



Mason Love uses music, muscle, tattoo to pursue perfection

SPORTS, 1B

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TABLE ROCK RECOVERS

‘Everything has been really quick to bounce back’

Bella Carpentier Greenville News | USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA



Table Rock State Park manager Michael Trotter looks around at the park while going over the damage caused by the fires Tuesday, Sept. 2, 2025 at Table Rock State Park in Pickens, South Carolina. PHOTOS BY ALEX MARTIN/GREENVILLE NEWS

Table Rock State Park Manager Michael Trotter drives a Kubota rough terrain vehicle up the base of the new Stool Mountain Trail, bumping over the same rocky trails that were caught in flames five months earlier. ● Trotter said all it took to cause nearly 16,000 acres of burn damage was a cigarette butt tossed aside by teen hikers. ● The treasured state park has since reopened every park amenity that was once closed due to the fires, bringing the Stool Mountain Trail back in July. ● “It’s pretty phenomenal how much it’s greened up,” Trotter said.

See TABLE ROCK, Page 4A

Paris Mountain protections proceed

Bella Carpentier Greenville News USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Advocates for Paris Mountain conservation say they are excited to see Greenville County move forward with long-sought-after zoning changes. The Greenville Council approved a second reading of an amendment that strengthens protections against development in the Paris Mountain community. All council members attended the Sept. 2 meeting, showing a united support for the changes. The meeting agenda included an ordinance to amend Section 8:5 of the county’s zoning ordinance. Paris Mountain is currently zoned as “environmentally sensitive district-Paris Mountain” (ESD-PM) under that section. The current zoning ordinance states that ESD-PM’s purpose is to establish a land use pattern that protects the mountain by “encouraging the proper and safe placement of structures in conformance with the natural landform, landscape, and existing plant life.” The revised policy builds on that mission with 11 bullet points that clarify the ESD-PM’s purpose. Some of the bullet points state the policy’s intent to ensure harmony between new and existing developments, preserve natural resources, and maintain the natural landscape. Tommie Reece has lived in Paris Mountain for roughly 40 years. She says too much development in the area can cause environmental threats like clear-cutting and stream pollution, which is why advocates have been pushing to change the county’s zoning ordinance. “We’ve been working on this for several years, trying to strengthen the zoning ordinance and make it more protective of the environmentally sensitive area,” Reece said. “We’re thrilled that we are at this point.”

See PARIS MOUNTAIN, Page 2A

Candidates vie for voter support with endorsements, advertisements

Bella Carpentier Greenville News USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

South Carolina election season is heating up as one gubernatorial candidate launches a campaign advertisement blitz while another long-time politician earns a key endorsement in his reelection bid. Here are five new developments in South Carolina politics from the past week.

Pamela Evette launches first campaign ad

Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette went live with her first gubernatorial campaign ad on Aug. 30. Evette’s ad touts her early support for President Donald Trump and her experience as a businesswoman. “I’m Pamela Evette,” Evette says in

the ad. “I am a businesswoman, a proud Trump conservative, and I’m running for governor.” The clip is part of a month-long, million-dollar advertising blitz, according to a press release from Evette’s campaign. The ad will air on television, radio and streaming. Ben Carson endorses Lindsey Graham Former U.S. Secretary of House and Urban Development Ben Carson endorsed Sen. Lindsey Graham as he seeks re-election in 2026. Carson, a neurosurgeon and former conservative politician, served in the Trump administration from 2017 to 2021. “Senator Lindsey Graham has been a steadfast conservative leader for South Carolina and our nation,” Carson stated in a press release. “His unwavering com-

mitment to conservative values, faith, freedom and the America First agenda is exactly why we need him in the Senate.” Graham said that he is “beyond honored” to receive Carson’s endorsement. Attorney General’s office weighs in on parental leave policy Attorney General Alan Wilson wrote an advisory opinion that interprets South Carolina’s paid parental leave statutes to cover parents with a stillborn child. This opinion was issued in response to a request from State Rep. Neal Collins (R-Pickens), who was concerned that some state employees and teachers were denied leave following a stillbirth. See CANDIDATES, Page 2A



This is a view of the landscape near the top of Paris Mountain. A proposed hotel project is being discussed near this location. ALEX HICKS JR./STAFF

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SPORTS



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COLLEGE FOOTBALL



South Carolina’s Mason Love punts during the spring game on April 18 at Williams-Brice Stadium in Columbia.
KATIE JANUCK/GETTY IMAGES

THE LOVE LIFE

USC punter uses music, muscle, tattoo to pursue perfection

Lulu Kesin
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA — Shane Beamer noticed Mason Love is always wearing headphones. If it’s game day for South Carolina football, the punter is listening to Etta James or Louis Armstrong to start then transitions to more fast-paced music closer to kickoff.

“He’s not antisocial, he’s a great young man, but it’s like he has tunnel vision,” Beamer said. “For him to be a young guy, he’s very much a pro.” Beamer arrived in December 2020, and Kai Kroeger was his constant at punter. A coach with deep special teams roots, he savored having Kroeger, his field-flipping weapon for five seasons but now he’s the New Orleans Saints’ starting punter. It’s Love’s turn.

South Carolina football’s new punter Mason Love
Beamer’s hand gestured the exact same way in discussing his punter as one year ago when asked about his star quarterback — horizontal, to show something undeviating. “He’s steady and mature. Nothing seems to affect him,” Beamer said. “A
See LOVE, Page 2B

Clemson gets huge payoff from alcohol sales vs. LSU

Derrian Carter
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

CLEMSON — Clemson’s alcohol policy change has been a boon. According to the school’s athletic department, Clemson generated \$467,843 in gross revenue and sold 45,045 units in the Tigers’ 17-10 loss to LSU on Aug. 30 at Memorial Stadium to open the 2025 football season in front of sold-out crowd of 81,500 fans. The numbers exceed what Clemson made from a sold-out baseball game for the Savannah Bananas in April at the same venue, which sold 27,181 units to make \$346,684 in gross revenue. The Clemson-LSU game was the first time alcohol was sold at regular-season football games. The net for alcohol sales are not available yet because Clemson is still figuring out expenses and revenue split, according to team spokesperson Jeff Kallin. The school received its gross revenue numbers from Aramark Sports and Entertainment, the company that sells alcohol at concession stands and kiosks at games. The athletic department announced April 1 that alcoholic beverages would be available for purchase at designated stands and kiosks at sporting events. It 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. Revenue generation was a reason why Clemson finally permitted alcohol sales to address increased costs in 2025-26 after the NCAA settlement. The cap for this season is approximately \$20.5 million, and Clemson plans to use the full amount and to fully fund 150 new scholarships across all sports, increasing totals from 275 to
See CLEMSON, Page 2B



Clemson fans hold alcohol containers on Aug. 30 at Memorial Stadium.
KEN RUINARD/USA TODAY NETWORK

NFL

Jags kick off Hunter-Coen era against Panthers

FIELD LEVEL MEDIA

For the third time in five seasons, a new era begins for the Jacksonville Jaguars on Sunday when the team hosts the Carolina Panthers to kick off the 2025 campaign. Liam Coen makes his debut as the eighth full-time head coach in Jaguars history in the culmination of what has been a meteoric rise. He’s just two years removed from being offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach at Kentucky in 2023, and was the offensive coordinator for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2024. “I do have to take it in. It’s a cool moment for me personally and professionally,” Coen said of his debut. “You’re eager to go and try and put a product on the field that people are proud of.” Coen will be opposing the man he replaced in Tampa. Dave Canales, offensive coordinator for the Bucs in 2023,



Jaguars wide receiver Travis Hunter warms up before a preseason game against the Pittsburgh Steelers on Aug. 9. TRAVIS REGISTER/IMAGN IMAGES

left to become Carolina’s head coach at the end of that season, opening the hatch for Coen’s rocketing trajectory. Canales is looking to build off late-season momentum from his first season in Carolina. After a 1-7 start that included five losses by 18-plus points, the team went 4-5 over its final nine games, with three of those defeats coming by one score. A big part of this positive trend can be attributed to second-year quarterback Bryce Young coming into his own. The No. 1 overall pick in the 2023 draft, Young was benched two weeks into last season after he threw three interceptions and no touchdowns during an 0-2 start. After a reprieve to reset, Young looked like a different QB down the stretch. He threw 12 touchdowns and
See PANTHERS, Page 3B

ON THE AIR

SUNDAY TELEVISION

COLLEGE FIELD HOCKEY

Noon ACC – Northwestern vs. Boston College

COLLEGE MEN’S SOCCER

7:30 p.m. ACC – Indiana at Notre Dame

COLLEGE VOLLEYBALL

1 p.m. ESPN – Stanford at Texas
ESPNU – Ohio State at Kentucky
3 p.m. ESPN – Illinois at Louisville

COLLEGE WOMEN’S SOCCER

1:30 p.m. ACC – Alabama at Duke

GOLF

7:30 a.m. Golf – DP World Argent Irish

Open

3 p.m. Golf – PGA Champions Stifel Charity Classic
7 p.m. Golf – Walker Cup

MLB

1:30 p.m. MLB – N.Y. Mets at Cincinnati
4:30 p.m. MLB – Boston at Arizona

MEN’S SOCCER

8:55 a.m. FS1 – Bulgaria at Georgia
11:50 a.m. FS1 – Netherlands at Lithuania
2:30 p.m. FS1 – Northern Ireland at Germany
7 p.m. CBSSN – Westchester at Spokane

MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

2 p.m. CW – Rome at Hub City

MOTORSPORTS

7:30 a.m. FS1 – MotoGP Grand Prix of Catalunya
9 a.m. ESPN2 – Formula 1 Italian Grand Prix
3 p.m. USA – NASCAR Cup Enjoy Illinois 300

NFL

1 p.m. CBS – Pittsburgh at N.Y. Jets
Fox – Carolina at Jacksonville
4:25 p.m. CBS – Detroit at Green Bay
8:15 p.m. NBC – Baltimore at Buffalo

RODEO

5 p.m. CW – PBR Teams: Anaheim

TENNIS

2 p.m. ABC – U.S. Open

VOLLEYBALL

8:30 a.m. CBSSN – FIVB Women's World Championship

WOMEN’S AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

1:30 am. FS2 – Collingwood at North Melbourne

WOMEN’S SOCCER

2:30 p.m. CBSSN – Romas vs. AC Milan
5 p.m. ESPN – Angel City at Gotham
8:30 p.m. ESPN – Houston at San Diego

WOMEN’S RUGBY

11:30 a.m. CBSSN – France vs. South Africa

Note: Live events only. Subject to schedule changes and local blackouts.

Love

Continued from Page 1B

lot of the same ways when people ask me to describe LaNorris Sellers, I would say the same thing about Mason. Just his demeanor.”

Sellers aims to keep Love off the field, but his job, when called upon, is paramount.

Love learned early how the mental side of his role mattered.

Growing up, Love never played soccer but he was always kicking a ball. When his older brother starting playing football, he wanted to also, so he carved out his niche.

When Love was in sixth grade, his father, Josh Love, was an assistant coach when they faced their rivals in the title game. It came down to Mason’s kick to win.

He heard his son say, “I don’t think I can do this, Dad,” before walking on the field.

The kick was blocked. Game over. “Going from that point to making a 57-yard field goal in a high school game I think it was a learning experience from an early age,” Josh Love told The Greenville News. “Facing pressure and adversity to learning how to deal with it.”

Mason Love always had the physical strength, adopted the mental side

Love was a three-time all-state punter and kicker by his junior year at Park Hill South High School in Riverside, Missouri. So it’s logical Justin Poncy knew his name and game before accepting the coaching job before Love’s final season.

But Poncy wasn’t prepared for the sight of his kicker hang-cleaning 265 pounds in the weight room.

“Holy cow,” Poncy recalled thinking. Seeing Love’s strength up close was an unforgettable first impression.

When then-South Carolina special teams coach Pete Lembo went to Missouri to watch Love in 2023, his unit had just finished first in ESPN’s special teams efficiency rankings. It was clear Lembo’s offers weren’t like lollipops at the doctor’s office.

Love went through a “grueling” series of punts, field goals and kickoffs on a hot spring day. Lembo was impressed, he vividly recalled over the phone two years later.

“He looked like an excellent overall athlete, not just a specialist,” said Lembo, now the head coach at Buffalo. “That always has been a quality that I’ve looked for.”

By high school, Love didn’t just learn



South Carolina football punter Mason Love’s tattoo reminds him to take a breath. LULU KESIN/GREENVILLE NEWS

to handle pressure, he owned it. Poncy said he never saw him rattled and instead only saw him break school records. Love was the nation’s No. 3 punter in 247’s rankings by his senior year.

This summer, Beamer said Love might be his place-kicker, too, but worried asking that much of the redshirt freshman would stretch him thin. For now, he’s the No. 2 kicker on the depth chart, and holds for redshirt senior William Joyce but special teams coach Joe DeCamillis hinted that Love could be called upon for longer field goal attempts.

South Carolina football punters: Kai Kroeger and Mason Love

On Love’s official visit to South Carolina, he stopped by Kroeger’s birthday party at a local driving range. Kroeger felt like he was staring at his old self, another “little blonde kid.”

Love arrived in January 2024, and there was no denying he was a scholarship-worthy kicker and punter.

“From the moment I saw him punt during spring practice, I knew he was really good,” Kroeger said. “I don’t think I have the season I had if Mason wasn’t there. He’s way ahead of where I was at

18. That made me step up my game.”

In 2022, Kroeger was second in the SEC in yards per punt but dropped to seventh in 2023. Kroeger claims Love’s talent could’ve caused a position shakeup, but Beamer trusted his ace.

So Love became a leech. He studied Kroeger’s approach and soaked up every strategy and technical adjustment. The understudy pushed Kroeger to work harder.

Kroeger finished second in the SEC in 2024, averaging 47.8 yards per punt, and is No. 10 all time in the SEC with a career average of 44.6.

“As much as I’d love to keep any records I have, it would be really cool if he went in and broke everything,” Kroeger said.

Mason Love adding to his toolbox at South Carolina

During the past year, Love has deepened his arsenal with meditation, yoga and breathing exercises that elevate his physical abilities. Love gained 40 pounds from January to July, a credit to both his strength staff and Chipotle, he says.

“When my mental health is good, that’s when my physical health is the

best,” Love said.

This spring, Love visited a tattoo shop to ink one word on his left hand: breathe.

“It made my heart swell when he said it’s because that’s what I always told him when he was going out on the field,” Josh Love said.

Love’s headphones aren’t used to detach. Rather they’re an avenue to the best version of himself.

“He’s open and goofy,” DeCamillis said, complimenting Love’s “great” personality.

He leans into South Carolina’s mantra of “know what time it is,” but focusing was never a struggle. According his dad, he always knew when to lock in.

Quieting his mind doesn’t mean his competitive fire never goes out, and after his debut against Virginia Tech, it shined through.

Two of his five punts went 50+ yards, and three landed inside the 20. He averaged 47.8 yards on his kicks, yet he’d like a few back.

“I want them to be perfect every time,” Love said.

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Clemson

Continued from Page 1B

425. That will be an approximate additional cost of \$6 million for Clemson.

Athletic director Graham Neff said previously Clemson has no plans of cutting sports, so generating more dollars while minimizing other expenses will be

an emphasis in 2025-26. In fiscal year 2024, Clemson athletics lost several hundred thousand dollars.

Clemson began revenue-generating initiatives ahead of the settlement being approved, including adding a student athletics fee, increasing season-ticket prices for football games, and hosting non-NCAA sports on campus like the Savannah Bananas. It also created Clemson Ventures, a revenue-generat-

ing entity that will produce in-house sales and sponsorship and facilitate NIL deals with businesses for Clemson athletes.

For Clemson’s spring football game in April, which was the first sporting event the school sold alcohol at, it welcomed around 35,000 fans and sold 3,394 units to make \$35,174 in gross revenue. The momentum has carried over to the football season with coach Dabo Swinney’s

team having six home games remaining in 2025 and potentially a College Football Playoff game.

Derrian Carter covers Clemson athletics for The Greenville News and the USA TODAY Network. Email him at dcarter@gannett.com and follow him on X, formerly known as Twitter, @DerrianCarter00

Easley’s Summer, Boiling Springs’ Hurley voted Ingles Upstate high school Athletes of the week

Kamryn Jackson

Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Abi Summer of Easley and Luke Hurley of Boiling Springs racked up enough of their respective votes to be named the Ingles Boys and Girls Upstate high school Athlete of the Week for Aug. 25-31.

Summer is a senior libero for Easley volleyball. She came up with 14 digs in a 3-0 sweep over J.L. Mann.

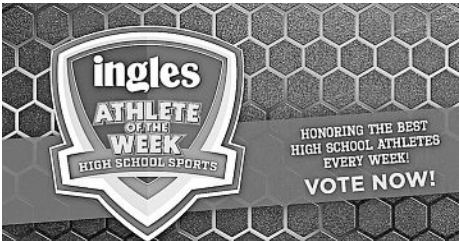
Summer finished with 8,145 of the 14,467 votes cast. Spartanburg Day cross country runner McKee Kent came in second with 4,708 votes.

Hurley, a senior cross country runner at Boiling Springs, won the Eye Opener cross country meet in Spartanburg. He

finished 5,000 meters in 15 minutes, 42.7 seconds to best 495 other competitors.

Hurley finished with 6,450 of the 19,117 votes cast. Junior running back for St. Joseph’s Mack Rambo came in second with 5,593 votes.

Kamryn Jackson covers high school and college sports for the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, Greenville News and



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