

**WOMEN'S BASKETBALL** vs. Duke in Raleigh N.C.,  
NCAA East Regional finals, 7 p.m. Monday  
**MEN'S BASKETBALL** vs. Syracuse in New York City,  
NIT semifinals, 9:30 p.m. Tuesday  
**SOFTBALL** vs. East Tennessee State, 3 p.m. Wednesday  
**BASEBALL** vs. The Citadel, 7 p.m. Wednesday

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## SPORTS

# Carolina fends off Drake

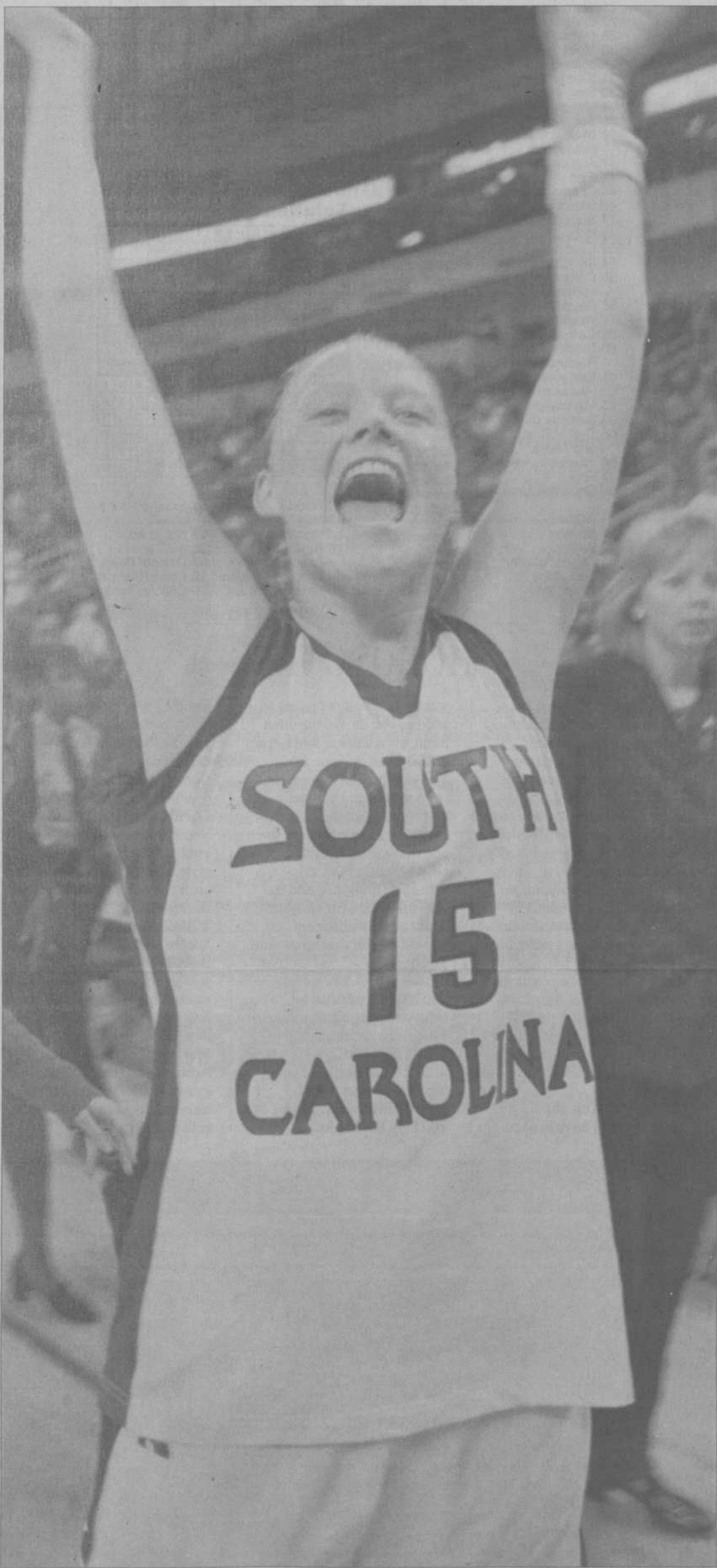


PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN/THE GAMECOCK

Christina Ciocan celebrated her birthday Saturday with a win over Drake. With the win, the Lady Gamecocks are one step closer to the Final Four in San Antonio.

## BASEBALL

## Gamecocks beat Gators

*USC rebounds from 14-5 defeat to clinch series on Sunday*

BY J. KEITH ALLEN  
THE GAMECOCK

The No. 4 USC baseball team played host this weekend to its first SEC series of the year with a three-game series against No. 6 Florida. The Gamecocks took two out of three games from the Gators to increase their record to 21-4, 4-2 in the SEC.

### Friday: USC 2, Florida 1

Carolina starter Gary Bell and Florida pitcher Jimmy Ramshaw locked up in a pitcher's duel in the series opener Friday night at

Sarge Frye Field.

Bell worked 8 1/3 innings and yielded one run on six hits. He also struck out eight and walked two Gators to increase his record to 5-1 on the year. Following a one-out walk to Florida's Aaron Sobieraj, Bell gave way to Blake Taylor, who shut the door on Florida to earn his fifth save.

USC got on the board early by scoring one run in the first inning on Yaron Peters' RBI single, his 37th RBI in 23 games. Catcher Landon Powell's two-out RBI single in the fourth inning scored Peters and finished the scoring for the Gamecocks.

Powell contributed from behind the plate as well. The catcher threw out Gators baserunner Matt Goss when he tried to steal third in the fifth inning. The play turned out to be huge, as Florida batter Ben Harris on connected on a home run on the next play.

Carolina continued its stellar defensive play, turning in its sixth consecutive errorless game, and 14th overall without a miscue.

Ramshaw took the hard luck loss, giving up two runs on six hits in the complete-game effort.

### Saturday: Florida 14, USC 5

An eight-run ninth inning for Florida spoiled the afternoon for 4,123 fans in attendance for the second game of the series. Gators first baseman Ryan Shealy had three hits, including a home run in the ninth inning outburst, to seal the victory.

David Marchbanks (5-2) took the loss. He pitched five innings and yielded five runs on six hits. Alex Hart was the winning pitcher

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	Drake	65
	USC	79

## Lady Gamecocks one win away from Final Four

BY BRAD SENKI  
THE GAMECOCK

The USC women's basketball team went Saturday afternoon where no USC women's team has gone before: the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament.

The third-seeded Lady Gamecocks (25-6) built an early lead and fought off Drake (25-8) for a 79-65 victory in the East Regional semifinal in Raleigh, N.C. USC grabbed a 16-point halftime lead and never looked back.

The Lady Gamecocks used a strong defensive effort and tough rebounding to advance to the regional final Monday night against top-seeded Duke Blue Devils.

Shaunzinski Gortman and Jocelyn Penn led the way for USC with 19 points each. Penn also grabbed eight rebounds and shot 8-for-10 from the field. Cristina Ciocan chipped in 10 points and dished out eight assists, while Kelly Morrone had 11 points.

Carla Bennett, Drake's leading scorer, scored 20 points, but it was not enough for the seventh seed to upset Carolina.

USC used its size and quickness to force 21 turnovers and convert them into 13 points.

"South Carolina is a great basketball team," Drake head coach Lisa Stone said. "They're very physical, big and very, very quick. The turnovers they caused were a big part of the game, and their defense was all over us."

The Gamecocks shot 47 percent from the field and 46.7 percent from behind the arc. Drake shot 48 percent from the field but was out-rebounded 39-27.

After grabbing the quick first-half lead, USC continued to play tough defense and take the ball to the basket. Drake cut the lead to 10 three times, but the Lady Gamecocks answered.

"Good teams will make runs, and whenever they made a run, we just had to answer," Gortman



Drake fans drove 1,600 miles during their spring break to watch their women's basketball team lose to the Lady Gamecocks on Saturday. Drake put up a tough fight and stayed within 15 points for most of the game.

PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN/THE GAMECOCK

said. "I think that frustrates a team when they're trying to get back into a ballgame and you just keep scoring on them."

With 4:51 to play in the game, Drake came within eight points only to see Gortman take over. She nailed a 3-point shot for a 72-61 lead. A Drake offensive foul with 3:09 remaining led to another Gortman layup, which sealed the victory for USC.

USC head coach Susan Walvius offered her thoughts on the strong Gamecock performance after the game.

"We shot the ball 16 more times than they did, and that was because of our defense and rebounding," Walvius said. "If we would have gotten into a shooting match with Drake, I'm not sure we're going to win. We need those 16 more opportunities a game."

"I've said over and over that defense and rebounding win games at this level. We just have to continue to do that and stay focused on playing our best basketball to be successful."

After celebrating their greatest NCAA Tournament run in school

history, the Lady Gamecocks must now prepare for Duke. The two met early in the season at Duke, where USC won 87-82 in overtime despite turning over the ball 32 times.

The Blue Devils enter the Raleigh Entertainment and Sports Arena looking to avenge that loss, which was their first non-conference defeat at Cameron Indoor Stadium since 1999.

Tip-off is scheduled for 7:07 p.m., and it will be televised on ESPN2.



### Duke vs. USC

7 p.m. Monday  
Raleigh Entertainment and Sports Arena  
TV: ESPN2  
Radio: WVOC 560 AM

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## USC and Syracuse to play NIT nightcap



### Syracuse vs USC

9:30 p.m. Tuesday  
at Madison Square Garden  
TV: ESPN  
Radio: WVOC 560 AM

BY CHRIS FOY  
THE GAMECOCK

The USC men's basketball team will have the opportunity tomorrow night to do what no other basketball team in school history has done: play in the semifinals of a national tournament.

The Gamecocks (21-14) advanced to the semifinals of the National Invitation Tournament after thrashing Ball State 82-47 Thursday night for their first quarterfinal win ever.

USC will square off against Syracuse in the second game of the semifinals tomorrow in New York City's Madison Square Garden. The Gamecocks are 0-3 all time against the Orangemen, with the most recent loss a 77-74 overtime defeat in the 1999-2000 season.

In their last game against Richmond, the Orangemen (23-11) had two players with double-doubles. Freshman Hakim Warrick tallied 15 points and 14 rebounds while senior Preston Shumpert scored 13 and had 11 rebounds.

♦ MEN IN NIT, SEE PAGE 9



PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN/THE GAMECOCK

USC will play Tuesday night in New York City.