A look at the linebackers

Carmichael anchors young unit

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HEADLINES
Key Losses: Will LB Ivon Hickmon and Sam LB Lonnie Clemons.

Key Returner: MLB Danny Carmichael. Carmichael, who has 21 starts the last two years, is a senior who led the Blue Raiders in tackles a year ago with 89 while adding 11.5 tackles for loss and three sacks. His leadership will be invaluable in 2009, and the coaches are counting on it.

Battle to Watch: Both outside linebacker positions will be worth watching when camp opens. Senior Cam Robinson and sophomore Gorby Loreus will battle for the LOLB spot while junior Antwan Davis and sophomore Darin Davis will compete for the ROLB. Not one of the previously mentioned four players have ever started a collegiate game, but that will all change Sept. 5 at Clemson. The hunger is what will decide this battle. There's not a big gap between either position so it will come down to who wants it most.

Spring Standout: Senior Cam Robinson really showed a great attitude, a hunger to get better, and commitment which you expect out of a fourth-year guy. He simply made the biggest improvement of any of the linebackers during the spring.

Coach Diaz on the linebackers
"This is an exciting time because both outside positions are wide open and there is a lot of competition. There are a bunch of guys in the room that have the ability, and the clock has just struck for them and it is their time to shine. They know this and know what it will take to grab playing time. This is why it is so important that we have a guy like Danny Carmichael anchoring the group.

He has been through the wars and is a great leader."

PLAYERS

Left Outside Linebacker

CAM ROBINSON (Senior) - Showed good leadership and attitude during the spring ... A smart player who can play inside or outside ... Needs to continue progression as a linebacker and in his conditioning.

GORBY LOREUS (Sophomore) - One of the most natural linebackers on the roster ... Is very quick inside the box and possesses tremendous lower body strength ... Explosive and has a great upside ... Needs to continue learning the scheme and work on his hunger to be great.

Middle Linebacker

DANNY CARMICHAEL (Senior) - The rock of the entire defense ... A tough and physical player who loves the game and loves to hit ... Has made improvements in the passing game ... Really made a huge jump from his sophomore to junior year, and the coaches expect even bigger things in 2009.

NORMAN WASHINGTON (r-Sophomore) - A tough player who had a good spring playing in the middle ... Is physical against the run but needs to improve against the pass ... A team player who provides a good presence in the locker room.

Right Outside Linebacker

ANTWAN DAVIS (Junior) - Has the best use of hands of any linebacker on the team ... Can play inside or outside ... Gained a better understanding of the scheme during spring drills ... Needs to improve on his reaction time.

DARIN DAVIS (Sophomore) - The fastest linebacker on the roster ... A prototype runner and hitter ... Loves the game and has a strong desire to be great ... Needs to improve strength and become more confident in the scheme.

Returners

44 Danny Carmichael (Sr., Mike)
55 *Jerry Cobb (r-So., Sam)
52 Antwan Davis (Jr., Sam)
59 Darin Davis (So., Will)
99 Antonio Hill (r-So., Will)
43 Gorby Loreus (So., Will)
30 Cam Robinson (Sr., Sam)
*Daniel Waller (r-So., Sam)
56 Norman Washington (r-So., Mike)

Newcomers

35 Craig Allen (Fr., Sam)
39 Roderic Blunt (Fr., Sam)
32 Justin Jones (Fr., Will)
87 Stephen Roberts (Fr., Mike)
*Non-scholarship

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