After Winning Year Clemson Wants More

After one winning football season (1974) in nine years, the folks around Clemson, S.C. have grown hungry for a winner. This season, in just three short weeks, the '77 edition of the Clemson Tigers has given those people plenty of reason to believe they have one.

Under the direction of new head coach Charley Pell, a former assistant at Tech, Clemson has been impressive. After dropping a hard-fought opener to highly rated Maryland (21-14) the Tigers have come on to defeat both Georgia (7-6) and Georgia Tech (31-14). Those victories equal the entire output of the '75 season (2-9) and are just one shy of last season's mark (3-6-2).

Employing a new offensive system, the Tigers have succeeded by molding good, solid football with plenty of enthusiasm. It's not fancy...but it has proven effective.

The heartbeat of the squad's new "I" formation offense is junior quarterback Steve Fuller. The 6-4, 198-pounder is an experienced leader and a capable passer, having completed on 46 per cent of his passes for 338 yards and one touchdown.

When Fuller elects to pass, his favorite target is split end Jerry Butler (6-1, 173). Against Georgia Tech, the Tiger quarterback connected on five of nine passes for 163 yards, all to Butler. Overall the junior receiver has 12 receptions for 253 yards (an average of 21.1 yards per catch) and one TD.

Starting flanker Dwight Clark (6-3, 207; Jr) and backup Rick Weddington (6-2, 193; Sr) also provide skilled targets for Fuller, as does tight end Cliff Bray (6-1, 220; Jr) who replaces injured starter Trav Webb.

When looking for yardage on the ground, the Tigers have speedy tailback Lester Brown (6-0, 178; So) and diminutive Warren Ratchford (5-8, 151; Jr). Brown who won a starting berth from Ratchford, leads the squad in rushing (171 yards on 38 carries) and scoring (three tds). Ratchford is second in rushing with 110 yards in 22 attempts--an average of five yards a carry.

Joining Brown in the "I" is sophomore fullback Tracy Perry, a 6-0, 220-pounder who has carried the ball 21 times for 84 yards.

Along the offensive front, the Tigers return four starters, including mammoth tackle Lacy Brumley (6-7, 275; Sr). Guards Steve Kenney (6-4, 241; Jr) and Joe Bostic (6-4, 258; Jr), and tackle Jimmy Weeks (6-4, 231; Sr) give the unit experience, with sophomore center Jeff Bostic (6-1, 221) the only newcomer.

Defensively, Clemson is strong at end, where starters Jonathan Brooks (6-3, 212; Jr) and Mark Heniford (5-11, 199; Sr) return. The Tigers also return starters Rich Tuten (6-1, 227; Jr) at middle guard and sophomore Jim Stuckey (6-4, 235) at left tackle. Two-year letterman Archie Reese (6-3, 258; Sr) is the starting right tackle.

The linebacking duties also fall in capable hands with...