

USC-Clemson game like ACC wars of old

Just when you thought the Clemson athletic program was losing some of its steam — BOOM!

The Tigers didn't win the ACC football title for a change this year; but, lo and behold, here comes their basketball team.

With Wednesday night's 97-93 win over Duke, the Tigers, 10-3 in the conference, grabbed at least a tie for the regular-season ACC championship, an honor that has escaped them since Clemson hoops began in the 1911-12 season.

Of course, the biggest game for Clemson lies ahead.

Saturday, at Alexander Memorial Coliseum, the Tigers have to face the most talented team in the ACC in my book — Georgia Tech.

Of course, the Jackets are coming off an 81-79 loss to the most up-and-down team in the ACC — the North Carolina Tarheels Wednesday night at the Dean Dome.

But still, Clemson changes faces when it hits the road. Gone are the frenzied throngs when Elden Campbell stuffs it home or the screaming masses when Dale Davis shoves the ball back in somebody's face.

This time, the screams will come when freshman Kenny Anderson streaks past opposing defenders for an easy lay-up or when Dennis Scott buries his fifth three-pointer of the contest. The Tigers just seem to break down on the road.

I'm not saying Clemson will lose, but I believe their chances are as good as Gerald's are of doing an intelligent show. (I think tomorrow's show is entitled, "The how and why of farm animal prostitution.") Good luck, Tigers.

Believe me, I'm not trying to "doom" the Tigers because, for the first time, I've found myself cheering for them this year. They're exciting, intense and good... especially at home. When USC played there earlier this season, a Clemson player passed it behind his back and made a USC player look foolish. I hated it, but I loved it. They had more dunks that day than I've seen in a season. In fact, the Tigers need only about 16 dunks to pass the season-high total of Houston's Phi Slamma Jamma.

Besides that, when Marion Cash and David Young are on from outside, they do not miss many. And Derrick Forrest leads an impressive, steal-happy defense.

Now, I know you're asking, "So what? What does Clemson have to do with us?"

Well, informed and enlightened reader, I'll tell you.

On Monday night, guess who invades Frank McGuire Arena? That's right, sports fans, Clemson and the highly touted 'Duo of Doom' — the regular season ACC champs. Are any lights coming on? Wait, what's that smell? Perhaps an UPSET!



BRANT LONG

Pep Talk

How sweet would it be ladies and gentlemen to beat the ACC champs?

From 1953-54 through 1970-71, USC was a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference. The Gamecocks won the championship in 1971 by beating North Carolina 52-51. What I am suggesting, folks, is revolutionary.

Passengers, please strap yourselves in.

This is our big chance. For one fateful night, ladies and gentlemen, we are back in the ACC. Don't the names just sound wonderful: Tarheels, Wolfpack, Cavaliers . . . Gamecocks. I have one wish, Coach Felton, let's get busy! Win this one for Frank McGuire and the '70-71 Gamecocks.

Clemson head coach Cliff Ellis said after the first USC-Clemson game this season that the rivalry hardly exists in basketball as it does in football. Well, Cliffy baby, I got a news flash for you . . . it's not a rivalry this time, it's World War III.

Oddly enough, the USC team in 1970-71 defeated Clemson twice, here, 81-53 and there, 47-44. This year, the Tigers already have the upper hand with a 83-65 win earlier this season. But this one is the biggie.

Imagine if you will (cue foreboding music and smoke): Clemson is leading by two, 72-70. :02 seconds left. Clemson is inbounding the ball from under their own basket.

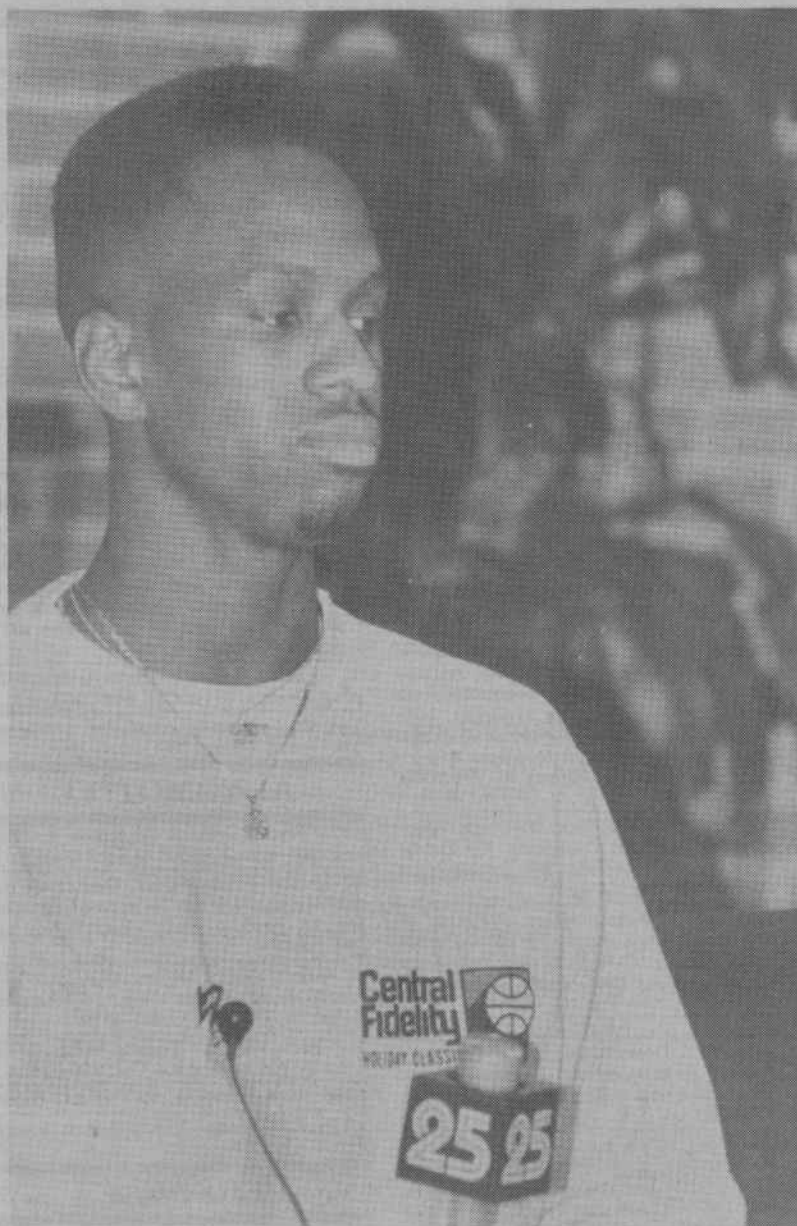
Cash triggers it in to a wide-open Dale Davis under the hoop. As the 6-foot-11-inch, 225-pound hoss of a man goes up for the easy jam, Eric Sykes, in his last game at home, takes the ball from him like taking candy from a baby. He outlets it to a streaking Jo Jo English, who goes over Elden Campbell for the jam . . . and the foul.

Jo Jo sinks the free throw and USC wins the Brant Long mythical ACC regular season title. Sounds good, doesn't it. But can USC do it?

Of course, they can. A big game from Sykes, English and Popovic. And an impressive inside game by Jeff Roulston and you get a tight, nip-and-tuck game.

If Frank McGuire Arena starts shaking Monday night, don't run for cover, it's not an earthquake or a twister, it's only the biggest upset in basketball history . . . OK, OK, maybe just a mild upset.

Wait, I have a meeting that night.
Never mind.



Teddy Lepp/The Gamecock

Sophomore Joe Rhett talks to the press Thursday about the pacemaker recently installed in his heart. Rhett is expected to be fully recovered and back in action next season.

Road to recovery begins for Rhett

By DOUG AUBE
Staff Writer

All the hard luck of USC's basketball season that has plagued the success of this year's team was forgotten with Joe Rhett's heart problem and recent surgery.

Suddenly wins were not important, the lack of available players was irrelevant — all that mattered was Rhett's health.

Well, for all the Gamecock faithful as well as those who just like stories with good endings, Joe Rhett is on the road to recovery.

Rhett is out of the hospital and back in school. He'll join his teammates on the bench for Saturday's game against Florida State.

He won't be suited up for action, but he'll be there to play the role of emotional leader.

"I'm going to be on the bench Saturday when they (USC) play Florida State and Monday night (for the Clemson game) and I'm going to be a big supporter, just like a coach, rooting them on," Rhett said.

An indication of Rhett's illness probably began as early as last season when he said he felt spells of nausea and dizziness during several practices. Rhett dismissed the spells as nothing more than fatigue.

And he kept the problem to himself.

"I used to go in his (Coach

George Felton's) office and talk to him about a few things, but I never really came out and told him what the problem was," Rhett said.

But Felton would finally learn firsthand about the problem when Rhett had a couple of faint spells during USC's recent six-game road swing.

Rhett decided then it was time to talk to Felton about the symptoms.

Felton convinced Rhett of the seriousness of the situation and arranged for the 6-foot-8-inch sophomore to visit the team doctor.

Three days later, Rhett underwent a one-hour operation to have a heart pacemaker installed.

The doctor now says he can lead a normal life which means that there is basketball in Rhett's future.

"Before he (Rhett's doctor) fully explained everything to me, I thought that my season and career were over, but there is no doubt that I will be out there again."

Right now Rhett is just concerned with the recovery process which he said has only limited his energy supply.

Felton said the surgery helped put basketball's wins and losses in proper perspective, he said.

All things considered, Joe Rhett is back to normal, basketball aside. As Rhett put it, there are more important things than basketball. "I'm just happy to be alive," he said.

Gamecocks rally to ground Flying Fleet 9-4

From Staff Reports

USC defeated Erskine 9-4 Wednesday at Sarge Frye Field to up their record to 5-2 on the young season.

The Gamecocks were down 4-0 to the Flying Fleet after two innings, but took the lead in the fifth when freshman Jeff Parnell hit his second double of the afternoon, knocking in George Rush.

USC reliever Charlie Young picked up his first win of the year after entering the game in the third inning. Young allowed only four singles and gave up no walks.

USC starter John Metzger gave up two runs in the second after walking Mark Segee, hitting Kevin Mutz and giving up singles to Stan Butler and Todd Polatty. Metzger was then taken out for Sean Hardwick with the bases loaded and no outs.

Butler then scored on a fielder's choice and Polatty on a sacrifice fly to make the score 4-0.

The Gamecocks wasted little time getting back in the game. A

hit batter, a walk, two infield outs and a wild pitch scored two South Carolina runs in the third inning.

Rush hit a solo home run in the fourth to make it 4-3. The Gamecocks tied it when Parnell hit a double and scored on second baseman Mike Adam's single.

In the fifth, Rush reached on a single and moved over to second on a wild pitch before Parnell drove him in to make it 5-4 USC.

USC's insurance runs came in the seventh with a couple of two-run homers by Dave Willman and Sandy Rickett.

Willman, Adams, Parnell and Rush each had two hits in USC's 12-hit attack. Erskine's eight hits were all singles.

Erskine starter Christopher Johnson, 1-2, took the loss as Erskine fell to 4-3.

USC begins a three-day tournament today with South Florida, Alabama and Western Michigan at South Florida's Red McEwen Field in Tampa.



Teddy Lepp/The Gamecock

Freshman first baseman Jeff Parnell readies to make the tag in a game earlier this season. Parnell had two doubles in Wednesday's 9-4 victory over Erskine.

SPORTS BRIEFS

USC sweeps two from Georgia State

The 13th-ranked USC Lady Gamecock softball team shut out Georgia State in both games of their doubleheader Wednesday winning the first 2-0 and the second 4-0.

Sophomore Andrea Beall and

freshman Leslie Adams had triples in the opening game while senior Stacy Agee had the game's only RBI.

In the second game, USC scored all four runs in the seventh and last inning. Junior Tricia Popowski was 1-4 from the plate with two RBI's while Beall notched the game-winning RBI on a fielder's choice.

USC plays Georgia Southern to-

day in a doubleheader. The first game begins at 2:00 p.m.

USC to swim into action after Metros

The men's and women's swimming teams, both coming off Metro Championships will be in action again this weekend.

The men, who won their seventh consecutive conference title, will participate in the USC Invitational today and Saturday at the Carolina Natatorium, inside the Sol Blatt P. E. Center.

The women, who won their third straight Metro crown, will be in Chapel Hill, NC for the Tarheel Invitational, to be held today.

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