Columbia goes famously hot in new tourism campaign

MACST hopes to attract visitors by playing up city's warm reputation

Elena Bloudek THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Columbia is transforming its reputation for sweltering heat into one of warmth and quality with the help of ‘The Midlands Authority for Conventions, Sports and Tourism’s new brand and marketing campaign, “Columbia, SC. Famously Hot.”

The campaign was developed to replace the previous slogan, “The Great City, Great Region.”

“Flames’ colors go from warm to cool in order to correspond to the tagline: ‘Famously Hot: Surprisingly Cool.’”

“With more contestants than ever before, this year’s competition will be tougher than it has been in years past, and Cedeno thinks that this will result in a more intense show.”

“I think there’s a real good line up of contestants,” Cedeno said. “So I really think it’s going to be a battle. And any time it’s a battle for a crown or a title, it’s going to be a good show.”

Joe White, a first-year theater student who performs as Lady Diamond, is ready to take on the other competitors.

“There are a lot of really good people coming in and a lot of people. I really love, you know, the other competitors,” White said shortly before performing Wednesday night. “Regardless of I’m going to be happy at the end.”

Not all of the contestants would be so happy if they didn’t win.

Colem Toman, a fourth-year criminal justice student who performs as Warren Pease, competed last year and didn’t win. This year, he’s in a battle for the title.

“It’s a sort of prestige,” Toman said. “It just shows that you worked for something instead of just doing drag once in a while. You actually hold it to esteem.”

“It’s not typically a drag pageant as most are,” Cedeno said. “It’s about having that school spirit and just having fun with it. Audience support is another PAGEANT ▪ 3A
**QUESTION OF THE WEEK**

"I like Spurs and Struts. I like to watch people dance."  
— Caroline Kelley, second-year business student

"I like the football game because I like to watch and I like to see who won the game."  
— Cedric Warren, second-year nursing student

"I like the Step Show because I like to see the Stephanie Mills film — it's interesting to see."  
— Cedric Warren, second-year nursing student

"I like the football game because I want to watch and I like to see the awards."  
— Lisa Falsetti, fourth-year biology student

**PIC OF THE DAY**

Alpha Delta Pi and Sigma Phi Epsilon’s Cookie Roast sits proudly in front of the Russell House University Union, just one of many showcased for Homecoming festivities.
President George W. Bush walks from the Oval Office to the Rose Garden of the White House to speak about the transition of the administration of President-elect Barack Obama.

Bush to discuss national issues, give advice to future president

Former president meets with president-elect to pass on lessons learned

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush and Barack Obama on Monday will hold their first substantive talks about the nation’s daunting priorities as the transition to a Democratic administration accelerates.

Bush, soon to return to Texas after two terms in office, ordered employees on Thursday to ensure a smooth transition of power to Obama. The transition is a delicate dance in which the White House keeps the president-elect in the loop, and even solicits his input, but the decisions remain solely the president’s.

On Monday’s discussion list for the current and future presidents: the financial crisis and the war in Iraq.

“Peace economic challenges that will not leave a new president set sail in,” Bush told a gathering of hundreds of employees from the presidential bureaucracy, gathered on the lawn of the White House.

“This will also be America’s first wartime presidential transition in four decades,” he said. “We’re in a struggle against violent extremists determined to do harm to our society, and they would like nothing more than to exploit this period of change to harm the American people.”

That sobering depiction came as Bush and Obama formed up plans for their first meeting since Obama defeated Republican John McCain in Tuesday’s election.

Bush and first lady Laura Bush will greet Obama and his wife, Michelle, at the White House on Monday afternoon. Bush and the president-elect will meet in the Oval Office while the first lady gives Mrs. Obama a private tour of the White House residence.

“I think for reaching out in the spirit of bipartisanship,” the president-elect said of Bush in a statement.

The Obamas’ two children won’t be there, but White House press secretary Dana Perino said, “We very much look forward to meeting them.”

Bush, who has made frequent trips to consult with his staff, under a gray sky on the South Lawn, also had the feel of an early goodbye with 75 days left in office.

He walked with the Cabinet, the first lady, and the vice president and his wife by side. By the time he finished speaking and offered a wave to the crowd, Bush grew emotional. Laura Bush leaned in to give him a hug.

The White House signaled that after months of staying out of the politics of the 2008 election — often embarrassing a pollster from Obama — it would soon start speaking up to defend Bush’s record on education, energy, the economy and other issues. The focus will be a natural turn to Bush’s legacy.

Meanwhile, the shift from one White House to the next is fully under way, with Bush setting certain tone and expectations for Obama.

The Bush administration has already arranged security clearances for key Obama transition staffers and is providing work space and policy briefings as well.

Career employees, who keep their jobs even when administrations change, have taken on extra work to prevent any disruption in essential services.

Whether a policy adviser was paying attention on the task at hand, because the American people expect no less,” Bush directed the entire employee.

Officials at the Department of Homeland Security caution that the U.S. is in a heightened state of alert against terrorism. The fear is that extremists could exploit the transition period to undermine the country’s defenses, as Bush himself warned. No specific threat has been presented to the public.

The complex transfer of power has quietly been under way for about a year. It accelerated with the landslide election of Obama, the Democratic senator from Illinois, over McCain.

Obama on Thursday got the first of what will become regular briefings on highly classified information from top intelligence officials. World leaders are working with Obama’s team to make the connections.

Bush also suggested there will be no tolerance of pranks during the transition.

When he took office in 2001, some aids found his computer keyboards were tucked for about the W key — a nod to the middle metal in George W. Bush. Staff members of outgoing President Bill Clinton were suspected and criticized for using impossibly.

Bush told the big gathering of employees on Thursday: “Know that you will continue to conduct yourselves with the decency and professionalism you have shown throughout my time in office.”

During the campaign, Obama relentlessly blistered the Bush administration for what he called failed, tired policies that have harmed the country. The White House has sought to make clear that policies will not change with the transition in any way.

Bush sounded wistful as he looked out to a sea of familiar faces, including some people he’s seen at work each day for nearly eight years.

The president recalled that before his 2001 inauguration, he said that he would only “by no means be the last time of transition.”

But the honor is great,” Bush said, “the work is temporary.”
Gay activists jarred by California marriage defeat with Provision 8

Movement takes major blow to cause with marginal support against same-sex unions

David Carey & Lisa Jeff

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — In a heartbreaking defeat for the gay-rights movement, California voters put a stop to gay marriage, creating uncertainty about the legal status of 18,000 same-sex couples who tied the knot during a four-month window of opportunity opened by the state’s highest court.

Passage of a constitutional amendment against gay marriage — in a state so often at the forefront of liberal social change — elated religious conservatives who had little else to cheer about in Tuesday’s elections. Gay activists were disappointed and began looking for battlegrounds elsewhere in the back-and-forth fight to allow gays to wed.

“There’s something deeply wrong with putting the rights of a minority up to a majority vote,” said Evan Wolfson, a gay-rights lawyer who heads a group called Freedom to Marry. “If this were being done to almost any other minority, people would see how un-American this is.”

Legal skirmishing began immediately, with gay-rights groups challenging the newly passed ban in court Wednesday and vowing to resist any effort to invalidate the same-sex marriages that took place following the state Supreme Court’s decision in May.

The amendment, which passed with 52 percent of the vote, overrides that court ruling by defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Thirty states now have adopted such measures, but the California vote marks the first time a state took away gay marriage after it had been legalized.

Gay-marriage bans also passed on Tuesday in Arizona and Florida, with the rival sides raising a new window of opportunity opened by the state Supreme Court to invalidate the ban filed a challenge with the state Supreme Court. They contended that California’s ballot cannot be used to undermine one group’s access to rights enjoyed by other citizens.

The measure’s passage casts a shadow of uncertainty over the marriages performed in the past four months. California State Attorney General Jerry Brown has said existing gay marriages will remain valid, but other legal experts said challenges are likely.

Amid the uncertainty, some gay couples continued applying for marriage licenses Wednesday. They succeeded in some jurisdictions and not others.

Jake Rowe, 27, and James Edlick, 29, were in the midst of getting their marriage license at Sacramento City Hall when someone from the clerk’s office stopped the wedding Wednesday morning.

“I’m thoroughly surprised,” Rowe said. “I thought California had come to the point where they realized discrimination wasn’t right.”

Some newlyweds took a positive approach.

“I’m really OK,” said Diana Correa of Berkeley, who married her partner of 16 years, Graham Crichton, on Sunday. “I hope the marriage holds, but we are already married in our hearts, so nobody can take that away.”

Proposition 8 became the focus of the marriage issue, saying he opposes gay marriage, compared with about half of white voters.

Denise Fernandez, a 57-year-old black woman from Sacramento, said she voted for Obama and Proposition 8. “I believe a Christian is held accountable,” she said. “Obama had a nuanced position on the issue, saying he opposes gay marriage while also speaking out against Prop 8.”

Rea Carey, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, did not directly criticize Obama, but said: “We’d hope for a day when candidates who are supportive of same-sex marriage are unafraid to clearly state that to the voters.”

Gay-marriage proponents say New York, where the Democrats now control both the Legislature and the governor’s office for the first time in 35 years, may be a promising battleground. New Jersey also is considered a gay-marriage prospect.

“We pick ourselves up and try again,” said Kate Kendall, executive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

“There has been enormous movement in favor of full equality in eight short years. That is the direction this is heading, and if it’s not today or it’s not tomorrow, it will be soon.”

Gay rights activists Stuart Gaffney, left, and John Lewis hold hands outside of City Hall, where they married this past summer, in San Francisco, Calif. Wednesday.
Major retailers worry over decline in important annual revenue

The stunning and rare drop in same-store sales, or sales at stores opened at least one year, which are considered a key indicator of a retailer's health, is the first non-Easter related decline is the first non-Easter related decline in October since at least 1986. That compares to a 2 percent gain in September and is well below the 1.8 percent average pace so far this fiscal year, which for retailers begins in February. Niemira said October's decline is the first non-October related drop since at least 1986. Excluding Wal-Mart, the October sales number was down 4.6 percent. The index is based on same-store sales, or sales at stores opened at least one year, which are considered a key indicator of a retailer's health. As a result, Niemira now expects same-store sales for the combined November and December period to rise 1 percent, his original forecast was for growth of 1 percent to 2 percent.

Wal-Mart posted a 2.4 percent gain in same-store sales, better than the 1.8 percent gain projected by analysts surveyed by Thomson Reuters. Including fuel sales, they were up 2.5 percent. But Target Corp., which has lagged behind Wal-Mart because of its heavier emphasis on online sales—posted a 6.8 percent drop, worse than the 2.8 percent decline expected.

"We expect the recent challenging sales environment to continue into the holiday season and beyond as a result of the economic factors currently affecting consumer spending," Target's President and Chief Executive Greg Steinhafel said in a statement.

Even teen centers stayed away from malls. American Eagle Outfitters Inc. announced a 12 percent drop in same-store sales for the November-December period. Abercrombie & Fitch Co. suffered a 20 percent drop.

Two days after Election Day, unofficial tallies were finally completed for four seats in the South Carolina House race, including the race for a U.S. House seat along the coast.

And recent court and long lines have Democrats calling for major changes in the state's election laws, just the same type of early voting now used in North Carolina and other states.

Unofficial results show irregularities, small margins in several House races

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Late teacher taught lessons for life, not just history

Catholic school mentor educated boys through example, demeanor

But when a person asks you for some change, he or she is expecting something in your pocket. Bennett believed in a kind of Catholic karma, saying that you were to expect something back for your helping spirit.

Bennett showed himself this generosity to his classes and students.

Whenever a student was destitute and had no money to buy a meal, he would hold the student on releasing so many germs and garbage into the world. That is the way he believed in a kind of karma, saying that when you do good, you will be rewarded with kindness when you're gone. Bennett and his family took care of all their students, from the poorest to the richest. Bennett always had a meal in his pocket, and he was always happy to share it with his students. Bennett's rituals taught many practical lessons, too.

The morning classes ended with Bennett giving an example to the reading of the lunch menu. Students faced push-ups as he taught them how to make the lunch checkers for the students. Bennett showed that there is no such thing as a free lunch. The students had to work hard to earn their meal.

Voting baseline for involvement

Historic presidential choice, congressional shift mark changes

These are just a few unorganized reflections on the post-election election before we dive into talking about the news about the situation or the situation. The state of our nation is a subject that needs to be taken seriously, but we will be at the election, which is all the more reason for us to vote.

There is no understanding the historical expectation is the election of a black president in the United States. As John McCain stated in his gracious concession speech, it was just a matter of time ago that the presidential race was over. The race was over, and it was obvious that the future of the Republican party was in jeopardy.

But because of how he handled the situation, the world lost a great man. Bennett showed this example, demeanor and attitude to his students.

What Bennett showed us was that it is a personal responsibility to take our duty seriously and to participate in our government. Bennett taught us that there is no such thing as a spectator in government.

Exasperated Republicans, who have been left to doubt what we witnessed the outcome of the election before we take to the Supreme Court, is a catharsis and release thing of joy. But because of how he handled the situation, the world lost a great man. Bennett showed this example, demeanor and attitude to his students.

The bottom line is that we are all citizens of a country that is no longer divided, but we do need a leader that is no longer divided, but we do need a leader that is no longer divided. The country needs a leader that is no longer divided, but we do need a leader that is no longer divided. The country needs a leader that is no longer divided, but we do need a leader that is no longer divided. The country needs a leader that is no longer divided, but we do need a leader that is no longer divided.
Emanuel brings fiery edge, experience to future Cabinet

Liz Sidoti & Nadia Falkner

CHICAGO — Barack Obama is signaling a shift in tactics and temperament as he moves from campaign to Oval Office, assembling a staff that includes a fiery chief of staff — Rahm Emanuel, a foul-mouthed practitioner of brass-knuckled politics who is known as a foul-mouthed and that of his top campaign advisers, Obama has chosen a fellow

Obama frequently sought Emanuel’s advice during Hillary Clinton’s 2008 campaign, and he initially liked Gibbs but ultimately chose Emanuel over Clinton as his choice for White House chief of staff. Emanuel is a fellow Chicagoan who is close to the president and the president’s top campaign aide. Emanuel helped write a large briefing book on how to run the Obama administration, the only Democratic

He will have to resign his congressional seat and put aside hopes of becoming speaker of the House. The selections are telling for Obama, who has been called arrogant and has been criticized for being too lightweight. But Emanuel is someone who not only can stand up to Congress but also maneuver within it. And Emanuel would make a strong choice for Obama, who has signaled he will rely heavily on Washington insiders.

One of the first things Emanuel will have to do is shut down the rumor mill. Some Democrats are already speculating about his background. Emanuel is known as a foul-mouthed and stands up to Congress but also maneuver within it. And Emanuel would make a strong choice for Obama, who has signaled he will rely heavily on Washington insiders.

Emanuel has also made it clear he will rely heavily on veteran of her husband’s eight-year administration, as well as his strengths and knows what he needs to be successful as a challenger from campaign to Oval Office. The turnout led to long

The turnover led to long days on the presidential campaign trail. It is accompanied by a briefing from top intelligence officials. Later, Obama met with his transition team of leaders who are tasked with building his entire administration in 10 weeks.

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Back by popular demand, the Trans-Siberian Orchestra will be in Columbia in time to kick off the holiday season with performances Friday at the Colonial Life Arena. TSO's orchestral rock music and light show is highly experienced live. Known as “the biggest and boldest rock show on the planet,” the band is made up of some of the most talented musicians and singers from around the world.

Its 2007 winter tour was its most successful — in 10 weeks, the group played to more than 2 million fans and generated $44 million.

In the first half of the light show, TSO performs “Christmas Eve and Other Stories,” complete with a narrator. The second half is a rock concert including songs from the band’s other recordings and previews of selections not yet released.

Violinist Mirah Gangwer, a third-year music graduate student, was contracted to play when TSO came to the Colonial Life Arena last year. Her brother Seth also performs with the TSO regionally in Nashville, Memphis and Atlanta.

Gangwer said his experience with the TSO wasn’t very different from other gigs and orchestral performances he has played in.

“It wasn’t too sure how different it is,” Gangwer said. “I mean, you show up for the rehearsal in the morning. It’s pretty straightforward.”

He said he might have enjoyed the experience more if he was watching the show as opposed to participating in both performances.

producer, composer and lyricist Paul O’Neill started the band with a symphonic rock concept, melding his love of classical music, rock operas, edge-pushing progressive rock and rock classics.

But TSO’s O’Neill was interested in creating a show that would capture the enthusiasm of fans and generated $44 million.

In 2007, the band was “the biggest and boldest rock show on the planet,” said the Colonial Life Arena. Gangwer said. “The Colonial Life Center was packed.”

“An inconvenienc is an adventure wrongly considered.” — G. K. Chesterton

“An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered.” — G. K. Chesterton
ZACK AND MIRI™ | Censured from DVD

the biggest impression. The chemistry between the two is often spot-on and charming, even in the film's most obvious and predictable moments. The best parts of "Zack and Miri" parallel the real life relationships of the two leads, enough, are when the leads are trying to write and direct their porn, not particularly because of how prevalent and obscene it can be, but because beneath it all Smith has crafted a deft portrait of the creative art of filmmaking.

"Zack and Miri" is as its best when it turns to the relationship between Smith and Robinson. Craig Robinson existed in the film only to give Smith a chance to use obvious and cringe-worthy color jokes. The only comic relief the film only to give Smith a chance to use obvious and cringe-worthy color jokes. The only comic relief the film only to give Smith a chance to use obvious and cringe-worthy color jokes. The only comic relief

Local play garners laughs

Ashley Warren
THE DAILY GAMECOCK

Contrary to the play's title, Workshop Theatre's production of "Table Manners" tells a story that is far from the property the name implies. Nor, the lead character played by Ashley Warren, faces an identity crisis in an unhappy marriage while trying to seduce his sister-in-laws. Like both the female relatives he attempts to entice, Norman feels unfulfilled and unappealing. As the curtain rises, "Perhaps" by Cake resonates throughout the theatre. This song sums up the atmosphere of the play, which keeps the audience wondering if Norman will succeed? At times Norman appears as an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is downright disrespectful and unlikable. The play's lead can also be moderately annoying, though he provides a majority of the humor.

The play, billed as a British comedy, has a through-line of clever monologue that director Glenn Farr described as "gun-busting." Farr has a great variety of expressions on the subtile humor in a way that is not over-animated or pronounced. The play has a great variety of expressions on the subtile humor in a way that is not over-animated or pronounced. The play's old-fashioned language and phrases do not date it, but rather simply make it seem more British. The play's love triangles serve as the basis for the play, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life and deserving of romance, while at others, Norman is an idealist trapped in a dull life 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SATURDAY

WEAR YOUR OFFICIALLY LICENSED SOUTH CAROLINA MERCHANDISE.
Inside the Box • By Marlowe Leverette / The Daily Gamecock

In the Box

ALL FOR FREE
2 p.m., $5.50
Nickelsondeon Theater, 937 Main St.

THE SCENE @ USC

TODAY
HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY
6 p.m., free
RH Theater

PINEAPPLE EXPRESS
9 p.m., free
RH Theater

WUSC FALL FUNDRAISER w/ DEADBEATS, BLASTROS, THE BALKANS, CARNIBUHES
7:30 p.m., $5 over 23/$7 under
New Imperial Tavern, 122 State St.

BAUMER, THE NOISES 10, PARACHUTE
9 p.m., $7.50
Headliners, 700 Gervais St.

TOMORROW

JOURNEY THROUGH THE CLASSICS
5:30 p.m., $3.50
Koger Center, 1051 Greene St.

CHOKE
6 p.m. and 8 p.m., $5-10
Nickolsondeon Theater, 937 Main St.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS
8 p.m., $25
Town Theater

ARIES
Hold away in your room and give yourself some private time. You can sleep, if appropriate. That works. Rest and regain your sense of humor and imagination.

TAURUS
Loved ones of loved ones turn out to be some of your very best friends. Get together with family for a wonderful time.

GEMINI
It’s not what you say, it’s what you do. You’re great at many things. Get together with friends. Get together with loved ones turn out to be some of your very best friends. Get together with family for a wonderful time.

LEO
You’re lucky now, but don’t take a chance. You worked hard to get on where you are. You worked hard to get there. Don’t promise your loved ones anything you can’t afford to get. You’d love to do that, but this time it’ll be a major glitch. Don’t leave a major glitch. Don’t leave a major glitch. Don’t leave a major glitch. Don’t leave a major glitch.

SAGITTARIUS
Before you go racing off to buy something new to spruce up your decor, dig around in stuff from last year and the year before.

CANCER

TAURUS
Maintained. If you do it, at least make sure you get an increase in status.

SCORPIO
Your imagination is sparked, you’ll come up with a lot of new ideas. More ideas on your own. Before you go racing off to buy something new to spruce up your decor, dig around in stuff from last year and the year before.

LIBRA
You can manage. You will manage. You can manage. You will manage. You can manage. You will manage. You can manage. You will manage. You can manage. You will manage.

CANCER
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Before you go racing off to buy something new to spruce up your decor, dig around in stuff from last year and the year before.
**Apartment Ad**

Great location 1116 Woodrow St. 2 children (3&5 y.o) one evening a week (4-8). $10/hr. Must be available Tuesdays or Thursdays. Call Patti at 540-1895 or email ZA’S BRICK OVEN. 318-0729...

**Roommate Ad**

FOR RENT 3BR 2BA home. 301 S. Edisto $1195. Call Joe Hawk at 361-2461...

**Housing-Rent Ad**

HELP WANTED

Casualty Co. Earn $400-$1600/mo working Pt as a recruiter for a busy insurance

- Help Wanted
- Apartments
- Roommates
- Housing-Rent
- For Sale
- Help Wanted
- Services
- Classifieds

**For Sale Ads**

Efficiency 1&2 BRS Start at $700

- For Sale
- Help Wanted
- Classifieds

**Services Ads**

Walt Whitman audiobooks to match your mood-- anywhere and anytime.

- Services
- Classifieds

**Help Wanted Ads**

- Help Wanted
- Forest Grill

**Classified Ads**

- Classifieds
- DailyGamecock.com

**Advertisements**

- Classifieds
- DailyGamecock.com
It's not common for a defensive lineman to find himself with the football in his hands during a game, and it's even rarer for there to be open field with which to run the ball towards the opponent's end zone. However, in September 2007 USC tackle Nathan Pepper was in just that position.

Up to that point, Pepper had distinguished himself in his South Carolina career. Coming out of Greenville High School as the reigning Class AAA Defensive Player of the Year after a senior season that saw him record 90 tackles, 13 sacks and earn a nod as a South Carolina Top 20 Prospect as rated by Rivals.com, Pepper saw action at defensive end in nine games as a true freshman, and even handled the short snapping duties in the historic 30-22 home victory over Florida that season — coach Steve Spurrier's first win against his old team and the program's first win over the Gators since becoming a member of the Southeastern Conference in 1992.

As a sophomore in 2006, Pepper, after winning the Carolina Hustle Award for the defense in spring practice, led the Carolina interior line in tackles with 25 and also had an interception, sack and fumble recovery on the season, as Carolina went 7-5 and won the Liberty Bowl.

Heading into his junior year in 2007, Pepper won the Joe Morrison Award as the best defensive player in spring practice. Pepper started off the season well, and in the third game against South Carolina State at Williams-Brice Stadium he picked off Bulldog quarterback Cleveland McCoy, rambled 19 yards for his first careers touchdown and in the process ended his season.

“It was rough, going from such a high of scoring a touchdown to such a low of having my season ended. It still felt good though, scoring and helping our team win a game,” Pepper said.

Pepper blew out his left knee while crossing the goal line, and while the Gamecocks would win 38-3 to improve to 3-0 on the season, Pepper's season-ending surgery would prove to be a major blow as the team would suffer major difficulties stopping the run the rest of the season, finishing a disappointing 6-6 and failing to be chosen for a bowl game.

Fast forward a bit more than a year later, and Pepper, at full strength after a long rehabilitation period, is playing like the injury never even happened — as a key component of the revitalized defense, among the nation's most dominant and the key to Carolina's 6-3 record.

“It was tough getting back,” Pepper said. “He [Pepper] worked hard and did everything we asked of him, and he's come back to full speed because of it.” Carolina defensive line coach Brad Lawing said.

Along the way, there were tough times for Pepper: one being unable to travel with the team to Arkansas, as he stayed behind in Columbia and watched Heisman Trophy runner-up Darren McFadden and Felix Jones, both of whom were first round picks in the NFL Draft this past April, combine for 524 rushing yards, in the Razorbacks' 48-36 win in Fayetteville, Ark. — the most rushing yards ever gained by an SEC team in a conference game, with McFadden's 323 alone setting SEC and school records.

“I stayed home and watched the game with the other guys who were out, Jordin Lindsey, Dustin [Lindsey] and Jasper [Brinkley],” Pepper said. “It was frustrating not being able to play and help.”

The run defense would continue to feel the loss of Pepper: the Gamecocks finished 11th nationally in rushing yards, 17th nationally in rushing yards per attempt and 11th nationally in yards per attempt. Pepper recently won the Joe Morrison Award as the best defensive player in spring practice.

“Joe Morrison, Joe, everyone was happy again,” Carolina defensive line coach Brad Lawing said.

Pepper's return to the field has been nothing short of inspiring, and his presence in the lineup has been crucial to the success of the Carolina defense.

“His return has been huge for us,” Carolina defensive line coach Brad Lawing said. “He's been a big part of our success.”

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No. 20 Georgia Tech at No. 19 North Carolina Noon

The Trojans have been on the closest thing to a bye week for the past three weeks as they have faced both Washington and Washington State, Southern California and their horde of talented running backs were able to shred both Washington schools by a combined score of 125-0. However, over the past few weeks Southern Cal will have to play their starters for the whole game this weekend as they take on the University of California. Cal has only one loss in the Pac-10 this season, as do the Trojans, which makes this six elimination game for a potential BCS berth. Southern Cal was upset earlier this season by an Oregon State team which they took out the BCS rankings with a solid win over a previously ranked team. On paper this game is

No. 9 Oklahoma State at No. 2 Texas Tech 8 P.M. ABC

With one late second touchdown catch by Michael Crabtree, Texas Tech leapfrogged Texas to become the darlings of college football. If we all have seen and heard how good Texas Tech is then surely both teams involved in Saturday’s game have heard as well. Texas Tech for the second week in a row will face a top ten team with an offense that can compete with theirs. Texas Tech will need to check out the memories of last week and focus on the Cowboys of Oklahoma State if they hope to remain unbeaten. The Cowboys have one of the most dynamic offenses in the country with a spreading attack and one of the best running games in the country. Texas Tech has long been criticized for its lack of defense; however, with the energy of the crowd last weekend the Red Raiders surprised some coaches with their ability to contain. Oklahoma State has a team to get itself mentally prepared to play the two biggest games in school history in the last few weeks. Oklahoma State has flashed the past few seasons of greatness they have yet to see this season and the team needs to stop playing the past and work on what is ahead. The cockiness and inexperience of Texas Tech coupled with the offensive firepower of Oklahoma State will result in a second straight upset in Lubbock.

No. 1 Alabama at No.16 LSU 3:30 P.M. CBS

Saturday is the day most LSU fans have been waiting for since the day the ink in Nick Saban’s pen hit his contact. Alabama is the former coach at rival Alabama. Saban is the former coach of LSU who left to coach in the NFL after reviving the LSU program as well as bringing a National title to Baton Rouge. However two years after leaving Saban’s return fans and media are nervous about the day they all wished for. Saban is coming in with the number twenty ranked team in the country. Both teams are nervous about the day they all wished for. Saban, after finishing his five seasons in California, Cal has a team one number one in the BCS and pointed to make a national title run. Meanwhile USC has experienced a drop off from last season losing to both Florida and Georgia in games that were over at the half. LSU has been plagued by injuries and depth issues and has had two losses this season. However since then the SEC has really come into their own. The Tide will be hungry to end their BCS title game on line this weekend as the Bulldogs take out their worst nightmares. The Bulldogs appeared slow and unorganized this weekend that they are a better team than Georgia. Matthew Stafford this weekend that they are a better team than Georgia. Matthew Stafford against a Florida team that is quickly emerging as one of the nation’s best. Matthew Stafford this weekend that they are a better team than Georgia. Matthew Stafford this weekend that they are a better team than Georgia. Matthew Stafford against a Florida team that is quickly emerging as one of the nation’s best. Matthew Stafford is a big reason why the Gators are on the cusp of a BCS berth this weekend. Both Georgia and Florida have been very successful this season in the passing game. Both teams appear to be evenly matched as both feature great defense and power runs on offense. The ability of Georgia Tech to run the ball and get the ball into the Tar Heels hands and allow the Yellow jackets to emerge victorious and be on their way to the ACC Championship game.

No. 5 Florida at Vanderbilt 8 P.M. ESPN2

Remember when Vanderbilt, not Florida was leading the SEC East? While this may seem like a joke, this fact remains true until just a few weeks ago. Vanderbilt was riding high after a 3-0 start and looked primed to make a New Year’s Day bowl. However since then the Commodores have lost two straight games in the SEC and will start a third in the last on Saturday. Vanderbilt needs just one more win to become bowl eligible for the first time in my life while Florida hopes to continue up the BCS rankings with a solid win over a previously ranked team. On paper this game is

No. 13 Georgia at Kentucky 12:30 P.M.

The Bulldogs appeared slow and unorganized against a Florida team that is quickly emerging as one of the nation’s best. Matthew Stafford and Knowshon Moreno, the two offensive stars for the Bulldogs, managed to only put 10 points on the board. That will change this weekend as the Bulldogs take on the furious defense of Kentucky. Moreno can relate to how Georgia feels after they were embarrassed by the Gators two weekends ago. Georgia will look to prove that they are a better team than the Gators, who should not even be a contest as Vanderbilt maybe has one or two players that could even make Florida’s roster. Florida defensive coordinator Toneyournia never return to Heisman form, and is looking to make another statement on Saturday. Vanderbilt will need to stick with their formula to advance to the SEC Championship. Georgia returns this season if they have even the slightest chance of winning. That formula is to control the ball and to force turnovers on defense. While this formula may have worked in Auburn it will not phase the Gators, who should have their starting roster in place for the entire half time.

No. 3 Penn State at Iowa 3:30 P.M. ABC

There may not be another team in the country that has more people currently pulling against them than Penn State. If Penn State were to win the rest of their games, including their game against Michigan State this season. However, the Nittany Lions will face a tough loss in Iowa this weekend. Iowa has one of the nation’s top rushing offenses led by running back Shaun Greene. If Iowa is to become the nation’s darling and pull the upset they will need to run the ball effectively and control the clock. Penn State has a very dynamic and balanced offense that can be contained if they do not use the field. The Hawkeyes will need a career day from Greene to pull the upset, which will not happen due to leadership, balance, and drive of this Penn State football team.

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The South Carolina Gamecocks have won five of the past six games, and are on the hunt for their fourth SEC victory this season against the Razorbacks. The Carolina defense continues to consistently perform at a high level, recently holding Tennessee to just six points in last week’s 27-6 victory. Although Dick has performed just short of perfection this year, last year’s game against Arkansas was a living nightmare for the defensive squad. Defeated 48-36, Carolina made a great time for Darren McFadden’s Heisman hopes when the Gamecocks allowed the star running back to rush for 133 yards. USC was held defenseless against the run, allowing a total of 441 yards on the ground.

But that was last year, and this season the players are ready to prove themselves against Arkansas.

It was embarrassing to me, the team and the fans that we allowed 441 yards on the ground. This is changed.

Junior linebacker Eric Norwood said: “It’s going to stick with you regardless, but we’ll try to get that out of people’s heads this year.”

Helping to erase the memories of last year will be defensive coordinator Matt Meacham. The true sophomore has played well this year, including a three tackle performance last weekend against Tennessee, in which he turned a 70-yard pass into a 7-yard sack.

Matthews and the rest of the defense will again be facing the run this year against Arkansas, as running back Michael Smith looks to continue his season as the SEC’s leading rusher. More threatening than stopping the run stands the Razorback quarterback Casey Dick.

This year the Gamecocks will play Arkansas twice, first by 136 yards last weekend in the win over Tulsa, Dick has plenty of momentum entering this weekend’s game, as he is 212-2 last year.

The Gamecocks will find a way to achieve a unique balance between pressuring the quarterback and watching for the run. The Razorbacks had just a two-dimensional offense, one that can easily attack by running or passing.

“I think Casey Dick will have to run over 400 yards this game and their running back is leading the SEC, so we’ve just got to come to play.” Matthews said. “Their offense has been pretty bad.”

Despite the formidable obstacles to stop, Matthews feels well prepared to take on Arkansas.

I watched a little film on them and I’ll watch more during the week, but we’re feeling pretty good about it,” Matthews said. “Coach [Eli] Johnson, he’s got a great defensive scheme for us. We just have to come ready to play.”

Johnson has done a solid job this season of identifying the threat that the opponent poses, and then creating a defensive scheme to stop it. Whether it be Vanderbril’s Chris Nickson, or Georgia’s Knowshon Moreno, the Carolina defense is well prepared for a myriad of serious offensive threats.

This week is no different, as the Gamecock defense looks to put a stop to yet another offensive threat.

“We’re feeling pretty good about it [Saturday],” Matthews said. “We’re moving on, we’re going back to practice, trying to peak each week and trying to get better.”

Questions with Jake Broom

1. **What’s wrong with a night game?**

This game was originally scheduled for 9 p.m., since people complained it was too cold and they didn’t like driving home late. First of all, this is South Carolina! If you can’t handle an early November evening coming in South Carolina, you should probably just move directly to the sun.

I promise you, there aren’t many places in America warmer than Columbia. Second of all, why change the game time over requests from old people? They are 60,000 students missing the game than 10,000 non-students missing the game. (Once a game time is announced, television scheduling is the only reason it is changed).

2. **Did Chris Smelly’s arm fall off?**

Last week Smelly came into the game for an injured Stephen Garcia and just handed the ball off 700 plus times. He was 1-for-1 passing on the night. I just don’t understand how he is good enough to stare games for two years, but all of a sudden it seems that Spurrier doesn’t even trust him to throw a pass.

JAKE BROOM

Second-year grandson.

3. **Can USC still own Michael Smith?**

Arkansas running back Michael Smith averages 12 rushing yards per carry, also known as 21 yards per game more than USC’s entire team.

Last year USC gave up about six miles of rushing yards to Arkansas. At one point they were pulling paws like the rest of the defense does on Father’s Day.

If the defense doesn’t play better than this, the Gamecocks will be in real trouble.

4. **Why can’t the offensive line pass without helmets?**

Last week during the game that ensued after Stephen Garcia’s knee injury, Terrence Campbell somehow ended up losing his helmet. He still ran around like a crazy person, looking for somebody to hit. Who isn’t wearing a helmet. Maybe if they weren’t allowed to wear helmets they actually put their hands on somebody long enough to run block.

5. **Why isn’t there a shuttle from campus to the practice field during the week?**

USC running back Kenny Miles was injured earlier this week in the third scooter wreck by a football player this year. Spurrier is now forcing every scooter driving player to wear a helmet or run. I wouldn’t ride a scooter down Assembly Street if I was wrapped in bubble wrap and had training wheels.

People drive around the curve on George Rogers Boulevard like it’s turn three at Daytona. I would also imagine it is easier for me to control my 5-foot-10, 185-pound body on a little scooter than say, a 6-foot-4, 250-pound offensive lineman.

Spurrier’s new rule is an improvement, but why isn’t there a shuttle that just picks players up on campus for practice?

I know money is always an issue, but it would at least move around one of our players from playing face first throughout Bricejalie’s drive thru window.

6. **What’s wrong with a day game?**

Last week during the chaos of Smelley’s injury, and just handing the ball off with little skill. He was 1-for-1 passing on the night.

Just don’t understand how he is good enough to stare games for two years, but all of a sudden it seems that Spurrier isn’t there a shuttle that just picks players up on campus for practice?

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If Chris Smelley throws an interception, and no one is around to see it, is it still an interception?

Apparently not, because the redshirt sophomore is once again set to play in this weekend’s showdown with the Arkansas Razorbacks at Williams-Brice Stadium.

Smelley, who has thrown nine interceptions in six starts for Carolina, is back in the mix at quarterback and may see more action this weekend, according to USC coach Steve Spurrier.

“Chris has played very well at times for us,” Spurrier said. “Chris is a good quarterback and at times really plays well. There is a chance we may try to use both guys in the course of the game. Why wouldn’t we? We haven’t had one well enough really to deserve to play the entire game yet. We’re planning on both of them going his week and see how he plays out.”

Why the sudden change? According to Spurrier, it’s starting quarterback Stephen Garcia’s inability to stay in the pocket and make the best decision at hand.

“Stephen has done some good things, but obviously he’s not prepared to play extremely well yet,” Spurrier said. “Stephen Garcia’s inability to stay in the pocket and make the best decision at hand.”

For the first time this decade Saturday’s matchup cannot be referred to as the Bowden Bowl. Tommy Bowden, the former Clemson coach and son of Florida State great Bobby Bowden, was let go earlier this season due to a lackluster opening to a season that was once filled with so much promise. Florida State on the other hand was considered to be a year or two away from being competitive in the ACC. However, the combination of the overall weakness of the ACC and the emergence of athletes all over the field in the Seminoles has given Bobby Bowden and Florida State a chance to win the ACC this season. Florida State has always had a good offense, but has struggled to put a consistent offense on the field the past few seasons. Quarterback Christian Ponder has emerged as a leader for the Seminoles who are looking to return to their rightful place in college football. Expect Bobby Bowden to get revenge on Clemson for the school’s recent dominance over the Seminoles as well as for the way Tommy has been treated the past few months.

For the time being, the Mountaineers will face their toughest Big East opponent this week when they take on the Cincinnati Bearcats. Cincinnati made a statement on national television last week when they absolutely dominated South Florida, who many people thought was West Virginia’s biggest competition in the Big East. Cincinnati is only one game out of first place in the Big East and a win on Saturday would put them in the driver’s seat. The ability of Pat White and Noel Devine to make plays will move West Virginia one step closer to their goal of a BCS bowl bid.

Score: 25 West Virginia 11 Cincinnati 21

Virginia at Wake Forest 3:30 P.M. ESPNU

Both Virginia and Wake Forest enter Saturday’s conference games with identical 1-2 records in the ACC. A loss on Saturday would essentially destroy any chance that other team would have of contending for an ACC title. A win however would put the winner in the thick of the competition all the way to the ACC Championship game.

Score: Wake Forest 24 Virginia 20
Every week, our staff will predict 10 college games. If you think you know your stuff, submit your picks for these games by Thursday to sagckspt@mailbox.sc.edu.

OSU at Northwestern
Georgia Tech at UNC
Georgia at Kentucky
Alabama at LSU
Clemson at Florida State
Cincinnati at WVU
OK State at Texas Tech
Florida at Vanderbilt
Cal at Southern Cal
Arkansas at USC

OSU
OSU
Georgia
Georgia
Florida State
OSU
OSU
OSU
OSU
OSU

Northwestern
Georgia Tech
Northwestern
Northwestern
Northwestern
UNC
Georgia
Georgia
Georgia
Georgia

UNC
OSU
UNC
OSU
OSU

Kentucky
LSU
LSU
Kentucky
Kentucky

Florida State
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University

Washington State University
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University
Louisiana State University

West Virginia
Texas Tech
Texas Tech
Texas Tech
Southern Cal

USC
USC
USC
USC
USC

Last Week’s Standings:
Overall:
5-5 (57-33)
8-2 (61-29)
6-4 (56-34)
7-4 (63-27)
5-5 (45-45)
6-4 (56-34)

Football picks and predictions

SUPPORT THE GAMECOCKS
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South Carolina is a state blessed with two big-time football programs. Clemson and USC compete for bragging rights as the top program in the state every year. However, the competition goes beyond the playing field. The two schools battle off the field in the recruiting world and on the pages of magazines.

Some states are not as lucky. Take Ohio for example. The Buckeye state is just that: home of the Buckeyes. Ohio State University may be a fine institution of higher learning, but when it comes to football Ohio State might as well be the Vatican for popes.

Just ask former Gamecock offensive lineman Gamble Goddard. Goddard attended USC from 2001-2006 but grew up in Dayton, Ohio. Goddard grew up under the impression that Ohio State was the mecca of college football. Even since Pop Warner football he believed that he was meant to don the scarlet and gray of the Buckeyes, however during his senior year in high school coaches at Ohio State University told Goddard that it might be best to pursue other schools.

Goddard still keeps up with his old team and teammates. When asked about the Gamecocks this season he responded enthusiastically.

“Absolutely,” Goddard said. “We’re 6-3 and three! We’re bowl eligible!”

Certainly Ohio is the kind of state that has a diaspora allegiance to one program and one program only. However, Gamble Goddard is proof that it doesn’t take long for that allegiance to be swayed by the sunshine and loyalty of South Carolina Gamecock football.

However, as it has always been for Goddard, when one door closes another opens. As he said goodbye to Lou Holtz he welcomed in a new, possibly even more legendary head coach in Steve Spurrier.

“When the team heard about Steve Spurrier we were like, ‘no way’” Goddard said. “It was far-fetched, honestly still upset about Lou Holtz leaving but when they told us about Spurrier we were like ‘no way.’

There was a way though. The legendary coach, obviously, came to Carolina and immediately made an impact. During Goddard’s senior year the Gamecocks tallied wins over Florida and Tennessee.

The hype around the program generated enough hype to convince some NFL teams to give Goddard a try after he graduated.

Now, Goddard has been with the New York Giants for two years and won a Super Bowl ring in his first season with the team, an experience that he describes as simply, "unbelievable.”

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Goddard fighting for spot on New York roster after successful career for Carolina

Michael Aguilar

Two Gamecocks are making a lot of noise in the postseason awards category. Jr. Eric Norwood and Emanuel Cook have both been listed in the final ballot for two postseason college football awards.

Cook, a strong safety, has been listed as a semifinalist for the Thorpe award. The Thorpe award has been given to the top defensive back in the country every year since 1986. Names such as Deion Sanders, Charles Woodson and Roy Williams are among those that have been given the trophy in the past 22 years.

Now, Cook is being considered along with 13 other college defensive backs for the award. Last season Cook earned second-team All-SEC in 2006 and has garnered attention from NFL scouts around the nation. Cook also helped the team in tackles, just as he did last season, and has been a team leader.

Cook also recovered a fumble in the Gamecocks’ win over Kentucky last week. With 52 yards to set up a Gamecock touchdown. But the most recognizable statistic Cook has also contributed in ways that cannot be measured at this point. Cook has developed into a team leader and a force to be reckoned with on the field.

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Norwood has also been named to a watchlist of his own. Norwood is a quarterback for the Lott Trophy. Awarded annually to the nation’s top defensive player. Norwood has been named to a watchlist of his own.

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SENIORS...
THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES

RB # 25 MIKE DAVIS
WR #11 KENNY MCKINLEY