December 4, 2010

Auburn – 56
South Carolina – 17

An Interview With:

SOUTH CAROLINA
COACH STEVE SPURRIER

COACH SPURRIER: Defense really struggled and offensively we had some opportunities the first half, and then there's the second half. And just didn't (indiscernible) different things that just give us much of a chance. But maybe it would not have mattered. Maybe if we played these guys ten times, they may win nine of them or more. Who knows.

So it didn't happen. It didn't happen for us. We needed to play a really, really good game. And we weren't very close to that.

But give Auburn credit. And so I think Auburn's got a chance to win it all, if they play like this. I think Oregon will play a lot better than we did, certainly. But they do have a chance to win it all in about a month or so.

But, anyway, Cam Newton, not only can he kick it and run, he's an excellent passer. We couldn't stop him (indiscernible) we knew we had to stay on the floor offensively (indiscernible).

Anyway, we got beat early. We had a good year. It wasn't a super year that we had all hoped for as Gamecocks. But it's a very good year. If we win a Bowl game, we win ten games and tie the school record (indiscernible). That's what we'll try to do.

Q. (Indiscernible) the end of the game?

COACH SPURRIER: You know, that was -- at the time looked like a big play (indiscernible) beat us 49 to 17, or 56 to 17 as it turned out, and they only punted once. But, yeah, it was a strange play because our defensive end, every day in practice we try to rush wide, let the guy buy a little time and get outside. (Indiscernible) rushed inside, when he threw it I said, Oh, gosh, what's going to happen. I don't know what's going to happen. When it ricocheted up, they got a score on us.

As all people know, the best way to defend that (indiscernible) but we didn't do that. So we didn't do a lot of things very well today, offensively, defensively. And special teams we didn't do much either.

So just give Auburn credit. I apologize to Carolina fans that came. That was the loudest pregame I've ever been to in my life. And I thank the Gamecock fans. I wish we could have given you something to cheer about during the game, but we couldn't do it. Auburn was too good for us.

But I will say that pregame noise by both schools I think is the loudest I've ever heard. Unfortunately, didn't help our guys play, didn't help us coach, I guess. But our fans are super and I appreciate all of them coming in this game, and hopefully we'll be back here again someday and win this thing.

Q. (Indiscernible)?

COACH SPURRIER: That was a communication breakdown. We told him kick a line drive, and he decides to kick a one-hopper. But he told me he was trying to kick a line drive. Now we wanted to kick that line drive, make it, get to the return there. At any rate, they started on the 4, actually hit it five-yard out. 16 seconds. We didn't quite get the kickoff. But the last play, that should not have happened, but it did.

But, again, it was only seven points. We got beat by, what, 35 or more. So, anyway, that was just one thing. That didn't cost us the game.

Q. Now that you played them twice, what advice would you like to give to Oregon?

COACH SPURRIER: I don't give advice. They'll play their game. They're dang good. They're good and I really think the two best offensive spread coaches in the country are going

at it. So it will be heck of a game. Might be 60 to 55, something like that. Maybe. I don't know. Maybe somebody will rise up and play a lot of great defense. Auburn was tough today. They were tough on us. Give them credit. Didn't have many yards.

Q. Obviously Cam Newton is the Heisman favorite. Is he that good at what you showed today?

COACH SPURRIER: Yeah, he really is. I mean, not only can -- you can't tackle him. He's got about four or five, six seconds back there. Auburn's offensive line is one of the best in the nation. They really are. They're good. I mean, you ought to go interview some of those guys also.

Cam, he's almost a one-man show. But those guys really, really helped. And the receivers are pretty good. Very good. But with that offensive line and him it's hard to stop them. Very hard for us to stop them, that's for sure.

Q. Looked like earlier in the game you guys might be able to match them offensively?

COACH SPURRIER: First drive.

Q. First couple of drives, seemed like. Did Auburn just start playing better defensively? Did they adjust to anything, did you guys get out of rhythm?

COACH SPURRIER: No, we just didn't play well. We got sacked and we should have thrown it here. But, anyway, we're just -- we're not a great passing team. We haven't been a great passing team pretty much all year. So if we get to where we gotta try to come from behind two, three touchdowns it's just a struggle for us.

And we had some opportunities there in the first half. The second half trying to put a little screen pass and I guess Steven got hit while he was trying to throw to their DB. And that really almost put us out of reach.

But, I mean, the way they were moving the ball they had one punt. We got one turnover. One fumble. We got one turnover. And we had to play a lot better. So it was -- give Auburn credit. They're a lot better than us especially tonight.

Q. They seemed pretty determined, Auburn did, to stop Marcus Lattimore.

COACH SPURRIER: Actually, Marcus averaged 5.2 a carry. He got 85 yards. And just got to where we were behind and got behind and didn't have an opportunity to give it to him that much. 16 carries for 85. I wish we could have run him 35 or 40. But the game didn't turn out like that.

Q. You won the Heisman. You coached Heisman winners, coached against them. Have you ever seen a better player than Cam Newton?

COACH SPURRIER: That's a good question. I don't like to put anybody at the top. But he's certainly one of the best quarterbacks, runners probably ever come through college ball. And it will be interesting to watch him in pro ball. He doesn't take hard hits. Keep thinking somebody's going to put a helmet on his ribs or something, but they can't do it. Jump him, he knows how to get down, get out of bounds after he gets about 20 or 30 yards. So he's a very good player.

I know the division (indiscernible).

Q. Offensive line?

COACH SPURRIER: About like always. It wasn't that bad.

Q. Obviously the second half, the end of the first half touchdown was huge, but even that first drive that you guys failed to come away with the field goal and they answer, if you look at that touchdown at the end of the first half and what happened at the beginning of the second half, where the game got away from you?

COACH SPURRIER: They got away from us. We're like 21-14. It was a ballgame. And then 28. Then they scored -- we didn't score. We tried the field goal. I can't remember the last time he missed two in a row. In fact, he makes usually all of them. We tried about a 51 or -2 yarder there, but he said, I can reach from there, end of that dome, just pulled it a little left, and then he pushed the other one a little right.

But that's just the way we had trouble stopping them. I don't know. It may have made the game a little closer, but it was a struggle for us to beat Auburn tonight. They were 9 of 12 on third down. That's why they're first in the conference. We were only 5 of 12. Couple of years ago that would be pretty good for us.

Q. You mentioned the pregame atmosphere. I'm wondering for you being back in this game after 10 years, did you find your

emotions to be any different than in all the times you came with Florida and, if so, how?

COACH SPURRIER: A little bit. But again the noise that our Gamecocks made, it was something else. I've never heard it in pregame. I just, again, wish we could have given them a lot better performance to continue that yelling as the game went on.

They were here. They were looking for something; it just never happened. It didn't happen. And we can still tell recruits you can be on that first SEC championship team. So we can still say that. Going into my seventh year, I can still say that. Maybe we can make it happen here one day.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Coach.

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