



# Sports

## GAMECOCK SPORTS SCHEDULE

- Volleyball at Alabama, Fri., 7 p.m.
- Women's soccer at Ole Miss, Fri., 7 p.m.
- Football vs. Arkansas, Sat., 1 p.m.
- Swimming vs. College of Charleston, Sat., 2:30 p.m.

## Gamecocks ranked 24th in polls

■ After dropping out from both Top 25 polls after losing to Alabama, the Gamecocks are back, ranked as the country's No. 24 football team

### FOOTBALL ROUNDUP THE GAMECOCK

For the second time this season, South Carolina is in the nation's Top 25 football polls. The Gamecocks, now 5-1 after last Saturday's 20-17 win at Kentucky, are ranked No. 24 in both polls. Two weeks ago, USC was ranked No. 23 following its win over Mississippi State. The Gamecocks dropped out of the rankings after losing to Alabama on Sept. 30.

Being ranked for at least two weeks during the season has not happened to a USC team since the 1988 season. The Gamecocks rose to #6 in the country that year after starting the season 6-0.

Several hundred Gamecock fans were at the Columbia airport to greet the USC team when it arrived back from Lexington at 2:30 a.m. on Sunday.

"I've said it before; our fans are unbelievable," said head coach Lou Holtz. "We've got as loyal of a fan following as

any in the country."

On his Sunday teleconference, Holtz mentioned that USC is "a beat-up football team right now. We had several players get X-rays this morning as precautionary measures. Hopefully, it's nothing that will keep them out for this week's game."

Running back Derek Watson has a deep thigh bruise, wide receiver Carlos Spikes has a groin pull, safety Rashad Faison has a shoulder bruise, and cornerback Sheldon Brown has a hip pointer.

According to Holtz, the come-from-behind win over UK was a boost to the team's confidence. "That was a good road win," Holtz said. "It was in a tough environment at night with a sold out stadium. Any win on the road in the SEC has a tendency to humble you."

Holtz applauded the play of his team's defense. "Our defensive coaches have done an outstanding job," he said. "We lost four players from last year to the NFL and yet they have managed to put our players in a position to have success."

"We haven't made that many big defensive plays and we haven't been able to put pressure on the quarterback, but we've made some adjustments in our scheme and have had some success," Holtz said.

Holtz also spoke highly of the play of sophomore tailback Derek Watson, who rushed for 149 yards against Kentucky, highlighted by a 58-yard touchdown run that put USC ahead to stay. Watson also had two fumbles.

bles.

"Derek Watson has been an integral part of any success we've had thus far," Holtz said. "He's played very well without the ball, and yet, on the other hand, there are times he needs to be playing with the ball. Derek is a very competitive player, he loves the game and has been very team-oriented."

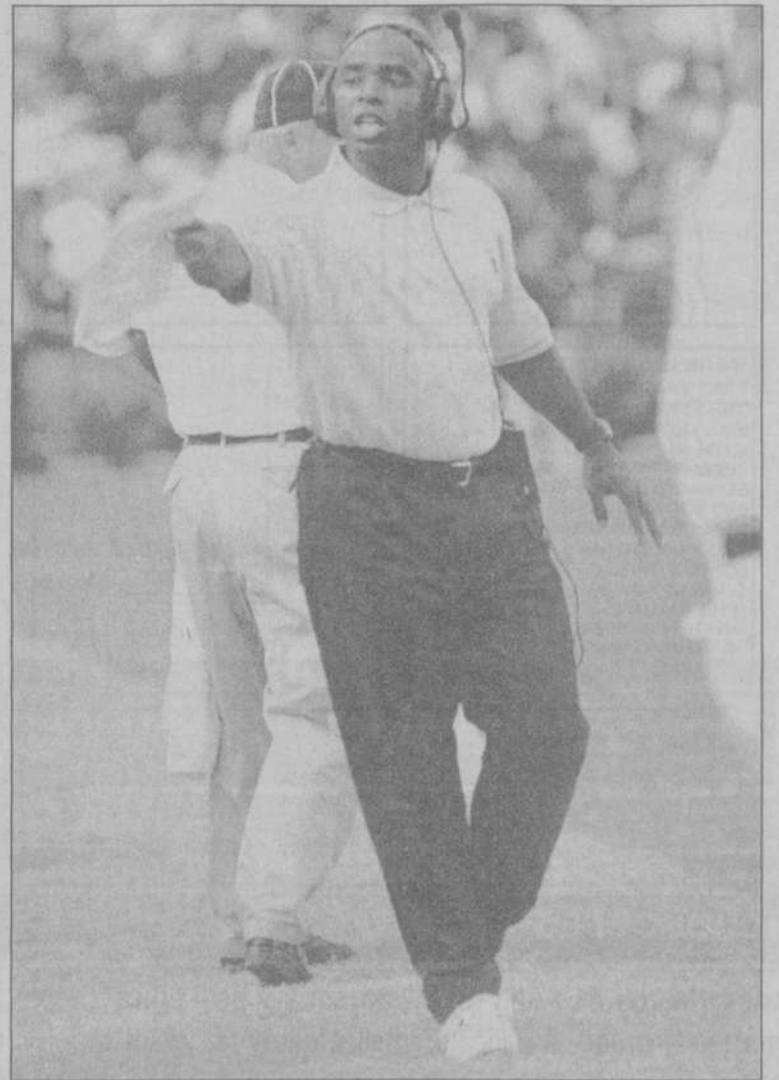
Arkansas is very familiar to Holtz, as he coached there in the late 1970s.

"There was a time when I thought I would finish my coaching career at Arkansas," said Holtz. "I enjoyed living there and coaching there. Now, I have come to truly love the state of South Carolina and the people of this state."

"Arkansas flat out annihilated us last year in Little Rock (48-14). Due to injuries, we had to play two walk-on quarterbacks (Kevin Sides and Kyle Crabb). I know Arkansas will be ready to play and we will get their best effort," Holtz said.

"We're not a real good team by any stretch of the imagination," said Holtz. "We had 24 missed tackles against Kentucky and that is way too many to have in one game. We have a lot of things to work on this week."

South Carolina plays host to Arkansas this Saturday at Williams-Brice Stadium.



SEAN RAYFORD THE GAMECOCK

Defensive coordinator Charlie Strong has the Gamecocks ranked 12th in the nation in total defense and 14th in scoring defense.

The sports desk can be reached at [gamecocksports@hotmail.com](mailto:gamecocksports@hotmail.com).

### SOUTH CAROLINA IN SEC TEAM RANKINGS (national rank in parentheses)

Scoring Offense (58)	25.5	10th
Scoring Defense (14)	13.2	2nd
Rushing Offense (45)	157.8	6th
Rushing Defense (20)	98.5	3rd
Passing Offense (43)	227.5	4th
Passing Efficiency (69)	112.9	9th
Passing Defense (23)	177.5	3rd
Pass Efficiency Defense (11)	90.20	3rd
Total Offense (49)	385.3	4th
Total Defense (12)	276.0	3rd
Kickoff Returns (50)	20.0	5th

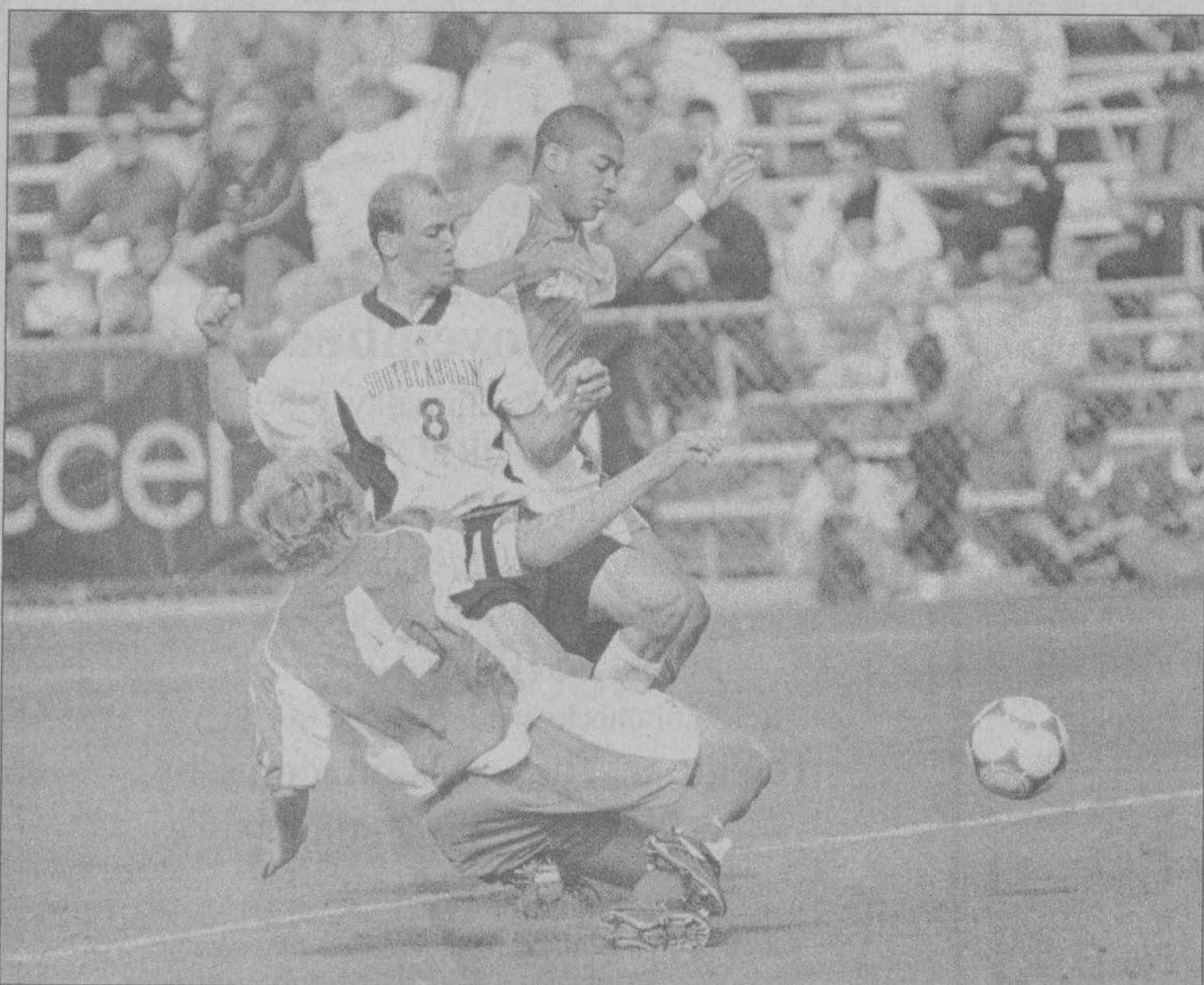
Punt Returns (89)	6.6	10th
Net Punting (46)	35.5	8th
Field Goals	.643	9th
PAT Kicking	.941	7th
Turnover Margin (45)	+0.33	4th
Sacks By	9	T10th
Sacks Against	11	T8th
Penalties	34	4th
First Downs	121	3rd
3rd Down Conversions	43.7%	4th
4th Down Conversions	33.3%	T11th
Time of Possession	29:31	9th

### SOUTH CAROLINA PLAYERS IN SEC INDIVIDUAL RANKINGS (national rank in parentheses)

RUSHING YARDS PER GAME		
Derek Watson (21)	102.0	3rd
PASSING AVERAGE PER GAME		
Phil Petty	194.2	7th
PASSING EFFICIENCY		
Phil Petty	117.50	8th
RECEPTIONS PER GAME		
Jermale Kelly	4.0	7th
RECEIVING YARDS PER GAME		
Jermale Kelly	59.7	7th
ALL-PURPOSE YARDS		
Derek Watson (8)	176.0	1st
TOTAL OFFENSE		
Phil Petty	204.8	3rd

INTERCEPTIONS PER GAME		
Sheldon Brown (T7)	0.67	1st
KICKOFF RETURN YARDS PER GAME		
Derek Watson (30)	23.4	3rd
PUNT RETURN YARDS PER GAME		
Ryan Brewer	6.3	10th
PAT KICKING PERCENTAGE		
Reid Bethea	100.0%	T1st
POINTS PER GAME		
Derek Watson (T35)	8.0	4th
SCORING (TOUCHDOWNS)		
Derek Watson	8	T2nd
SCORING (KICKING)		
Reid Bethea	7.2	3rd
FIELD GOALS		
Reid Bethea	1.5	2nd
FIELD GOAL PERCENTAGE		
Reid Bethea	64.3%	9th

## Worthen's role change leads Gamecocks to new heights



SEAN RAYFORD THE GAMECOCK

Gamecock Joey Worthen is double-teamed by two Clemson defenders during their scoreless tie on Sunday. Worthen, USC's leading scorer last season with 27 points as a forward, now plays on the left side of the midfield.

BY KYLE ALMOND  
THE GAMECOCK

Joey Worthen, when asked what he feels is his greatest strength as a soccer player, emphasizes his desire to win.

That desire is evident in 2000, as last year's leading scorer for the Gamecocks sacrificed personal glory and individual statistics for team success when he switched positions from forward to midfield.

"I'm going to do what's best for the team," Worthen said of the switch. "If that's where the team needs me to be, then it's worth doing."

The junior from Salt Lake City, Utah, had 11 goals and five assists last year for the Gamecocks, and only has one goal in 11 games this season. But the team is off to one of its best starts in school history, jumping out to a record of 8-1-2.

Worthen is confident that the Gamecocks, currently ranked No. 9 by the NSCAA, are capable of continuing their winning ways throughout the season.

"I think if we keep playing well, we can get a bid and be seeded in the (NCAA) tournament," he said. "Then, in the tournament, anything can happen."

Worthen credits a lot of the team's early success to a togetherness that other Gamecock teams hadn't been able to match.

"The camaraderie is a lot better this year, and just the closeness that we have and the way that the players play for each other is really good," Worthen said. "We just all stick together and work together."

Since arriving at USC in 1998, Worthen has collected a slew of accolades in a short time. He was named Independent Co-Rookie of the Year his freshman season and also second team All-Independent. He did even better in his sophomore season, earning

first team All-Independent honors while also being named to the All-South Region team.

Worthen has certainly come a long way from Salt Lake City. He says he came to USC in large part because of head coach Mark Benson.

"Coach has been around a long time," Worthen said. "And he always has a good record, with a lot of players going to the pros."

The pros might be the next step for Worthen as well, but the liberal arts major is cautious when talking about the next step.

"I'd like to play more soccer after graduation," he said. "But we'll just have to wait until after my senior year. I don't want to jinx myself."

Worthen admits to having a little difficulty making a smooth transition from forward to his new position on the left wing.

"It's more defense-oriented," he said. "I've found it a little hard to adjust, but I'm getting used to it."

Worthen gained valuable experience in the off-season when he took last semester off to play with the U-20 National squad. By playing in a number of international matches with the team in the World Championships, Worthen says his game improved immensely.

"It helped me a lot," he said. "Just being able to play and practice with guys of that caliber everyday really improved my game, especially my touch on the ball and my shooting."

So far this season, Worthen has only one goal and one assist for three points. But his lone goal was a critical one, the deciding goal in a 3-2 win at Davidson. Worthen has also contributed 20 shots, with three on goal, for the Gamecocks.

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