



WOMEN'S GOLF at Lady Tar Heels Invitational in Chapel Hill, N.C., Friday-Sunday
 WOMEN'S TENNIS in Lady Gamecock Classic, Friday-Sunday
 WOMEN'S SOCCER at Kentucky, 7:30 p.m. Friday
 VOLLEYBALL at Arkansas, 8 p.m. Friday
 FOOTBALL vs. Mississippi State, 1 p.m. Saturday

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USC hurting after win

Gamecocks suffer key losses at Vandy to offensive line, defense

BY JASON NOLL
 THE GAMECOCK

Injuries have become an alarming problem for the Gamecock football team, as head coach Lou Holtz discussed Monday.

"These injuries are devastating because they only add to the problems we have in the offensive line," he said.

Against Vanderbilt, the Gamecocks lost center C.J. Frye to a knee sprain, offensive guards Shane Hall and Cedric Williams to neck strains, and the team's leading tackler, linebacker Lance Laury, to a knee sprain.

Frye and Laury underwent surgery Monday and will not play against Mississippi State on Saturday. Hall and Williams are listed as "questionable" for Saturday's game, but Holtz said he "doesn't expect them to play," leaving the Gamecocks with a considerable void to fill in the offensive line.

"Losing your two guards and your center makes it real critical there now, but you move on," he said.

Although Holtz said Monday he doesn't know exactly how he'll salvage his offensive line, he discussed several options. He expressed confidence in freshman offensive lineman Na'Shan Goddard to help to fill in for Frye at center but is still open to several choices at guard. Holtz says he could use freshman Jabari Levey, who was going to be redshirted. He may also transfer defensive linemen Eric Stroman and Chris Tucker to the offensive line, which concerns Holtz because of the possibility of confusion at a new position.

To fill in for Laury, Holtz will use either Darel Slay or Ricardo Hurley. It is also possible that Holtz may move defensive end George Gause back to linebacker, where he has played occasionally this season.

"You just don't lose your leading tackler and one of the leaders in the conference and

say 'We'll move this guy there, et cetera.'" Holtz said. "It's like starting over."

Gamecocks progressing

Overall, Holtz was pleased with his team's performance against Vanderbilt, except for the team's offense inside the 20-yard line. The Gamecocks were in the red zone three times, but came away with a total of only three points.

Holtz was encouraged by his defense's progress, but feels there are still some areas where the defense needs to work.

"I think against the run we've gotten pretty good," Holtz said. "But we still can't get pressure on the passer, leading to problems in the secondary."

Holtz was also impressed by his team's improvement running the ball.

"We have moved the ball better this year than we have any year since I've been here," he said.

Holtz said he is encouraged by the performances of running back Andrew Pinnock, wide receivers Michael Ages and Troy Williamson, linebacker Jermaine Lemon and defensive end Dennis Quinn.

He is especially impressed with the development of quarterback Corey Jenkins.

"He's a quarterback getting a better feel and a better understanding for the offense each and every week," Holtz said. "He's become the leader of this offense... no doubt about it."

Holtz is excited about Gause and defensive lineman Moe Thompson, who he says "could be two outstanding defensive ends in the future."

This weekend's outlook

Looking at the rest of the season, Holtz feels his team is in for a big challenge, starting Saturday against Mississippi State at Williams-Brice Stadium.

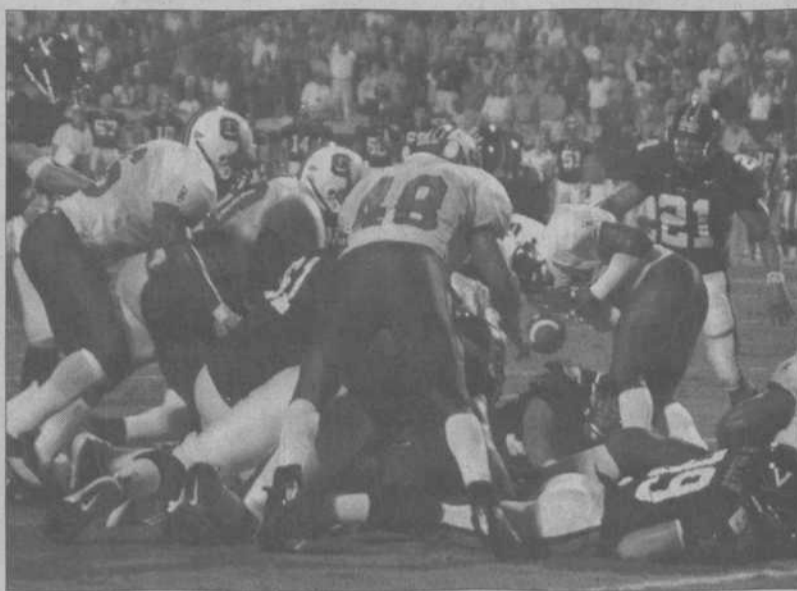
Holtz says his team needs to work on red zone offense and eliminating turnovers in order to be successful. The Gamecocks' final seven opponents include powerhouses Tennessee and Florida, and the rival Clemson Tigers.

"We're going into the seven toughest games in a row that I have ever encountered as a football coach," he said. "The only one we're looking at is Mississippi State."

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Laury



Above: Linebacker Lance Laury (No. 48) will be out 3-5 weeks after suffering torn knee cartilage Saturday against Vanderbilt. He is USC's leading tackler this season.

Left: Fullback Andrew Pinnock was one of several Gamecocks who showed improvement against Vanderbilt. He rushed for 69 yards on 17 carries.

PHOTOS BY CANDI HAUGLUM/THE GAMECOCK

I'm at a loss when it comes to Moss



KYLE ALMOND
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Vikings' wide receiver running out of chances after latest outburst.

After being charged with careless driving and disobeying a Minneapolis traffic officer this past week, Randy Moss cried to ESPN's Andrea Kremer and claimed he's been treated unfairly by the media, the police and pretty much anybody who's been down on him.

"It's how I'm labeled," the Minnesota Vikings wide receiver said. "I'm labeled as a bad guy. And I've tried to make changes for the best. I've tried to do a 360."

Moss meant to say 180, but his slipup made perfect sense. When it's come to turning his life around, all Moss has done is turn around in circles.

His traffic transgression is just the latest in a string of problems dating to high school.

In 1995, Moss had a scholarship revoked by Notre Dame after he was charged with beating up a high school classmate in West Virginia. He pleaded guilty and spent 30 days in jail.

He got a second chance at Florida State, but he was caught smoking marijuana and got kicked off the team.

Moss seemed to have his life in order after a successful stint at his third school, Marshall. But when he got to the NFL, he found trouble again. He was fined \$25,000 for squirting a referee with a water bottle and \$15,000 for verbally abusing corporate sponsors on the team bus. Last season, he infuriated fans around the league for making the statement "I play when I want to play."

Moss is right: He is labeled as a bad guy. But his actions haven't led anyone to believe otherwise.

The whole incident with the traffic officer might have been extremely minor, maybe a big misunderstanding. There really wasn't any real harm done. But after five previous incidents, you'd think that Moss would want to be a little more careful.

I couldn't help but think of Derek Watson when I watched Moss face the music.

The former USC tailback, dismissed from the Gamecocks last spring, also blew another chance this past week when he was charged with reckless driving and driving with a suspended license.

Watson, who is now with South Carolina State, was suspended indefinitely by the Bulldogs, and his future is up in the air.

What's up with these athletes that are immensely talented on the field but frustratingly inept off of it? How can they continue to waste away their chances?

Don't get me wrong; I think everyone in life is entitled to a second chance, and probably even a third. Hey, we're human, and we all make mistakes. But when you're blowing your fourth or fifth chance, there's a serious problem there.

Are these athletes spoiled? Moss sure sounded like it when he told Kremer, "I've been playing the sport all my life, and what do I get in return?"

Well, Randy, you shouldn't be looking for anything in return. You've already received more than you probably deserve. In fact, you should be thanking your lucky stars and feel blessed that you even received the opportunities to be where you are now — making millions of dollars to play a sport you love.

What would happen to Moss and Watson if they couldn't play football? Do you think they'd receive the same treatment that you or I would receive?

♦ ALMOND, SEE PAGE 11



FILE PHOTO / THE GAMECOCK

The USC softball team is in the middle of fall practices as it prepares for the 2003 season. Carolina looks to repeat the success of recent years.

Softball getting ready for spring

BY MATT ROTHENBERG
 THE GAMECOCK

With the beginning of the season only four months away, the Carolina softball team is hard at work preparing for the 2003 campaign.

Despite the loss of pitcher Megan Matthews and outfielder Adrianna Baggetta, head coach Joyce Compton has positive feelings of her returnees during the team's fall practices.

The aim for fall practice is "just trying to figure out who's going where and who's doing what," Compton said. "It's just to get pitchers some time against live batters. The fall is trying to get your feet on the ground and work on the fundamentals, which we're doing quite a bit."

"It's difficult scrimmaging, but you try to put them into scrimmage situations as best as you can and get a feel for where we are from last year."

The team is largely the same as last season but with two new faces on the roster. Melanie Henkes, an Aiken native, arrives to bolster the pitching staff, and Ashley Smith, from Portage, Mich., will see playing time as catcher.

Acclimating the newcomers to collegiate-level softball is another major goal of fall practice, Compton said.

It's important "getting them up to speed on the game itself, which is pretty different from high school and summer ball," she said. "I think they're both making the adjustment. ... They're freshmen coming along, and they'll definitely see more playing time come spring. I think they'll both be excellent additions for us."

While starting positions are a long way from being finalized, the coaching staff continues to look at different possibilities in the lineup. Senior Danielle

Quinones is seeing some time at third base, while teammate Kim Evans has been receiving action in left field — the position vacated by Baggetta.

There are also plans to fill the pitching vacancy left by Matthews, with sophomore Aleca Johnson playing a key role.

"We hadn't planned to use her that much pitching-wise, but things just kind of evolved," Compton said of Aleca Johnson's situation last year, where Johnson became a relief pitcher after being an outfielder. "We're planning on using three players in the rotation, and I see Aleca being one of the three starters" along with Henkes and Stacey Johnson.

"I really liked having a relief person (last year). We never really had a relief person like that, and that really worked out well. Our first priority is to put starting pitchers out there, but who

♦ SOFTBALL, SEE PAGE 11

Bowden Bowl IV set for Thursday night

CLEMSON (AP) — Tommy Bowden still wants to beat his father.

But the festive family atmosphere that surrounded the first three Bowden Bowls will likely be gone when Bobby Bowden's Florida State team hosts Tommy's Clemson Tigers on Thursday night.

"I just don't feel the love this year," Clemson's Bowden said.

Bowden hasn't talked to his father this week. Although the team arrives a day early for the nationally televised game, Bowden doesn't expect to see his father until the pre-game meeting. He might talk to his mom, Ann, after the game. Maybe.

"It's like I was telling the team, I wish it wasn't a father-son thing," Bowden said Tuesday.

That's been hard for anyone to escape since big time college football's first father-son series began at Clemson in 1999.

Back then, Tommy and Bobby acted at times like they were on a family vacation. The two rode to nearby Travelers Rest — a caravan of TV trucks following behind — to watch Tommy's son Ryan play a high school football game.

The next season with Bobby as host, the family went out to dinner the night before Florida State's 54-7 victory.

No such family bonding is apparent this weekend.

Maybe it's because of Florida State's 26-20 overtime loss to Louisville last Thursday night that dropped Bobby's team from fourth to 11th in the rankings.

Or maybe it's Clemson's defense, ranked No. 1 in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

But mostly, says the son, it's because the Tigers (3-1, 10 ACC) have yet to prove they can come close to the Seminoles (4-1, 3-0) on the field. "The big interest nationally is

Florida State and how they're going to respond after losing to an unranked team," Tommy Bowden said. "I think that's why most of the nation is going to tune in Thursday night, not to see us."

Anyone who does could see a different group of Tigers than during Bowden's first three seasons. While they're tops in defense, their typically potent offense is averaging 338 yards a game, 120 fewer than Florida State's.

"I told you I was going to do something different on offense," Bowden joked.

Tommy has tried to keep the family emotions out of the locker room this week. It hasn't always worked.

"Coach Bowden's really, really, really excited about this game," Clemson linebacker John Leake said. "We feel and he feels this is our best chance" to beat the Seminoles.

Clemson wins have been few and far between in the series. The Tigers have lost 10 straight to the Seminoles. Things are even bleaker at Doak Campbell Stadium where Florida State has won its past five games with Clemson by an average score of 46-2.

Things got out of hand in a hurry two years back. Heisman Trophy winner Chris Weinke helped the Seminoles roll up 771 yards on a Clemson team ranked, at the time, among the nation's best defenses.

Cornerback Brian Mance cringes up his face and shakes his head at the memory. "It gets mentioned in practice every time somebody doesn't bat down a pass or misses an assignment," Mance said. "We say, 'We don't want to go down there and get embarrassed like before.'"

Neither does Tommy.