

Sports

Sports Briefs

Kerrigan in first-place entering today

Nancy Kerrigan leads the women's Olympic figure skating competition going into today's long program, which will determine medal winners.

Teammate rival Tonya Harding stumbled on a landing and is in 10th place and almost out of contention.

Former Olympic champion Katarina Witt is in sixth place.

Baylor joins Big Eight

Longtime Southwest Conference member Baylor University left the conference Wednesday to join the expanding Big Eight conference.

Texas, Texas Tech and Texas A&M, which are other SWC schools, are expected to follow soon.

Hunter charged with felonies

Former Purdue University quarterback Eric Hunter was charged with two felonies Wednesday following a knife brandishing incident in a dormitory on the West Lafayette, Ind., campus.

Hunter, 23, was arrested after waving a knife and proclaiming he was Jesus. He played for Purdue from 1989-1992.

Georgia Dome home for SEC Championship

The SEC announced Wednesday that the conference will move its football championship game from Legion Field in Birmingham, Ala., to the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.

Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington said SEC Commissioner Roy Kramer called to tell him of the move.

Kansas, Minnesota upset

The Nebraska Cornhuskers (15-8, 5-6 Big Eight) upset No. 5 Kansas 96-87 Wednesday in Lincoln.

Eric Piatkowski scored 33 points to lead Nebraska, including four free throws in the final 30 seconds to secure the win.

The Jayhawks (21-6, 6-5 Big Eight) got 16 points from Steve Woodberry in the loss.

In East Lansing, Shawn Respert scored 43 points, including eight three-pointers to lead Michigan State (16-10, 7-7 Big Ten) past Minnesota.

The Gophers (18-9, 8-6 Big Ten) were paced by Vashon Leonard's 25 points.

In Tallahassee, Duke's Marty Clark and Chris Collins each scored 17 points in the No. 2 Blue Devils (20-3, 11-3 ACC) 84-72 win against Florida State.

The Seminoles were led by Bob Sura and Charlie Ward, who had 21 and 19 points respectively.

No. 7 Kentucky, playing without the suspended Travis Ford, Jared Prickett and Gimel Martinez, slipped past Tennessee 77-73 Wednesday in Knoxville.

The Wildcats (21-5, 10-3) trailed the Volunteers (5-18, 2-11) in the second half before rallying. Tony Delk scored 21 points in the victory.

Today's sports on TV

NBA Basketball:

Chicago at Washington (WGN, 7:30 p.m.)

NHL Hockey:

Chicago at Buffalo, or Philadelphia at New York Islanders (ESPN, 7:30 p.m.)

Winter Olympics:

Alpine skiing, figure skating, ski jumping and bobsled (CBS, 7 a.m.)

Selected events (TNT 1 p.m.)

Ski jumping, Alpine skiing, figure skating, ice hockey and speedskating (CBS, 8 p.m.)

Return of the Fool

That's right, I'm back. I just returned from a nine-month sabbatical spent trying to hunt down the moron who designed those stupid looking Winter Olympic mascots.

■ And speaking of stupid looking Olympic mascots, it's just a little more than two years until Whatizit? or Izzy? or Whatever? gets plastered all over every T-shirt, mug, billboard and pair of bikini briefs in Atlanta. Of course, I'm still a bit angry that my name for it wasn't selected: Itzadumbasslook-ingblueblob.

■ And now for my Winter Olympic observations.

Isn't like, you know, Picabo Street just, like, you know, the coolest skier dudette, you know? She's just, like, sooo groovy, you know?

I know "Home Improvement" is a great show, but wouldn't Seinfeld have been a better coach than Tim "The Tool Man" Taylor? How about Bob Vila?

And finally, if you didn't watch the pairs ice dancing competition, you really missed a show. I'm not kidding. One of the required moves is for the woman to skate with one skate on the ice, the other leg on her partner's shoulder and her head between his legs. Seriously. All that was missing was that '70s retro-psycho-funk music. No truth to the rumor the arena was full of 6,000 13-year-old boys in really loose pants.

■ Of course, the commercials could have been a bit better. My suggestions:

Dan Jansen for Med-Alert. You know, "I've fallen, and I can't get up." Oh wait, he won. Make that Ron Gant.

Nancy Kerrigan showing off her big pair of, uh, teeth for Aqua-Fresh.

Tonya Harding for (choose one) Field and Stream, American Hunter, Popular Mechanics, Guns and Ammo, The Club or my personal favorite, Bounty.

Torvill and Dean for Modern Maturity, AARP, Geritol and Advil, now that Nolan Ryan finally took his old carcass off the field.

Jeff Gillooly for Soldier of Fortune.

■ If you were like me, you watched for half an hour waiting to see the Jamaican bobsled. Well, for some reason, they didn't race. Well, here's the scoop.

The Jamaican bobsled was disqualified from Olympic competition for

being overweight. Sources tell me there was no way the Jamaicans were going to take the tape deck out of the front of the sled.

In addition, the 35 pounds of hemp found in the trunk probably had something to do with the DQ. Brakeman Wayne Thomas (nice Jamaican name, huh) said, "Hey mon, won't no way we was leaving the weed back in de village, mon. We never leave home without it, mon."

■ Bonehead of the Week.

That's right, the bonehead's back, too. The Olympic edition winner, Inna Sheshiki. Seems ol' Inna trained all her life for her one shot at Olympic glory in the biathlon. Well, she ran the race of her life and was about to cross the finish line and collect her silver medal when she fell.

That's right, she tripped just two yards away from immortality in a 7.5 kilometer race. Five seconds later, she finished in fourth place.

■ OK, back to the states where it's baseball season once again. That's right, break out the dust-covered tomahawks, bandwagoners. The Bills, I mean Braves, are predicted to win the World Series again. Maybe the fourth time's the charm. Sound familiar BuffaloLLLLL?

■ And finally, a story.

Fact. Moo U. wanted to hire a coach to carry on the legacy and tradition of Danny Ford, so it hired Ford assistant Tommy West.

Fact. Cow College was recently found guilty of a violation of NCAA rules by trying to convince USC player Robert Smith to follow his nose to the Upstate.

Moral. Be careful what you ask for, you just might get what you want.

■ And a final question. What's Clemson doing coming after our players anyway? Why not Florida State or Miami? Smart guys, real smart.

Heartbreaker
Gamecocks lose at buzzer

By TONY SANTORI
Sports Editor

The score was 70-65 Gamecocks with 2:45 left in the game. Mississippi State's Brian Price had just fouled out. The crowd at Frank McGuire Arena was loud and sensed USC (6-17, 2-11) was about to break an eight-game SEC losing streak.

But Marcus Grant nailed a three-pointer to cut the lead to two. USC's Emmett Hall then missed a jumper, and MSU (16-7, 8-5) went inside to freshman Erick Dampier. Dampier dunked, and the game was tied with just more than a minute to go.

"I thought we were in control at that time," Hall said about the five-point lead.

The Bulldogs broke out in a three-on-one break, but Jamie Watson, trailing the play, came up with an incredible blocked shot, and the score stayed tied at 70.

With just more than 30 seconds remaining, USC's Carey Rich cut in front of a Bulldog pass and went the distance to give the Gamecocks a two-point lead.

MSU then missed a shot, and Hall rebounded and passed to Rich, who was fouled. Seven seconds were showing, and the Gamecock faithful began celebrating.

But Rich missed the first free-throw, and palms began sweating. He missed

the second shot as well. The Bulldogs pushed the ball up the court as the clock ticked down. MSU's T.J. Honore dribbled though traffic to the top of the key and let fly with a 21-footer.

The shot hung in the air for what seemed like years before cleanly falling through the hoop. Final score: Bulldogs 73, Gamecocks 72 and many broken hearts.

The unfortunate victim of circumstance was Rich. The junior point guard was outstanding for 39 minutes and 53 seconds, scoring 18 points and dishing out nine assists while committing just one turnover.

"We weren't even in the game without Carey Rich," USC coach Eddie Fogler said. "He had a heck of a floor game. It was an interesting game, a good college basketball game."

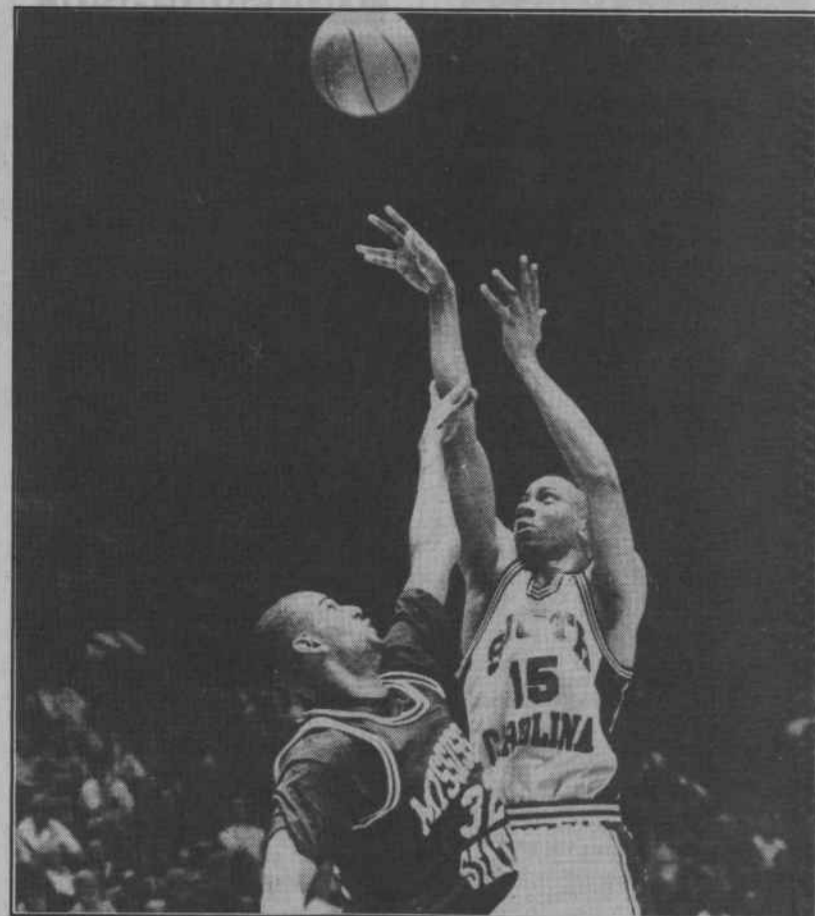
The Bulldogs raced out to 16-4 first-half lead on three-pointers by Darryl Wilson and Marcus Grant. MSU took a 37-33 advantage into intermission.

"Grant hurt us from three," Fogler said. "He's a streaky shooter, but he hit them tonight."

Despite falling to 6-17, Fogler is proud of the way his team has played.

"I've never coached a six-and-what-ever-we-are team," he said. "We've got good attitude, no bitching, no complaining with that."

Hall led the Gamecocks with 24



David Mandrell/The Gamecock

Jamie Watson shoots over a Mississippi State defender Wednesday in the Gamecocks' one-point loss to the Bulldogs.

points and seven rebounds. Senior Jamie Watson added 21 points and six rebounds.

Grant and Wilson led MSU with 19 points and 15 points respectively.

SC's Andy Bostick continued to struggle, scoring just two points.

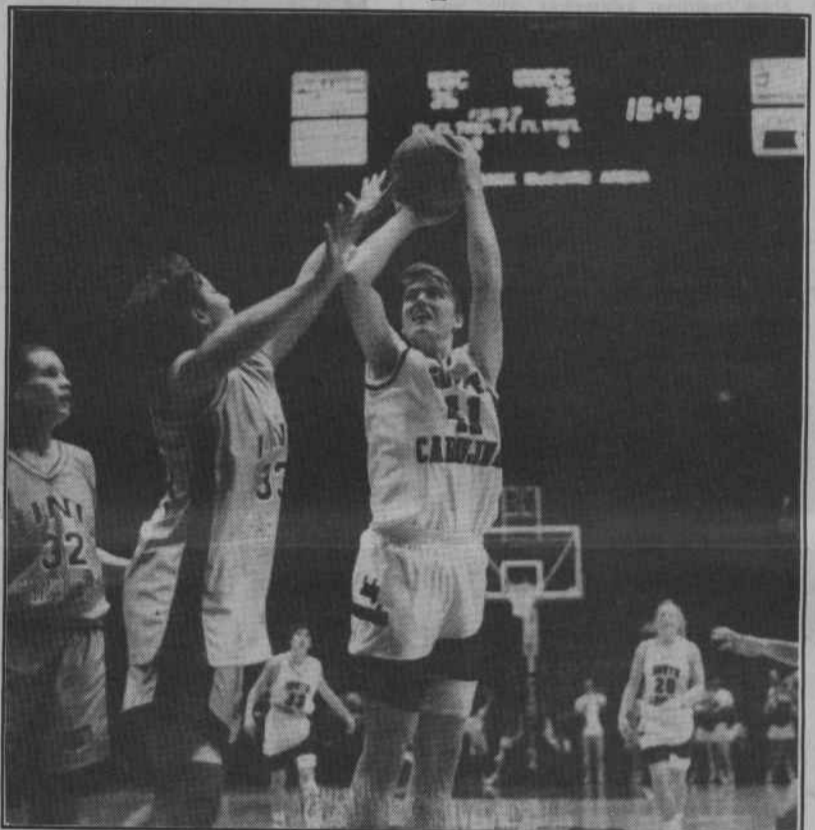
"Andy is in the 'Florence Funk'

right now," joked Fogler, who was referring to Bostick's hometown.

The loss keeps USC in a last-place tie with Tennessee in the SEC East.

The Gamecocks will travel to Knoxville, Tenn., to play the Tennessee Volunteers Saturday.

Johnson, three-pointers lead Lady Gamecocks past UNCC



David Mandrell/The Gamecock

Cindy Kelly shoots for two points Wednesday in the Lady Gamecocks' victory over UNCC. USC will conclude its regular season Saturday against Vanderbilt.

JIMMY DeBUTTS

Assistant Sports Editor

The Lady Gamecock basketball team defeated UNC-Charlotte Wednesday 74-65 at Frank McGuire Arena.

USC (14-11, 2-8 SEC) was led by Shannon Johnson who scored a game-high 19 points and dished out eight assists. Jenny Randall and Cindy Kelly also scored in double figures for the Gamecocks.

The Lady 49ers (12-10) kept the game close throughout the contest. USC's biggest lead in the first half was five points with 5:18 left in the half. UNCC was able to tie the score at 28 when Heather Hart scored with 3:20 left. The 49ers held a 33-32 lead at halftime.

The Gamecocks outscored the 49ers 42-32 in the second half, led by Johnson's 14 second-half points. USC outrebounded UNCC 46-39 in the game, led by Randall's nine, including seven offensively. Kelly and Johnson both pulled down seven boards.

Although the Gamecocks shot only 37.3 percent from the field, compared to the 49ers' 49.1 percent, they were able to win because of volume. USC

outshot UNCC 75-55, but only hit one more shot than the 49ers.

USC continued to throw up the three-pointers against UNCC. Carolina netted 9 of 32 three-point shots against the 49ers. The Gamecocks have taken 78 three-point shots in their last two games, connecting on 21 of them.

The 49ers had three players score in double figures. Martika Aldridge scored 15 points and handed out seven assists to lead UNCC. Charlette Hargrove had 14 points and grabbed a team-high 11 rebounds. Charlene Reid added 11 points for the 49ers.

For the season, Johnson is leading Carolina in scoring and three-point accuracy. She is averaging 23.8 points per game and has hit 41 of her 104 three-point shots for an average of .394. Malinda McDaniel is grabbing a team high 8.1 rebounds per game.

The Gamecocks close out the regular season against Vanderbilt at 2 p.m. Saturday at Frank McGuire Arena.

Women's golf finishes 15th in Arizona Invitational

From Staff Reports

The USC women's golf team shot a final round total of 317 Wednesday to finish 15th, with a team total of 945 at the Arizona Invitational in Tucson, Ariz.

Arizona State won the tournament with a team total of 869.

Sophomore Siew Ai Lim led the Lady Gamecocks with a three-day total of 226, finishing the tournament tied for 17th.

Arizona State's Heather Bowie won individual honors with a total of 214. She was followed in second and third place by teammates Tracy Cone and

Emilee Klein.

USC's Lea Bagwell shot 79-75-79 for the three rounds. The junior from Gray Court, S.C., finished tied for 52nd.

Sophomore Clarissa Childs tied for 67th in the tournament. She shot 76-85-79 for a three-round total of 240.

Julie Norris finished 87th with a score of 252. Norris' best round was her second-round 80.

Freshman Katie Weiss bounced back, after struggling through an opening round 89. The Fergus Falls, Mn., native closed with rounds of 80 and 83. She finished 88th with a total of 254.

Women's Golf Results

Arizona Invitational

1.	Arizona State	869
2.	UCLA	895
3.	Oklahoma	899
T15.	USC	945

Individual Results

T17	Siew Ai Lim	78-72-76=226
T52	Lea Bagwell	79-75-79=233
T67	Clarissa Childs	76-85-79=240
87	Julie Norris	86-80-86=252
88	Katie Weiss	89-80-83=254

Women's tennis to take on Vanderbilt, Auburn

From Staff Reports

The USC women's tennis team will face two crucial SEC showdowns this weekend.

On Saturday, the Gamecocks (7-0, 1-0) will play the Vanderbilt Commodores (4-2). On Sunday, Auburn (5-2) will visit. Both matches are at 1 p.m. at the Maxcy Gregg Tennis Courts at the corner of Blossom and Barnwell streets.

"The SEC is solid and even from the No. 3 team on down," Elkins said. "Florida and Georgia are the only teams that stand above the rest. There are no sure wins at any position for us. Therefore, every spot in the lineup has to fight to win."

Last season, Vanderbilt defeated USC twice: 5-3 in the regular season and 5-1 in the SEC Tournament. The latter was a bitter defeat, as the Commodores edged out the clinching victories in third-set tie-breakers.

The Vanderbilt match will offer fans the opportunity to win racquet bags, tennis balls and Gamecock tennis T-shirts and hats. The drawings will be held between the conclusion of singles play and the beginning of doubles play.

"These are two teams we should have beaten last year," Elkins said. "Victoria (Davies) was hurt in both matches, putting us at a disadvantage at No. 2 singles and No. 1 doubles."

USC's doubles tandem of Helen Crook and Victoria Davies are among the nation's elite. They lead the nation with 22 doubles victories and are the reigning SEC champions. The duo, which defeated the country's No. 4 doubles team at the ITA All-



USC Sports Information

The Lady Gamecocks will play Vanderbilt and Auburn this weekend at the Maxcy Gregg Tennis Courts. America Tournament, are No. 14.

"Biased crowd participation was a big factor in last year's match at Vanderbilt," Crooks said. "We really would appreciate the support of our students on Saturday. It can make a big difference in what will most likely be a close match."

All eight Gamecocks have at least 10 singles victories for the season. Leading the way is freshman Sophie Ljucovic at 17-5 and Crook at 14-6. Crook is 7-2 against SEC foes and was runner-up to Florida's Anoushka Popp at the SEC Championships in October.