

INSIDE

10

pages of exclusive game
preview content

3

key storylines to watch
for Saturday



GamecockCentral.com

GAMEDAY

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WATCH & LISTEN

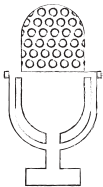
→ ON TV...



Saturday's game will kick off at 4:00 ET and will be broadcast on SEC Network.

Taylor Zanzour and Matt Stinchcomb will be on the call with Kris Budden on the sidelines.

→ ON THE RADIO...



Locally, catch the Gamecock Radio Network's broadcast. The station's feed is 107.5 FM; due to contractual stipulations, no USC athletic events have audio streaming online. The game is also on Sirius 106/XM 384.

→ ONLINE...



While you are not able to actually watch the game on GamecockCentral, you can still hang out with thousands of other passionate fans on our site.

Head on over to *The Insiders Forum* to get our live updates and analysis, discuss the game as it happens with fellow Gamecocks, check the main page and forum for the latest recruiting scoop and news, and much more.



FIRST ROAD TEST

By Chris Clark

After a disappointing performance at home against Georgia, the Gamecocks travel to Nashville for what should certainly be an interesting contest against a 2-1 Vanderbilt team.

The Dores are feeling good about themselves after dispatching Middle Tennessee State and Nevada and taking a top-ten Notre Dame team down to the wire in South Bend. Vanderbilt has experience on both sides of the ball and certainly enough playmakers to give South Carolina trouble. Even though South Carolina holds a significant historical advantage in wins in this series, many of the games have typically been close.

Each game in college football stands on its own, though. Our staff has cautioned fans of the Gamecock program not to take too much away from a scattered performance against an elite Georgia team, but there are issues that need to be rectified before kickoff for the Gamecocks to walk away victorious in Nashville and notch the team's first conference win.

We'll go into some of those keys for victory and analyze the game further in the pages that follow. With extra time for the Commodores, it's important for the Gamecocks to have a crisp performance and come away with a win this week against a team it's been expected to defeat.



"All gas, no brakes..."

What are your impressions of Vanderbilt after a close loss to Notre Dame?

Everyone, from South Carolina fans to players to the media members covering the program, probably took notice of that game as a possible sign that Vanderbilt is maybe better than they were believed to be prior to the season. While the transitive property doesn't apply to football, it is worth pointing out that while, yes, Notre Dame did handle Michigan in Week 1, they also received a scare from Ball State in Week 2, so I'm not sure we fully know how good Notre Dame is -- or Vanderbilt or South Carolina, for that matter.

What that game does tell me for sure, though is that this is a Vanderbilt team with some mental toughness to it. It would have been more impressive in that area had they found a way to leave South Bend with a win. But simply going into one of college football's most storied arenas and arguably outplaying the Irish, is worth taking note of. Vanderbilt is no doubt going to be salty, but despite losing the game, probably pretty confident heading into Saturday night.

TWO KEY QUESTIONS FOR VANDY...

WITH GCC'S
WES MITCHELL



GamecockCentral.com

"Effort, toughness, discipline..."

What are the biggest concerns for USC in this contest, and what areas can the Gamecocks take advantage of in this game?

Last season, Kyle Shurmur completed 27 of 49 passes for 333 yards and four touchdowns and the Commodores offense had no trouble moving the football on Carolina through the air. Shurmur is back, and has complete command of Vanderbilt's pro-style scheme. Shurmur, and everything that he brings to the table from a pure passing standpoint, to his ability to get the offense in the right plays, concern me for the Gamecocks. They'll need to find a way to get pressure on him and try to make him uncomfortable.

Vanderbilt's defense appears to be improved from last season, but - despite what we saw in the UGA game - the Carolina offense should be able to move the football this week. This is an aggressive defensive scheme, which could lead to negative plays for Carolina, but also should allow the opportunity for explosive plays. The easiest way to get a blitz-heavy team out of their comfort zone is to chip away at them with the running game and keep them out of obvious passing scenarios.

TWO KEY QUESTIONS FOR VANDY...

WITH GCC's
WES MITCHELL



**WEEK
4**

VANDERBILT

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Photo credit: Nelson Campbell - USA Today Sports

TOP PLAYERS

- QB Kyle Shurmur
- LB Charles Wright
- S Ladarius Wiley
- WR Kalija Lipscomb
- TE Jared Pinkney
- CB Ke'Shawn Vaughn

KEY NOTES

The Commodores took Notre Dame down to the wire in South Bend, turning the ball over on downs on a final drive attempt.

Derek Mason's squad easily dispatched Middle Tennessee and Nevada prior to that loss, and has all the makings of a tough out for USC.

LAST TIME...

A road game against Vanderbilt in 2016 was Will Muschamp's first at the helm of the USC program.

Kicker Elliott Fry hit a 55-yard field goal with 35 seconds remaining to put the Gamecocks up 13-10; USC held on for the victory.

CRITICAL GAMECOCKS



"We've got to tackle better."

MONTAC

STEVEN MONTAC

SAFETY

ENTERING THIS GAME...

Montac has tallied 8 tackles, half a sack, and half a tackle for loss through two games this season.

WHY IS HE IMPORTANT?

With USC's staff placing an emphasis on communicating better on defense, Montac will be critical in the back end. He's not the most vocal of leaders, but will be counted on to step up in that regard and to ensure everyone's properly aligned against an offense that will move around a lot.



"I'm glad he's our MIKE (linebacker)"

WILL MUSCHAMP

TJ BRUNSON

LINEBACKER

ENTERING THIS GAME...

The team's starting MIKE linebacker, Brunson has 11 tackles, half a sack, and half a tackle for loss this season.

WHY IS HE IMPORTANT?

Vanderbilt does a good job up front on the offensive line, and Brunson will be tasked with sorting through movement and fighting through blocks in traffic to tackle some tough ball carriers. He'll also need to be aware in coverage, helping out against those same backs and a talented tight end.



"We're focusing on dominating the line of scrimmage."

DOWDLE

RICO DOWDLE

RUNNING BACK

ENTERING THIS GAME...

Dowdle has 22 catches for 126 yards and a touchdown rushing, averaging 5.6 yards per carry. He also has 5 catches and a touchdown.

WHY IS HE IMPORTANT?

USC hopes to rebound from a poor rushing performance against Georgia by getting the running game on track against the Commodores. Dowdle will be a key component in doing that, counted on to break tackles and win some one-on-ones.



"Vandy plays hard, they have talent, you have to be ready."

EDWARDS

BRYAN EDWARDS

WR

ENTERING THIS GAME...

Edwards has 11 catches and leads the team in touchdown receptions with three. He's also been the squad's top punt returning option.

WHY IS HE IMPORTANT?

With so much focus from opponents on Deebo Samuel, Edwards is an undervalued commodity given his production. He'll have some opportunities in man situations and is adept at sitting down in zone and making things happen after the catch. He'll be needed.

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➔ BALANCE.



South Carolina's lack of rushing success against UGA was due to a combination of design, Georgia's efforts, and a late game deficit.

The staff wants to be more balanced and run the ball better the rest of this season, and it needs to start this week. USC's offense will really open up if the backs can find space and break some big plays.

➔ COMMUNICATION.



Will Muschamp has not been happy at all with the way USC's defensive players have talked with each other to get lined up and in the right positions.

With a Vandy offense who will move and shift to find numbers advantages, the Gamecocks have to ensure they're communicating well at every spot to get into position to make plays.

➔ TURNOVER MARGIN.



South Carolina and Vanderbilt both did well in early season contests in terms of taking care of the ball, and both were hurt in their last losses by turnovers against strong opponents.

Especially playing on the road, it will be critical for South Carolina to display good ball security on offense. It would be a huge boon to the team's chances to be able to create a turnover advantage of plus-two or greater by having the Gamecock defense create some takeaways, as well.



KEYS TO THE GAME

By Wes Mitchell

While the Gamecocks have owned Vanderbilt in the win-loss column during the last decade, nearly all of these games have been close with a handful of key plays in each deciding the winner and loser. South Carolina's current psyche as a team could be the difference in those plays going their way or Vanderbilt's way.

As for the actual matchups in the game, I'd contend that we still don't know a whole lot about the Gamecocks. Are they closer to the team that manhandled Coastal and made it look easy or the team that got run off its own field against Georgia? The truth usually lies somewhere in the middle. Same with Vanderbilt. They're given a lot of credit for almost beating Notre Dame, but it's the same Notre Dame program that struggled past Ball State the week before.

A lot of the talk from Carolina following the Georgia game centered around needing to run the football more efficiently and more often, and, fittingly, I think this game goes straight back to that. Carolina will need to successfully run the football early and often to both open up their receivers down the field and keep Shurmur and his offense off the field after he torched the secondary a year ago. Running the football is almost always a "key to victory" but given these variables, it seems especially important this week.

TRAEVON KENION

Kenion is a very intriguing talent for the Gamecocks. He has experience on both sides of the ball and combines a defensive, physical mentality with a pass-catching presence on offense. He'll be used similar to Hayden Hurst in the USC offense and could prove to be a willing blocker. Where he should do his most damage is as a receiver, where he has enough speed to get vertical and has very soft and strong hands.

DEREK BOYKINS

Another North Carolina product, Boykins is already put together like a player who's been in a college weight program for awhile. He's a thumper type who probably profiles as a MIKE or WILL linebacker in the Gamecocks' scheme, someone who can roam around and find the football. He's adept at avoiding or fighting through blocks and arrives at the ball carrier in a bad mood.

JAHMAR BROWN

What Brown lacks in prototypical size, he makes up for in length and ability at his linebacker position. He plays for one of the best programs in the state of Florida and has been very productive.

Brown runs well and shows excellent instincts in chasing the ball, while also being more than capable of using his athleticism to cover tight ends and backs out of the backfield.

“ I knew where I wanted to be and the type of environment I was looking for. ”

Q&A: TRAEVON KENION

The four-star tight end out of Monroe, North Carolina goes on the record...

ON COMMITTING TO USC

"Off the field, it's not that far from home. The coach (Pat Washington) is real. He's an amazing coach. I can see myself playing there."

ON HOW USC WILL UTILIZE HIS TALENTS

"They said they'll be using me inside and out. Tight end, but also splitting me out. I'm aggressive while being elusive, too. I know how to move. I can make plays."

RIVALS.COM'S ADAM FRIEDMAN ON KENION'S SKILL SET

"He (gets down the field) in a hurry and times his jumps to catch the ball at its highest point. Kenion has length and is a big-time target on crossing routes over the middle."





2018 ROSTER

MEET THIS YEAR'S
GAMECOCK SQUAD

1 Nick Harvey DB	26 Jaylin Dickerson DB	53 Ernest Jones LB	99 Jabari Ellis DL
1 Deebo Samuel WR	27 Ty'Son Williams RB	54 Jovaughn Gwyn OL	
3 KC Crosby TE	28 Joe Thomas DB	55 Christian Peltage OL	
3 Javon Kinlaw	29 JT Ibe DB	57 Jazuun Outlaw DL	
4 Bryson Allen-Williams LB	30 Damani Staley LB	59 Alex Deloach LB	
4 Darius Douglas QB	31 Jamel Cook DB	60 Chandler Farrell OL	
5 Rico Dowdle RB	31 Lavonte Valentine RB	61 Javion Duncan DL	
5 Keir Thomas DL	32 Kevin Pickens DB	61 Cameron Johnson OL	
6 TJ Brunson LB	32 Caleb Kinlaw RB	63 Blake Camper OL	
6 Josh Vann WR	33 Zay Brown DB	66 Will Putnam OL	
7 Jaycee Horn DB	33 Slade Carroll RB	68 Wyatt Campbell OL	
7 Dakereon Joyner QB	34 Mon Denson RB	70 Hank Manos OL	
8 Randrecous Davis WR	35 Trey Adkins WR	71 Eric Douglas OL	
8 DJ Wonnum DL	35 Daniel Fennell LB	72 Donell Stanley OL	
9 Keisean Nixon DB	36 Jonathan Gipson DB	73 Summie Carlay OL	
10 RJ Roderick DB	39 Dawson Hoffman DB	74 Dennis Daley OL	
10 Jay Urich QB	40 Jacob August TE	75 Jordon Carty OL	
11 Corbett Glick QB	40 Jason Senn DB	76 Jordon Rhodes OL	
11 Eldridge Thompson LB	41 Caleb Jenerette TE	77 Malik Young OL	
12 Michael Scarnecchia QB	42 Rosendo Louis LB	78 Zack Bailey OL	
13 Shi Smith WR	42 Alexander Woznick K	79 Dylan Wonnum OL	
14 Deshaun Fenwick RB	43 Parker White K	81 Darius Rush WR	
15 Evan Hinson TE	44 Sherrod Greene LB	82 Bailey Rogers WR	
15 Aaron Sterling DL	44 Ben Asbury LS	83 Chavis Dawkins WR	
16 Rashad Fenton DB	45 Spencer Eason-Riddle LB	84 Kyle Markway TE	
16 Bailey Hart QB	46 Patrick Reedy TE	85 Michael Almond P	
17 Javon Charleston DB	46 Noah Vincent LB	86 Chad Terrell WR	
17 Danny Gordon QB	47 Jaylan Foster DB	87 Kiel Pollard TE	
18 OrTre Smith WR	47 Cole Hanna K	88 Will Register TE	
19 Jake Bentley QB	48 Sean McGonigal LB	89 Bryan Edwards WR	
19 Brad Johnson DL	48 Will Tommie K	90 Rick Sandidge DL	
20 Joseph Charlton P	49 Matthew Smith LS	91 Shameik Blackshear DL	
21 Jamyest Williams DB	50 Griffin Gentry DL	92 Tyreek Johnson DL	
22 Steven Montac DB	50 Sadarius Hutcherson OL	93 Jesus Gibbs	
23 Korey Banks DB	51 Max Iyama OL	94 MJ Webb DL	
24 Israel Mukuamu DB	51 Donovan Wirt LB	95 Kobe Smith DL	
25 AJ Turner RB	52 Kingsley Enagbare DL	96 Josh Belk DT	



WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

It's the best \$10/month I spend along with Netflix- If you are a true Gamecock fan or graduate, you need to have a membership!

jamesleeuscpte2013

There is literally no better source of content that covers USC across the board. The staff is world class and always has their ear to the ground to provide consumers the best, most accurate content possible. To top it, all of the forums provided are more than just forums. They are a community of knowledgeable fans, insiders and family. If you're looking for the best Gamecock content, then you've come to the right place.

Gyandle

First class folks run this site; they are helpful and even fun to talk with. I truly appreciate this site.

hopegousc

Totally worth the money.

mrbrentharmon

For the most accurate, thoughtful, dedicated and personally-tailored coverage of the South Carolina Gamecocks athletics program, there is one clear choice -- GamecockCentral.

-vogtne

GamecockCentral has been and will continue to be the best site on the internet for Gamecock sports fans. Their in-depth and honest coverage is unmatched!

ChucktownCock2001

This site is unquestionably the best sports site on the Internet. If you love the Gamecocks and are not a part of this site, you are making a huge mistake. If you aren't already a member, come join us. We are ready for another #SpursUp..... and that one is meant for you!

BreakinDownFilm

Love every minute I use it...

JBSC88

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ABOUT US

I very much believe the reason for our existence will always separate us from other media outlets.

Gamecock Central's foundation -- our roots, our basic DNA -- will always be different than websites created with the sole intent of making a profit. Certainly, we have a bottom line, but all decisions aren't based on it. Of course, passion alone isn't going to satisfy our subscribers.

We have a tremendous team of insiders, analysts and photographers. They're all very skilled and nobody works harder. Together, they provide the most in-depth, accurate and professional coverage of Gamecock sports and recruiting.



"It's where the most passionate fans hang out..."

What do you get when you combine our unrivaled coverage and our passionate community?

An online home for thousands of hardcore Gamecock fans.

I'd like to personally invite you to join Gamecock Central so it can be Your Home for Gamecock Sports!

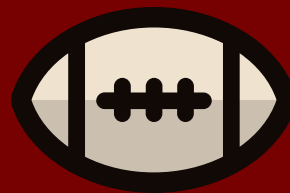
Join us now for great information and tons of fun!

Brian Shoemaker
Publisher

fun facts about GAMECOCK CENTRAL

* The site went online on August 27, 1998. We just celebrated our 20th anniversary earlier this month.

Over the course of the next two seasons, the Gamecock football team went 1-21. Our premium service went online on December 5, 2001.



The original name of the site was "CockFans.com".

We were the first online publication to be credentialed by USC's media relations department.



Each spring, we used to have a "I Love That Dang Chicken Golf Tournament."

We signed our agreement to join the Rivals.com network in December 2003 and moved over in January 2004.

r rivals

The website once had a group called the "12th Man Club", which was shut down after a cease and desist order from attorneys representing Texas A&M.

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