Gifts are weird. For many, it’s the holiday season, and giving and receiving gifts can be complicated. When I took over The Daily Gamecock editor-in-chief position in October, it didn’t feel like a gift; it felt like a burden. But in retrospect, taking the job was the best decision I made this semester, and I have so many people to thank for that.

To the professional team of Student Media, thank you for your support, trust and counsel when I needed it. Most, this semester and all those previously. My confidence in this job has stemmed largely from you.

To everyone on senior staff, to whom I can never say this enough: Thank you. You are the reason that I can call my brief term as your editor successful. You are the delightful, infectiously quirky people that I’ll miss spending two nights a week with at production, plus all the scattered hours we cross paths in the newsroom. You are the content that makes this newspaper something I’m proud to be a part of.

Thank you for letting me lead you, for trusting me and for calling me a friend. There are only a few places in my life that offer a real sense of belonging, and the newsroom is one of them.

Briefly, to my immediate predecessor, thank you for this gift, as difficult as it was for both of us.

This semester did not go the way I planned, but none of them do. There are people I would never have met or become close to, experiences I would never have had without this weird gift of a job. So thank you again — to all of you, for everything.
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That’s been the problem for the Residence Hall Association this semester. Starting from the very beginning when orientation was cancelled due to Hurricane Matthew, the organization has struggled to get its senators all on the same board. Beyond the largely first-year senate, these struggles stem from the executive board, a 10-member elected group with various governing duties. RHA President Turner Johnson came in with a constitution he hoped to push through. Provisions in the constitution that would grant the president more power and rename the organization Residence Government created conflict among the executive members, who don’t get a vote on any changes.

Johnson’s constitution was tabled, however, and no constitutional changes have been made. Other debates over Cockstock funding and cancelled meetings stemmed from the same misunderstandings and a lack of communication. While Johnson held an informal vote on giving money to Cockstock over the summer, he pledged $7,000 to the event without their knowledge. More recently, a senate meeting cancelled for Tiger Burn resulted in executive board members contradicting each other over constitutional interpretations.

Johnson shocked the organization Nov. 28 when he left office due to a university policy violation. Before that, on Nov. 19, a senator started impeachment procedures against the entire executive board except Johnson. The charges have yet to be read. With Johnson out, former Vice President Sam Payseur has become acting president. The decision that Payseur was moving up and an election would be held to replace the vice president position was made after consultation with University Housing RHA advisor Tiffany Conde and other university administrators.

In all the controversy, the organization with a budget totaling about $100,000 has spent just about a quarter of its largest fund throughout the semester. Each on-campus student pays $10 in fees to RHA.

The Residence Hall Association senate meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m.
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Student Body President Ross Lordo spent much of the semester taking up a fight no one’s been willing to take on since the mid-1990s.

It would require an act of the General Assembly to make the Board of Trustees student representative a voting member, and a bill hasn’t been introduced to make that change since 1995. That bill never made it out of committee. The legislature is also already one year in to its two year term, cutting in half the amount of time to get the job done.

But as of November a bill has been pre-filed in both houses of the state legislature. Lordo is hopeful that the bill will at least make it out of committee so that a hearing can take place.

As student body president, Lordo attends all Board of Trustees meetings and can sit in on most closed executive sessions. However, he can be barred from certain closed executive sessions, and he cannot vote with the rest of the board.

In Lordo’s mind, that’s bad for students and trustees alike. He believes that adding a student vote would foster more trust and accountability.

“It equips students and a student body of over 50,000 in the entire system with the ability to have an opinion that is recorded for others to see,” he said.

Lordo acknowledged that the transient nature of the student body president affects the Board position but says he also hopes to combat that problem by changing the timeline of SG elections.

Valtorta expressed “personal” doubts about Lordo’s push, citing a study entitled “Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities” which argues “ways should be found to permit significant student participation within the limits of attainable effectiveness.” Valtorta referenced the same study at the August meeting after Lordo spoke.

Lordo made clear he still appreciates the sentiment behind Lordo’s desire to increase student participation.

While he is aware of the many challenges in the way of passing a bill, Lordo still has faith in his crusade. He campaigned on getting students a voting representative on the Board of Trustees, and he describes himself as “optimistic” when it comes to making substantive progress.
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This year’s freshman class of nearly 5,800 students marked an increase of approximately 700 new students compared to last year.

One explanation for the jump in enrollment, proposed by administrators such as vice president for student affairs and vice provost Dennis Pruitt, is the phenomenon of American universities undergoing a spike in applications following an outburst of athletic success.

In USC’s case, Pruitt refers to the phenomenon as the “basketball bump,” a nod to the Gamecocks’ Final Four runs, which ended with a women’s basketball national title. With each tournament win, the USC brand received more and more exposure across television networks and venues in Dallas, Phoenix and New York City.

But the exposure brought on a new challenge. Pruitt said freshman overflow has occurred before, but in previous years administration would rent hotel rooms for students through the fall semester. But with a building boom in off-campus student housing, reservations weren’t necessary this fall. To accommodate the overflow, the university contracted off-campus housing partners Park Place and Aspyre to volunteer 500 and 250 beds for incoming freshmen, respectively.

For the incoming class of 2021’s size, Pruitt also cited USC’s partnership with Raise.Me, an online service providing students with “micro-scholarships” for high school achievements. Partnered with over 225 colleges, Raise.Me is available to students at 56 South Carolina high schools. Pruitt noted the program’s popularity with students in rural and other “under-represented” parts of the state.

USC is still working to increase its international student population, and it is the university’s goal to take in 400 international students in 2021.

Admissions growth also meant more hiring by the university.

“All the people need service, and there’s jobs being generated by that. And more faculty jobs as well,” Pruitt said. “It’s a good news story for us.”

And when move-in day finally arrived, a record-setting number of parents watched their children make a home in their freshman dorms.

It’s “awful and great at the same time,” parent Bethany Miller said of her son, Wesley, on move-in day. “I want him to not want to come home.”

USC students and their fellow Columbia residents awoke on Sept. 17 to the news that multiple people were wounded in a shooting at the Empire Supper Club in the Vista.

The shooting was described by officials as an “intentional act” with two parties targeting each other. Five people were eventually charged in connection with the shooting at the corner of Park and Lady streets. They face charges ranging from attempted murder to accessory after the fact.

One of the injured was a woman visiting Columbia for the Gamecocks’ football game against the Kentucky Wildcats. Denise Massey, who was shot in the cheek and sustained damage to her carotid artery, was eventually released from the hospital and able to return home to Kentucky.

Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin addressed the incident at the time via Twitter, writing that he was “Sick & tired of this culture of senseless violence that grips our country.”

The Vista, one of Columbia’s largest entertainment districts, is popular with USC students and close to university facilities such as Colonial Life Arena. Many students knew of the incident and found it worrying, but not all are ready to blacklist the area when making their evening plans.

As an exchange student from Australia, Madeline Bolton said she planned to rely on the judgement of friends she’d made on campus who know the area better. She admitted that the shooting made her feel “a little unsafe” and was atypical from her experiences at home in Australia.

But when asked if the incident would affect her plans for going out, she said “probably not,” citing that others don’t seem “that worried.”
Follow these helpful tips to get through the most stressful time of the semester:

- Be sure to manage your time well by scheduling when you’ll study for each exam (include scheduled study breaks!).
- Be realistic about your goals - write down exactly what you hope to accomplish during finals week.
- Don’t pull all-nighters - be sure to get some sleep.
- Eat regular meals with plenty of protein to sustain your long hours in the library.
- Drink caffeine in moderation - too much will make you too jittery to focus.
- Take a walk or exercise to help clear your head.

Take study breaks - here are some great events to attend if you have a longer break:

- Meditation Event
  - Friday, Dec. 8
  - 12:30-12:50 p.m.
  - Russell House Patio
  - *If inclement weather, this event will be in the C.A.L.M. Oasis, Center for Health and Well-Being

- Extended Meditation Time
  - C.A.L.M. Oasis, Center for Health and Well-Being
  - Thursday, Dec. 7, Tuesday, Dec. 12 & Thursday Dec. 14:
    - 9-9:20 a.m.
    - 12:30-12:50 p.m.
    - 2-2:20 p.m.

- Instructed Yoga
  - C.A.L.M. Oasis, Center for Health and Well-Being
  - Tuesday, Dec. 12 & Thursday Dec. 14
    - 11:30 a.m. - noon
    - 12-12:30 p.m.

Consider scheduling a one-on-one stress management consultation when you return for the spring semester so you can get ahead of stress and get tips to avoid getting overwhelmed. Call 803-777-8283.

Student Health Services
Supporting the vision of a Healthy Carolina community
A diverse group of students, faculty and staff gathered at Rutledge Chapel this semester to remember students lost to suicide and offer comfort and solace to those affected.

 Speakers from different corners of campus life, from University President Harris Pastides to a student who lost her best friend to suicide, shared often deeply personal stories as well as words of hope and encouragement.

 “Let me say that all of us are wounded in some way ... and it is our goal to let everybody know that when we are wounded, and feel wounded, and feel alarmed, and feel anxious, and feel depressed that there is somewhere to go,” Pastides said in his address.

 April Scott, USC’s associate director of Campus Mental Health Initiatives highlighted the university’s counseling and psychiatry services as well as stress management and suicide prevention programs.

 Pastides echoed a similar sentiment but also said USC needs to expand its mental health services.

 “It is in fact my personal and the university’s mission to provide counseling and services in sufficient quantity and quality to serve every student, professor and staff member,” he said. “I’m not here to claim that we’re already there, and we will continue to build and to hire so that we can take care of people in a timely way.”

 A 2017 study found that 10.1 percent of USC students have “seriously considered suicide” in the last 12 months. The same study indicated that depression rates among USC students rose from 3.8 percent to 10.8 percent from 2010 to 2017.

 Student speakers shared their own experiences, and the event culminated in a moment of silent reflection as attendees guarded the flames of their candles against the lingering remnants of the day’s rain on the Horseshoe.

 “I really felt like our student body as well as faculty and staff came together ... I feel like this is a good way to lay the foundation of community around our university,” fourth-year mass communications student Corbin Landers said.

 Landers, one of the vigil’s organizers, worked closely with the Graduate Student Association, mental health awareness organization Active Minds and USC’s Student Government to put together the event. They were inspired after the death of a student in Gambrell Hall in October.

 Third-year experimental psychology student Katie Cohen, who serves as SG’s secretary of health and wellness, was also part of the organizing team.

 “I hope that [attendees] know that they’re supported and know that there are resources for students that are struggling,” she said.

 Illustration by Maggie Neal

 Campus focus shifts to mental health

 Larissa Johnson and Mary Ramsey

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First-year sport and entertainment management student Dom D’auria heard about the incident at that weekend’s football game, and he acknowledged the incident would make him think twice about visiting the district. “I’d probably want to stay away from there,” he said.

Grace Wilson, a University of Georgia student in town that weekend to see D’auria, expressed concern for her friend’s wellbeing. “I think it affects how I feel about him going to those areas,” she said.

Empire Supper Club, which was shut down as a “public nuisance” following the shooting, remains closed. Owner Joe Stovall protested the closure, and he was represented by former state legislator Bakari Sellers. Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook met with Stovall and Sellers, but he did not reverse his decision and called the closure “final.”

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It’s definitely for the food, it’s all for the food.” — Travis Zuidema, fourth-year chemistry and art history student

“Cheers to good friends, good times and good music. God bless country music.” — Thomas Rhett

“Korean culture is steeped in great tradition and this festival focuses on the artistic contributions that Korea has made to society.” — Brian Shelton, co-host of the Korean Festival,

“Pride means being yourself, it means being who you love and doing what you love for all the people around you and connecting with other people around you.” — Ashlyn Morris, third-year journalism student

“Cockchella: It takes a lot of guts to come up in front of people and put yourself out there.” — Nick Hooks, second-year political science student and chairman of Student Government’s Multicultural Affairs Committee

“Cockstock: He started out with a very repetitive set that made you feel like you were in a trance, but every now and then you could pop out of that trance and dance.” — Vasco Madrid, first-year computer science student

“Foo Fighters: Over the entire course of the show I was holding [the poster] up and finally at the encore Dave Grohl brought me on stage to play with the Foo Fighters. It hasn’t hit me yet.” — Pierce Edge, second-year student

“Student Choreography Showcase: I have never been more nervous in my life than when my choreography goes out onstage because I have no control over it. I created it, I made it, but it’s gone.” — Emma Morris, fourth-year dance and environmental science student

“Cat Cafe Opening: A man only gets so many opportunities in his lifetime to make a real change and I felt that this was one of them so I took it.” — Jaime Andres Ortega, co-owner of Catitude

“Columbia Rocks for Puerto Rico: Any time that I can help anybody out in any situation is always good for me.” — Deron Hunter, lead vocalist for band Jeremy’s Ten

“Step Show: It has the potential to display a whole cultural [minority] that sometimes goes completely unnoticed here at the university.” — Harold Summers, Phi Beta Sigma leader
Local photographer Aaron Smalls created a new Instagram account called Faces of Columbia to display the positive aspects of the city from a local’s perspective.

“I really wanted to help people showcase more of what they like about Columbia,” Smalls said.

Smalls has been passionate about art since he was young. He was first introduced to photography in high school but didn’t pick it up until after he became less interested in drawing and visual art.

Smalls’ favorite type of photography showcases people and fashion.

“For me, you can tell a lot about a person by looking into their eyes. I mean, they say that’s the window to the soul,” Smalls said.

Faces of Columbia came from an older idea Smalls had while working as a contractor overseas. At the time, Smalls wanted to do a series called Faces of War that would support the troops while showing the realities of war-torn areas.

Smalls realized that people in Columbia need to focus on the valuable aspects of the city. He said people tend to express the negative even though there are always positive qualities to celebrate.

“It’s just really about building a community and actually pushing things that people love about Columbia into light,” Smalls said.

Smalls hopes that his short conversations with subjects gives people a chance to share stories about themselves or give information about a business they own that others in the community might be interested in.

He plans on hosting one or two meet-ups per month around the city to encourage people to be a part of his project.

“People can actually come out, talk to each other, meet new people, maybe learn some new things about Columbia,” Smalls said.

Smalls’ future goal for Faces of Columbia is to put the photos together in a book and use the profits to benefit the Columbia community. He also hopes to have a show in a museum one day. Smalls envisions the idea to expand beyond Columbia and become a statewide or national project, all in the pursuit to connect humans and showcase appreciated aspects of shared communities.

“Sometimes as humans, we express more of the negative versus what we love ... I definitely feel there is a need to just bring some positive energy,” Smalls said.
When creators of entertainment content buy rights to a story that was originally written by another person, it is generally understood that the new owners of the intellectual property will take some creative liberties with the work. These liberties should not, however, extend to portraying sex scenes in a way that strays from the author’s initial intentions.

It is unethical to twist the tone and purpose of the original scene in such a way that it appears as sexual assault to the viewers.

For example, HBO’s “Game of Thrones” inaccurately portrays a sex scene between Jaime and Cersei Lannister. In “A Storm of Swords,” George R. R. Martin clearly indicates that Cersei — though not agreeing to Jamie’s first advances — does consent to having sex with Jaime before they actually do. By contrast, in the television show, Cersei explicitly says “no” several times and repeatedly asks Jaime to stop making advances, but he does so regardless. There is never any indication that Cersei gave consent, making it rape — a large divergence from the nature of the scene in the original story.

If altering the nature of a sex scene from book to screen advanced the plot more efficiently or added to characterization more effectively, it could be argued that the change was necessary in making the transition from book to television or movie. But this is rarely the case, and it cannot be argued as such for the “Game of Thrones” scene. This is because the creators and directors behind the show have been relatively silent on the matter, and one would think that if the scene was shot in such a way with some kind of justifiable creative purpose, they would speak to that publicly. Additionally, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau (Jaime Lannister) and Lena Headey (Cersei Lannister) both said that there was no communication between the actors and the creators specifically indicating that they were shooting a rape scene.

It would be reasonable to conclude, then, that the only reason to leave out Cersei’s words of consent was for the shock value.

If any scene is altered to become one portraying sexual assault for no reason other than shock value, they are glorifying a horrific experience in many people’s lives, which is counterproductive to the ultimate mission of raising awareness about the problem and trying to make sexual assault significantly less prevalent.

It’s a mission that those involved in entertainment media play an integral role in. We must ask them to embrace this role with pride instead of throwing it away in favor of cheaply earned audience reactions.
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A'ja Wilson shoots a free throw

Foo Fighters at Colonial Life Arena

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Leland McElveen / THE DAILY GAMECOCK
I met up with Cat Galan on the same day she and her bandmates were to open up for Atlas Road Crew at Main Street Public House. She’s a second-year music performance student at USC, and she focuses on the violin.

Galan began classical training at the age of 5 with her two brothers, but she is the only one who stuck with it.

USC professor William Terwilliger teaches violin at the School of Music and has been working with Galan since she was in high school.

“I think the world of Catherine ... in fact, her whole family is very talented,” Terwilliger said.

Both Terwilliger and Galan described her parents as “very supportive” of the kids’ musical endeavors.

Galan’s instrumental expertise is similar to language proficiency in that there are a couple things in which she is fluent — voice and violin — but there are others in which she dabbles, including guitar, cello and piano.

One of Galan’s major focuses right now is the band she’s in, Bellavida, meaning “beautiful life.” Bellavida has been together for a little over two years, and Galan herself was the last member to join. Her understanding of classical violin adds a unique element to the band’s sound.

Bellavida started off as many groups do: performing covers. But they crossed the threshold that most young bands don’t — writing original music and rehearsing on a consistent basis.

“We had regular practice and songwriting and stuff like that, so we were pretty serious about it so that was new for me actually, but I grew to really love it,” Galan said.

And taking the music seriously has paid off. They now have a manager, Trevor Guyton, and last September the band released their first EP, “Letters to Rose.”

In terms of longterm goals, the band has different ideas about what may be in store. Galan and her brother like to keep a practical mindset while other members aim high.

“Logan and Blake are shooting far and thinking ahead, which I think is great ... I’m just kind of thinking one step at a time,” Galan said.

As for the music itself, Bellavida is relatively flexible about what genre they fall into. The band has been described as “acoustic-driven rock” and indie pop-rock, but Galan doesn’t see the group as fitting into one particular category.

Galan is young, relatively speaking, and from this vantage point her possibilities seem endless. Though she may like to keep a cautious optimism about her, she’s already won people over — people who think she has what it takes to go far, like Terwilliger and Guyton.

Without really trying, she’s won me over too. I’m convinced that Cat Galan can take this music thing as far as she wants it to go.
The past semester in Carolina Productions

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Look out for our Spring Calendar for information on next semester's events
Bentley completes first season as starter

Growing up in nearby Duncan, South Carolina, South Carolina quarterback Jake Bentley has strong ties to the Spartanburg area.

But Bentley didn’t let those ties get in the way of a victory against the Terriers, leading the Gamecocks to a 31-10 victory for their eighth and last win of the regular season.

The first-year starter spent one year at James F. Byrnes High School before moving to Opelika, Alabama. His father, Bobby Bentley, who accepted a coaching position at Auburn prior to becoming the running backs coach for South Carolina in 2015, is also a Byrnes alumus.

“It’s pretty cool growing up (in the area) seeing Wofford’s stuff,” Bentley said. “They just got a new basketball facility so they’ve got a lot of good stuff going at their school.”

For Bentley, defeating Wofford and other surrounding schools in the Carolinas are all included in the team’s “Win the State” mantra.

“For me, Coach Muschamp and, I think, everyone gets wrapped up in ‘winning the State’ as the game of the year,” Bentley said prior to the matchup. “If you look at it, we take both Carolinas as one. If you look at NC State ... and Wofford, it’s another chance for us to win the state.”

Bentley said that veterans who played in South Carolina’s one-point loss to the Citadel in 2015, including Hayden Hurst and Skai Moore, helped younger players like himself stay focused in the intra-state matchup with the Terriers.

“I think the older guys in the locker room know that were here when (South Carolina) played the Citadel,” Bentley said. “They know what it takes to win a game like this, stay focused, and to treat this game no different than any other week of the season.”

Starting in all 12 games this season for South Carolina, Bentley’s statistics certainly improved in some regards, but there was also a sign of a the “sophomore slump” for the second-year starter.

Bentley (19) threw 16 touchdowns in 12 games in 2017.

OUTBACK BOUND

Sunday was like Christmas for many college football fans who found out which bowl game their teams will play in this postseason.

For the Gamecocks and their fans, the news was something they’ve heard before.

On Jan. 1 at noon, South Carolina will take on a familiar foe in the Michigan Wolverines.

This will be the first matchup between these two teams since 2013 when the Gamecocks took on the Wolverines in the Outback Bowl.

As almost every college football
fan knows, that game in 2013 was also when Jadeveon Clowney delivered the “hit heard 'round the world.” This game displays two completely different teams compared to the 2013 squads, but it still has all the makings of a highly contested ball game.

This matchup features two teams that both finished with eight wins on the season.

For Gamecock fans, eight wins is a sign of improvement and shows that the program is trending in the right direction.

“I’d like to congratulate head coach Will Muschamp for his leadership of our football program,” said athletics director Ray Tanner. “It’s a compliment to him, his staff and the players for the tremendous strides we’ve made over the past two years, and their hard work has been rewarded with a New Year’s Day bowl.”

For Wolverine fans, eight wins was not the desired outcome.

After starting the year with four straight wins and cracking the Top 10, Michigan was riding high and hoping that this was its year. With losses to Michigan State and Penn State in a three-week span, things began to fall off for the Wolverines. After losing their starting quarterback Wilton Speight to a neck injury, the Wolverines could never quite get back on track. The Wolverines are currently on a two-game skid and will look to end their season on a high note against the Gamecocks.

South Carolina was able to find more success on the field this year compared to last season’s 6-7 campaign. A large part of its success came from a defensive standpoint. Compared to last year’s defense, the Gamecocks have improved in key areas that hurt them last season. For the year, South Carolina led the SEC in turnovers forced with 23, increased its sack total and turnover margin and decreased its points per game allowed and rushing yards — all areas that are key to winning close ballgames.

The offense would sputter at times, but more times than not, the defense has been able to hold the weight and handle tough situations this season.

Another bonus for the Gamecocks will be the extra 15 bowl practices that come with the game. South Carolina is no doubt still in the middle of a rebuild, but head coach Will Muschamp knows that this game is an opportunity to get better and to become the seventh team in school history to win nine or more games in a season.

With 70 percent of the roster made up of freshmen and sophomores, this extra game allows the Gamecocks the opportunity to improve, Muschamp said.

“As much as anything, football is a developmental game,” Muschamp said. “Probably the first three or four practices will be strictly our underclassmen to continue to work and develop those guys ... It’s an opportunity for these guys to take a huge step forward and feel good about themselves going in the offseason and going in the spring ball.”

Competition for starting roles will be more tough at some positions for the Outback Bowl. Muschamp expects Rico Dowdle, Shi Smith and K.C. Crosby to all be healthy for the game. All three of these players are capable of making a statement. “We’re there to win the game, the fun’s in winning. If you don’t win, they give you all these nice bowl sweats, and you don’t want to wear them. You might as well win the game, and that’s what we’re going to do,” Muschamp said.

The official time and date for the Outback Bowl is Jan. 1 at noon on ESPN2.
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Baseball welcomes Meade, top recruits

Carson Mason
@CARSONANNMASON

The South Carolina baseball team welcomed in a slew of new additions this fall, including new pitching coach Skylar Meade and a recruiting class that was ranked No. 5 in the nation by Baseball America on Sept. 12.

The class trailed only Vanderbilt, Florida, Arkansas and Arizona State with the fourth-highest ranking by Baseball America in the SEC.

According to GamecocksOnline, this is the eighth straight season the Gamecocks’ recruiting class has been ranked by Baseball America, including four top-10 rankings in that span.

Eighteen new players joined the Gamecocks this fall to play under first-year head coach Mark Kingston, who was hired on June 30 after three years as the head coach at South Florida. While in Tampa, Kingston and the Bulls made

Samuel, Allen-Williams to return for 2018

Carson Mason
@CARSONANNMASON

After a season filled with several injuries to key starters, the South Carolina football team will see the return of star wide receiver Deebo Samuel and linebacker Bryson Allen-Williams in 2018.

Samuel, who broke his left leg during the third quarter of South Carolina’s loss to Kentucky, and Williams, who injured his shoulder against Louisiana Tech, both announced their returns via Twitter.

“GAMECOCKS COUNTRY we got one more ride and it’s going to be one to remember,” Samuel Tweeted. “I love you all.. I’ll be back 2018 to give you the summary!!”

“... I will use my redshirt and will stay on for my RS Senior season,” Allen-Williams Tweeted on Sept. 23.

Samuel has dealt with injuries throughout his career at South Carolina, playing in only 18 games over the past three seasons. A hamstring injury caused him to only see action in five games his freshman year, and a recurrence of the injury sidelined him in 2016 for three games.

There was a chance Samuel could’ve returned towards the end of this season, but he suffered a sprained foot the week before Nov. 5 while rehabilitating his original injury and will not play again this season.

Gamecock fans were saddened that Samuel and Allen-Williams could not aid the team against Clemson, but are excited for the return of an NFL caliber wide receiver and a productive team-leading linebacker.

Through the three games, Samuel recorded 250 receiving yards, three receiving touchdowns, two kickoff returns for touchdowns and a rushing touchdown. Even with limited time on the season, Samuel still leads the team in touchdowns, and his 474 all-purpose yards were not surpassed until the Gamecocks’ game against Georgia.

In his Twitter post, Samuel seemed optimistic about returning after this year’s season-ending injury.

“I write this with my head held high now with a smile on my face cause I’m coming back and I’m coming back better than ever with so much passion and fire in my soul,” Samuel said.

South Carolina head coach Will Muschamp said he knew about Samuel’s announcement on Nov. 5, but wanted to let the player announce his own news.

“Obviously, we’re excited,” Muschamp said. “I think it says a lot about our program to have guys like Bryson Allen-Williams and Deebo Samuel — guys that are excited about coming back to South Carolina. They see what we’re building, they see what’s happening and they see the support that we have and they want to be Gamecocks. That’s exciting.”
McCaskill leads women’s soccer to Final Four

Being a great athlete is an understatement for South Carolina’s Savannah McCaskill, who helped lead the women’s soccer team to its first Final Four appearance in program history this season.

The senior forward has earned many accolades in her women’s soccer career, including being named the SEC Offensive Player of the Year and NSCAA All-South Region First Team.

While McCaskill has significantly impacted the South Carolina women’s soccer team the past three seasons and currently during her final season, leading the team with seven goals, she has not taken anything for granted.

McCaskill said she owes the creation of the soccer program to both of her coaches: Shelley Smith and Jamie Smith.

“It’s come so far since they’ve gotten here,” McCaskill said. “And just to be able to come in and play for them and really be part of the family is amazing.”

Ever since she was 7 years old, McCaskill’s vision was to play soccer at the collegiate level at a Division I school.

Her first promise to herself was to make an impact instantly.

McCaskill’s early soccer days consisted of playing travel ball and traveling from Greenville and Sumter to Columbia. She became accustomed to doing schoolwork while on the road in order to put her energy into soccer.

She began to develop a deeper passion for soccer and create valuable leadership skills. Before her high school team would get ready to play, McCaskill would write inspirational quotes on paper to put in her teammates’ cleats.

Leadership became second nature to McCaskill.

“She always knew she was going to be a leader,” Tina McCaskill, Savannah’s mother.

McCaskill grew up as an only child, leading her to develop her own goals and aspirations at a young age. Both of McCaskill’s parents influenced her to work hard for what she wants.

“Just really instilling that in me when I was younger has been a big thing for me and to be able to build on that,” McCaskill said.

During her first year at South Carolina, McCaskill was one of 14 players on the team. Despite the numbers, she was not intimidated. Her confidence allowed McCaskill to become a “silent leader,” according to her mother.

That silence broke for McCaskill at South Carolina, especially during her junior season. She made a commitment to herself to become more fit and prepare to play a full 90 minutes each match.

“That really helped me to be on the field the whole match and to be able to impact the entire match,” McCaskill said.

The routine of practice and game days is habit for McCaskill, who said the key after practicing in the morning is going to class and receiving any treatment and recovering for the upcoming game.

McCaskill puts her left cleat on before her right and listens to her favorite playlist before each game. She is fully focused before stepping onto the field. Once on the field, her eyes are searching for a way to score or how to bring other players into the game.

“I love to attack, so like, anything that I can do to be creative or be on the ball, is kind of what I really love to do and I really enjoy,” McCaskill said.

Some of McCaskill’s inspiration as a player comes from books. One of her favorites is “John Gordon’s Training Camp Book,” which she read before going to a national ECNL camp in Portland, Oregon, during her junior year. This was the point when she realized the difference in becoming a great player and being a great player who leads.

McCaskill’s hard work is not overlooked, which has allowed her to be nominated as one of the Top 10 senior finalists for the CLASS Award. The CLASS Award is given to an NCAA Division I senior student-athlete who embodies community, competition, character and classroom.

“It’s always a privilege to be nominated for stuff like that,” McCaskill said. “But it’s just a testament to how good this team has been and how good everyone around me has been in order to put me in the position to be nominated for it.”

McCaskill’s parents were surprised when they heard she was a finalist for this award, but when they realized what it symbolized they knew the award described McCaskill.

“The fact that it is built so into the character portion as well as the accomplishment on the soccer field that says a lot because it’s a well-rounded person that they are looking for,” Tina McCaskill said. “So of course, as parents we certainly want the character part to be just as important as what her skills on the field show.”

After she graduates in December, McCaskill is determined to make sure her soccer career doesn’t end. She plans to go into the draft in January in hopes of playing professionally.

“I really hope she takes a lot of great memories ... look back on the goals that she had, that she wanted to go into a college to make an impact and to enjoy herself,” Tina McCaskill said. “And I hope that in the end that she can look back and say, ‘Yep, that’s what I did,’ and just check another box.”
GOOD LUCK ON EXAMS

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Hayden Hurst was one of the most well-known names on the South Carolina football team in the 2017 regular season, but the 6-foot-5, 250-pound tight end took a unique path to lead him to where he is today.

For Hurst, sports was always his passion growing up. There was not a question as to whether he wanted to play at the college or professional level.

“I knew that it would be some sort of professional sport,” Hurst said. “Whether it be baseball or football, it was always my dream.”

His passion for baseball came first when he played for the Pittsburgh Pirates, but football soon began to grab the attention of the former pitcher. Hurst’s childhood memories of football soon became a reality for himself with the help of quarterback Perry Orth.

“He’s the one who ... got me in contact with [Steve Spurrier] and he gave me the opportunity to walk on, and I thank him everyday,” Hurst said.

Orth grew up competing with Hurst, but the two never developed a friendship outside of football. Hurst and Orth shared mutual friends, who helped him reach out to Orth.

The once walk-on for South Carolina became a loud voice on the field, leading his team to numerous achievements. Hurst was named as one of eight semifinalists for the Mackey Award, which is awarded to the top tight end in the country.

“It’s an honor,” Hurst said. “Like I’ve told you guys before when I stepped foot on campus, I figured I could come and compete, but being one of eight tight-ends to be named top in the country is pretty humbling.”

The Mackey Award is just one of the acknowledgements that Hurst has received over the past three years at South Carolina. Hurst set the Gamecocks single-season record of 48 catches by a tight end in 2016. He broke the school record for receiving yards by a tight end with 616 and won the Co-tenacity Award for offense.

Hurst is not only a great football player, but also has the ability to lead as one of South Carolina’s permanent captains. He said the key is to stay grounded and treat everyday the same.

“When you have a guy like Hayden Hurst, the playbook opens so much that you can just have the freedom to do whatever you want,” August said.

“Hayden, he can catch, he can block, he can run to make tackles, fumble the ball. I know for the coaches, it’s really reassuring to have him on the field.”

According to quarterback Jake Bentley, Hurst is one of the best playmakers on the team. He adds to the pass protection and run blocking. Bentley emphasized that the offense tries to get Hurst in different spots, and in the best match-ups against opposing defenses to have space and get the ball.

“I just try to go out there and play as hard as I can,” said Hurst. “And catch every pass that Jake throws and just do what I can do.”

While he is technically a junior, Hurst was recognized in South Carolina’s Senior Day game against Wofford. He is still unsure of his professional future in football, but is hopeful of what is to come professionally for him.

“It’s crazy now to come full circle,” Hurst said. “I started off playing football as a kid and then everybody told me baseball was the answer; now it’s football. It’s just weird. Like I said, I just try to take full advantage of every day.”
BENTLEY PAGE 20

Bentley had twice as many pass completions as he did last year, jumping from 125 to 226. In addition to a rise in pass completions, Bentley showed significant growth in his passing yards, going from 1,420 in 2016 to 2,555 in 2017. He also threw for 16 touchdowns in 2017, which is nine more than he threw in the seven games he started in 2016.

Bentley's pass completion percentage dropped from 65.8 percent to 62.4 percent. In addition to this, Bentley's passing efficiency rating fell by 9.8 points, going from 140.0 in 2016 to 130.2 in 2017.

Bentley received many accolades in the SEC this season, including appearances in multiple polls for his statistical achievements in 2017. He ranked No. 1 for pass completions, No. 3 for pass attempts, No. 4 for passing yards and No. 2 for total plays.

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June 4–27
(M/W) 6–9 p.m.

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Drug decriminalization beneficial from legal, public health perspectives

On Oct. 23, our Opinion page featured a two-pronged argument in favor of drug decriminalization. Opinion editors Linden Atelsek and Dan Nelson wrote from a criminal justice and public health standpoint respectively on the benefits of decriminalization.

From a criminal justice standpoint
— The U.S. has an insanely high rate of drug-related arrest, 84 percent of which were for possession in 2014.
— This leads to a tremendous strain on the criminal justice system, wasting the time of cops, public defenders, and judges and leading to an explosion in the prison population. The justice system is simply not equipped to handle this many people.
— Decriminalization, which leaves trafficking and sale criminalized but makes simple possession legal, would therefore lead to a more than 80 percent reduction in the arrest rate, correspondingly decreasing the burden on the justice system.
— Drug use is a question of personal morality, since it doesn’t directly impact anyone other than the person choosing to do it, and it’s debatable whether the government should choose what you can and can’t put in your own body.
— Additionally, our drug laws result from a series of racist drug scares, and while that doesn’t necessarily mean the laws are racist, the fact that current arrest and imprisonment statistics show a racial disparity in enforcement means that we shouldn’t take it for granted that they aren’t.
— As we saw during alcohol Prohibition, making it illegal to use these substances probably isn’t lowering our crime rate — it’s just giving rise to more organized crime here and abroad.
Conclusion: Decriminalization won’t fix everything, but it would save our criminal justice system time and money and lessen injustice, as well as violence at home and abroad.

From a public health standpoint
— More than 60,000 people in the U.S. died last year due to drug overdose, and harsh prohibition policies show no promise for fixing that problem.
— Drug decriminalization would allow police and prosecutors to continue pursuing drug dealers and traffickers, but allow addicts to get help and be safe without fear of prosecution.
— Portugal tried this route, and their imprisonment rates dropped, their addicts have better health outcomes and their rate of drug-induced death has plummeted. The Czech Republic tried the same strategy, and it worked the same way. It’s very possible that it could also work here.
— When countries that have decriminalized are compared to companies that have not decriminalized, their rate of use is similar, meaning that drug prohibition policies do not necessarily reduce use.
— Lastly, even after we lock up our addicts, they continue to use. Drugs aren’t difficult to get in prison, and even if they don’t use behind bars, they may be left alone during withdrawal or relapse immediately upon release.

Conclusion: Our current policies of drug prohibition are failing due to a lack of public health focus, and decriminalization could make addicts safer, while not substantially increasing use.

See full arguments online at www.dailygamecock.com.
Do your holiday shopping at the Russell House Bookstore!
**Crossword**

Edited by Rich Norris and Joyce Lewis

**ACROSS**

1. Not insignificant
2. LeBron’s hometown
3. Pet food brand
4. iPod model
5. Saltine brand
6. Action word
7. Divisions politiques
8. Those, to Pablo
9. Pet food brand
10. iPod model
11. Saltine brand
12. Action word
13. Divisions
14. Action word
15. Words after an estimate
16. Manchester hospital hookup?
17. Divisions
18. Those, to Pablo
19. Award-winning defense unit?
20. Pet food brand
21. iPod model
22. Saltine brand
23. Action word
24. Divisions politiques
25. Action word
26. Words after an estimate
27. Manchester hospital hookup?
28. Divisions
29. Pet food brand
30. iPod model
31. Saltine brand
32. Action word
33. Words after an estimate
34. Divisions politiques
35. Action word
36. Words after an estimate
37. Divisions
38. Action word
39. Words after an estimate
40. Divisions politiques
41. Action word
42. Words after an estimate
43. Divisions
44. Action word
45. Words after an estimate
46. Divisions politiques
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63. Words after an estimate
64. Divisions politiques
65. Action word
66. Words after an estimate
67. Divisions
68. Action word
69. Words after an estimate
70. Divisions politiques
71. Action word
72. Words after an estimate
73. Divisions

**DOWN**

1. British nobleman
2. Motivate
3. Mess (up)
4. Korean sedan to be discontinued in the U.S. after 2017
5. Whistling vessel
7. Director Prominger
9. “__ Maria”
10. Enrolled African land
11. Tofu nutrient
12. Watch
13. Custom on some cruises
20. Multiple-choice choice
22. Louis XIV, par exemple
26. Wrap around
28. “I, Robot” writer
30. Champion swimmer/actor Buster
32. Director Van Sant
33. Where eyes can hang out
35. __ even keel
40. Flightless birds
41. Making a touchdown
42. Metro area SSE of Casper
43. Major hassles
46. Updates the plant
47. Rush hour report topic
48. Suppress
49. Vein contents
50. Vein contents
51. Plains tribe
52. Source of hard and soft lumber
54. One of the three bears
56. Mai __
57. Arctic coast explorer
58. Consume
61. Make smart remarks ... and a phonetic hint to the answers to starred clues
63. Mosque figure
65. Big name in craft stores
67. Response to being slain, in texts?

**Sudoku**

By The Mepham Group

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two NCAA Regional appearances and were 100-78-1 overall.

The Gamecocks opened their fall practice schedule on Sept. 14, and Kingston
said he was eager to help players fine tune their skills.

“To this point, I’m very pleased with what I’ve seen from a talent standpoint,”
Kingston said. “Now, it’s a matter of getting them on the field, starting to teach
them how we want to do bunt defense, how we do cuts and relays, how we go
about preparing for a game offensively. Just a lot of great things.”

Kingston said he had an introductory meeting with his players on Sept. 13,
discussing their approach for the season and plan for action. He said the biggest
thing he’s noticed from his players is their anxiousness to get better.

“They’ve asked good questions,” Kingston said. “When we’ve asked them do
something, they’ve gone overboard trying to do it, so I’ve been very pleased with
their approach and their desire to try to learn and to understand we all want to
take that next step.”

This season marked Kingston’s third time taking over a collegiate baseball
program as a new head coach, giving him experience figuring out how new players
will fit into the equation during the season.

As for which players Kingston is excited about, he listed Noah Campbell, Kyle
Jacobson, Ridge Chapman, Carmen Mlodzinski and Corey Stone off the top of
his head.

“Definitely there is some good young talent in that class,” Kingston said. “What
we need to figure out now are which of these guys are ready to help us right away.
To me, that’s the biggest factor. They’re talented. Are they ready to help you win
games at this level?”

Kingston added, “We need to figure out what is at a level that can help us have
the success we want to have and what areas need improvement … At this point in
the process, there’s a lot for me as the head coach and our staff to figure out what
needs to be improved, what is solid.”

Along with Kingston, former Michigan State pitching coach Meade was hired as the
Gamecocks’ new pitching coach to fill in for the absence of Jerry Meyers, who
took an indefinite medical leave of absence on Nov. 3.

Meade made the decision to take the job at South Carolina very quickly after
he talked to Kingston. According to Meade, the decision was “pretty easy” for his
family.

South Carolina baseball is not foreign to Meade, who started coaching at the
collegiate level at the time South Carolina won back-to-back national
championships under former head coach and current athletics director Ray Tanner.

“This spring being able to coach down here and see the atmosphere live and in
person was outstanding,” Meade said. “I felt like I had a real good impression
and that was one of the things that I think made it a little more easier with our team
at Michigan State, them having played here so those guys fully understood when
this opportunity arose.”

Meade only looked forward when the South Carolina opportunity came into
place for him, despite the challenge of coming into the program in the mid-
season.

“It’s a blast to be out there. All of the guys, not just the pitchers, that I have met,
carry themselves very, very well,” Meade said. “They are a humble group from
what I can tell, in phone conversations, … just texting different guys throughout
the day.”

Whether a pitcher is big and strong or small and fast, Meade said his goal is to
help develop the player as much as possible. He is not concerned with a pitcher’s
ability to call the right pitch and look smart, but rather his ability to throw the best
pitch and stay committed.

“I never would say that there’s a certain type of arm that I have to have as a
pitching coach,” Meade said. “I think my job is to adapt to a system that the ability
they have and then adjust the system accordingly.”
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