

CONTACT US

Story ideas? Questions? Comments?
Write us at gamecocksports@hotmail.com



SPORTS

GAME SCHEDULE

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Duquesne, 7p.m. Friday
SWIMMING AND DIVING at Davidson Invitational, Friday
MEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Colorado State, 7:30 p.m. Saturday
EQUESTRIAN in Division I Invitational, Saturday

USC easily beats Wofford

BY PRESTON BAINES
THE GAMECOCK

It's becoming a trend for this season's South Carolina basketball team. Once again, USC played its best in the opening minutes. The Gamecocks thwarted the Wofford attack early Wednesday night and remained ahead for the rest of the game on their way to a 64-49 victory.

The Terriers started off ice cold in front of the home crowd, helping Carolina (3-2) take a 20-10 lead midway through the first half. Wofford's shooting game bore no resemblance to the strong attack shown in last week's 85-82 loss to Clemson.

The Gamecocks came into the game worried about Wofford's three-point shooting prowess. But Carolina used its decided height advantage to guard the outside. The Terriers shot just 25 percent in the first half and 30.4 percent in the second half.

"We gave all the respect we could muster to the Wofford team, particularly to the perimeter," USC head coach Dave Odom said.

"I felt if we didn't mix our defenses tonight and if we played our very best brand of man-to-man defense and pressed out on the perimeter, I didn't know if they could make enough shots over our defense to beat us," Odom said.

Sophomore Rolando Howell had been in a slump the past few games but came up big Wednesday. Howell had a double-double with 17 points and 10 rebounds.

"We brought him (Tuesday) and worked him a little extra hard and talked to him," Odom said. "I



Colorado St. at USC

7:30 p.m. Saturday
at Frank McGuire Arena
Radio: 560AM-WVOC

think we kicked him where we needed to kick him and loved him where we needed to love him."

Howell was also happy with his improvement.

"I haven't been helping this team a lot," Howell said. "I haven't been playing my type of game. I came through tonight, and hopefully this is the start of a breakthrough for me."

Carolina grabbed a 20-10 lead at the 10-minute mark in the first half and built its lead up to 27-12 at the 5:17 mark. But Wofford would end the half scoring the final six points to cut the lead to nine.

The Terriers wouldn't be silent, however, and hung around for much of the game to pull within six, 35-29, in the second half. At that point, a Rolando Howell layup and a Jamel Bradley three-pointer helped Carolina pull away.

Bradley had 15 points on the night off five three-pointers. All nine of his shots were from three-point range.

Odom has said he would like to see Bradley take more two-point shots, and Bradley has been working on that area of his game.

♦ BASKETBALL, SEE PAGE 7



Sophomore Michael Boynton looks to see significant playing time this year.

PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN

Florida can help USC get to Citrus



CHRIS FOY

GAMECOCKSPORTS@HOTMAIL.COM

A positive trend has begun to take hold in Columbia during this time of year: the eagerly awaited announcement of USC's bowl bid. Now, obviously, with the SEC Championship game pushed to Dec. 8, plans have to wait. But being prepared never hurt anyone, so here are a few things to keep in mind about our postseason as well as for all of college football.

1. Count on the Citrus: The most likely scenario for us to miss out on the biggest non-BCS bowl is for Florida to lose to Tennessee this weekend or for the SEC East team to lose in the SEC Championship game. Quite frankly, this weekend's game doesn't concern me. The Vols haven't beaten the Gators in the Swamp since 1971. UT has as much of a shot at beating Florida as Clemson has of going to a respectable bowl. And sorry, Tigers, the Tangerine Bowl doesn't classify (if you even make that). The conference championship should be a breeze for the East representative as well. There have been a few West teams who have managed to upset East teams this season, but it won't happen when the SEC crown is on the line.

2. Save your money: I know this is going to shock most of you, but the Citrus Bowl doesn't care how good we are. OK, maybe they do, but I can promise you they're more concerned about making money than playing host to a decent matchup. It's \$60 a pop for Citrus Bowl tickets, and Outback ticket prices have risen to \$50. Thanks, bowl officials. As if the average college student isn't poor enough, you're going to rip us off so you can make a few extra bucks.

3. After SEC Championship, all bets are off: Carolina students are pulling for Florida until it locks up a high enough bowl bid to help our chances. That's fine, but some people say they always pull for the SEC against non-conference opponents. That's crap. In the regular season we proved we are the best all-around conference. In the postseason, it's all right to root for teams like Florida to be embarrassed in front of a national audience and have to live with it until next season. It won't reflect too poorly upon our conference.

Let me make this perfectly clear: the SEC is the toughest conference in the NCAA. Period. The Big 12 has two very good teams, but one's an underachiever that starts a non-hall of fame former pro quarterback's son while a good quarterback sits on the bench. Never mind the fact that he set practically every school passing record.

You can throw Colorado State in this list, too. They're good, but they're not great. They did pull off one hell of an upset, though.

Let's face it, folks, the Big 12 is the only other conference that could even compare to the SEC. Big 10? Ha. ACC? Maybe in five years, though I must say they're in the right direction. The SEC is the best because it offers the highest level of competition. But just because it's the best overall conference, doesn't mean you have to be let down if some teams get knocked off their high horses every now and then.

Those are just a few thoughts going into bowl season. For now, go out and support your basketball team. They haven't yet reached the level of prominence as our football team, but Odom is going to do a lot for this program. Let's show him the respect he deserves and give the Coliseum the atmosphere it deserves.

Volleyball ends with hard loss to UNC

BY CHRIS FOY
THE GAMECOCK

It's over.

After beating the North Carolina Tar Heels 3-1 last weekend to close out the season, the Lady Gamecocks appeared to be poised to have little trouble in the first round of the NCAA volleyball tournament. Unfortunately, the Lady Tar Heels had different plans, as they repaid the favor Thursday night by downing USC 3-1 and ending the Lady Gamecock's season. North Carolina will advance to the second round to face Pepperdine tonight at Chapel Hill.

"It's always an emotional contest when North and South Carolina play each other. They had the home court advantage and seemed very motivated - they played relentless defense," Christopher said. "This Gamecock team has been wonderful. We will miss our seniors, Liz Price, Nia Mackie and Milicia Perovic, next year, but we return an outstanding bunch. We talked before the match about our expectations as far as wins and losses go, and this is not the way we wanted to end."

Niece Curry was the leader on the court for the Gamecocks on Thursday night as she notched in

20 kills. Star player Cally Plummer injured herself in the first game, but still pulled out a strong showing with 19 kills. Yajaira Cadet had 10 kills, and Megan Hosp had three service aces. USC was outdug by the Lady Tar Heels 83-73.

In game one, UNC took a quick 7-3 lead. During the Tar Heels' run, Plummer injured her right ankle. Sam Alban stepped up for the Gamecocks, stopping the UNC run with a kill. Despite the Heels' 16-8 lead, USC managed to cut the lead to four at 20-16. However, they weren't able to pull in for the win as North Carolina took game one by the score of 30-25.

Game two showed a resurgence by Plummer as her team quickly picked up a 12-7 lead. Nadia Sefferovich was next on USC's injury list, as she suffered a leg injury when a North Carolina player collided into her leg. The Gamecocks persevered but almost lost their hold on the match when the Tar Heels tied it up at 30. However, a kill by Plummer ensured a 32-30 game two victory for the Gamecocks.

In game three, the Lady Gamecocks found themselves down 7-4 but pulled back to take the 13-12 lead. UNC responded with a 13-2 run, but the Lady Gamecocks pro-



Yajaira Cadet dives to keep the ball alive for Carolina this past week in a game versus North Carolina. PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN

duced a run of their own and were down only two at 25-23. USC would only get two more points in the game, however, as UNC took game three, 30-25. The Gamecocks hit a meager .082, while North Carolina hit .234.

Game four was pivotal for the

Lady Gamecocks as a loss would end the match and their season. UNC took an 11-9 lead before breaking loose to take a demanding 18-12 lead. South Carolina fought back to pull within four at 22-18. But UNC would not be denied. The Lady Tar Heels went on

a 7-1 run that would give the match, 30-21.

The Lady Gamecocks finish the season with a 20-6 record, while UNC goes into the second round with a 23-8 record.

Clemson does number on No. 25 Lady Gamecocks

BY COURTNEY KELLER
THE GAMECOCK

The 25th-ranked Lady Gamecocks ended their four-game winning streak after falling to the Clemson Tigers on Wednesday night, 71-63.

The Gamecocks haven't won a game against Clemson since the 1994-95 season and haven't won at Littlejohn Coliseum since the 1989-90 season. Wednesday's match between the rivals marked their 47th court meeting, with Clemson leading the overall series 29-18.

"We have to really credit the Clemson team. They did a great job in putting up a fight against

us," said USC head coach Susan Walvius.

Carolina came into the game after defeating then-No. 9 Duke in overtime in the Duke Women's Basketball Classic. The Lady Gamecocks were hoping to have another great start like they did during the 1998-99 season, when they went 5-0.

"The best way not to win is to focus too much on winning," Walvius told her team before the game. "Since this game is always a battle, our focus will be to do the little things well like we did against Duke."

"I didn't know what to expect," Walvius said afterwards. "Clemson is a very good team, and they always play tough at their place."

The Lady Gamecocks (4-1) and the Lady Tigers (3-1) both struggled during the game, combining for 26 turnovers and 2-11 three-point shooting. Clemson, however, managed to lead by as many as 10 points in the first half. Nevertheless, the Gamecocks would close the first half down only two, 28-26.

"We struggled offensively and when things didn't go well, we put our heads down," Walvius said. "This was one of our uglier offensive performances. We had no point-guard leadership, and we didn't deliver the ball where it needed to be on the court like we did versus Duke. We've got some nice talent, but we didn't play as a

team. We looked a little timid and we went in with an attitude to try not to make mistakes."

The Lady Gamecocks cut Clemson's lead to four with 34 seconds left in the second half, but the Lady Tigers made seven straight free throws to seal the win.

USC was led in points by guard Shaunzinski Gortman with 17, forward Jocelyn Penn with 11 and Ines Ajanovic with 10. Carolina only led twice in the game.

Clemson finished with four players in double figures. Julie Aderhold led the Tigers with 16 points, 14 coming in the second half to help the Tigers build a 13-point lead.

"We had some good individual

performances, but this isn't about individual play. If we want to win against good teams, we can't do this," Walvius said. "I know we wanted to win this badly and it was important for us to hold onto the top 25 ranking, but this game boils down to us trying not to lose. When you get out here and try not to lose, you're gonna lose. So we have to count on the little things to make a difference."

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