SPORTS

Volleyball starts SEC play

BY DAVID CLONINGER ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

The South Carolina volleyball team will start its Southeastern Conference schedule this weekend as the Gamecocks play host to Kentucky and Tennessee at the Volleyball CompetitIon Facility.

USC (6-4) has exhibited strong performances this season, beating Florida State on its home court and winning two tournaments. However, the team fell to Michigan last weekend in a disappointing effort after leading the Wolverines 2-0.

Kentucky, who finished 16-14 last year, split the season series with USC in 1998 and is also starting its SEC schedule Friday night. The Lady Wildcats are led by All-SEC performer Jaclyn Homan and Katie Eiserman, but are still learning the new system set by second-year coach Jona Braden.

The Wildcat recruiting class features three high-profile players in Kristen Batt, Aleisha Craven and Elizabeth McCaslin. The three have already seen significant playing time this year.

Tennessee, 19-10 in 1998, were dominated by the Gamecocks last year. Coach Rob Patrick watched the Lady Vols get beaten twice by USC and is looking for some payback.

The Volunteers are led by Ariana Wilson, who made second-team All-SEC in 1998. Also contributing will be sophomore Erica Lear, who turned heads her freshman year by finishing third in the conference in assists.

USC, coming off of Coach Kim Christopher's 300th career win, will be led by sophomore Cally Plummer. Plummer has been a consistent scoring force since returning from a shoulder injury suffered in the preseason. Senior Crystal Moore will be helping out also, trying to duplicate an all-tournament performance last weekend.

Carolina freshman setter Sam Alban will be expected to continue her strong performances this season, as she leads her team to the strong offensive force it has shown in 1999. Also, freshman Berna Dwyer has been a threat, starting the majority of USC's matches this season. They will be joined by another freshman, Megan Hosp.

USC and Kentucky will play at 7 p.m. Friday, while Tennessee and Carolina play at 1 p.m. Sunday. The Gamecocks will then go on the road for two matches against Arkansas and Louisiana State next weekend.

LANGSTON

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had the Devil beat, and they were healing lepers left and right. They had it together. I'd say in the spiritual realm, they have a good record.

Does Holtz have the same loyalty from his players? Can he trust the fate of

the spiritual world with these guys? There's only so much one man can do with the corps of players this team has. Not to say the players are awful, but work is needed in some of the crucial offensive spots.

Holtz can only do so much. From it. They were running things, man. They * there, it's up to the players to improve

It seems obvious his presence has not dazzled the players in the same manner it has the fans. If these players were as awestruck as the majority of the people of USC and Columbia, I would be predicting a national title.

Maybe Holtz has us all fooled. Maybe he's only a good speaker and a good presence. Maybe his coaching skills leave much to be desired. But I seriously doubt

If there is one thing I learned from my experience with high school football, it is that the coach's role only goes so far. The players must pick up where the coach

After all, he has one national championship under his belt.

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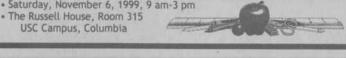
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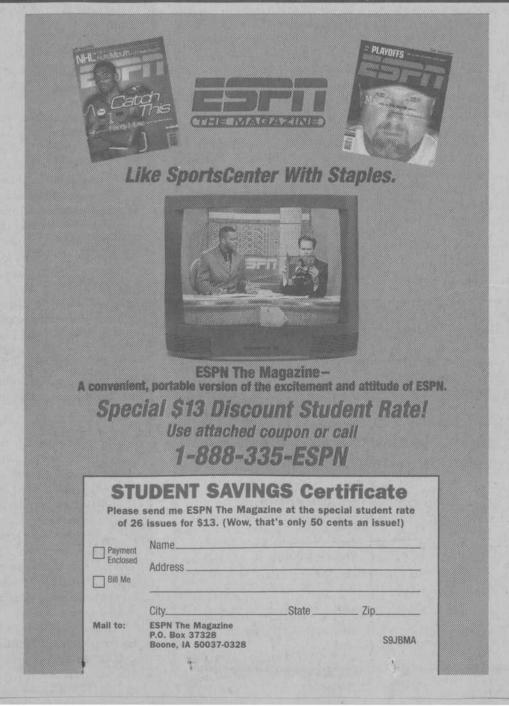
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