

GAMECOCK ATHLETICS

Mens' Basketball @ Vanderbilt
Tonight, 7:30 p.m. EST
Memorial Gymnasium
Radio: AM-560

Womens' Basketball vs. Kentucky
Tonight 7:00 p.m.
Frank McGuire Arena
Radio: AM-1400

SPORTS

THEY SAID IT

"It makes you feel real good to know that everyone is behind you and everyone's excited about South Carolina and what we're doing right now."

BJ McKie on students camping out for tickets

Wednesday, January 29, 1997

The Gamecock

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USC travels to 'Music City' tonight to take on Vandy

LARRY WILLIAMS Senior Writer

Tonight the men's basketball team will be looking to continue doing what it couldn't do last season: Win on the road.

The Gamecocks (13-5, 7-0 SEC) travel to Nashville to take on the Vanderbilt Commodores (11-7, 3-4), hoping to win their fourth-straight game away from home (8:37 p.m. EST).

Last year, playing away from Frank McGuire Arena produced miserable results, as USC posted a miserable 3-10 road record.

What a difference a year makes. This season, USC been perfect away from home, having posted wins at Mississippi State, Florida and Alabama.

Having eight straight wins and a lofty perch above the SEC East gave USC a No. 25 ranking in the Associated Press poll Monday, its first ranking since 1991.

For sophomore guard BJ McKie, who won SEC Player of the Week honors Monday, it's the memory of last year's road disasters that has produced this year's successes.

"It made us concentrate a little harder and stay more focused," McKie said. "It's very hard to stay focused, especially when you're away from home. The odds are against you, but that's part of playing on the road."

McKie, who is second in SEC scoring with 18.1 points per-game, said the team gained wisdom from those losses as well.

"I feel we've gotten much more mature as a team," McKie said. "We could have folded through those three games we won on the road. Concentrating on the little things, making every possession key, that really helped us win on the road."

To win against Vanderbilt, USC coach Eddie Fogler said the Gamecocks will have to bring a strong defense to Nashville, which they didn't in last year's 107-97 loss.

"The game there was one of the better shootouts that I've been involved in," Fogler said. "In terms of offensive production, both teams were terrific offensively. But they scored more points than we did, and neither team could guard the other."

McKie said another shootout is the last thing USC wants tonight. "Everything went in for us, but everything went in for Vanderbilt, too," McKie said. "Vanderbilt got the best end of that deal, because they shot a little bit better than we did."

"Nobody could stop one another, so hopefully we can go in [tonight] with a little more defense. Last year, it was everything except defense."

The Gamecocks and Commodores know each other well, having met two times last year in addition to the Nashville affair.

In the teams' first meeting, USC came from behind to take an 87-83 overtime win in Columbia.

In the NIT, Vandy and USC faced each other for yet a third time. The Gamecocks did it with defense, winning 80-70 to advance in the

tournament. This year, the Commodores have been struggling to replace guard Frank Seckar, on whom they depended so much in seasons past.

Filling the void left by Seckar have been forwards Pax Whitehead (14.2 ppg) and Billy DeSpaltro (12.4 ppg), and guard Drew Maddux (12.5 ppg).

"They have been able to overcome Seckar's three point shooting with Whitehead's ability to shoot the ball better," Fogler said. "They're still very good, they're tough," Fogler emphasized. "Their front-court players have gotten better. Dispartro is now much more of a factor offensively for them."

After having been voted No. 25 Monday, USC is looking to continue its climb up the polls.

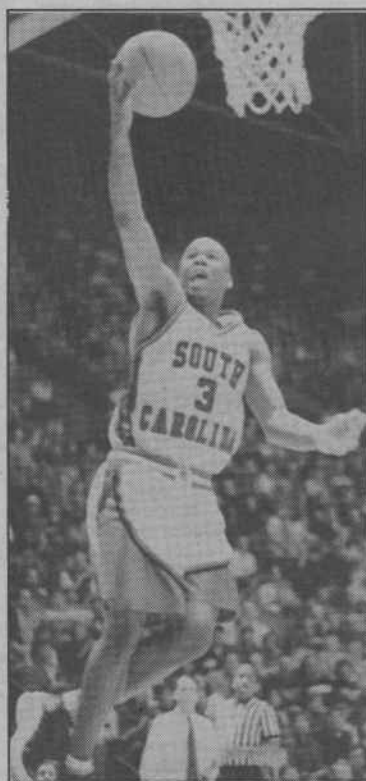
But, as sophomore forward William Gallman says, the ranking isn't something the team has lost sleep over.

"It's great and all, but I think it's greater for the fans," Gallman said. "It's something for them to get excited about."

"I don't think that's a particularly big deal," the Irmo native McKie said. "It matters how you finish later on in the season."

"Our main goal is to keep playing the best we can, try not to listen to all the hype. That attitude has gotten us this far. We're just going to try to keep it up," McKie said. "If you're not No. 1 at the end of the season, what does it actually mean?"

McKie honored as SEC Player of Week



ROBERT WALTON The Gamecock

BRYAN JOHNSTON Sports Editor

Sophomore BJ McKie was named SEC Player of the Week Monday by the conference office.

McKie, who averaged 22 points and nine rebounds for the week, helped lead the Gamecocks to victories over Alabama and Ole Miss last week.

McKie scored 16 of his game-high 18 points in the second half of the Gamecocks' 62-60 road victory over the Crimson Tide Wednesday.

"It's a great accomplishment and it's something I didn't do last year," McKie said.

As much as the award is an individual honor, McKie said he owes credit to others.

"It makes me feel good but I have to thank my teammates for that because without them, none of the recognitions or individual accolades would be possible," McKie said.

In Saturday's game, the Columbia native once again led all scorers as he poured in 26 points

and grabbed a career-high 11 rebounds.

"BJ was terrific last week," USC coach Eddie Fogler said. "He was very good at Alabama, and against Ole Miss he was absolutely sensational."

McKie is the leading active scorer in the SEC, averaging 18.1 points per game. Kentucky's Ron Mercer was averaging 18.6 points per game before blowing out his knee.

The Irmo High School graduate is also averaging 2.2 3-pointers a game (4th in SEC), a 40.8 percent 3-point goal percentage (7th in SEC) and 46.9 percent from the field (5th in SEC).

He also leads the league in SEC games only with 19.4 points per contest.

McKie is the second Gamecock player in three weeks to be named SEC Player of the Week. Larry Davis, who before McKie was named was the only Gamecocks ever to be given the honor, was named Player of the Week for the week of Jan. 13.

Gamecocks crack AP Top 25

BRYAN JOHNSTON Sports Editor

It took a while, but the Gamecocks are back where they started at the beginning of the year—the Top 25.

In the latest AP Top 25 released Monday evening, USC was No. 25. It is the Gamecock's first national ranking in six years.

"It makes us feel good to get national recognition," BJ McKie said.

Many of the pre-season basketball magazines had Carolina in the Top 20, but after a 5-5 start, USC was about as far away as you can get from receiving votes.

Two weeks ago, they received only two votes, and last week, they got 75 votes. With this week's 129 points, they cracked the Top 25.

"We're on a winning streak right now and look to keep it going," McKie said. "Right now we feel we can win anytime we take the court."

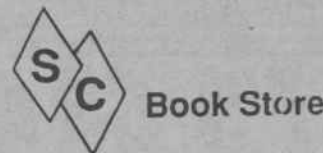
AP Top 25 #25	
1. Kansas	14. Villanova
2. Wake Forest	15. Stanford
3. Kentucky	16. Michigan
4. Utah	17. Indiana
5. Maryland	18. Colorado
6. Minnesota	19. N. Carolina
7. Clemson	20. Xavier
8. Cincinnati	21. Tulsa
9. Louisville	22. Texas Tech
10. Arizona	23. Texas
12. Duke	24. Marquette
13. New Mexico	25. S. Carolina

OFFICIAL BALLOT

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The Gamecock

The Gamecock is asking the University of South Carolina to cast its vote for the best products and services provided in Columbia. Take a moment to fill out this official ballot and you'll automatically be registered for PRIZES GALORE!!!



You are automatically registered for weekly prize drawings just by voting!

Return Ballot to:
Carolina's Best
c/o Student Media
Russell House
Columbia, SC 29208

1st Prize - Airfare for Two - \$500 Value
2nd Prize - SC Bookstore Shopping Spree - \$150 Value
3rd Prize - Barefoot Sandal - Gift Certificate - \$100 Value

Shopping and Business

- _____ Best Shopping Mall
- _____ Best Department Store
- _____ Best Grocery Store
- _____ Best Discount Store
- _____ Best Pharmacy and Drug Store
- _____ Best Convenience Store
- _____ Best ABC/Package Store
- _____ Best Men's Shop
- _____ Best Ladies' Shop
- _____ Best Shoe Store
- _____ Best Lingerie Shop
- _____ Best Alternative Clothing Shop
- _____ Best Sporting Goods Store
- _____ Best Camping/Outdoor Shop
- _____ Best Bookstore
- _____ Best University Bookstore
- _____ Best Formalwear Shop-Men
- _____ Best Formalwear Shop-Ladies
- _____ Best Place for Visionwear
- _____ Best Jewelry Store
- _____ Best Bicycle Shop
- _____ Best Camera Shop
- _____ Best Pet Shop
- _____ Best Dry Cleaners

- _____ Best Place to Wash Clothes
- _____ Best Car Wash
- _____ Best Music Store
- _____ Best Musical Supply Store
- _____ Best Banking Services
- _____ Best Auto Supply
- _____ Best Car Dealership
- _____ Best Art Supply
- _____ Best Cellular Phone Service
- _____ Best Florist
- _____ Best Print Shop
- _____ Best Tanning Salon
- _____ Best Hair Salon
- _____ Best Nail Salon
- _____ Best Barber Shop
- _____ Best Computer Store
- _____ Best Fitness Center
- _____ Best Travel Agency
- _____ Best Apartment Complex

Entertainment

- _____ Best Bowling Center
- _____ Best Comedy Club
- _____ Best Movie Theater

- _____ Best Radio Station
- _____ Best Morning Radio Show
- _____ Best Radio DJ
- _____ Best Club DJ
- _____ Best Happy Hour
- _____ Best Video Rental
- _____ Best Dance Club
- _____ Best Blues Club
- _____ Best Jazz Club
- _____ Best R&B Club
- _____ Best Alternative Music Club
- _____ Best Country Music Club

Food and Drink

- _____ Best Place for Seafood
- _____ Best Place for Italian
- _____ Best Place for Chinese
- _____ Best Place for Mexican
- _____ Best Place for Greek
- _____ Best Place for Japanese
- _____ Best Pizza (eat-in)
- _____ Best Pizza (delivery)
- _____ Best Wings
- _____ Best Place for Homestyle Cooking

- _____ Best Subs
- _____ Best Deli Shop
- _____ Best Hot Dog
- _____ Best Fries
- _____ Best BBQ
- _____ Best Brand of Beer
- _____ Best Soft Drink
- _____ Best Bar
- _____ Best Pub
- _____ Best Place for Coffee
- _____ Best Place for Dessert
- _____ Best Ice Cream
- _____ Best Frozen Yogurt
- _____ Best Place for Steak
- _____ Best Place for Breakfast
- _____ Best Place for Late Night Food
- _____ Best Delivery

Religion

- _____ Best House of Worship
- _____ Best Youth Activities
- _____ Best Religious Bookstore

Official Entry Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Only one ballot per person allowed. Duplicated or reproduced ballots will be discarded. Where applicable, restrictions apply on all prizes awarded.

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 Faculty
 Staff