

Another running back works to get in Gamecocks' mix

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COLUMBIA — South Carolina redshirt freshman running back David Williams got teased when arriving in Columbia last summer



“(Director of football strength and conditioning) coach Joe (Connolly) was laughing at me when I first got here,” said Williams. “He said: ‘Y’all don’t lift weights in Philly?’ I’ve picked it up since then.”

That is an understatement. Williams entered the program weighing 205 pounds. Now the 6-foot-1 athlete

 weighs a rock-solid 220 pounds and has lowered his time in the 40-yard dash to 4.34 seconds.

“He ran a 4.37 in the summer and then ran a 4.34 in the spring with the extra weight,” said USC running back coach Everette Sands. “Coach Joe is doing a good job.”

“It has been a grind,” said Williams, considered one of the nation’s top running backs as he came out of Imhotep Charter High School. “I’ve put on a lot of weight.”

Williams was impressive in South Carolina’s Thursday spring practice, running smoothly and making good cuts.

He understands that, with Mike Davis, Brandon Wilds and Shon Carson returning, getting playing time in the backfield will not be easy. He’s ready for the challenge, however.

“I’m more familiar with the playbook,” said Williams. “I’m not out there second guessing myself. I’m out there confident, knowing what I need to do.”

Williams almost saw the field as a freshman when junior running back Brandon Wilds was injured, but the coaching staff decided not to waste a year of eligibility.

“Mike was dinged, but he could still go and Shon was good so we didn’t have to have to use him,” said Sands. “If something would have happened when Brandon was down, if either Mike or Shon was hurt, then we might have.”

Sands believes Williams is ready to make an impact this season, even at a position that is stacked.

“He’s doing well,” said Sands. “All his working numbers are going up, and that’s exactly what you want to see in the off-season.”

Williams rushed for 1,904 yards and 23 touchdowns as a high school senior, leading his team to a 14-1 record.

“It’s looking like we are going to share

👉 the ball,” said Williams. “But we’re trying to get Mike out of there. I just want to play. It’s hard not playing. I’ve spent my whole life playing, so I’m anxious to get on the field.”

Williams has settled down in Columbia so much that he says homesickness was never an issue.

“I thought it would be harder,” said Williams. “But, after the summer was over and people started coming to school, I started to (get) social. I started to meet a lot of people, and I felt comfortable.”

Williams play on the field, even though the Gamecocks have only had three practices, has already been recognized.

“David is special athletically,” said USC quarterback Dylan Thompson. “He is a great player. He had a good day out here today from what I saw. He is a guy who is big and he can run. I think it is underrated how tough it is to learn

👉 the playbook, blocking schemes. He’s doing a good job picking that up, and I think he will make some plays for us this fall.”