor Mitch

Redshirt sophomore quarterback Connor Mitch has to be considered the odds-on favorite to start the season opener against North Carolina, but can you ever really truly predict the winner of a quarterback battle when it involves Steve Spurrier? Spurrier has shown that he's not scared to go against the grain and start the quarterback who he thinks gives the best chance to win, regardless of what the common perception is on who the starter should be. What do we know at this point? Mitch had a good spring and finished it off with a good spring game. He's got the ability to get the job done, but obviously lacks experience at this time. Perry Orth might be a walk-on, but he's an extremely hard worker and probably knows the offense better than anyone on the team. We all know that Spurrier wants his quarterback to be an extension of him and we know that Spurrier likes Orth a great deal, so can he truly be counted out? Probably not. Freshman Lorenzo Nunez also brings a different element to the position as the best athlete the Gamecocks have at quarterback. If Nunez moves the team when he's in there, could he ultimately take the job? All of these are questions that will be answered in time. Mitch has to be considered the favorite, but with Spurrier and quarterbacks, nothing is ever for sure.

BRANDON WILDS

by Wes Mitchell



Senior RB **Brandon Wilds** | Photo by Chris Gillespie

Running back Brandon Wilds enters his final season in the South Carolina program with the opportunity to put up big numbers. While Wilds will share the backfield with redshirt sophomore David Williams and, to a lesser extent, fellow senior Shon Carson, the Gamecocks' question mark at quarterback should mean Wilds is handed the football plenty in 2015. Not very highly recruited out of high school, Wilds has shown he belongs at the SEC level, though nagging injuries and sharing the rock with running backs like Marcus Lattimore and Mike Davis has kept him from having a true All-SEC level season. Wilds ranks 28th on Carolina's all-time rushing list with 1,277 yards on 256 carries. Also an excellent receiver and solid pass protector, Wilds should be in line to start and have a career year for the Gamecocks.

BRANDON SHELL

by Chris Clark



Senior OL **Brandon Shell** | Photo by Chris Gillespie

A former Rivals100 prospect and Shrine Bowl selection, Shell played a bit in 2011 after recovering from labrum surgery and ended up taking a redshirt. From the 2012 season onward, he's been a fixture for the Gamecocks up front. Shell brings a consecutive games started streak of 35 into the 2015 season. Shell is likely to have plenty of NFL buzz, given his size, athleticism, and NFL bloodlines (nephew of Art Shell). The Goose Creek product has played right tackle for the Gamecocks in prior seasons but Shawn Elliott could move him to the left side this season as USC searches for the best combination within the starting five. Regardless of what side he mans, Shell is the most experienced player on the offensive line for the Gamecocks and will be a big key to the 2015 campaign.

D.J. NEAL

by Chris Clark

Take a look at the NFL Draft and it is littered with former two-sport athletes. Gamecock freshman wide receiver D.J. Neal has a chance to be one of them. A four-star receiver prospect, Neal was also a standout baseball player in high school that was a 32nd-round draft pick of the Atlanta Braves. If not for his desire to attend college and lofty signing bonus demands, he would have been a much higher pick.



Freshman WR D.J. Neal | Photo by Rivals.com

Neal has height, frame, athleticism, and ball skills on the football field and could also factor in as a member of USC's baseball team as an outfielder if he decides to play both. This fall, USC is looking for some receivers to step up opposite Pharoh Cooper and Neal is an intriguing candidate. He will have every opportunity to earn himself some playing time if he performs well in fall practice.

LORENZO NUNEZ

by Wes Mitchell

Freshman quarterback Lorenzo Nunez immediately became the Gamecocks' most athletic quarterback when he stepped on campus for the Summer I session and it's that athleticism that will make him a threat to avoid a redshirt this season. Nunez didn't necessarily play on a very good high school team and will, of course, have to learn head coach Steve Spurrier's system quickly if he's going to help much in 2015, but his athleticism and leadership ability should carry him a long way while he's learning the playbook.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see GC's in-depth video feature on Nunez.



Freshman QB Lorenzo Nunez | Photo by Rivals.com

Spurrier has seen his eyes opened to the need for having a quarterback with wheels, so Nunez should get a package in the offense that will allow him to make an impact. South Carolina will, of course, still use Pharoh Cooper in his Wildcat role in order to get the ball in his hands, but Nunez also is a perfect fit for that and could bring the opportunity for more wrinkles to that look with his passing ability as he gets more comfortable.

ALLOPPONENTTEAM

OFFENSE

by Rixon Lane

QB	Deshawn Watson	Clemson
RB	Nick Chubb	Georgia
RB	Leonard Fournette	LSU
WR	Mike Williams	Clemson
WR	Artavis Scott	Clemson
TE	Steven Scheu	Vanderbilt
OL	Evan Boehm	Missouri
OL	Sam Frye	The Citadel
OL	Landon Turner	North Carolina
OL	Greg Pyke	Georgia
OL	Mike Matthews	Texas A&M

OFFENSIVE SPOTLIGHT

by Rixon Lane

Nick Chubb - Georgia

Sophomore RB

Replacing Todd Gurley is no small task, but Chubb appears to be up to the task. The sophomore's bowling ball style of running and his underrated speed make him one of the country's most unstoppable backs. With Keith Marshall taking some of the reps, Chubb isn't likely to wear down.



DEFENSE

by Rixon Lane

DL	Mitchell Jeter	The Citadel
DL	Shaq Lawson	Clemson
DL	Thomas Niles	UCF
DL	Myles Garrett	Texas A&M
LB	Jordan Jenkins	Georgia
LB	Curt Maggitt	Tennessee
LB	Kendell Beckwith	LSU
DB	Vernon Hargreaves III	Florida
DB	Jalen Mills	LSU
DB	Mackensie Alexander	Clemson
DB	Jayron Kearse	Clemson

DEFENSIVE SPOTLIGHT

by Rixon Lane

Vernon Hargreaves III

Junior CB



The most disruptive defensive back in the SEC, Hargreaves led the league last season with 13 pass breakups. His ability to blanket any wideout makes him a top NFL prospect. Hargreaves has the pure coverage skills needed in the open field, but can get physical at the line of scrimmage.

TOP 3 GAMES

by Rixon Lane



The season opener sets the tone for the entire year. The 2013 opener was the beginning of the four-month Jadeveon Clowney soap opera. Last year's opener showed that the Gamecock defense was not ready for prime time. What will the Gamecocks learn in The Queen City on Thursday night?



How on Earth did South Carolina beat Georgia last season? The Bulldogs, thanks to Dylan Thompson's sneak, missed a trip to the SEC Championship game by about the width of the period at the end of this sentence. Can the Gamecocks beat Georgia for the fifth time in six years?



The streak is over and Clemson appears to be loaded on offense in 2015. The Tigers haven't beaten the Gamecocks in back-to-back season since 2007-08, but they will be favored to do so. If the Gamecocks finish the regular season with a rivalry win, it will erase any disappointments from August until November.

COMMITMENTLIST

Name	Pos	Ht/Wt	Stars	Rank
P.J. Blue	LB	6-4/201	★★★★★	12
Marlon Character	DB	6-0/173	★★★★★	12
Akeem Cooperwood	OL	6-8/340	★★★	NR
Bryan Edwards	WR	6-3/205	★★★★★	54
C.J. Freeman	RB	5-11/195	★★★	19
Jaqui Givens	DB	6-1/165	★★★	41
Tre Jackson	DB	5-10/178	★★★	37
Brandon McIlwain	QB	6-0/188	★★★	22
Jacorey Morris	LB	6-3/220	★★★	56
Will Putnam	OL	6-5/270	★★	NR
Chris Smith	WR	5-10/168	★★	NR
Jordan Smith	DE	6-6/220	★★★	34
Cecil Stallings	DE	6-4/250	★★★	NR

QUICKSHOT

2016 QB **Brandon McIlwain**

Dual-threat QB
 Newtown, PA
 6'0"
 188 lbs.

Rivals Rating		★★★★★
RANKINGS		
POSITION	NATIONAL	STATE
22	NO RATING	8
Rivals Rating	About	4.9 — 6.1 — 5.7

Photo by Rivals.com

