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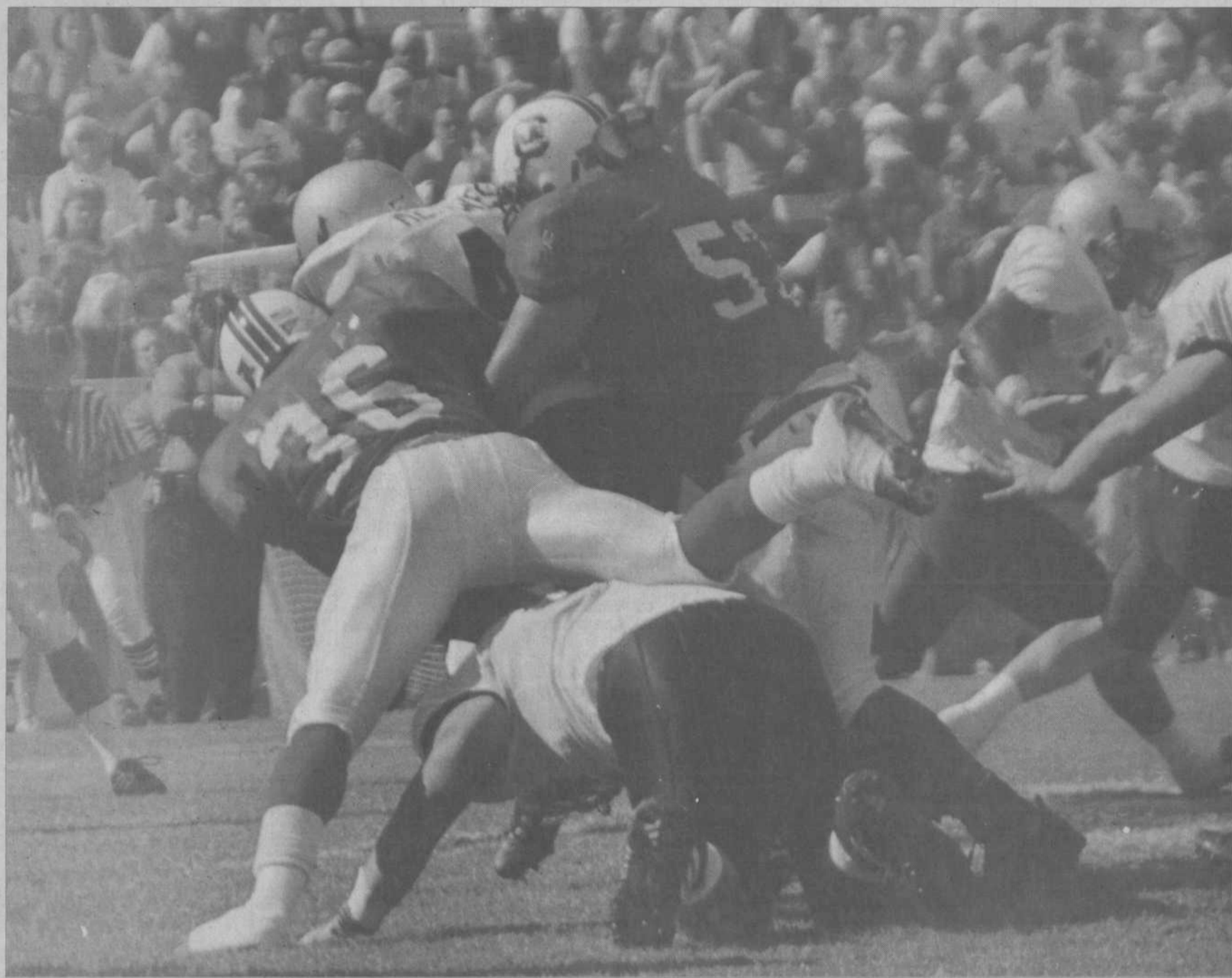
Story ideas? Questions? Comments?
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SPORTS

WOMEN'S SOCCER vs. Birmingham Southern, 4:30 p.m. Friday
MEN'S SOCCER vs. Charleston Southern, 7 p.m. Friday
CROSS COUNTRY at Charleston Southern, Friday
VOLLEYBALL at Michigan State Classic, Friday-Saturday
FOOTBALL vs. New Mexico State, 7 p.m. Saturday

FOOTBALL 2002



Jermaine Lemon (No. 36) and Langston Moore (No. 57) are two of the four returning starters on the USC defense this season. The Gamecocks have always been renowned for their strength on defense, but with some key losses, it remains to be seen if they can maintain their lofty reputation.

PHOTO BY AARON HARK/THE GAMECOCK

Reloaded and raring to go

USC's defense ready to tackle its critics in 2002

BY MATT ROTHENBERG
THE GAMECOCK

If there was any sense of doubt surrounding USC's defense after losing seven starters from last year's squad, you couldn't tell after talking to defensive coordinator Charlie Strong.

"You felt at ease last year because of all the seniors we had; we lost some really good players on defense," Strong said. "But I like what we have coming back, and I like the new players we

brought in. I'm excited about seeing them play. This group knows we've been pretty good on defense the past couple of years, and they don't want to be the ones to live that reputation down."

Even some of the returning players, including cornerback Dunta Robinson, are hesitant to use the term "rebuilding," which has been thrown around to describe this year's defense.

"I don't like to use that term because I think guys are going to step in and do just as good a job," Robinson said. "I just want to call it 'losing players and then replacing them.' That's what I like to call it."

The buzz around Gamecock camp also centers on the new-

comers, including some who might play a big role in Carolina's potential success this season.

Among those are top prospects Ricardo Hurley, Moe Thompson, Randy Jackson and Darel Slay. Strong indicated that having this youth would go a long way towards developing sufficient depth, which at times last year was sorely needed.

"I think just about every young player we signed on defense is going to help us," Strong said. "We're starting to develop two units on defense. We weren't able to do that last year. We've got some people who can run, and we will need to put together two units that can make plays on the field."

Senior defensive end Dennis Quinn is also excited about what he has seen out of the freshmen and transfers.

"From what I saw, those boys have a whole lot of potential," Quinn said. "They got the fundamentals down; they run real well. I hate it for those upcoming (opponents) in the future because (USC's younger players) are only going to go up from here."

As a veteran, Quinn knows his role as a mentor and leader will be essential not only to the defense, but also to the team overall.

"I try to be a leader on the field, but by actions," Quinn said. "I try not to be a vocal leader because a lot of people talk

Countdown to Kickoff 2002

Look for a preview of the football season opener, as well as a look at USC's special teams, in Friday's issue of The Gamecock. Past stories about the football team can be read at www.dailygamecock.com.

but don't walk the walk. I think it's important for the younger players to see somebody out there doing the hard things and watching them play and following us."

One major bone of contention

♦ DEFENSE, SEE PAGE 11

Little League on TV? I'll pass



KYLE ALMOND

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Many sports fans were glued to their television sets Sunday as the Little League World Series drew to a close. Many were captivated by Aaron Alvey and the rest of the young players from Louisville, Ky., that won the championship over Sendai, Japan, 1-0.

I was not one of them.

Little League on TV? Are you kidding me? If I wanted to watch little kids play baseball, I could do that right here in Columbia.

There are plenty of other things ESPN and ABC could have broadcast instead, and they could have saved money in the process. Old NFL films. The Fitness America Pageant. Reruns of the World Series of Poker. Even (gasp!) Major League Soccer.

The networks' best bet probably would have been the World's Strongest Man contests. You know what I'm talking about; they're always on at 3 a.m., and they feature dudes with 40-inch necks named Magnus von Magnusson.

It really doesn't matter what the networks choose to show. Just anything but little kids playing baseball.

The reason I watch sports is because I want to see people do things that I can't do myself. I can't throw a telephone pole 60 feet like Magnus, but I could strike out little Bobby Braces with my eyes closed. When I watch sports, I want to see tremendous athletes who have trained hard at their profession, not a youngster who's a year removed from playing Pokemon with his little sister.

I think I'm just angry at the whole concept of Little League on TV because I think it's inherently wrong in the first place. I feel sorry for the kids, who have to be feeling an enormous amount of pressure with all the money and attention that's invested into the event.

These poor kids are only 12 years old, and they're already being asked to carry a burden that some professional athletes (see: Ryan Leaf) can't handle. These youngsters have it hard enough already dealing with the onset of adolescence and all the crap that comes with it: zits, their first kiss, algebra class. Why should they have to feel the pressure of performing well in front of a national audience?

I just don't get why watching kids play baseball is so appealing to some people. I've heard the argument that it's better than watching professional baseball, which is tainted by corrupt, money-grubbing players and owners. But Little League has proved that it's no different from its pro counterpart. Danny Almonte was the Little League World Series' darling last season, and then it was discovered that he was really 14 years old — two years over the required age limit.

Corruption is present wherever there's money involved, and Little League, sadly, is no exception. You don't need a Tom Emanski video to realize that.

The Little League World Series has been on TV for as long as I can remember, but that tradition needs to be kicked to the curb. Let the players enjoy their childhood first. The spotlight, and all the stress that's associated with it, can come later.

WEEKLY AWARDS

Pimp Daddy of the Week:
Seneca Wallace

Yeah, so the Iowa State quarterback came up 1 yard short against

♦ ALMOND, SEE PAGE 11

Club Corner

Mountaineering and Whitewater Club

The Mountaineering and Whitewater Club meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m. in Gambrell Hall Room 151. This semester is planned to be filled with trips for rock climbing, whitewater rafting, backpacking, caving, kayaking, canoeing, mountaineering and lots more.

No experience is necessary, gear is provided, and transportation across the tri-state area is paid for. Dues are only \$25 for the fall semester.

Roller Hockey

The Roller Hockey Club will hold its first meeting of the semester on Sept. 5 at 7 p.m. in Russell House room 304. Anyone interested in playing roller hockey at Carolina this year needs should attend.

Roller hockey is a coed sport, and all students and faculty, regardless of gender, are invited to come out.

The club competes in the Atlantic Collegiate Roller Hockey Association against teams from North and South Carolina. In its inaugural season last year, Carolina skated

♦ CLUB CORNER, SEE PAGE 11

Volleyball set for new season

BY ROBIN NURRE
THE GAMECOCK

A new year, some new faces, but the same high expectations.

With six seniors leading the way, the Carolina volleyball team heads to Lansing, Mich., this weekend to take on several of the nation's top teams in the Coca-Cola/Michigan State Classic.

USC brings in a tough team that just missed being ranked in the USA Today/AVCA preseason poll. The Gamecocks received 161 voting points, 30 less than No. 25 Notre Dame.

"This year's team brings a wealth of experience both on the court and in life," head coach Kim Christopher said.

Leading the way for the Gamecocks are seniors Cally Plummer and Megan Hosp, both of who were All-SEC and all-region selections last season. Also joining Hosp and Plummer on the All-SEC team were fellow seniors Berna Dwyer and Sam Alban.

Carolina is hoping to build its success around a strong offense with seasoned veterans at all positions, and it wants to develop a tough defensive squad as well.

"Offensively, we should be strong," Christopher said.

USC Volleyball Vital Statistics

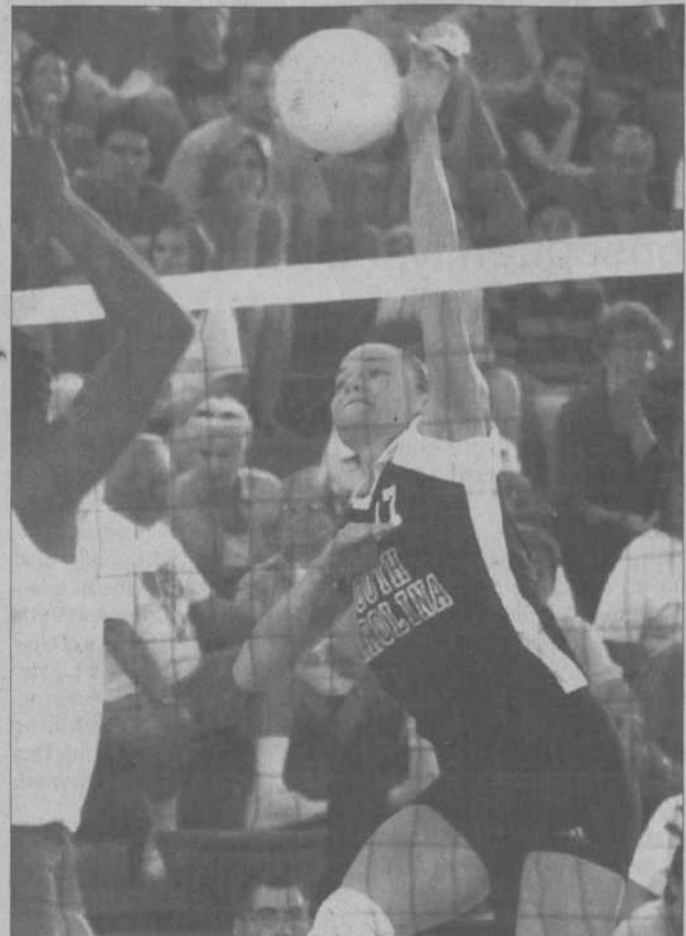
HEAD COACH:
Kim Christopher
STARTERS RETURNING: 5
PRESEASON RANKING:
Not ranked in USA Today/AVCA poll
FINAL RANKING IN 2001:
Not ranked
RECORD IN 2001:
20-6 (10-4 SEC)
STADIUM:
Volleyball Competition Facility
KEY PLAYERS:
OH Cally Plummer, S Megan Hosp, MB Berna Dwyer, MB Sam Alban

"Defensively, we continue to work on our blocking, and we have gained a better understanding during spring training. We have committed a considerable amount of time and effort to becoming a better blocking team."

USC has a lot of depth at outside hitter, and Plummer is the most decorated of the bunch.

Plummer, a three-time All-SEC and two-time all-region selection, led the team in four categories last

♦ VOLLEYBALL, SEE PAGE 11



SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Senior Cally Plummer has been named to the All-SEC team every year she's been with the Gamecocks.