

From the rafters to the record book: Foster's the best of Lady Gamecocks



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 third of a four-part series.

It hangs gracefully from the rafters of Frank McGuire Arena. At times it flutters or sways gently, ever so gently, as air from nearby vents blows against it.

It is one of only two uniforms to ever be retired by the Lady Gamecocks' basketball team. In bold letters, above the number 53, the jersey is printed with the name: FOSTER.

To have ones number and uniform retired by a team has been long considered the highest honor

that can be payed to a former player. The simple tribute is certainly a noteworthy one but it says very little about the contributions made by the most famous female athlete to ever play a sport for USC.

The number and uniform were worn by Sheila Foster. The 6-foot-1 center was born and raised in the Palmetto state, spending her pre-USC days in the town of Spartanburg. In 1978, Foster decided to play basketball for the Lady Gamecocks and (then) head coach Pam Parsons.

Her first year at USC still stands as the single best season ever for a freshman. During the 1978-79 season Foster set seven records including: points scored, 516; most field goals made, 216 and attempted, 432; most free throws made, 84 and attempted, 128; most rebounds, 329; and highest rebounding average, 8.89 per game.

The fortunes of Foster and the rest of the Lady Gamecocks continued to improve the following

season. In 1979-80, she led the team to USC's winningest basketball team (men's or women's) ever as they coasted to a 30-6 record. Foster set sophomore records that year for field goals made (245) and rebounds (379). She also set a personal best for free-throw percentage that season by connecting on 70.7 percent.

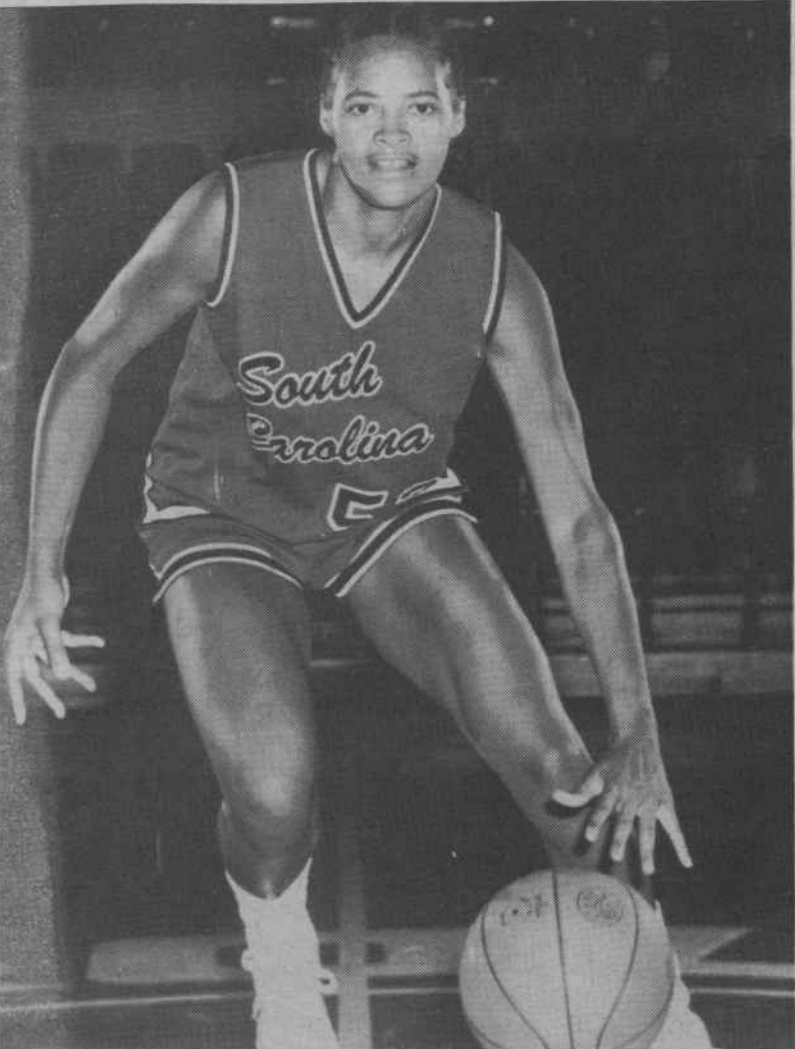
With her position as the team leader of USC well-established, Foster began to blossom into one of the premier players in the nation as a junior. During her 1980-81 stint, Foster led the Lady Gamecocks in field goal percentage (53.3), rebounds (12.7 per game) and points per game (17.8) while attracting rave reviews across the land. Her sensational play earned her a spot on the U.S. team in the World University Games and a third team All-American selection.

In her final year at USC, Foster bid the world of competitive basketball farewell in grand style. She set personal bests in four categories en route to being named a first team All-American. She had

the highest single season field goal percentage ever (58.3%) while playing a record 1,176 minutes in 1981-82. For the third year in a row, Foster led the Lady Gamecocks in field goal percentage, rebounding and scoring and shared the team lead for blocked shots (23) with forward Brantley Southers. On Feb. 6, 1982, Foster set a new USC single game record by scoring 38 points against the Clemson Lady Tigers.

Foster's place in the Lady Gamecock record book remains solidified. She has played more games, scored more points (2,266) and grabbed more rebounds (1,427) than any other women's basketball player in the history of USC. In addition to scoring and rebounding, Foster also ranks third in steals (250) and fourth in blocks (134).

After lettering at USC all four years, Foster decided to take up residence in Columbia - where she still resides. Her place in the hearts of Lady Gamecock basketball fans remains just as close.



Foster

USC experiences 'deja lose' as Tigers cruise to win 80-58

By PATRICK VILLEGAS
Assistant Sports Editor

The Gamecocks, losers of four of their past five games, shot a wimpy 26 percent from the field in the second half and collapsed to Memphis State 80-58 in USC's worst home defeat of the year.

With hopes of an NCAA tourney bid on the line for both teams, the Gamecocks and Tigers exploded in the first five minutes of the game running and gunning back-and-forth, looking more like windshield wipers than a basketball game, before the Tigers shifted gears to high and left USC out in the rain.

Despite a couple of late surges in the first half by the Gamecocks, Memphis State and the scoring antics of Elliot Perry and Ernest Smith put the game completely out of reach.

Perry and Smith, both scoring 18 points each on the day, took all the steam out of the Gamecocks, and left USC head coach George Felton confused about the lack of motivation behind a team on the verge of a postseason tourney bid and playing for the last time on their home court.

"I'm disappointed. We didn't play with any emotion," he said. "They (Memphis State) played with a will to win. We just didn't play with that type of desire."

Felton said the Gamecocks were a "step behind" throughout the whole game and never had the spark

needed to win, especially when the "bottom fell out" in the second half.

"It was hard to describe the performance of today's team," he said.

But freshman guard Jaime Watson had some ideas.

"We were lackadaisical. It's hurting us," he said.

"Nobody's playing with a purpose."

It seemed frustration played itself out more than anything on the court, especially with the play of Gamecock center Jeff Roulston.

Roulston, who spent most of the second half getting banged underneath the boards, falling on the floor and receiving an accidental foot in the face, received a technical for his lack of discipline toward the referees.

"He feels he's getting hit a lot," Felton said. "It's taking his toll on him."

With the thoughts of March Madness dancing in the heads of Gamecock fans before Saturday's match-up, the final home game of the season proved that the Gamecocks might need to look at the present instead of the future.

Although the Gamecocks have lost four of their past five Metro road games, and travel to Virginia Tech and Florida State for their final two games of the season, Felton reassured himself that the season is still not over.

"I don't think we are totally out of the picture. If we are, I think the NCAA should call us," he said.



Eric Glenn/The Gamecock

Barry Manning weaves past two Tiger defenders to lay up a shot.

USC's bats beats Bucs

From Staff Reports

USC's right fielder Brian Lawler smacked a solo home run and a three-run double in the second inning to help power the Gamecocks to a 13-3 victory over Charleston Southern Saturday afternoon at Sarge Frye Field.

With five RBI's and three hits on the day, Lawler paced the 10-run second inning Gamecock barrage into a circus atmosphere, that included Rob DeBoer's first collegiate home run and a round-tripper by Jerry Sheppard.

Both Lawler and Sheppard combined for six hits and were both a triple shy of hitting the cycle.

The Gamecocks, who improved to 6-0 overall, played an almost flawless game as pitcher Sean Hardwick allowed only four Buccaneer hits in five innings to improve his season record to 2-0.

Relievers Will Lewis and Andy Stein finished the game for Hardwick striking out six, and allowing only two hits and one run in four innings.

USC will next face Georgia Southern at 3 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon at Sarge Frye Field near the Roost.

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