



SPORTS

GAME SCHEDULE
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Austria, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday
MEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Hungary, 7:45 p.m. Wednesday
VOLLEYBALL at SEC tournament, Friday
FOOTBALL vs. Clemson, 12:30 p.m. Saturday
MEN'S SOCCER at Florida International, 7:30 p.m. Saturday

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Bowls ride on rivalry matchup



Derek Watson runs for a long gain against Clemson during last year's game. His status for Saturday's game is questionable after suffering a hip injury during last week's game against Florida. FILE PHOTO

 BY PRESTON BAINES
 THE GAMECOCK

One of the nation's biggest rivalries is here again. The obvious importance of beating an in-state rival is evident in the recruiting advantages, bragging rights and claiming of the national spotlight.

Carolina came into last year's game in the same situation it is in now — with a 7-3 record after getting knocked out of a chance to win the SEC championship by Tennessee and Florida.

It would seem the Gamecocks have nothing to play for because they are going to a bowl regardless. But there are more important reasons to get this victory.

Carolina is playing for the second-highest bowl honor a SEC team could get without two teams making a Bowl Championship Series game.

The Florida Citrus Bowl in Orlando is the first bowl to pick an SEC team after the BCS makes its selections.

Last year, Citrus Bowl officials were insistent on getting the Gamecocks to Orlando, citing USC's great crowd support and the attention brought by Lou Holtz's name.

Unfortunately for the Gamecocks, the last-second loss to Clemson in Death Valley cost the Gamecocks a shot at the Citrus Bowl.

In order to be selected, USC must have only one less loss than the conference's second-place team. With games against Kentucky and Vanderbilt, it looks likely that Tennessee will finish with at least nine wins.

Therefore, Carolina must beat Clemson to make the trip they missed out on last season. A loss to Clemson means USC would then go

on a wild goose chase.

Although USC contributed to the largest crowd in Outback Bowl history last season with more than 35,000 fans in Tampa, most bowls don't pick the same team for consecutive years.

After the Outback Bowl, there is either a big drop-off or a long trip for Gamecock fans.

The Cotton Bowl in Dallas would be a likely possibility, taking Carolina fans halfway across the country to the freezing New Year's Day temperatures in Texas.

If the Gamecocks didn't make the fields of Cotton, then Carolina fans might feel like they got cheated come bowl season.

The likely possibilities then become the Peach Bowl in Atlanta, the Music City Bowl in Nashville and the Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La.

The bowl situation is a bit bleaker for the Tigers. A win over Carolina would only then make the Tigers bowl-eligible. But the Tigers are still likely to make a bowl regardless with their game against Duke on Dec. 1.

Clemson's disappointing season has left Tiger fans looking up at teams they didn't think they would be looking at and at bowlsthey didn't think were possibilities.

At this point, the most likely takers for Clemson are the newly formed Tangerine Bowl in Orlando or, even worse, the Silicon Valley Bowl in San Jose, Ca., which will most likely invite nearby early-season success Fresno State.

So more than pride will be on the line Saturday. Both teams will hold their postseasons in their hands.

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

Ric Flair is still the man


 KYLE ALMOND
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"To be the man, you gotta beat the man."

Ric Flair's trademark saying couldn't have summarized this weekend any better for the USC football team.

The Gamecocks had their shot at being the man, a shot at being the best in the SEC East. But Florida, with Flair on the sideline, was up to the task.

I'm sure most of you don't want to be reminded of Saturday's thrashing. And I don't want to write about it. So instead of depressing ourselves with "what ifs" and "what nows," let's take some time to reflect on the man, the myth, the legend — the "Nature Boy" Ric Flair.

OK, we all know Flair's choice of football team sucks. I prefer him in a diamond-studded robe to that disgusting orange shirt he wore on Saturday. But when it came to wrestling, there was none better.

Flair had it all. He had the look, the moves, the wit, the gold and, most important of all, the ladies. You can talk all you want about Hulk Hogan, but Flair had more charisma in his little finger than the Hulkster had in his entire body.

Flair wasn't the biggest wrestler. Not even close. He was also slow as dirt.

But he made up for his physical shortcomings with his smarts.

If he was ever in trouble of losing a match or a world title (he won 18 of them by my count), Flair would take desperate

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This time, it's personal

A play-by-play preview of the Carolina-Clemson game, staying true to The Gamecock's satirical style

 BY BEN BRYAN
 THE GAMECOCK

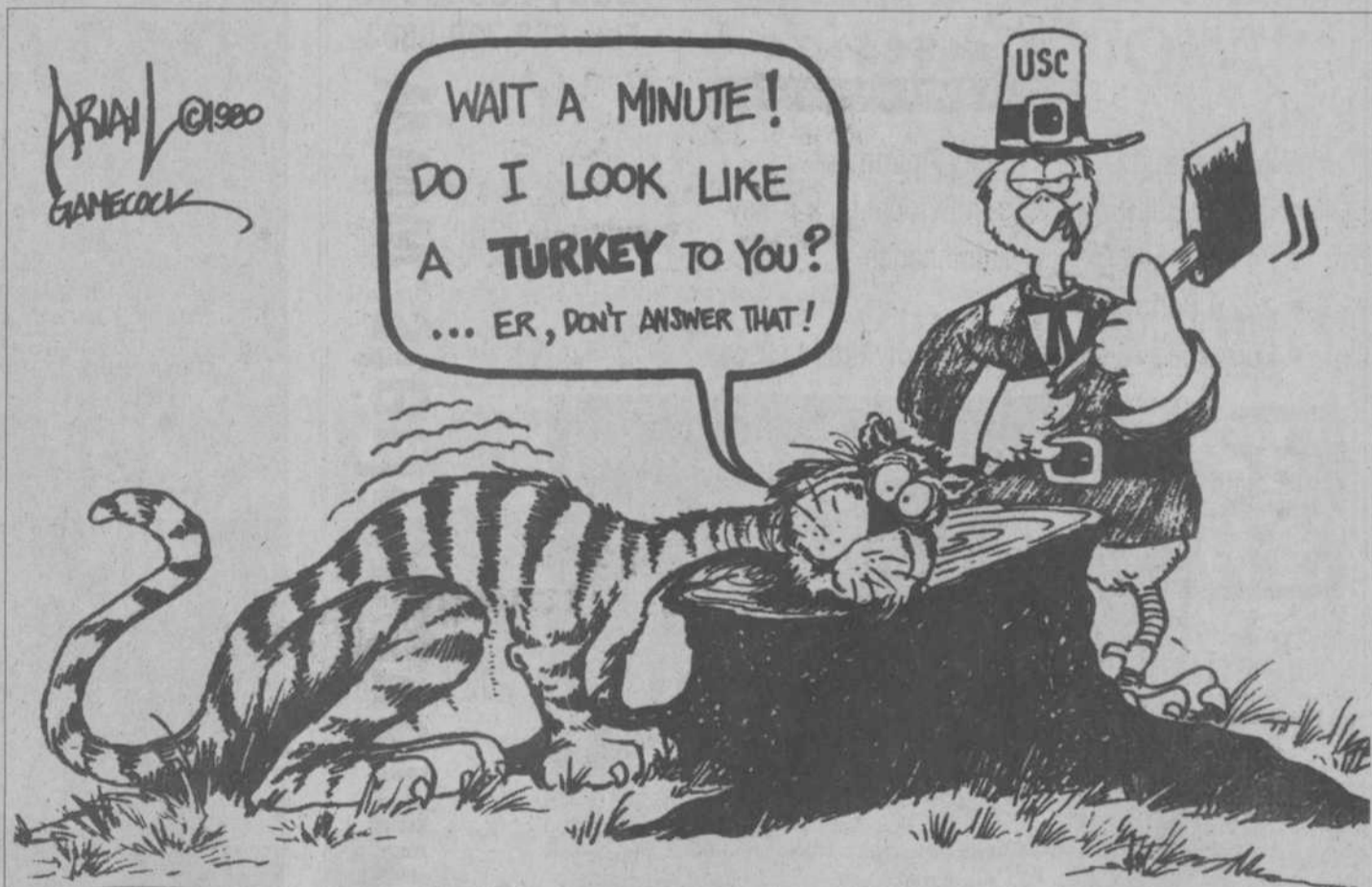
Those of you who have faithfully read the sports section of *The Gamecock* for the past several years probably remember David Cloninger and his creative approach to previewing USC football games. In the first of a two-part series, we'll take a Cloninger-esque look at our upcoming intrastate pigskin rumble — and hope the game unfolds more like our prediction than last year.

12:24 P.M. The Clemson players, clad in purple pants, are met by a barrage of penalty markers as they run onto the field. Coach Tommy Bowden is dismayed to learn that his team has been flagged with a dead ball foul for "chromatic atrocity." The Tigers are assessed a 15-yard penalty on the opening kickoff.

1st Quarter

12:55 The Gamecocks draw first blood when fullback Andrew Pinnock breaks away for an 85-yard touchdown run. A tearful Pinnock thanks the Clemson defense for the confidence booster and then asks coach Lou Holtz if he can try a punt return later. **SCORE: USC 7, CU 0**

7:31 The Clemson offense catches the USC defense off guard with a seldom-used trick play in which quarterback Woody Dantzler hands the ball to another player. Travis Zachery takes the ball in from the 30-yard line to tie the game. Offensive coordinator Brad Scott congratulates Zachery and thanks him for giving Scott the credit for thinking up the play. **SCORE: USC 7, CU 7**


 Robert Ariali, now an editorial cartoonist at *The State*, drew this before the 1980 Carolina-Clemson football game for the Nov. 24 edition of *The Gamecock*. FILE PHOTO

2nd Quarter

10:20 Corey Jenkins scores on a 45-yard run on a quarterback draw. Tommy Bowden hurls his headset to the ground in disgust for the fifth time, breaking the Williams-Brice record for headpiece hurling in a single quarter — a record set by Lou Holtz just the week before. **SCORE: USC 14, CU 7**

6:16 Facing third-and-long from USC's own 2-yard line, Lou decides to dig into his bag of tricks. Petty lines up from shotgun and is flanked by punter Tyeler Dean, who is wearing a note on the front of his jersey reading "I am

Pinnock." The Tiger defenders are completely fooled. Dean, posing as the 250-pound fullback, takes the direct snap for the quick-kick and belts a 60-yard punt that the Gamecocks down for no return.

2:29 Dantzler breaks away on a 50-yard run from scrimmage, but mistakes the 10-yard line for the end zone and freezes in the Heisman pose at the five. Eighty thousand people simultaneously burst into laughter. Before Dantzler can figure out what the commotion is, Roscoe Crosby pushes him across the goal line for the touchdown. **SCORE: USC 14, CU 14**

0:04 Desperately hoping to rejuvenate the kicking game, Lou sends in USC soccer player Joey Worthen to kick a 48-yard field goal. Worthen splits the uprights to make the score **USC 17, CU 14**. On the ensuing kickoff, Derrick Hamilton returns the ball to midfield where he attempts to lateral to Brian Mance while being tackled by USC's Willie Offord. Mance takes the pitch and breaks away from the nearest Gamecock defender on the way to what appears to be an easy touchdown. However, the Carolina band, believing the half to be over, has already begun marching onto the field

for the halftime show. Mance attempts to fight through the sea of garnet but is leveled at the 3-yard line when a trombone player clotheslines him with the slide of his horn. The Carolina trombone/baritone section proceeds to beat Mance to the ground with their instruments, thus preserving the halftime lead for the Gamecocks and striking a triumphant blow for trombone players everywhere. **HALFTIME SCORE: USC 17, CU 14**

Check back Friday for the dramatic conclusion!

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