

Carolina opens new era with a bang, 80-62

LARRY WILLIAMS Sports Editor

In the dawning of a new era Monday night, the South Carolina basketball team trounced the Sluc Nancy International team 80-62 in exhibition action Monday.

Led by junior Larry Davis, who paced the Gamecocks with 27 points in his 27 minutes on the court, USC raced to a 26-13 lead at the 9:18 mark of the first half and never looked back.

Sluc Nancy opened the game hot, bolting to a five-point lead with 1:24 gone in the first half when Nancy's Derrick Lewis converted a three-point play off a Larry Davis foul to make the score 5-0.

Ryan Stack opened the scoring for USC on a 15-foot jumper with 18:20 left in the half that began a twelve-point run for the Gamecocks. Nancy ended its drought with a three pointer by Pat Durham with 15:25 left in the half.

Leonard "Bud" Johnson, one of the many heralded recruits signed by USC head coach Eddie Fogler last year, made a thundering entrance into the game when he jammed the ball through the basket while being fouled with 13:43 left in the half. The former Eau Claire standout went on to score 12 points on four-of-seven shooting.

At the half, Carolina led 47-29, due in large part to the performance of Davis, who had 14 points for the first half. Johnson checked in second for the Gamecocks with 10 points, followed by Melvin Watson, who had nine. Forward Durham, who had 17 points to lead the scoring for both teams, led Nancy in the first half. Carolina finished the half registering a 65.5 field goal percentage.

The nets cooled to begin the second half for the Gamecocks, as the youth and inexperience of the team began to show. Poor shooting allowed Nancy to climb to within 11 with 18:18 left, as a trey by Pat Durham closed the gap to 47-36. When Russell scored the first basket of the second half with 2:45 gone, the Gamecocks' engines were running again.

The Gamecocks then began to overpower Nancy during the next 10 minutes, extending their lead to 21 points when they went ahead 66-44 with 9:19 left in the game. USC extended their lead to a game high 22 with 4:54 left.

Fogler said he was pleased with his team's efforts in the 80-62 win but said the Gamecocks still have a way to go before competing in the upper echelon of the Southeastern Conference.

"We didn't play well," Fogler said. "We only had four kids out there who played last year."

Fogler said he was content with the effort of his team's newcomers. "Bud (Johnson) looked relaxed, and Larry certainly shows his ability to score," Fogler

said. "Bud showed that he will be a factor."

Davis, who transferred from North Carolina last year, said playing at USC was quite a transition from playing limited minutes for the Tar Heels.

"I had fun tonight. It was very exciting from the moment I got to court level," Davis said. "I was always nervous playing at North Carolina, because you always had Dean Smith there to let you know about it, and also (Derrick) Phelps and (Donald) Williams were always ready to come in."

BJ McKie, the highly acclaimed signee from Irmo, didn't appear to play to his full potential in the exhibition opener, scoring only four points on one-of-seven shooting. But, as Fogler will be the first to warn you, don't be fooled.

"BJ and Bud have done the best and are more ready to play than anyone else. (As far as McKie's performance), don't let tonight be an indicator. BJ is going to be very, very good," Fogler said.

The exhibition opener was witnessed by an announced attendance of 5,722 fans, an amazing number considering past attendances at USC basketball games. Fogler considers the fan support a reflection of past legends of success at Carolina.

"5,700 is a pretty good turnout for an exhibition game ... Season tickets haven't sold this well since '74, and I think that's a tribute to Frank McGuire," Fogler said.

Fogler was referring to the "Glory Days" of Gamecock basketball, the days when the Coliseum was a sellout for every game and the Gamecocks were considered a national powerhouse, led by their late coach Frank McGuire.

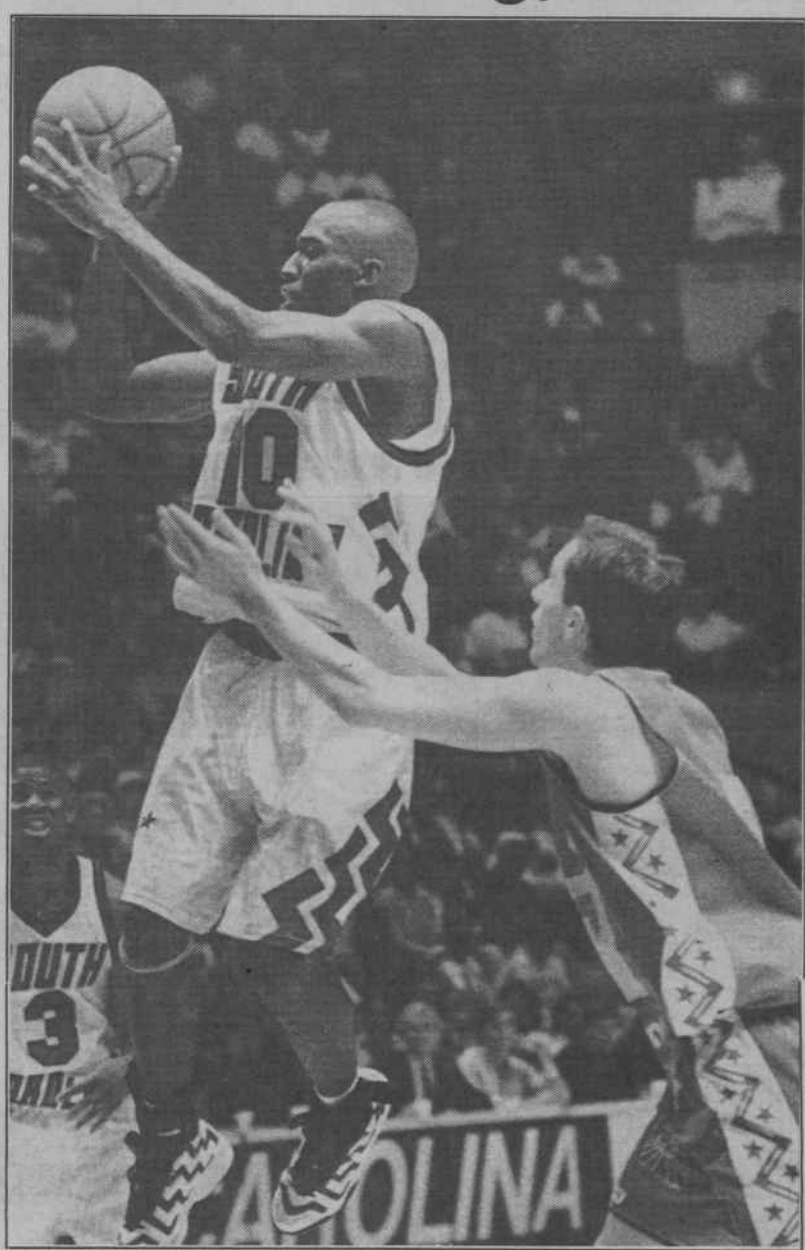
Davis said that the fans played a big part in the win. "From the moment we got upstairs and saw the Coliseum begin to fill up, it was very exciting. We got big support once we got going," he said. "I'm very excited about the talent and the nucleus of players we have here. We just need to listen to the coaches, and we'll be alright."

Team Notes:

Ryan Stack, who suffered an ankle sprain midway through the second half, will take about three days to a week to recover from the injury.

Hagen Rouse, the true freshman guard from Greenville, N.C., will be red-shirted, Fogler announced after Monday's game.

William Gallman, who rolled his ankle last week, will return Wednesday, as will senior William Unsel. USC's next game is Friday against the Charlotte Royals in their second and last exhibition game of the season. Tipoff is at 7:30 p.m.



ROBERT WALTON The Gamecock
Melvin Watson goes for a shot in the Gamecocks 80-62 defeat of Sluc Nancy Monday night in Frank McGuire Arena.

Unsel ready to lead rebuilt Gamecocks

LIZA ACIERNO Staff Writer

One of two returning senior players, forward William Unsel hopes to bring Carolina men's basketball to a new level this season. His ultimate goal is to win the SEC Championship. Returning from a respectable season, Unsel made the transition from Junior college to Div. 1 basketball. Averaging 7.6 points, 4.9 rebounds and .8 steals per game Unsel describes Div. 1 as "much more physical."

To compensate he has gained 20 pounds in the off season. Unsel will start at center this year, but was unable to play during the Nancy vs Carolina exhibition game because of a muscle sprain in his left leg.

Coach Eddie Fogler has high expectations for Unsel. He looks to him to play better in the post and to maintain his outside touch. Unsel finished off last season scoring 129 points and 78 rebounds in the last 13 games.

He remembers one amusing moment last season when he fell off the rim while going up for a dunk. Unsel's best moment in Carolina basketball was when he scored 23 points, had seven rebounds, three assists and three blocked shots against Campbell.

His career high was in Jr. College when he scored 53 points against South-

eastern Illinois. Unsel describes himself as a team player: "If I score two points and we win, I'm happy."

His favorite athlete is Hakeem Olajuwon because Olajuwon is the type of player who, according to Unsel, "just plays."

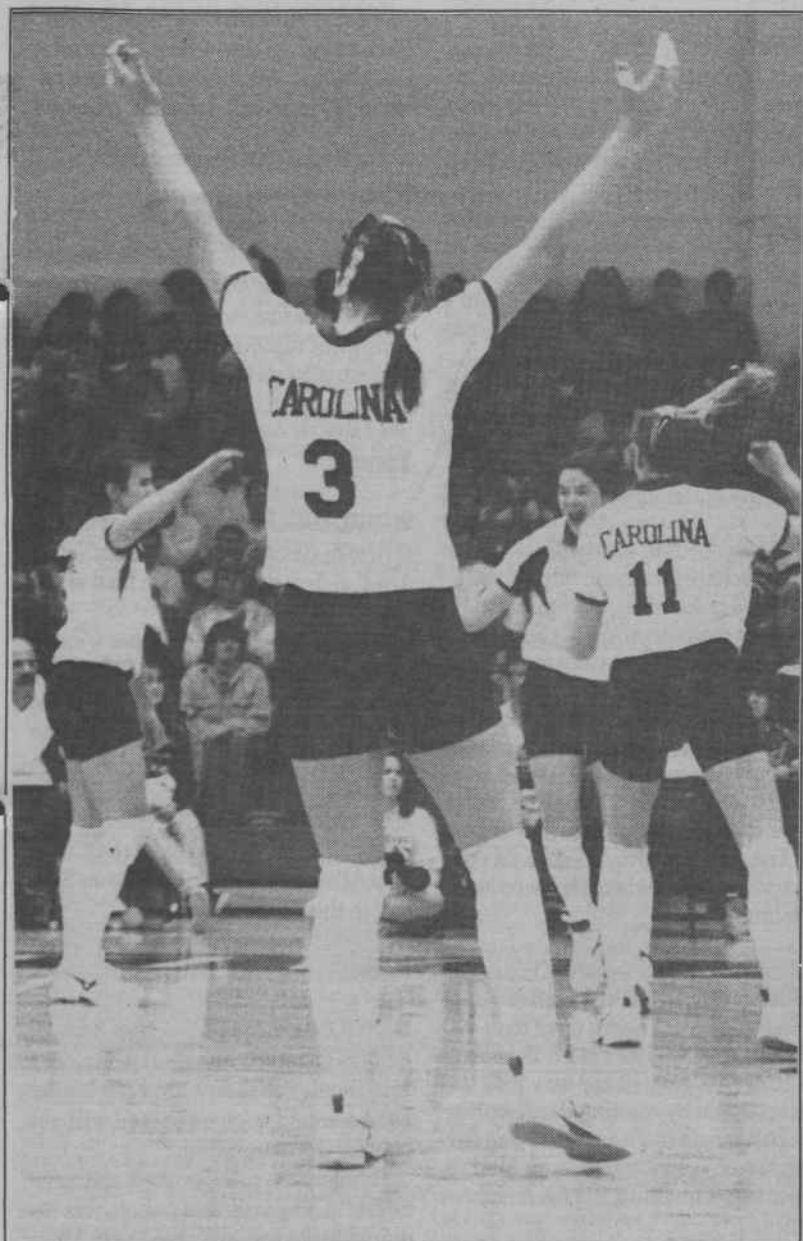
Even today the biggest influence on Unsel's basketball career is his mother. She supported him and attended all his games throughout high school and Jr. College. After he graduates next December, Unsel plans to pursue a masters. He is a Sociology major but doesn't know exactly what he plans on doing.

Unsel's no-nonsense attitude on the court pushes him to do what he can to be the best at what he does. He looks to the fans for support to help his team stay in the game. Unsel encourages the fans to come out and fill the Coliseum.

"They can make the difference in a close game," he said.

Fan support is expected to be extremely high this season. For the first time in 20 years, season tickets will sell out. This type of following has been non-existent since Frank McGuire coached.

Confidence in Fogler is high despite only 19 wins in the past two seasons. This season Fogler has a full squad to work with. The benefit of a strong bench is that when players are injured they have time to heal. Last year the attitude was "hurry up we need you to get better." This year, the emphasis is take your time and get well.



JAMIE CLARK The Gamecock
Shani Abshier raises her arms in celebration after the Gamecocks win a point in Sunday's 3-1 upset of No. 25 Georgia. The upset marked the last game to be played in Blatt P. E. Center.

Gamecocks take bite out of Bulldogs, 3-1

Fortman, aggressive play highlight upset of No. 25 Georgia in final game at Blatt. STAFF REPORTS

In a game of firsts and lasts, the South Carolina volleyball team defeated No. 25 Georgia in the Gamecock's last-ever match at Sol Blatt P. E. Center Sunday afternoon. Carolina entered the match with a series record of 1-23 versus Georgia, having won only their first meeting in 1978, 3-1.

The 3-1 victory moves the Gamecocks to 18-9 and 8-6 in the SEC, while the Bulldogs fall to 19-7 and 11-3 in the SEC. The victory closes out the regular season for the Gamecocks, as they finished third in the SEC East.

"This was really a team effort," coach Kim Hudson said. "This really gives us the momentum we wanted to go to the SEC Tournament. We knew after the first time we played Georgia this year, we had a real shot at beating them in the rematch."

Freshman Dee Dee Fortman, who racked up her second triple double of her young career, had 17 kills, 16 digs and 10 block assists, hitting an impressive .438. Freshman Ashley Edlund also had a career day, with career highs

in assists, with 70, and digs, with 24. Senior Kori Ermigarat had 21 kills and 30 digs. Ermigarat's play was amazing considering she re-injured her heel in practice last week and wasn't cleared to play until game time. The Gamecocks had four hitters in double figures in kills and out-blocked the Bulldogs, 39-31, as UGA is No. 2 in the country in blocks.

Down 5-7 in game one, USC came back to tie it up at 7-7 and then went on to a 15-10 victory. Stepping up the blocking in game two, the Gamecocks controlled game two from start to finish, winning 15-8.

The bulldogs refused to go down easy and built a 9-14 lead in game three, before Carolina fought back to tie the game at 14-14. Carolina couldn't capitalize when serving as the Bulldogs took game three, 16-14.

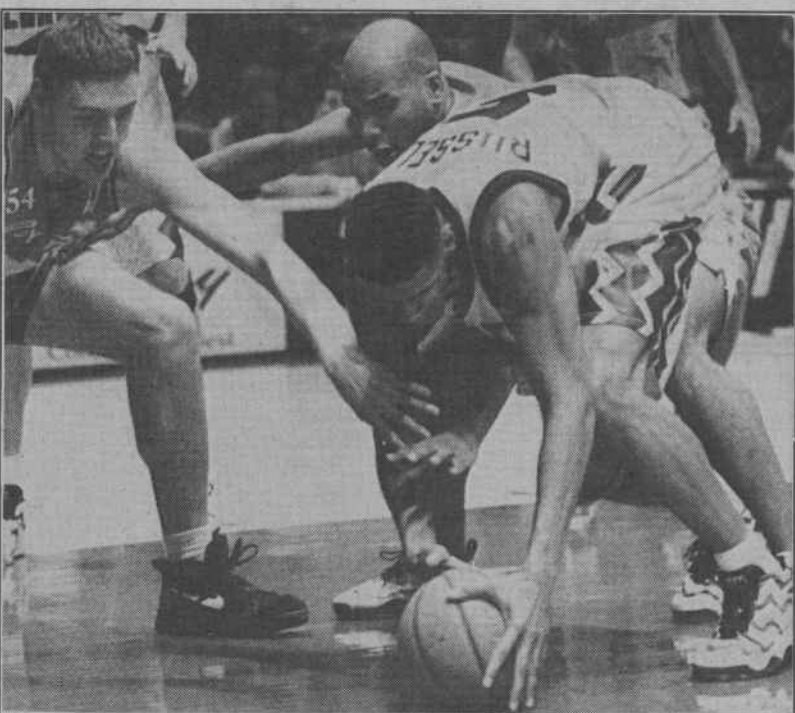
Carolina roared out to an 8-1 lead in game four, but again couldn't capitalize when serving as the Gamecocks moved the score to 11-9, and then Georgia tied it up at 14-14. Carolina held on, as Fortman's 17th kill of the day proved to be the game winner, with Carolina winning the game 16-14.

It was the first home match ever to be broadcast on live radio as seniors Kori Ermigarat and Cary Beeson were honored before the game. Carolina will play in the first round of the SEC Tournament, in Baton Rouge, La., Friday against Mississippi State.

After the SEC Tournament, the Gamecocks will await a post-season tournament bid.



FORTMAN



ROBERT WALTON The Gamecock
Malik Russell scrambles for the ball in the Gamecocks 80-62 victory over Sluc Nancy. Russell is one of only two seniors on the squad.

Gamecock Sports. We're into upsets.

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