

Gamecocks hope Williams gives edge at corner

Willie T. Smith III, wtsmith@greenvillenews.com 8:05 p.m. EDT September 25, 2014



(Photo: MYKAL McELDOWNEY, Staff)

COLUMBIA – In search of improvement in the secondary, University of South Carolina defensive coordinator Lorenzo Ward has returned senior Brison Williams to cornerback.

Williams, who started at cornerback in the Gamecocks' first three games, moved to safety for the team's Southeastern Conference game at Vanderbilt last week.

Before halftime, Ward sent Williams to nickel cornerback. One play later, he returned an interception 53 yards for a touchdown.

"I think they threaten you more down the field than the first two teams," Ward said of Missouri. "East Carolina threw the ball down the field way more than Texas A&M did. You go back to the A&M game, 30 passes were for under five yards.

"They are going to stretch the field and they throw it down the field more."

Ward moved Williams back to cornerback because his young corners continued to make mistakes. He moves into the slot manned by sophomore Rico McWilliams.

Williams and freshman Al Harris Jr. will start at the corners with T. J. Gurley and Chaz Elder at safety.

"Vanderbilt was a team that did a lot of shifting and motioning and we wanted to make sure we got lined up," Ward said. "That is why we started (Williams) at safety. Then, after the game went on, the young corners made some busts so we put him back outside.

"This game he will start outside and he will definitely play nickel when it is time to play nickel."

- The Gamecocks continue to search for a pass rush, and Ward believes his unit is improving.

"It is not about effort," Ward said. "There are a lot of teams that don't have great, per se, pass rushing but have effort. I think we're getting better. ... I think they guys are coming along. They just have to get quicker."

- Ward said defensive end David Johnson is out indefinitely because of a meniscus tear in one of his knees, although there will be no surgery.

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