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## Roberts willing to do whatever he can to make team better

Marcquis Roberts' career at South Carolina has been a rollercoaster ride to say the least. It started with a shoulder surgery in the summer of his freshman year that forced him to take a medical redshirt for the 2011 season.

Then, around three days into spring practice the following year the linebacker tore the ACL in his left knee and found himself sidelined for yet another year.

Finally, in 2013, Roberts was able to take the field as a Gamecock. He made the most of it, playing in all 13 games and making nine starts at the Will linebacker position. Roberts was fifth on the team with 48 tackles and he also had 3.5 tackles for loss and 1.5 sacks.



"It was rough at the beginning, but I had good teammates and my family always kept me positive," Roberts said. "I just stayed positive through the whole situation. I could still come back and still have the chance to play."

Despite the good season in 2013, Roberts found himself third on the depth chart at the Mike linebacker position entering this season. However, the Georgia native still found some playing time and performed well in his limited amount of action. Then, before the Missouri game, Roberts once again found himself back in the starting lineup.

And as he has done throughout his career the redshirt sophomore seized the opportunity and shined. He was credited with five tackles, one for loss and a quarterback hurry in the loss to the Tigers.

"It's been a long process," Roberts said. "I'm grateful to have a chance and I just want to make the team better. Whatever I can do to make the team better, I'm here to do it."

With Saturday's performance, Roberts now has 10 tackles on the season and remains atop the depth chart.

Roberts never worried that he wouldn't get a chance to play football, but said that having major injuries in back-to-back seasons was hard to go through.

It's not a coincidence that Roberts' first start of the season was also the Gamecocks' best defensive performance. Spurrier said as much when he said Roberts "added some enthusiasm, some more effort to the team."

The result was a defense that allowed less than 379 yards for the first time all season.

"I just think we played harder," Roberts said. "We had a lot more effort out there, a lot more energy. We were having fun."

Despite still losing to Missouri, the good performance will give the defense confidence as they head into this weekend's matchup at Kentucky.

"We're feeling pretty good," Roberts said. "We're getting better and better each week, which is always a positive. All we can do is keep improving."

The start for Roberts came as a surprise to many people after he hadn't received much playing time over the first four games. But what Roberts does on the practice fields ultimately gave him the opportunity.

"I've just been working hard," Roberts said. "I work hard everyday in practice. I come out with positive energy, I try to bring that to my teammates and the coaches saw that and I just got my chance."

**\*\*Story by Kyle Heck/Photo by Allen Sharpe\*\***