

# Sports

USC blows 22-point lead

## Gators storm back to beat Gamecocks, 80-73

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Staff Writers

The Florida Gators erased a 22-point first-half lead to defeat the USC men's basketball team 80-73 at Frank McGuire Arena Wednesday.

The Gamecocks, who led by 18 at the half, were devastated by their loss. "Needless to say, this is one of the most frustrating nights of coaching that I've had," Coach Steve Newton said.

The Gators were all smiles as they brightened their chances of receiving a bid to the NCAA tournament.

The Gamecocks broke a 17-17 tie on a free throw by Edmond Wilson. That started a 20-0 run for the Gamecocks that began at the 11:54 mark of the first half. The run ended with a driving layup by Troy McKoy with 5:09 left. During that span, the Gators were ice cold, going 0 for 11 from the field and 0 for 2 from the foul line. The Gamecocks scored 14 points off 11 Florida turnovers during the run. The Gators scoring drought was broken with a free throw by sophomore center Andrew DeClercq.

USC's frontcourt of Chris Leso, Emmett Hall, Troy McKoy and Edmond Wilson made up for the lackluster play of the backcourt, scoring 40 of USC's 46 first-half points. Jamie Watson had four points at the half, finishing with a season-low five points. USC shot 57 percent from the field and 75 percent from the free-throw line in the first half.

The Gators started the second half with a tenacious full-court press that helped them pull within

### THE FINAL SCORE: U.S.C. vs. FLORIDA

Gamecocks	Points
73 (9-14)	E. Hall 21
	C. Leso 17
	E. Wilson 13

Gators	Points
80 (15-8)	S. Poole 16
	C. Brown 14
	S. Stewart 12

48-45 with a 17-2 run. Leso said, "The press caused some confusion, they got a couple of turnovers, and it slowed down the tempo of the game."

Craig Brown's layup with 9:08 left in the game gave Florida their first lead, 54-53, since an 11-9 lead in the first half. The Gamecocks fought back, tying the game at 66 before Hosie Grimsley hit a pair of free throws and a short jumper for the Gators with 2:31 left. Then senior guard Scott Stewart took over, sinking six free throws in the final 31 seconds, putting the Gators up 78-73 with 10 seconds left in the game. Senior forward Stacey Poole put an exclamation point on the win with a dunk at the buzzer.

Poole led the Gators with 16 points and 7 rebounds. Emmett Hall led the Gamecocks with 21 points and 7 rebounds, and Leso added 17 points and eight rebounds.

Newton said, "In the second half, we gave up far too many points and didn't do the things necessary to hold off a very aggressive and determined Florida team."

Both teams shot 48 percent from the field for the game, but the difference was from the free-throw line in the second half. The Gators shot 81 percent, hitting 13 of 16 from the line. The Gamecocks, however, shot a mediocre 47 percent, hitting a measly 6 of 15 free throws.

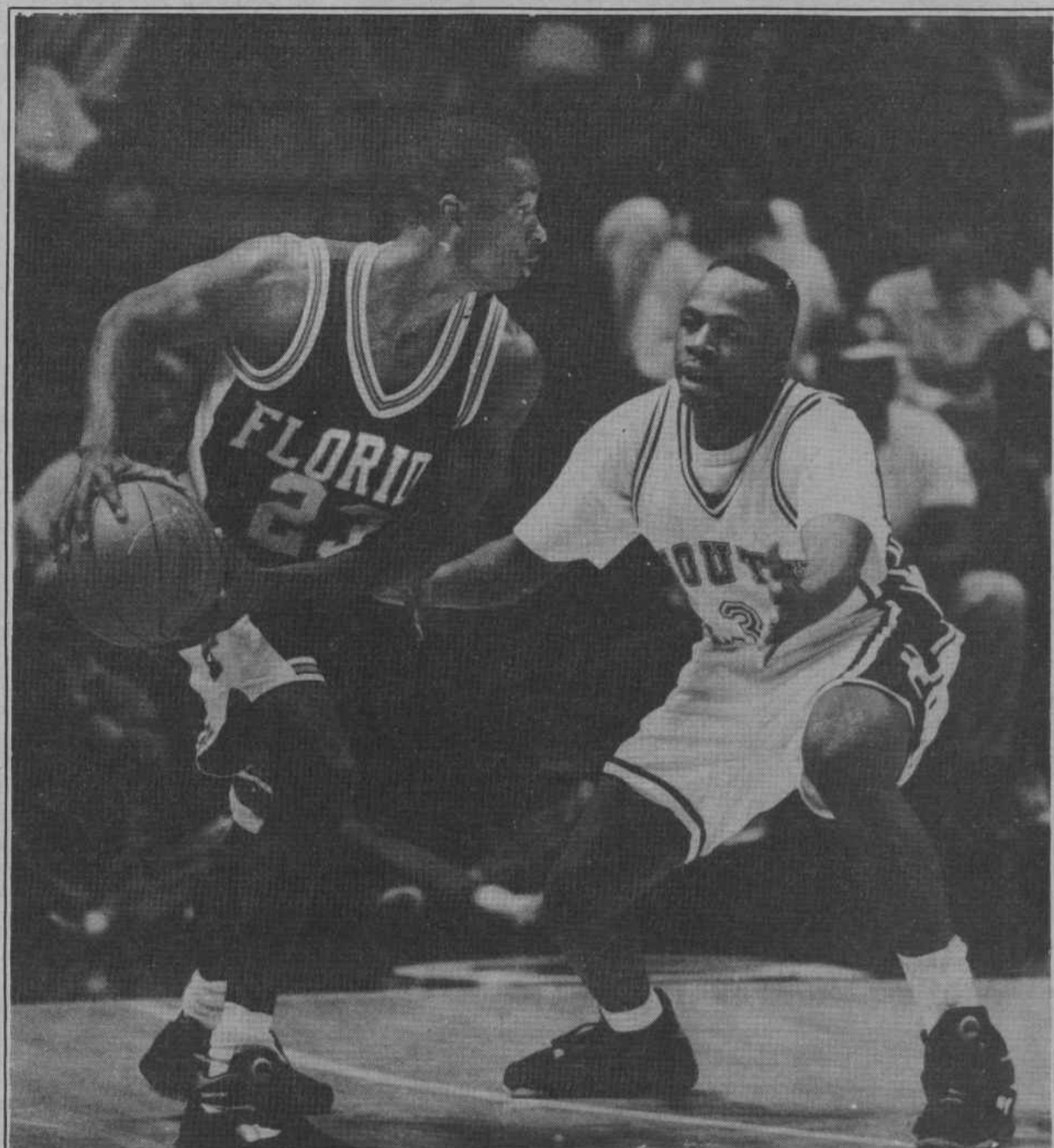
### SEC STANDINGS

VANDERBILT	EAST			
	SEC	Overall	W	L
Vanderbilt	11	22	4	1
Kentucky	10	20	3	3
Florida	8	15	8	8
Georgia	5	11	12	12
S. Carolina	5	9	14	14
Tennessee	4	12	13	13

WEST	SEC			
	SEC	Overall	W	L
Arkansas	8	17	6	6
LSU	8	19	7	7
Auburn	6	13	9	9
Alabama	6	13	10	10
Miss. State	4	12	13	13
Ole Miss	4	9	14	14

Wednesday's Games  
Vanderbilt 87, Georgia 83, OT  
Florida 80, S. Carolina 73  
Auburn 83, Ole Miss 73  
Tennessee 78, Kentucky 77



Sophomore point guard Carey Rich had eight assists in Wednesday's 80-73 loss to Florida.

## Baseball season finally upon us, but does anyone really care?

Ahhh, the crack of the bat, the pop of the mitt and the pull of the groin. That can mean only one thing, YAWN!, the baseball season is once again, like that itch that just won't go away, back to annoy us.

Now don't get me wrong; I truly enjoy baseball. Of course, when it is forced down your throat every night for nine months a year, it tends to drive you to the nuthouse, which is exactly where the owners, it seems, have been for quite some time. If you don't believe me, just take a look at the facts.

Deposed Commissioner Fay Vincent wakes up and becomes the first commissioner in the history of baseball to realize that Atlanta is in



SPORTIN' FOOL  
TIM THORSEN

the EAST and Chicago is not. So, what do the owners do to the only person in the sport with half a brain and any common sense? They put their collective foot up his butt. Fitting, huh? I mean, he did tamper with the "best interests of baseball." Is it Vincent's fault the "best interests of baseball" make the

entire sport look like a joke? The whole situation reminds me of college elections.

And what a wonderful schedule. Honestly, do we REALLY need a 1,200-game schedule? I mean, come on, how many times do we need to see the Braves throttle the Astros before we realize that Atlanta is better than Houston on grass, turf, mud, snow, sleet, rain

and whatever planet or surface they play on? Do the Cardinals and Cubs honestly need to play a 40-game series over the course of one year, and will anyone pay attention? Will anyone stay up until two in the morning watching the thrilling conclusion to the Seattle Mariners/Cleveland Indians fiasco on ESPN?

The only baseball ever worth watching on television is the playoffs. There's got to be a better way. Of course, the owners wouldn't know a good idea if it fell out of the sky and crashed on their pea-sized brains. Of course, if it messed up their pretty suits . . .

Well, you get the idea. Baseball is in disarray, and no one really seems to care. Thus, I will trudge my way through the latest happenings from the land of spring training, sunny Florida.

After one week of practice, the

Atlanta Braves have already been made overwhelming favorites to lose the World Series. Nobody seems to know who the winner will be, only that the Braves will somehow find a way to snatch defeat out of the jaws of imminent victory. (See Buffalo Bills.)

The first casualty of the heated pennant races has already hit. Unfortunately, the Cleveland Indians have already been mathematically eliminated. Word is, they are planning a year-long golf outing with the NBA's Dallas Mavericks. Of course, the Mavericks will be slight favorites since they haven't been playing anything for the past five months.

And now to a sport with at least a little sense, the NBA. Maybe if baseball would take a few pointers from David Stern, people would actually care about their sport.

Well, Pat Riley has done it now.

Whining because his boy, Patrick Ewing, wasn't voted a starter, Pat Riley has drawn the ire of one "Grandmama," Mr. Larry Johnson.

In case you missed it, Riley played Johnson only 16 minutes. That's 16 minutes of a game that went into overtime. Of all the childish, bonehead things to do, this one pretty much takes the cake.

The fans voted Larry Johnson a starter in the All-Star Game. The fans wanted to see Larry Johnson beat up on the best players in the West. Nobody asked to see Patrick Ewing and his rickety knees lumber up and down the court. I'd just like to thank Riley for giving us just that.

By the way, Pat, LJ is not the type of guy you want angry at you. When told that he scored 31 points the last time he played the Knicks, Larry promised that the next time they meet (April 14 in Charlotte),

he was going to score 80. It's not like Charles Oakley or Anthony Mason will be able to stop him. Plus, if the standings stay the way they are today, Charlotte would match up with New York in Round 2 of the playoffs. From all the Charlotte fans, I'd just like to say thanks and good luck, Pat.

By the way, thanks to Pat Riley, the NBA's All-Star Game is the recipient of the Nytol (will help you get your ZZZZZs) Award.

I would also be remiss if I failed to mention the Houston Oilers-like collapse of the South Carolina basketball team against Florida. The only problem is that the game pretty much speaks for itself. There's not a whole lot else I can say. Once again, the basketball team has left me at a loss for words. Well, at least at a loss for anything other than four letter words because I could rattle off a string of them.

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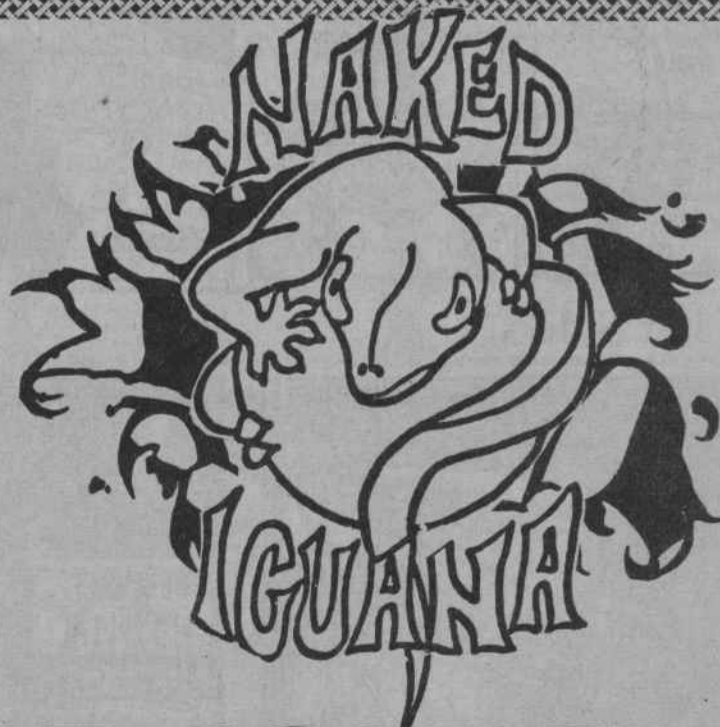


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