

# USC faces must-win match-ups

By MIQUEL JACOBS  
THE GAMECOCK

The struggling USC women's soccer team (6-9-2, 0-6-2 SEC) has reached a point in its season that it probably hoped would be in November rather than October: do-or-die soccer. With three games remaining and no conference wins, the Gamecocks are on the outside of the SEC Tournament with a sweep the only possible way that Carolina can claim a spot. Arkansas and LSU are up first for the Gamecocks this weekend in the final stretch of the season.

Friday night's match-up with the Lady Razorbacks of Arkansas will be the first test as Carolina travels for its final away game of the season. Arkansas (6-8-2, 2-4-2 SEC) is also searching for a crucial conference victory as the Razorbacks are 10th in the SEC standings, two spots shy of making the tournament. USC will look for history to be on its side as the Gamecocks lead the overall series 3-2, including a 2-1 edge in Fayetteville.

Leading the young Lady Razorbacks team are Sarah Gwisdala and Christina Burger. Tied for the team lead in points at 12, the players rank seventh and 10th, respectfully, in the conference in goals per game. Gwisdala, a freshman defender, has been a boost to the program and could finish the season as the first freshman to lead Arkansas in points since 1993. She has been slowed this past week by an ankle injury, however, as was evident by her going scoreless last weekend. Burger, a sophomore midfielder, has been tapped as the heir apparent to be the all-time leading scorer at Arkansas. With defenses zoning in on Gwisdala and junior Megan McCool, Burger, the team's leading returning scorer from last season, might indeed finish out the season on a roll. It will be up to Carolina defenders Sarah Lentz, Jackie Welch and Kimmy Gillespie to control the balanced attack of the Lady 'Backs and control the tempo of the game.

Should USC return home with its



SARAH ZILINSKY/THE GAMECOCK

Freshman midfielder Erin Sullivan, right, dribbles in last weekend's game against Mississippi State. USC will look for its first conference win this weekend as the Gamecocks take on Arkansas and LSU.

tournament chances still alive, a home date against SEC West rival LSU should be an easier task. LSU, like Carolina, is at the bottom of its division with a record of 6-9-1 and 1-6-1 in the SEC. Given the manner in which Carolina has battled many other teams in the conference, USC head coach Shelley Smith said she is hopeful that USC can get over the hurdle of not just having a great game but also a win.

"We've been playing well. I don't know how the team will respond from the close losses," Smith said. "We've played well at home, and it's important for us to take advantage of that. All the teams we are playing are trying to get into the SEC Tournament like we are."

With LSU also in a bind trying to sneak into the SEC Tournament, Sunday's match could end up being one of the most emotional of the season should both teams win their respective games Friday. In the midst of the longest winless streak in school history,

the Gamecocks have not posted a win since Sept. 9 against Charlotte. The streak spans eight games, all conference matches. Fortunately, the Gamecocks also hold the series edge against LSU 3-1-1, including a 2-0 victory in 2002, the best season under Smith.

Despite individual successes, the Tigers have struggled this season with only one conference victory. Senior forward Artie Brown ranks at the top of every offensive category in the SEC, including being second in points (1.19 per game), second in goals (0.56 per game), and fifth in shots (2.69 per game).

Teammate Stacy Bishop, a sophomore forward, is also at the top of the lists as she ranks first in shots (4.81), fifth in points (1.06) and sixth in assists (0.31). Carolina's defense will again be tested as they attempt to limit the chances given to these two players who have the ability to change a game.

The offensive spark that was prevalent in last week's match with

Mississippi State will again be needed for USC as they take on the fourth-ranked goalkeeper in the conference — freshman Valerie Vogler, who sports a .807 save percentage.

Gamecock senior Ashley Williams, who recently moved to number seven on USC's all-time scoring list, will be relied upon to lead the offense. Senior defender Lentz, number 13 on the all-time scoring list, should also be a key factor in the crucial conference matches. Should either game be decided on a game-winning goal by Lentz, she would become USC's all-time leader at six game-winning goals.

The action is set for 8 p.m. for Friday's game at Arkansas and will conclude with a 1 p.m. match Sunday against LSU at Eugene E. Stone III Stadium. The Gamecocks' season finale will be at home next week against the Florida Gators.

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NICK ESARES/THE GAMECOCK

Freshman midfielder Ramon Paracat, right, fights off a Clemson defender earlier this season. Paracat and the Gamecocks will try to avoid their fourth straight loss Saturday against UNC-Wilmington.

## Guzan's 13 saves can't put soccer past Charleston

Gamecocks head to Wilmington after three straight losses

By BRIAN DAVIS  
THE GAMECOCK

The No. 15 men's soccer team suffered its third-straight shutout Wednesday night to the College of Charleston. The game winner was scored at the 15:07 mark by College of Charleston senior midfielder and Columbia native Troy Lesene.

Just 15 minutes later, Cougar sophomore striker Jeremy Gold extended the lead with an assist to fellow midfielder, senior George Grygar, on a goal in the 31st minute.

The Gamecocks' inability to score has plagued them in their past three matches, including two in which they out-shot the opposing team. Unfortunately, the Gamecocks were unable to do this against the Cougars as they were out-shot 26-15.

The game was put out of reach in the 80th minute when Lesene assisted on a final goal by senior striker Tony Myers.

With the loss, the Gamecocks drop to 8-4-1 on the season while the Cougars extend their five-game win streak and go to 10-4-0 on the season.

"The first half was great soccer. The second half we had some lapses, but overall, this was a great performance," College of Charleston head coach Ralph Lundy said.

More than 1,600 fans were in attendance for the home team's victory at Patriot's Point in Mount Pleasant.

On a positive note, USC sophomore goalkeeper Brad Guzan broke a personal record, tallying 13 saves in the game.

This weekend the Gamecocks will match up on the road with University of North Carolina-Wilmington. The Gamecocks will close their three-game road swing against the Seahawks, while the Seahawks will be looking to close their three-game home stand at 2-1.

The Seahawks split the first two home

games of the stretch with a strong second-half performance to beat Drexel and a loss against Hofstra.

The Seahawks came out of the second half against a struggling Drexel in a 0-0 tie and scored three second-half goals to clinch the victory. Drexel fell to 3-8-0 with the loss and 0-3-0 in the Colonial Athletic Association.

The Seahawks then suffered their third CAA loss against Hofstra. After trailing 1-0 at halftime, the Seahawks tied it up only to allow two more quick goals, falling behind 3-1. Despite slimming the lead to 3-2 with under 10 minutes remaining in regulation, UNCW was unable to gain an equalizer.

The Seahawks have had several scoring threats with three players leading with four goals, as well as three players with three goals. The Seahawks have had substantial advantages over their opponents in corner-kick opportunities as well as shots this season. But the Seahawks' 210 penalties, 51 more than their opponents, has been a definite downside. Additionally they trail their opponents in saves by six.

Defense will be a major key in this game as both teams lead their opponents in shots through the season. Fortunately, the Gamecocks have more saves than their opponents this season, in large part because of Guzan's astounding play. He has four shutouts on the season and saves more than 80 percent of the shots he faces.

Headed into Saturday, the Seahawks now stand at 9-4-1 and could use a major morale boost in a competitive match-up with the Gamecocks. The kickoff for the match-up is set for 7 p.m. Saturday.

The Gamecocks will look to break their minor losing streak Saturday night before returning home to face a formidable Furman team Wednesday. A match-up with fellow national heavyweight Duke will take place at Eugene E. Stone III Stadium at 2 p.m. on Halloween.

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## GAMECOCK CHALLENGE

THE CHALLENGE: Every week, The Gamecock's readers and staff test their sports knowledge with game predictions.

	Jonathan Hillyard Sports editor (43-23)	Adam Beam Editor in chief (48-18)	David Stagg Design director (47-19)	Wes Wolfe Viewpoints editor (38-28)	Steven Van Haren Copy editor (48-18)	Marcus Ebelhar Reader of the week (41-25)
Colorado at 17 Texas A&M	A&M	Colorado	A&M	Colorado	A&M	A&M
Bos. College at 24 Notre Dame	ND	ND	ND	BC	ND	ND
13 Michigan at 12 Purdue	Purdue	Purdue	Purdue	Michigan	Purdue	Purdue
Alabama at 11 Tennessee	Tenn.	Tenn.	Tenn.	Alabama	Tenn.	Tenn.
10 Georgia at Arkansas	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia
25 Iowa at Penn State	Iowa	Penn State	Iowa	Iowa	Iowa	Iowa
BYU at Air Force	Air Force	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU	BYU
Eastern Kentucky at Vanderbilt	Vandy	Vandy	Vandy	Vandy	Vandy	Vandy
Nebraska at Kansas State	KSU	KSU	KSU	KSU	KSU	KSU
Maryland at Clemson	Maryland 17-10	Maryland 42-3	Maryland 28-13	Maryland 24-10	Maryland 21-7	Maryland 21-14

WANT TO BE READER OF THE WEEK? E-MAIL SELECTIONS FOR NEXT WEEK'S GAMES TO [GAMECOCKSPORTS@GWM.SC.EDU](mailto:GAMECOCKSPORTS@GWM.SC.EDU). LAST WEEK'S RESULTS: Design director David Stagg is just one game behind first place after a 9-1 week, two games better than his closest competitors.

### ■ SERIES

Continued from page 8

his ankle. This man risked his career for his teammates, and he pitched a one-run masterpiece in the process.

Outside of Schilling, you have to root for the rest of this Red Sox team. You have guys like Johnny Damon, Boston's version of Gamecock Jesus, who came through when his team needed him most. You have guys like Kevin Millar, who is the epitome of a goofball and obviously loves playing baseball more than anything in this

world. By the way, has there been another player in recent memory as clutch as David Ortiz?

At the same time you almost feel sorry for some members of the Yankees' squad. Derek Jeter, who plays harder than any baseball player you'll ever see, probably deserves better. Mariano Rivera is probably the best closer in baseball history. Kenny Lofton is still looking for his first World Series ring. But you have to wonder what Yankee owner George Steinbrenner is thinking right now. 'I wonder if Randy Johnson is available?' 'How much am I going to have to pay

**We are the lucky ones, my friends. We true sports fans will never forget this series.**

for Carlos Beltran? He's probably leaning back in his multi-million dollar recliner, wondering whom to fire for this one, the biggest collapse in sports history.

But let's not fool ourselves — the Red Sox won this one. And we are the lucky ones, my friends. We true sports

fans will never forget this series. This truly is, in my mind, one of the most remarkable accomplishments in sports history, if not the most remarkable. It just wouldn't have been right if it was the Tampa Bay Devil Rays coming back to beat the Colorado Rockies after being down 3-0. It was just perfect. Who do we have to thank though? George Steinbrenner, that's who. So George, you got what you wanted, the best team in history, on paper. Now they will sit at home, waiting on your pink slip. It's a magnificent story. I can't wait to buy the movie.



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