

SPORTS



Complete coverage in Sports Extra
Look for NBA coverage and more in **Sports Extra**, our subscriber-exclusive, eNewspaper section.



South Carolina assistant coach Khadijah Sessions dances with players during the Gamecocks' NCAA Championship parade and celebration on April 14, 2024, in Columbia. SEAN RAYFORD/GETTY IMAGES

Clemson approves alcohol sales at sporting events

Derrian Carter
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

CLEMSON — Clemson will allow the sale of alcohol at its sporting events, changing a multi-decade stance.

The school's athletic department announced Tuesday that alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase at designated stands and kiosks in Memorial Stadium starting Saturday for Clemson football's spring game. Beer sales will commence at McWhorter Stadium (softball) and Doug Kingsmore Stadium (baseball) starting the week of April 7.

"We are excited to continue to expand concessions offerings and roll out this important change to our gameday experience, and we want to be thoughtful in doing so," Clemson athletic director Graham Neff said in a news release. "We have appreciated the support from several key groups to begin a safe implementation that is both fan-friendly and family-friendly. We will continue to evaluate the impacts and adapt our offerings and policies to meet the needs of our fans."

Clemson was one of three Power Four schools nationally (the others being Utah and BYU), including the only school in the ACC, SEC and Big Ten, that neither offered the sale of alcoholic beverages in its athletic venues nor accepted sponsorship revenue from alcoholic beverage advertisers.

Clemson's in-state rival, South Carolina, began selling beer and wine at football and basketball games on Jan. 1, 2020.

Clemson previously didn't sell alcohol to fans at sporting events, but

See CLEMSON, Page 2C



Lights turn on in buildings, including Clemson Memorial Stadium and Tillman Hall clock tower in Clemson. KEN RUINARD/STAFF FILE

‘It’s a trust thing’ Whether Staley is running hot or not, Sessions provides balance

Lulu Kesin
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – Sunday’s Elite Eight game might have been a challenge for defending champion South Carolina women’s basketball, but it wasn’t for assistant coach Khadijah Sessions.

An intense environment, two teams battling for a spot in the Final Four and a game with an uncertain outcome until the final seconds.

As a South Carolina player and star guard for Dawn Staley from 2012-16, Session has experienced all aspects of a March Madness. So as the No. 1 seed Gamecocks (34-3) beat No. 2 Duke 54-50, Sessions knew when to yell and when not to, when to push and when to pull.

“It’s a trust thing,” Sessions said. “If

you can tell them and show them, they have to believe you. Being a player for Coach Staley makes it easier for me to relate to them. I went to the Final Four, I was No. 1 in the country, we won the SEC, it’s easy for them to believe in me because I’ve done it, I’ve lived it.”

As South Carolina faces Texas in the Final Four on Friday (7 p.m., ESPN) it does so with Sessions on the bench, as the program’s inspiration for what succeeding in Staley’s system looks like.

Prior to her arrival on staff in July 2023, Sessions dove into coaching after playing overseas in Finland, working in both AAU and high school basketball programs.

When she started with the Gamecocks, Sessions began putting out feelers to gain trust, according to redshirt freshman Adhel Tac. She showed interest in players’ lives off the court, taking the time to understand their habits,

how they tick, what makes them grow and what halts their progress.

“She’s an amazing coach,” Tac said. “I give her a lot of credit for how we do things because she does have a way of getting through to us. She always make sure, even sometimes when we aren’t putting the best in ourselves, she is going to try to bring that out of us.”

It’s not necessarily more effort than other coaches, but Sessions knows she came with advantages.

“You know what you want from your coaches,” Sessions said. “I’m a relationship type of person, I do a really good job at reading people, seeing what they need in the moment and out of the moment. It’s more about understanding players off the court to understand them on the court.”

See TRUST, Page 2C

Johnson returning to USC if hardship waiver is approved



Guard Meechie Johnson Jr. is returning to USC after playing this season at Ohio State. JOSEPH MAIORANA/IMAGN IMAGES

Lulu Kesin
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA — Meechie Johnson Jr. announced via social media on Tuesday afternoon that he’s returning to South Carolina basketball, just one year after he entered the transfer portal to leave the program.

Johnson, a 6-foot-2 guard, began his career at Ohio State, playing two seasons (2020-22) before transferring to South Carolina for two seasons from 2022-24.

After leading coach Lamont Paris’ team to a program record-tying 26 win season in 2023-24, he went back into the portal and returned to Ohio State.

The 2025-26 season would mark his sixth year in college. He is eligible for a mental health medical hardship waiver and if it’s approved, he will play at South Carolina.

Johnson played just 10 total games this season and didn’t play

after the loss to Auburn on Dec. 14. He averaged 9.1 points and 2.7 assists.

According to the Columbus Dispatch, Johnson left the team “for what were publicly described as personal reasons.”

Johnson talked to the Dispatch in an article published on March 26 where he described the situation as mental health related.

“My therapist, if you talked to her, I was disappointed in a lot of things, not from an Ohio State standpoint but just within myself in how a lot of things went and how I wasn’t able to be there on the court with my team,” he said to The Dispatch. “I’ve seen a lot of things: ‘Oh, he quit.’ Nah, that’s just not what happened at all.”

In Columbia, Johnson averaged 14.1 points, 4.1 rebounds and 2.9 assists in 2023-24. He started in all 33 games and was the team’s leading scorer. During the 2022-23 season,

See JOHNSON, Page 2C

