

Women split 2 matchups in weekend soccer classic

Michael Aguilar
FOR THE GAMECOCK

USC's women's soccer team made a good showing at the Auburn Reebok Classic during the long weekend.

On Friday the team improved its record to 3-0 by beating Rhode Island 2-0, then fell Sunday to Cal State Fullerton 1-0.

The Gamecocks went into the Rhode Island game with high hopes on a two-game winning streak. Rhode Island came into the game 0-2 and looked like an easy win.

The Gamecocks executed well, beat the Rams 2-0 and reached a previously unachieved record in USC history.

The 2005 season is the first time a women's soccer team has started a season with three-straight wins.

The Gamecocks jumped out to an early lead when midfielder Ashley Kirk scored in the 17th minute off an assist from midfielder Monica Hogan.

Hogan received a pass deep in Rhode Island territory from junior Erin Geldhof and dropped it back to Kirk for the 25-yard score.

Carolina solidified the lead and froze the scoreboard at the 31:15 mark.

Freshman midfielder Mary Worthen earned her first career goal thanks to a great cross from Alex Mouton, making the score 2-0.

The defense dominated the Rhode Island offense for the rest of the game and held the Rams to only seven shots.

Sophomore goalie standout Lindsay Thorstenson led the way with four saves.

The rest of the defense did its part by holding on to the two-goal lead.

The next round of the tournament held a greater challenge for USC, as opponent Cal State Fullerton came into

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Katie Kirkland / THE GAMECOCK

Sophomore midfielder Ashley Kirk dribbles in a game earlier this season.



USC men's basketball coach Dave Odom served as coach for one of eight Army camp all-star teams in the Middle East.

Odom of Arabia

Men's basketball coach returns from 'truly special' 5-day trip to Kuwait

Todd Green
FOR THE GAMECOCK

When you're riding a camel in the Kuwaiti desert, in the middle of the day, with the temperature reaching upward of 130 degrees, it's a strange feeling to not shed a single drop of perspiration. USC's men's basketball coach Dave Odom recently experienced this sensation after taking a stroll atop "Simon," a camel employed by the U.S. military.

"I came inside and immediately, I started sweating all over. I thought I was getting really sick," Odom said.

Odom is back in South Carolina after spending five days in Kuwait taking part in Operation Hardwood, during which he and seven other members of the college basketball coaching fraternity coached and thanked American soldiers.

A soldier told Odom the desert sun beats down with such ferocity that it evaporates sweat the second it comes out of the glands. This makes people feel as if they are not even sweating, and it can make the onset of heatstroke almost undetectable.

ESPN camera crews filmed the trip for a documentary scheduled to air Nov. 19. Each coach led a team that represented one of the several military bases positioned around the tiny middle eastern country bordering Iraq.

"I thought I knew something about team building. I know nothing," Odom said. "The U.S. military knows how to

build a team."

Much of the supply line that brings U.S. troops the weapons, food, ammunition and equipment needed to fight the war in Iraq, known as Operation Enduring Freedom, begins in Kuwait.

Odom's team was made up of soldiers from Camp Northstar, the northernmost outpost in Kuwait, where the battlefield is only a few short miles away. Camp Northstar has a large contingent of South Carolinians, and 10 of the 12 players on Odom's team, which finished fourth, hailed from the Palmetto State.

Odom spent his time talking to soldiers, passing out Gamecock memorabilia, signing autographs and posing for pictures. Two female soldiers described their typical day to Odom. One drives a large transport vehicle, while the other operates the machine gun.

"I asked them how often they get shot at," Odom recalled. "They told me, 'Every time we go out.'"

Odom pointed out that he did not go to Kuwait to express any political ideology, but to simply support the troops.

"This is about morale for our troops that are there," Odom said, then pausing. "I didn't meet one soldier who questions whether the war is right or wrong," he said. "Their attitude is, we're here, we love America and we're going to do what we're charged with doing, which is to protect America."

Odom, who said the trip has made him a better person, wants to instill what he saw in his Gamecock basketball players.

"We've got great kids here," Odom said. "But they don't understand how fortunate they are, and somehow I've got to make them see that."

Odom helped coach the championship



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Odom salutes in full Army uniform during his recent trip to Kuwait.

game with coach Tom Izzo's Camp Arifjan squad. Seeing the 1,500 troops in the crowd stand at attention with players and coaches next to him while Whitney Houston's rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner" played is a moment Odom said he will remember for the rest of his life.

"It was truly special," he said. "Outside of the day I got married, and watching my two sons being born, I don't think I've had a more fulfilling week."

Odom said that besides riding a camel, he drove an M1 Abrahams tank, and rode gunner on that same tank, while ESPN basketball analyst Jay Bilas drove.

"It doesn't get any better than that," Odom said.

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

Men's soccer misses mark in close-call showdowns

USC can't come through against rivals Clemson, College of Charleston

Matt Moore and Tom Benning
FOR THE GAMECOCK

USC's men's soccer team did not fare well in its early-season rivalry games against Clemson and College of Charleston. Despite providing solid efforts in both games, the Gamecocks could not come up with a victory.

"Even with the losses, the main things we want are in place. That's the determination, fighting power and team chemistry," said USC coach Mark Berson. USC played Clemson Friday and College of Charleston on Tuesday.

College of Charleston 1, USC 0

USC was looking to avenge its postseason loss to the Cougars but ultimately came up short in a 1-0 loss. The game was a fast-paced battle for most of the first half, and both teams had great opportunities to score.

The offense was spurred by junior forward Mike Sambursky, who provided the Gamecocks with numerous scoring opportunities in the first half.

"He has been hurt, so it was good to get him back in the lineup," Berson said.

With the exception of a few mistakes, the defense stood strong against a potent Cougar offense.

"I thought in the back, our guys did very well," Berson said. "I thought (defenders) Greg Reece and Ryan Leeton did great."

After even play for much of the first half, the scoreless deadlock ended on a penalty kick by Cougar forward Jeremy Gold with 13 minutes left in the first half.

"I don't know what you can say," Berson said of the handball ruling that resulted in the kick. "There was a call that could've been called or not called, and it went the other way. That happens sometimes."

The Gamecock offense stepped up its intensity in the second half and controlled the tempo and possession. With about nine minutes to go in the second half, the Gamecocks mounted one final attack against the Cougar defense.

Within 45 seconds, USC had two corner-kicks and three shots on goal. The Gamecocks culminated the burst with a sensational header attempt by Josh Acala.

However, Charleston goalie Hunter Gilstrap made excellent saves on all three attempts, and the Gamecocks did mount

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Ticket prices rise throughout SEC

USC ranks at lower end of elevated admission rates among South's big names

Savi Smith
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Long gone are the days when a father could drive up to the ball field with his son and buy two tickets to the game along with a bucket of popcorn and a soda — all for less than \$20. These days, just hunting down the ticket itself is practically worth the life of that father's first born.

Ticket prices for college football have begun to skyrocket. It's not something that has happened all at once, but is rather a gradual buildup that has begun to raise eyebrows. With new USC football coach Steve Spurrier, every home game is already sold out for the 2005 season. Getting a ticket is virtually possible at this point, unless you go the scalping route.

And it's not just USC football games

that have seen increasing ticket prices; the entire SEC is seeing a rise. But there is good news.

"We're actually at the low end of ticket prices," said Julius Grant, associate athletic director for ticket prices.

USC groupies have to throw down \$25 for a non-conference game, up from \$24 for the 2004 season.

Believe it or not, conference game ticket prices at USC have actually gone, gasp, down. Last year, a ticket for a conference game cost \$31, and this year it's down to \$30.

Auburn fans are paying \$45 a ticket, and the University of Georgia charges \$30 a ticket and \$192 for a season ticket. Florida charges \$28 per game.

Billy Houck, who came to USC for a year in 1950 after graduating from Davidson, has held season tickets since the late 1960s.

"I can't remember exactly how much we used to pay for tickets, but I know it's a lot more now," he said.

However, he's not incensed at the price increase.

"Ticket prices parallel to the cost of living, which has gone up, too," Houck, a member of the Gamecock Club said. "It's different though, because I used to be able to park right up at the stadium, but now my parking has moved back into the fairgrounds."

David Chard attended law school at USC and has joined the Gamecock Club this year so he can be a season-ticket-holder.

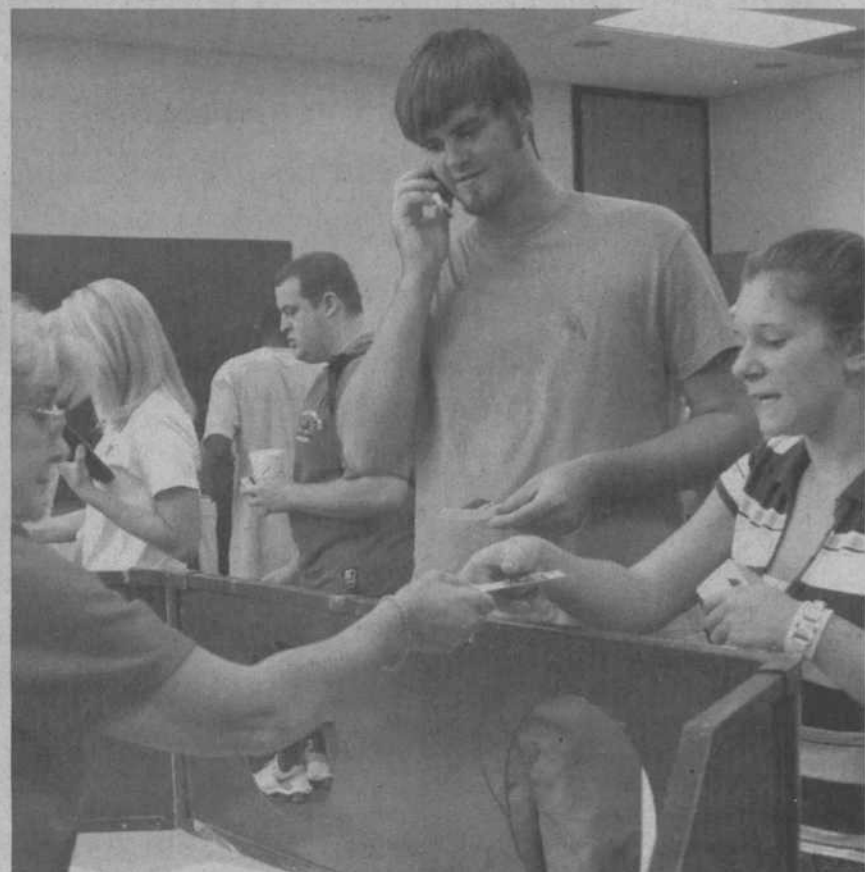
"I basically just asked what was the least amount that I could donate in order to get on the list to get tickets. This year it was \$1,600 that I had to give to get four tickets, and I ended up with tickets to four of the seven home games."

But like Houck, Chard isn't too upset about the prices, either, because he says it could be worse.

"My sister has season tickets to Ohio State football games, and she has to contribute \$2,500 in order to try to get tickets."

How are fans going to react if ticket

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Trisha Shadwell / THE GAMECOCK

USC students get their tickets for last week's season opener against UCF.