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Basketball teams start SEC play

Men's basketball team wins SEC opener against Ole Miss, but road woes continueBY BRAD SENKIW
THE GAMECOCK

The South Carolina men's basketball team struggled once again on the road at Kentucky's Rupp Arena on Saturday night. USC remains winless on the road this season after a late-game rally came up short and the Gamecocks fell 62-55. Carolina was led by Kerbrell Brown's 19 points, 17 of them during the second half. Carlos Powell and Chuck Eidson chipped in 17 and 11, respectively.

Kentucky shook off a slow start and shot 48 percent from the field. USC once again struggled offensively, shooting only 38 percent and going to the free-throw line four times.

USC had no interior defense, as Erik Daniels led Kentucky with 19 points on a 9-for-12 shooting performance. Marquis Estill added 12 points and five rebounds for the Wildcats.

"Daniels was the difference in the game," USC head coach Dave Odom said. "He was much more effective in and around the basket. He finished 9-for-12 (from the field). That's pretty efficient, I'd say."

USC trailed by 13 at halftime and by as much as 21 during the second half. Carolina rallied late in the game, but couldn't rid itself of cold shooting. The Gamecocks were 6-for-28 from the three-point line.

"We were too passive on offense," Powell said. "We were setting for passing the ball around the perimeter instead of penetrating their defense."

South Carolina looks to get back on track Wednesday at the Carolina Center against the Auburn Tigers. Tip-off is at 7:30 p.m.

Jan. 8 vs. Ole Miss

South Carolina came out cold against Ole Miss in the beginning of the first half, when it scored four points during the first 17 minutes. The Gamecocks fought back during the second half, when Powell scored 13 of his 15 points to lead the Gamecocks to a 55-49 win.

It was the first SEC game of the year for Carolina, and the team has remained unbeaten at home.

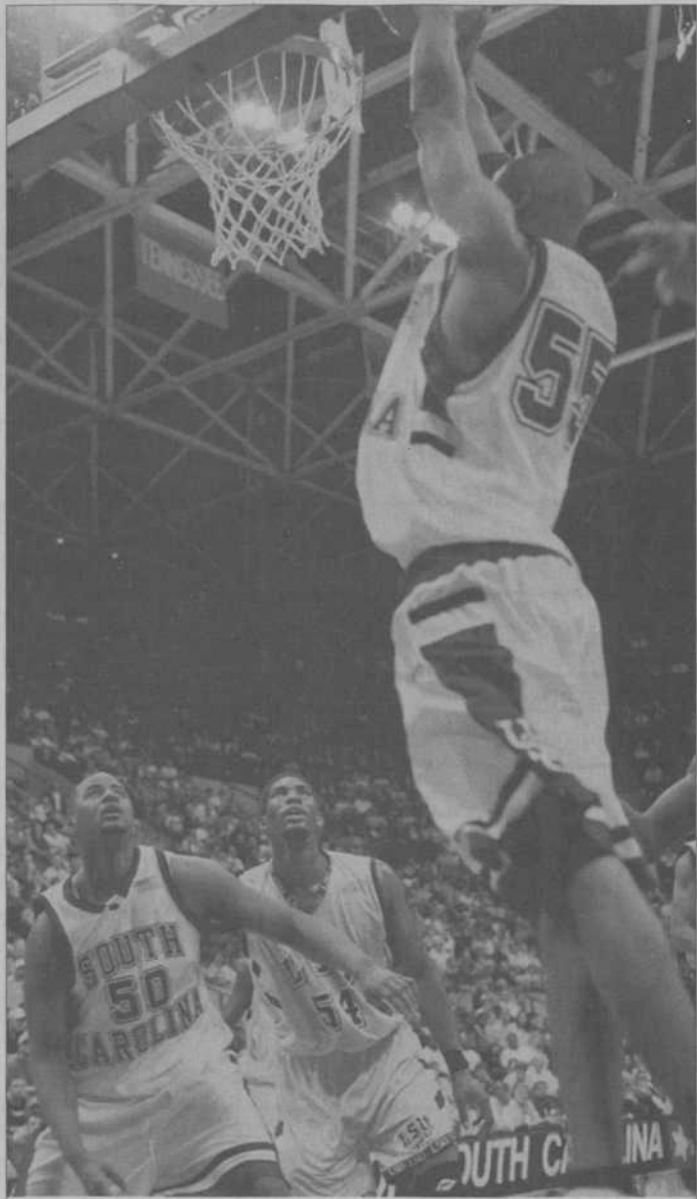
USC used a strong defense and 11 points from Tony Kitchings in his first game back after he suffered a hand injury early in the season.

Jan. 2 vs. The Citadel

The Gamecocks took care of The Citadel, winning 66-50, with Powell leading the way with 20



Powell



FILE PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN/THE GAMECOCK

USC center Tony Kitchings, left, pictured during a game last year, returned from a hand injury and forward Rolando Howell, right, suffered blunt head trauma against Ole Miss.

points. Michael Boynton added a career-high 14 points, as Carolina cruised late after a shaky start. USC's defense held the Bulldogs to only seven field goals during the second half.

Dec. 22 vs. Colo. State

South Carolina blew an early lead on the road in Fort Collins, Colo., where it lost to the Rams 81-67. Rolando Howell led the Gamecocks with 21 points and eight boards, and Powell chipped in 14, as the Gamecocks dropped their fourth game out of their last five. Colorado State hit 7-of-8 free throws down the stretch to stay unbeaten at home.

Dec. 19 vs. Wyoming

Carolina never found its rhythm on the road in Laramie, Wyo., against the Cowboys, as the Gamecocks lost 77-63. Brown had 14 points and Eidson scored 13, but it wasn't enough for South Carolina to get its first road win. Marc Bailey led Wyoming with 19 points, 12 of those during the first half.

a positive career move.

"I have the utmost respect for Charlie, both as a coach and as a person. I really hate for Charlie to leave," Holtz said. "It's like losing a member of your family. He's done so much for me and the South Carolina program. Charlie said that he felt that this was in his best interests professionally, and I hope he made the right decision."

Cosh will begin his fifth season at USC and praised his predecessor, whose plans Cosh wants to improve on.

"Charlie Strong did an outstanding job with the defense here, and I want to continue that improvement," Cosh said. "We have some outstanding young defensive players in this program, and we plan on playing fundamentally sound and aggressive defense that takes advantage of the skills that our players have."

To fill Strong's other role as defensive line coach, Holtz tabbed Jerome "Jappy" Oliver for the job. Oliver spent the past eight seasons at the Air Force Academy under

Dec. 16 vs. Wofford

South Carolina avoided a scare to take control late against the Wofford Terriers for a 70-59 win. Howell and Powell scored 16 points apiece, and Eidson grabbed a career-high 12 rebounds. Wofford led by four early in the second half, but a 13-0 run by the Gamecocks put USC on top for good. It was Carolina's 19th straight victory over the Terriers.

Dec. 8 vs. N.C. State

The Gamecocks offense struggled late once again as they lost to the surging Wolfpack 76-64 in Raleigh, N.C. Powell's 19 points weren't enough to stop the hot shooting of North Carolina State as it went on a 17-3 run in the second half. The Wolfpack was led by Julius Hodge's career-high 26 points as the team shot 59 percent in the second half. Brown added 15 points for the Gamecocks in the loss.

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Gamecocks drop close game to No. 11 Arkansas, but finish 7-2 over winter breakBY MATT ROTHENBERG AND NICK YOUNG
THE GAMECOCK

After opening its SEC schedule on a high note, the 13th-ranked USC women's basketball team quickly suffered its first loss in league play. The 11th-ranked Arkansas Razorbacks got past Carolina on Sunday afternoon in Fayetteville, Ark., where they won 67-58.

The victory was the 400th for Razorback head coach Gary Blair, and it was a great effort on the part of Arkansas to overtake the Gamecocks.

USC began the game on a 7-2 run, but Razorback Dana Cherry brought the home team back into the thick of things.

Arkansas (14-2, 1-0 SEC) briefly held a one-point lead during the first half before Sarah Burgess' 3-pointer that gave the Gamecocks the lead. Both teams traded baskets, as the two went into the half tied at 29.

During the second half, Carolina and Arkansas remained neck and neck, but Kelly Morrone's 3-pointer put the Gamecocks up 46-44. Down 59-55 with less than two minutes to play, USC committed several fouls under its basket to allow the Razorbacks to extend their advantage.

Cherry and Ruby Vaden each scored 14 points to lead the Razorbacks, while Jocelyn Penn scored 19 points and grabbed 13 rebounds for USC (13-2, 1-1). Koretha Johnson added 15 points for Carolina in the defeat, and Petra Ujhelyi contributed five assists.

The Gamecocks will continue their play on the road as they travel to Nashville, Tenn., for a Thursday-night showdown with the Vanderbilt Commodores.

Jan. 9 vs. Miss. State

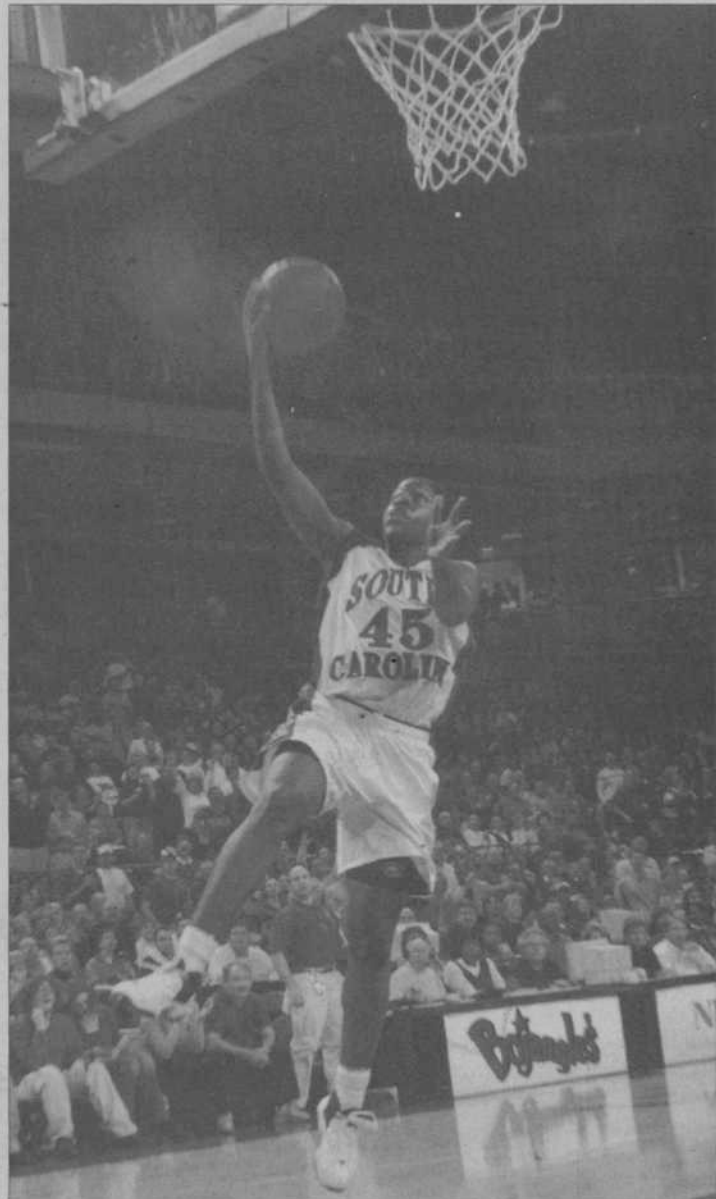
The Gamecocks faced off against the Lady Bulldogs of Mississippi State in a match that pitted the SEC's two top scorers in USC's Penn and MSU's LaToya Thomas. USC won its third straight SEC opener 83-79.

Throughout the game, the Lady Bulldogs led by double digits, but USC charged back when Penn returned to the game late in the second half after having picked up several fouls.

Carolina was down 14 points at halftime, but battled back to shoot 65.5 percent in the second half.

With 53 seconds left, USC's Burgess made a brilliant assist to Johnson for the game-winning lay-up.

Five Gamecocks, led by Penn and Ujhelyi, scored in double figures in the win.



FILE PHOTO BY CANDI HAUGLUM/THE GAMECOCK

Gamecock senior forward Jocelyn Penn set a school record with 51 points against the Stetson Hatters. Against S.C. State, Penn broke the USC record for most steals in a career.

Jan. 4 vs. Stetson

This might go down as one of the biggest nights in Penn's career; the Carolina senior scored a school-record 51 points in a 101-39 victory over Stetson.

The 51 points also tied an SEC record and made Penn the nation's scoring leader with 28.2 points per game. Penn became the first player to score 50-plus points in a game since Jackie Stiles in 2000.

Following the game, Penn was named SEC Player of the Week, her second such honor this season. Burgess added 11 points and four steals in the Gamecock win.

Dec. 31 vs. S.C. State

Penn stole the show and a record as the Gamecocks beat the South Carolina State Bulldogs 85-42 on New Year's Eve.

Penn recorded four steals to go along with her 19 points, and broke Rita Johnson's 20-year-old record of 298 career steals.

Morrone and Ujhelyi had season-highs in points with 18 apiece.

USC began with a 23-8 run and led 39-13 at halftime.

Dec. 29 vs. Alcorn State

Penn became only the fourth woman in USC history to score more than 1,500 points, grab 500 rebounds and have more than 200 steals after a put-back gave her 1,501 career points in a 96-52 win against Alcorn State. Five Gamecocks scored in double figures, with Penn's 28 points leading the way.

Dec. 27 vs. Temple

USC helped lengthen Temple's four-game losing streak, downing the Owls 57-39. During the game, Penn continued her assault on the record books, as she scored 16 points to move past her sister, Annie Lester, on USC's all-time scoring list.

Four USC players scored in double digits, as the team shot 42 percent from the field.

Dec. 20 vs. No. Carolina

The Gamecocks met the North Carolina Tar Heels in the Myrtle Beach ACC-SEC Beach Ball Classic. Four starters fouled out

♦ BASKETBALL, SEE PAGE 12

Strong leaves Gamecocks for SEC rival Gators

BY MATT ROTHENBERG
THE GAMECOCK

USC football head coach Lou Holtz had to fill more holes, other than those left by the graduated seniors, on his team this winter. It is not uncommon for college football programs to lose members of their coaching staffs, and the Gamecocks are no exception.

When defensive coordinator Charlie Strong took a similar position with Florida shortly after Christmas, Holtz found his replacement in just a matter of days. Linebackers coach Chris Cosh was elevated to the coordinator position and will take the reins of a group with plenty of young talent.

Strong's departure will leave Gamecocks' SEC rival didn't have a bad taste in the mouth of Holtz, who encouraged Strong to go if the position with the Gators would be



Strong

Cosh

the legendary Fisher DeBerry.

The newcomer says he is thrilled to be a part of Holtz's staff at Carolina and will help Cosh with the young and upcoming defensive line.

"Excitement is the word that best describes how I feel about joining the South Carolina program," Oliver said. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to work for someone like coach Lou Holtz, who is a legend in the coaching profession. The South Carolina program presents a tremendous opportunity and I look forward to rolling up my sleeves and going to work."

The spot Holtz has yet to fill is that of Joker Phillips, who coached USC's receivers for a season before he moved back to Kentucky, his alma mater. Phillips will be the Wildcats' receivers coach and recruiting coordinator.

Gamecocks Honored

SEC coaches and the media recognized several USC football players over the winter. Moe

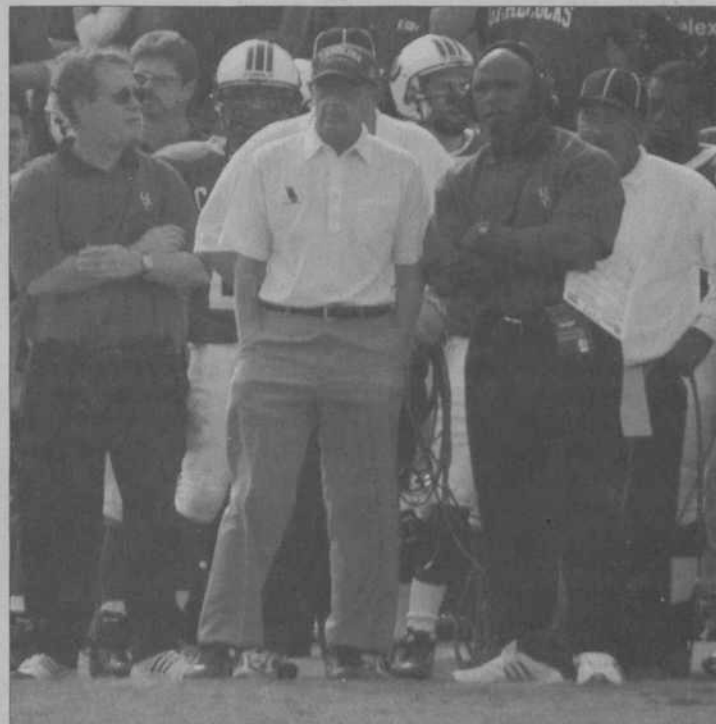
Thompson, Lance Laury and Nashan Goddard were named Freshman All-America by the Sporting News. That trio, along with Troy Williamson, was selected to the SEC All-Freshman Team.

The conference's coaches picked senior nose guard Langston Moore as second-team All-SEC. Moore and junior offensive tackle Travelle Wharton were named first-team All-SEC by the Sporting News, as well.

USC's All-Star Seniors

Some graduating Gamecocks will extend their season by a game after being selected to the post-season all-star games. This past weekend, fullback Andrew Pinnock played in the East-West Shrine Game in San Francisco. Pinnock rushed for 1,803 yards and scored 27 touchdowns during his time at USC.

Fellow seniors Corey Jenkins, Cedric Williams, Rashad Faison and Dennis Quinn will play in the

♦ FOOTBALL, SEE PAGE 12

FILE PHOTO BY CANDI HAUGLUM/THE GAMECOCK

Charlie Strong, right, has left USC to take over as defensive coordinator at Florida. He was replaced by linebackers coach Chris Cosh.