

THE GAMEPLAN

RETAILER NEWSLETTER OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA EDUCATION LOTTERY • JANUARY 2026 EDITION

COVER STORY

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Join us as we count down the TOP 5 stories that made headlines in 2025.

No. 5 Man buys 162 tickets for one lottery drawing, wins a record \$811,000

Last year saw a Lowcountry man win the South Carolina Education Lottery’s largest Pick 4 prize payout to a single player. He won a total of \$811,000 in the Pick 4 midday drawing on August 7.

“I was excited of course,” the winner, who does not wish to be identified, said.

He told staff at the Towne Centre Market on N. Hwy. 17 in Mount Pleasant that he had a good feeling about the numbers 1-7-3-1. So he played those numbers across 162 tickets that cost \$339. Most all of the tickets were played straight at odds of 1 in 10,000.

Another customer at the Towne Centre Market overheard the man’s hunch, so he played the numbers too and won \$25,400.

No. 4 Powerball Skyrockets to \$1.8 BILLION!

This fall, Powerball® players enjoyed a chance at a \$1.8 BILLION jackpot, the second largest in game history. It came 17 months to the day since the last billion dollar Powerball jackpot win, a drought the lottery and retailers were glad to see come to an end. The Lottery hit a record for Powerball sales the week of the \$1.8 billion jackpot drawing. The September jackpot run was also a real win for South Carolina. Retailers, you earned more than \$3.2 million in commissions and education benefited from an additional \$20 million from the jackpot run.

No. 3 Clerk’s Mistake Leads to SC Woman’s Six-Figure Jackpot Win

The Pig made national news. When a clerk at the Piggly Wiggly on Pearl St. in Darlington handed a customer the wrong lottery ticket, the mistake led to a \$303,000 Palmetto Cash 5 jackpot win and one of our most popular winner’s stories of 2025.

The customer accepted the ticket, but realizing the error, the clerk asked if she still wanted a Palmetto Cash 5 ticket. The answer was “Yes.” But instead of playing her own numbers, like she always did, she got a quick pick instead. That quick pick surprised her by matching all five numbers drawn for the win.

“If the clerk hadn’t made a mistake, I wouldn’t have won,” the winner said. And for selling the claimed ticket, The Pig received a commission of \$3,030.

No. 2 Mega Changes Coming to Mega Millions

Mega Millions® got a makeover in 2025. Bigger jackpots, better odds and a built-in multiplier were enhancements touted at an increased cost of \$5 per play.

(Countdown, continued)



The Game Plan is published monthly by the South Carolina Education Lottery. Every effort is made to ensure the information presented is accurate. Due to print lead times, certain information may not be the finalized product or version. For questions about this publication, call 803-737-4419.

REMINDERS

BY STATE LAW, ODDS INFORMATION MUST BE DISPLAYED IN ALL RETAIL OUTLETS ADJACENT TO SCEL POINT OF SALE. This information is included in the piece called “Odds of Our Games.”

Display the Top Prizes Remaining Report: Every morning when you sign in the terminal will generate a “Top Prizes Remaining” report. Post this updated report in the clear sleeve or change mat on your counter. The clear sleeve must be on your dispenser or near the point of purchase.

Prizes remaining, end-of-game and odds information for scratch-off games is available by scanning a QR Code posted at the play station. Make sure you display this QR Code in your play station.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ticket Orders: Contact Your MSR
Stolen/Missing Tickets: 1-866-269-5668
IGT Help Desk: 1-844-458-8535
Customer Information: 1-866-736-9819
Licensing: 1-866-737-7235 (Option 4)
Gambling Hotline: 1-877-452-5155

South Carolina Education Lottery
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Launch dates and tickets are subject to change. Artwork shown is not necessarily representative of final product.

DATES TO KNOW

LAST DAY TO SELL

Wed., January 7: Mighty Jumbo Bucks (#1554)
Wed., January 14: Hit \$50 (#1606), Magic 8 Ball (#1607) & Plug In (#1617)
Wed., January 21: Carolina Jackpot (#1631) & Clemson Jackpot (#1632)

LAST DAY TO RETURN

Fri., January 2: Mighty Jumbo Bucks (#1554), Hit \$500 (#1566) & Super Slingo (#1627)
Fri., January 9: Ice Cold Bonus (#1619)
Fri., January 23: Red Hot Bonus (#1587)
Fri., January 30: Octane Cash (#1582) & Jurassic Park (#1630)

LAST DAY TO CLAIM

Tues., January 6: Junior Jumbo Bucks (#1612)
Tues., January 13: 200X (#1604) & Money Madness Extra Play (#1615)
Tues., January 20: Jumbo Bucks (#1577)

“SCEL COIN” DRAWINGS

\$5,000 cash (10 winners) – Draw Date 1/8
\$500 Cash (20 winners) – Draw Date 1/20
Carolina Baseball (1 winner) – Draw Date 1/27
Clemson Baseball (1 winner) – Draw Date 1/27

“SCEL COIN” ACHIEVEMENTS

January 1-31

Enter \$50 worth of any tickets
Enter \$20 worth of Pick 4
Enter \$10 worth of Cash Pop
Enter 2 Sapphire Surprise and 2 Ruby Red Treasures
Enter 5 \$3 scratch-offs
Enter \$10 in Mega Millions & a \$20 scratch-off
Jan 4-11, 12-18, 19-25 & 26-Feb 1
Enter \$5 worth of Pick 3
Enter 5 \$2 scratch-offs



(Countdown, continued)

Also promised, more wins. Six months in, Mega Millions has reported that players nationwide are taking home an average of 4X more wins than in the old game. That amounts to \$266 million more in non-jackpot winnings!

And there’s more good news. A strong jackpot run late in the year helped Mega Millions rebound from a slow summer. In South Carolina, we can report that after 37 draws of the fall Mega Millions jackpot run, education benefited from more than \$9 million in transfers. So now is a great time to remind players of the new game’s appeal.

No. 1
You can now play the Lottery with a debit card in SC

The biggest lottery headline of 2025 was debit cards. In July, lottery players starting using debit cards to purchase tickets. Today, roughly 2,200 retailers and growing are accepting this new payment option.

Why is this important? As we move toward a cashless society, the ability to take debit cards will keep our games relevant.

And players have embraced it. Retailers that take debit cards have seen an increase in lottery sales of around 10 percent. This is a strong sign that you can gain new customers that don’t usually carry cash by simply accepting debit cards for lottery purchases.

RETAILER SPOTLIGHT

Upstate Players Get Their “Kicks” at Nik’s Quick Shop

It’s been said that some people get their “kicks” on Route 66, but many Upstate players get their “lottery kicks” at Nik’s Quick Shop on White Horse Rd. in Greenville.

A perennial member of the Lottery’s Million Dollar Sales Club, owner Nikhail Patel (aka Nik), explains what steps he and his staff have taken to achieve lottery success.

“Customer service is priority #1 and always will be,” says Nik. “We try to anticipate our lottery player’s needs and wants, therefore we get new tickets received, activated and loaded in the dispensers.”

Nik also added that the dispensers are always full. “Our customers really appreciate that!”

In addition to the outstanding customer service provided, Nik believes in what the Lottery not only offers to the players, but also the educational benefits provided by the lottery.

“I believe in what the lottery provides, especially the HOPE and LIFE scholarships, because I have customers or their children who have benefited from them!”



So, if you are looking for your “lottery kicks” and a friendly staff, stop by Nik’s Quick Shop and they’ll be happy to serve you.

- Jay Caldwell, Upstate LSR

NEW GAMES

Tuesday, January 6:



Tuesday, February 3:

