

SPORTS

Wilson, Johnson lead women's basketball team to 2-1 start

By JIMMY DeBUTTS
Senior Writer

USC — The women's basketball team has started the 1993-94 season on a positive note.

The Gamecocks are 2-1, winning against Miami and South Carolina State. USC lost the first game of the season to Old Dominion 69-79.

Coach Nancy Wilson is looking to sophomore guard Shannon Johnson and senior center Melinda McDaniel to lead the team this year. Johnson is the only returning starter on this year's squad.

The past year's team finished 17-10. Wilson will have to replace three starters lost from the 1992-93 team. This year's team has six guards, two forwards and three centers. They will use their speed to keep the game fast-paced on both ends of the court.

The Gamecocks will use their depth at the point guard

position to incorporate a pressing defense this year.

Johnson has led USC so far this season, averaging 23.7 points per game and hitting six of seven three pointers this year. In 1992-93, Johnson led the Gamecocks with 83 assists and 65 steals. This year, she is leading the team in total rebounds with 21.

Johnson is the first Gamecock to win a gold medal from the Olympic Festival. She played on the South team in the 1992 summer games.

McDaniel has pulled down 17 rebounds and scored 29 points so far this season.

With Coach Wilson using the press and keeping the game fast-paced, most of the players will see action in each game. Coming off the bench to contribute will be Shayla Wilkins, who has already pulled down 11 offensive rebounds, which leads the team. Christi Timmons, Brit Canty and

Wendy Moss will also play a lot this season.

So far this season, the Gamecocks are shooting .411 in field goals, while their opponents are shooting .449. Although USC is not shooting as accurately as its opponents, the Gamecocks are keeping their opponents to 65.7 points a game while scoring 76.5.

Wilson is in her 10th season as USC's coach, compiling a record of 179-95. She is the winningest coach in Lady Gamecock history and has had a winning season every year but one.

Wilson has led USC to five Metro Conference Championships and three Metro Tournament titles. She has also taken the Gamecocks to five NCAA tournaments, amassing 20 victories in four of those seasons.

The Gamecocks will face N.C. State at 9 p.m. today at the Arizona State Invitational.



Sophomore guard Natalie Funderburk takes evasive action against a South Carolina State defender.

Pete Rogers/The Gamecock

Gamecock men's basketball to compete in Diet Pepsi Tournament of Champions

By TONY SANTORI
Senior Writer

USC — Coach Eddie Fogler's basketball team travels to the Charlotte Coliseum this weekend to compete in the four-team Diet Pepsi Tournament of Champions. The tournament consists of USC; two teams who were picked to win their respective conferences, UNC (ACC) and BYU (WAC); and George Washington, which was a preseason Associated Press Top 25 choice.

UNC started the season as the AP preseason No. 1 team and defending National Champion.

USC begins play at 7 p.m. tonight when it takes on Brigham Young. BYU (0-1) will provide stiff competition for the young USC squad. The Cougars start two seniors, two juniors and one sophomore.

The Gamecocks, on the other hand, enter the tournament with only two players with Division I experience, seniors Jamie Watson and Emmett Hall. Junior point guard Carey Rich will be out of the Gamecock lineup for at least three weeks following a bout of appendicitis.

BYU showed solid scoring balance in its loss to Arizona State with six players scoring in double figures. Junior forward Shane Knight led the Cougars with 19 points in the contest. Junior forward Mark Durant came off the bench to add 14. The player who

could give USC the most fits, however, is junior Russell Larson. The 6-foot-11, 220-pounder had 12 rebounds to go along with 12 points against ASU.

BYU Coach Roger Reid will continue with his frequent substitutions to try to wear down the short-handed Gamecocks. Against ASU, Reid used 10 players, each for at least nine minutes.

USC enters the tournament after a 84-80 loss to Old Dominion in Fogler's regular season debut. The Gamecocks are led by Watson and Hall, both of whom received All-SEC honors last season. Watson, a 6-foot-7 guard, averaged 14.7 points per game last year to lead USC. Hall, a 6-foot-7 forward, was second on the squad in scoring at 14 points per game last season and led the team in rebounding with almost eight per contest.

Fogler will have to get contributions from any of the Gamecocks seven newcomers if he hopes for his team to play in the championship game Saturday night.

In the other game Friday, No. 4 UNC takes on the George Washington Colonials. The Tarheels finished third in the preseason NIT after defeating Minnesota following an upset loss to Massachusetts. The defending NCAA Champions only lost forward George Lynch to the NBA from the 1992-93 squad, and the Tarheels replaced him

with two of the best freshmen in the land.

First-year players Jerry Stackhouse and Rasheed Wallace have already contributed for UNC. Their play, along with senior All-American center Eric Montross and junior All-American guard Donald Williams, are the reasons most favor the 'Heels to win the NCAA Tournament again this season.

George Washington, led by third-year Coach Mike Jarvis, was 1992-93's "Cinderella" of the NCAA Tournament. The 12th-seeded Colonials advanced to the "Sweet 16" before losing a tight game to eventual runner-up Michigan.

GW is led by 7-foot-1, 265-pound Yinka Dare. The 21-year-old sophomore from Kabba, Nigeria, flashed on to the national spotlight last season, averaging almost 13 points and 11 rebounds a game in only his third season of organized basketball. Dare averaged almost three blocked shots a game last season and made a handful of preseason All-American publications.

Should the Gamecocks defeat BYU Friday, they would take on the UNC/GW winner in the championship game Saturday night. If USC falls to the Cougars, the Gamecocks play the UNC/GW loser at 7 p.m. Saturday.

Santori's Shots -

Woods's dismissal delivered too soon

By TONY SANTORI
Senior Writer

■ The Santori Jinx.

Most avid sports readers have probably heard of the "SI Jinx." For those of you who do not know, the SI Jinx involves the long-standing theory that whenever Sports Illustrated features an athlete or team on its cover, that athlete or team sometimes loses a crucial game, suffers injuries or completely collapses.

Well, welcome to the Santori Jinx. If anyone remembers my last column, I said the Pittsburgh Steelers are probably going to represent the AFC in the Super Bowl, and the UNC Tarheels have a good chance of going undefeated in college basketball this season.

Since then, the Steelers have been blown out twice in a row, and UNC lost in the third game of its season. I printed the Notre Dame Fight Song. Lou Holtz's then No. 1 Irish proceeded to choke at home against Boston College about three days later.

Remember the story of King Midas? You know, the "Midas touch" thing, where everything the old monarch touched turned to gold? Just call this the "Santori touch." Everything I touch just rusts.

So, now what? Do I just stop praising teams for their sake and mine? Of course not. I figure I can use this thing to my advantage. I really do not want the Cowboys to win the Super Bowl, the Tarheels to win the NCAA tournament, the Knicks to win the NBA Championship and most of all for Clemson to win its bowl game.

So...the Cowboys are unstoppable, the Heels will bounce back, the Knicks are too

strong and Clemson is the best football team on the planet. There. That should take care of that problem.

■ Just Thinking.

Speaking of Mr. Lett: Which do you think weighs the most?

- A: One stick of chewing gum.
- B: The nucleus of a hydrogen atom.
- C: Lett's brain.

I am not a science major, but I would have to say "B."

■ Sparky Gets the Shaft.

Over the course of the 1993 Gamecock football season, I was as critical of former Coach Sparky Woods as anyone else. I questioned everything from his handling of players to the play calling. But I completely disagreed with Athletics Director Mike McGee's decision to hand Woods his pink slip with one year left on Woods' contract.

I do not know if Woods is cut out to be a Division I football coach. I just know that when he was hired here in 1989, Woods said it would probably take until the 1994 campaign for USC to be a competitive and winning program. That took a lot of guts on Woods' part to put a time table on something that would ultimately determine his job status.

Granted, the Gamecocks have won only 12 games in the past three seasons. But the fact remains that this coming 1994 season would have been Woods' first "true" senior class that he could call his own. Unfortunately, Woods will not be around to see his players win seven or eight games next season. And if he is lucky enough, he will be far enough away that he does not have to hear someone else get credit for what he did.

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