

Alex English: from Gamecock great to NBA legend



By STEVE JOHNSON
Sports Editor

Editor's note: in conjunction with the celebration of Black History Month, the sports department is paying tribute to great black athletes from USC. This is the first of a four-part series.

Class. It's the one word that best describes the greatest basketball player to ever play for the Gamecocks.

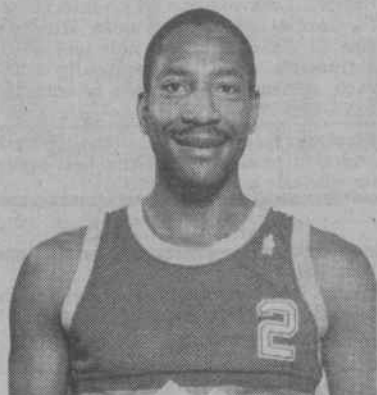
Now playing for the Dallas Mavericks, Alex English has been a leader and a positive role model, both on and off the court, through-

out his life.

A 15-year veteran of the NBA, English started his playing days right here in Columbia, where he was born on Jan. 5, 1954. A star in his teens when he played at Dreher High School, English decided after he graduated in 1972 to stay close to home and play college ball at the University of South Carolina.

The 6-foot-8 forward not only started every game the Gamecocks played from the 1972-73 to the 1975-76 season, he was a consistent scorer every year.

To put his scoring outputs into a contemporary perspective, his point average of 14.6 per game when he was a freshman (take note, Jamie Watson!) would rank him second in scoring on this year's team behind only another English (not related), Jo Jo. The elder English would also be the leading scorer on this year's squad



English

if you were to take his points per game average from any of his last three years at USC.

English's accomplishments at USC are numerous. He lettered all four years and was named to several All-American teams in 1976, when he led the Gamecocks in scoring with an average of 22.6

points per game. He holds the following team records: most consecutive games started (111), most points (1,972), highest scoring average (17.8) and most field goals (855). His #22 was retired following his senior season in 1976.

In 1976, English was the 23rd player taken in the NBA draft (by the Milwaukee Bucks). Through two seasons with the Bucks, English averaged 7.7 points per game in a limited role.

English signed with the Indiana Pacers for the 1978-79 season and would finally start making a scoring impact the following season, averaging 14.9 points per game through 54 games before being dealt to the Denver Nuggets.

It was in Denver that English really started to show the star quality Gamecock fans knew he possessed all along. In 10-and-a-half seasons

with the Nuggets, English racked up a series of honors including being named to eight NBA All-Star teams, leading the league in scoring in 1983 (28.4 ppg), and scoring more points in the 1980s than any other player. English had his best year as a Nugget in 1986 when he scored 2,414 points for the second-best point average (29.8 per game) in the NBA that year.

After being signed by Dallas as an unrestricted free-agent, English is playing his first (and perhaps his final) season with the Mavericks. The NBA's leading active scorer has had to adapt to a limited role while playing behind younger forwards Roy Tarpley and Rodney McCray. Through the first 46 games, English is averaging only 11 points per game, but has managed to start half of the Mavs' games.

English's accomplishments off the court are also noteworthy. He is a published poet and one of only three major speakers who spoke along with Pope John Paul II at the "Service of Unity" at Williams-Brice Stadium during the papal visit to Columbia in 1987. That same year he appeared in the movie *Amazing Grace and Chuck* with actress Jamie Lee Curtis and actor Gregory Peck.

It is "Alex English- the humanitarian" though that English would probably like to be remembered for best. In a touching gesture, English proposed that he and the rest of the participants of the 1986 NBA All-Star Game donate their pay for that game to the Ethiopian famine relief. He persuaded his fellow players, and the league adopted the proposal.

Eagles present tough challenge to NCAA bid-seeking Gamecocks

By PATRICK VILLEGAS
Assistant Sports Editor

USC's toughest test of their current road trip, and possibly of the season, will take place Saturday when the Gamecocks face a head-on collision with the 9th-ranked Metro-leading Golden Eagles of Southern Mississippi.

The talents of Southern Miss forward Clarence Weatherspoon will clearly be on the minds of the Gamecock players. Established as one of the nation's best forwards, Weatherspoon is averaging 18.1 points per game and a Metro-leading 12.2 rebounds a game. Weatherspoon also garnered Metro Conference Player of the Week honors earlier this season.

Weatherspoon, along with teammate Darrin Chancellor, were the heroes in Southern Mississippi's tight 64-58 victory over the Gamecocks at Carolina Coliseum Jan. 10. Weatherspoon, with 14 points on the night, powered the Eagles late in the second half to keep a

hold of the slim Eagle lead and eventually the victory. Chancellor led all players with 17 points.

All the hoopla in Columbia focused on the defensive antics of the Gamecocks and the offensive force of the Golden Eagles. The game proved to be a defensive stand and an offensive flub. USC and Southern Miss, ranked 21st and 19th respectively at the time, failed to put up the numbers as both teams collapsed, shooting under 40 percent from the field.

Again this weekend, the focus on the game will spotlight the Metro-leading defense of USC, allowing 64 points per game, against the Metro-leading offense of Southern Miss, with 87 points per game.

Southern Mississippi's dynamic duo of Weatherspoon and Chancellor will provide the last testing hurdle for the Gamecocks before the NCAA tourney, provided the Gamecocks make it that far. USC

will not face another team of this caliber until postseason action.

The "Spoon and D.C." tandem, as the Golden Eagle fans call them, are among the Metro's elite in almost every individual category, namely scoring, field goal percentage, three-point field goals, and rebounding.

As a sidelight, Jo Jo English and Chancellor will use the game to duel it out to see who will hold the three-point percentage crown at the end of the regular season. Chancellor leads the league with 52 percent, but English is not far behind with 43 percent.

Led by head coach M.K. Turk, the rest of the Eagle lineup includes freshman forward Bernard Haslet (8.3 ppg), senior center Daron Jenkins (12.4 ppg and 8.1 rpg) and senior guard Russell Johnson (11.8 ppg).

Saturday's game with the Gamecocks and the Golden Eagles will be broadcast live by Raycom at 1 p.m. on WIS-TV channel 10.



Rich Taylor
Chip Shots

O'Neal not un-'real,' Johnson a big 'deal'

Sherry Dayid, Ann Gardner, Beverly Hawkins, Treka McMillian and Karen Middleton. These five women will play their final home game in a Lady Gamecock uniform Monday against Memphis State.

The 5 p.m. encounter with the Lady Tigers (not "Eagles," David Newton!) precedes the USC-Winthrop men's game. This group of seniors has been largely responsible for winning the Metro Conference regular season title the past three years and being in the hunt for a fourth as this season winds down.

Coach Nancy Wilson has guided the Lady Gamecocks to three consecutive NCAA tournament appearances, yet fan support has been marginal. C'mon Carolina fans! Come out early and show your appreciation to these five deserving seniors!

... My vote for college basketball Player of the Year goes to Larry Johnson of UNLV, not LSU's awesome Shaquille O'Neal. Johnson is the best player on the most talented team in the history of collegiate hoops. O'Neal, who turns 19 years old in March, can be incredibly dominating. But anyone who saw Christian Laettner of Duke outplay the Shaq Attack this past weekend realizes O'Neal still has a ways to go (scary thought).

... Speaking of UNLV, NBA analyst Ted Green said on ESPN's *Up Close with Roy Firestone* that the Runnin' Rebels have SEVEN eventual first-round draft choices on their roster.

... Feat-of-the-Week Award goes to Craig Hodges of the Chicago Bulls for his performance in the NBA three-point competition in Charlotte during All-Star Weekend. In the second round, Hodges connected on his first 19 shots en route to the Long Distance Shooters crown. Hitting 19 straight from behind the NBA three-point arc is un-bee-lieev-able!!!

... Which "sport" is a bigger farce, professional boxing or professional wrestling? Sugar Ray Leonard's pounding at the hands of Terry Norris made further mockery of what the likes of Don King and Bob Arum have done to a once-great sport. It's ironic that amateur boxing and wrestling are so legitimate in nature, while their professional counterparts are such charades.

... With Jim Palmer attempting a baseball comeback, wonder who else will follow? Are we going to see Hank Aaron batting cleanup for the Braves this year? Will Willie Mays patrol centerfield for the Giants in Quakertown? Is Ted Williams going to put down the rod-n-reel and take one last shot at .400? Listen Jim, stick to commentating and underwear ads.

... Congratulations to ourselves here at USC! We are now officially off NCAA probation! Let's stay that way, OK?

**GAIN VALUABLE EXPERIENCE
WORKING FOR THE GAMECOCK**
Call 777-7726

CARA
Columbia Area Resident Advisor

A Columbia Resident Advisor (CARA) is a staff member of the Department of Resident Student Development and Off Campus Student Services, responsible for serving as a resource person and support system for a group of students living off campus. Responsibilities include: Student and Community Development, Administration and Departmental Responsibilities.

Qualifications: The candidate must be an Off Campus Student with a 2.25 GPR and cannot hold any additional employment until their second semester of service.

Benefits: A CARA receives \$350 per semester, Paraprofessional status within the department, opportunities for professional development.

Inquiries are Welcome! Please contact Rosemary Broadway or George Morell at Off Campus Student Services 777-4174.

**\$50 MINIMUM EACH
DONATION**
Your plasma is needed if you have or recently have had any of the following infections!!!

- 1) Mononucleosis
- 2) Strep Throat
- 3) Chickenpox or Shingles
- 4) Measles
- 5) Mumps
- 6) Chlymidia or Herpes (must be free of other STD's)

2719 Middleburg Dr.
Suite 105
Columbia, SC 29204
(803) 254-6537

The Freshest Mint. The Coolest Cool.

Trident
SUGAR FREE GUM
Freshmint

On Earth.

© 1991 Warner-Lambert Co.