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SPORTS

GAME SCHEDULE

VOLLEYBALL vs. Mississippi State, 7 p.m. Friday
FOOTBALL vs. Alabama, 12:30 p.m. Saturday
WOMEN'S SOCCER vs. Florida, 12 p.m. Sunday
MEN'S TENNIS vs. National Tennis Team Championships, Friday-Sunday

FACE OFF



Alabama at USC

12:30 p.m. Wednesday
at Willams-Brice Stadium
TV: JP Sports WIS Columbia
Radio: 560 AM WVOC

BY GREG WHITT
THE GAMECOCK

The 15th-ranked South Carolina Gamecocks (3-0, 2-0) on Saturday look to take another step they have never taken before: beating the Alabama Crimson Tide.

Coming off an emotional, nationally televised win against Mississippi State last week, the Gamecocks will be challenged to remain focused and not slight a very talented Alabama team.

The Tide has an edge on the Gamecocks in every offensive category except points per game, in which both teams are tied at 20. After the Crimson and White's performance against Arkansas last week, Alabama could be heading back to its glory days under the leadership of new head coach Dennis Franchione.

Alabama seems to be getting back to the level of the 1999 10-3 Orange Bowl team.

The Tide is already distancing itself far from last year's dismal 3-8 effort.

The Gamecocks have never beaten Alabama in ten tries (though they were once awarded

a win by forfeit), a statistic head coach Lou Holtz surely has reminded his team of.

Holtz has also reminded the team plenty of times about the Tide's 31-10 bashing of Arkansas last week.

Saturday's matchup will involve two teams whose current manifestations are entirely different from their past histories.

USC Offense vs. Alabama Defense:

Rushing: The Gamecocks will continue with their three-back rotation of juniors Derek Watson, Andrew Pinnock and even Ryan Brewer occasionally. Pinnock had an outstanding game against Mississippi State last week, gaining 97 yards on 12 attempts. He averaged 8.1 yards a carry, with most of those yards being gained between the tackles.

Also, look for Holtz to get Watson more involved this week. He has not yet had the explosive type of performance Gamecock fans are used to seeing from him. Besides the games against Mississippi State and Tennessee last year, Watson had been a constant threat.

Saturday's game should be a low scoring defensive battle. Both Alabama and USC's defenses are extremely similar in their setup and philosophies.

Alabama's defense has only allowed an average of 13 points per game this season. Junior defensive end Kindal Moorehead, who was an all-SEC selection in 1999, is back after missing last season

because of an ACL injury. Moorehead is one of the top pass rushers in the nation.

The Tide's veteran defensive line forced four turnovers last week in their defeat of Arkansas.

Alabama linebacker Saleem Rasheed is one of the best at his position in the country.

ADVANTAGE: USC

Passing: Senior signal-caller Phil Petty will once again be the helm for the Gamecocks. Petty's passing ability has improved tremendously this season, after throwing 10 interceptions last season. This year, he has no interceptions and has completed 64 percent of his passes for 474 yards and two touchdowns. Ryan Brewer, who has caught 10 passes for 128 yards this year, will lead the receiving corps. Petty also has reliable receivers in the speedy Corey Alexander and Brian Scott.

Another possible option at quarterback has emerged in Corey Jenkins. Jenkins led USC on a game-winning drive where he rushed 11 times for 75 yards. Though there is no quarterback controversy, it is possible Jenkins will enter the game to make the Tide adjust their defense.

ADVANTAGE: ALABAMA

Alabama offense vs. USC defense:

Rushing: Alabama can run the ball, too, averaging 168 rushing yards per game.

Ahmaad Galloway leads the attack on the ground for the Tide. He ran over Vanderbilt with 144 yards and has compiled 283 yards

so far this season.

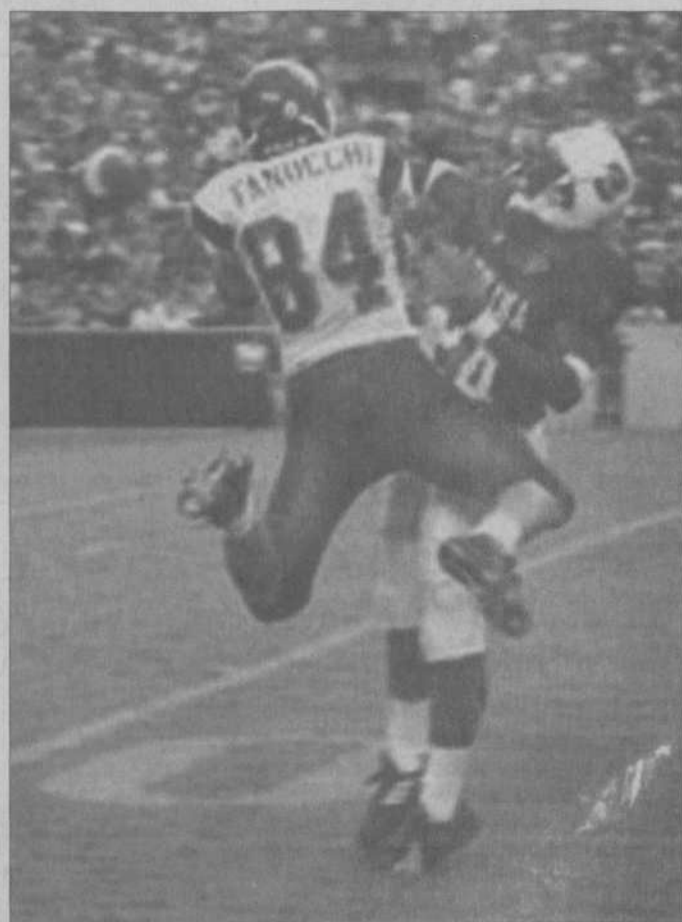
Look for the Tide to try and get him involved early. Junior quarterback Tyler Watts is also second on the team in rushing with 98 yards.

Carolina's defense, led by senior Kalimba Edwards, has been equally dangerous, allowing only 12 points per game.

The Gamecocks will get a big boost when senior linebacker Kenny Harney returns to action after missing the last two games. Sophomore Jeremiah Garrison will be moving back to outside linebacker.

Both teams like to rely on their defense to come up with turnovers and points. USC has a veteran defensive line, led by senior defen-

♦ FOOTBALL, SEE PAGE 9



Top: Sheldon Brown attempts to break up a pass against Boise St. Bottom: Derek Watson runs for yardage against Boise St. PHOTO BY AARON HARK

For Gamecocks, the best is just beginning



CHRIS FOY

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Could you imagine it? The Gamecocks are going to the Rose Bowl. The words every South Carolina fan is dying to hear -- that USC will compete for the national title.

But let's not get too far ahead of ourselves.

Is this South Carolina squad a No. 1 team? No.

Are they an 11-0 team? Could be. This may not be the most "clicking" Gamecock football team you have ever seen, but one thing you have to admit is that they find a way to win.

This season's Gamecocks have some serious advantages that last year's didn't. Two, mainly. They can score a touchdown in the final minutes under pressure, and (surprise) they have a field goal kicker who hasn't missed a field goal (we'll just overlook the missed PAT).

Now, let's look ahead through the season and see what threats are present to thwart a perfect season. There are four pivotal games remaining on the schedule, and three are at home. Beating Alabama, Tennessee, Florida and Clemson will prove to the nation that this team is a powerhouse. And if we do happen to accomplish this feat, maybe ESPN will give us the rights to USC.

First on the list is tomorrow's matchup with Alabama. The 2-1 Crimson Tide won't pose too much of a threat, will they? Well, Carolina does have to overcome the hurdle of actually beating them, as the series is 10-0 in 'Bama's favor. But not only are they playing in Columbia, the talent factor lies with South Carolina. USC should win this game.

Next up, Kentucky, Arkansas and Vanderbilt. These shouldn't be

too much of a problem. But note "shouldn't." In college football, upsets are frequent. However, Carolina can win these games and probably won't have any problems in doing it.

Then the real test begins: The start of the Orange Crush, which begins on the road this season. However, the Gamecocks have already beaten two ranked opponents on the road. Tennessee is certainly better than Mississippi State and Georgia, but it's a testament to this South Carolina team about who they can play on the road. In a clean game, with solid performances by Phil Petty and either Derek Watson or Andrew Pinnock, the Gamecocks can easily upset the Vols on the road.

South Carolina will roll over Wofford. By this point, USC could realistically be in a match that will determine the SEC East Champion — going 9-0 into a home game against Florida. Make no mistake; Florida is by far the best team on the schedule. But with a little bit of luck, and the luxury of playing at home, USC could be sending the Gators home with a loss. Remember last year's sudden attack in Gainesville when the Gamecocks went up 21-3 in the first quarter? Of course, the Gators came back and tore USC apart, but there was a solid lead for a time. If the Gamecocks have a very clean game and can capitalize on any Gator mistakes, this could very well be marked as a win for South Carolina.

Are you seeing the possibilities yet? Let's say this is reality. Clemson will come to town to face the 10-0 Gamecocks. South Carolina has the ability this season, regardless of what each team's record will be entering the game, to give Clemson a beating like they have never seen. But even if the Gamecocks are perfect when Nov. 17 comes around, the Tigers should never be taken lightly. It wouldn't be out of the ordinary for the next chapter in the Clemson-USC rivalry to feature the Tigers stopping the Gamecocks from achieving a

♦ FOY, SEE PAGE 9

Volleyball hits road to Miss.

Mississippi State will be next challenge

BY RICK JOHNSTON
THE GAMECOCK

The South Carolina volleyball team hits the road this weekend on a swing to Mississippi for games against Ole Miss and Mississippi State.

USC (7-1, 1-1 SEC) is coming off a weekend where it went 1-1 in its SEC season openers, defeating Georgia and narrowly losing to No. 9 Florida on the televised SEC match of the week.

Mississippi State (5-4, 1-1 SEC) is coming off a weekend that saw them take on Auburn and Alabama. The Bulldogs won 3-0 at Auburn by scores of 30-23, 30-27 and 30-18, giving the Bulldogs only their second win in an SEC opener since 1989. Also,

MSU took back-to-back road wins from Auburn for the first time in school history. MSU fell to Alabama 3-1, 30-22, 14-30, 23-30 and 24-30.

Ole Miss (3-7, 1-1 SEC) is also coming off a 1-1 weekend against the Alabama schools, defeating Auburn and losing to Alabama. The 3-2 win over Auburn gave the Rebels their first road win of the season in dramatic fashion, winning in five games with scores of 30-28, 30-19, 24-30, 25-30 and 15-9.

Last season, the Lady Gamecocks swept the series against the Mississippi schools, winning 3-0 over Ole Miss and 3-1 over Mississippi State. Both matches were at USC's Volleyball Competition Facility.

For Friday's game, a key matchup will be on both teams' right side.

Mississippi State junior Misty Hubenthal recorded her third straight double-double in

the win over Auburn, notching 15 kills and 15 digs.

Her counterpart for the Gamecocks is junior Cally Plummer, a two-time first team All-SEC performer. In the loss against Florida, she led USC with 20 kills, giving her 121 for the season, an average of more than four kills per game. Plummer is also hitting .288 for the season.

MSU sophomore middle blocker Tanika Taylor will be matched up against the powerful USC middle, with junior Berna Dwyer, junior Sam Alban and redshirt freshman Niece Curry leading the way. Curry leads the Lady Gamecocks with 33 blocks, averaging just more than one per game.

Ole Miss will be led by senior outside hitter Jamie Burns, who got a double-double of her own this past weekend, getting 21 kills and 11 digs against Auburn. The Rebels present their own

force in the middle with junior Sarah Lansden, who recorded a career-high 19 digs against Auburn. Junior Erin Newsome will join Lansden to try and neutralize the USC middle attack.

Among the other Lady Gamecocks looking to have big weekends is junior outside hitter Yajaira Cadet, who had 16 kills in the Florida match. Also look for another solid outing by junior setter Megan Hosp, USC's leader in assists, with 348 total and an average of 12 per game, and digs, with 81 total and an average of nearly three a game.

Hosp also ranks sixth in kills for USC, with 26 on the year, averaging just under one kill per game.

The Lady Gamecocks are ranked 18th in the AVCA/USA Today Coaches' Top 25. In the all-time series, USC leads Mississippi State 13-4 and Ole Miss 13-6.

FYI for Saturday's Game

Fans are encouraged to be in their seats at 12:15 in order to see the special pregame show. Larry Gatlin will sing the national anthem. Fans are also encouraged to stay for the halftime show, which will be a special tribute in recognition of firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency personnel.

REMINDERS:

- ◆ No coolers, thermostats, bookbags or any other types of bags will be permitted inside the gates.
- ◆ If you bring in a purse or medical case, it will be searched before you can enter the gate.
- ◆ You will not be allowed to park on the shoulder of National Guard Road.
- ◆ All cars on the stadium grounds will be subject to search.
- ◆ Gates will open 30 minutes early, at 10 a.m.
- ◆ Unless it is absolutely necessary for students to bring anything else, they are encouraged to bring only their student IDs.