

Women hit the road to take on Bulldogs

From staff reports

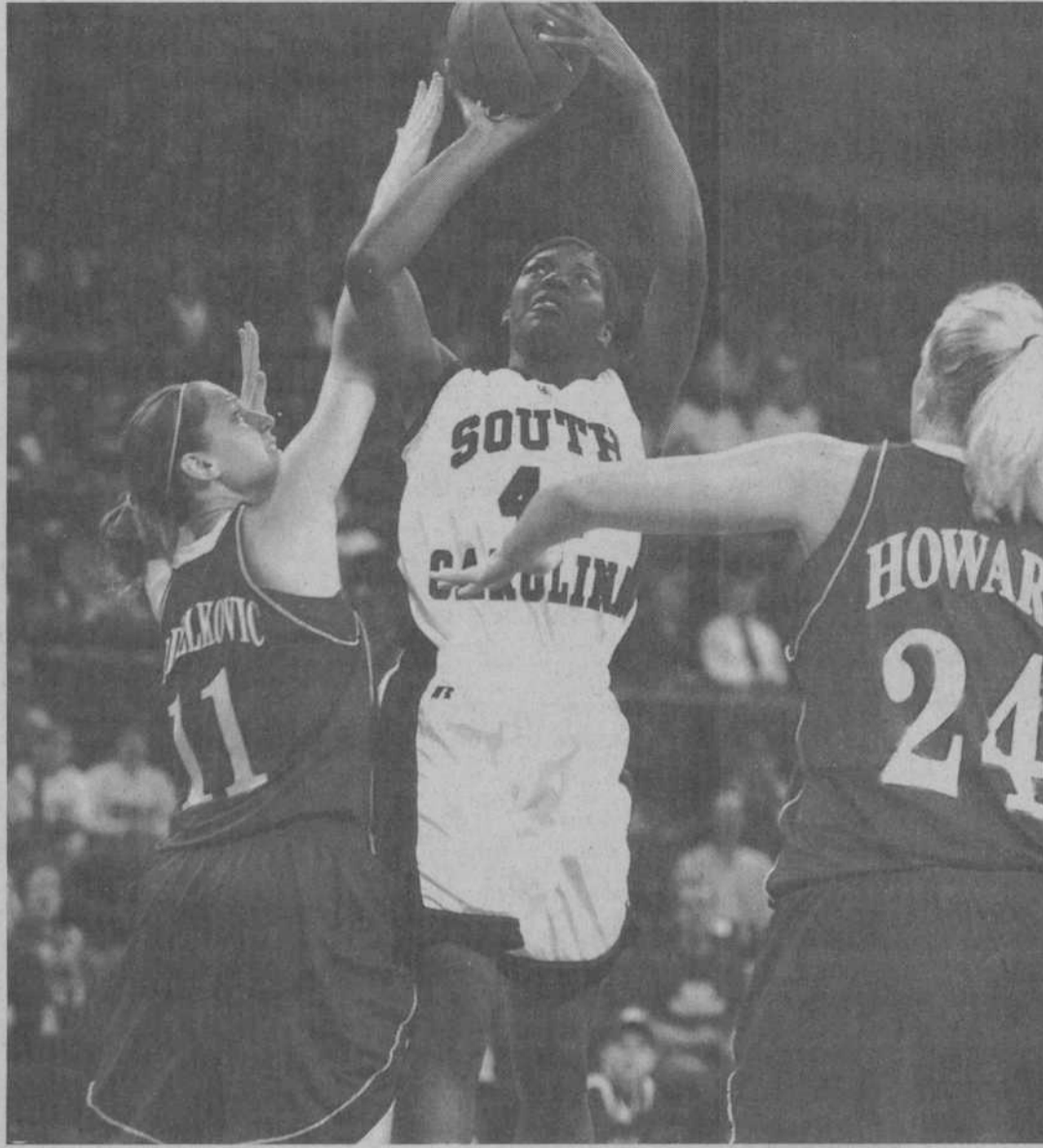
USC's women's basketball team looks to feed off a little momentum when they travel to Starkville, Miss., to take on the Lady Bulldogs on Sunday. After losing its first four SEC games, Carolina has won two of its last three games.

Mississippi State has lost its last six games, and is winless since topping in-state rival Ole Miss in Oxford Jan. 8. The Lady Bulldogs are led by Robin Porter, a freshman guard from Abbeville, Ala. Porter is the only player on MSU's team in double digits, as she's averaging 10.4 points per game.

Sunday's game against the USC will begin a four-game home streak for MSU.

The Gamecocks play three of their next four games on the road before finishing with three home games to finish the regular season.

USC guard Stacy Booker leads the Gamecocks, averaging just more than 10 points a game. Forward Iva Sliskovic is averaging eight points and six rebounds a game.



Nick Esares / THE GAMECOCK

USC forward Lakesha Tolliver is fouled on a shot attempt against Arkansas on Sunday. Coach Susan Walvius and the Gamecocks are looking for their third win in four games.

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Spurrier said at his Signing Day news conference on Wednesday. "We certainly feel the offensive lineman, the defensive lineman and a few players here and there will help our team immediately."

USC's 2006 class, totaling 26 commitments, was ranked at No. 24 by recruiting Web site Rivals.com. In all, Spurrier signed four four-star offensive linemen and one four-star defensive lineman. Some, Spurrier said, will play immediately, but others will likely be redshirted.

Among those redshirts will probably be offensive lineman Garrett Anderson, ranked as the Gamecocks' top recruit by Rivals.com. Anderson, an Irmo native, allowed no sacks his senior season and graded out at 93 percent.

"That's very good," Spurrier said of Anderson's numbers. "That's a lot better than anybody we had, I can assure you of that."

Running back Emanuel Cook, who also played safety, signed with the Gamecocks on Wednesday. USC missed out on four-star wide receiver Tim Hawthorne, who signed with Auburn. In all, the

Gamecocks signed just one running back, one quarterback, and one true wide receiver.

The quarterback, Chris Smelley, was ranked among Rivals' top-10 quarterbacks, committing to USC over SEC rival Alabama.

Spurrier said Wednesday that Smelley, Cade Thompson and Tommy Beecher would all compete with Blake Mitchell for the starting quarterback position next year.

With the departure of Na'Shan Goddard and Jabari Levey, a hole was left in the offensive line that Spurrier addressed immediately.

Joining Anderson will be four-star offensive linemen Clarence Bailey, Hutch Eckerson and Kevin Young. Three-star linemen Heath Batchelor and Seaver Brown are also on their way to Columbia.

On the defensive line, USC signed four-star defensive tackle Kenrick Ellis, from Lake Worth, Fla., and tackle Joel Reaves, from Milledgeville, Ga.

"He's maybe the biggest guy we have signed," Spurrier said of Ellis.

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GREEN ● CONTINUED FROM 6

they're in their early to mid-thirties. Jack Nicklaus won 38 tournaments, including eight majors, in his thirties. Arnold Palmer won 44 tournaments and six majors while in his thirties, as well.

Winning tournament golf is unique from other sports because there are many more variables involved. Distance, accuracy, putting and focus are just a few of the skills a golfer must master to win. The biggest factor may be how well a golfer is able to handle the pressure. In the history of professional golf, this skill has most often come through experience.

Tiger Woods has been handling pressure since he was 4 years old. As a child prodigy, he was constantly in the spotlight for his ability to make impossible shots,

defeating golfers more than twice his age. He won at every stage, as a junior, collegiate and amateur player.

Woods won 46 tournaments, ten majors and over \$50 million while in his twenties. If that was just a preview of what can be expected of him over the next ten years, Woods could shatter every record in golf.

When 21-year-old Woods exploded onto the scene by winning the Masters in 1997, it sent shockwaves across the world of golf. Suddenly, a sport that had always been seen as an upper-class hobby became a mainstream phenomenon.

Today, golfers train for hours on end. Lifting weights, running, eating healthy and having a private instructor are all key to success in professional golf. Golf courses all over the

country are being lengthened due to the amazing driving distances achieved by today's players, a process called "tiger-proofing." All of this is a testament to Tiger Woods' impact on the sport.

Of all the up-and-coming golfers trying to turn themselves into the next Tiger Woods, none have shown the mental fortitude it takes to become a champion like him. Some can put more distance on the ball and some are more accurate with the putter, but none have the ability to inflict absolute fear into the competition the way that Woods does.

30-year-old Tiger Woods has already left a giant footprint on the game of golf. One can only imagine what will happen now that he's entered his prime. As "Ol' Blue Eyes" said, the best is yet to come.

HOOPS ● CONTINUED FROM 6

with Alabama 78-75.

"We have to get ready to play on Saturday and fight for a win," said Arkansas coach Stan Heath. "We have to create our own breaks and get to the point where we're greedy with a lead."

Carolina will try to rebound from their bitter road loss, but they will

have to do so without their leading rebounder and emotional catalyst, Renaldo Balkman.

Balkman suffered a sprained left knee in practice Monday and is listed as doubtful for the contest with the Razorbacks.

"After talking with the doctors and our medical staff, I am going to be very careful not to bring

Renaldo back until we are confident his knee is completely recovered and able to withstand the physical demands of SEC basketball," USC coach Dave Odom said in a statement. "A final decision will be made closer to Saturday's game time."

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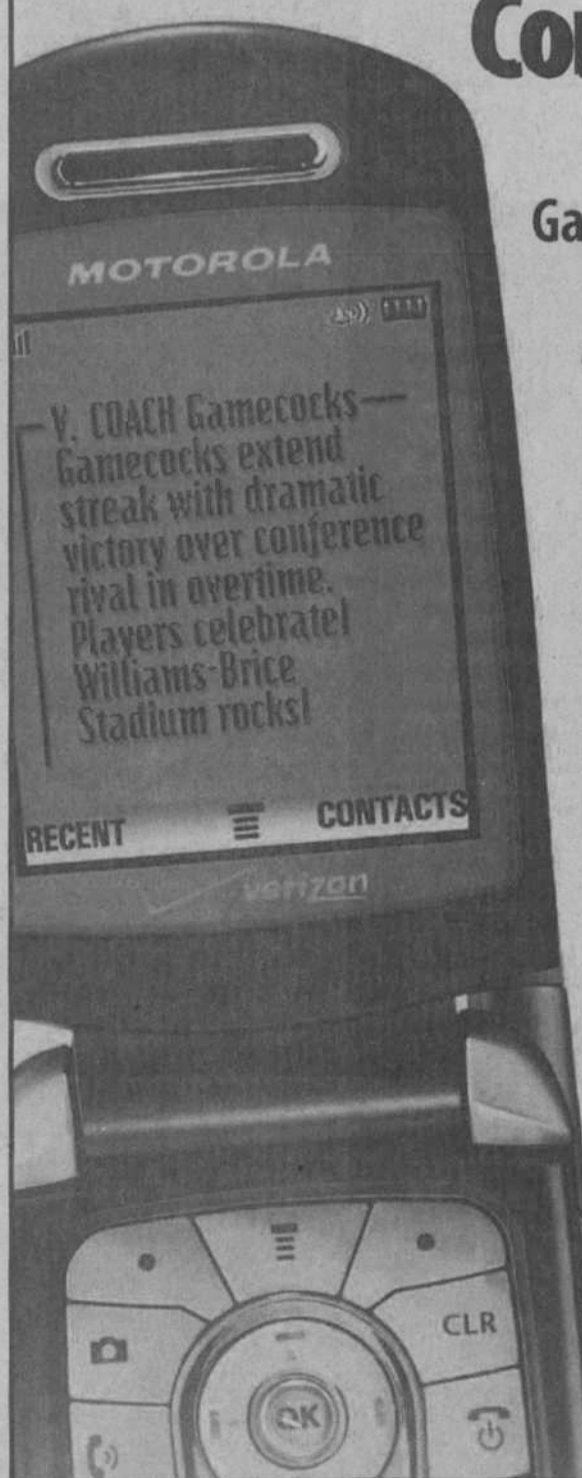
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