Gamecocks Are All New For Meeting With Tech

By BILL MILLSAPS

When South Carolina's football fortunes went from bad to worse to horrendous at the start of the 1972 season, beleaguered coach Paul Dietzel didn't waste any time.

Even though the one-time boy wonder of the college coaching ranks has 11 years remaining on a 12-year contract, he took drastic action. After the Gamecocks had failed to score and produced only one first down in a 21-0 loss to Ole Miss (lowering South Carolina's record to 0-3), Dietzel took the pro-set offense he had built around transfer quarterback Bill Troup and hurled it in the direction of the nearest trash can.

WHAT THE GAMECOCKS will present Saturday afternoon in Blacksburg, where they meet Virginia Tech, is a play-action, sprint-out offense built around the skills of sophomore quarterback Dobby Grossman. There are few offensive similarities between the Gamecocks of Sept. 9, who were soundly whipped by Virginia, and the Gamecocks of this week. "They look like a completely different football team," said an impressed Charlie Coffey, the Tech coach.

PLAGUED BY imexperience in their offensive line, the Gamecocks have lost five of their eight games. But they gave evidence of growing maturity in a resounding 35-3 win over Wake Forest last Saturday night.

A second-team center is the only senior on South Carolina's offensive line two-deep chart, and that young up-front bunch simply blew the Deacons off the line of scrimmage. In the first seven games, South Carolinians netted only 674 yards rushing. In the Wake game alone, they collected 358 yards, 120 of them gained by Jay Lynn Hodgins.

Meanwhile, Troup, who left the Virginia football team in pre-season practice of 1971, languishes on the bench. At the moment, he is a third-string quarterback behind Grossman and freshman Jeff Grantz.

As South Carolina reaches for a consistently strong offense, Coffey believes his team also has problems along that line.

"I haven't been satisfied with our offense since the Houston game (a 27-27 tie)," said Coffey. "We've lost too many third-down battles. We're having to punt too much. If we have 13 possessions during a game, we've got to score more than two or three times.

"We've got the passing game, sure, but it's a ball-control passing game, and controlling the ball is not what we are doing. We are giving it up entirely too much."

Coffey's hopes for some satisfaction rest on the right arm of quarterback Don Strock, No. 1 nationally in total offense and No. 2 in passing.

WHILE THE HOKIES will be seeking to raise their record to 5-3-1 Saturday afternoon, the nation's mail system will be dispatching some special Tech publicity material to the Heisman Trophy voting board.

"I think Don deserves the Heisman Trophy as much as anybody," said Coffey, and so tomorrow the "campaign" flyers will go out of the Hokies' publicity offense. The bulk of the information will be Strock's eye-popping statistics over the past two years (in his last 19 games, he has accounted for 4,791 yards).

"We are just going to send out the information, and let that speak for itself," said Coffey.

The Hokies play unbeaten and No. 2-ranked Alabama Saturday week in Tuscaloosa, and Coffey insists that "there ain't anybody around here thinking about Alabama. We know that we have to play like hell every week just to have a chance to win."

The Tech coach added that he would send only one scout to Saturday's battle between the Crimson Tide and Louisiana State. "We don't need but one," said Coffey. "When you play folks like Alabama, a whole bunch of scouts aren't going to do you any more good than one."