

2008 Florida Football

Post-Game Notes

Florida vs. South Carolina

November 15, 2008

- ◆ This was the fifth straight game Florida scored 42 points or more, which matched the second-longest streak in school history (1996 and 2001). It is also tied with Oklahoma for the longest active streak in the country.
- ◆ Head Coach Urban Meyer is now 16-5 all-time against ranked opponents, 14-5 at Florida. He has led the Gators to wins over eight of the last 10 ranked opponents and 13 of the last 16.
- ◆ UF did not lose to an SEC East team this year and has gone undefeated against division teams 10 times in school history.
- ◆ USC remained unable to notch a win in Gainesville, as it is now 0-12 all-time. Florida increased its series lead to 22-4-3 overall and has claimed 16 of the last 17 meetings. Steve Spurrier is 1-3 against his former team and has lost the last three consecutive meetings.
- ◆ Prior to today's game, the most points the Gamecocks had allowed in 2008 were 24 and were allowing only 15.6 points per game. The Gators scored 28 points with a little over 11 minutes to play in the first half.
- ◆ USC was ranked third in the nation in total defense, allowing only 256.5 yards per game. The Gators racked up 519 offensive yards today. The Gamecocks were also fourth in the nation in pass defense, only allowing 155.1 yards/game. The Gators registered 173 passing yards.
- ◆ Prior to today's game, the Gamecock defense allowed opponents on 101.4 rushing yards per game and 12 rushing touchdowns on the year. Junior wide receiver/running back Percy Harvin collected 167 rushing yards alone on the day. UF tallied 346 total rushing yards and five rushing touchdowns.
- ◆ The last time Florida recorded at least 300 rushing yards as a team was on Sept. 13, 2003 against Florida A&M (309). The last time UF recorded over 300 rushing yards in an SEC game was on Oct. 12, 1996 against LSU (308). The 346 yards is the most since the Gators tallied 362 against Vanderbilt on Oct. 14, 1989.
- ◆ The Gators averaged 13.3 yards per play in today's game, which is the highest average this season by 5.6 yards (7.7 against Arkansas and LSU).
- ◆ Junior athlete Brandon James set new Florida records with 427 single-season punt return yards, surpassing Jacquez Green's 392 yards set in 1997. His 1,044 career punt return yards ranks first in Florida record books as well, passing Keiwan Ratliff's (2000-03) 860.
- ◆ For the first time in his career, junior quarterback Tim Tebow has thrown multiple touchdown passes in six straight games (46-yard pass to Deonte Thompson in second quarter; five-yard pass to Aaron Hernandez in fourth quarter).
- ◆ After the Gators were held scoreless in their first two possessions of the game, they rallied back to score three touchdowns in 2:15, taking a 21-0 lead with just over two minutes to play in the first quarter.
- ◆ Junior linebacker Brandon Spikes returned an interception 12 yards for a touchdown with 4:37 left in the first quarter. It marked his third interception of the season and his second return for a touchdown, joining Darryl Gamble (Georgia) and Sean Weatherspoon (Missouri) as the only linebackers in the country with two interception returns for touchdowns. He ties Florida's all-time high for interception returns for a touchdown.
- ◆ Sophomore safety Ahmad Black made UF's second interception with 3:58 remaining in the first quarter, recording his sixth interception of the season. He is tied for fourth in Florida record books for single-season interceptions and is currently tied for first in the country.
- ◆ Junior wide receiver/running back Percy Harvin ran for a touchdown with 3:52 left in the first quarter, marking his 12th straight game of scoring a touchdown. Harvin's streak ties for first nationally (Michael Crabtree, Texas Tech). He now has six rushing TDs on the year and 15 in his career.
- ◆ For the first play of the second half, Harvin rushed for an 80-yard touchdown, setting a new career long. It also ties Florida's seventh-longest touchdown run in school history.
- ◆ With 476 rushing yards in 2008, Harvin has owns the top three spots in the Florida record book for single-season rushing yards by a wide receiver (764 in 2007, 428 in 2006).
- ◆ Redshirt senior long snapper James Smith recovered his first fumble at the one yard line with 3:43 to play in the first quarter. The Gators scored on the following drive.
- ◆ Tebow recorded his 11th rushing touchdown with 2:22 to play in the first quarter on a one-yard run. He ranks first all-time in Florida record books with 42 career rushing TDs.
- ◆ Tebow then threw his 18th touchdown pass of the year 46 yards to redshirt freshman wide receiver Deonte Thompson with 11:17 to go in the half. Thompson has caught two TDs this season.
- ◆ Sophomore punter Chas Henry tied his career-long punt with 1:29 to play in the first half with a 60-yard kick, which Florida downed at the two yard line.

- ◆ Freshman safety Will Hill recorded his first career interception with 7:05 to play in the game. He returned it for 30 yards.

Urban Meyer's Plan to Win

- *Play Great Defense*
 - With Alabama, Missouri and San Jose State yet to finish their games tonight, Florida's five interception returns for touchdowns ranks first nationally. UF has had at least one interception in nine of 10 games this year.
 - In the last 73 games, the Gators have scored points off turnovers in 52 games. 362 of UF's points under Coach Meyer have come off turnovers.
 - Florida has outscored opponents, 101-0, in the first quarter over the last six games and 125-7 on the year.
 - UF has allowed just two first-half touchdowns all season and is outscoring opponents, 199-26, before the half.
 - The Gator defense did not allow the Gamecocks to enter Florida territory until just over 11 minutes to play in the second quarter.
 - Florida forced South Carolina to punt six times in the first half, bringing the season total to 34 times UF has forced opponents to punt in the first half.
 - In eight of 10 games, UF has not allowed its opponents' offense to score a touchdown in at least one half.
 - The Gators did not allow a touchdown in the entire game.
 - UF has not allowed a rushing touchdown in the last four games. UF has allowed five on the entire year.
- *Turnovers*
 - UF increased its turnover margin to +15; tallying three interceptions and one fumble recovery today.
 - Florida only has 10 turnovers this season
 - Because Penn State threw an interception in its game today, Florida is now the only school to throw only three interceptions this year.
- *Score in the Red Zone*
 - The Gators have scored on 40-of-43 trips inside the red zone and did not allow USC to enter the red zone the entire game. The closest the Gamecocks got was the 24 yardline.
- *Win the Kicking Game*
 - Overall, UF has started 28 drives in opponent territory this season and the Gators have scored on 23 of those.
 - Florida has punted only 34 times this season
- ◆ Attendance: 90,646
- ◆ Game Captains: Louis Murphy, Brandon Spikes, Ryan Stamper and Phil Trautwein; Florida won the coin and deferred to the second half.
- ◆ Weather at Kickoff: 67°F with winds out of the west at 14 mph; light rain, humidity: 86%
- ◆ Prior to the game, the 2009 Hall of Fame Inductees were announced, the Gator Women's Golf team was recognized for its 2008 SEC Championship, golfer Jessica Yadloczky received the 2008 SEC Sportsmanship Award and head women's golf coach Jill Briles-Hinton was recognized for her 2002 SEC Coach of the Year award.
- ◆ Between the first and second quarters, the Gator Women's Tennis team was recognized for its 2008 SEC Championship and in the second quarter, the 1998 women's tennis team was recognized for the 10-year anniversary of the NCAA Championship.
- ◆ Gator student-athletes are sponsoring the season-long "Gators Canned Goods Challenge for Kids," a canned food drive to benefit the Bread of the Mighty Food Bank in Gainesville. Fans are asked to bring cans to every home football game in 2008.

2008 Florida Football
Post-Game Quotes
Urban Meyer
Florida Head Coach
Florida vs. South Carolina
November 15, 2008

Opening Statement:

"This was a great win. I'm very pleased. The defense played phenomenal. They gave us momentum, which was worth 14 points. Hats off to Coach Charlie Strong and the defensive players. I am excited about our kickoff team above anything else."

On Sophomore Linebacker Brandon Hicks...

"He is making the normal progression. He played phenomenal on kickoff. He is very outspoken and a positive motivator."

Update on Injuries...

"Carl Johnson has an MCL sprain and Jason Watkins left the game with a concussion."

On Coach Strong...

"He is one of my close friends. He is also the best coordinators in the country. It's not schemes, more of getting good players and developing them. You can see it in players like Spikes, Black and Jenkins.. That's his strength."

On Depth of Team...

"Our catches are spread out. There is not one guy you have to lean on. That is a sign of good recruiting."

On South Carolina...

"That is a first-class outfit. That is a good football team with good players. Number 84 [Jared Cook] is a great player. He is a first round pick."

2008 Florida Football
Post-Game Quotes
Florida Players
Florida vs. South Carolina
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Junior Running Back/Wide Receiver Percy Harvin

On the game:

"Coming into the game, we knew that South Carolina had the number one defense in the SEC. We thought our offense was the best and we had the best running backs, so we had something to prove."

On his 80-yard touchdown run:

"The coaches noticed the counter was effective all day. I scored on a counter in the first half and we came back to it on that play. Aaron Hernandez had a great block and I took it the distance. My ankle is feeling really good so I knew if I got into the open field I could score."

Junior Linebacker Brandon Spikes

On the defense:

"The effort was outstanding. I knew we would play well because we had a good week of practice. We were in the right place all day and made plays. We still have room for improvement and we will work this week to prepare for The Citadel."

On his interception and touchdown:

"Brandon Hicks put pressure on (Chris) Smelley and I was able to step in front of the ball and make a play. My hat goes off to my teammates who are playing relentlessly right now."

Senior Special Teams Specialist James Smith

On recovering the fumble on the kickoff:

"I've been in that position on kickoff for a few years now and I figured one day someone would try a trick play. Coach Spurrier is the guy to do it. They had a different guy back to receive so I expected something and kept my eye on him. When I saw the pass, I knew it was up to me to make the play. I'm glad I could help the team."

2008 Florida Football

Post-Game Quotes

Steve Spurrier

South Carolina Head Coach

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Opening Statement:

“I felt a lot worse two years ago than I did today. We got royally beat. Our defense played their hearts out in the first half. Our offense gave up two scores and then we tried the ill-advised throwback pass. I told Coach Ray, ‘Go ahead with it.’ I felt maybe we had a shot at it. We did have one-on-one coverage over there. Unfortunately, our guy couldn’t catch it. He couldn’t even fall on it and his guy got it. It was a dumb call on my part. We thought it might provide a spark. That was just seven of the points. Florida got going in the second half. The running backs they have; Percy Harvin, if he was a tailback on somebody else’s team, he’d be a 200-yards-a-game guy. Of course, their other backs are great too. They’re all pretty good. Their lines were very good. We got pushed around on offense. We couldn’t find a play. Charlie Strong and his guys had good coverages and good pass rush. Our quarterback play struggled, and when you add it all up you get clobbered. We got clobbered this year. I don’t know what we could have done differently except try to keep things close. We did force six punts by Florida, so we made our defense play the whole game. Overall, they (Florida) did a lot good things. We gave Florida way too many opportunities.

On Florida’s team compared to 2006:

“This team is a lot better than the one two years ago. I said they had a chance (two years ago) because they won all of the close ones two years ago. This team that they have now is a lot stronger than that one in my opinion.”

On the game possibly being the worst loss in his career:

“I don’t know about that. It was the worst this year; I know that. A loss is a loss, whether it’s by one point or 50 points. Sometimes getting your butt beat real good is better than a one-pointer or two-pointer. We’ll find out when we play Clemson in a few weeks whether we can regroup or not.”

2008 Florida Football

Post-Game Quotes

South Carolina Players

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Freshman Quarterback Steve Garcia

On being down early at Florida...

"Their defense was playing great. We really hurt ourselves by committing those turnovers. It's hard to dig out of a 21-point deficit. They threw a lot of coverages at us and made things difficult all night"

On the tough loss to Florida...

"They played a great game. We'll have to leave this one here and focus on Clemson. A loss is a loss; it's hard to take any way it comes."

On Florida's defense...

"They have the best defense I have ever played against. They did a lot of things really well."

Sophomore Quarterback Chris Smelley

On Florida's defense...

"That was the best defense I have ever played against. They move players around, stand-off guys and bring lots of different looks we weren't used to seeing."

On warning his brother Brad, who plays for Alabama...

"I let my brother know that Florida is playing really good right now."

Sophomore Outside Tackle Jarriel King

On the loss to Florida...

"It was a tough game. The Florida Gators are a pretty good team. They bring a lot of motion to the game using a lot of different players."

On rebounding to the loss versus Florida...

"No one wants to play a game the way we did. We made mistakes and they took advantage of their opportunities. We will have to play better than that against Clemson."