

# SPORTS



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Oklahoma's Payton Verhulst drives to the basket vs. South Carolina's Tessa Johnson on Jan. 22. SARAH PHIPPS/THE OKLAHOMAN

## South Carolina women vs. Oklahoma preview

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

The South Carolina women's basketball team has a chance to avenge its only SEC loss of the season.

Coach Dawn Staley's team lost 94-82 in overtime at Oklahoma on Jan. 22 and will now face the Sooners (26-7) in the Sweet 16 of the Women's NCAA Tournament on March 28 (5 p.m ET, ESPN) in Sacramento, California.

The No. 1 seeded Gamecocks (33-3) beat No. 9 seed Southern Cal 101-61 on March 23, and the No. 4 seeded Sooners beat No. 5 seed Michigan State 77-71 on March 22.

Oklahoma lost to LSU in the SEC Tournament quarterfinals, which prevented a rematch with South Carolina ahead of March Madness.

South Carolina beat LSU in the semifinals and lost to Texas in the championship game.

Here's what to know about the rematch.

See **PREVIEW, Page 2C**



How Latson proved her transfer to South Carolina wasn't a mistake

South Carolina guard Ta'niya Latson listens to coach Dawn Staley on March 8 during the SEC Women's Tournament championship game at Bon Secours Wellness Arena in Greenville. ALEX MARTIN/GRENVILLE NEWS

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

Ta'Niya Latson gave Florida State all she had to give.

The guard scored 30 points with seven rebounds, four assists and two steals in the second round Women's NCAA Tournament loss to LSU in 2025.

Then three days later as South Carolina women's basketball was preparing for its Sweet 16 matchup, news broke that Latson, the nation's leading scorer at 25.2 points per game, would en-

ter the transfer portal. The senior will play in her first career Sweet 16 on March 28 (5 p.m. ET, ESPN) but this time she isn't averaging over 20 points a game. At South Carolina, she's averaging just 14.3, but her team is a No. 1 seed.

That's exactly how Latson wanted it to be. "I know a lot of people don't understand my why," Latson said. "I know a lot of people are like, 'She was just the leading scorer in the nation. Why the hell would she go to South Carolina to give the ball up?' But I want to win. The purpose is bigger than scoring points. I want to be a complete player when I get to the league (WNBA)."

**Why Latson picked Staley, South Carolina**

Coach Dawn Staley's system of success doesn't hinge on one star. Her track record of three national championships, 10 SEC regular-season titles, seven Final Four appearances and 18 WNBA draft picks supports her philosophy.

At Florida State, Latson carried a heavy load. She averaged 21 or more points and 15.9 or more field goal attempts a game each season.

She knew the WNBA would not mirror the type of play she displayed in the ACC. So to improve

See **LATSON, Page 2C**

### CLEMSON FOOTBALL

## Morris: Vizzina 'is our guy' at quarterback, for now

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

CLEMSON – Clemson football has not named a starting quarterback for 2026, but new offensive coordinator Chad Morris says Christopher Vizzina is still the frontrunner.

"Coming out of spring, CV is our guy," Morris said March 25 after Clemson's 12th spring practice. "But there's still competition. No one signed a lifetime contract."

Morris said he has been impressed with how Vizzina's comfort level has progressed when learning the new offense. Vizzina has been in the "pole position," receiving first-team reps first after sitting behind Cade Klubnik for three years, since the start of spring practice.

Vizzina is battling redshirt freshman Chris Denson, freshmen Tait Reynolds and Brock Bradley, and graduate student Trent Pearmanto be the team's starter in 2026.



Clemson quarterback Tait Reynolds (2) throws with Christopher Vizzina (17) and Chris Denson (15) during practice on March 4 in Clemson. KEN RUINARD/USA TODAY CO

All are learning Morris' new offense that emphasizes tempo and big plays either through the air or on the ground. He said each was "drinking water through a firehouse" when the Tigers started spring practice but have improved over

11 practices and one scrimmage. "Have they mastered it? No, they haven't mastered it," Morris said. "But have they gotten better? Yeah, they have, but I want to keep them uncomfortable, too."

**Can freshman Tait Reynolds beat out Christopher Vizzina for Clemson starting QB?**

Vizzina is Clemson's most experienced player, playing in 14 games and making one start, which came in 2025 against SMU with Klubnik out. All the other quarterbacks have combined for eight appearances and no starts.

Reynolds, 6-foot-2 three-star signee who weighs 215 pounds, has emerged as a contender to push Vizzina. Reynolds was working with the second-team offense during Clemson's tempo period on March 23 when media was allowed to watch.

During the last media viewing period on March 2, Denson was taking snaps with the second team.

Morris said there's "great competition" in Clemson's quarterback room despite Vizzina still leading.

"Tait's done a really good job this

See **CLEMSON, Page 2C**

## SPORTS ON TV FRIDAY, MARCH 27 (ALL TIMES EASTERN)

## COLLEGE BASEBALL

**8 p.m.**  
 ACCN — Miami (Fla.) at Clemson  
 ESPNU — Tennessee at Vanderbilt  
 SECN — Oklahoma at Texas  
**COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)**  
**7:10 p.m.**  
 CBS — NCAA Tournament, East Regional, Semifinal, Duke vs. St. John's  
**7:35 p.m.**  
 TBS/TRU TV — NCAA Tournament, Midwest Regional, Semifinal, Michigan vs. Alabama  
**9:45 p.m.**  
 CBS — NCAA Tournament, East Regional, Semifinal, UConn vs. Michigan State  
**10:10 p.m.**  
 TBS/TRU TV — NCAA Tournament, Midwest Regional, Semifinal, Iowa State vs. Tennessee  
**COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN'S)**  
**2:30 p.m.**  
 ESPN — NCAA Tournament, Regional 1, Semifinal, Vanderbilt vs. Notre Dame  
**5 p.m.**  
 ESPN — NCAA Tournament, Regional 1, Semifinal, UConn vs. North Carolina  
**7:30 p.m.**  
 ESPN — NCAA Tournament, Regional 2, Semifinal, UCLA vs. Minnesota  
**10 p.m.**  
 ESPN — NCAA Tournament, Regional 2,

Semifinal, LSU vs. Duke  
**COLLEGE HOCKEY**  
**2:30 p.m.**  
 ESPNU — NCAA Championship, Love-land Regional, Semifinals, Western Michigan vs. Minnesota State  
**5:30 p.m.**  
 ESPNU — NCAA Championship, Albany Regional, Semifinals, Michigan vs. Bentley  
**9 p.m.**  
 ESPN2 — NCAA Championship, Albany Regional, Semifinals, Minnesota Duluth vs. Penn State  
**COLLEGE SOFTBALL**  
**5 p.m.**  
 BTN — Maryland at Wisconsin  
**6 p.m.**  
 ACCN — Stanford at Duke  
 SECN — Mississippi at Tennessee  
**7 p.m.**  
 FS1 — Oregon at Northwestern  
 ESPN2 — Florida at Arkansas  
**9 p.m.**  
 FS1 — UCLA at Nebraska  
**FIGURE SKATING**  
**1 p.m.**  
 USA/PEACOCK — World Championships, Men's Short, Women's Short/Free, Prague, Czechia  
**GOLF**  
**3:30 a.m.**

**GOLF** — DP World Tour, Hero Indian Open, Second Round, New Delhi, India  
**11 a.m.**  
**GOLF** — Korn Ferry Tour, Club Car Championship, Second Round, Savannah, Ga.  
**3 p.m.**  
**GOLF** — PGA Tour, Texas Children's Houston Open, Second Round, Houston  
**7 p.m.**  
**GOLF** — LPGA Tour, Ford Championship, Second Round, Chandler, Ariz.  
**10 p.m.**  
**GOLF** — PGA Tour Champions, Hoag Classic, First Round, Newport Beach, Calif. (tape delay)  
**HORSE RACING**  
**1:30 p.m.**  
 FS2 — America's Day at the Races  
**5 p.m.**  
 FS2 — America's Day at the Races  
**MLB BASEBALL**  
**7:07 p.m.**  
 MLBN — Athletics at Toronto  
**8:15 p.m.**  
 APPLE TV — L.A. Angels at Houston  
**9:45 p.m.**  
 APPLE TV — Cleveland at Seattle  
**10:10 p.m.**  
 MLBN — Arizona at L.A. Dodgers  
**NBA BASKETBALL**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**NBA TV** — Miami at Cleveland  
**10 p.m.**  
**NBA TV** — Dallas at Portland  
**NHL HOCKEY**  
**7 p.m.**  
 NHLN — Detroit at Buffalo  
**PICKLEBALL**  
**7 p.m.**  
 FS1 — PPA Tour, Greater Zion Cup, Quarterfinals, Ivins, Utah  
**SOCCER (MEN'S)**  
**3:45 p.m.**  
 FS1 — International Friendly, England at Uruguay  
**SOCCER (WOMEN'S)**  
**10 p.m.**  
 AMAZON PRIME — NWSL, Houston at Angel City  
**TENNIS**  
**1 p.m.**  
 TENNIS — Miami Open, ATP/WTA Semifinals; WTA Doubles Semifinals  
**5 p.m.**  
 TENNIS — Miami Open, ATP/WTA Semifinals; WTA Doubles Semifinals  
**7 p.m.**  
 TENNIS — Miami Open, ATP/WTA Semifinals; WTA Doubles Semifinals  
**UFL FOOTBALL**  
**8 p.m.**  
 FOX — Birmingham at Louisville

## IN BRIEF

**Reports: LSU to fire McMahon, bring back Wade as coach**

LSU is parting ways with Matt McMahon to hire North Carolina State's Will Wade for a second stint as head coach, according to multiple reports on Thursday morning.

Wade, 43, previously was the head coach of the Tigers from 2017-22, guiding the program to three NCAA Tournament appearances in those five seasons. He had an overall record of 105-51 and a Southeastern Conference mark of 56-33 with LSU before being fired for cause in 2022 after committing NCAA violations.

Wade guided McNeese State to NCAA Tournament appearances in 2024 and

2025 before helping North Carolina State to the Big Dance with a 20-14 record in 2025-26.

LSU recently hired former McNeese State president Wade Rouse as its system president and added the latter's school's athletic director, Heath Schroyer, as the senior deputy athletic director on Thursday. Wade was asked about rumors linking him to LSU on March 12 after the Wolfpack dropped an 81-74 decision to Virginia in the ACC tournament.

"Is the job open there?" Wade said at the time. "No? Listen, let me be very clear. I'm excited at NC State. I was hired at NC State to do a job. This wasn't going to take one year. I've already met with our administration about next year and

some of the changes that we need to make and some of the things that we need to do to put this program where it deserves long-term."

McMahon, 47, took over as LSU head coach in 2022-23 but has never posted a winning record in SEC play and has gone 3-15 in the conference each of the past two seasons. LSU limped to a 15-17 overall record this season. McMahon was hired after leading Murray State to a 153-67 record and two trips to the Sweet 16 (2019, 2022).

**Report: Packers' Parsons may miss first 3-4 games**

Green Bay Packers pass rusher Micah Parsons is expected to miss the first

three to four games of the 2026 season while recovering from his torn left ACL, The Athletic reported Thursday.

Parsons, 26, underwent reconstructive knee surgery on Dec. 29 after sustaining the season-ending injury in a Week 15 loss to the Denver Broncos on Dec. 14.

Parsons finished his first season with the Packers with 12.5 sacks, 41 tackles, 27 quarterback hits and two forced fumbles, making the All-Pro first team for the third time in five seasons.

Green Bay acquired Parsons from the Dallas Cowboys in a stunning trade on Aug. 28, 2025, then signed him to a four-year, \$186 million contract extension through 2029.

— *Wire reports*

## Preview

Continued from Page 1C

**Why layups helped Oklahoma beat South Carolina**

South Carolina missed 15 layups (16-of-31) in the loss to Oklahoma, a game that was tied 75 at the end of regulation.

It's not a knock to the Sooners to acknowledge that a lot of the mistakes the Gamecocks made in that game were self-inflicted. Oklahoma's defense was disruptive but South Carolina missed a lot of wide-open looks.

**Oklahoma's Aaliyah Chavez had second-best SEC game vs South Carolina**

South Carolina had a chance to win in regulation but didn't get a shot off, then Oklahoma freshman Aaliyah Chavez scored 15 of her 26 points in overtime.

Chavez's career-high in an SEC game

is 27 but her best shooting night from behind the arc was the South Carolina game, finishing 50% from the 3-point line (5-of-10).

She's one of the top freshmen in the country and averages 18.3 points a game.

**Raegan Beers won first matchup vs Madina Okot**

Star Oklahoma center Raegan Beers vs star South Carolina center Madina Okot was the main matchup in that game. Beers scored 18 points and had 14 rebounds. Okot had six points and four rebounds, which tied for her second-fewest rebounds and third-fewest points scored.

Okot was feeling pressure as a starter and it seemed to come to a boil in that game, so Staley took her out of the starting lineup. Now she's averaging 13.5 points and 10.9 rebounds, shooting 58.4% from the floor.

She's also 46.2% from the 3-point line, which means if Beers defends her,

they might try to pull Okot out and let Joyce Edwards go to work inside the post.

Edwards is averaging 19.9 points and has scored 50 points with 18 rebounds in the first two rounds of March Madness. Beers is averaging 15.8 points and 10.5 rebounds, shooting 61.7% from the floor. She scored 18 points each of the last two games.

**South Carolina can't let Payton Verhulst heat up again**

What makes Oklahoma tough is it's not just Chavez the point guard and Beers the center, as shooting guard Payton Verhulst is also a threat.

Verhulst will pull up from a few steps behind the 3-point line and even though she only went 1-of-4 from there in the first meeting, she finished with a season-high 19 points.

**Oklahoma's transition baskets hurt South Carolina**

missing the next two games and halting the rhythm that she worked hard to build in a new system.

Whenever she has an off night, there is social media criticism about her decision, including that she made the wrong choice coming to South Carolina.

"Nobody ruined me," Latson said. "I made a decision and I would 100% do it again. Injuries, probably pressure has gotten to me a little bit, not the coaching. I feel like Dawn has always given me the freedom to be myself."

Ahead of her first NCAA Tournament game at South Carolina, Latson's phone lit up. It was Staley reminding her of something simple.

"She can turn on a light bulb in just a few words," Latson said when asked about Staley's impact mentally. "She

Even though the Gamecocks knew Oklahoma feeds off transition points, they didn't execute well enough.

The Sooners sprint the floor and push the ball ahead even on made baskets and it's imperative South Carolina defends a lot better in transition better if it wants to win.

**South Carolina vs Oklahoma March Madness prediction**

**South Carolina 96, Oklahoma 80:** The Gamecocks beat Vanderbilt by 29 fresh off the Oklahoma loss and key players for Staley seem to be in better spots now than they were in the first matchup. This team wants revenge and scored 204 points across the first two rounds.

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## Latson

Continued from Page 1C

her passing, defense and other weaker elements to her game that scoring hid, she came to South Carolina.

Heading into the rematch with No. 4 seed Oklahoma, Latson is averaging career-highs in field goal percentage (49.5%), effective field goal percentage (55.9%), points per play (1.01) and points per scoring attempt (1.15) despite taking less shots each game.

"I'm playing around a lot of other talented players and this is what I came to South Carolina to do," Latson said. "A lot of people don't understand that and that's fine, because I do."

**How Latson made difficult adjustments**

It wasn't always easy. It's been a battle of "giving herself grace" while transforming into the new role. She's used hobbies like building Legos to take her mind off basketball, but most of all, experience and repetition with the Gamecocks (33-3) allowed her to see value in herself beyond scoring.

"Shoot, it was hard," Latson said, but play-making and sharing the ball with other dominant scorers was all part of her transfer plan.

Latson averaged 17.4 points across her first 13 games, shooting 51% from the floor, but against Providence on Dec. 28, she sprained her ankle. She returned Jan. 11 but then hurt her knee Jan. 29,

**from quarterbacks in Clemson spring game**

Clemson will have its spring game on March 28 (1 p.m. ET) at Memorial Stadium.

For the scrimmage to be successful for Clemson quarterbacks, Morris said he wants all "commanding the offense and responding to adversity." He added that he wants the entire offense to clean up procedural penalties that were no-

ticeable in the team's scrimmage on March 11.

Another area of growth Morris wants to see from his quarterbacks at the spring game and in the summer is accuracy on vertical throws.

"We're working on that. That's something that we've got to continue to stress through the course of the summer," Morris said.

Morris said that when Clemson's top wide receivers return healthy, including

Bryant Wesco Jr. and T.J. Moore, it'll help the quarterbacks improve in that area, too.

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## Clemson

spring, and it was his day to, kind of, get those reps," Morris said. "I've been pleased with all our guys, but Tait has gotten several reps with the 2s, as we've rotated those around as well with all our guys. But it was his day. He's done a really good job of growing."

**What Chad Morris wants to see**