Records predict rivalry outcome

Carolina and Clemson are two college football teams who have not enjoyed great success recently on the gridiron. And the old cliche that says when the two rivals play you can throw out the statistics and records because anything can happen, is basically not true.

Since 1960 the team with the poorer record coming into the game has managed to win twice. In 1961, USC won 21-14 after coming into the game with a 3-6-1 record when the Tigers were 5-4. In 1965, USC won 17-16 with a 4-5 record while Clemson was 5-4 prior to the game. Even then the records were very similar.

HISTORICALLY, WHEN the two teams come into the game with contrasting records, as is the case this year, the weaker team has about a ten per cent chance of an upset. Thus USC should defeat Clemson because their 6-4 record is much better than Clemson’s 2-6-2 record.

Say what you think about cliches, the facts speak for themselves. Any football prognosticator would make a million dollars if he was 90 per cent right all the time. This could be the one in ten years for a real upset but the odds are against it.

The past two games in the series best express the reality of the rivalry. Clemson finished 7-4 and was undefeated at home in 1974 when they beat USC’s 4-6 team, 33-21. It was Paul Dietzel’s coaching finale. A year later in Williams-Brice Stadium the Gamecocks finished 7-4 with a 56-29 win in Jim Carlen’s first year here while Clemson finished 2-9.

Since 1960 Clemson has had six winning seasons and two break-even years while the Gamecocks have had winning seasons four times and have broken even twice. And since 1960 Clemson and Carolina have not had winning seasons in the same year. However, in 1965 both schools finished 5-5 and in 1967 Clemson had a winning 6-5 record while USC was 5-5.

Despite the lack of great success at the two schools they each enjoy some of the best fan followings in America. Their athletic scholarship donors have been on the increase each year. This may just be one of the reasons fans from the Gamecock and IPTAY fund raising clubs follow their schools so intensely. To them, football is not only an investment, but a way of life.

In 74 previous meetings, the game has mainly served the interest of fans from the two schools while national television audiences tune into games being played in other regions of the country. Yet every year there is a uniqueness about the rivalry few can accurately explain. South Carolinians are proud football fans.

CAROLINA HAS AN incentive to play hard. A win will probably give them a Peach Bowl bid. After such a great start in the early season, Gamecock fans should be upset if USC loses and finishes 6-5. After playing two of the nation’s top teams, Georgia and Notre Dame so competitively USC appeared destined to the Gator Bowl.

Quite frankly, USC has played a much more difficult schedule then Clemson this year. When the going gets tough, this gives USC a competitive edge.

The sports world can be cruel at times. Just imagine, the future of Red Parker as Clemson’s head coach may depend on a win over USC Saturday. There are times, even when Clemson plays Carolina, that too much depends on winning. That may be the incentive that Clemson needs to play well against USC. When you are thinking about the future of your coach it should make you play harder.

DURING THE YEARS misconceptions have been printed about the Clemson-Carolina rivalry. It is basically a predictable game with little national interest. Maybe things will change. It will become a truly great game when it attracts more national attention and when its winner becomes a national champion or gains an invitation to the Orange Bowl.

But for now it serves the interests of football fans in South Carolina well. As one fan said the other day, “To hell with the rest of the states when Clemson plays Carolina.”

Tiger burn

Tigerburn will begin at 7:30 p.m. tonight in front of the Russell House on Green Street.

After a march to the capital where students can hear head coach Jim Carlen speak, the rally will return to an intramural field near the Sol Blatt Physical Education Center for the burning of the tiger.

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