

Softball takes two games from Rebels

Gamecocks win first two, Compton upset after 5-4 loss Sunday

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STAFF WRITER

In a season of disappointing outcomes, the USC softball team suffered another frustrating result on Sunday, losing 5-4 to Ole Miss.

Despite winning the three-game series against the Rebels (17-33, 4-19 SEC), USC head coach Joyce Compton was visibly upset with her team's performance.

"It was a ridiculous performance on our part," she said. "We don't execute. We make mistakes — all mental. You can't have that happen."

The Gamecocks (26-26, 6-17) were up 4-3 going into the seventh inning, but after throwing 100 pitches, USC pitcher Christie Hamilton could not hold off the Rebel charge. Ole Miss right fielder Mary Jane Callahan and third baseman Rebecca McIntire led off the seventh with back-to-back singles.

A sacrifice bunt moved the runners over, and Ole Miss second baseman Lauren Row knocked them home with a double to left-center field. After stopping the bleeding with two quick outs, Carolina could not muster a comeback in the final half-inning. USC center fielder Lisa Longo offered her thoughts on the loss.

"We didn't do the little things right, and that was the outcome," she said. "We just have to look to the next game and put it all together so we can win some big games."

After going down 1-0 early in the game, USC tied it in the second inning and took the lead with a huge third inning. Shortstop McKenna Hughes got to second on an error, and third baseman Chrissy Schoonmaker followed with a single. After Hamilton struck out, Longo cleared



Juan Blas / THE GAMECOCK

USC first baseman Jacqueline Wetherbee fields an out during the Gamecocks' win against Ole Miss on Friday. USC took two of three from the Rebels, losing Sunday.

the bases with a 2-RBI single to give Carolina a 3-1 lead.

The teams battled back-and-forth over the next two innings until the Gamecocks had a chance to extend their 4-3 lead in the sixth inning. Left fielder Margaret Person led off the inning with a single, and it appeared that she was knocked home by a double from right fielder Jessica Josker.

However, the umpires ruled the play dead and called Person out because she left first base prematurely. Josker eventually flied out to left field, and the Gamecocks did not threaten for the rest of the game.

Lost in the performance was a monster game from Longo. After going 0-for-6 in the first two games of the series, the sophomore went 3-for-4 with one run and two RBIs.

"I just relaxed in there," she said. "I took what I did yesterday, and I changed it a little bit."

Carolina started off the series with two much-needed victories. Coming into the

weekend USC had lost five-straight games and 13 of the last 15. The first half of Saturday's doubleheader was a thrilling 10-inning 3-2 win, ending with second baseman Ashton Payne hitting an RBI single to bring in pinch runner Darcy Norem. In the second game of the day, Carolina cruised to a 2-0 victory behind the flawless pitching of Kate Pouliot.

The Gamecocks currently sit in the eighth and final spot to get into the SEC tournament, but after Sunday's loss, Mississippi State and Ole Miss are only two games behind. With six games left in the season, including a series against nationally-ranked Florida, Longo believes Carolina just needs to get back to the basics.

"Everyone has to do (her) job," she said. "If someone gets on, someone has to bump them over. We have to do the little things right. Hopefully, we will come out on top."

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BASEBALL • CONTINUED FROM II

pitcher Wynn Pelzer, to give Kentucky the 10-9 victory.

Saturday looked to be a different story in the beginning, but the end result was the same. Carolina had a 12-6 lead, in large thanks to four-run innings in the tops of the fifth and seventh, until the Wildcats tied it up in the bottom of the seventh.

USC's Smoak had three RBI, while Campbell, Willard and Reese Havens added an RBI each to give USC a substantial lead. Then, shortly after the seventh inning stretch, Kentucky awoke and knocked around Gamecock relievers Chase Tucker and Andrew Cruse for six runs.

A series of singles by Justin Scutchfield, Antone DeJesus, Collin Cowgill and Michael Bertram, combined with a pair of hit batsmen by Tucker, combined for a total of six Kentucky runs to tie the game.

Kentucky would put the game away in the bottom of the eighth, when Ryan Strieby took advantage of runners on base when he launched a three-run homer off of Cruse, allowing Kentucky to win 15-12.

Carolina committed a total of four errors in the game, including a crucial dropped ball by Cruse that enabled Cowgill to reach base before Strieby's homer.

After having already lost the series, Carolina hoped to salvage a win on Sunday, but Kentucky simply would not allow it. Again, USC took a heavy early lead scoring three runs in the third and three more in the fourth for a 6-0 lead. Drew Martin had two RBI in the two innings.

Kentucky decided to ruin Carolina's afternoon, as Strieby and Shelby both hit homers in the bottom of the fourth. Strieby sent a solo shot while Shelby took advantage of a walk to Bertram when he blasted a two-run shot off Carolina

starter Harris Honeycutt. Honeycutt then left the game with a blister on his finger, opening the door for reliever Kyle Brown to win the game.

Kentucky scored two more runs in the bottom of the fifth before Shaun Lehman knocked a three-run homer to give the Cats an 8-6 lead. Kentucky followed that with four more runs in the bottom of the fifth, knocking in a RBI off Carolina pitcher Brandon Todd.

USC would try to rally, scoring one run in the sixth and two in the eighth, as Crisp notched a two-run homer. Kentucky's lead proved to be too much, though, as the Cats won the game 12-9.

The sweep marks the first time all season that Carolina has been swept by an opponent. Their next SEC matchup will be against Mississippi State in Columbia.

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BROOM • CONTINUED FROM II

make sure that the animals can't smell them. The fact that I have to make a rule that says you cannot cover yourself in synthetic deer urine speaks volumes about hunters.

Third, no traps or baits allowed. People do all kinds of ridiculous things to make animals come to them. You don't see animals sprinkling cheeseburger crumbs in the middle of a Hooters parking lot to make strong-nosed fat guys wander over in amazement, so why is it fair to put deer cocaine in the middle of a field?

Finally, no weapons allowed. Until we start arming the animals, it just isn't fair. If you want to kill animals, that is fine. I have absolutely no problem with that. I'm not some tree-hugging animal lover. In fact, I stopped swerving to avoid squirrels years ago. But at least make it interesting — use your bare hands.

This rule is effective across the board. For smaller animals, like raccoons or rabbits, it would be easy to kill them with your hands, but very difficult to catch them in the first place. (Personally,

I'd punch a raccoon in the face. They keep hiding in our dumpster. They are begging for it.) For larger animals that would be easier to catch, like bears or rhinos, it would be harder to kill them with your bare hands. Plus, if you kill a rhino with your bare hands, I'll be your boy for life.

After hunters abide by those simple changes, I'll not only stop making fun of hunting, but I'll start watching it on television. I'll consider hunting a sport when the animals know they are participating and the humans have something to lose.

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