

## Almond

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body actually cool to interview?  
**2.** Why in the world would someone leave SportsCenter to talk to Malcolm?  
**3.** Do you really wake up in the morning excited to talk to Malcolm?  
**4.** If so, do you have genitalia?  
 And finally ... for your permanent job as host,  
**5.** Can you name one player on the USC football team?  
 Ehhh ... time's up, Craig. I heard Conan needs a new sidekick.

## Weekly Awards

**Pimp Daddy of the Week:**  
 Byron Leftwich

The Marshall quarterback didn't win his team the game Saturday, but he earned points for playing hurt. After suffering a lower leg injury in the first quarter, Leftwich came out in the third quarter and still threw for 300 yards.

He could barely walk or turn to hand the ball off to a running back. But with the help of his teammates, who carried him down the field after big gains, he was able to make Akron work for their upset win.

**Toolbox of the Week:**  
 Paul Tagliabue

The NFL commissioner lays down \$125,000 in player fines for helmet-to-helmet hits.

No truth yet to the rumor that the NFL will change to two-hand touch next season.

## Quote of the Week:

"We played the guys who we felt could help us win." — Golden State Warriors head coach Eric Musselman, who played rookie Mike Dunleavy a measly 18.9 seconds in the team's win over the Spurs last week.

Dunleavy has to feel terrible, if for nothing more than the fact that Adonal Foyle played 34 minutes more than he did.

*Almond is a fourth-year print journalism student. His column appears every Wednesday in Gamecock Sports.*

## Soccer

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preparation for the season, Carter remembers lifting weights on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, then having to practice on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. In the spring, the team completed monthly fitness tests.

It paid off. Carter, an All-SEC performer, leads the Gamecocks in points scored, with 18. She comes through with critical goals, knows when to step it up on the outside, and has the mentality to take on players and create scoring opportunities. She is also quite inquisitive.

"You can always guarantee that she is going to ask a question," Smith said. "The team jokes with her about it, but she just wants to make sure she knows her role on the field so she can play to the best of her ability. And she is disappointed with herself if she doesn't do that."

McIntyre is another senior who demands a lot of herself.

Sidelined with an ankle injury for much of last season, McIntyre worked even harder in the off-season to prepare for her senior year.

Leading all players with eight

goals, she can also create scoring chances for other teammates.

"She has learned how to become a more dangerous player," Smith said. "She's learned to make runs to create things for herself."

"She is also someone that hadn't learned how to play the offense and defensive part of the game. She had that forward mentality that 'I've got to score goals and that is all I have to do.' Morgan has learned to do both sides of the game very well and has been a big part of our success."

Besides helping mold the team, the seniors have inspired their coach.

"They've taught me how crucial it is to be accepting of others," Smith said. "Since the day we got here they were very eager to learn. They were always very accepting of our new ideas. With their respect, we were able to get an amazing amount accomplished in a short time."

Now the SEC Tournament is their prize.

"It's going to be tough, but we are confident," Julin said. "I think we have done so much work that now we are just enjoying it."

"We just don't want it to end."

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

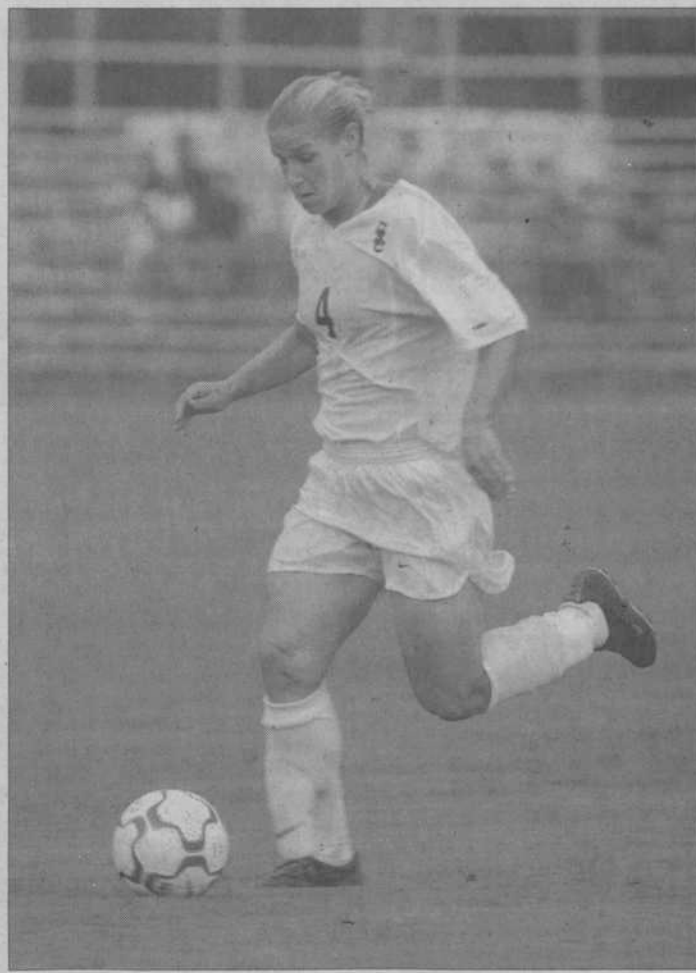


PHOTO BY KIM TRUETT/UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

USC senior midfielder Melinda Carter leads the Gamecocks in points and questions asked. She'll lead the team into the SEC Tournament on Thursday to take on Florida in the first round. USC is the fifth seed, and the Gators are the fourth.

## SEC TOURNEY TEAM CAPSULES

### No. 1 Auburn

(14-3-2, 6-1-2 SEC)  
**Key player:** GK Megan Rivera  
**The scoop:** The Auburn Tigers won their first-ever SEC regular season championship in 2002. This year, they have broken team records for most wins in a season, most SEC wins and most shutouts.

### No. 2 Tennessee

(13-5-1, 6-2-1)  
**Key player:** F Kim Patrick  
**The scoop:** The Lady Volunteers won the SEC East and are riding a four-match unbeaten streak.

### No. 3 Ole Miss

(13-3-2, 5-3-1)  
**Key player:** MF Kelly Renie  
**The scoop:** This year's tournament hosts are making their sixth straight SEC Tournament appearance.

### No. 4 Florida

(13-9-2, 5-3-1)  
**Key player:** GK Jordan Kellgren  
**The scoop:** The defending SEC champion has struggled at times this year and lost 1-0 to USC in September.

### No. 5 USC

(13-5-2, 4-3-2)  
**Key player:** GK Elise Matthews  
**The scoop:** Carolina is back in the tournament for the first time since 1999.

### No. 6 Kentucky

(10-7, 4-4)  
**Key player:** F Elizabeth Ramsey  
**The scoop:** Ramsey, with 18 points this season, is a force for UK.

### No. 7 Georgia

(8-10-1, 4-5)  
**Key player:** MF Tricia McKee  
**The scoop:** Georgia will play the Lady Vols in a rematch of both teams' season finale, when Tennessee won 2-1 in overtime.

### No. 8 LSU

(11-4-3, 2-3-3)  
**Key player:** F Mandy Heintz  
**The scoop:** LSU forced a 1-1 tie with Arkansas in the teams' season finale to earn the right to play in the SEC tournament. Heintz was fourth in Division I and led the SEC with 48 points.

## Interested in taking The Gamecock's Sports Challenge?

If you can beat the editors, you'll win a free Gamecock T-shirt. Send your picks to gamecocksports@hotmail.com by 2 p.m. Thursday. We'll select ONE person's picks, at random, to be our reader of the week.

♦ FOR TIEBREAKING PURPOSES, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR SCORE FOR THE ARKANSAS-USC GAME. AND DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME!

### This week's games:

Arkansas at USC  
 Clemson at North Carolina  
 2 Miami at Tennessee  
 16 LSU at Kentucky  
 Ole Miss at 7 Georgia  
 21 Iowa St. at 12 Kansas St.  
 14 N.C. State at Maryland  
 15 Oregon at 5 Washington St.  
 Louisiana Tech at San Jose St.  
 20 Bowling Green at No. Illinois

Rankings are from the Associated Press

## Girls & Sports

BY JUSTIN BORUS AND ANDREW FEINSTEIN



Girls & Sports runs every Wednesday in Gamecock Sports.

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