

**GAMECOCK SPORTS SCHEDULE**

- Men's basketball vs. Auburn, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.
- Indoor track at SEC Quad in Lexington, Ky., Saturday
- Women's swimming at Arkansas/Kentucky, Saturday, 11 a.m.
- Women's basketball vs. Florida, Sunday, 3 p.m.

Gamecocks hold off Commodores

BY CHRIS FOY
THE GAMECOCKUSC 57
VANDERBILT 49

The last time the Vanderbilt Commodores visited Columbia, two free throws made by Vandy cost the Gamecocks the game.

This year, it was South Carolina that needed only two free throws to take the lead for the final time.

Junior guard Aaron Lucas hit the tie-breaking free throws in the waning minutes and soon after stole the ball for a lay-up to secure the win for the Gamecocks, 57-49.

In a highly competitive match-up in which the lead changed hands eight times, the Gamecocks finally broke free with 2:32 left in the game by going on a 8-0 run down the stretch to win.

With the win, South Carolina (10-5, 2-2 SEC) has won its ninth straight home game, while Vanderbilt (12-4, 2-2) falls to 2-2 on the road.

Throughout the game, neither team played particularly well. South Carolina head coach Eddie Fogler described both team's performances as "dull and lackluster."

"I think we're better than that, and I think Vandy is better than that," Fogler said.

USC senior forward and co-captain David Ross agreed with Fogler, but was nonetheless pleased with the outcome.

"An ugly win is certainly better than a loss," Ross said.

The first half was a relatively low scoring affair for both teams. Vanderbilt went on a scoring drought for about five minutes before going on a 15-3 run that tied the game at 27 at the half.

USC had some trouble shooting, particularly on 3-pointers, as the Gamecocks were one for 10 for 3-pointers and only nine for 23 on field goals. The Gamecocks also turned the ball over 10 times.

South Carolina got a scare before the half was over when sophomore forward Chuck Eidson fell awkwardly on a

sprained knee. He laid on the court in pain for a couple of minutes before limping off with help. Eidson didn't return to play and watched the second half on crutches.

Early in the second half, the Commodores took charge of the game. After USC senior forward Antonio Grant nailed a three off a jumper, Vanderbilt went on a 14-6 run to go up 41-36 with 10 minutes left in the game.

That's when freshman forward Rolando Howell stepped up and took charge of the game. Howell sparked the Gamecocks, scoring seven of 12 USC points to pull Carolina within one.

After junior guard Jamel Bradley made a three to tie the game at 49, Lucas was fouled with three minutes left in the game.

Lucas put in both free throws to put the Gamecocks back in the lead, one they wouldn't give up for the rest of the game.

Through the remainder of the game, South Carolina's defense shut out the Commodores while Lucas scored four more as Carolina came out on top.

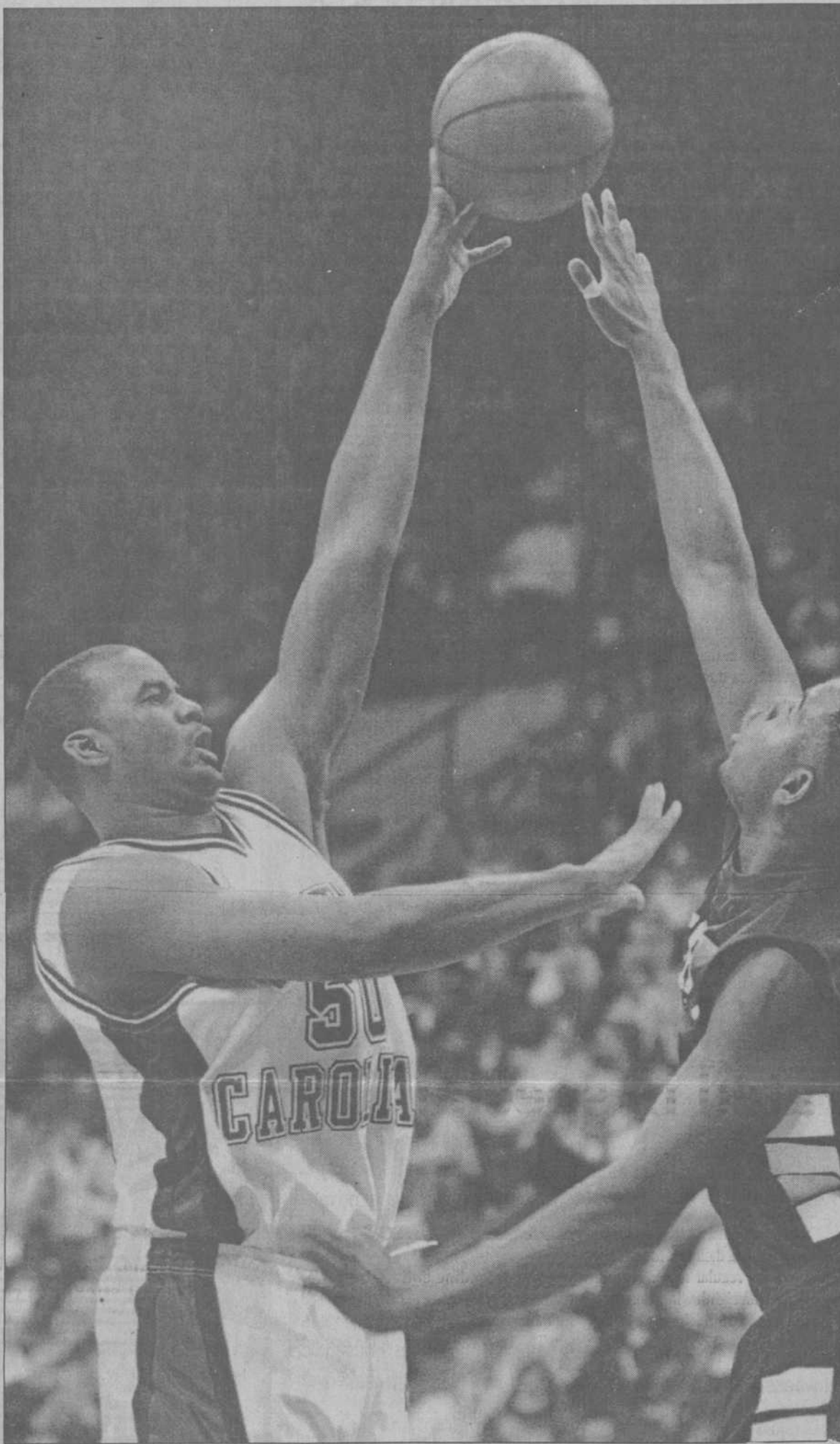
Howell led the Gamecocks in scoring with a career-high 13 points. After the game, Howell expressed his desire to help his team win. "I just tried to go out there and contribute as much as I can," he said.

Lucas was second for South Carolina in points scored with 12. Vanderbilt's Sam Howard was the only Commodore to score in double digits, picking up 18 on the evening.

Eidson was diagnosed Thursday with a torn ACL in his knee and is not expected to play again this season.

Teammate Tony Kitchings bruised a rib in the game and is questionable for Saturday's game against Auburn.

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



Sean Rayford/The Gamecock

Center Tony Kitchings (left) is the only Gamecock shooting above 50 percent from the field. The rest of the team has struggled mightily to connect on their shots.

Injury finishes Eidson's season

BY KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

USC's hopes for a successful season received a huge blow Thursday when an MRI revealed that sophomore swingman Chuck Eidson tore

the anterior cruciate ligament in his knee in Wednesday night's game against Vanderbilt.



A torn ACL normally is a season-ending injury in basketball, and Eidson is no exception.

The versatile player will have reconstructive surgery this weekend on his right knee, which collapsed underneath him in the first half of the Gamecocks' 57-49 win over Vandy.

"I certainly feel bad for Chuck Eidson, and this injury is very unfortunate for him," Carolina head coach Eddie Fogler said. "We will miss all of the different aspects of the game that he brings to this team. We will see now if our players can replace some of the things that Chuck brought to the table."

Eidson was averaging nine points and 5.3 rebounds a game this season. He was also first in the team in steals (1.9 spg), second in assists (3.1 apg) and blocks (6), and third in minutes played (28.2 mpg).

Last season, as a freshman, Eidson set a new school record for steals in a season with 93. He was also named to the freshmen All-SEC team.

After the Vanderbilt game on Wednesday night, team officials believed Eidson to have only a slight tear because the swelling in the knee wasn't very bad.

However, the news was worse than expected, and now the Gamecocks will have to scramble to find a replacement for Eidson, who was a jack-of-all-trades for Carolina on the hardwood. Fogler wants his team to remain focused on the task ahead.

"Injuries are a part of basketball, and we must get ready to compete against a very tough Auburn team Saturday and against the remainder of the SEC schedule," Fogler said.

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January 17, 2001, Frank McGuire Arena, Columbia, S.C.
USC 57, VANDERBILT 49

Vanderbilt (12-4, 2-2 SEC)

Williams 2-4 0-1 5, LaPointe 2-13 0-0 4, Howard 7-11 0-2 18, Lakey 1-5 0-0 2, Moore 4-10 0-0 9, Coulibaly 0-0 0-0 0, Plavich 0-2 0-0 0, Richmond 3-5 1-2 7, Hundley 2-3 0-0 4, Freije 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 21-55 1-5 49.

USC (10-5, 2-2)

Petravicius 3-5 0-0 6, Eidson 2-9 0-0 4, Kitchings 2-5 2-3 6, Lucas 3-6 6-8 12, Bradley 2-7 0-0 6, Ross 1-4 2-4 5, Boynton 0-2 0-0 0, Clemmons 0-0 0-0 0, Grant 2-7 0-1 5, Howell 4-7 5-7 13. Totals 19-52 15-23 57.

Halftime—SC 27, Vanderbilt 27. 3-Point goals—Vanderbilt 6-19 (Williams 1-1, Howard 4-7, Lakey 0-3, Moore 1-5, Plavich 0-2, Freije 0-1), SC 4-22 (Eidson 0-4, Lucas 0-1, Bradley 2-7, Ross 1-4, Boynton 0-2, Grant 1-4). Fouled out—Williams. Rebounds—Vanderbilt 34 (LaPointe 7), SC 41 (Kitchings 9). Assists—Vanderbilt 13 (Moore 4), SC 11 (Ross 4). Total fouls—Vanderbilt 21, SC 14. A—9,878.

Recruits commit themselves to USC

Only weeks after their Outback Bowl victory, the Gamecocks begin filling in their roster for the future

BY MICHAEL HANEY
AND KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

The countdown to signing day is drawing closer, and college football coaches are using every line in the book to sign recruits who they hope will bring a national championship to their schools.

The day circled on every coach's calendar is Feb. 7, National Signing Day, the day all high school seniors have to choose the school they'll play for. South Carolina already has many firm commitments from some of the best players in the country.

Carolina received several commitments this past weekend, and the Gamecocks have added some quality talent. As of Jan. 18, there were 14 athletes from high schools and junior colleges around the nation committed to USC. Carolina is expected to give only 17 scholarships instead of the usual 25 because of its small 2000 senior class.

The most-heralded recruits on the Gamecocks' commit list include quarterback Corey Jenkins, wide receiver Ricky Ricks, cornerback Isaac Stackhouse, running back Thez Robinson and defensive end George Gause. Robinson and Gause committed on Monday.

Jenkins is a junior college All-American at Garden City Junior College in Kansas. Jenkins, a Columbia native and Dreher High School graduate, could play a number of positions for head coach Lou Holtz.

Jenkins had originally signed with USC out of high school, but instead chose to play professional baseball in the Boston Red Sox organization when he was drafted in the first round of the Major League Draft in 1995. After his contract with the Red Sox expired, Jenkins committed once again to USC.

"I plan on resuming my baseball career after college is done, but playing college football was something I've always wanted to do," Jenkins said.

Jenkins stands 6 feet 1 inch tall and weighs 215 pounds. He runs the 40-yard dash in 4.5 seconds. He was a dual threat in junior college, passing for 932 yards and six touchdowns and running for 816 yards and 10 touchdowns.

Ricks is another junior college transfer. He had 37 catches for 733 yards and five scores this year for Mississippi Gulf Coast Junior College in Perkinston, Miss. At 6 feet 2 inches, 200 pounds, Ricks should be another dangerous weapon in the Gamecocks' spread offense.

Stackhouse, a Dillon, S.C. native, committed to USC in 1998 but didn't qualify for the NCAA. Now he is back and brings a speedy presence to the Carolina secondary. He could also play receiver.

Robinson rushed for 1,400 yards and 30 touchdowns for Toombs County High School in Lyons, Ga. He also played safety in high school.

Gause might turn out to be the jewel of this class. A 6-foot-5-inch, 235-pound defensive end from Conway, S.C., Gause is an all-around great athlete. He holds school records for weightlifting, started on the basketball team and was a state triple jump champion in track and field.

For Gause, whose cousin Andrea is a freshman at USC, it came down to Clemson and Carolina, and the choice wasn't easy.

"[Clemson] was a lot of fun," Gause said. "They had some good-looking girls there. [But] I like the coaching staff at South Carolina. They also have an established defense style and scheme."

Carolina will have one more weekend of official visits on Jan. 26 before the recruiting season ends. On the wish lists of top Southeastern colleges, including USC, is

2001 football commitments

- OL Josh Malloy (Shelby, N.C.)
- WR Mathew Thomas (Pearson, Geo.)
- RB Thez Robinson (Lyons, Geo.)
- LB Orus Lambert (Jacksonville, Fla.)
- DE Chris Tucker (Decatur, Geo.)
- DE George Gause (Conway, S.C.)
- DE Charles Silas (Swainsboro, Geo.)
- S Jermaine Lemon (Milledgeville, Geo.)*
- WR Ricky Ricks (Perkinston, Miss.)*
- QB Corey Jenkins (Garden City, Kan.)*
- QB Bennett Swygert (Summerville, S.C.)
- CB Isaac Stackhouse (Ellisville, Miss.)*
- LB Travis Weston (Columbia, S.C.)
- DE James Scott (Marion, S.C.)

* - junior college transfer

wide receiver Roscoe Crosby of Union High School. Crosby was named "Mr. Football" in South Carolina for 2000, and is being recruited heavily by the Gamecocks, as well as by Clemson and Florida State. He is also a major baseball prospect who is listed as a probable first-round pick in the upcoming Major League Draft.

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USC's shooting woes continue

BY KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

The Gamecocks might have won the game Wednesday night, but questions still remain about the team's ability to put the ball in the net.

USC came into the game against Vanderbilt ranked dead last in the SEC in points scored (72.1 a game), last in field goal percentage (40.9 percent) and last in 3-point shooting percentage (29 percent).

The game against Vanderbilt was more of the same. USC only scored 57 points in the win, its second-lowest output this season. The Gamecocks also shot a paltry 34.5 percent from the field and 25 percent from behind the arc.

Head coach Eddie Fogler was at a loss to explain the shooting woes.

"I really don't know," Fogler said after the game. "We shoot pretty well in practice. Statistically, we're shooting the ball well in our drills. Now it somewhat becomes mental."

Only one Gamecock, center Tony Kitchings, is making more than half of his shots on the year. For the rest of the

team, it has been a constant struggle to make shots consistently.

Sophomore swingman Chuck Eidson's shooting problems over the last few games illustrate just how much USC is struggling. Eidson, who got injured in the game against Vandy and is out for the season, has only made eight of his last 43 shots and two of his last 18 three-pointers. Against Vandy, he finished 2-of-9 from the field and 0-for-4 from downtown. His lack of confidence was evident, and defenders were playing off him, almost daring him to shoot. Eidson had also become hesitant to shoot the open shot, and the home crowd at the Frank McGuire Arena took notice.

"Right now it's hard to say (what's wrong with Eidson)," Fogler said. "The crowd, who obviously means well, is almost making it worse with oohs and aahs."

Despite Eidson's troubles, Fogler insisted he still had plenty of confidence in his player.

"I want to say about ten days ago, [Eidson] hit 70 out of 100