



# Sports

## GAMECOCK SPORTS SCHEDULE

- Volleyball vs. Georgia, Friday, 7 p.m.
- Football at Florida, Saturday, 3:30 pm (CBS)
- Swimming at Clemson, Saturday, 2 p.m.
- Men's basketball exhibition at Carolina Coliseum, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.

## USC to enter "The Swamp"

### ■ Saturday's winner will be named SEC East division champs

BY MICHAEL HANEY  
THE GAMECOCK

South Carolina faces the Florida Gators tomorrow in one of the biggest games in the program's history. The 21st-ranked Gamecocks (7-2, 5-2) will face No. 5 Florida (8-1, 6-1) for the SEC's Eastern Division title at Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, also known as "The Swamp." The winner will travel to Atlanta to play in the SEC Championship Game on Dec. 2.

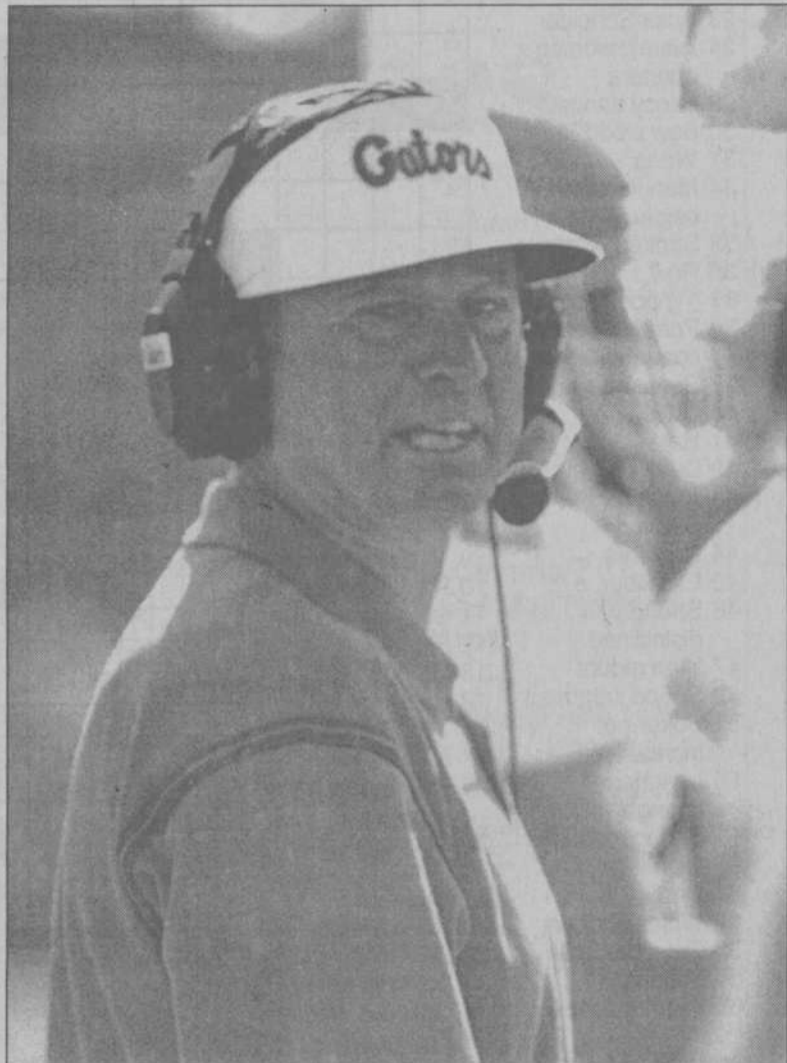
The Gators have not lost a game to an SEC East opponent in The Swamp since 1990 and are 36-2 at home versus the rest of the SEC. They are 62-4 at home for the last ten years.

Carolina is coming off a much needed off-week that allowed them to rest and have many of their injured players heal. However, offensive lineman Travelle Wharton isn't expected to play because of an ankle injury, and junior linebacker Kenny Harney is limited with a bruised knee.

Florida continued its dominance of Vanderbilt by trouncing the Commodores 43-20 in Nashville. Coach Steve Spurrier said it was a big win for the team, but that "the biggest is next week with South Carolina."

Spurrier, who is criticized by many for being too cocky, had nothing but praise for the Gamecocks at his Sunday teleconference.

"South Carolina is a solid football team. They are well-coached, play smart and don't make many mistakes. What they have accomplished this season is no fluke, by any means," Spurrier said. "All of their wins were by a solid margin, and they came very close to winning the two games



SEAN RAYFORD THE GAMECOCK

Steve Spurrier and the Florida Gators look to win their second straight SEC East title Saturday when they take on South Carolina.

USC at Florida,  
Sat., 3:30 p.m.  
(CBS)

they have lost. This is a good team with some very good players."

One of the most intriguing matchups will be South Carolina's defense against Florida's high-flying offense. The Gamecocks are fifth in the country in scoring defense allowing a paltry 13.0

points a game. The unit is also ranked 13th in passing efficiency allowing 175 yards through the air while they have allowed only two passing touchdowns all year.

Florida's offense is cranking out almost 42 points per game to be sixth in

the nation in that category. Freshman quarterback Rex Grossman is leading the NCAA in passing efficiency.

Freshman wide receiver Jabar Gaffney is a favorite target for Gator quarterbacks. Gaffney has 52 catches for 837 yards receiving and 12 touchdowns. He averages 93 yards a game receiving.

The Gamecocks offense will face a speedy Gator defense, much like that of Tennessee.

Florida's defensive squad is ranked 45th in the country, but are first in turnover ratio. The Gators have forced 33 turnovers this year.

"They don't have to worry about making a mistake offensively," head football coach Lou Holtz said. "They know that they will be able to get the ball back with their defense."

The advantage for the Gamecocks is the Gators defense is giving up nearly 150 yards rushing per game while Carolina averages 164 on the ground offensively. Derek Watson is just 119 yards away from 1,000 yards for the season. He has 10 touchdowns and is averaging 97 yards per game on the ground.

Sophomore tailback Andrew Pinnock has come on of late with solid performances against Arkansas and Vanderbilt. Pinnock has 310 yards with six touchdowns.

Jason Corse will handle the place-kicking duties for South Carolina this weekend.

This will be Corse's first time attempting field goals in a game. Holtz isn't worried about that as he sees it as an advantage for the kicker.

"I think that's a plus. The other guys have all this baggage. Jason hasn't missed one. That's a plus on this," he said.

The game will be televised nationally by CBS beginning at 3:30. This is the Gamecocks third nationally televised game this year.

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

### TALE OF THE TAPE

South Carolina (7-2, 5-2 SEC)		Florida (8-1, 6-1 SEC)	
Sept. 2	New Mexico State 31-0 W	Sept. 2	Ball State 40-19 W
Sept. 9	Georgia 21-10 W	Sept. 9	Middle Tennessee 55-0 W
Sept. 16	Eastern Michigan 41-6 W	Sept. 16	at Tennessee 27-23 W
Sept. 23	Mississippi State 23-19 W	Sept. 23	Kentucky 59-31 W
Sept. 30	at Alabama 17-27 L	Sept. 30	at Mississippi State 35-47 L
Oct. 7	at Kentucky 20-17 W	Oct. 7	Louisiana State 41-9 W
Oct. 14	Arkansas 27-7 W	Oct. 14	Auburn 38-7 W
Oct. 21	at Vanderbilt 30-14 W	Oct. 28	Georgia (neutral) 34-23 W
Oct. 28	Tennessee 14-17 L	Nov. 4	at Vanderbilt 43-20 W
Nov. 11	at Florida	Nov. 11	South Carolina
Nov. 18	at Clemson	Nov. 18	at Florida State

TEAM OFFENSIVE LEADERS		TEAM OFFENSIVE LEADERS	
	Phil Petty (R-Jr.) 129-242, 1744 yds., 7 TD, 6 INT		Rex Grossman (Fr.) 92-152, 1424 yds., 17 TD, 5 INT
	Derek Watson (So.) 150 carries, 881 yds. (5.9 per carry), 10 TD		Robert Gillespie (Jr.) 91 carries, 540 yds. (5.9 per carry), 5 TD
	Jermale Kelly (R-Sr.) 32 receptions, 470 yds., 4 TD		Jabar Gaffney (Fr.) 52 receptions, 837 yds., 12 TD <small>(picture not available)</small>

BY THE NUMBERS		BY THE NUMBERS		
USC	Opponents	UF	Opponents	
24.9	points per game	13.0	41.1	points per game
382.0	offense yards per game	280.2	419.1	offense yards per game
164.9	rush yards per game	104.4	105.1	rush yards per game
217.1	pass yards per game	175.8	314.0	pass yards per game
29:42	time of poss. per game	30:18	26:15	time of poss. per game
+6	turnover margin	-6	+18	turnover margin
43.7%	third down conversion	2.6%	41.0%	third down conversion

## Men's soccer looks to return to NCAA Tourney

BY KYLE ALMOND  
THE GAMECOCK

The South Carolina men's soccer team wraps up its regular season Sunday when it takes on Florida International, and a postseason birth could hang on the outcome.

The Gamecocks (11-3-3), ranked No. 20 by the NSCAA, are hoping to make a final good impression on the NCAA Tournament Selection Committee in front of a home crowd at the Graveyard.

Last year, USC finished 10-7 and failed to qualify for postseason play for the first time since 1996. But this season, a young Gamecock squad that features 19 underclassmen has played like a group of steady veterans, outscoring opponents 38-18.

The Gamecocks started the season off with a win and a loss, but then went on a 10-game unbeaten streak that started with them knocking off top-ranked Virginia and No. 8 Maryland in the Maryland Soccer Classic.

During their streak, USC also defeated then-No. 2 Penn State on the road. The Gamecocks tied Clemson and Furman, teams who have spent most of the season in the NSCAA Top 25, at the end of their streak.

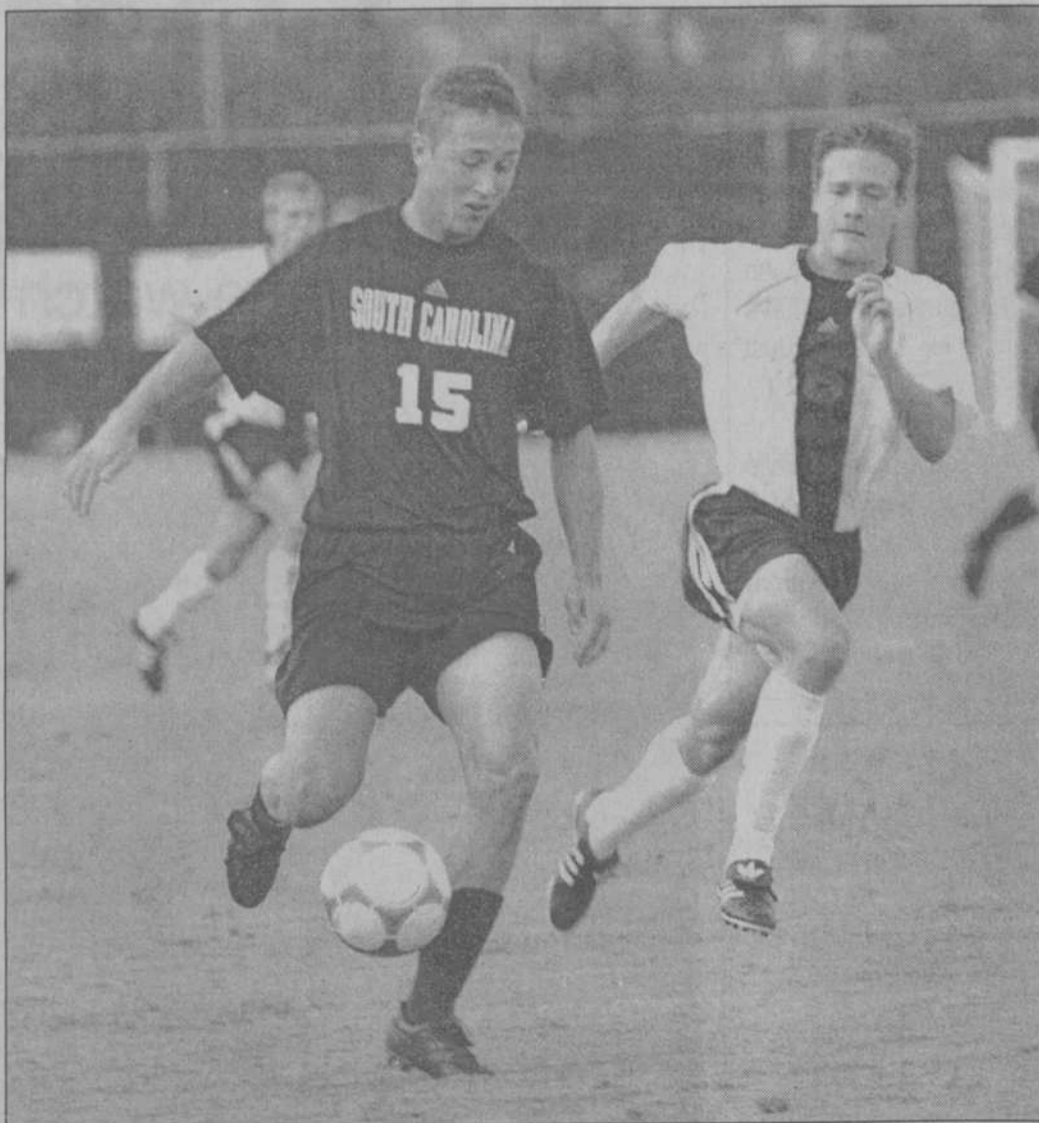
Since tying Furman Oct. 15, USC has dropped two of their last five matches. Bucknell upset the Gamecocks 2-1 in the Gamecock Soccer Classic, and No. 2 North Carolina beat USC 2-0 Sunday.

But with USC's strength of schedule and its wins over top-10 teams, it would be hard to see the Gamecocks not getting back into the NCAA Tournament. A win over Florida International in the final game of the season would certainly help the team's cause.

The Golden Panthers of Florida International come into Sunday's meeting with a record of 11-6-1 and an Atlantic Soccer Conference title already wrapped up.

Head coach Karl Kremser, in his 21st year with FIU, has made the Golden Panthers a perennial powerhouse in college soccer.

In the past six years, FIU has advanced to the NCAA Tournament three times, even ad-



Sean Rayford THE GAMECOCK

Freshman midfielder Jack Cummings (left) has been an attacking threat for the No. 20 Carolina soccer team all season.

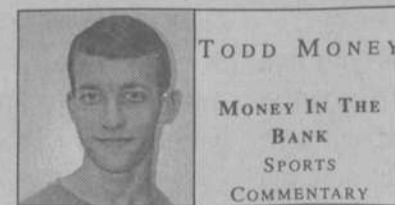
vancing to the title game in 1996. In the 1990s, Kremser led FIU to an overall record of 125-65-14.

On the field, the Golden Panthers' leader this season has been forward Ezequiel Romero. He leads FIU in goals with eight, assists with four and total points with 20. The freshman from Hallendale, Fla. also has contributed the

most shots on goal for FIU with 62 and half of his goals have been game-winners.

Supporting Romero will be junior forward Brad Kroening and sophomore midfielder Matias Asorey. Kroening has five goals in only 10 games this season, and four of them have

## Elections, sports not so different



TODD MONEY  
MONEY IN THE BANK  
SPORTS COMMENTARY

Now, let's see. By the time you read this, the course of this country probably will have been changed forever by what we call the elections process. It's a good system, in theory anyway.

It's been here for 200-something years. So we stick with it. We teach our kids that this is how you pick a favorite. Basically, you line all the candidates up, take into account their stands on all the "issues," and how much of a leader each of them appears to be and what history has proven before.

The question is, then, how do we do this in sports? How do we pick a favorite team?

I've always liked baseball's Cardinals, Athletics and Braves. When I first got into baseball, around 1987, there were obvious reasons for this: the A's had Jose Canseco, Dennis Eckersley, Dave Stewart and a young, skinny kid named Mark McGwire who had hit 49 homeruns his rookie year. They were about to become unstoppable. They were cool.

The Cardinals had Ozzie Smith and Vince Coleman. Ozzie could do anything. Vince would steal anytime. I remember looking out to the street to our mailbox, pretending I was Vince, checking cars on either side to be sure I wouldn't get 'caught' and then taking off to get the paper and see what the

Cards had done the day before. And red was my favorite color.

Obviously, winning doesn't have everything to do with it. The Braves were perennial losers when I started following them. It was a while before they'd get better. But you could watch them every night, every game! You couldn't miss them. Unless you liked the Cubs. And if you liked the Cardinals, that was illegal.

In pro basketball, I had the Lakers. They were winners, then, too, with Magic and Kareem winning title after title. But the guy I admired was Kurt Rambis, a tall power forward who looked like he belonged in a lab coat. In fact, he didn't look like anybody. And he wasn't very smooth on the court or a good shot. But he hustled, diving into the stands for loose balls, taking punishment under the glass. He was always where he should be. And that's what I wanted to be.

In football, the Pittsburgh Steelers were my best friends. I think I admired that 1970's mystique more than anything. All those NFL films specials about those Super Bowl teams just seemed so, well, ethereal. And all those great players - Terry Bradshaw, Franco Harris, Joe Greene - surely no other team had been so great for so long. Or so I figured.

So what kind of logic does it take to pick a team and call it yours? I think there are about six kinds of fans: first are the rival busters: Someone you're forced to interact with regularly will un-