

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



ROGELIO SOLIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Florida's O.J. Small, left, and Ciatrick Fason, right, sit in dejection following their 38-31 loss to Mississippi State in Starkville, Miss. With the loss Florida's overall record falls to 4-3.

Meltdown in Mississippi highlights top 25 action

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STARKVILLE, Miss. — Sylvester Croom's first big win for Mississippi State sent Florida to a new low under coach Ron Zook.

Jerious Norwood's 37-yard touchdown run with 32 seconds remaining lifted Mississippi State to a 38-31 upset of the 20th-ranked Gators on Saturday.

Norwood rushed for 174 yards on 29 carries and scored twice for the Bulldogs (2-5, 1-3 Southeastern Conference), who had lost five straight since beating Tulane in their first game under Croom.

Jeremie Johnson set up Norwood's game-winner when he intercepted Chris Leak at the Mississippi State 44 with two minutes remaining.

After four running plays moved the ball to the 37, Norwood took the handoff around left end, spun past a defender, then ran through another Florida player at the goal line.

Ciatrick Fason rushed for 143 yards on 16 carries and had a 55-yard touchdown run for the Gators (4-3, 2-3).

NO. 13 MICHIGAN 16, NO. 12 PURDUE 14

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Freshman Michael Hart rushed for 206 yards and Garrett Rivas hit a 35-yard field goal with 2:45 to go to lift Michigan to a win.

Hart broke Ricky Powers' record for rushing yards by a Michigan freshman and also caught a touchdown pass to help the Wolverines (7-1, 5-0 Big Ten) keep pace with No. 6 Wisconsin atop the conference.

The scene was all too familiar for Purdue (5-2, 2-2), which again had a costly fumble late to lose its second game in a row after starting the season with five straight wins.

Kyle Orton was 14-for-30 for 213 yards, a touchdown and an interception for Purdue.

NO. 5 FLORIDA STATE 20, WAKE FOREST 17

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Xavier Beitia kicked a 22-yard field goal with 1:03 to play to help Florida State pull off a surprisingly close victory.

Seminole quarterback Wyatt Sexton had a miserable day, committing three costly turnovers that nearly cost Florida State (6-1, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) the game.

Florida State needed a 46-yard run by Lorenzo Booker on third-and-10 and a 14-yard pass from Sexton to Dominic Robinson on third-and-6 to set up the game-winning field goal.

Wake Forest (3-4, 0-4) dropped another close one. The Demon Deacons lost to Clemson and North Carolina

State in overtime and also battled Virginia Tech down to the wire.

NO. 10 GEORGIA 20, ARKANSAS 14

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — David Greene threw for a career-high 382 yards and two touchdowns, Thomas Brown rushed for 107 yards and Georgia held off Arkansas.

Fred Gibson caught six passes for 169 yards and a touchdown for the Bulldogs (6-1, 3-1, Southeastern Conference) and Reggie Brown had seven receptions for 107 yards.

Arkansas' offense lacked much of its punch with quarterback Matt Jones hobbled by a groin injury. He played most of the game, but the Razorbacks (3-4, 1-3) had just 278 yards total offense. They fumbled the ball four times, losing it twice, and were scoreless in the second half.

NO. 11 TENNESSEE 17, ALABAMA 13

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee turned to its defense to turn back Alabama's late rally, and the 11th-ranked Volunteers held on for a victory with key stops and an interception in the final seconds.

The Crimson Tide (5-3, 2-3 Southeastern Conference) was trailing by a touchdown when Brian Bostick's 47-yard field goal with 6:26 left pulled Alabama within four.

Tennessee (6-1, 4-1) allowed the Tide to get to midfield on its next drive, but Omar Gaither dropped Alabama's Kenneth Darby for a loss of 3 to make it fourth-and-6.

Alabama got a break when Parys Haralson was called for roughing the passer on fourth down, moving the ball to the Tennessee 37. The Vols got another stop behind the line, and Corey Campbell secured the win with an interception at the 15 with 46 seconds remaining.

NO. 18 LSU 24, TROY 20

BATON ROUGE, La. — Marcus Randall threw a 30-yard touchdown pass to David Jones with 2:18 left to give No. 18 LSU a come-from-behind 24-20 victory over Troy on Saturday night.

The Trojans (3-4) had only 36 yards of offense in the first half, but trailed only 17-10 at the break thanks to LSU turnovers. Turnovers also allowed the Trojans to stay with the Tigers (5-2) throughout the second half.

Randall completed 24 of 37 passes for 328 yards and a touchdown. He was intercepted three times and sacked twice.

■ **JV**

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to cheers from the crowd only to be tackled for a 2-yard loss on the play.

Rathe started the game after his heroics last week at Kentucky. The senior wasted no time in starting where he left off, connecting with redshirt freshman Smith on a 23-yard touchdown pass on the Gamecocks' first drive. USC got a 37-yard field goal from sophomore Charlie Carpenter after the fumble return by Rice.

After another Georgia Military fumble on its next possession, the 6-foot-4-inch Smith pulled in a Rathe pass on a 17-yard fade route that gave USC a 17-0 lead.

Bulldog freshman Antroun McDaniel capitalized on both fumbles by USC punt returners. The running back scored on runs of 13 and 15 yards, both in the first half.

Freshman Allen Smith kicked a field goal with no time remaining in the first half to pull the Bulldogs within 24-17. It was the last time Georgia Military would score.

Neither team could establish a

rhythm in the second half as the Gamecocks went with the inexperienced Nichols. The Bulldogs failed to score in the second half due to a combination of turnovers and penalties.

USC fared only a little better, scoring on a 16-yard keeper by Nichols with 3:08 left in the game on a drive that included a 30-yard completion to freshman Tyrone Pinder.

If nothing else, the bye week and junior varsity game served to give Holtz peace of mind about his quarterbacks' injuries and the play of their backups. Holtz said the question of who would be available against Tennessee had yet to be answered.

"We're going to have to see where

Dondrial is after this break and where Syvelle is," Skip Holtz said. "Right now, (Newton) has done very little. The (trainers) are trying to keep him in a boot to reduce the swelling."

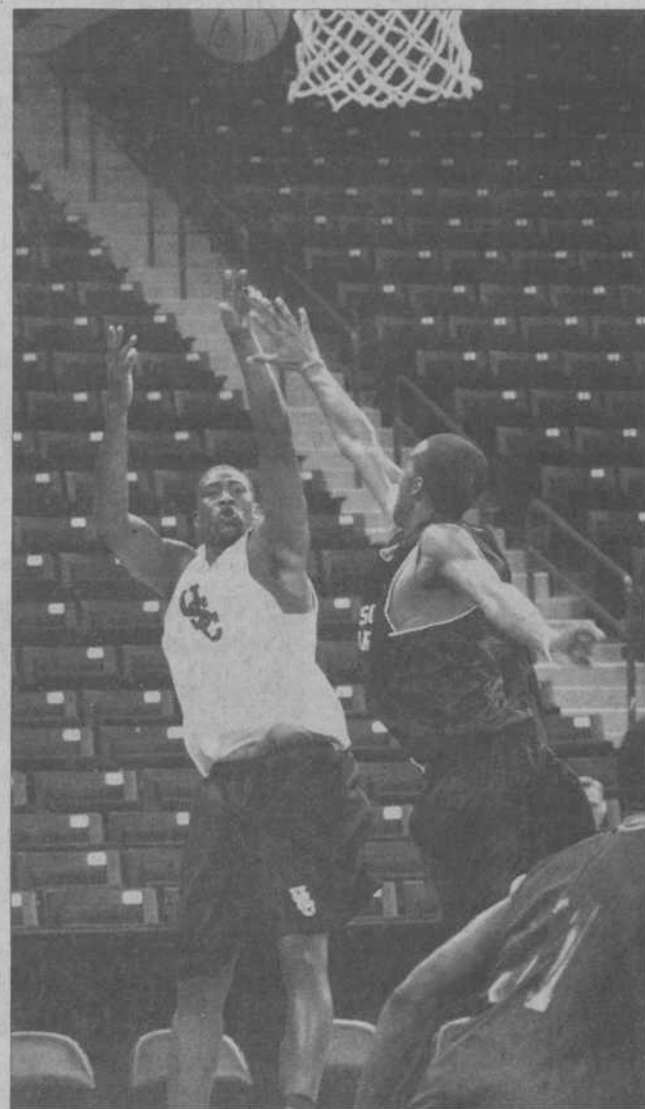
Lou Holtz had hinted last week that Newton, who suffered a high ankle sprain against Kentucky, may be able to practice as soon as Monday.

Lou Holtz also noted that Pinkins' injury was a partially torn rotator cuff, contradicting the MRI report, which said it was a bruise.

If neither quarterback can go, Rathe will be the likely starter after a solid outing in Sunday's game.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu

POWELL POWERS USC



KATIE KIRKLAND/THE GAMECOCK

Senior forward Carlos Powell shoots over teammate Tarence Kinsey in a practice earlier in October. Powell was named to the All-SEC second team recently by media who cover the SEC. He is one of four USC seniors on the team.

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