

# Veteran baseball team looks ahead to SEC

By SEAN RYAN  
Staff Writer

One year ago, the Gamecock baseball team anxiously gathered in front of the television to watch the pairings of the NCAA tournament field. With a 40-22 record, the team expected to see where it would travel for post-season.

When the pairings were announced, South Carolina's deserving team was left out. This year, the nationally-ranked Gamecocks want to show the nation they belong among the elite.

"The players were really hurt," head coach June Raines said. "We felt that we belonged in the tournament."

The Gamecock baseball team begins its 56-game schedule tomorrow at 5 p.m. when Western Carolina visits Sarge Frye Field. The Gamecocks will play 31 home games in 1992, including a three-game series against defending national champion LSU. This series also marks the first game for the baseball team in the SEC.

Raines leads the No. 15 Gamecocks into the powerful SEC, as he enters his 16th season as head coach. With a career record of 590-262-1, Raines has never had a losing season.

Raines and his team have their work cut out for them, as three SEC teams are ranked higher than South Carolina. Florida and Mississippi State are ranked third and seventh respectively, while LSU is ranked 13th.

To make matters worse, South Carolina will play eight three-game series against other conference opponents. Doubleheaders will be played on Saturdays, with a single game following on Sunday.

"People are going to realize that the SEC is the toughest conference in every sport," Raines said. "It's like playing Clemson every day."

Experience is a huge bonus for the Gamecocks, as they return eight starters from last year's squad. Raines said intensity is also a key for the season.

"We have to play hard every weekend, playing 25 innings in 24 hours, Raines said. "If you're not ready to play, you could lose three."

The Gamecocks enter 1992 with one of their best offensive teams ever. Seniors Jerry Shepherd, Burke Cromer and Dave Willman, along with junior Jeff Parnell, will provide much of the offensive fireworks.

"Our offense could be one of the best," junior pitcher Matt Threehouse said. "We need to avoid a midseason slump, like we had last year."

"The key is for everyone to play hard every day," Willman said. "Last year, sometimes only five players came ready to play."

On the mound, South Carolina looks to be in good shape. Threehouse will be flanked by junior and staff ace Jared Baker. Filling out the starting rotation will be juniors Sean Hardwick and Rich

Pratt, along with sophomore Scott Pace. Junior Rob Mosser and Cromer look to be the closers.

"We don't have a senior starter, but our starters have been through the wars together against tough competition," Raines said. "A big key is to stay healthy on the mound."

Threehouse and Baker have overcome tender arms, and appear to be ready for the season to begin. Mosser is expected to miss from one to three weeks with a bad knee.

The Gamecocks also display a great deal of depth as they enter the new season. Outfielders such as juniors D.T. Cromer and Joe Biernat are expected to see action. Freshman Mark Gugino and sophomore Rob DeBoer will play a role as well.

"How well the guys not starting respond is going to be big for this team," Raines said. "Sooner or later, everyone is going to play. Will they be ready to play?"

"All I want is for my players to give me 100 percent each day," Raines said. "We have enough depth where if someone doesn't push himself, we can put someone else in there for him."

The Gamecocks' main goal is that their play is worthy of an NCAA tournament bid. "They want to be good," Raines said.

"We have a great amount of confidence in our team," Threehouse said. "If we play as well as we can, we're going to be tough to beat."



The Gamecock baseball team Thursday will play Western Carolina at 5 p.m. at Sarge Frye Field.

# Clemson football player receives three-game penalty for contract

By The Associated Press

It is unfortunate Clemson fullback Rudy Harris has to sit out the first three games next season, says the sports agent with whom he spoke.

But Richard Stern of Kamson Sports Inc., a New Jersey-based sports group, said Monday he is glad the NCAA didn't rescind all of the player's remaining eligibility.

Clemson officials told the NCAA Stern had entered into a contract in January with Harris, the agent confirmed. Stern said Harris approached him after attending a seminar on sports agents. He said Harris considered bypassing his senior season for the NFL draft because of an uncertainty about his academic standing.

Harris changed his mind after high school and college coaches, and his family convinced him to return.

"He was laboring under his own misgivings," Stern said, "but after critically reviewing all that was going on, he realized he could make a go of it."

"It's unfortunate it got beyond the point where the NCAA was willing to overlook it. But I'm glad everybody is able to say hey, let's not basically screw this kid's life over for a stupid mistake."

Stern said he wrote a letter to NCAA officials hoping they would be sympathetic to Harris' situation.

There is precedent for not taking all of a player's remaining eligibility for entering into a contract. In 1988, the NCAA suspended Michi-

gan State offensive lineman Tony Mandarich for three games after he signed with an agent.

"I'm very happy Rudy is able to play football," Stern said. "I wish it didn't get to the point where he lost his eligibility to play three games."

"I wish him the best. I think he will be better off as a player and a human being if he's able to finish school. If he didn't go back and didn't make the NFL, he'd have had a tough life."

Stern declined to comment on the agreement he had with Harris. He also wouldn't say if he would represent Harris next year when the player's collegiate eligibility has expired.

There is another issue involved in the case besides Harris' amateur status.

# Cougars bring pro football to the Carolinas this spring

By ROB RODUSKY  
Staff Writer

Professional football has finally found its place in South Carolina with the Carolina Cougars of the Professional Spring Football League.

The new league, which is not affiliated with the National Football League, has two divisions with five teams in each. The Cougars will be competing against teams from Arkansas, Miami, Nevada, New England, New Mexico, Oregon, Tampa Bay, Utah and Washington, D.C.

After the 16-week season, the top two teams in each division will play in a semi-final game, and the winners will meet at Washington D.C.'s RFK Stadium in the Red, White and Blue Bowl July 5.

Each team is allowed a \$2 million salary cap for 45 roster players, five developmental players and five practice players. Cougars Public Relations Director Mike Nicholson said the average salary for a player will be \$45,000.

"A lot had a shot at the pro's but didn't make it or wanted to try something different," Nicholson said.

Players were mainly drafted by region with the Cougars selecting from North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Some players making a homecoming of sorts will be former Gamecocks Todd Ellis, Ira Hillary, Woody Myers, Rusty Russell and Danny Smith. Former Clemson Tigers playing for the Cougars are Wesley McFadden, Joe Henderson and Eric McSwain.

Some different rules from the National Football League include a two-point conversion, one foot allowed in bounds for a catch, overtime can only be decided by a touchdown, no instant replay and allowed celebration. All of these changes combined with a 30-second play clock should make for a quicker and exciting game.

Coaching the Cougars is Pete Kettela. He served under George Allen in the now defunct USFL

and under former Green Bay Packer great Bart Starr for the Packers. Before accepting the position with the Cougars, Kettela was the offensive coordinator for California State University.

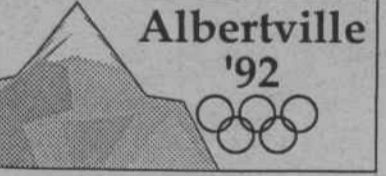
Other ex-professional players are head coaches in the PSFL. Former New England Patriot quarterback Steve Grogan will coach the New England Blitz while former Denver Bronco and Dallas Cowboy quarterback Craig Morton will coach the Oregon Lightning Bolts.

Nicholson said the "players are under contract to give something back to the community." This community appreciation will be shown by the free public appearances the players plan to make.

The Cougars are an early favorite for the championship game because of the impressive seating at Williams-Brice Stadium and the organization of the team so far.

The Cougars will kick off the inaugural season Sunday, March 1.

# Blair to battle in speed skating



By The Associated Press

Bonnie's back. Two days after skating faster than anyone else over 500 meters, Bonnie Blair returns today to the temporary oval in the middle of this quaint Olympic community to try and triple the distance — the 1,500.

She's not just in it for the exercise. To be sure, the distance is not Blair's specialty. She is more comfortable at the shorter distances like the 500 and Friday's 1,000, a race in which she won the bronze medal at Calgary four years ago.

Still, her coach, Peter Mueller, says it would be foolish to rule Bonnie out. "I think we can medal in the 1,500," he said Tuesday, watching skaters breeze around the oval on an overcast afternoon. "If I didn't think she could win, she wouldn't enter."

Also in the 1,500 field — and the gold medal favorite for the event — is Germany's Gunda Niemann, who won the 3,000-meter gold in the first race this week at the widely-criticized speedskating venue.

"I'm really not in competition with Gunda," Blair said. "I've always looked at the 1,500 as a way to train for my two races — the 500 and 1,000."

With Blair skating, even at a non-specialty distance, taped coverage of the 1,500 is the feature of CBS television's coverage Wednesday evening.

Also scheduled is the women's downhill combined, which the network showed live Wednesday morning; the women's luge, with U.S. teammates Cammy Myler and Erica Terwillegar running 6-7 half-way through the competition; and freestyle skiing moguls prelims, in which American Donna Weinbrecht is a gold medal favorite.

Weinbrecht, the 1991 moguls world champion, calls the freestyle ski events perfectly suited to her personality. "I was an art student," she said. "I had good perspective,

but I didn't do well with a sharp pencil. I did a lot better with the abstract, which fits moguls."

Other live morning coverage focused on the 15K cross country portion of the nordic combined, the men's 10K biathlon and the hockey game between Canada and Norway. Switzerland plays France and the Unified Team goes against Czechoslovakia in Wednesday's other hockey games.

# Golf team 7th at Florida tourney

From Staff Reports

USC men's golf team, starting the 1992 spring season, finished seventh out of 15 teams at the Barnett Bank Invitational in Gainesville, Fla. this past weekend.

Senior Morgan Beam led the team with posted rounds of 70, 72 and 73, finishing 10th in individual competition.

Senior team captain Daniel Seawell finished in a tie for 13th place with 75, 71 and 70, totalling 216. Gamecock senior Michael Christie finished 38th, and junior Carl Pau-

slon and freshman Chad Mason both placed 47th.

The Gamecocks team totals were 294, 286 and 289 for a sum of 869 strokes. Placing in front of USC in the invitational were Flor-

ida, Southwestern Louisiana, Georgia, Alabama, Auburn and Florida State.

The Gamecocks will next participate in the Florida Southern/Imperial Lakes Invitational.

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