

SPORTS

Staley: USC deserves No. 1 seed

Cora Hall
Knoxville News Sentinel
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

GREENVILLE – Dawn Staley believes South Carolina women’s basketball deserves the No. 1 overall seed of the NCAA tournament after the Gamecocks won their third straight SEC tournament.

South Carolina was the No. 5 overall seed, making it a No. 2 seed, in the NCAA Tournament committee’s second in-season reveal of the top 16 seeds on Feb. 27. The No. 1 seeds in that reveal were UCLA, Southern Cal, Texas and Notre Dame.

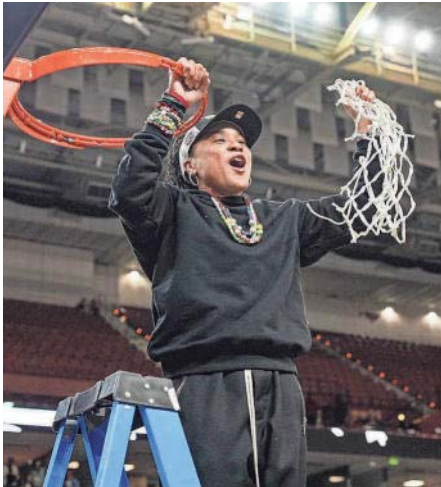
The Gamecocks were the No. 1 seed in the SEC tournament and beat the No. 2 seed Longhorns 64-45 in a dominant showing at Bon Secours Wellness Arena on Sunday. When Staley was asked if she believed the Gamecocks deserved the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA tournament, her response was they earned it.

“When you win this tournament, and you play the schedule that we played, I do think we’re the No. 1 overall seed no matter what it ends up being,” Staley said. “We, again, manufactured our schedule to put ourselves in this situation.”

Staley also discussed the seeding with the crew of ESPN’s “College GameDay” after South Carolina beat Oklahoma on Friday.

“I’m going to speak out about it because I have to ‘cause you got to hear the voice of the other side,” Staley said Sunday. “If you don’t think our body of work deserves it, then somebody

See STALEY, Page 2C



South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley cuts the net down after the Gamecocks’ win against Texas on Sunday at Bon Secours Wellness Arena in Greenville.
JIM DEDMON/IMAGN IMAGES



Texas forward Madison Booker goes toward the basket while defended by South Carolina guard Bree Hall on Sunday at Bon Secours Wellness Arena in Greenville. JIM DEDMON/IMAGN IMAGES

Hall locks down Booker as USC earns SEC title

Lulu Kesin
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

GREENVILLE — Bree Hall woke up Sunday morning and texted her parents.

“I’m shutting her down,” was the message from the South Carolina women’s basketball guard, referring to Texas star sophomore and SEC Player of the Year Madison Booker.

“I woke up with the mindset of ‘I have to get her,’” Hall told The Greenville News in the locker room at Bon Secours Wellness Arena after No. 1 seed South Carolina (30-3) defeated No. 2 seed Texas 64-45 for the SEC tournament championship. “I know after that game (on Feb. 9), (Booker) had said ‘she can’t f-ing guard me,’ so I said that will be my motivation this game. I have to take that personally.”

Hall held Booker to zero points until the 1:51 mark in the second quarter. Booker had three points by the fourth quarter and ultimately finished with 10, making just 4-of-13 shot attempts from the field.

Texas (31-3) shot a measly 30% from the field.

“I woke up with the mindset of ‘I have to get her,’” I know after that game (on Feb. 9), (Booker) had said ‘she can’t f-ing guard me,’ so I said that will be my motivation this game. I have to take that personally.”

Bree Hall
South Carolina guard

“We don’t win this game without the contributions of Bree Hall and Raven Johnson,” South Carolina coach Dawn Staley said. “She was locked into the game plan and wanted to know what she needed to do in order for her to help us win another championship.”

In the win over Texas on Jan. 12, Hall played an instrumental role by stopping Booker’s fluidity, as she finished 3-of-19 from the field and only scored seven points.

On Feb. 9 in Austin, Booker started off shaky against Hall but ultimately pulled her offense together in the second half. She finished with 20 points in the 66-62 win but only hit 7-of-22 field goals, scoring most of her points at the free-throw line.

In the three games Hall has defended

Booker for a majority of the time with Booker going 14-of-54 (25.9%), scoring above her average in one of the three games and scoring below 10 in the other two.

“(Hall) is going to shut her down, she’s going disrupt her and get in her head,” Hall’s mother, Lashauna told The Greenville News. “That’s who she is, she’s doing to do the dirty work, do whatever it takes to win. That’s why she came here to South Carolina. To win.”

Hall knows her teammates and coaches recognize and see the impact she has on defense. However, Hall was overlooked for the SEC All-Defensive Team.

She didn’t forget that, too, on

See USC, Page 2C

BOYS BASKETBALL SUPER 25

Greenville holds onto No. 1 in Upstate rankings

Todd Shanesy
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Here are the final Upstate Super 25 high school boys basketball power rankings for the 2025 SCHSL season.

1. Greenville

Record: 26-2, Class AAAAA Division 2
Previous ranking: 1
Last game: Beat Goose Creek, 81-71, in two overtimes to win state championship

2. Dorman

Record: 24-5, Class AAAAA Division 1
Previous ranking: 2
Last game: Lost to Blythewood, 46-45, in Upper State final

3. Powdersville

Record: 21-10, Class AAA
Previous ranking: 4
Last game: Lost to Keenan, 58-53, in



Greenville High School players and coaches celebrate their state championship on Saturday night in Florence. ALEX HICKS JR./GREENVILLE NEWS

state championship

4. Wren

Record: 25-5, Class AAAA

Previous ranking: 3

Last game: Lost to Lancaster, 61-57, in Upper State final

5. Greer

Record: 21-8, Class AAAA
Previous ranking: 5
Last game: Lost to Wren, 79-59, in Upper State semifinals

6. Riverside

Record: 20-8, Class AAAAA Division 2
Previous ranking: 6
Last game: Lost to Greenville, 61-48, in Upper State semifinals

7. J.L. Mann

Record: 12-15, Class AAAAA Division 1
Previous ranking: 7
Last game: Lost to Dorman, 79-73, in second round of playoffs

8. Daniel

Record: 19-9, Class AAAA
Previous ranking: 8
Last game: Lost to Wren, 59-48, in second round of playoffs

See RANKINGS, Page 2C

COLLEGE MEN’S BASKETBALL



Kevin Keatts was fired after eight seasons coaching N.C. State.
KYLE TERADA/IMAGN IMAGES

NC State fires Keatts: Here’s what we know

Rodd Baxley
Fayetteville Observer
USA TODAY NETWORK

N.C. State basketball coach Kevin Keatts has been fired, Wolfpack athletics director Boo Corrigan announced Sunday morning.

Keatts led the Wolfpack to an ACC Tournament championship and Final Four run in 2024, but the Wolfpack had a 12-19 record this season. N.C. State, which posted a 5-15 mark in the ACC and did not qualify for the ACC Tournament, was 0-11 in road games.

“I want to thank Coach Keatts for his contributions to NC State and for always representing the university with class,” Corrigan said in a school-issued statement.

“He will always have a treasured place in Wolfpack history for the accomplishments of his 2023-24 squad and I appreciate the passion he brought to this role. We wish him and his family the best in the future.”

Keatts, who just finished his eighth season at NC State, posted an overall record of 151-113 with the Pack, finishing 69-84 in ACC play. His teams earned three NCAA Tournament bids during his time in Raleigh.

The Wolfpack lost 13 of their final 16 games this season, with a nine-game losing streak at one point. N.C. State ended its season Saturday with a 72-70 loss at Miami, which finished at the bottom of the ACC standings.

“I am extremely proud of what we

accomplished during my time here,” Keatts wrote in a social media post.

“... As we enter this new era of college sports, I wholeheartedly believe that I am leaving the program in better position to succeed than when I started — and that the basketball program will continue to thrive when supported to the level necessary to compete.”

Keatts wrapped up his post by saying he was “officially entering the portal.”

The Wolfpack said a national search for the next head coach will begin immediately.

Kevin Keatts buyout

With the Wolfpack firing Keatts, N.C. State owes him a buyout of \$7.8 million. The Wolfpack’s ACC Tournament title and Final Four run in 2024 added a two-year contract extension, which meant Keatts was extended through the 2029-30 season. If Keatts finds another coaching position, N.C. State will have part of its obligation offset by his new salary. Factoring in the salaries of assistant coaches, the Wolfpack will likely be on the hook for close to \$10 million.

Rodd Baxley covers Duke, North Carolina and N.C. State for The Fayetteville Observer as part of the USA TODAY Network. Follow his ACC coverage on X/ Twitter or Bluesky: @RoddBaxley. Got questions regarding those teams? Send them to rbaxley@fayobserver.com.

Clemson lands four-star 2026 WR Burroughs

Derrian Carter
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

CLEMSON — Clemson football added its eighth player in its 2026 class with the commitment of four-star wide receiver Naeem Burroughs on Saturday.

The 5-foot-11, 175-pounder from the Bolles School in Jacksonville, Florida, is rated as the No. 7 player in the state and the No. 8 receiver nationally by the 247Sports Composite rankings.

Burroughs chose Clemson over Florida, Southern Cal and Texas.

In his junior season, Burroughs recorded 33 receptions for 829 yards and

12 touchdowns, according to Max Preps. He is the eighth player to commit to coach Dabo Swinney’s 2026 class, which is ranked No. 9 nationally.

Four-star wide receiver Connor Salmin committed to Clemson hours after Burroughs. The class has five four-star recruits, three three-stars and one player who isn’t rated.

Burroughs is the second recruit from Florida in the 2026 class to commit to the Tigers, joining long snapper Alex Nocco. Salmin, Quarterback Tait Reynolds, cornerback Shavar Young Jr. and offensive tackle Adam Guthrie are the other four-star recruits in the 2026 class.

ON THE AIR

TUESDAY TELEVISION

COLLEGE MEN’S BASKETBALL

2 p.m. ACC – Notre Dame vs. Pitt
4:30 p.m. ACC – Virginia Tech vs. Cal
7 p.m. ACC – Florida State vs. Syracuse

CBSSN – CAA Championship
ESPN – Horizon Championship
ESPN2 – Central Connecticut vs. Saint Francis
ESPNU – McNeese State vs. TBD
9 p.m. ESPN – WCC Championship
ESPN2 – Bryant vs. Albany
ESPNU – Big Sky Semifinal 1
11:30 p.m. ESPN2 – Big Sky Semifinal 2

COLLEGE WOMEN’S BASKETBALL

Noon ESPN2 – Horizon Championship
4 p.m. ESPN2 – WCC Championship

MLB

1 p.m. MLB – N.Y. Mets vs. Houston
4 p.m. MLB – Chicago Cubs vs. Milwaukee
9 p.m. MLB – San Francisco vs. Athletics

MEN’S SOCCER

4 p.m. CBSSN – Inter Milan at Feyenoord
8:30 p.m. FS1 – LAFC at Columbus
10:30 p.m. FS1 – Cincinnati at Tigres UANL

NBA

7:30 p.m. TNT – Milwaukee at Indiana

TENNIS

2 p.m. Tennis – BNP Paribas Open
10 p.m. Tennis – BNP Paribas Open

Staley

Continued from Page 1C

needs to speak out on it. If it’s not us, if it’s not our conference, if it’s not whoever, I’m going to go down fighting. I am going to go down fighting for what our team earned.”

Staley hopes the NCAA selection committee doesn’t discount the Gamecocks’ full resume.

She said there “isn’t anybody in the country” that has the strength of schedule South Carolina does, won a share of the regular-season championship and won its conference tourna-

ment over the current No. 1 team in the country. Texas has been ranked No. 1 in the USA TODAY coaches poll and the AP Top 25 for the last two weeks.

South Carolina is 15-3 in Quad 1 wins, which is more Quad 1 wins than any other team in the country. Only three other teams in the country have more than 10 Quad 1 wins (Texas, UCLA and USC).

“I’m shocked that we weren’t the No. 2 (overall) seed,” Staley said. “I was very shocked ... if you get so much credit for beating us, yet when we’ve had some of the toughest stretches in the country, and we came out of it unscathed – you can’t discount that. You can’t discredit that.”

USC

Continued from Page 1C

Sunday.

“Absolutely it was,” Hall said. “Maybe it’s because I don’t pack the stats with steals and blocks which is fine but I feel like leaving me off that award list motivated me more for this tournament.”

When Booker goes, Texas goes. She fuels runs, she hits difficult shots and she’s one of a kind. At 6-foot-1, Booker thrives in mid-range. Hall explained when a player is so good in that middle ground, it’s impossible to tell when they’ll shoot. It’s a type of offensive versatility that challenges one to stay on their feet because one late response is a foul on the arm. One moment without focus, she’s going by you for a layup.

“Shoutout to her, she’s a fantastic player for sure,” Hall said. “Nothing but love for her.”

Sunday specifically Booker couldn’t create for herself or her teammates, finishing with zero assists despite averaging 2.9 per game. It was only the third time all season she couldn’t create an assist and the first in an SEC game.

“She takes the job nobody wants,” Staley said of Hall. “I tell her, ‘Your de-

fense is going to be something that will carry you in the transition to the next level.’ I hope she hears me. These WNBA franchises have been looking at Bree for four years. They know what she’s best at.”

Lulu Kesin covers South Carolina athletics for The Greenville News and the USA TODAY Network. Email her at lkesin@gannett.com and follow her on X @Lulukesin

Rankings

Continued from Page 1C

9. Boiling Springs

Record: 16-10, Class AAAAA Division 1
Previous ranking: 9
Last game: Lost to J.L. Mann, 68-60, in first round of playoffs

10. Byrnes

Record: 24-4, Class AAAAA Division 1
Previous ranking: 10
Last game: Lost to Blythewood, 73-58, in second round of playoffs

11. Christ Church

Record: 20-6, Class AAA
Previous ranking: 11
Last game: Lost to Powdersville, 58-57, in Upper State final

12. High Point Academy

Record: 26-3, Class AA
Previous ranking: 12
Last game: Lost to Atlantic Collegiate Academy, 58-52, in state championship game

13. Mauldin

Record: 18-10, Class AAAAA Division 1
Previous ranking: 13
Last game: Lost to River Bluff, 69-59, in second round of playoffs

14. Westside

Record: 18-9, Class AAAA
Previous ranking: 14
Last game: Lost to Daniel, 73-68 (OT), in first round of playoffs

15. Liberty

Record: 13-15, Class AA
Previous ranking: 15
Last game: Lost to High Point, 62-44, in Upper State final

16. Belton-Honea Path

Record: 16-11, Class AAA
Previous ranking: 15
Last game: Lost to Powdersville, 68-56, in Upper State semifinals

17. Fountain Inn

Record: 14-12, Class AAAA
Previous ranking: 16
Last game: Lost to A.C. Flora, 60-55, in first round of playoffs

18. Blue Ridge

Record: 12-5, Class AAAA
Previous ranking: 17
Last game: Lost to Dreher, 54-35, in first round of playoffs

19. T.L. Hanna

Record: 14-13, Class AAAAA Division 2
Previous ranking: 18
Last game: Lost to Catawba Ridge, 45-44, in first round of playoffs

20. Woodruff

Record: 18-9, Class AAA
Previous ranking: 19
Last game: Lost to Powdersville, 61-50, in second round of playoffs

21. Woodmont

Record: 14-13, Class AAAAA Division 2
Previous ranking: 20
Last game: Lost to Fort Mill, 68-54, in second round of playoffs

22. Chesnee

Record: 21-7, Class AA
Previous ranking: 23

Last game Lost to Liberty, 54-50, in second round of playoffs

23. St. Joseph’s

Record: 15-9, Class AAA
Previous ranking: 21
Last game: Lost to Christ Church, 60-20, in Upper State semifinals

24. Palmetto

Record: 10-11, Class AAA
Previous ranking: 24
Last game: Lost to Belton-Honea Path, 60-54, in second round of playoffs

25. Landrum

Record: 19-8, Class AA
Previous ranking: 25
Last game: Lost to York Prep, 67-63, in first round of playoffs

Todd Shanesy covers high school athletics for the Greenville News, Spartanburg Herald-Journal and Anderson Independent Mail in the USA TODAY Network. Contact him by email at todd.shanesy@shj.com. Follow him on X, formerly called Twitter, at @ToddShanesySHJ.