

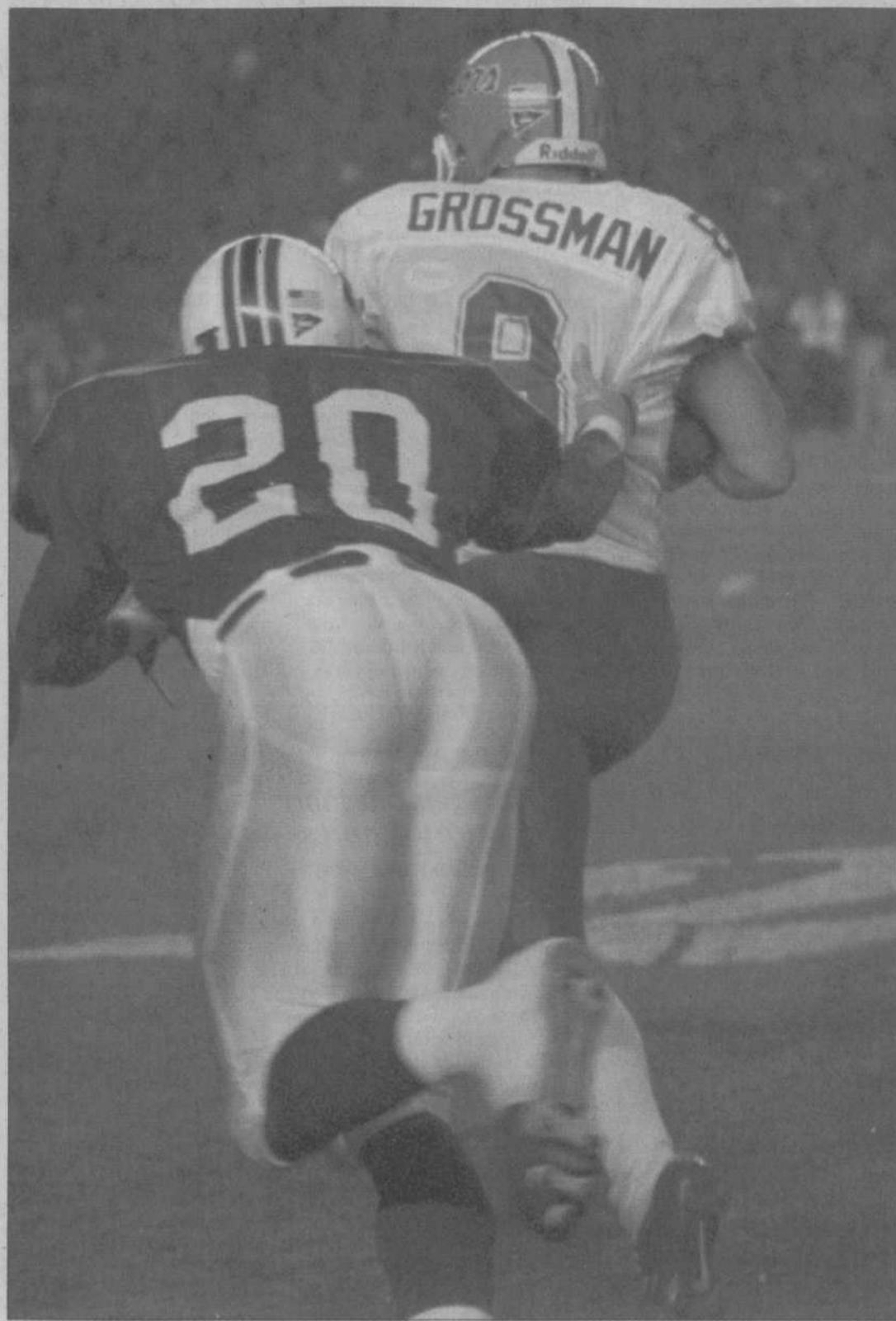


SPORTS

GAME SCHEDULE
BASKETBALL vs. TBA, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday
VOLLEYBALL vs. Tennessee (at SEC Tournament), 7 p.m. Thursday
FOOTBALL vs. Clemson, 12:30 p.m. Saturday
MEN'S SOCCER at Florida International, 7 p.m. Saturday

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CONTACT US

 Story ideas? Questions? Comments?
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Above: Willie Offord gets a hand on Florida QB Rex Grossman during Saturday night's game. It was one of the few times USC was able to pressure Grossman. PHOTO BY TRAVIS LYNN

Below: More than 10,000 fans gathered at the State Fairgrounds on Saturday morning for the live broadcast of ESPN's College GameDay. PHOTO BY CANDI HAUGLUM



Volleyball defeats Wake Forest 3-0

BY CHRIS FOY
 THE GAMECOCK

With Cally Plummer leading the way, the Lady Gamecocks took down Wake Forest 3-0 on Sunday at the Volleyball Competition Facility. With the win, South Carolina improved to 18-4 (10-4 SEC).

After the game, USC head coach Kim Christopher felt her team played well. "Today, I felt we played the way we have been practicing lately," Christopher said. "We were relaxed, and our defensive effort was good. Wake Forest is known as a very good defensive team, and we wanted to outwork them defensively. We beat them in the digs category 45-30, and that is really what we wanted to do. We knew that if we could outplay them defensively, then we could do some really good things offensively as well."

In game one, the Demon Deacons were down early but pulled within three to make the score 9-6. But they were unable to get any closer, and the Lady Gamecocks prevailed 30-17.

Game two followed the same pattern as the first, except this time the Lady Demon Deacons were down four. That was as close as they would come, however, as they dropped the match 30-20.

Game three was a hard-fought match that featured five lead changes. The Deacons got a surprising 20-16 lead but were unable to stop the offensive surge by the Gamecocks, who came back to win 30-25.

USC was a sharp .333, while Wake struggled, only hitting .183. Plummer finished the game with 16 kills and three service aces. Nadia Sefferovich led the defense with 14 digs and had an outstanding .667 hitting percentage en route to the Lady Gamecocks' win. Megan Hosp led the team in assists with 29.

The Lady Gamecocks will next compete in the SEC tournament starting Thursday in Knoxville, Tenn. Pairings for the opening round will be released later today.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@hotmail.com.

Men's soccer team thrashes Elon

BY KYLE ALMOND
 THE GAMECOCK

Coming off a disappointing 1-0 loss to No. 7 North Carolina on Friday, the USC men's soccer team rebounded Sunday with a 5-1 thrashing of Elon at the Graveyard.

Jordan Quinn scored a pair of goals, and three freshmen rounded out the scoring for the No. 20 Gamecocks, whose record improves to 11-4-2 with only one regular-season game remaining.

Seniors Joey Worthen, Ryan Stocking and Tony Vitagliano were honored before Sunday's game, USC's last regular-season home game of the season. Worthen didn't take long to make his presence felt once the game got underway, assisting Quinn on the opening goal at the 5:34 mark. The forward from Salt Lake City brought Elon's goalkeeper out of the six-yard box and lofted a cross into the middle, where Quinn headed the pass into a wide-open net.

Elon's Brent McDowell tied the game less than four minutes later, but Quinn's free kick in the 12th minute put the Gamecocks back on top again. Kolby Runager in-

BLACK AND BLUE

FLORIDA GATORS KILL GAMECOCKS' SEC TITLE HOPES WITH BLOWOUT AT WILLIAMS-BRICE STADIUM

BY MATT ROTHENBERG
 THE GAMECOCK

On Saturday night, the Florida Gators shut down the electricity at Williams-Brice Stadium, causing an on-field blackout that went along with the one in the stands. Despite a record-breaking crowd of 84,900, mostly clad in black, the Gamecocks could not withstand the Gator attack and succumbed 54-17. Florida scored on all but one of its drives and left the Gamecock coaching staff to scrounge for answers following the loss.

"We couldn't stop them," head coach Lou Holtz said. "They ran the ball, threw the ball. We got beat by a far superior football team. This was devastating physically, mentally, every which way."

The Gamecocks got a lucky break early. After the opening drive stalled at their 49-yard line, the Gamecocks made an outstanding play on special teams. Tyeler Dean

boomed a 43-yard punt that Florida's Lito Sheppard fumbled inside the 10-yard line. Junior defensive back Brian Elam was there to fall on the loose ball, and Carolina continued its drive on the Florida 7-yard line. It took one play for the first score, as Derek Watson got the handoff and ran for his sixth TD of the year, off blocks from Ryan Brewer and Andrew Pinnock.

Florida quarterback Rex Grossman came out shooting. On the first play of the drive at his own 25, Grossman hit receiver Jabar Gaffney for a 15-yard completion and three plays later got the ball to Earnest Graham for an 11-yard gain. After the Gator drive stalled at the Gamecock 25, kicker Jeff Chandler put the ball through the uprights from 42 yards out, cutting Carolina's lead to four.

The Gamecocks continued to chip away at the Florida defense with their running attack, includ-

ing a 19-yard run by Petty. After an incomplete pass on third down, the Gamecocks settled for a 32-yard field goal from Daniel Weaver. This marked Weaver's tenth of the season, making him the first Carolina kicker to reach that mark since 1994. Through the first quarter, the Gamecocks accumulated 79 yards of rushing against the Florida defense, which had been allowing an average of less than 100 yards per game.

After Sheppard took the kick-off back 32 yards for Florida, Graham piled up fifteen yards on four attempts, including two for first downs. With his receivers blanketed by the Gamecock defense, Grossman burned his heels on a 31-yard pickup, finally being stopped by Kenny Harney on the South Carolina 12. Following a short gain by Graham, Grossman connected with Gaffney for an 11-yard touchdown strike to tie the

♦ FLORIDA, SEE PAGE 8

USC looks to Clemson matchup

BY BRANDON LARRABEE
 THE GAMECOCK

"That was an awesome display by Florida."

LOU HOLTZ
 USC HEAD COACH

Nothing seemed to go right for the Gamecocks on Saturday night.

Their defense was picked apart by Rex Grossman and the Florida offense, which piled up 482 yards of total offense. Grossman was 21-of-33 passing, throwing for 302 yards and two touchdowns. Earnest Graham ran for 91 yards on 19 carries. And Jeff Chandler was perfect on the night, making five field goals from 42, 36, 46 and 44 yards.

"I have never been involved in

a football game before where the other team scored every time they had the ball plus when we had the ball," USC head coach Lou Holtz said after the game. "That was an awesome display by Florida, particularly on offense."

USC's offense was all but silenced by the Gators, who at one point held Carolina scoreless for nearly 40 minutes.

And to top it off, USC will likely

have to face archrival Clemson on Saturday without starting quarterback Phil Petty, Kalimba Edwards or Jeremiah Garrison. Derek Watson is questionable, though he said he intends to play. And Holtz also said Rod Thomas has a shoulder problem.

"We're going into the most important game of the season's next

♦ CLEMSON, SEE PAGE 8



The Gamecock offense prevailed over Drury's tight defense last week. PHOTO BY REGINA GOODWIN

creased Carolina's lead to two early in the second half, and the rout was on. Udo Seidel and Anthony Stovall each scored header goals in the 73rd and 83rd minutes, respectively.

Vitagliano, a midfielder from Scottsdale, Ariz., was happy to get a win in what could be his final game at the Graveyard.

"It feels good to go out with a win," Vitagliano said. "It's unfor-

tunate it might be the last game, but it's got to come to an end."

USC has a strong chance at hosting a first-round game in the NCAA Tournament, which starts Nov. 25. The brackets will be announced Nov. 19.

Head coach Mark Berson thinks a win at Florida International in the final game of the regular season could be a deciding factor in whether the

Gamecocks host a first-round game

"I think it's absolutely crucial," Berson said. "I think that we need to win in Miami to give us the best chance to host a game in the NCAA Tournament. There are no guarantees, win or lose, but certainly a win there improves our chances."

Berson said he was pleased with how his team played following the North Carolina loss. The Gamecocks lost Friday on a fourth-minute goal by David Testo, who transferred from USC in the offseason.

"I'm real proud of the way the guys responded," Berson said. "We didn't get back until late Friday night, like 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning. So we had to do this without much rest."

With the win, the Gamecocks finish with a home record of 7-1-1. Their only loss came to Maryland in the Gamecock Soccer Classic on Oct. 19.

Elon fell to 8-11 with the loss.

"I was very pleased for our seniors," Berson said. "Ryan Stocking, Joey Worthen and Tony

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