

# SPORTS

## WOMEN’S BASKETBALL



Ta’niya Latson drives to the basket while being guarded by Vanderbilt’s Jada Brown on Jan. 25 at Colonial Life Arena in Columbia. JACOB KUPFERMAN/GETTY IMAGES

# ‘I had to bring more’

How Latson left her worst game behind quickly in South Carolina rout of Vandy

**Lulu Kesin**  
Greenville News  
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

COLUMBIA — After scoring a season-low six points, South Carolina women’s basketball starting guard Ta’Niya Latson had a few options.

She could let the 1-for-10 shooting night in the loss to No. 16 Oklahoma on Jan. 22 linger.

Or she could score 10 points in the first 10 minutes against No. 4 Vanderbilt on Jan. 25. She did the latter.

Latson had a team-high 21 points on 8-of-15 shooting with five rebounds and five assists in the 103-74 win.

“It’s mainly from self-motivation, I knew it wasn’t my best game,” Latson said of the Oklahoma game. “I knew I had to bring more, especially going into a top five matchup and playing a team like Vandy. We had personal conversations, and we had to watch a lot of film. It’s just a learning experience. So I knew tonight I had to go out there and just be myself.”

The No. 2 Gamecocks (20-2, 6-1 SEC) jumped out to an 11-2 lead in the first two minutes, and Latson scored or assisted

on three of the first five baskets.

“Vandy is a really good team so we knew we had to play great defense to win that game,” Latson said. “We were connected on defense. We just had to get stops, one stop at a time, and I think we executed that well today.”

The Commodores (20-1, 6-1) are No. 17 nationally in fewest turnovers per game at 12.5, but midway through the second quarter, they already had 13. South Carolina scored 32 points off their 20 turnovers.

South Carolina point guard Raven Johnson played just three minutes before picking up two fouls, so Latson played 17 of the first 20 minutes in Johnson’s absence as Staley worked Maddy McDaniel and other guards in.

Latson had 12 first-half points by way of layups through contact in transition and creating her own offense. When Vanderbilt cut a 21-point deficit to seven early in the third quarter, Latson came alive again.

She scored seven points in the third quarter, which put the exclamation point on the dominant victory. Vanderbilt outscored South Carolina 28-22 in the second quarter, but South Carolina outscored Vanderbilt 27-12 in the third.

In the fourth quarter, Latson stepped in the passing lane to let Johnson pick off the ball, then sprinted the floor with her hand up so Johnson could drop in a perfectly timed transition pass. Latson jumped to catch the ball and scored before hitting the ground.

“She’s a competitor she only wants to see herself play and perform at the highest level and when she’s anything but that, she makes adjustments,” coach Dawn Staley said of Latson. “Her shots were falling in today, she got to the rim, but she defended. And when you’re able to play both sides of the ball impacted that way it’s only going to be good results.”

Latson helped defend Vanderbilt freshman Aubrey Galvan, who was averaging 11.7 points. She scored only seven on 3-of-8 shooting and had four turnovers.

“You can see her take her intensity and her ability to lock in, to another level. Now all players can’t do that. I do see it in her, and I did see it in her today, and she stayed locked in for the 30-plus minutes that she played,” Staley said.

## CLEMSON FOOTBALL

# Why Swinney publicly called out Ole Miss for tampering with Ferrelli

**Derrian Carter**  
Greenville News  
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

Dabo Swinney said he knew tampering was going on in college football for a long time, but it felt different when it impacted his own team.

Clemson football lost linebacker Luke Ferrelli, who transferred to Clemson on Jan. 7 then re-entered the portal on Jan. 16 to transfer to Ole

Miss on Jan. 22.

This led to Swinney going on a lengthy rant on Jan. 23, calling out Ole Miss and Rebels coach Pete Golding for what the Clemson football coach said was tampering with Ferrelli.

Swinney said Golding was contacting Ferrelli despite him transferring to Clemson, being enrolled in classes and participating in team workouts. He said he submitted the information to the NCAA.

“There’s tampering, and then there’s blatant tampering,” Swinney said. “Tampering 101 is when you’re talking to kids who aren’t in the portal. Tampering 201 is when you’ve already negotiated the deal with the kids not in the portal.

“Tampering 301 is when you got a kid who’s going in the portal, signed somewhere, moved there, going to classes and you’re texting them while they’re in class. That’s like a whole other level of tampering.”

College football coaches are vocal about tampering in the transfer portal and high-school recruiting, but they rarely call out schools or coaches like Swinney did.

Swinney, who is coming off his second-worst coaching season at Clemson after going 7-6 in 2025, acknowledged some would think he was coming off as bitter for losing Ferrelli, the ACC’s defensive rookie of the year.

However, Swinney said he called out Ole Miss to protect Clemson from future acts of tampering and for the betterment of the sport.

“It’s about the message that is being sent if this blatant tampering is allowed to happen without any consequences,” Swinney said. “This is about protecting our program. This is about college football.”

Swinney said he refuses to make deals with players before the portal opens. He also challenged coaches

See SWINNEY, Page 3B

## CLEMSON FOOTBALL

# Ranking transfer portal additions after Ferrelli flip

**Derrian Carter**  
Greenville News  
USA TODAY NETWORK – SOUTH CAROLINA

CLEMSON — Clemson football used the transfer portal more than ever after a disastrous 2025 season.

The Tigers (7-6) had their second-worst season under coach Dabo Swinney after missing the ACC championship and College Football Playoff. This led to Clemson setting a single-season transfer record after multiple players departed because of the portal, expiring eligibility and the 2026 NFL Draft.

Clemson ended up with 10 transfers (eight on defense, two on offense) after linebacker Luke Ferrelli re-entered the portal to transfer to Ole Miss. The Tigers’ 2026 transfer portal class ranks No. 70 in the 247Sports rankings, their highest ranking ever, but is 15th in the ACC.

Here’s how we ranked Clemson’s portal additions from best to worst.

### Ranking Clemson football’s transfer portal additions in 2026

**Jerome Carter III, S**

Clemson’s pass defense was its weaknesses last season, and the Tigers lost both starting safeties because of the portal, including Ricardo Jones, who led the team and ACC in interceptions with six.

This caused the Tigers to pursue Old Dominion ball-hawking safety Jerome Carter III, the No. 121 safety in the portal. The 6-foot-1 safety recorded 75 tackles and six interceptions (tied for second in FBS) in 2025.

**Corey Myrick, S**

Khalil Barnes, a three-year starter, was the other safety to depart Clemson.

See ADDITIONS, Page 3B



SMU Mustangs running back Chris Johnson Jr. carries the ball against the Arizona Wildcats during the Holiday Bowl on Jan. 2 in San Diego, Calif. KIRBY LEE/IMAGN IMAGES