

SPORTS



Complete coverage in Sports Extra
Find scores, photos and more in **Sports Extra**, our subscriber-exclusive, eNewspaper section.



South Carolina forward Joyce Edwards, seen earlier this season, had 23 points and 12 rebounds in a win at Alabama on Feb. 19. JEFF BLAKE-IMAGN IMAGES

Clemson football makes 10 portal additions

Derrian Carter
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK

CLEMSON — Clemson football’s transfer-portal haul has changed the Tigers’ roster for 2026.

The Tigers and coach Dabo Swinney set a single-season program record with 10 transfer additions (eight on defense, two on offense). Clemson had its highest-rated cycle, ranking No. 68 nationally, but the Tigers are No. 15 in the ACC, according to 247Sports.

This came after the Tigers went 7-6 in 2025, their second-worst season under Swinney as they missed the ACC championship game and College Football Playoff.

Here’s a look at how the transfer portal changed multiple positions for Clemson.

Corey Myrick, Jerome Carter III could be Clemson’s starting safeties

Clemson’s pass defense was its weakness in 2025, allowing 251.2 yards

See CLEMSON, Page 3B

Staley evaluates Edwards’ 10th double-double

Lulu Kesin
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Joyce Edwards hasn’t scored less than 21 points in each of the three times she’s played Alabama.

In South Carolina women’s basketball’s 83-57 victory over the Crimson Tide (20-7, 6-7) on Feb. 19 in Coleman Coliseum in Tuscaloosa, the sophomore forward finished with 23 points and 12 rebounds.

It marked her 10th career double-

double.

“Joyce shoots herself out of a cannon all the time,” South Carolina coach Dawn Staley said. “She plays fairly quickly, I think her athleticism and her quickness give her an advantage to shoot the ball, drive past people or posting up. I thought we did a great job finding her, especially when she had two feet in the paint.”

Edwards is averaging 20 points for the No. 3 Gamecocks (26-2, 12-1) and when she scores 20 or more, South Carolina is 21-0 this season. This

marked the 17th time she led the team in scoring.

She’s a critical piece to the offense and especially with a lack of post presence, she exposed Alabama’s weakness. The Gamecocks had 44 points in the paint compared to 20 for the Crimson Tide. Edwards, along with Madina Okot, who had 16 points and 16 rebounds, had eight offensive rebounds.

Alabama was South Carolina’s home-and-home this season and in the

See EDWARDS, Page 3B



Clemson added safety Corey Myrick (22) from Southern Miss in the transfer portal. SEAN GARDNER, GETTY IMAGES

South Carolina football adds 25 from portal

Lulu Kesin
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA — South Carolina football coach Shane Beamer heavily utilized the transfer portal to rebuild his roster for 2026.

South Carolina added 25 players via the portal, and the class ranks No. 22 nationally and No. 10 in the SEC, according to 247Sports.

The Gamecocks went 4-8 in 2025, the worst in Beamer’s five seasons after going 9-3 (the best) in 2024.

Beamer returned his star trio of quarterback LaNorris Sellers, wide receiver Nyck Harbor and edge rusher Dylan Stewart.

Here’s a look at how the transfer portal changed almost every position for South Carolina.

Is Christian Clark the next star South Carolina running back?

There was a dip in run game success in 2025. Rahsul Faison was South Carolina’s leader with 470 yards and three touchdowns, and Oscar Adaway added 140 yards and one touchdown, but both are out of eligibility.

Christian Clark played in eight games for Texas in 2025, finishing with 236 yards on 55 carries and two touchdowns, averaging 4.3 yards per carry.

Clark brings SEC experience, and South Carolina only returns three running backs who combined had 341 rushing yards in 2025, so Clark might jump up to RB1.

Shane Beamer brings in portal kicker for first time

Texas Tech’s Upton Bellenfant was 6-of-6 on field goals with his longest a 33-yarder in 2025. He played behind Stone Harrington but was the main kicker in 2024 for Buffalo.

Beamer also brought in long snapper Emmet Rhoades to add to his group of transfer specialists.

South Carolina has completely new offensive line

South Carolina lost eight offensive linemen from the 2025 roster and brought in eight new players for the 2026 team.

Josiah Thompson entered the transfer portal but returned 11 days later and will likely start at left tackle for the third straight season.

Jacarrius Peak from NC State has played 2,202 total snaps in his career with only seven sacks allowed, per Pro Football Focus. He allowed just three on 850 snaps in 2025, earning a 73.8 grade for his offense by PFF.

Sellers needs better protection in 2026 so this is a critical position group for the offseason.

South Carolina brings in edges to help Dylan Stewart

Stewart is a 6-foot-5 game-changer on defense and he had 4.5 sacks and three forced

See SOUTH CAROLINA, Page 3B



Incoming USC running back Christian Clark (6) played in eight games for Texas in 2025. MATT PENDLETON-IMAGN IMAGES

Edmonds, Abrams are Athletes of the Week

Kamryn Jackson
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Zibi Edmonds, of Chesnee girls wrestling, and Johnston Abrams, of Spartanburg boys basketball, were named Upstate Ingles Athletes of the Week for Feb. 9-15.

Edmonds won the 125-pound division at the Class 5A girls wrestling state qualifiers. She had 15,276 out of 27,370 votes cast. Cienna Heiselman, of Byrnes girls wrestling, was the runner-up.

Abrams had 24 points (3-for-5 on 3-pointers) in a 73-70 win against Eastside and 17 points with six assists in a 64-40 win against Wade Hampton. He had 4,232 out of 6,272 votes cast. Jaden Johnson of Dorman boys basketball was the runner-up.



Spartanburg Vikings guard Johnston Abrams (2) drives past Dorman Cavaliers guard Carter Williams (5) on Jan. 6. ALEX MARTIN/GREENVILLE NEWS

South Carolina

Continued from Page 1B

fumbles last year.

South Carolina brought in Caleb Herring from Tennessee and Drew Collins from Arkansas State to help out Stewart.

In 2025 Bryan Thomas Jr led the way with seven sacks but he's out of eligibility. Desmond Umeozulu played behind Stewart and Thomas, logging a sack but he transferred to Alabama.

South Carolina loses backup QB, adds one

Air Noland transferred to Memphis after one season as Sellers' backup, and the Gamecocks brought in Lucian Anderson III from Bowling Green. Anderson threw for 245 yards and two touchdowns last year.

Cutter Woods showed promise as a freshman, so Woods could be No. 2 behind Sellers or freshman Landon Duckworth might be as well.

Shane Beamer trusts linebacker depth, doesn't add in portal

One position the Gamecocks didn't add to using the portal was at linebacker.

Fred "JayR" Johnson, Shawn Murphy and Justin Okoronkwo were key pieces to the defense last year who are returning.

South Carolina adds four wide receivers in portal

South Carolina added four receivers: Jayden Gibson from Oklahoma, NiTareon "Nitro" Tuggle from Purdue, DJ Black from UCF and Charly Mullaly from Holy Cross.

Gibson was injured for the last two seasons but had 375 yards and five touchdowns for the Sooners in 2023.

Tuggle had 500 receiving yards on 34 receptions to go with four touchdowns in 2025. Mullaly had 17 catches for 189 yards in 2025. Black had 273 receiving yards on 22 catches and two touchdowns.

It'll be interesting to see who rotates in with Harbor, Mazeo Bennett, Jayden Sellers and Donovan Murph.

South Carolina added tight end Max Drag from UCF. He had 19 yards on three catches as a sophomore.

DL Tomiwa Durojaiye could be a game-changer for South Carolina

Tomiwa Durojaiye has spent three seasons at three schools but was a four-star portal defensive lineman out of Illinois in 2025 when he had two sacks.

Losing Nick Barrett and Monkell Goodwine, who were out of eligibility, frees up starting spots.

Quay'Sheed Scott adds to South Carolina secondary

Cornerback Quay'Sheed Scott had 26 solo tackles and one interception in 2025. Beamer lost Jalon Kilgore and Brandon Cisse to the NFL draft and DQ Smith is out of eligibility but still returns Peyton Williams, Vicari Swain and Judge Collier.

LKessin@usatodayco.com

Clemson

Continued from Page 1B

through the air (120th nationally). The Tigers also needed to replace both of their starting safeties after Ricardo Jones and Khalil Barnes entered the portal.

With inexperience on the backend, Clemson brought in safeties Jerome Carter III (Ole Dominion) and Corey Myrick (Southern Miss), and both can be immediate starters.

Carter is a ball hawk, logging six interceptions (tied for second in FBS) in 2025, and Myrick is a versatile defender. Both will have to beat out Ronan Hanafin, Kylon Griffin, Kylan Webb, Misun Kelley and freshman Polo Anderson.

Clemson has variety of options at running back

Clemson did not sign a high school running back but did land SMU transfer Chris Johnson Jr. He is a speedster who will join an unproven but capable room with Gideon Davidson, David Eziumume, Jay Haynes and Jarvis Green.

Johnson is the most experienced running back, but he has started only one game in his career. The other Clemson running backs have never made a start, but all have had moments in their careers.

With no clear-cut No. 1, the Tigers may utilize multiple players based on matchup or who is the hottest.

Clemson adds four defensive linemen in portal

Will Heldt is the only returning starter on Clemson's defensive line after two entered the NFL draft, one's eligibility expired and another transferred.

This prompted the Tigers to add four transfers: edge rushers London Merritt (Colorado) and CJ Wesley (Howard) and defensive tackles Markus Strong (Oklahoma) and Kourtney Kelly (West Georgia).

Clemson defensive coordinator Tom Allen rotated defensive linemen into games often in 2025 and hopes these additions can complement Heldt, edge rusher Jahiem Lawson and defensive tackles Amare Adams, Vic Burley and juco signee Andy Burburija.

Which Clemson CB will start opposite of Ashton Hampton?

Clemson lost star cornerback Avieon Terrell to the NFL, leaving a hole opposite returning starter Ashton Hampton.

This prompted Clemson to add Penn State's Elliot Washington II and Auburn's Donovan Starr. Washington, a speedster, played under Allen at Penn State

in 2024, and Starr, a sophomore, was a four-star recruit.

Both will compete for No. 2 cornerback along with Branden Strozier and Corian Gipson.

Clemson gets wide receiver depth with Jaylen Brown-Wallace

Jaylen Brown-Wallace, who graduated from Daniel High School, spent three seasons at Wingate, a Division II program, and recorded six catches for 84 yards.

Barring significant injury, he won't have an impact this season. Bryant Wesco Jr., T.J. Moore, Tyler Brown, Cole Turner, possibly Tristan Smith and three freshman signees all will be prioritized more.

Clemson options at linebacker after Luke Ferrelli exit

One of Clemson's top additions was Cal linebacker Luke Ferrelli, the reigning ACC defensive rookie of the year. He transferred to Clemson but re-entered the portal on its final day to go to Ole Miss to the displeasure of Swinney.

Sammy Brown is Clemson's top linebacker, but Ferrelli's departure places a heightened emphasis on Jeremiah Alexander and Kobe McCloud. Both started some in 2025 but will be crucial to Clemson's defense.

Where Clemson wasn't active in transfer portal

Clemson also did not get a quarterback, tight end, offensive lineman or any special teams players in the portal.

The biggest surprise was not landing a quarterback. With Cade Klubnik gone, Clemson has five quarterbacks who have combined for only one start. Three-year backup Christopher Vizzina is the leader to be the team's starter in 2026 but has to beat out Chris Denson, Trent Pearman and signees Brock Bradley and Tait Reynolds.

Another concern was the offensive line. The Tigers lost starting tackles Blake Miller and Tristan Leigh, center Ryan Linthicum and right guard Walker Parks as all exhausted their eligibility.

They attempted to address their needs on offensive line but missed. Clemson has four players who are expected to start on the offensive line in 2026: Harris Sewell, Collin Sadler, Elyjah Thurmon and Brayden Jacobs. The last starter will be determined later.

Derrian Carter covers Clemson athletics for The Greenville News and the USA TODAY Network. Email him at DCarter@usatodayco.com and follow him on X, formerly known as Twitter, @DerrianCarter00

Edwards

Continued from Page 1B

83-57 win on Jan. 1, Edwards had a game-high 25 points.

As a freshman she scored 11 points in the final 10 minutes against Alabama on the road to finish with 21, which was then a career-high.

"I think the floor opens up for her for some reason," Staley said when asked if there's a trend for Edwards in the matchup. "(Alabama) does some switching, they plan some zone. I think Joyce does a lot of studying film, I think she sees the gaps and what is presented to her, and she takes what the defense gives her."

Edwards is 20th in the nation in scoring and fourth in the SEC, a jump from the 12.7 points she averaged as a freshman.

From Jan. 29 to Feb. 8, Edwards set a program record with 20 or more points in four consecutive SEC games.

Joyce Edwards ties career-high in rebounds vs Alabama

Okot has been the driving force behind South Carolina's rebounding success, especially with Chloe Kitts out the whole season with a torn ACL. Kitts averaged a team-high 7.7 rebounds in 2024-25 but Okot is averaging 10.5, tied for the SEC lead.

Though Edwards' scoring is a big reason South Carolina is on pace to win the SEC regular season championship, rebounding is an area that could still improve.

She averages six per game but tied her career-high with 12 on the night. It marked her 10th time with double-digit rebounds in 67 career games.

Next up is No. 17 Ole Miss on Feb. 22 (noon, ESPN). Ole Miss is 21st in the country in offensive rebounds per game with 15.3.

"I liked her aggressiveness rebounding the basketball," Staley said. "I think she needs to take that and be a lot more consistent when rebounding the ball because we're a different basketball team when she brings that element to the game."

Lulu Kesin covers South Carolina athletics for The Greenville News and the USA TODAY Network. Email her at LKessin@usatodayco.com.