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SPORTS

GAME SCHEDULE

MEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Southwest Missouri State
at Guardians Classic Semifinals in Kansas City, Mo., 9
p.m. Monday
VOLLEYBALL at UNC, 12 p.m. Saturday

Strong defense pushes USC past Midshipmen

BY SHAWN ROURK
THE GAMECOCK

If defense wins championships, then USC is getting plenty of practice before its SEC conference schedule begins in January, and nothing could make head coach Dave Odom happier after knocking off Navy 73-40 Friday night.

"I am very, very pleased with our defense," Odom said after the game.

"I thought defensively we were exactly where we needed to be almost on every place. Early on I think they got the ball inside on us too much."

USC's defense was dominating all night. Statistically, it was one of the team's best defensive performances.

"They're playing well together. Defense, like offense, is confidence. You have the confidence to get tight on a guy and know that he's not going to drive by you, but if he does, your teammates are going to cover for you," Odom said.

They combined for 20 steals and nine blocks on the night, a season high through their first three games. The Gamecocks also caused Navy to turn the ball over 30 times, which amounted to 40 points off turnovers.

"I think three of their first five baskets were inside baskets. We

cut that out, made them go to the outside, dogged their dribblers, dogged their shooters, cut out their offensive rebounding," Odom said. "And I think offensively, it just took us a little while to get on track."

The defensive onslaught even sparked much of USC's points on the night. The team's offense was jump started with the defensive effort of Jarod Gerald, who played

11 minutes in the game and got four steals and three big assists in the short amount of time.

"I think the thing that got us going tonight was not Tarence Kinsey, it was Jarod Gerald. Jarod hadn't really played in a game or so," Odom said. "I

thought we were in a bit of an offensive lull and decided to go ahead and put him in. He got us going on the defensive end. Deflections, got a couple of rebounds, made a couple of really nice assists, got the ball to the right people. Jarod can do that. He can get a team moving whenever you're stagnant."

The Gamecocks' offense was feast or famine all night. There were points in the game where shooters could not get the ball to go in, then they would link together six quick points off turnovers and suddenly Odom's shooters were 7-for-10 and on a 15-

0 run in the second half.

"Offensively, we're a team that plays in spurts," Odom said. "We go along in a lull for a while where we can't score points, and then we score them in flurries. I don't know if I like that or not, but I think the crowd does."

Michael Boynton led all scorers with 15 points, followed by Tarence Kinsey who had 14. In all, five Gamecocks were in double figures. The team combined to shoot 45 percent from the field. Even though it was the best effort all season, Boynton said they're still not where the team wants to be at the moment.

"Guys are just trying to press too much," Boynton said. "Early on, guys are trying to feel where they fit into the offense. We have a lot of new guys that don't know where they can implement their individual talents into the team offense. So it'll take time, and in a couple of weeks you'll start seeing a lot more improvement."

Odom said that his team's defense will get its first tough test on the road in the semifinals of the Guardian's Classic. USC is scheduled to play Southwest Missouri State in Kansas City on Monday.

"That's a very tough assignment," Odom said. "We're going to the state of Missouri and playing a Missouri team. The water gets deeper, the sharks get more ferocious, and it's time for us to move out. Let's move up. Let's see what we've got and test our metal against a really good team."

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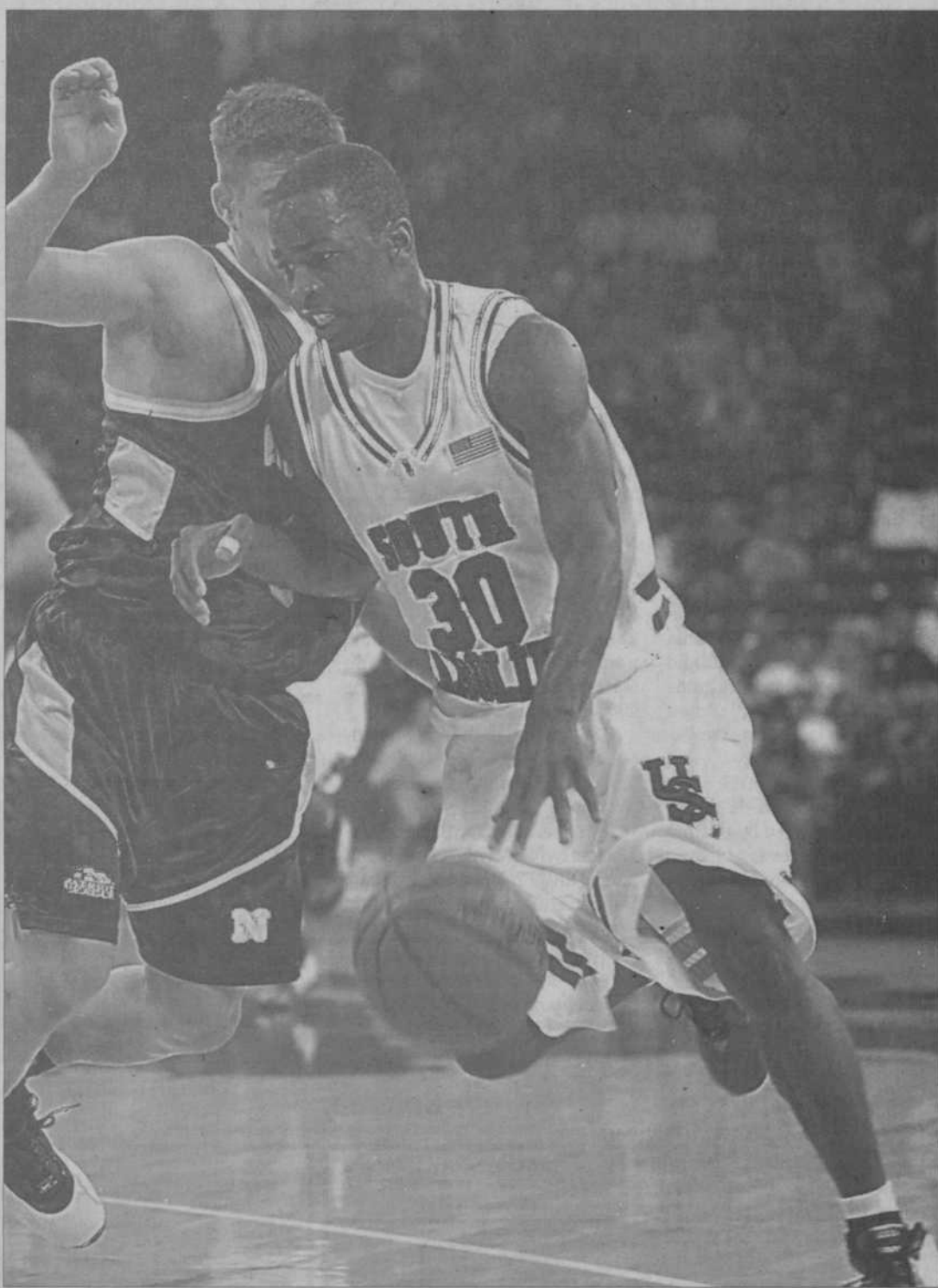


PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/THE GAMECOCK

USC's Michael Boynton, who led the Gamecocks with 15 points, drives by a Navy defender.

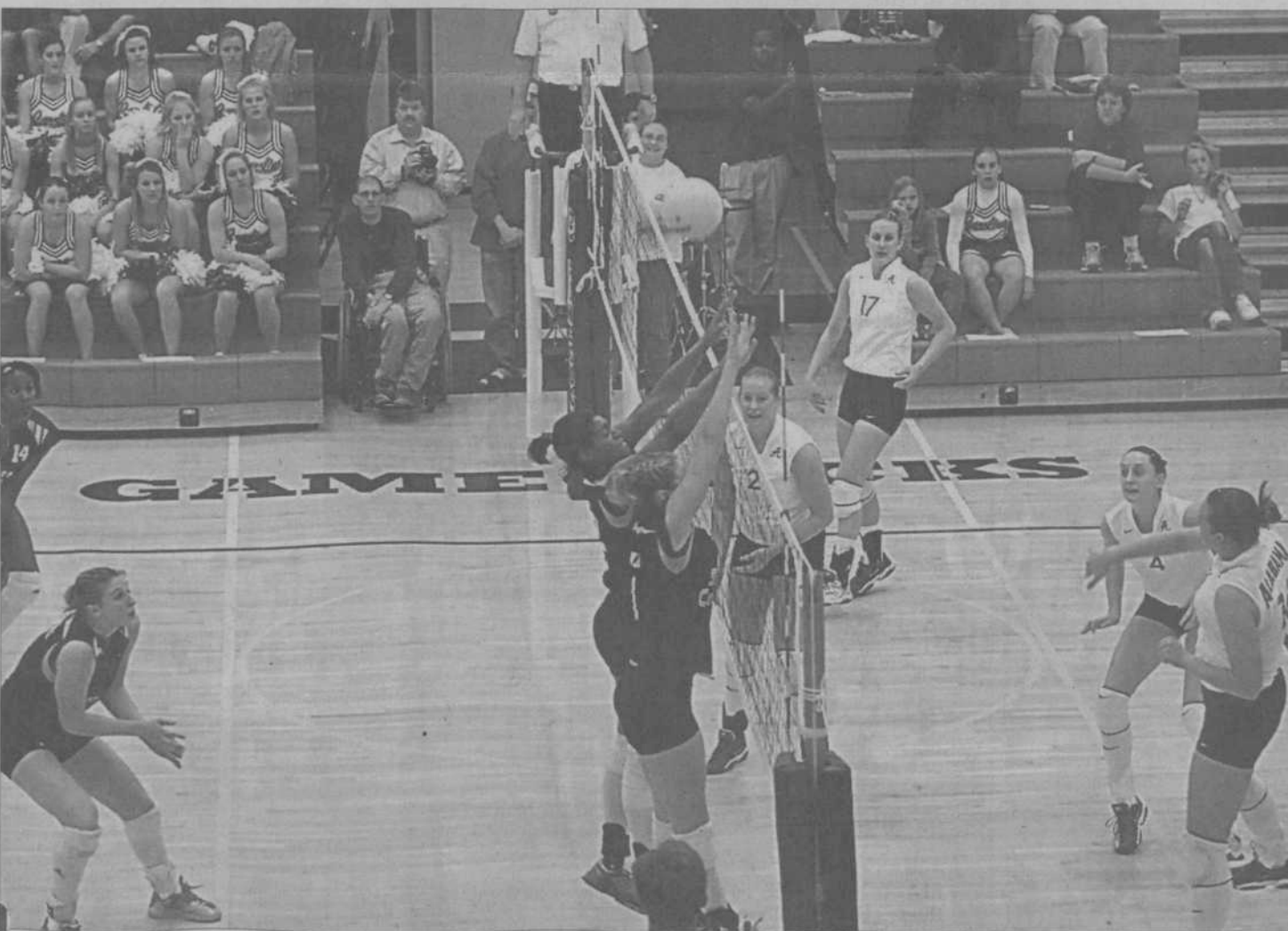


PHOTO BY MARK SCHILLING/THE GAMECOCK

USC's Nicole Miller and Katelyn Panzau go for a block during Alabama's 3-0 defeat of Carolina.

Volleyball loses in first round of SEC tourney to Alabama

	USC (12-17, 6-10 SEC)	0
	Alabama (18-13, 11-5 SEC)	3

BY WES WOLFE
THE GAMECOCK

The No. 6 seed USC volleyball team (12-17, 6-10 SEC) was bounced from the first round of the SEC Volleyball tournament Friday by No. 3 seed Alabama, 3-0. The Crimson Tide (18-13, 11-5) used strong defense and offensive consistency to beat the Gamecocks and advance to the tournament semifinals.

"You could see the players get discouraged," USC head coach Kim Hudson Christopher said. "A couple of bad plays, and it is easy for a team to make a run on us. We average 14 unforced errors a game. I think a lot of it has to do with youth. It will be a very difficult spring. We have to get mentally

tough, and have to get the players to be able to perform under stress."

Perception during the match was that Carolina was making more errors than the Crimson Tide. In reality, Alabama finished the match with only five fewer total errors than the Gamecocks. The difference in the match was made on earning points. Overall, Bama had 16 more kills and four more service aces than USC.

Alabama outside hitter Erin Heffner led all players with 17 kills and her teammate, outside hitter Jennifer Bibber, was second with 15 kills. Outside hitter Shonda Cole led Carolina with eight kills, but her eight errors canceled out those. Similarly, Gamecock outside hitter Sarah Morgan was second on the team with six kills, but she also had six errors.

Alabama made a run in the first game to take a 1-0 lead in the match. After USC had established a 20-14 lead, Bama began making

♦ TOURNAMENT, SEE PAGE A11

Women's basketball opens season with loss

BY PETE IACOBELLI
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEMSON — Julie Aderhold saw something good as soon as Clemson teammate Julie Talley put up the long 3-pointer that turned the tide for the Tigers.

"I knew it was going in when it left her hand," Aderhold said.

Talley's shot with 1:52 to go in overtime recaptured the lead — and the momentum — for the Lady Tigers, who went on to a 63-99 victory over rival South Carolina on Friday night.

Everything that had gone Clemson's way for the game's first 32 minutes went wrong the last seven.

The Lady Tigers let a 79-64 lead slip away behind the furious charge of Gamecock seniors Cristina Ciocan and Kelly Morrone.

Ciocan finished with a triple double — 22 points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds. And Morrone stuck what looked like the game's most dramatic shot, a deep three-point

bucket with 1.7 seconds left to force the extra session.

"It would have been easy for them to hang their heads," Clemson coach Jim Davis said. "Especially after they lost the lead."

Instead, the Lady Tigers (1-0) forced South Carolina (0-1) into quick shots and took advantage — mostly — at the foul line down the stretch.

Lakeia Stokes had seven of her career-high 32 points in overtime. Her two foul shots with 30.6 seconds put Clemson ahead 102-96.

Ciocan gave the Gamecocks one last hope with her third 3-pointer, but Aderhold ended the drama with a foul shot with 3.2 seconds to go.

It was as sweet a win as either of these rivals can have.

Two years ago after South Carolina had lost in the final eight of the NCAA basketball tournament, coach Susan Walvius congratulated her team.

But she reminded them that they weren't state champs. Clemson was one of seven losses the Gamecocks had that season.

Last year, the Gamecocks broke Clemson's seven-game win streak at newly opened Colonial Center in front of 17,712 fans — the largest crowd to watch basketball in the Palmetto State.

"I only wish there were 11,000 out there to watch," Davis said. Littlejohn Coliseum was less than half full, possibly because many fans already had left for the school's season-ending football game on Saturday night.

Stokes said the team had pointed to this contest ever since last year's loss. "This gives us a good boost for the rest of the year," she said.

Clemson hopes to rebound from its 14-15 season of a year, the first in 16 years with Davis as coach.

South Carolina coach Susan

Walvius said her team picked up its defense to get back in the game. "But we lost the game in the overtime period doing the same things we did in the first half," she said. "We didn't guard Talley and she hit the deep three. We gave them second shot opportunities. That's what the game comes down to."

After Talley's game-changing basket, the Gamecocks missed their next eight shots and Clemson upped the lead.

Stokes went 14 of 20 from the foul line. She also had 14 rebounds and five assists.

Clemson had five players in double figure scoring. Talley had 15 points, Kanetra Queen had 13 and Maggie Slosser had 12.

Morrone finished with five 3-pointers and 21 points for South Carolina. Gritsaeva had 20 points and Sarah Burgess 17.

Both Clemson's Davis and South Carolina's Walvius say they don't plan to open the season against each other next year.

Being thankful for sports is on my list



BEN SINCLAIR
GAMECOCKSPORTS@HOTMAIL.COM

Thanksgiving gives me a great chance to reflect.

Being assigned to write the last column before Thanksgiving, I did something many people do this time of year. I started to reflect on everything that I should be thankful for. The more I thought about it, the more I realized many Gamecocks and sports enthusiasts likely have a very similar list. I hope everyone reading this column has just as many

reasons to be thankful. In case you need help, I thought of just a few things you might be thankful for as well.

First, I am thankful for The Gamecock. I am just as thankful for the opportunity to write this column and for the people who read it.

Despite the many complaints about USC football, I am thankful that Lou Holtz is our football coach and not Brad Scott or Sparky Woods.

I have to be thankful for all the vehicles that safely transported me many miles to pull for the Gamecocks. It took tremendous faith to believe that old Cavalier would make a round trip from Columbia to Omaha and back without problems. So far, I have seen almost every SEC town without needing a tow truck.

♦ THANKSGIVING, SEE PAGE A11