

Sports

Baseball's second season begins

TONY SANTORI
COLUMNIST

This week Major League Baseball's second season begins as the playoffs commence Tuesday night in Atlanta.

The National League Championship Series pits the Atlanta Braves, 98-64 and winners of the NL West, against the Pittsburgh Pirates, 96-66 and champions of the Eastern Division.

I have only six words for Pirate manager Jim Leyland: John Smoltz, Steve Avery, Tom Glavine.

For those of you who have been living in a cave for the past few years, those are the names of Atlanta's three young guns who have pitched the Braves to the division title the past two seasons.

They have a combined 5-2 record with a 2.74 ERA against the Pirates during 1992 campaign.

However, the one question mark for Bobby Cox's team will be the bullpen.

Veteran closer Jeff Reardon has helped solidify the relief corps and will be called to shut down any late

Pirate rallies. Reardon, acquired in a late-season trade with Boston, has had experience in playoff pressure before and should come through in clutch situations.

Right fielder David Justice and left fielder Ron Gant have had sub-par years for the Braves, but should

A's Wednesday night to kick off the series.

Just a thought, but maybe Barry Bonds should sign with the Blue Jays in the off-season because they both perform equally poor in post-season action.

Toronto has lost four playoff series since 1985, despite the fact they usually possess more talent than their opponents. I wouldn't expect things to change much this year. Yes, Toronto has better pitching than Oakland. Yes, the Jays have been healthier than the A's all year. And, yes, now that Jose Canseco is wearing a Rangers uniform, they probably have more power than Oakland.

National League Championship Series	
Pittsburgh Pirates	Atlanta Braves
Team Batting Average .255	Team Batting Average .254
Earn Run Average 3.35	Earn Run Average 3.14
American League Championship Series	
Oakland Athletics	Toronto Blue Jays
Team Batting Average .258	Team Batting Average .263
Earn Run Average 3.73	Earn Run Average 3.91

Source: USA Today

Kristin Buehlman/The Gamecock

break out of their slumps in the series.

"Barry Bonds. Paging Mr. Barry Bonds. Where are you Barry?"

Bonds will probably do his October disappearing act again this year. (Read: .156 batting average in 13 playoff games.) And without Bonds, the Pirates are an average team because, outside of Doug Drabek, they don't have the pitching the Braves do.

Prediction: Braves in five games.

In the ALCS, the Toronto Blue Jays, AL East Champs, play host to the AL West Champion Oakland

Look for Mark McGuire and Ruben Sierra to have a big series and don't be shocked if one of the A's newcomers, maybe Mike Bordick, has an outstanding October.

Despite the fact Dennis Eckersley hasn't had a haircut since he arrived in Oakland, he is, without doubt, the best closer in baseball.

"The Eck" pounces on save opportunities like a lawyer does to clients who get hit by a city bus going the wrong way down a one-way street. He should save at least three games in the series.

Prediction: Oakland in 6.

Walker stomps Cowboys Monday night

By ANDREW BORGERT
Staff Writer

Herschel Walker gained revenge against his former team Monday night as the Philadelphia Eagles smashed the Dallas Cowboys 31-7.

In the early season "Game of the Year," the Eagles used their strong

defensive front to hassle Troy Aikman into three interceptions. One of the turnovers occurred in the Eagle end zone as Philadelphia stopped the Cowboys from scoring.

Despite the miscues, Dallas was within striking distance in the beginning the second half. But after

another Aikman interception, Walker went to work.

The Eagles marched down the field and set up Walker's 9-yard touchdown run. After scoring the touchdown, Walker fake-spiked the ball in an uncharacteristic show of emotion.



Lea Clayton/The Gamecock

Gamecock Soccer Statistics

Appalachian State	Won	4-2
Davidson	Tie	2-2
St. Louis	Won	3-1
Portland	Won	2-1
Washington	Tie	1-1
Erskine	Won	7-0
UNC-Charlotte	Tie	2-2
Wake Forest	Lost	0-1
Furman	Lost	1-2

Senior co-captain Ruben Tufino advances the ball toward the Furman goal. Tufino had five shots on goal in the rain-plagued match Sunday.

USC drops to 17th-ranked in the nation

Furman defeats soccer team, 2-1

By TIM THORSEN
Sports Editor

Furman University held off a late South Carolina charge in defeating the Gamecock soccer team 2-1 at the Graveyard Sunday.

The loss, USC's second this week, drops South Carolina to 4-2-3 and 17th nationally, according to Soccer America. Last week, the Gamecocks were ranked fourth nationally.

The game was a defensive struggle from the beginning as the teams entered halftime scoreless.

But 47 seconds into the second half, Furman broke the tie on a goal by Brian Little. Little head-

ed a crossing pass from senior Kyle Vosen past Gamecock goalie David Turner.

Eleven minutes later, the Paladins banged home the eventual game winner on a goal by senior Richard Hughes. The shot was a 30-yard chip which sailed over the heads of the Gamecocks pulled-out defense.

USC rallied to cut the lead to 2-1 with 19 minutes left to play on a goal by senior Hans Lohner. Lohner scored on a six-yard goal past Furman goalkeeper Ed Stein. The assist went to senior Chris Crosby.

With 2:30 left to play, Carolina had a chance to tie the game when Paladin defender

Brian Blair cut down Gamecock midfielder Rob Smith and was ejected. USC, with a one-man advantage, managed five shots, but could not get the tying goal.

South Carolina dominated the game statistically with 24 shots on goals compared to Furman's 11. USC attempted nine corner kicks and the Paladins' two.

The referees whistled Furman for 29 fouls and South Carolina for 20.

The Gamecocks will regroup this week playing against Presbyterian College and the University of Kentucky.

Carolina faces Presbyterian today at 5 p.m. at The Graveyard.

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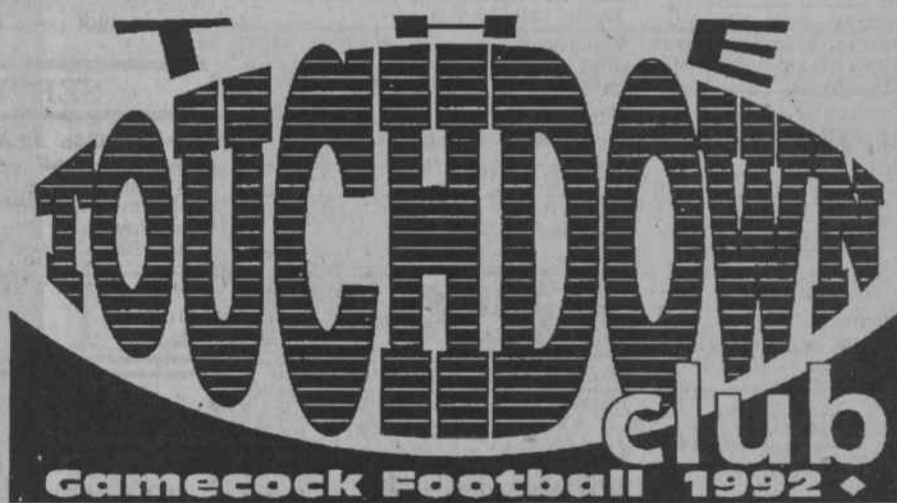
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