

Eagles halt Gamecocks winning streak

By AARON SHEININ
Assistant News Editor

The previously undefeated Gamecocks entered Wednesday's home baseball game against the 3-10 Georgia Southern Eagles averaging over nine runs per contest. Holding a team to three runs, means an automatic win, right?

Eagle pitcher Joey Hamilton and company said, "Nope. Guess again."

Hamilton brought a 7.43 earned run average and a 1-3 record into Sarge Frye Field and effectively shut down USC batters en route to a 3-2 win.

USC's Matt Threehouse (1-1, 3.27 ERA) only allowed three hits until the fifth inning when Eagle rightfielder Todd Greene took a two-out pitch off the scoreboard in right-center with two men on to give the Eagles a 3-0 lead.

Gamecock bats fell dormant after beating the Eagles Tuesday 13-9. But Wednesday, pitching was the story. Hamilton gave up only five hits in nine innings of work, two of which were solo dingers to designated hitter Jerry Shepherd in the seventh and catcher Dave Wilman in the eighth.

Centerfielder Mac White tried getting things started for USC in the bottom of the third with a leadoff double. After Wilman and rightfielder D.T. Cromer flied out to center, White was stranded at second as first baseman Jeff Parnell flied out to left.

In the fourth, Shepherd, the only Gamecock to get more than one hit, followed third baseman Burke Cromer's ground out to second with a one out single to left, which brought up leftfielder Brian Lawler.

Lawler brought a four-game hitting streak and a .600 batting average to the plate. Shepherd was caught stealing and Lawler subsequently struck out to end the inning.

Then, in their half of the fifth, the Eagles made it count.

Catcher Buddy Holder got a one-out single, and shortstop Chris Peterson walked after centerfielder Kevin Hallman flied out to Wilman behind the plate, to bring up Greene with two on and two out.

Greene then extended his hitting streak to 12 games with a flick of the wrist and a three-run homer to right-center, recording his 19th, 20th and 21st runs batted in. Threehouse got out of the inning when third baseman Chad Sumner grounded out to short for the third out.

Down 3-0, USC coach June

Raines pulled Threehouse for lefthanded senior Will Lewis. Lewis, sporting an 11.25 ERA in four innings of work, gave up three hits, struck out two and walked one in three innings, cutting his ERA almost in half.

After emerging unscathed from a bases-loaded situation in the top of the seventh, USC got on the board. Shepherd stepped to the plate to start the seventh and cut the deficit to two with his fourth home run of the season. But the Gamecocks couldn't keep the momentum going.

Hamilton got Lawler to fly to right, struck out shortstop Randy Thompson and got second baseman Mike Adams to fly out to center to end the inning.

Georgia Southern's bats went south in the eighth as Lewis found a rhythm and the Eagles went

down in order.

In the bottom of the eighth, USC had their chance again. Dave Wilman extended his hitting streak to 9 games with a one-out solo homer to put the Gamecocks down by one.

But again, USC couldn't come up with the rally. D.T. Cromer grounded out to the pitcher, and Parnell struck out to end the inning.

In the ninth, Lewis shut down Georgia Southern again with three ground outs, but Hamilton regained form and finished off the Gamecocks with a three-up, three-down bottom of the ninth.

USC was scheduled to start the first of a two-game series with the University of North Carolina-Charlotte 49ers Thursday afternoon



Lewis

at Sarge Frye Field. The Gamecocks travel to Charlotte today to take on the 49ers at 3:00 p.m. USC's next home game features a match against College of Charleston Saturday at 2:00 p.m.

USC's basketball hopes hinge on season finale against FSU

By MELISSA WINGATE
Staff Writer

Make or break. Do or die. A must-win situation.

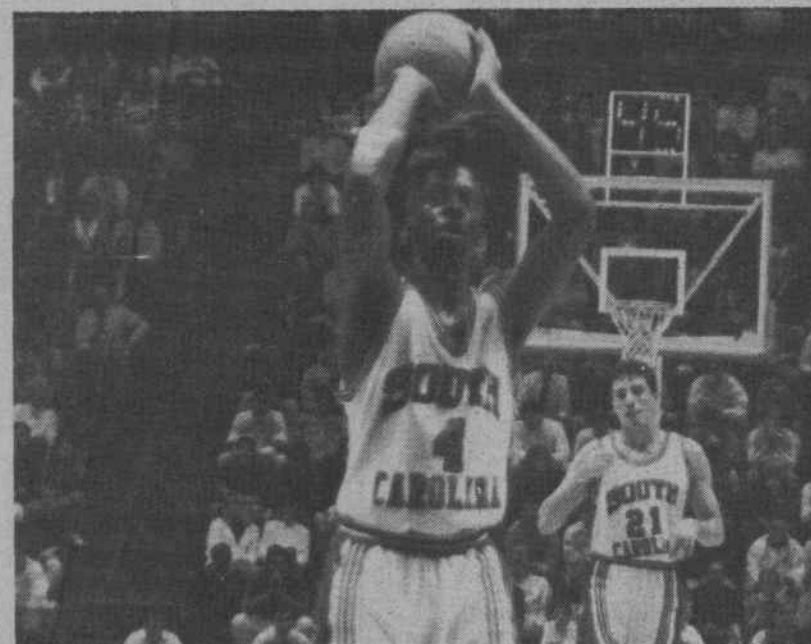
Any way you say it, USC's basketball team must defeat the Seminoles of Florida State in Tallahassee Saturday afternoon to salvage the dignity of a season filled with high expectations.

Riding the crest of a successful December when it recorded wins over North Carolina and Temple, USC's wave crashed Jan. 18 against Florida State at Carolina Coliseum when the Seminoles upset the Gamecocks 81-80 in overtime.

That was the game where starters Barry Manning and Joe Rhett watched the first few minutes from the bench after breaking a team rule and Bo Popovic and backup center Edmund Wilson were responsible for keeping the Gamecocks alive in the first half.

USC is 6-6 since that loss to FSU and now it faces those same Seminoles in hostile territory. This is the last regular-season game for USC and could possibly be "magic win number 20," and breathe a little bit of life into the Gamecocks' NCAA hopes.

Florida State is led by the surprising play of sophomore Douglas Edwards, averaging 14.9 points and 7.4 rebounds per game, while



File photo

Jo Jo English scored 13 points in Wednesday's 50-41 loss against the Virginia Tech Hokies.

junior Jo Jo English leads USC with 15.8 points and 3.2 assists per game.

FSU is coming off a thrilling victory over league leader Southern Mississippi earlier this week and were riding a three-game winning streak heading into last night's game at Memphis State.

Statistics alone, though, cannot be the measure of this game for the Gamecocks. USC now shares the next-to-last spot in the confer-

ence with Virginia Tech after going 2-6 in the Metro since that last meeting with the Seminoles.

A victory Saturday is especially crucial as USC heads into the conference tournament next weekend. The Gamecocks' performance against the Seminoles and in the Metro Tournament in Roanoke, Va., could be their catalyst into the NCAA tournament later this month, a dream that everyone has talked of since November.

Softball team hungry for more

By PATRICK VILLEGAS
Assistant Sports Editor

A 49-14 record, two All-American softball players and a team full of desire and determination couldn't quite bring 1989's Lady Gamecock softball team a NCAA tourney bid this past year.

This season there's one reason why they should make it: they're due.

USC, 6-0 and ranked 14th in the nation, brings to the new season a host of veteran players that could very well take the talented Lady Gamecock team to its fourth appearance in the Women's College World Series this May.

USC returns 13 of 14 players from this past year's team, including All-American Michelle Delloso at second base and second-team All-American Tricia Popowski in centerfield. The tandem of Delloso and Popowski will provide an excellent defensive game as well as offensive firepower to the Lady Gamecock team.

Delloso, who was an All-American in 1989, struck out only once in her 212 at-bats in 1990, and produced an outstanding .340 batting average that helped her lead the Lady Gamecocks with 72 hits this past year.

At second base, the USC four-year starter had an incredible .991 fielding percentage, committing only three errors in all 63 games. Many consider Delloso as USC's best defensive player ever.

Popowski, another four-year starter for the Lady Gamecocks, this past year led the team in nine offensive categories, including RBI's with 36. With a career batting average of .340, USC's leadoff hitter will be expected to start the fireworks each game.

"We got a good group of talented players," head coach Joyce Compton said. "We are trying to get everything in place."

Compton said she expects big productivity from her remaining two seniors on the squad, pitcher Angie Lear and Kelley Kirkland at third base.

Lear, a 1990 first team All-South member, pitched to a 28-13 record this past year, with an ERA of 0.84, and crept up to second on the USC all-time victory list with 69 wins. Kirkland, the final senior on the team, is expected to be a utility player this spring.

Compton said the undefeated Lady Gamecocks will soon move into the difficult part of the season that will really test the players. With back-to-back games and tour-

naments on the rise, Compton hopes the work ethic and optimism that has carried the team so far will not fade in the future.

"We had a successful fall (work-out), and this team is hungry for not making last year's NCAA tournament," Compton said.

In order to make that ultimate goal of the college world series, especially as an Independent, Compton said the team has to keep up with the hard work that is needed to accomplish that feat, and adds that the team has shown the potential to go all the way, provided injuries are few and far between.

The Lady Gamecocks will play their first home game of the year Saturday against the University of North Carolina at 1 p.m. and then will face Louisiana Tech at 3 p.m. at The Lady Gamecock Field near the Roost. The teams will again play each other March 3.

USC, which has already defeated the Lady Tar Heels 4-0 earlier this season, will expect a very tight game in which pitching will dictate the game, Compton said.

This weekend's games will be the only home games for the Lady Gamecocks until March 24 against Toledo.

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