



SPORTS

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Game Schedule

MEN'S GOLF at the Mercedes-Benz Collegiate in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla.
WOMEN'S GOLF at the Northrup Grumman Regional Challenge in Los Angeles, Calif.
MEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Mississippi State, 7:30 p.m. Wednesday



Forward Kerbrell Brown goes up against Kentucky forward Erik Daniels while guards Mike Boynton and Tre Kelley play defense in USC's narrow defeat by the Wildcats. Daniels played well against Carolina's tough defense, shooting 7-of-11 for 17 points.

PHOTO BY MATT GOINS/THE KERNEL

USC succumbs to Kentucky in final seconds

BY WES WOLFE
THE GAMECOCK

The No. 25 USC men's basketball team (19-4, 6-3 SEC) came within one point of an upset victory at No. 9 Kentucky (16-3, 6-2) on Saturday, 65-64.

Both teams have had experience with close games during conference play this year, but the Wildcats managed to sink the right shots at the right time to win and take sole possession of the SEC East lead.

"Certainly it's a disappointing loss for us," USC head coach Dave Odom said. "I felt like our team played hard enough to win the basketball game. This is not just any basketball game against just any basketball team played in just any basketball arena."

The two teams traded the lead in the final two minutes, until the game came down to a last-second shot attempt by the Gamecocks. With about one minute left, UK guard Antwain Barbour hit his only 3-pointer of the game to give the Wildcats a 2-point lead. A foul on forward Carlos Powell gave

USC a chance to tie-up the game, but Powell only made one of the free throws. Kentucky turned the ball over on its next possession, leaving the Gamecocks with 22 seconds to make a game-winning shot.

However, the UK defense held tough, forcing USC to take a time out with only four seconds left. A shot by USC forward Kerbrell Brown after the time out hit the side of the backboard, and a rebound by UK guard Cliff Hawkins sealed Carolina's fate.

"It came down to one possession, and we didn't execute very well, and I take full responsibility for that," Odom said. "I thought our team deserved a chance to win the basketball game and we got it. That's what any coach wants—a chance to come in and win the game in the end."

Brown spoke following the game on the difficult nature of getting a good shot off in the final seconds of the game.

"Coach [O] told me to hit Carlos at the post if he was open but to shoot if he wasn't," Brown

♦ MEN, SEE PAGE 9



PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/THE GAMECOCK

Pitcher Melanie Henkes on the mound last season for Carolina.

Softball undefeated after first road trip

BY WES WOLFE
THE GAMECOCK

The USC softball team (4-0) started out its season in the Tar Heel State last weekend, playing a doubleheader at Charlotte (0-2) on Saturday and a doubleheader at North Carolina (0-2) on Sunday.

USC 8 - Charlotte 0

In their first game of the season, the Gamecocks dominated the Charlotte 49ers by a score of 8-0 in five innings.

Pitcher Aleca Johnson showed no rust from the off-season, as she threw a no-hitter against the Niners to notch her first solo no-hitter of her career in only her ninth career start.

Johnson had one shared no-hitter, with pitcher Stacey Johnson, last season. Aleca Johnson would have pitched a perfect game with no hits, no runs and no errors, but Carolina was charged with an error with only one out left in the fifth inning.

Catcher Ashley Smith was the offensive player of the game,

knocking out two home runs in three at-bats and driving in five of Carolina's eight runs.

USC 13 - Charlotte 0

Carolina had another prodigious offensive game in the second half of the doubleheader against Charlotte, again forcing the five-inning mercy rule.

The Gamecocks set the school record for home runs, hitting five out of the park and breaking the old record from 1994. Smith added another home run to her two from the previous game, while third baseman Samantha Jennings and shortstop Amber Curtis both contributed two home runs each.

Four was Curtis's lucky number, since she had four hits in four at-bats, notching four runs and four runs-batted-in.

Pitcher Stacey Johnson took the win, allowing four hits in five innings.

USC 3 - UNC 2

All of USC's runs in the first half

♦ SOFTBALL, SEE PAGE 9

Tennessee overruns women's basketball

	USC	58
	Tennessee	72

BY ELIZABETH A. DAVIS
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KNOXVILLE, TENN. — Shyra Ely had 12 points and 12 rebounds to help top-ranked Tennessee beat South Carolina 72-58 on Sunday.

Shanna Zolman scored all 12 of her points in the first half while Tasha Butts and Tye'sha Fluker each added 10 for the Lady Vols, who bounced back from an 81-67 home loss to fourth-ranked Connecticut on Thursday.

Tennessee (19-2, 8-0 Southeastern Conference) will most likely lose its No. 1 ranking in the new polls, but it is still atop the SEC.

The league's last-place Gamecocks (9-12, 0-8) lost to the Lady Vols for the 29th straight time, and Tennessee has won 52 SEC home games in a row.

The Lady Vols grabbed the lead in the first two minutes of the game and used a 16-0 run to fight off a second-half rally.

The Gamecocks were down 10 a minute into the second half when they went on a 12-2 run to tie it at 42 with 16:50 remaining.

Tennessee kept South Carolina scoreless for five minutes while scoring 16 straight points to go ahead 58-42. LaToya Davis had back-to-back steals during the run, scoring a layup

SEC Standings

All statistics are current as of February 8, 2004.

TEAM	CONF.	OVERALL
Tennessee	8-0	20-2
LSU	6-2	18-4
Florida	6-2	16-5
Auburn	6-3	18-5
Ole Miss	6-3	15-8
Georgia	5-4	16-6
Vanderbilt	4-5	16-6
Mississippi State	3-5	9-12
Arkansas	3-5	14-7
Alabama	3-6	11-11
Kentucky	1-8	9-13
USC	0-8	9-12

after one and dishing off to Brittany Jackson for another basket.

The Gamecocks wouldn't go away and cut it to nine with 4:27 remaining. Ely converted a three-point play to put Tennessee up 63-51, and the Lady Vols finished strong.

Lauren Simms and Cristina Ciocan scored 13 points apiece and Iva Sliskovic added 10 points for South Carolina, which was a dismal 3-of-15 from the foul line.

Tennessee coach Pat Summitt complained that her players were outworked and outthrustled by Connecticut.

The Lady Vols didn't let that happen Sunday, outrebounding South Carolina 58-31, which made up for their 28-of-74 shooting from the field and 18 turnovers.



PHOTO BY TRISHA SHADWELL/THE GAMECOCK

Guard Kelly Morrone drives past an opposing player in a game this season. USC has yet to win an SEC game.

Former SEC players excel in Arena League

BY JONATHAN HILLYARD
THE GAMECOCK

We now enter the month of February, the darkest of months for many football enthusiasts across America. Following the Super Bowl, people begin counting the days until kickoff in August.

This is not the case for many SEC football alumni, as their season is just beginning in the Arena Football League.

Players such as USC alumnus Stacy Evans, Auburn's Markeith Cooper and Tennessee graduate Andy McCullough are now thriving with the Arena Football League's Georgia Force out of Atlanta, Ga.

The league is a hotbed of players who don't fit the prototypical NFL mold but still have the talent and desire to play professional football. While bearing the same essential premise, arena football is much different than the outdoor game in terms of physical and mental factors.

Evans, a former two-time All-

SEC defensive end, has played in the Arena League for five years. He was the Gamecocks' starting defensive end his junior and senior seasons at USC in 1997 and 1998 and is a native of Laurens. Evans was signed as a free agent in the NFL as a rookie but was released before the season started. Since then Evans has found his niche in the Arena League.

In 2002, Evans was one of the most dominant players in the league, and was named to the AFL's All-Ironman team, a squad made up of players who play both sides of the ball.

Cooper, in his third AFL season, knew he would most likely never play in the NFL due to his 5-foot-7-inch, 175-pound frame. After playing running back and wide receiver for Auburn, Cooper tried to play in the Canadian Football League, but was released. He then moved to Atlanta with his wife and unloaded packages for UPS and FedEx.

He tried out for the Force in 2002 and made the team. He is now the offensive specialist for

the Force and finished last season with 28 receptions for 358 yards and five touchdowns.

McCullough, a former Tennessee Volunteer, is also beginning his third season in the AFL. In his first two seasons in the AFL with the Dallas Desperados, McCullough was the team's career leader in scoring, touchdown receptions and receiving yards.

Before being in the Arena League, McCullough had been on the training camp teams of NFL teams like the Green Bay Packers in 2002, the Arizona Cardinals in 2000 and the Kansas City Chiefs in 1999.

The AFL plays on a 50-yard AstroTurf field, on which the sidelines are replaced with slightly padded, but very hard wooden walls. Punting is not allowed under any circumstances, so a team must go for it or kick a field goal into uprights only eight feet in width.

The scoring is much higher than the outdoor game, making the league very attractive for of-

fensive minds everywhere. The AFL is also different in that there are only eight players on the field for each team at a time, and most of the players, with the exception of kickers, quarterback, one offensive specialist and two defensive specialists, play both sides of the ball.

The Georgia Force is now in its third year of operation in Atlanta but is adopting a new attitude this year. Vince Dooley, former national championship coach and athletic director for the University of Georgia, was named the team's advisory board chairman prior to the season and has flooded the board with big-time SEC names such as Heisman Trophy-winning running back Herschel Walker and former All-American and Chicago Bears kicker Kevin Butler.

With 18 team across the country and a contract to televise games with NBC, the AFL is becoming nationally accessible.

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