

Sports

USC challenges Commodores

By TONY SANTORI
Staff Writer

The tough SEC schedule continues for the Gamecock basketball team on Wednesday night as they travel to "Music City, USA," Nashville, Tenn., to take on the Vanderbilt Commodores.

Vanderbilt, with Head Coach Eddie Fogler, currently sports a 6-1 conference record and a 16-3 mark overall. Plus, in a poll of SEC coaches, Vandy was picked the surprise team of the league thus far this season, receiving five votes, including USC coach Steve Newton's.

The Commodores are led by Duke transfer guard Billy McCaffrey, who is currently ranked in the top 10 of seven SEC offensive statistical categories including scoring (20.1 ppg.), field goal percentage (56.7), and 3-point shooting percentage (50.6).

Also contributing to Vandy's superb season has been another transfer, center Chris Lawson, who defected from Indiana University. The red-headed 7-footer is second to McCaffrey in scoring for the Commodores with just under 13 points per contest.

In reaction to the 'Dores uprising, Auburn coach Tommy Joe Eagles said, "I don't think anyone

understood how good Billy McCaffrey and Chris Lawson were going to make that basketball team." Eagles was apparently right.

Vanderbilt is now ranked 11th in the nation and is tied for first place with Kentucky in the SEC East.

However, receiving three votes in the "surprise" poll, second to Vandy, were none other than our very own Gamecocks.

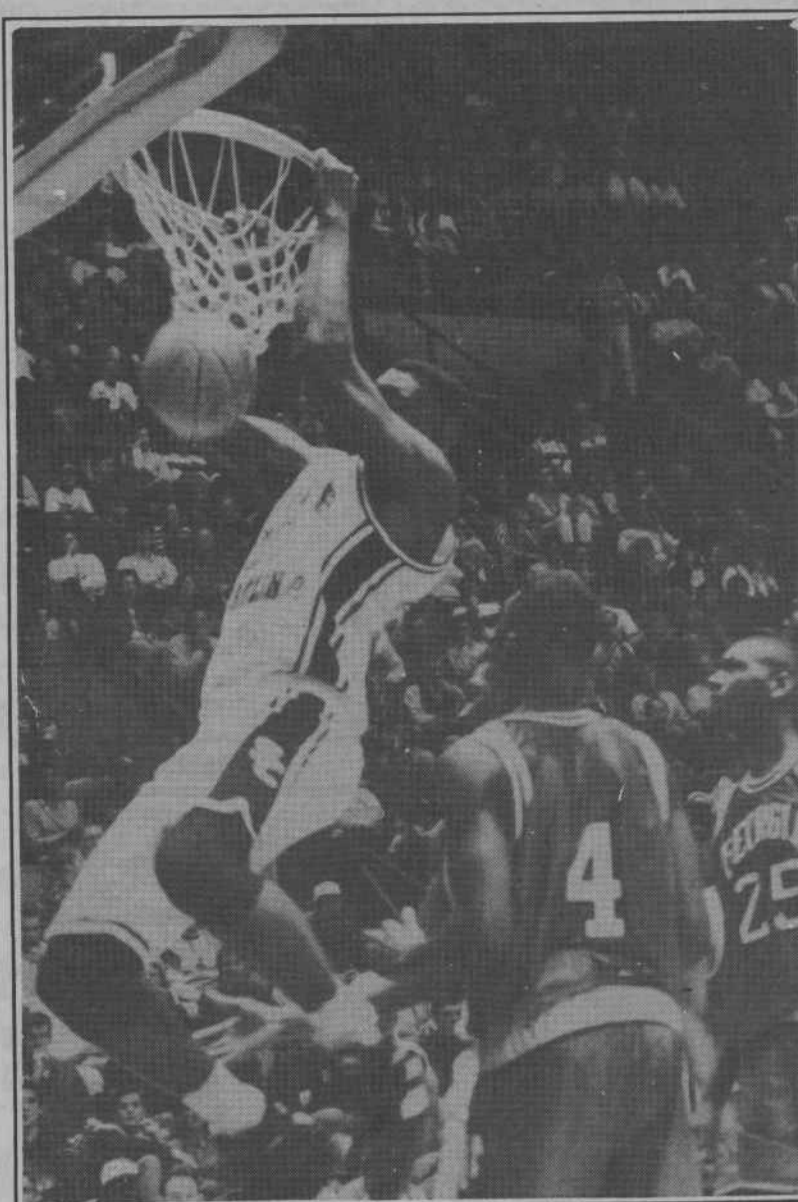
USC was picked to finish dead last in the conference before the season, yet they have managed to produce a respectable 4-4 SEC record, 8-9 overall.

Alabama coach David Hobbs commented on the Gamecocks' surprise. "If you are going to beat South Carolina, regardless of where you're playing them, you'd better strap it on and be ready to play."

USC continues to be led by junior forward Jamie Watson with 15.6 ppg. and just over five rebounds per outing.

Balance is the key to Gamecock hardwood success, however, as six different players have led USC in scoring in at least one game this season. For Carolina to be victorious in Nashville, a balanced attack will again be needed.

Tip-off at Memorial Gymnasium is set for 8:30 p.m. eastern time.



Senior center Edmund Wilson, shown here against Georgia, will be matched up against Vandy center Chris Lawson.

USC student remembers Ex-Cowboy speaks about NFL career

By JEFFREY C. TURBITT
Staff Writer

As the Dallas Cowboys took the field for Super Bowl XXVII Sunday, one USC student had a deeper understanding of how Cowboy players thought and felt.

Dexter Clinkscale, a second-year USC law student, was a regular starter as strong safety for the Cowboys from 1980-1987. In '80, '81 and '82, the Cowboys played three NFC Championship games, losing to the Eagles, 49ers and Redskins in succession.

Clinkscale remembers the games in Washington, D.C., against the Redskins as a career highlight. "The conditions for football were always great," Clinkscale said. "They have that grass field and those great fans. As a Cowboy player, there was nothing greater than making those great fans boo."

Despite his love for football, education has always been Clinkscale's primary concern, and law school was always part of his plan. In fact, one week after losing the '80 NFC Championship game, which would have put the Cowboys in the Super Bowl, Clinkscale returned to S.C. State to finish up his business degree.

"Coming out of college, my primary concern was to get my undergraduate degree and then go to graduate school," Clinkscale said. "I had no real ambition to play professional football."

"When your career as a professional athlete is over, you still have the better part of your life to live," he said. "The public gets confused about that."

In 1987, Clinkscale moved on to

the Indianapolis Colts where he grew tired of football. His relationship with the Colts was strained by critical comments he made of teammates. "A lot of guys took the things I said personally, and I was not misquoted," he said.

Clinkscale remembers the shock of his first year. "As a kid, I used to think I was Ed 'Too Tall' Jones or Harvey Martin, and the next thing I know, I'm in the same huddle with those guys playing defensive back," Clinkscale said. "I was like, 'Wow! How old are these guys?'"

In choosing his all-time team, Clinkscale picks Earl Campbell first and Tony Dorsett second. "Earl knocked me around too many times not to take him. He's tough," Clinkscale said.

In the quarterback position, Clinkscale said, "Joe Montana is the best quarterback ever."

Clinkscale said he had retained friendships with former players: Rob Fellows, Robert Newhouse, Timmy Newsome and Dennis Thurman.

"The time for camaraderie and friendship is when you're playing," Clinkscale said.

Despite all the interest in the Cowboys of late, Clinkscale has no desire to recapture his football days. "I don't regret my years with the Cowboys," he said. "I don't aspire to continue them either. I'm happy for my experience and the opportunity it gave me to help my family. I'm not going to cheat myself and say 'I wish I was still there.' Most of us don't get the experience. How can I not be happy?"

Cheerleaders excel in the classroom, on the court

By CHARLIE TISDALE
Staff Writer

Over the years, cheerleaders around the nation have been the butt of many jokes. As high school cheerleaders, girls are stereotyped as bubble-headed bleached blondes, and as USC spirit coach Bill Boggs states "guys are perceived as sissies."

At USC, however, Boggs is quick to point out that the cheerleaders have the reputation of "student athletes, an elite profile group." The South Carolina squad is taking great strides to shed the stereotype which is placed on all cheerleaders.

The strenuous physical demands placed on these athletes is one reason for that new-found respect. The cheerleaders practice two hours every day and endure four hours of conditioning a week. According to Boggs, they are able to "provide more entertainment from an acrobatic standpoint" as a result of their hard work.

This hard work, in and out of the sports arena, makes the USC program one of the best in the nation both academically and athletically. The team has a graduating rate of 95 percent, and last semester their average GPR was 2.5. The squad has been ranked in the top 10 nationally for the past 10 years, and they are a perennial visitor to the NCAA Cheerleading Championships. They have even produced a National Champion for the partners competition.

There are two squads of cheer-

leaders at USC. The upper-class varsity squad leads cheers at all home and away football and men's basketball games. The junior varsity squad appears at home football games and at women's basketball games. Both squads make several appearances around campus at other varsity events.

Because of all their help to the school, the cheerleaders are given scholarship money to assist them with college expenses. South Carolina is one of the first schools to offer scholarship programs for

cheerleading. "More and more schools are developing scholarship programs," Boggs said.

The USC cheerleaders have fought through the stereotypes of high school and earned the respect of the school. They set a great example for other students because they are true student athletes.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL WEDNESDAY NIGHT

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Chris Muldrow/The Gamecock

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