

Introduction



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Gamecock Basketball



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Credits

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Gamecock Basketball

Quick Facts

University Information

Location.....	Columbia, S.C.
Enrollment.....	25,077
Founded.....	1801
Team Name.....	Gamecocks
University President.....	Dr. Harris Pastides
NCAA Faculty Representative.....	Dr. Bill Bearden
Athletics Director.....	Eric Hyman
Deputy Athletics Director.....	Marcy Girton
Senior Woman Administrator.....	Val Sheley
Colors.....	Garnet (PMS 202) and Black
Conference.....	Southeastern
Arena/Capacity.....	Colonial Life Arena/18,000
Press Row Phone.....	803-777-6182

Coaching Staff Information

Head Coach (Alma Mater, Year).....	Dawn Staley
Record At South Carolina/Years.....	10-18 / 1 year
Overall Record/Years.....	182-98 / 9 years
Assistant Coaches (Alma Mater, Year).....	Lisa Boyer (Ithaca, 1972)
	Carla McGhee (Tennessee, 1990)
	Nikki McCray (Tennessee, 1995)
Basketball Office Phone.....	803-777-0371

Team Information

2008-09 Overall Record.....	10-18
2008-09 SEC Record/Finish.....	2-12 / 11th
Postseason.....	None
Starters R/L.....	4/1
Letterwinners R/L.....	6/6

Program Information

First Year of Basketball.....	1974-75
Overall Record.....	590-447
SEC Record.....	66-170
NCAA Tourn. Appearances/Last.....	8 / 2003
NCAA Tournament Record.....	8-8
WNIT Appearances/Last.....	4 / 2008
WNIT Record.....	5-3

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Koval E-Mail.....	dkoval@mailbox.sc.edu
Koval Cell Phone.....	314-369-6050
Web Site.....	www.GamecocksOnline.com



2009-10 Roster

Numerical

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/Last School
1	Ebony Wilson	G	5-8	So.	Newark, N.J./Rend Lake College
3	Lauren Falohun	G	5-9	Jr.	Atlanta, Ga./Pace Academy
4	Samone Kennedy	G	5-4	Jr.	Birmingham, Ala./Ramsay
5	Kelsey Bone	C	6-5	Fr.	Houston, Texas/Dulles
11	La'Keisha Sutton	G	5-9	So.	Trenton, N.J./Trenton Catholic
12	Charenee Stephens	F	6-1	So.	Decatur, Ga./Southwest DeKalb
14	Ieasia Walker	G	5-8	Fr.	Amityville, N.Y./Copiague
21	Ashley Bruner	F	6-0	Fr.	Norman, Okla./Norman
22	Courtney Newton	G	5-10	So.	Flowery Branch, Ga./Flowery Branch
24	Marah Strickland#	G	6-0	Jr.	Mt. Airy, Md./Univ. of Maryland
31	Valerie Nainima	G	5-5	Jr.	Suva, Fiji/Long Island University
52	Jewel May	F	6-1	Jr.	Conyers, Ga./Heritage

Alphabetical

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown/Last School
5	Kelsey Bone	C	6-5	Fr.	Houston, Texas/Dulles
21	Ashley Bruner	F	6-0	Fr.	Norman, Okla./Norman
3	Lauren Falohun	G	5-9	Jr.	Atlanta, Ga./Pace Academy
4	Samone Kennedy	G	5-4	Jr.	Birmingham, Ala./Ramsay
52	Jewel May	F	6-1	Jr.	Conyers, Ga./Heritage
31	Valerie Nainima	G	5-5	Jr.	Suva, Fiji/Long Island University
22	Courtney Newton	G	5-10	So.	Flowery Branch, Ga./Flowery Branch
12	Charenee Stephens	F	6-1	So.	Decatur, Ga./Southwest DeKalb
24	Marah Strickland#	G	6-0	Jr.	Mt. Airy, Md./Univ. of Maryland
11	La'Keisha Sutton	G	5-9	So.	Trenton, N.J./Trenton Catholic
14	Ieasia Walker	G	5-8	Fr.	Amityville, N.Y./Copiague
1	Ebony Wilson	G	5-8	So.	Newark, N.J./Rend Lake College

Head Coach: Dawn Staley

Assistant Coaches: Lisa Boyer, Carla McGhee, Nikki McCray

indicates must sit out 2009-10 season due to NCAA transfer rules

Roster Breakdown

By State

Georgia (4): Lauren Falohun, Jewel May, Courtney Newton, Charenee Stephens.
New Jersey (2): La'Keisha Sutton, Ebony Wilson.
Alabama (1): Samone Kennedy.
Maryland (1): Marah Strickland.
New York (1): Ieasia Walker.
Oklahoma (1): Ashley Bruner.
Texas (1): Kelsey Bone.
International (1): Valerie Nainima.

By Class

Junior (5): Lauren Falohun, Samone Kennedy, Jewel May, Valerie Nainima, Marah Strickland.
Sophomore (4): Courtney Newton, Charenee Stephens, La'Keisha Sutton, Ebony Wilson.
Freshman (3): Kelsey Bone, Ashley Bruner, Ieasia Walker.

By Position

Guard (8): Lauren Falohun, Samone Kennedy, Valerie Nainima, Courtney Newton, Marah Strickland, La'Keisha Sutton, Ieasia Walker, Ebony Wilson.
Forward (3): Ashley Bruner, Jewel May, Charenee Stephens.
Center (1): Kelsey Bone.

Pronunciation Guide

Lauren Falohun	foul-LOAN	Marah Strickland	MAR-uh
Valerie Nainima	nigh-KNEE-muh	Ieasia Walker	eye-EESH-uh
Charenee Stephens	SHAR-nay		

Gamecock Basketball

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Media Policies

- Per departmental policy, media are not permitted to contact South Carolina student-athletes on their own at any time in any fashion, including social media networks. All media requests for interviews with women's basketball staff and student-athletes must be arranged through Assistant Director of Media Relations Diana Koval via phone (803-777-7977 or 314-369-6050) or email (dkoval@mailbox.sc.edu).
- Following the first official day of practice (Oct. 16), head coach Dawn Staley and selected players will be available following practice once per week leading up to the first game of the season (Nov. 11). The day will be determined by the coaching and media relations staffs and announced at least 24 hours in advance.
- Practice will be open for the final 20 minutes on the day before each weekday game and on the Friday before each Saturday or Sunday game. Head coach Dawn Staley and selected players will be available for interviews at the conclusion of practice those days as well. Media members should contact Koval to confirm practice times on those days.
- Special requests for one-on-one interviews will be considered on an individual basis and will take place during the standard media availability time whenever possible. All interviews will take place at a campus location, likely either the practice site or the media relations office. Dormitory, apartment and/or cell phone numbers for student-athletes will not be provided to the media. Should you need to conduct a telephone interview with a student-athlete, a call will be placed to you from the student-athlete at a mutually agreeable time.
- All postgame interviews will be conducted in the green room at Colonial Life Arena. NO interviews will take place outside of the green room, including in the South Carolina locker room or hallway. Courtside interviews may be granted whenever possible to television stations broadcasting live from the arena if the reporter notifies Koval by halftime.
- Postgame interviews will be conducted in the following order in the green room at Colonial Life Arena:
 - Visiting Coach
 - South Carolina Players
 - South Carolina Head Coach Dawn Staley
- Any media member failing to comply with these rules may have his/her media privileges revoked at the discretion of the media relations staff.

Media Outlets



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Columbia, S.C. 29201
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Pete Iacobelli (piacobelli@ap.org)

The State

Box 1333
Columbia, S.C. 29202
(O): 803-771-8470 (F): 803-771-8613
Beat: Joe Person (jperson@thestate.com)
(C): 803-917-8463

Charleston Post & Courier

134 Columbus Street
Charleston, S.C. 29403
(O): 843-937-5598 (F): 843-937-5579
Travis Haney (thaney@postandcourier.com)

Greenville News

Box 1688
Greenville, S.C. 29602
(O): 864-298-4239 (F): 864-298-4395
Bart Wright (rbwright@greenvillenews.com)

Orangeburg Times & Democrat

1010 Broughton Street
Orangeburg, S.C. 29116
(O): 803-534-1060 (F): 803-533-5595
Thomas Grant, Jr. (tgrant@timesanddemocrat.com)

Spartanburg Herald-Journal

Box 1657
Spartanburg, S.C. 29304
(O): 864-582-4511 (F): 803-594-6350
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1111 Bull Street, Columbia, S.C. 29202
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Rick Henry (rhenry@wistv.com)

WLTX-TV (Channel 19)

6027 Garners Ferry Rd, Columbia, S.C. 29205
(O): 803-647-0233 (F): 803-776-1791
Bob Shields (bobshields@wltx.com)

WOLO-TV (Channel 25)

Box 4217, Columbia, S.C. 29204
(O): 803-754-7525 (F): 803-691-4015
Tim Hill (timhill@abccolumbia.com)

WACH-FOX (Channel 57)

1400 Pickens Street, Columbia, S.C. 29201
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GamecockAnthem.com

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William Gunter, Chris Wellbaum

Gamecock Basketball

Change and Optimism are Buzz Words for 2009-10 Gamecocks

Head coach Dawn Staley promises up-tempo, passionate basketball in her second season at the helm.

South Carolina head coach Dawn Staley enters the 2009-10 season with the optimism befitting her youthful roster. The Gamecocks have talent, but, without a single senior among them, there is plenty of work to be done to truly define the season's outlook. Six letterwinners return from Staley's inaugural squad, including three starters led by sophomore La'Keisha Sutton, who was a unanimous SEC All-Freshman selection in 2008-09 as the highest-scoring freshman in league play. Staley bolstered her squad with a top-five recruiting class that features center Kelsey Bone and guard Ieasia Walker, both *Parade* All-America selections, among the five additions. The Gamecocks will also benefit from the debut of junior Valerie Nainima after the dynamic guard sat out last season due to NCAA transfer rules.

"I think it's going to be a fun season for us," Staley said. "We're going to have the ups and downs of having a young team. But it doesn't frighten me all that much because they are talented. We're going to give ourselves a shot to win some basketball games that were just too much for us last year."

Style Points

As both coach and team learned more about each other last season, Staley made strategic adjustments to maximize the talents of her team. Those shifts led to less of the frenetic pace the highly regarded head coach prefers. After stocking her team with the nation's No. 4-ranked signing class, Staley is more comfortable lifting the structure her inaugural team needed to stay in games. Last season's team mirrored its coach in its ability to battle no matter what the odds, but the 2009-10 Gamecocks will play even more in their mentor's image.

"We'll definitely see a change in style of play," Staley said. "We're going to get up and down. We're going to have some scoring from a lot of different positions, and it's so diverse. We've got players who can shoot from the outside, players who can drive, and Kelsey (Bone) inside. We'll have a little more depth on the perimeter, which I like and will allow us to play a little more quickly than we've played and press a little more than we did last season. It's kind of a fun thing where we can play more up-tempo and less half-court basketball."

While Staley most looks forward to seeing what her team will produce on the offensive end, she believes a bulk of the team's points will be on the opposite end of the floor. Not matter what players make up a Staley-coached team, fans can rely on defense as the backbone of that group's success.

"Defense is our staple, and we're going to do the same types of things this year as last," she said. "But, we're going to capitalize on early offense, which we weren't able to do last year. I'm going to allow them less structure early on because I think they just need to spread their wings. We're going to push the ball and get it out quickly. Early on we may see them turn the ball over a little more than I like, but over the course of the season, once we iron out our personnel and figure out who likes what where, we're going to be more difficult to scout."

They're Back

Six letterwinners return for their second season under Staley, and their coach likes the makeup of the group. The returning players arrived in excellent shape to go along with the mental toughness bred of the extended minutes they were forced to play in 2008-09. That invaluable experience will be enhanced by the new players Staley brought into the program, as veterans will be able to return to roles in which they can thrive.

La'Keisha Sutton

The player that most thrived when thrust into the spotlight last season was Sutton, who finished her freshman campaign as the team's top scorer at 11.0 points per game. Forced into the starting lineup by the rash of injuries early in the SEC schedule, Sutton netted double figures 15 times, including nine games of 15 or more points, while also tying for team-high honors with 2.4 assists per game. Her 13.6 points per SEC outing put her among the league's top 10 and was the highest output by a freshman in the conference. Sutton also developed a

reputation and a pick-pocket on the perimeter, nabbing 1.3 steals per contest.

"It's hard to follow up what La'Keisha did last year, but she is going to be better this year," Staley said. "Having better players around her is going to make her even more valuable because she has been there. She knows what it is to play at the collegiate level and she knows what she's good at. She's worked on her outside shot and is going to stretch the defense because they're going to have to respect her drive. Her 3-point shot and one- to two-dribble pullup look great. And, defensively, she's not afraid to mix it up with any perimeter player. We're looking for her to continue on the path of doing great things for us on both sides of the ball."

Samone Kennedy

After tying for the team lead with 2.4 assists per game last season, Samone Kennedy enters her junior season ready to stake her claim to playing time among the stable of talented newcomers at the guard position. Kennedy struggled early under the critical eye of one of her sport's premier point guards of all time, but worked her way back to start 19 of the season's last 20 games. She led the team in assists 14 times last season, tops on the team, and handed out five or more assists four times.

"Samone had a great offseason," Staley said. "She knew we had some talent coming in, so she made herself better. She increased her stock by being able to shoot the outside shot, and playing so many minutes last year worked wonders for her. She's been around the block and will use that to her advantage."

Charenee Stephens

Sitting out nearly the entire first semester of her freshman year for personal reasons, Charenee Stephens ended her first collegiate campaign among the SEC's best rebounders. Often undersized in the post at 6-foot-1, she battled for 6.0 rebounds per SEC game to rank 14th in the league and was the Gamecocks' top rebounder in four of the 18 games in which she played. Stephens comes into the 2009-10 season in the best shape of her basketball career, and Staley believes she is on the brink of dominating the glass.

"Charenee is a rebounding machine," the head coach said. "She's strong, athletic and in great shape. If she doesn't score 10 points in a game, she's going to get 10 rebounds. She's going to get out and help us score some easy baskets in transition. If we have games where we're not shooting the ball well, Charenee's rebounding is going to be a tremendous asset."

Jewel May

Another player thrust into the spotlight by injuries last season, Jewel May not only stepped into the shoes of second-team All-SEC performer Demetress Adams for the second half of the 2008-09 season, she chose to step into her jersey number as well. A raw, athletic talent, May became the focal point of interior defenders and averaged 4.7 points and 5.1 rebounds for the season.

May enters her junior year facing another challenge. Offseason ankle surgery forced her off the court for three months and heading into the fall semester, she is still working to find her fitness and form.

Lauren Falohun

Lauren Falohun started her sophomore season as the starting point guard and finished the campaign as a key player off the bench. A big, strong presence on the perimeter, Falohun will make herself an asset on the defensive end this season. Her volume of playing time will depend on the development of her ability to hit open shots consistently.

Courtney Newton

Coming off an injury early in the 2008-09 season, Courtney Newton found a steady spot in the starting lineup late in the season as she embodied the unbridled passion and fight Staley values most. She found her shooting stroke as the season wound down and has sustained that momentum through the offseason.

"Courtney is shooting the ball more consistently now and looks to be in

Gamecock Basketball

Ashley Bruner

Six-foot freshman Ashley Bruner was an all-state performer who left Norman High School as the program's all-time leading rebounder and third-highest scorer. While she will not be the focal point of the frontcourt, Staley likes her intelligence and the intangibles she brings to the floor.

"Ashley is one of the smartest players on our team, and she's deceptive," Staley said. "She can shoot the ball from the outside, yet she can suck the defense in and drive past them. She's going to do some very good things that won't necessarily show up in the stat sheet."

Valerie Nainima

While the true newcomers on the team have been garnering most of the attention, the most valuable player to make her Gamecock debut this season may be junior Valerie Nainima. After a two-year career at Long Island University, that program's prolific scorer – she was the fastest Blackbird to reach 1,000 career points, needing just 53 games to hit the mark – arrived in Columbia just after Staley in 2008. She is well-versed in Staley's playbook and expectations after a year of practicing with the team, and the head coach is anxious to see the player she believes is most like her compete in the SEC.

"Val is just a player," Staley offered possibly her loftiest praise. "She loves to play, the game comes very easy to her and she makes every single person that plays with her better. She's vocal and sets the tone because she is our best player and our hardest worker."

Ieasia Walker

The other half of the All-America duo is Ieasia Walker, who finished her career at Copiague High in excess of 2,000 points and 1,000 rebounds en route to 2009 Miss New York Basketball Long Island Player of the Year honors. Rated the 17th-best player in the 2009 class, she posted the first quadruple-double in Long Island history with 20 points, 15 rebounds, 10 assists and 13 steals in a game against Longwood in December 2008. Staley loves Walker's talent and potential, seeing her as a key piece of the Gamecocks' future.

"Ieasia is going to be the wild card for us," the head coach said. "She is talented and ready physically. Once she gets comfortable in our system and finds the confidence that she can play at this level, she is going to instantly make our team better."

Ebony Wilson

A transfer from Rend Lake College, Ebony Wilson needed just one season at the junior college to make her mark on the program. The second-highest scorer on the team at 15.2 points per game, she earned all-conference and all-region honors and was named Great Rivers Athletic Conference Freshman of the Year. Wilson is a versatile player that Staley sees helping the team in a number of ways – aggressive, physical defense, rebounding and posting up smaller guards on offense.

Strength of Schedule

Staley stuck to her philosophy of challenging her teams in November and December as a building block for success in January and beyond. The Gamecocks will face as many as 22 games against teams that participated in the 2009 postseason, including seven non-conference outings.

"Scheduling eight-to-10 cupcakes will do nothing besides fatten our win column," Staley said. "I don't want to play an uncompetitive schedule that gives us a false sense of how good we really are. You have to play teams that have been to the [NCAA] Tournament because that's where you want to be playing. We may take our hits by losing some games, but in the long run, I truly believe it's going to help us."

To set the stage for 11 games against SEC teams that played in the 2009 NCAA Tournament, Staley has her Gamecocks opening at NCAA Tournament participant Charlotte and does not let up. South Carolina will face Final Four participant Oklahoma and NCAA Tournament veterans Notre Dame and San Diego State at the Paradise Jam. The non-conference slate also includes a neutral-site matchup against border rival and perennial top-25 presence North Carolina.



Sophomore La'Keisha Sutton will be a true triple threat on offense while sparking the Gamecocks' defensive effort on the perimeter.

mid-season form already," Staley said. "We wanted her to work on her release and get more consistent with it, and she's done that. She's putting the ball on the floor, driving to the basket and is filling it up. And, we need Courtney to continue to be Courtney everywhere else. She's hardnosed and will mix it up with anybody."

Fresh Faces

Staley made her first season of recruiting a productive one, nabbing the fourth-best class in the nation. Headlining that class is the first tandem of *Parade* All-Americans in the program's history. Inking such a prestigious group was crucial to getting the Gamecocks on track toward Staley's lofty goals.

"It sets the tone for where we're trying to go and what we're trying to accomplish," Staley said of the importance of signing a class of this caliber. "We have definitely gotten better talent-wise. Across the board, the players that we brought in will significantly impact our season one way or the other, on either side of the ball."

Kelsey Bone

A consensus All-American and both the McDonald's Morgan Wootten and John Wooden National High School Player of the Year, the No. 2 rated player in the 2009 class is the centerpiece of the four-player freshman class. At 6-foot-5, she will be a solid presence on the Gamecock interior and instantly command respect from opposing players and coaches. Staley is counting on Bone to fill the void left by the graduation of Adams, who the coach routinely relied on for at least 10 points and nearly 10 rebounds per game. Having that inside presence is critical to everything else the Gamecocks do on both sides of the ball.

"Kelsey is a legitimate double-double threat, but she has to live up to that," Staley said. "She will do it a little differently than Demetress, but she is capable of it. As a freshman, though, she is going to have big games and she's going to have some poor performances. But, even through that, teams are going to have to think about her, about a game plan for handling her even if she's not playing well. You have to respect the fact that she's a big body that takes up a lot of room in the paint and can score on the block."



Gamecock Basketball

A Message from the Compliance Office

Dear Alumni, Fans and Friends,

As a University of South Carolina season ticket holder, alumnus, Gamecock Club member or fan, you are, by NCAA definition, a representative of University of South Carolina's athletics interests. Those who actively support Gamecock Athletics are an integral part of our program. Your support enables our student-athletes to train and prepare in quality facilities, compete for championships in the nation's top conference and pursue a college degree. Your level of support is vital to their overall success.

We value your interest and support, but we must remind you that an inappropriate action on your part can jeopardize the eligibility of a student-athlete, prospect and/or the compliance of the University with Southeastern Conference and NCAA regulations.

The NCAA has strictly limited the role you, as a Gamecock fan, may assume with regard to prospects and student-athletes. The following information is intended to provide you with a basic understanding of NCAA rules and regulations that you should know as someone who cares about intercollegiate athletics.

Prospective Student-Athletes

A prospective student-athlete (prospect) is a student who has:

- Started classes for the ninth grade, or
- Ever received any financial assistance or other benefit prospective students do not generally receive.

An individual remains a prospect until one of the following occurs (whichever is earlier):

- The individual officially registers and enrolls in a minimum full-time program of studies and attends classes in any term (including summer) of a four-year collegiate institution's regular academic year.
- The individual participates in a regular squad practice or competition at a four-year collegiate institution that occurs before the beginning of any term.

Remember a prospect remains a prospect even after signing a National Letter of Intent with South Carolina.

Extra Benefits

The NCAA defines an extra benefit as any special arrangement by an institutional employee or a representative of the institution's athletics interests to provide a student-athlete or the student-athlete's relative or friend a benefit not expressly authorized by NCAA legislation.

Specifically prohibited financial aid, benefits and arrangements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An employment arrangement for a prospect's relatives
- A gift of clothing or equipment
- The cosigning of loans
- Providing loans to a prospect's relatives or friends
- Cash or like items
- Any tangible items, including merchandise

Employment

Boosters may contact a prospect to discuss a summer job ONLY after the prospect has signed a National Letter of Intent to attend the University of South Carolina. In addition, boosters MAY NOT employ or arrange employment of a high school prospective student-athlete until the prospect has completed all classes and graduated from high school.

Enrolled student-athletes are permitted to be employed during the regular academic year as well as during official vacation periods. PRIOR TO the student-athlete's employment, he/she must receive written approval from the Compliance Office and complete the required paperwork.

Student-Athletes and/or employers may be asked to provide records related to employment. This information may include, but is not limited to, payroll records, tax documents and benefits statements.

Please note all employers are subject to NCAA regulations and penalties for any violations.

Compliance with NCAA rules is of the highest priority for our athletics program and institution. As a member of the NCAA, University of South Carolina is responsible for the actions of its alumni, supporters and fans. Even the best-intentioned action on your part may be a violation of NCAA rules.

The University of South Carolina appreciates its alumni and friends who strive for the highest level of ethical conduct while supporting the student-athlete's goals for both academic and athletics success.

Please contact the Compliance Office at 803-777-1519 if you have any questions regarding what is permissible. Additional information can be found on the Compliance web page at: www.GamecocksOnline.com. Remember, "Ask Before You Act!"



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