1-14-2013

The Daily Gamecock, MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2013

University of South Carolina, Office of Student Media

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Game Changer

January 14, 2013

Jeffrey Davis

/The Link/

Jeffrey Davis
Comedians top Carolina Productions spring calendar

Lawrence to take job at UC Davis

Thad Monroe

USC’s first-ever vice president for communications, Lianne Lawrence, will leave the university this semester to take a job at UC Davis. She said she’s been admitted to a PhD program and plans to study rhetoric and communication.

"Decision to return to the West” is an opportunity to top administrators, Telford said. Lawrence came to USC after serving as vice president for university advancement at Oregon State University.

Cost of performances greater than $4,000

Carolina Productions Spring calendar

Jan. 30

"I Love Female Orgasm; gender and sexual education lecture/comedy"

Feb. 5

"Parks and Recreation" star Nick Offerman

Feb. 13

"SNL" alum Seth Meyers

March 11

Dueling DJs (as part of Dance Marathon)

March 26

Nick Offerman (Non-Swanson of NBC’s “Parks and Recreation"

April 23

African drum and dance ensemble

Campus MovieFest finale

Main Street dorm project advances with sale, OK from commission

"Hub on Main Street" expected to open in August 2014

That Men... Thad Monroe

A city design commission gave the OK to developers planning to build a private dorm, dubbed the "Hub on Main Street," in the vacant Palmetto Center on Main Street — but it came with some conditions.

The concrete office tower at 1438 Main St. was sold to Chicago developers Core Campus LLC on New Year’s Eve, a move that real-estate analysts think could hasten the move for at least a five-story dorm, dubbed the "Hub on Main Street," in the vacant Palmetto Center on Main Street — but it came with some conditions.

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In Brief

**Palmetto Compress housing project gets rehearing**

Members of Columbia’s Design/Development Review Commission (DDRC) couldn’t make up their minds last week.

The question: Whether they should grant a rehearing after they rejected plans for a student housing complex on the site of the Palmetto Compress warehouse on Blossom Street in December.

The proposal would have turned down the historic building and replaced it with eight low, vinyl-sided warehouse on Blossom Street in December.

The commission’s rules.

Opponents said the right of rebuttal isn’t guaranteed in the commission’s rules.

Supporters of the rehearing suggested that the developer, Ohio-based Edens Communities, wasn’t given a chance to make its case.

The crux of the commission’s question was simple: Did it do anything wrong in last month’s hearing?

The commission voted 5-4.

Did it do anything wrong in last month’s DDRC meeting.

Because the project has been before the DDRC about 2008 and newer vehicles only; 2012 Harden Street savings account when the loan is established. Savings account required for membership.

And to boot, Amber Dean, 27, Keith Allen, 38, and Darrell Rowan, 20, have been charged with accessory after the fact.

**Dining at Russell House, Swearingen shuffles over breakfast**

At the Russell House, Marble Slab Creamery and the Great American Cookie Company have moved down to the first floor of the building.

In their place, Woodstock, a soup and sandwich restaurant, is moving in.

It features a yogurt bar, all-day breakfast sandwiches, baked breads, fresh fruit, juices, teas, and it should open this week, pending final inspection.

Steele said.

It will also offer cookies, fresh sandwiches, a vegan and gluten-free options.

Woodstock will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday.

**Escaped suspect rearrested after New Year’s getaway**

Michael Juan Carrell had an eventful New Year’s Day.

The 20-year-old was arrested around 2 a.m. on the 700 block of Harden Street in Five Points and, WIS reported, provided police with two different ages.

But what began as a relatively minor underage possession charge spiraled into a litany of offenses when the officer stopped to help another cop with a fight near Rosewood Street.

He parked at the BP gas station, then Carrell allegedly broke through the car’s back window and made a run for it. Later, his friends helped him cut and unlock his handcuffs, according to a police press release.

Now, Carrell is charged with escape, resisting arrest, providing false information to police, and being a person under the age of 21, drunkenness, malicious injury to property and petit larceny.

And to boot, Amber Dean, 27, Keith Allen, 38, and Darrell Rowan, 20, have been charged with accessory after the fact.

**Food truck, Woodstock new to USC campus**

Winter break saw a handful of changes for Carolina Dining, from Russell House, Swearingen Engineering Center.

At the Russell House, Marble Slab Creamery and the Great American Cookie Company have moved down to the first floor of the building.

Freshens, said Cynthia Steele, dining’s marketing manager. They’ll also be open longer — until 1 a.m. Monday through Thursday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Friday and 1 a.m. on Sunday.

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but the food truck, Woodstock, will offer smoothies, and as an added bonus, it’s now accepting meal plans, she said.

"It’s an effort to provide a vegetarian selection that “offers more than lettuce,” Steele said.

"Simply to Go" offerings.

Diner.

new vegan bar at the Bates Market Place with a bag of fruit for $6.09, or one lunch meal swipe; refined of fruit for $6.09, or one Market Place  with a bag

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concrete in South Carolina,” said Lesesne Monteith, an architect on the commission. And while some commissioners and members of the public who spoke said the concrete was designed to mesh well with the structure of the Marriott hotel next door, Jeffrey Zelisko — an architect with Chicago-based Antunovich Associates, the firm that designed the project — said the color scheme was designed to set the building apart. He also said it was intended to keep moisture out of the building.

“The intent is that it doesn’t look like an office building,” Zelisko said.

Still, when the DDRC approved the project, it held off approving the painting plan and deferred that aspect to commission staff, who will work with developers to find a solution.

The sale of the 456,000-square-foot building accounted for a big drop in the amount of available office space in the last quarter of 2012, according to market reports released by real estate firm Colliers International last week.

The vacancy rate for the lowest-quality office buildings, or Class C, downtown dropped 20 points in one quarter, to 28 percent, according to the reports. And the overall vacancy rate for downtown office space fell significantly, dropping eight points to 14 percent.

Plus, with more people living downtown, analysts expect more restaurants and student-oriented shops to crop up between the building and the Statehouse, the stretch residents would walk to and from campus, Free Times reported last week. It’s also expected to extend business hours on Main Street.

The project dovetails with a growing resurgence of the area that’s brought more Columbia residents in from the suburbs on weekends and evenings, with attractions including the new Nickelodeon Theatre, the recently moved Soda City market and the Main Street ice-skating rink.
GAMECOCK THE VOTE

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STUDENT BODY ELECTIONS:
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During the 2021-22 USC Student Body Election and U.S.C. Student Government Office elections, all dates, acts and ticket prices subject to change without notice. Subject to applicable service charges and fees.
Games, pep rallies, parade build energy for bowl game

Not all competitions played on field in Tampa

Sarah Ellis
SELLIS@DAILYGAMECOCK.COM

TAMPA, Fla. — They would’ve come for the game alone, but the thousands of Gamecock fans who arrived in Tampa in the days leading up to the Outback Bowl found that the city had activites and an atmosphere that would please beyond the stadium.

Before sophomore defensive end Jadeveon Clowney hit Michigan running back Vincent Smith to force a game-changing fumble, before sophomore quarterback Dylan Thompson passed to sophomore wide receiver Bruce Ellington for a game-winning touchdown, fans took to the beach to get geared up for the upcoming game.

The Outback Bowl hosted its annual Clearwater Beach Day on Dec. 30, where fans, bands, cheerleaders and even a few players gathered in the sand for an afternoon of live music, drinks, cheers and competition.

Redshirt junior defensive end Ashton Holmes represented USC in a key lime pie–eating contest, in which he handily defeated a Michigan player by consuming eight mini pies in two minutes.

Holmes’ teammate Marcquis Roberts, a redshirt freshman linebacker, cheered him on from the stage and afterward took the microphone for an opportunity to rile the crowd.

"Look, this (is) all we do — we win. All day, every day. Gamecock Nation, that’s what we do,” Roberts said, in apparent foreshadow of the team’s victory two days later.

The Kidd family travels often to watch the Gamecocks play, but this year was the first time since their move that the team has played in their new hometown.

"It’s really very exciting for us because we’ve been waiting for this. It’s always Florida, Georgia, some other SEC team (in the Outback Bowl), so I never really (got) excited,” Kidd said. “This is the first time since we moved here that they’re here, so it couldn’t be any better. This is right in our back yard.”

His 17-year-old daughter Annemarie described her father as “the biggest fan ever.”

Beads were thrown into the crowd, marching bands struted, and fans of both teams struggled to outdo each other with competing cries of “Game! Cocks!” and “Go! Blue!”

"We might put Greg in a drag show," Sarah Greer said, with laughter from the whole crew.

But Tampa’s drag queens weren’t the main attraction in Ybor City on New Year’s Eve, when Gamecocks and Wolverines came by the thousands and flooded the streets and sidewalks of the historic Latin district for a Mardi Gras–esque parade and pep rally.

"Wherever the Gamecocks are playing is special," Davis said.

And three years ago, they finally did.

"It’s really very exciting for us because we’ve been waiting for this. It’s always Florida, Georgia, some other SEC team (in the Outback Bowl), so I never really (got) excited,” Kidd said. “This (is) the first time since we moved here that they’ve been waiting for this. It’s always Florida, Georgia, some other SEC team (in the Outback Bowl), so I never really (got) excited.”

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Not all competitions played on field in Tampa

Cheerleaders and football players from South Carolina and Michigan participate in a pep rally and various competitions in Tampa, Fla., before the Outback Bowl.
night’s carnival-themed revelry. Donning a lavish garnet and black feathered Gamecock “victory hat,” Cline sounded her own signature cock crow among the crowd.

Cline was a bit generous with her prediction for a USC victory. She called a three-touchdown margin and said she looked forward to “a great year ahead of us.”

Rachel Price, a fourth-year environmental science student, offered the Gamecocks a slightly thinner cushion in her game prediction, anticipating a two-touchdown margin of victory for USC.

The next day, South Carolina beat Michigan with a thrilling last-minute touchdown, winning 33-28.

Price traveled to the game from Columbia with a group of 11 from Cocky’s Reading Express. They handed out about 1,000 books to kids at the Ybor City parade, she said, and planned to donate another 500 books at a Tampa library on their way home.

USC President Harris Pastides said he could not see enough of the fans’ faithful attitudes and willingness to trek down to Florida.

“The fans were here when even getting to a low-tier bowl game was a huge accomplishment,” Pastides said. “Now, coming to Tampa in a top-tier bowl on New Year’s Day ... they’re paying us back with their affection and noise.”

He and other top university brass, including Athletic Director Ray Tanner, men’s basketball coach Frank Martin and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs Jerry Brown, joined several hundred Gamecock fans at the My Carolina alumni carnival before the game.

Pastides said Tampa might be his favorite bowl site so far, praising the city’s food, weather and “New Orleans flavor.”

But, he said, “next year if we happen to be in the Sugar Bowl or the National Championship, I might reconsider.”

Expectations all around were optimistic looking toward the upcoming year, and with the New Year’s Day victory putting an exclamation point on the end of a historic season, Gamecocks had plenty of reason to continue the celebration they had started days before in Tampa.

“It’s a celebration of a great season, and I’m proud of our players and proud of the University of South Carolina,” Tanner said. “This is the best experience I’ve ever had.”
Next year, many USC students may be fighting for new housing. This time, however, the housing isn’t on campus. The Latitude Center, a building that has been vacant sat on Main Street, is set to become privately owned, off-campus housing.

This time, students, Columbia and the community are fighting for new housing. This time, a portion of Main Street is rundown and empty. We welcome all students, donors and critics to engage in an online discussion and promote the film. The idea is being tested at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Center Theater Group at the Ahmanson, the Palm Beach Oscars in Florida and the Public Theater, New York.

Some actors and directors criticize the idea, which they think does not really fit into the structure of a smartphone. Students may automatically turn on their phone to see who, for example, is sending them messages, without even sitting around them. People sitting around them.

The argument comes down to ideology. Americans, who are not so into protests and shootings in schools or gun violence on the streets, have a hard time in Folks. The United States government’s founders granted the United States Constitution a second amendment based on their ideological world, one in which each is such a great idea because it has become a habit for us to check our phones while walking, with friends or even alone. Some smartphone-addicted students would try an experiment like this. People in some classrooms can now enjoy the latest film, stay connected and avoid getting people sitting around them.

The goal of The Daily Gamecock’s Viewpoints section is to “the liberal rag.” On some occasions, we are, admittedly, all of these things.

It’s important to remember, though, that when it boils down to it, the big sign is not really determined by me or any other editor on The Daily Gamecock staff. Rather, what we publish on our page every day is determined by you. The Viewpoints section is comprised solely of the voices of our readers. It’s up to you. It’s up to the student body who choose to express what you think, to write what you wish to say. The Viewpoints section is comprised solely of the voices of our readers. It’s up to you. It’s up to the student body who choose to express what you think, to write what you wish to say.

Concerning the argument about relationship between citizens, state and the Constitution, I feel that it’s our duty to remind ourselves that we live in a society of laws and order. It’s important to remember, though, that when it boils down to it, the big sign is not really determined by me or any other editor on The Daily Gamecock staff. Rather, what we publish on our page every day is determined by you.

What is predictable, however, is the types of issues and opinions the wind will blow toward us each semester. While the new housing project is still in the works, we hope to continue to offer a forum for all voices to express themselves. We welcome all students, donors and critics to engage in an online discussion and promote the film. The idea is being tested at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, the Center Theater Group at the Ahmanson, the Palm Beach Oscars in Florida and the Public Theater, New York.

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Outback Bowl Champions

2013

Congratulations Gamecocks!
You order, they smash. Hand-rolled Angus meatballs and spicy, seasoned black bean balls are flattened in one swoop with the chain’s signature smasher and grilled just beyond the front counter. It’s a smash, not a squash, and the resulting flavor is, well, smashing.

Smashburger is Columbia’s newest burger joint — sitting just in front of Cross Hill Market. It’s a chain that’s grown from Denver and plays each location’s menu to the locale with a taste of local favorites. Columbia’s Smashburger opened next to the new Moe’s on Dec. 12 and has attracted students, families and professionals with a low-cost menu that perfectly caters to taste, nutrition and selection.

There are seven Smash-designed burgers, including mushroom swiss and avocado club sandwiches, as well as a list of add-ons and a create-your-own-burger menu. The Carolina Chili, topped with American cheese, chili, yellow onion and coleslaw, is Columbia’s tailor-made selection for $5.99, or $6.99 for the “big smash.”

There’s a small smash, a smash and a big smash. The smash itself hangs over the edge of the bun — with the pick of classic egg, multigrain, pretzel, spicy chipotle or the low-call lettuce wrap — and more than satisfies. In the create-your-own column, the smash is $4.29, and the big smash is $5.29. The seven specialty burgers are $4.99 or $5.99 for the smash and $5.99 or $6.99 for the big smash.

Although the barbecue bacon and cheddar and spicy Baja are tempting choices predesigned for deliciousness, the power of Smashburger is in each customer’s ability to play chef. Spreading avocado across a pretzel bun and adding applewood smoked bacon, perhaps with a pile of haystack onions, is only where the options begin. There are fried eggs, garlic mushrooms, fried pickles and goat cheese — smash sauce, spicy chipotle mayo and spinach.

Then, there’s the personal favorite: the black bean burger ($5.99). The meatless patty can be dressed with all of the create-your-own toppings — may I suggest the aged swiss and avocado — or, there’s the spicy Baja black bean burger set up with a long list of Baja specialties.

All of the Smashburger classics are also available with crispy or grilled chicken breasts — from the spicy Baja to a spinach and goat cheese sandwich with balsamic vinaigrette. Stack your favorite sauces and toppings, then serve on blue cheese, pepper jack or sharp cheddar, just to name a few, to create your own savory chicken burger.

The haystack onions, or very thin-cut onion rings, are also available as a side item for $2.29. Order them on top of your burger, or order them as a side or order them as both.

And, as if you’re not feeling guilty enough just reading this list of salty, sweet and savory combos, there’s one last thing that defines Smashburger: the Haagen-Dazs shakes. There’s vanilla, chocolate and strawberry, Sundrop and Cheerwine floats and a Nutter Butter milkshake or malt. Each is served diner-style with a silver cup of the extra shake, a dollop of whipped cream and a red straw. It all sounds wonderful, but healthful options are available, too. Not in the malt and milkshake showing, but in the grilled chicken and black bean burger, the no-dressing salads and even the smaller-sized burgers.

On a Saturday afternoon, the line wraps around the restaurant. A few scattered diners sat outside, while the others slid into big booths and half-table, half-booths that stretched the length of the restaurant. In just five minutes, customers from the back of the line were placing orders and moving on to the infamous Coca-freestyle machines, first made Columbia-famous in the Main Street Moe’s.

To-go customers line up just beside the front counter, while in-house diners take a number to their table. Members of Columbia Smashburger’s management stood at the kitchen line and delivered orders to tables, dropping off plates and plates of burgers and a couple of milkshakes to two excited children.

It’s a dine-in experience, without the added cost of sit-down restaurant dishes or tips. And, at the risk of sounding cheesy, Smashburger is a smash hit.
At the very beginning of “Zero Dark Thirty,” audiences experience a brief prologue over a dark screen — the voices of World Trade Center victims making emergency calls on Sept. 11, 2001. “This isn't a movie filled with surprises or revelations. We all know the story about the hunt for Osama bin Laden — it ends with the former al-Qaeda leader in a body bag. All of the enthrallment and tension within “Zero Dark Thirty” comes from seeing how director Kathryn Bigelow dramatizes the events leading up to bin Laden’s capture and take a more journalistic approach.

But at its heart, “Zero Dark Thirty” is pure entertainment, an old-fashioned espionage thriller that takes from real-life events. “The Hurt Locker” in 2009) avoid all surprises or revelations. We all know the story about the hunt for Osama bin Laden — it ends with the former al-Qaeda leader in a body bag. All of the enthrallment and tension within “Zero Dark Thirty” comes from seeing how director Kathryn Bigelow dramatizes the events leading up to bin Laden’s capture and take a more journalistic approach.

Little is known about her or her past, except that she’s not the kind of woman to screw around with co-workers. Obsession runs her life — an obsession that will make her go to any extreme to find bin Laden. Plenty of thrilling moments take place within the film, from gunfire to sudden explosions. But the movie doesn’t officially switch into thriller mode until the final act, when the sardonic Navy SEALs bring the gunfire directly to bin Laden’s hideaway, where cinematographer Greig Fraser switches the camera work between night-vision views and standard. The miraculous part is that he keeps the camera going through the action without getting too shaky.

This final raid isn’t played out like a generic action film. It’s shown in real time, exposing the realities of how things can go wrong, and that when deaths occur, they can be brutal.

In reminding us all of the time it took to complete this manhunt, Boal breaks the story up into episodes or sequences in the search identified by intertitles — “The Meeting” and “Tģadacticals,” for instance. After all, there are no Hollywood shortcuts in the real world of chasing and identifying targets, which forces the audience to be patient.

The real tension the movie presents comes from the price of the manhunt. Boal delves deep into the psyche of these characters and the stress that comes with their jobs, so much so that the audience can make a connection with them. “Zero Dark Thirty” magnifies all of the people saddled with their own taxing duties as part of the manhunt. It drives deep into the ethics. Bigelow leaves the stance on torture involving the accusations that the movie glorifies. The movie certainly doesn’t encourage the idea, but it contains some implications that some useful information was obtained using enhanced interrogation methods on a suspect. Bobigelow has made here a spectacular nonpolitical war film with little patriotism or rah-rah backslapping. Despite the knowledge of the story and its ending. “Zero Dark Thirty” is still a gripping and emotional experience.

**“Zero Dark Thirty” recounts the manhunt for al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden.**
Bon appétit — it’s Columbia Restaurant Week!

Just when you thought your post-holiday diets were safe, restaurant week has officially kicked off in the city of Columbia, serving up 11 days of local restaurant fare at prices that won’t flatten your wallet. While diners can dig into specialty menus from hometown favorites like Yesterdays in Five Points and Vista hot spot Blue Marlin, there are a few newcomers to this year’s table. Tombo Grille will be offering a three-course menu featuring items like fried oysters, roasted hen, veal meatloaf and homemade desserts for $29 per person, while Il Giorgione Pizzeria dishes up traditional Italian courses such as spaghetti carbonara, baked eggplant and homemade gelato at $25 per person. For $30 per person, diners at the Oak Table can select from ricotta gnudi, wild mushroom risotto, pan seared grouper and s’mores to create their own flavorful (and affordable) three-course meal.

— Compiled by Mary Cathryn Armstrong, Assistant Mix Editor

Restaurant Week creates low-cost menus

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“Spec Ops: The Line” is a surrealistic journey to the epicenter of a sand-flooded Dubai, inspired by Joseph Conrad’s “Heart of Darkness.” Despite that well-known inspiration, the game is anything but predictable. Its ending is a bone-chilling reveal; an almost nihilistic anti-drama that deconstructs the shooter genre and seizes the inherent ugliness back in the player’s face. It’s depressing, haunting and everything that a game about a bunch of marines never is. Echoes of “BioShock” run through the game, which end up interlocking in incredibly meaningful ways. In a generation full of games designed to make the player feel unstoppable, “XCOM” is refreshing—it beats the player deep into the ground and says, “Now deal with it.” No game this year made me swear at it more, and yet no game this year made me more elated when I managed to make a comeback by the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth. The fact that “XCOM” can evoke so many feelings of tension and horror by means of nothing other than the skin of my teeth.
6. “Dishonored”  Arkane Studios

Forget its bland narrative and shallow fictional universe; what sets “Dishonored” apart is its immediate level design. A spiritual successor to the design philosophy of Warren Spector’s “Deus Ex,” “Dishonored” offers so many options for how to approach any given scenario that it occasionally boggles the mind. Its stealth action is fast-paced and streamlined efficiently, with supernatural powers which serve as work-arounds for the most dull aspects of sneaking. Rather than waiting totally motionless for a guard to turn his back, “Dishonored” allows players to peer into walls and teleport directly past their line of sight. The game never forces the player down a single path. Despite playing as an assassin, even killing is entirely optional. It’s a unique take on an old-school design, one that rewards creative thinking and is highly replayable.

7. “Fez”  Polytron Corporation

“Fez” is about a small sprite character named Gomez, who lives in a 2-D world. All is well until one day he discovers the third dimension. Suddenly, he finds himself with the ability to rotate the cubic world he lives in, realizing he can exist on four separate planes. It is with this clever, quirky gameplay premise that this “2.5D” platformer begins. But where “Fez” goes from there is unbelievable. As it progresses, “Fez” becomes increasingly nonlinear, complex and esoteric. Eventually, it becomes apparent that the nature of “Fez” as a cute platformer is, in fact, a deceit. The game slowly but surely transforms into something its eccentricities have to offer, it will astound you yet again with the depths to which it is willing to venture down its own rabbit hole. It is completely and utterly insane. And that’s a compliment, to be sure.

8. “Sleeping Dogs”  United Front Games

“Sleeping Dogs” from “Grand Theft Auto’s” open-world design, “Ranman: Arkham Asylum’s” melee combat mechanics and the stylistic elements of Hong Kong cinema. Yet, for all of its borrowing, it is surprisingly unique. After so many urban crime games have featured American cities being blown up with all sorts of firepower, it is refreshing to play one set in Asia, with combat primarily focused on martial arts. The fact that the fighting is so satisfying, the movement so fluid and Hong Kong so gorgeously rendered (especially in the rain) it makes “Sleeping Dogs” absolutely worth playing.

9. “Mark of the Ninja”  Klei Entertainment

Don’t let its 2-D nature fool you, “Mark of the Ninja” gets right to the core of what makes ninja games so satisfying. And it does this while also managing to intuitively communicate the spiritual feedback, which is so key to the game. When hidden in shadows, the ninja simply changes color. When making noise, sound waves are visually cast from their source. These are subtle cues, but they are indicative of the entire game design. It doesn’t overcomplicate the metaphor a lot of stealth games manage to do. It knows exactly what type of game it wants to be and strives to be the best possible version of that game. As a result, “Mark of the Ninja” features pitch-perfect controls, a great visual style and a tautness that is seriously satisfying.

10. “Halo 4”  343 Industries

Handing one of the most successful and influential shooter franchises of all time to a developer other than Bungie Studios just felt ... wrong. But 343 Industries proved with Master Chief’s reawakening in “Halo 4” that it knows exactly what makes the series tick in regard to gameplay. Sadly, the game’s story, despite its ambitious end, ends up being a bit clunky. And while the Prometheans are an interesting addition to the list of “Halo” enemies (certainly a welcome alternative to the Flood or Brutes), they are no replacement for the classic Elites. But, tips aside, “Halo 4” manages to tweak the series’ combat in some clever ways and push the universe in some interesting new directions. Plus, it’s the most stunning emotional experience you can have on a console right now. Play it with headphones and the biggest HD screen you can get your hands on.
1. “Oz the Great and Powerful”
Director Sam Raimi plans to capture the same movie magic that made “Alice in Wonderland” such a hit in 2010. A prequel to “The Wizard of Oz,” “Oz the Great and Powerful” will see James Franco as an unethical circus magician hurled into the land of Oz. Michelle Williams will star as Glenda the Good Witch, while Rachel Weisz and Mila Kunis play the wicked witches of the East and West. Out March 8.

2. “Warm Bodies”
Director Jonathan Levine (“50/50”) will be teaching George A. Romero a lesson Beatles-style, proving that all you need is love when it comes to fighting zombies. Nicolas Hoult is a zombie named R, who saves a human survivor named Julie (Teresa Palmer) and learns there is still some humanity left within himself. Summit Entertainment will really be relying on this movie to make up for the loss of its recently completed money-grabber, the “Twilight” series. Out Feb. 1.

3. “A Good Day to Die Hard”
Valentine’s Day usually means it’s time to drag your insignificant other to see another sappy romance film. But if Nicholas Sparks’ “Safe Haven” sounds too mushy, might I suggest seeing the fourth “Die Hard” sequel and watching John McClane (Bruce Willis) dish out another “yippee-ki-yay, mother******”? Actually, in this sequel, it’s “Mother Russia” since John travels to Russia to help his son Jack (Jai Courtney) take down a rogue Russian leader who escaped from prison. Out Feb. 14.

4. “Oblivion”
Tom Cruise stars in his first science-fiction film since 2005’s “War of the Worlds,” and he really has been on a hot streak lately with his action films. In “Oblivion,” most of mankind has been eliminated, with Earth along with it. Cruise plays a drone repairman for an air force responsible for extracting vital resources left over from a war against a threat known as the Scavs. The visuals already look stunning, but can everything about the film be equally great? In theaters April 19.

5. “Movie 43”
I’ve seen two trailers for this film and even visited the official website, and I’m still not exactly sure what this movie is. Peter Farrelly (“There’s Something About Mary”) has assembled a gigantic cast that includes Hugh Jackman, Halle Berry, Richard Gere, Terrence Howard, Emma Stone and almost everyone else in

NEW YEAR REELS IN FRESH FLICKS

Identity Thief, ‘Movie 43’ among upcoming releases
Tyler Simpson
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‘Oz the Great and Powerful’

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‘A Good Day to Die Hard’

‘Oblivion’

‘Movie 43’
Best and Worst Movies of 2012

‘The Master’ takes last year’s top spot, ‘Red Dawn’ falls to bottom

Tyler Simpson
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BEST

5. “Argo”

The No. 1 spot on this list was incredibly difficult to fill since 2012 was a pretty great year for movies. I deeply enjoyed “Lincoln” thanks to the performance of Daniel Day-Lewis, and “Silver Linings Playbook” was a step forward from all of those schmaltzy rom-coms. Still, I would have to give it to “Argo,” because Ben Affleck has really made a name for himself as a better director than actor. With “Argo,” Affleck successfully takes an important historical moment in U.S.–Middle East relations and adapts it into a riveting chase thriller that also acts as a hilarious Hollywood satire.

4. “Killing Them Softly”

Audiences may not have exactly warmed up to director Andrew Dominik’s most recent attempt to pound on America with an iron hammer, but “Killing Them Softly” engages nonetheless. Set in post-Katrina New Orleans, the movie satirizes dog-eat-dog capitalism under the guise of a gritty crime drama, but in no way was its message toward the American recession and the 2008 Obama-McCain election campaign subtle. Equal parts visually gripping film that invites its viewers to do some soul-searching.

3. “Diango Unchained”

Now, I’ve always loved bold and daring films, and nothing says bold and daring like Quentin Tarantino. With “Diango Unchained,” Tarantino mixes spaghetti Westerns with blacktoplation in a film that reminds us that slavery within aristocratic gentility was indeed terrible, but presents it in a style that is provocative, filled with blood and nonetheless engrossing. Also, no other director can take such dark material and imbue moments of violence, blood and gore with such hilarity. Watch “Inglourious Basterds” and you’ll get what I mean.

2. “Zero Dark Thirty”

Never mind all of the controversy around the film’s view of torture, and let’s look at “Zero Dark Thirty” for what it really is a work of unsettling complexity about the hunting and killing of Osama bin Laden. It’s not arguing for or against the tactics used to track down America’s enemy; it views the snookums as solid and dedicated detective work. If there is meaning here, it’s up to the viewers to determine it. “Zero Dark Thirty” has taken several of the moments within America’s fight against terrorism and transcended them into an anguished, gripping film that invites six viewers to do some searching.

1. “The Master”

For a while in September, “The Master” looked like it was the film to beat during this season’s Oscar race. Though it failed to secure a nomination for best picture, it’s director Paul Thomas Anderson’s latest complex, thought-provoking film. “The Master” delves deep into masochistic psychology while also exploring blind obedience within pseudo-religion. But this movie is more of character study than anything, with Joaquin Phoenix giving the performance of his career as the drifting, brain-soured Freddie Quell looking for spiritual nourishment. Plus, the cinematography (the movie was shot using 70-mm film) was nothing less than drop-dead gorgeous, with certain sequences so hypnotic it’s almost like you’ve slipped into a vertigo-induced dream.

WORST

5. “Act of Valor”

Before people start bashing this selection, the reason I consider this film terrible has nothing to do with the brave men and women who serve this country. I just wish the Navy SEALs took a better way to represent their achievements than a film that makes actual war look like a generic action movie. This played out like one of those laughable recruit seminars that would make you fall asleep in high school.

4. “Taken 2”

I loved “Taken,” a movie that showed even an older actor like Liam Neeson can be just as fierce as today’s young action stars. But this hastily written sequel was boring and made watching a movie for arthritis medication, which 60-year-old Neeson looked like he was advertising during the fight scenes. If another installment comes out, I hope the bad guys kidnap both the wife and daughter, because then Bryan Mills might finally realize what a terrible husband and father he is.

3. “The Words”

Bradley Cooper is ex-soccer star and ex-romantic. He not only starred in the best romantic comedy of the year, “Silver Linings Playbook,” but he also starred in the worst romance of the year, period. He may be in line to take the Oscar for best actor, but he’ll want to forget this hackneyed and pretentious attempt at a romantic tearjerker. This movie could have been better if it hadn’t been so overconembled with meaningless plot devices.

2. “Resident Evil: Retribution”

For some two hours and three times, and I’ll say it again: VIDEO GAME MOVIES SUCK. When it comes to the Resident Evil series, the whole thing just doesn’t make sense to me. I’m not talking about the story, but the reason Hollywood continues to torture everyone outside the fan base. The acting was terrible, the plotting was poor, the action was relentless and Milla Jovovich seriously needs to consider new line of work.

1. “Red Dawn”

This was just another one of those rehashes of a decent movie that should never have happened. Never before have I seen a thriller that made less sense. Why did the North Koreans invade America? How did these high school kids gain military skill in such short time? Why the confusing opening and closing? A spiritual clue? How did Josh Peck lose that weight? We need answers.

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Hollywood, paired them up with 11 different directors and created a series of short films meant to be outrageously and offensively hilarious. It already looks to be one of the most original comedies created, but the hilarity could still go either way. In theaters Jan. 25.

6. "Spring Breakers"
"Spring Breakers" was actually released last year at a couple of film festivals, but it was never officially released for general audiences. It looks like it might be something more than pure titillation for guys, but it could turn out to be one of those surprise hits. Four girls (Selena Gomez, Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Benson, Rachel Korine) rob a restaurant to finance their spring break trip to Florida. James Franco also has a role as a drug dealer who helps the girls out of jail but expects them to do his dirty work in return. In theaters March 29.

7. "The Host"
After the overwhelming success of the movie adaptations of her "Twilight" novels, it didn’t take the movie industry long to try and capitalize on Stephenie Meyer’s other book project, "The Host." This movie is apparently more science fiction than romance, with mankind becoming hosts to parasitic aliens called "souls" that have possessed their minds. This movie also seems to have better acting talent, with Saoirse Ronan ("Atonement") playing the heroine. Out March 29.

8. 42"
So far, we’ve seen that this season has action, romance, science fiction and comedy to offer. But not one of those appeals to your taste, maybe a sports docudrama about legendary baseball player Jackie Robinson will. Starring Chadwick Boseman ("The Express"), the movie will focus on Robinson’s road to breaking the color barrier in baseball. Harrison Ford will star as Dodger’s general manager Branch Rickey, the man who saw something in Robinson that nobody else did. In theaters April 12.

7. "The Heat"
This winter and spring, Melissa McCarthy will be taking the comedy world by storm. America’s favorite comedic actress, who stole the show in "Bridesmaids," will be starring in not one but two comedies this year. The first, "Identity Thief," will have her star opposite of Jason Bateman as a con artist who commits identity theft and uses the credentials of Bateman’s character to live it up in Miami. The second, "The Heat," has her teaming with Sandra Bullock as police detectives who track down a Russian mobster. In theaters Feb. 8 and April 5.
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TAMPA, Fla. — As South Carolina players celebrated and reporters mobbed coach Steve Spurrier, sophomore quarterback Dylan Thompson walked across the field with both arms raised.

Thompson didn't even see sophomore wide receiver Bruce Ellington catch the game-winning touchdown pass he threw in the closing seconds of USC's 33-28 Outback Bowl win over Michigan. The sophomore said he "took a pretty hard shot in the ribs" during the play so he didn't see Ellington score it, but the roar of the crowd told him his throw had found its mark with 11 seconds left in the game.

"We haven't won one like that since I've been here, in eight years," Spurrier said.

Thompson's throw gave the Gamecocks their second straight 11-win season, continuing the program's recent rise to national prominence.

"We battled the fourth quarter, all the way down to the wire," said junior wide receiver Ace Sanders. "We showed this team is going to fight hard, and we'll be back next year to do the same thing over again."

The comeback win was a fitting conclusion to a tumultuous season. South Carolina reached its highest ranking of the season after its sixth consecutive win, a 35-7 demolition of Georgia on national television with ESPN College GameDay on campus.

But two straight road losses, to LSU and Florida, derailed the Gamecocks' goal of winning the SEC East. The following week saw a season-ending injury for junior tailback Marcus Lattimore, who was on the sidelines for the Outback Bowl.

Despite the setbacks, the Gamecocks have now won 31 times in the past three seasons, making this senior class the winningest in school history.

"People feel good about being a Gamecock," said athletics director Ray Tanner. "That's what it's all about."

Sophomore Bruce Ellington caught a 32-yard touchdown pass in the final seconds. But the junior was not on the field for the 32-yard game-winning pass, although he lined up for the failed two-point conversion that followed.

Ellington, on the other hand, had just two receptions on the day. The first, a 4-yard catch, came on the first play of USC's last drive.

"I was getting a little frustrated that I wasn't getting the ball," Ellington said. "[Teammates] told me just to be patient. The ball will come to you."

Junior Connor Shaw started the game at quarterback, but Thompson came on in the second quarter, completing four consecutive passes for 75 yards to set up the Gamecocks' third touchdown of the afternoon. Shaw returned for the next drive.

"We tried to tell Connor, 'It's your game,' and it was his game," Spurrier said. "But Dylan's going to play. He understood that. It worked out beautifully."

It was the junior who began USC's final rally. The Gamecocks trailed 28-27 after Michigan scored a touchdown with 3:29 left in the game and could not complete a two-point conversion.

Five passes by Shaw brought South Carolina to the Wolverines' 43-yard line before his nagging foot injury forced him out of the game.

Thompson, who attempted two passes in the third quarter and did not complete either, took over mid-drive.

The sophomore was knocked down by Michigan linebacker James Ross III as soon as the pass left his hands, but Ellington caught it at the 2-yard line and ran it in.

"I saw open area and Bruce Ellington is a Pro Bowl cornerback," Sanders said.

South Carolina finishes season with 11 victories

Paulina Berkovich
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Junior quarterback Connor Shaw (left) was pulled from the game in the middle of USC's final possession. Sophomore Dylan Thompson (right) threw the game-winning pass.
At 5 feet 8 inches tall, junior Ace Sanders is not the prototype of a wide receiver. But Sanders was one of the biggest forces in South Carolina’s 33-28 Outback Bowl win, finishing the game with three touchdowns. He had nine catches for 92 yards and scored on a 63-yard punt return.

The Bradenton, Fla., native was honored as the game’s MVP for his performance, which coach Steve Spurrier called “sensational.”

“He’s going to keep running the ball and getting open and catching it,” sophomore wide receiver Bruce Ellington said. “He’s just a great receiver.”

The Gamecocks took an early lead against Michigan, scoring their first touchdown less than two minutes into the game on a 56-yard pass from junior quarterback Connor Shaw to sophomore wide receiver Damiere Byrd. But South Carolina went three-and-out on its next two drives.

After the defense forced the Wolverines off the field with a three-and-out of their own, Sanders returned a punt from the South Carolina 37-yard line to the end zone. It was his second punt return touchdown of the season.

The junior said watching film on Michigan’s special teams paid off because, unlike other teams the Gamecocks faced this year, the Wolverines tended to back up and protect the punter, which gave him room to run. He added that once Ellington and sophomore Brison Williams blocked the gunners, no one else was down the field.

Sanders’ first touchdown reception came in the second quarter on a 4-yard pass from sophomore quarterback Dylan Thompson, giving the Gamecocks a 21-10 lead. South Carolina finished the first quarter with one rushing yard, but Thompson needed just four passes to lead the 75-yard scoring drive.

“We know if the ground game’s not moving, coach Spurrier’s going to put it in the air,” Sanders said. “I just told all the receivers to play confident, play to your abilities, and that’s what everybody did.”

The junior scored again in the fourth quarter, catching a 31-yard touchdown pass on the first play after sophomore defensive end Jadeveon Clowney forced a fumble on Michigan running back Vincent Smith.

“I came out with something to prove,” Sanders said. “But at the same time, I just tried to be patient and let the game come to me, because I’ve heard that when you press for stuff, it doesn’t really play out like you want.”

Sanders received a personal foul on the play for unsportmanlike conduct. Asked at the postgame press conference what the foul was for, Sanders said he never even saw the flag being thrown.

“I had my whole team land on top of me,” he said.

The junior finished the season leading the Gamecocks in touchdown receptions with nine and in total receptions with 45. Ellington, listed at 5 feet 9 inches, led the team in receiving yards.

“The Wolverines had a lot of 5-foot-11 (inch) guys around the field. You can ask any secondary. They don’t want to do that because we can run all day,” Spurrier joked after the game that all of the players, including Sanders, will be competing for their starting jobs next season, but added that the junior had “a wonderful game.”

“You probably wonder how we got him away from Florida and Florida State,” Spurrier said. “They passed on him and said he’s too little. But he can play football, that’s for sure. That was our good fortune.”

Sanders finished with 3 touchdowns, 9 receptions in Gamecock win

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TAMPA, Fla. — In an Outback Bowl that hinged on a handful of big plays, the man South Carolina head coach Steve Spurrier called the team’s “star player” in his Monday press conference had yet to make a single play of note.

But in the fourth quarter, sophomore defensive end Jadeveon Clowney stepped up to make the play that turned the momentum in USC’s 33-28 win.

A controversial first-down ball spot had the Michigan Wolverines driving from their own 41-yard line midway through the fourth quarter with the Gamecocks trailing 22-21. Clowney finally broke through the Michigan offensive line that had neutralized him for the majority of the game.

With a hit that junior wide receiver Ace Sanders said sounded like a “car crash” from the sideline, Clowney leveled Wolverine running back Vincent Smith, forcing a fumble that Clowney recovered at the Michigan 31-yard line.

The sophomore said he knew his big play would mean an even bigger one to follow for the USC offense.

Michigan coach Brady Hoke said the Clowney hit and fumble recovery was a “huge play.” It cost his team six points on the very next play, when junior quarterback Connor Shaw hit Sanders for a touchdown that put South Carolina up 27-22.

Sophomore wide receiver Bruce Ellington, whose scoring reception sealed the Gamecock victory with 11 seconds left in the game, said he didn’t see Clowney’s hit.

“But I heard it. I was like, ‘Whoa,’ and then I saw the replay. It shocked me,” Ellington said. “I kind of jumped when I saw it.”

Having been kept quiet in the first half by Michigan left tackle Taylor Lewan, Clowney said he was eager to step up for his teammates.

“I said, ‘It’s going to be a big play coming up, just wait for it,’” Clowney said. “It was a matter of time. I said, ‘Guys, I’ma show up; I’m coming. Just hang in there. We gonna win this game. I’ma make a big play.’”

Big plays are something Gamecock coaches, players and fans have come to expect from the sophomore defensive end. Tuesday’s big hit and forced fumble capped off a season of highlight reel plays that earned Clowney consensus All-American honors, making him the first Gamecock to earn unanimous first-team honors since Heisman Trophy winner George Rogers in 1980.

“Clowney’s a great guy,” Ellington said. “He does what he can do to help the team win.”

Clowney finished the Outback Bowl with four tackles, a relatively modest performance from a player who recorded seven tackles, including 4.5 sacks, against Clemson in the final game of the regular season.

Looking ahead to next season, Clowney is widely expected to be an early contender for the Heisman Trophy. Having already hinted at his intention to turn pro after next season, Clowney expects to improve in the coming months.

“I think I’m going to be a lot better than I am this year because I can work on my run stopping ... and just get stronger,” Clowney said. “So it’ll be a lot better next year. Y’all just wait and see.”

Sophomore defensive end Jadeveon Clowney (left) forced a fumble that was followed by a touchdown on South Carolina’s next play.
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Thank you for the many hours of practice and sacrifice starting in August and all the daily rehearsals.

Students and fans - If you see a name on this list you recognize, thank them for their service in the Carolina Band!
Florida, LSU among SEC teams upset in postseason

Nate Hammett
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No. 2 Alabama over No. 1 Notre Dame, 42-14, BCS Championship, Jan. 7

Alabama rolled over Notre Dame to capture its third national title in four years. The Crimson Tide posted four quick scores and never looked back, taking a 28-0 lead into halftime. The Tide ran 33 plays on the board before Notre Dame scored its first point of the night. Backup junior running back Eddie Lacy and freshman T.J. Yeldon gained more than 100 yards on the ground, as the Tide rushed for 265 yards and added another 266 through the air. Redshirt junior quarterback A.J. McCarron hit 29 of his 28 pass attempts, throwing four touchdowns and no interceptions. The Alabama defense stifled the Irish offensively, limiting Notre Dame to just 107 yards. The Tide's defense also recovered four fumbles and returned the interception for a touchdown.

No. 6 Georgia over No. 23 Nebraska, 45-31, Capital One Bowl, Jan. 1

After a last-minute loss to Alabama in the SEC Championship Game, Georgia managed to pull out a last-second touchdown to seal its bowl victory. This year's team is the third in Georgia history to win 12 or more games. The Bulldogs struggled to shut out the Cornhuskers with 140 yards. Georgia's defense led the Cornhuskers' rushing attack of 264 yards.

No. 14 Clemson over No. 9 LSU, 25-24, Chick-fil-A Bowl, Dec. 31

LSU got off to a strong start in Atlanta when defensive end Barkevious Mingo forced a fumble on the second play from scrimmage, and two plays later, the Tigers scored on the second play from scrimmage. LSU never trailed in the game until the final play, when Clemson kicked the game-winning field goal as time expired. The Tigers finished the game with only 219 yards, two touchdowns, and one interception. Louisiana struggled to shut down the Tigers with only 219 yards, two touchdowns, and one interception. The Tigers faltered down the stretch, surrendering 12 points in the final quarter. Clemson ran 100 plays over the course of the game and gained 445 total yards. Prior to the Chick-fil-A Bowl, LSU had not lost to an ACC team since 1995, when the Tigers fell to Maryland.

No. 12 Oklahoma over No. 10 Texas A&M, 41-13, Cotton Bowl, Jan. 4

Freshman quarterback Johnny Manziel showed the country why he was the Heisman Trophy winner for 2012 as the Aggies walloped Oklahoma. Featuring a rematch between old foes, the game was close heading into the half, with A&M holding a 14-13 lead. But the Aggies took control in the second half, reeling off 27 unanswered points to finish 11-2 in their inaugural season in the SEC. Led by Manziel, Texas A&M gained more than 630 yards of offense. The Heisman winner finished the night with 247 yards passing with two touchdowns and an interception. "Johnny Football" also rushed 17 times for 229 yards. Oklahoma quarterback Landry Jones put up big numbers of his own in his last game as a Sooner. Jones completed 73 percent of his passes for 376 yards and a touchdown. The Aggies' defense picked him off once and held the Sooners scoreless in the second half.

Crimson Tide wins national championship

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Bruce Ellington (23) had just one reception before his game-winning touchdown catch.

"Much of the credit goes to our seniors, especially the leadership provided by our captains — DJ, Swearinger, TJ, Johnson, Junior Cunningham and Shaq Wilson — which was instrumental in our success," coach Steve Spurrier told reporters. "We lose a lot of outstanding players but have a good nucleus returning for next season."

"I knew I had to catch it for the win," Ellington said. "I saw it coming and it felt like it was in slow motion," Ellington said. "So I figured there was a good chance of it running," Thompson said. "So I ran it in that way they do, " Martin said. "That's the awesome thing about Coach Spurrier and the football coach Frank Martin said. "We're going to compete the way they're competing right now." But according to Thompson, the comeback win capped the Gamecocks' season run of three straight appearances in the finals of the College World Series, including two wins, the football program has created an expectation of winning that basketball coach Frank Martin said his team will strive to emulate. "If the guy next to me is winning, then I want to win too because I want to represent our school the same way they do," Martin said. "That's the awesome thing about Coach Spurrier and the football guys. They're taking football to new heights here, and that's exciting to me, to build a program so we can compete the way they're competing right now."

"We're going to fight," Thompson said. "We're still going to get better."
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