USC outlasts hot Huskies

By GARY WEST
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CHICAGO—Carolina, behind the torrid shooting of Tom Riker, outlasted Northern Illinois, 83-72, in a hotly contested game here Saturday night. Marquette defeated Loyola, 69-67, in the second game.

Riker, playing his second great game in a row, connected on 15 of 22 shots from the floor, tallying 34 points for the night and squelching any thoughts of a Huskie upset.

The Gamecocks started fast and took an early 6-2 lead with 17:18 remaining in the first half. Then Riker went to work, firing in 10 points in the next four and one-half minutes, as their lead swelled to 17-11 as Northern was unable to score against USC.

Then Jerry Zielinski, who lead Northern with 23 points, fired in two jumpers as the Huskies closed the gap to 17-14. The Huskies remained close until the last four minutes of the half, as Carolina spurred to an 10 point lead at the intermission, 41-31.

The Huskies shot only 33 per cent from the field against the taller Gamecocks zone defense, which stopped their patented running game that had been averaging 100.2 points a game.

Riker, who scored 18 points in the first twenty minutes, was followed by Rick Aydlett and Danny Traylor who both scored 8 apiece.

With Zielinski and Billy Harris leading the way, the Huskies began to comeback in the second half and the 18,422 partisan fans suddenly had something to cheer about.

Harris fired in another two pointer at the 12:35 mark and Northern was down by only three, 50-47. Carolina then upped its lead to 56-49, but Northern came right back, closing the game to 59-55 with 8:13 left in the game on a basket by Jim Bradley. Both teams traded baskets until Zielinski connected with 3:35 remaining bringing Northern within two, 69-67.

Then the one and one began to pay dividends as Brian Winters hit both ends and USC went up by four, 71-67. A foul by Tom McKierman and Winters added another from the charity stripe, making it 72-67. Bradley then pumped in two for the Huskies and Riker matched it with 1:50 remaining. Another free throw by Bradley and Huskies were down, 74-70. After a missed shot, Northern quickly sped into the front court, appearing to get an easy last break bucket. But Kevin Joyce, trailing the play, shot past and leaped up to block the sure Huskie basket.

Northern was then forced to foul in an attempt to get the ball and the Gamecocks promptly dropped in eight of eight free throws and one technical bonus to supply their final total of 83 points. A meaningless uncontested basket by McKierman brought the final score to 83-72.

Coach Frank McGuire, beaming after another hard fought victory, spoke highly of his opponents and his senior stalwart, Riker. "We faced a very strong team tonight—one of the best we've seen. I think we showed them down with our zone, that's the difference in the game. We didn't want to run with them or they'll blow you off the court. Riker took the good shots tonight and showed he's an All-America. He's probably one of the best pro prospects in the country. But it was a team effort and all the kids contributed."

Riker, obviously happy after scoring 76 points in the last two games, was questioned about his performance. "My game is getting better now that I've got the brace off my hand and I'm shooting well from the outside. The team get's more confidence in me, as I score more and we just feed the hot hand."