



Sports

GAMECOCK SPORTS SCHEDULE

- Women's soccer vs. Utah, Fri., 7 p.m.
- Volleyball at LSU, Fri., 8 p.m.
- Football vs. Mississippi State, Sat., 12:30 p.m.
- Men's soccer at Wake Forest, Sat., 7 p.m.

Gamecocks prepare for undefeated MSU

BY MICHAEL HANEY
THE GAMECOCK

The South Carolina Gamecocks take on the No. 25 Mississippi State Bulldogs in a key Southeastern Conference showdown this Saturday.

Carolina is riding high after starting the season with an unlikely 3-0 record, including a victory over the then No. 9 Georgia Bulldogs. This will be Carolina's second Top 25 opponent this year. Carolina is ranked 26th in the Associated Press poll and is only 10 points behind MSU.

The Bulldogs are also undefeated, having slipped by Memphis in their season opener, then blasting BYU last Thursday 44-28 behind the running of quarterback Wayne Madkin and their always stingy defense.

The Gamecocks come into the game with a rejuvenated offense, averaging 405.3 yards per game and ranked 39th in the country. The Bulldogs haven't had to use much of their offense because of the play of their defensive unit. They are averaging 251.5 yards per contest.

Pulling the weight of Carolina's offense has been the running game. With the new spread formation, many teams are backing off to avoid giving up the big pass play, which has helped the Gamecocks lead the SEC and rank 16th nationally in rushing with 224.3 yards a game. Sophomore Derek Watson has been the workhorse of the unit, rushing for 422 yards and 7 touchdowns. Quarterback Phil Petty has completed 61% of his passes for 481 yards and no touchdowns with one interception.

The Carolina offensive line has been the surprise of the season so far, helping the team gain much of its success. Led by junior tackle Melvin Paige and senior center Scott Brown, the offensive line has been able to control the line of scrimmage through the first three games. They will face a Mississippi State defensive line that averages 6 feet, 3 inches and 308 pounds compared to Carolina's average of 6 feet, 3 inches and 280 pounds on offense.

Last week, wide receiver James Adkisson caught 8 passes for 100 yards. The receiving corps will look to improve upon its performance through their first three games against the Bulldogs. How involved this group is will greatly determine the success of the offense on Saturday.

Mississippi State enters the game with one of the best backfield tandems in the league. Quarterback Wayne Madkin is not only the team's leading passer with 232 yards and a 56% pass completion rate, he is also the team's leading rusher with 110 total yards, averaging more than six yards a carry.

Tailbacks Dizenzo Miller and Dontae Walker have three touchdowns between them. Miller is also a big threat at receiver. He has four catches for 102 yards and one touchdown—a 78-yarder against BYU.

The Bulldog's offensive line is annually one of the

biggest in the league. The Dogs average 6 feet, 4 inches and 309 pounds along the front, led by a pair of 346 pounders, Pork Chop Womack and Courtney Lee.

The receiving group has a solid one-two punch with Terrell Grindle and senior Larry Huntington. While not household names, both are capable of making the big play when necessary.

Defensively, both teams are tops in the country. Carolina is ranked 3rd in total defense, while the Bulldogs are 13th nationally. Carolina is tied for 1st with cross-state rival Clemson in scoring defense, only giving up an astounding 5.3 points per game, and is ranked 1st in pass efficiency defense. Mississippi State is tied for 18th in rushing defense, allowing 76 yards per contest. Perhaps the Bulldogs best statistic is a +2.5 turnover ratio. Their defense stifled the pass-happy Brigham Young offense, scoring 21 points on defense. They have caused 9 turnovers in just 2 games.

Carolina is led on defense by senior nose guard Cleveland Pinkney and senior defensive tackle Cecil Caldwell. Senior linebacker Andre Offing leads the team in tackles with 26, plus a fumble recovery for a touchdown. Carolina's secondary has been stellar this season, intercepting seven passes—one less than all of last year. Almost every member of the group has one interception, the only exception being free safety Antoine Nesmith. Defensive end Dennis Quinn leads the team in interceptions with two.

Mississippi State has an aggressive defense led by All-American cornerback Fred Smoot. Smoot leads a unit that ranked 1st in total defense last year. Safety Pig Prather joins Smoot in the secondary. Prather has six tackles for a loss and three sacks. Senior end Ellis Wymms and tackles Toby Golliday and Willie Blade anchor the defensive line.

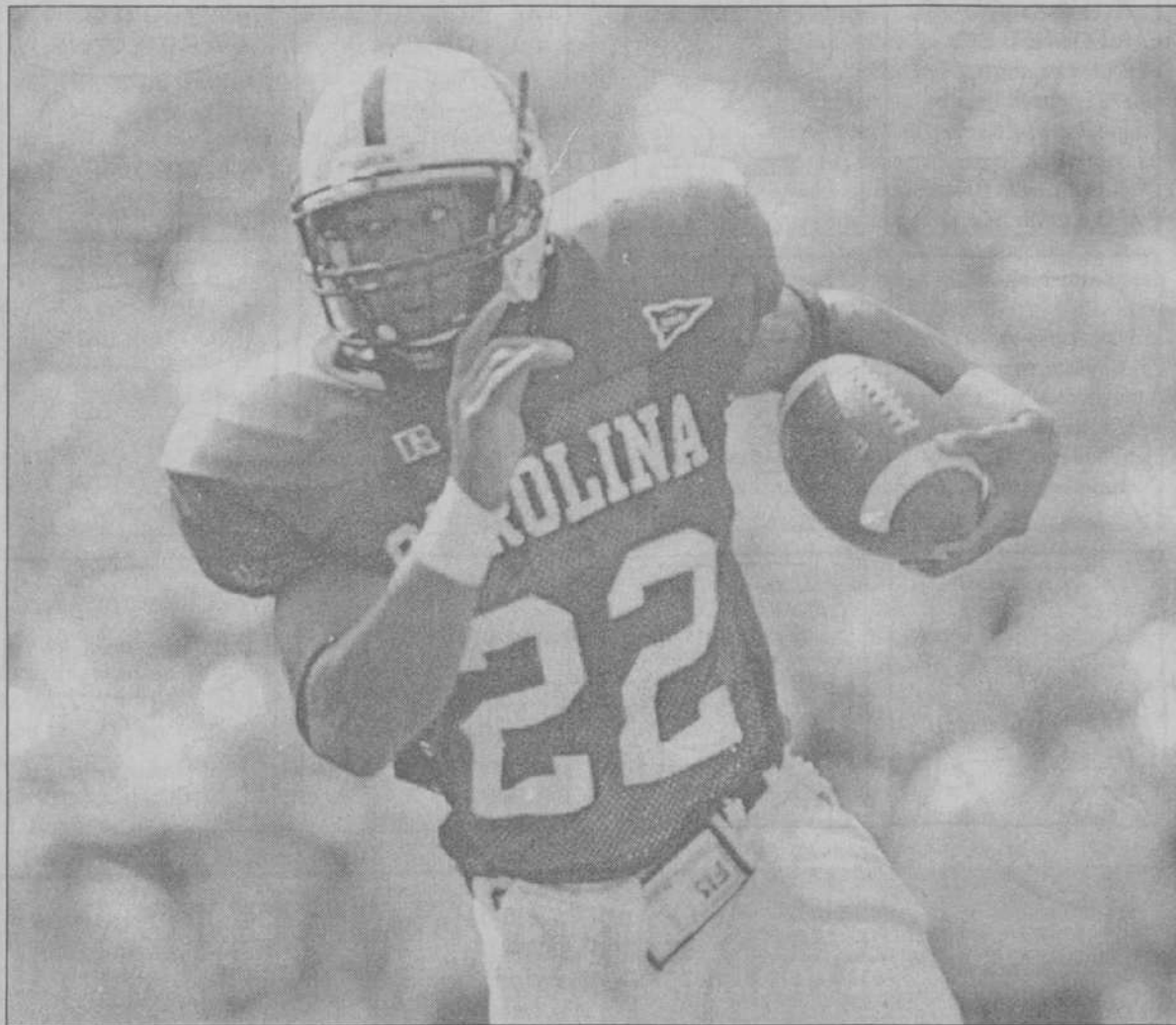
The Bulldogs average five sacks per game. Linebacker Mario Haggan is tied with Prather and Blade for the team lead with three.

Mississippi State punter Prentiss Cole is averaging 47 yards per punt and Bulldog placekicker Paul Westfield is one of the best in the country. He is 20-26 on field goals in two years, with a long of 51.

Carolina head coach Lou Holtz said the special teams are his biggest concern in Saturday's game.

"The kicking game really worries me," said Holtz. "Last year at Mississippi State we averaged 25.5 yards net punting, and they averaged 42.7 yards. That is a big difference that once again looms in this ballgame. Our best bet is to do some damage control with the kicking game."

The sports desk can be reached at gamecocksports@hotmail.com.



Photos by Sean Rayford THE GAMECOCK

Derek Watson, South Carolina's leading scorer with seven touchdowns on the year, looks to lead the Gamecocks to a win over Mississippi State Saturday.

Women's soccer to play Utah

BY CHRIS FOY
THE GAMECOCK

University of South Carolina women's soccer head coach Sue Kelly may have been onto something when she referred to her team earlier this season as "fireworks waiting to go off."

After dropping their first six matches of the season, the Gamecocks continue to improve in every facet of the game. In the past two matches, the Gamecocks have had an outpouring of offensive success. They are scoring more goals and putting up more shots against opposing goalies, making South Carolina's offense more of a threat than it has been earlier in the year.

USC is now looking to continue their two-game winning streak against the Utah Toreros tonight at Stone Stadium. The match begins at 7 p.m. as the Gamecocks (2-6) take on the Toreros (6-3-1) in the midst of South Carolina's windup of non-conference games.

Freshman midfielder/forward Becca Epstein has emerged as the leader of the Gamecocks in the past couple of games by moving the offense and leading her team statistically. On Tuesday night, she had two goals and an assist against Charleston Southern, giving her three goals in the last two matches. She is currently leading the Gamecocks in points scored, having compiled eight points, with three goals and two assists, in the last two games.

Junior midfielder Morgan McIntyre and freshman midfielder/defender Jessica Julin are leading the of-

fense alongside Epstein, and are putting the most of- fensive pressure on opposing defenses, with each post- ing 13 shots on goal. In addition, the two have also scored eight points each on the season.

Utah was able to put up the best season in their five- year history last year with a 13-7 record. Head coach Amy Freeman Winslow was named 1999 Mountain West Conference Coach of the Year.

The Toreros are led by junior forward Amy Kofoed and sophomore midfielder Katie Tate. Kofoed and Tate are tied for the team lead in goals with five each. Sophomore Maren Harper is also proving to be a threat, tying a Utah single-game record in assists against the Nevada Wolfpack. Sophomore Shauna Gurr was named MWC Soccer Player of the Week last week after scor- ing the game-winning goal in Utah's upset victory over No. 24 San Diego. Although the Toreros have a young squad, they are hoping to continue the success of last year's team, which lost only one conference game.

The Gamecocks enter tonight's game with some much needed momentum, coming off their second straight victory Tuesday night against Charleston South- ern, 4-1. South Carolina's four goals against the Lady Buccaneers were the most they have scored in a single game this season. Since being shut out in their first three games, the Gamecocks have not failed to score in a single match.

The sports desk can be reached at gamecocksports@hotmail.com.

Associated Press Football Top 25

1. Nebraska
2. Florida State
3. Florida
4. Kansas State
5. Virginia Tech
6. UCLA
7. Wisconsin
8. Washington
9. USC
10. Michigan
11. Clemson
12. Miami (FL)
13. Tennessee
14. Ohio State
15. Texas
16. Notre Dame
17. Oklahoma
18. Texas Christian
19. Illinois
20. Auburn
21. Purdue
22. Southern Miss
23. Michigan State
24. Georgia
25. Mississippi State

Men's soccer team edges Davidson

BY KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

The South Carolina men's soccer team continued its winning ways Wednesday night when it defeated Davidson 3-2 at Smith Field in Davidson, N.C.

The No. 7 Gamecocks (6-1) have now won five straight games since losing to UNC-Charlotte on Labor Day.

Davidson (3-2-1) took the lead first when Jon Tetirick's cross swerved into the Gamecock goal in the 14th minute of play. The goal was meant to be a pass, but it took a fortunate turn in midair for the junior midfielder and put the home team on top.

The score stood at 1-0 until the 71:27 mark, when sophomore mid- fielder David Testo scored the equal- izer for USC off an assist from fresh- man forward Ryan Daley.

Davidson's Chris Norbet put the Wildcats back on top in the 82nd minute, scoring unassisted, and the Gamecocks were almost eight min- utes away from losing only their sec- ond game of the year.

However, South Carolina's lead- ing scorer, Jordan Quinn, tied the game just 20 seconds later, slotting home his team-leading fifth goal on the season off a rebound by freshman mid- fielder Robert Rosenberg.

"We had the lead a couple of times, and we gave it away twice," said Davidson head coach Charlie Slagle.

USC's leading scorer from last season, senior Joey Worthen, scored the game-winning goal at the 83:27 mark, and South Carolina held on to win. The goal by Worthen, assisted by sophomore Chris Herron, was his

first of the season. He scored 11 goals last year for USC.

Statistically, the game was even- ly matched. Both teams had 13 shots in the game, and USC held a slight advantage in corner kicks, 9-8.

The win was sweet revenge for South Carolina, who dropped a tough game to Davidson last season, 1-0, in overtime.

"We came in fully aware of the capabilities of Davidson," USC head coach Mark Berson said. "We also came in fully aware of last year's result. The loss last year was devastat- ing."

Davidson co-captain Dane Erickson was disappointed with the loss, but hoped his team could learn some- thing from the result.

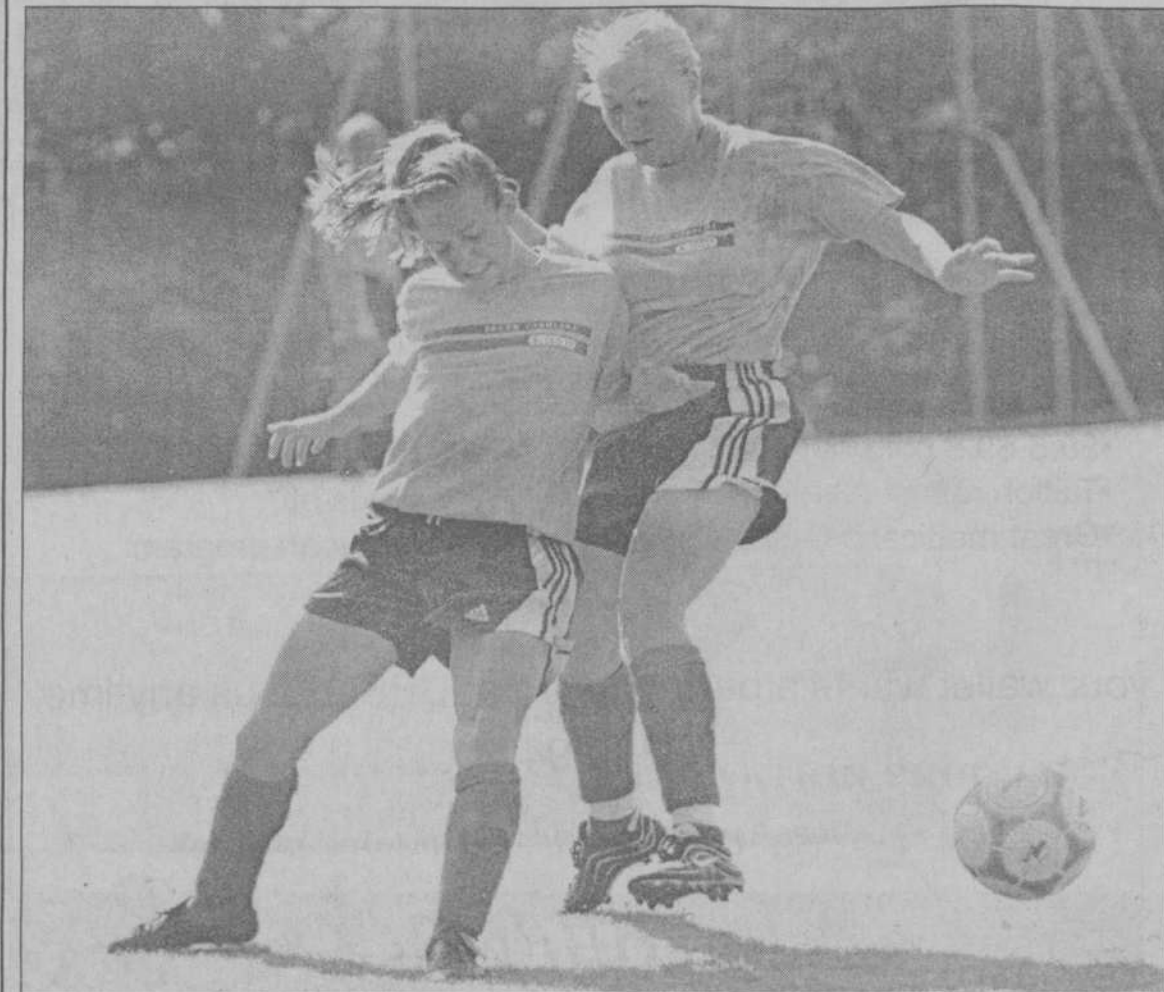
"We proved tonight we can beat anyone in the country, but little mis- takes are going to cost you, and that's what happened here tonight," he said.

"It's early in the season and hope- fully we can learn from our mistakes." With the win, Carolina improves to 14-4-1 all-time against the Wild- cats.

The Gamecocks will look to win their sixth straight game Saturday when they travel to Winston-Salem, N.C. to take on No. 20 Wake Forest. Last season, USC tied the Demon Deacons 3-3 at the "Graveyard."

Davidson will head to Colorado Springs, Colo. to take part in the Air Force Academy Tournament. The Wildcats will play Air Force on Fri- day and Denver on Sunday.

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South Carolina's Becky Leeper (left) battles for the ball with a teammate during practice.