



Sports

GAMECOCK SPORTS SCHEDULE

- Women's soccer vs. Auburn, Fri., 7:00 p.m.
- Volleyball vs. Ole Miss, Fri., 7 p.m.
- Football at Vanderbilt, Sat., 2 p.m.
- Men's soccer vs. Bucknell, Sat., 5 p.m.

Gamecocks travel to Vanderbilt

BY MICHAEL HANEY
THE GAMECOCK

It's true. South Carolina has qualified for a bowl game.

Not far in the past, many doubted this team would break the four-win barrier. Now, with a bowl berth already clinched, Carolina will look to improve their bowl position this Saturday as they take on the Vanderbilt Commodores in Nashville.

Carolina (6-1, 4-1 SEC) used an impressive 27-7 victory over Arkansas last weekend to qualify for its first bowl game since 1996 when they finished 6-5, but were not invited.

Vanderbilt (2-5, 0-4 SEC) lost a close game to No. 12 Georgia 29-19. The Commodores were able to run up 442 yards of offense against the Bulldogs in Athens.

Vanderbilt will look to get its first SEC win this season, while South Carolina will try and have its first winning season in the conference since joining the league in 1992.

Vanderbilt head coach Woody Widenhofer is confident in his team going into this Saturday's match-up.

"We've got four more ballgames left, all SEC opponents, and we can finish on a high note if we take them one at a time and start by beating South Carolina," Widenhofer said.

Carolina head coach Lou Holtz has warned his team about a letdown coming into this weekend's game. The Gamecocks, which have proven all of the experts wrong thus far, find themselves in unfamiliar territory, one that requires extreme focus.

"Every time I've seen a football team really ready to play one week I have great consternation about the next week," Holtz said Monday. "Any time you get a real emotional high and you're successful, you're going to come down off of that, and when you come back down you aren't on an even keel."

"The main thing we try to do (to avoid a letdown) is, and we'll emphasize this with our players, follow the example of the coaching staff. The preparation, the thoroughness, the intensity will be exactly the same as it's been for any other game we've played," Holtz said.

Vanderbilt, who was projected by many to make a postseason appearance, will be ready for the Gamecocks as they feature several talented players.

Vanderbilt quarterback Greg Zolman is one of the SEC's most dangerous passers. Zolman is throwing for an average of 226 yards per game and is completing 57 percent of his passes. The junior has thrown seven touchdown passes. Zolman ranks second in the SEC in passing and second in total offense. In last week's close call against Georgia, Zolman completed 28 of 42 passes for 334 yards and one touchdown. Zolman is a talented left-handed quarterback who is a three-year starter.

Vanderbilt has several receivers that are very productive, including Dan Stricker who has 39 receptions for 671 yards and four touchdowns. Stricker ranks second in the SEC in receiving. Tight end Elliott Carson is next with 21 catches for 274 yards. Carson was a second-team All-SEC selection in 1999.

Defensively, Vanderbilt features two of the SEC's best at their respective positions. Linebacker Jamie Winborn is an All-American candidate, Butkus Award candidate, two-time defending SEC tackle leader and two-time All-SEC selection. Winborn enters the South Carolina game with 57 tackles (second on the team), two fumbles caused and two tackles for loss.

Jimmy Williams is an All-SEC caliber performer at cornerback. Williams enters this week with 19 tackles, while leading the team in interceptions (two) and passes broken up (six). Williams is also one of the SEC's most explosive kick returners. He is on the verge of breaking all of the school's records for kickoff and punt returns.

One of the biggest stories for the Gamecocks this week is along the injury front. Strong safety Antoine Nesmith is out for the remainder of the year due to torn cartilage suffered in last week's game.

Offensive guards C.J. Frye and Cedric Williams are not expected to play this weekend because of ankle injuries. Frye also has a knee injury. Linebacker Kenny Harney, who has missed the last 3 weeks due to a broken fibula, could return this week if necessary. Nose tackle Cleveland Pinkney has been nursing an ankle sprain all week and his practice time has been limited.



SEAN RAYFORD THE GAMECOCK

Jonathan Martin, a redshirt sophomore defensive back for South Carolina, reaches for a tackle against an Arkansas wide receiver last Saturday. Martin and the Gamecocks defeated the Razorbacks, 27-7, and improved their overall record to 6-1.

"Langston Moore and Willie Sams will need to be ready at middle guard," Holtz said. "I'm not sure if Cleveland will be able to go for very long."

True freshman DeAndre Eiland will make his first collegiate start this weekend in Nesmith's place. Eiland has seen playing time this season mainly in the Mississippi State and Arkansas games. He recorded his first interception against Arkansas.

"DeAndre has been a good example of this freshmen class," Holtz said. "When

they've been called upon to play, they have been pretty productive."

Holtz remains cautious this week heading into the game with the Commodores.

"They have a nice package," he said. "They are starting to play well now. They really were impressive against Georgia. I'm very much concerned, particularly with the physical condition of our team."

The Gamecocks, who have lost the last two years to Vanderbilt, expect to be ready to play this Saturday and keep their SEC Championship hopes alive.

"We can't go in there with a big head," offensive guard Larrell Johnson said. "Their main goal right now I can see is knock off anybody that's trying to pursue the dream of playing for the SEC title, and right now we fit in that boat."

"If we go up there and don't play good ball and go in there with the big head, they can probably knock us off and hurt us in the SEC race."

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

Goalkeeper Ring stifles opposing scorers

BY JEN GESIMONDO
THE GAMECOCK

Redshirt senior and starting Gamecock goalkeeper Henry Ring is a perfect example of a person who lives every day to the fullest.

"If I'm not happy, something's definitely wrong," Ring said.

And Ring has every reason to be happy. With a record of 8-1-3, Ring's goaltending skills have definitely added a much needed edge to the USC men's soccer team, ranked as high as No. 5 in the nation this season.

Ring grew up on a farm in Franklin, Tenn., and was the seventh generation to grow up on his family's farm. Ring personifies a player who realizes his humble beginnings, along with many inspirational coaches, are what led him to become the confident and dedicated player he is today.

"If it wasn't for my many coaches who helped to boost my confidence throughout the years, I wouldn't be here," Ring said.

And here, at USC, is where Ring belongs. From his beginning years as a goalie at age 14 to making All-American on his high school team, Ring successfully achieved another All-American honor two years ago as a redshirt sophomore here at USC.

Although this amazing athlete has achieved many special honors, he's still striving to achieve his ultimate goal of becoming a professional soccer player.

"My first step to going pro is to not worry about it right now," Ring said. "I'd like to have a good season and then if our season goes well, take it from there."

But when concentrating on this season, Ring hopes to make it to the NCAA Tournament and win the national championship. In order to get there, Ring realizes he needs to im-



SEAN RAYFORD THE GAMECOCK

Gamecock starting goalkeeper Henry Ring (right) lays out on the ground to make a diving save against Furman. Ring, a redshirt senior, is in his fifth season with USC and has allowed only nine goals this season.

prove on some of his skills when it comes to goaltending.

"I could always improve on jumping and my athletic ability in general," Ring said. "Especially if I want to play on the next level."

In playing 12 games, he's only allowed nine goals and has added 68 saves along with 4.5 shut-outs.

Not only does Ring play soccer, but he also has a wide variety of other interests such as playing the gui-

tar, playing basketball and collecting music.

With many other interests to keep himself busy, Ring never forgets the hard work he went through to be with the Gamecocks. Part of his advice to people wanting to play sports on a collegiate level comes from his knowledge of how hard the pursuit is to make it as a collegiate athlete after high school.

"I think hard work pays off more

than physical ability," he said. "Hard work is everything. I am also a big believer in dedication."

Ring has proven his dedication to the team through the years and hopes the team will continue to improve after he graduates.

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

Penn to receive redshirt this year

BY MARTHA WRIGHT
THE GAMECOCK

Jocelyn Penn, a junior forward for the Lady Gamecocks, will sit out this season because she is pregnant, Coach Susan Walvius said.

Walvius said this past Monday that Penn would be redshirted for one year. The announcement was made at the women's basketball team's annual media day.

Walvius also mentioned Penn's redshirting in an online question-and-answer session for the Athletics Department (www.uscsports.com/news/bko/bkw).

Redshirting is common and holds no connotations of punishment. It's a practice used to give new players more experience and to help seasoned athletes recover from injury.

And, as a representative from the National Collegiate Athletics Association said, redshirting a player because of pregnancy is well within the bounds of national rules.

"Usually cases like these are dealt with on the university and conference level. They hardly ever get to us here at the NCAA," said Jane Jankowski of the NCAA member services department.

"I do know for a fact, though, that the red-shirt period of five years can be extended for a pregnancy."

Penn will keep her basketball scholarship and won't be barred from playing for the team in the future. Walvius said she expects

Penn to be back on the court next year.

"She decided to make a personal decision to have a child, and she will rejoin the team next season," Walvius said.

Penn has a strong record with the Lady Gamecocks, averaging 12.4 points per game, 6.1 rebounds and leading the team in steals with 74 this past year.

USC's decision conforms with the NCAA's policy that says anyone can be redshirted before the beginning of a season.

Typically, the respective university continues to pay the student's scholarship.

Though the player can't play a single game in the upcoming season, the university isn't allocated funds for another scholarship to give to a replacement player, even if he or she is a walk-on or a transfer student.

"NCAA redshirt rules don't have anything to do with scholarships. They are two completely separate entities," Assistant Sports Information Director Brian Binette said.

"Basically a redshirt is like losing a scholarship player for the season."

"If you have 10 scholarship athletes and one gets redshirted, basically, you have nine scholarship athletes now," Binette said.

Jared Kelowitz contributed to this report. The sports desk can be reached at gamecocksports@hotmail.com.