



TODAY:

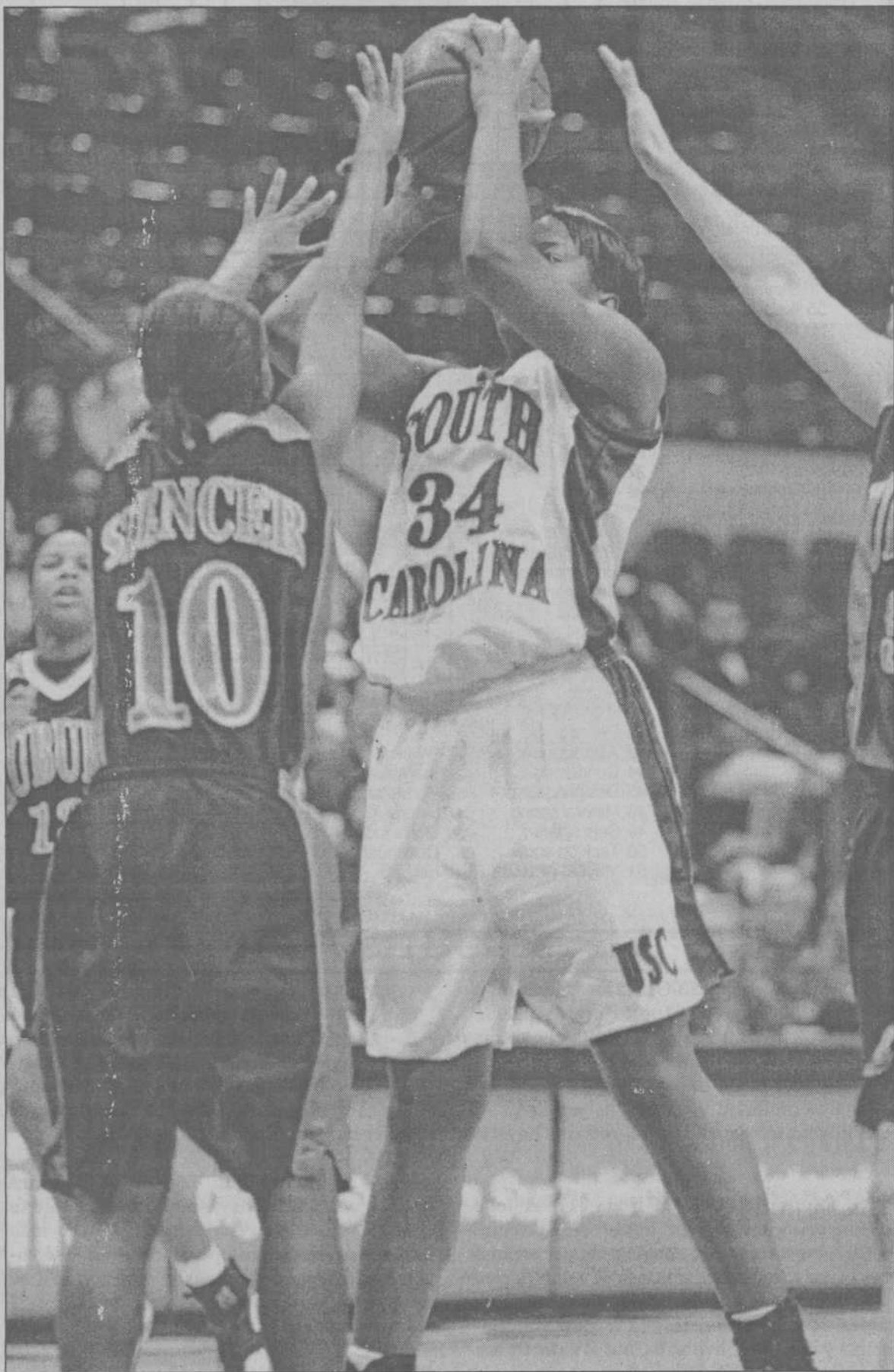
Gamecock Sports previews the 2000 USC baseball season in a special insert

SPORTS

SCHEDULE

- Baseball vs. Chas. Southern, 3 p.m.
Track at Milrose Games, NY, today
Baseball vs. Chas. Southern, Sat.
Men's basketball at Kentucky, Sat.
Women's basketball vs. Ole Miss, Sun.

Tigers slip past Lady Gamecocks



Sean Rayford GAMECOCK SPORTS

USC's Shannon Segres, 34, drives on Auburn's LaRita Spencer, 10, during Thursday's 71-62 loss. The loss was the Gamecocks' seventh SEC loss of the season, dropping them into 11th place.

BY SHANNON ROOKE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Many differences show up when comparing the past two games for the Lady Gamecock basketball team.

Last time, Florida was the team, the place and the second half was the time when they came so close.

This time, No. 13 Auburn was the team, home-court South Carolina was the place and the first half was their strong point. One thing, however, remains the same.

It's the same thing that has been constant for the last four matches. They lost.

After getting out in front with an early lead, the Lady Gamecocks fell behind the Tigers in the first half. USC rallied behind freshman Kelly Morrone and turned Auburn's nine-point point lead into a one point lead of their own.

For the first time in three games, the Lady Gamecocks led the game heading into their locker room for a halftime talk.

While the fans watched as all of the USC women's sports teams were brought out in front of them to celebrate National Women in Sports Day, the basketball team was figuring out what to do to hold onto their lead.

It would be to no avail.

Tasha Hamilton, who led her team with 18 points, brought out the Lady Tigers and began the second half with a 10-0 Auburn run.

The Gamecocks, never coming closer than seven points for the rest of the game, would have to watch as the No. 5 team in the Southeastern Conference slipped by them 71-62.

In the end, the Lady Gamecocks had some things to look at. The beginning of the second half being one of them.

"The first five minutes in the second half is the most important part of the game, I believe," said Morrone. "We came out a little softer than we should have and dug ourselves into a hole that we couldn't get out of. We worked hard at the end of the game but we've got some more things to work on."

Carolina head coach Susan Walvius couldn't agree more. "We came out into the second half a little tentative," she said. "And that cost us the ball game."

With star point-guard Shaunzinski Gortman out for the remainder of the season with a torn ACL, the women's basketball team is looking towards their younger players to fill her shoes.

"We definitely miss Shaun, she's a big part of our team," said Jocelyn Penn, who had two points, five rebounds, and five steals on the night. "But we're still going to go out there and play as a team."

When sophomore guard Crishna Hill was called upon by her coach to become the "emotional support" of the Gamecocks, she had no idea that it would lead her to the top of the statistics for the team. Hill came off the bench to score ten points and tally two rebounds for Carolina.

"Crishna shot the ball really well for us tonight," said Morrone. "She stepped up a lot and without Shaun, it was appreciated."

Despite ending the game with 11 less rebounds than their SEC opponent, Walvius

knew coming into the match that it was going to be something to consider.

"We knew the keys to this game were keep them off the offensive boards, defend penetration and keep the ball out of their post player's hands," she said. "We did a good job in the first half with the offensive rebounds, but after that, we were playing catch-up ball."

On her players' individual performances, Walvius was pleased with what she saw.

"I felt that Kelly Morrone did a pretty decent job working to communicate and attempting to run the show," she said. "Ines Ajanovic, you have to understand, is 6-foot-3 and playing on the outside. The more comfortable and experienced that Ines gets, the better that she is going to be."

With nine freshmen and sophomores on the team and the leadership of players such as Morrone and Gortman, fans can expect promising seasons in the near future.

"Sometimes that inexperience that comes with such a young team shows itself," said Walvius. "And it showed up tonight. We're still trying to find a chemistry that works for us on the floor and some of that again is just youth."

"They shot 51 or 52 percent on the game and, against a zone, that's pretty good and many times we were double teaming the post on top of that."

Stepping up for the Lady Tigers with 15 points, eight assists and two steals was 5-foot-9 senior Tiffany Krantz. Alongside her and adding 15 points of her own was teammate Consweila Sparrow.

With the win, the Lady Tigers increased their overall record to 18-4 and became 6-3 in the SEC. Auburn will now look to win their last six games which are all in the conference and will take them to the SEC playoffs.

Looking down the road for the Gamecocks is yet another SEC match-up.

Only this time, the team is Ole Miss, and they're the only team below USC in the SEC standings. Mississippi is currently last in the conference with an 0-6 record. Tipoff is scheduled for 3 p.m., and Carolina will be looking to stop their four-game losing streak.

Auburn 17-4, 5-3 SEC

Table with 15 columns: No., FG, FGA, 3-PT, FT, FTA, OF, DE, TOT, PF, TP, A, TO, B, S, MIN. Lists stats for Auburn players like Shana Askew, LeCoe Willingham, etc.

South Carolina 11-10, 1-7 SEC

Table with 15 columns: No., FG, FGA, 3-PT, FT, FTA, OF, DE, TOT, PF, TP, A, TO, B, S, MIN. Lists stats for South Carolina players like Shannon Segres, Annie Lester, etc.

No end in sight as Florida hands USC 7th SEC loss

BY SHANNON ROOKE
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

For the seventh time in a row, South Carolina fans sat on the edge of their seats as the men's basketball team came from behind to lead against a ranked team.

And as they filed out of Frank McGuire Arena on Wednesday night, their final thoughts equaled those of the past three weeks: we were so close.

Sending their record to a struggling 1-7 in the Southeastern Conference and 9-12 overall, USC fell to No. 12 Florida 86-82 after a strong second half comeback attempt.

"I am for the most part proud of what we did here today from the effort standpoint and the competition standpoint," said Eddie Fogler, head coach of the Gamecocks. "They are an excellent basketball team. They play basketball well and when they score, it's pretty."

Before a crowd of almost 10,000 fans, Carolina jumped off to an early lead with a 7-0 run to open the game.

The Gamecocks, who were going for their first three-game road-winning streak in eight years, would not have a chance to lead until five minutes had left the clock.

Then came 5-foot-10 Florida guard Teddy Dupay.

The sophomore from Fort Myers, Fla., scored a season high with 20 points and hit five of his team's 10 3-point attempts. Dupay was also six-for-10 from field goal range and 100 percent from the free throw line.

Down by five at the halfway mark, the Gamecocks rallied behind the offensive efforts of leading scorer Jamel Bradley and tied the game at 62 with 9:21 left to play in the second half.

The lead of the game would jump between the two teams for the remainder of the game before finally coming to rest with the Gamecocks. Florida forward Matt Bonner sank a 3-point shot with 35 seconds on the clock, sending Carolina into an eight-point hole that it would not dig out of.

With all of the 3-point action coming from Florida, it was no doubt that 19-game starter Aaron Lucas was missed on the USC court. Lucas, who was averaging 7.3 points per game and was also ranked fourth in the SEC in assists, is currently out of action with a

fractured right hand that he received in a tough loss to Vanderbilt on Jan. 26th.

Forced to try to fill Lucas' shoes, Fogler looked towards his younger players. Freshman Chuck Eidson came off the bench to start and play 35 minutes.

"We don't have Lucas," Fogler said. "And in fairness to Eidson, he got fatigued. With playing point guard as many minutes as he has

against their play and their press, he is fatigued."

Junior David Ross also landed a starting position and was pleased with being able to help.

"That's what me and Jamel were called upon to do," said Ross, who totaled 11 points, five rebounds, and one block. "To give a little spurt off the bench. Especially because Aaron is out right now, someone is defi-

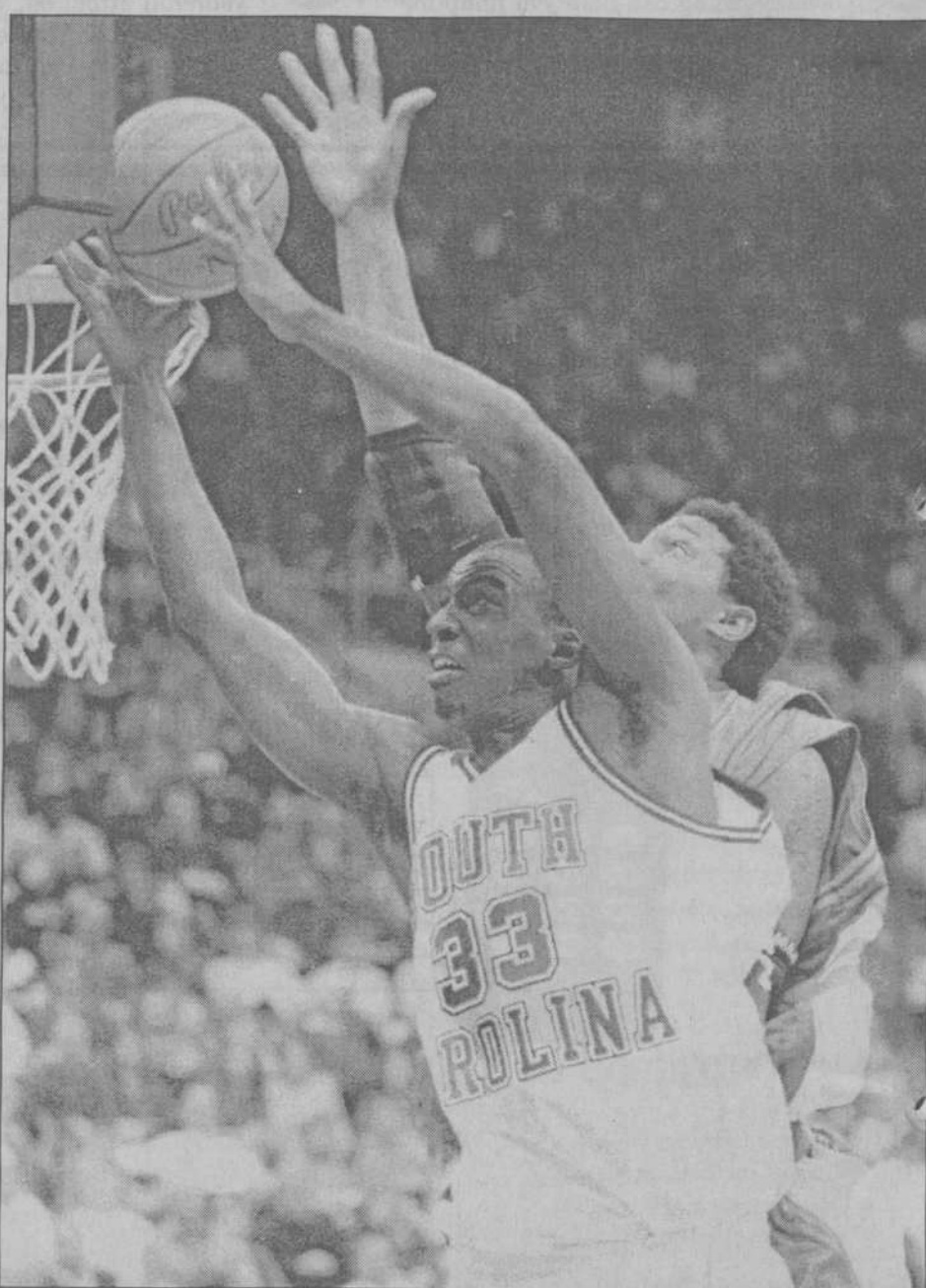
Men's SEE PAGE 9

Florida 16-4, 5-2 SEC

Table with 15 columns: No., FG, FGA, 3-PT, FT, FTA, OF, DE, TOT, PF, TP, A, TO, B, S, MIN. Lists stats for Florida players like Brent Wright, Major Parker, etc.

South Carolina 9-12, 1-7 SEC

Table with 15 columns: No., FG, FGA, 3-PT, FT, FTA, OF, DE, TOT, PF, TP, A, TO, B, S, MIN. Lists stats for South Carolina players like David Ross, Damien Kinloch, etc.



Sean Rayford GAMECOCK SPORTS

USC's Damien Kinloch, 33, goes up for a rebound while Florida's Udonis Haslem tries to stop him Wednesday. The Gamecocks lost their seventh straight game, 86-82.