

Fairgrounds beautification project announced

Staff Reports

The USC athletics department and the S.C. State Fair announced plans for the initial phase of an area beautification project surrounding the outside of the fairgrounds parking lots and Williams-Brice Stadium.

The first phase of the project, which will begin this spring and be completed by the beginning of the 1995 football season, will include enhancements to the areas of the fairgrounds parking lots encompassing Gate 6 to Gate 10 along Assembly Street and George Rogers Boulevard.

The overall concept evolved following discussions with the two groups as well as with representatives from the S.C. Department of Agriculture, the State Farmers Market, the city of Columbia, the S.C. Department of Transportation and the S.C. Educational Television Network, whose headquarters is located across the street from the fairgrounds and is adjacent to Williams-Brice Stadium.

The first phase of the project will include the installation of a decorative brick and wrought iron fence around the perimeter of the parking lots. Landscaping plans call for trees 25- to 30-feet tall to line the inside of the fence, interspersed by smaller trees outside the fence to add fall color. The trees will be native to South Carolina.

Estimates have revealed that more than 2 million people vis-

it the State Fair, Williams-Brice Stadium and State Farmers Market areas on an annual basis, making the locale one of the city's most visible venues.

"The athletics department looks forward to participating in this project," said Mike McGee, director of athletics. "The S.C. State Fair has worked closely with us over the years to assist us with our parking needs during football season, and that partnership has been of vital importance in regard to the athletics department providing these types of services to our fans.

"This beautification project will improve the overall quality and appearance of this area and will leave a more attractive and appealing impression on those who visit our stadium."

"The S.C. State Fair is very pleased to work together with the Carolina athletics department on this project," said Gary Goodman, general manager of the State Fair. "We have had a very favorable and long-standing relationship with the athletics department with regard to parking.

"This project will enhance all of the events at the fairgrounds and surrounding the stadium and will provide a dramatic change in the overall looks of this area. It's a good sign when there can be a partnership such as this working together to benefit the general public."



KIM TRUETT The Gamecock

The construction of the new press box at Williams-Brice Stadium is one of many ongoing projects centered around the enhancement of the fairgrounds area.

Columbia Mayor Bob Coble said the beautification effort "represented successful collaboration between the Carolina athletics department and the S.C. State Fair and would make a positive difference in one of the city's most visible areas.

"With Williams-Brice Stadium, the S.C. State Fair and the State Farmers Market all located in this corridor, the enhancement project makes good sense. An appealing gateway is essential for both residents and

visitors alike."

McGee said the addition of the new football office complex in the stadium's north end zone, along with the construction on the west side, which will include box seats, suites and a new press box, should have an additional positive impact on the area's cosmetic looks. SCETV plans a similar beautification project once the construction of its new facility is completed, with the entire area having a consistent design to it.

McGee said additional phases of the beautification project would include landscaping on both sides of Bluff Road adjacent to the west side of the stadium.

It is estimated that the initial phase of this project will cost about \$300,000, of which \$90,000 will come from non-appropriated athletics department funds. It's anticipated that additional funds for future phases of this project may also involve private grant funding.

Penguins dominate as NHL reaches end of 1st quarter

Associated Press

As the NHL reaches the first-quarter mark, who has been more surprising than the Quebec Nordiques — unless it's the Pittsburgh Penguins?

Despite the seasonlong absence of two top players and other sidelined stars along the way, the Penguins are off to the fastest start in franchise history. The Penguins won their first eight games and were undefeated in 11 (10-0-1) as they challenged the record of 15 unbeaten games at the start of a season by the Edmonton Oilers in 1984-85.

The Penguins' performance has been all the more remarkable considering that their best player, Mario Lemieux, is out for the season and No. 1 goaltender Tom Barrasso has been out of action since the start. Pittsburgh hasn't missed a beat with an offense that has been among the league leaders in the early going and exceptional goaltending from backup Ken Wregget.

The Nordiques also got off quickly in the NHL's lockout-shortened 48-game season. Quebec, which finished out of the playoffs last season, challenged Pittsburgh for first in the Northeast Division with a 10-1-0 record after 11 games.

The San Jose Sharks, meanwhile, were another team on the rise. The Sharks, a sub-.500 team during the regular season last year, continued to build

on their great playoff run. Currently they are in second place in the Pacific Division, a point behind Calgary.

While the Sharks were rising in the standings, the Vancouver Canucks were falling. Last season's Stanley Cup finalists weren't alone, either, among several highly regarded teams that struggled early.

Such teams as the defending Stanley Cup champion New York Rangers and New Jersey Devils also played below par in the early going.

The Rangers, who had the best record in the NHL last season, uncharacteristically lost four one-goal games and were a sub-.500 team in the first three weeks. The Devils, who had the second-best mark last season and were a conference finalist, were having offensive problems and didn't win until their fifth game.

Among the early trends, goaltenders were a dominating factor in league play. As of last Wednesday, 20 of the 26 teams had at least one goaltender with a goal against average under 3. And three goaltenders were under 2 — Detroit's Chris Osgood (1.26), Buffalo's Dominik Hasek (1.27) and Quebec's Stephane Fiset (1.86).

Boston goaltender Blaine Lacher has been one of the league's top rookies so far. With no professional experience before this season, Lacher had a 6-1 record after seven decisions, a 2.27 goals-against average and a .910 save percentage.

Alberty grabs second title at SEC Diving Championships

Staff Reports

The USC men's and women's diving team competed in the SEC Diving Championships this weekend. The women finished fifth with 52 points, while the men finished in eighth place with 15 points.

Senior All-American Vivian Alberty continued her dominance of the one-meter board, capturing the SEC crown for the second consecutive year with a score of 429.15. Alberty is the only female to win a SEC title since USC joined the league in 1991-92.

Teammate Laura Pykett placed 15th with a score of 332.10, while sophomore

Danielle Duris and freshman Kasi Jones placed 21st and 25th, respectively. Jones also placed 19th on the platform board with a score of 214.90.

On the men's side, freshman Tommy Thomas finished eighth in the one-meter board at 462.40 and finished 17th on the platform with a score of 299.80.

The combined scores from the SEC Diving Championships will be added to the scores of the SEC Swimming Championships, which will begin Wednesday through Saturday at the Natatorium.



ALBERTY

Miami teammates highlight disappointing All-Star Weekend

Associated Press

PHOENIX -- The NBA All-Star weekend, which started off with a sloppy slam dunk contest and a small upset in the 3-point contest, ended with a less than spectacular game in which the West crushed the East 139-112.

On the NBA's annual day of hype and music known as All-Star Saturday, Miami players swept the skills competition. Glen Rice beat Reggie Miller in the long-distance shootout, then Harold Miner won his second slam dunk championship after missing last season's contest with an injury.

The Heat may be one of the league's worst teams, but Miner and Rice showed their entertainment value. Rice warmed up with his first 3-point title, then Miner provided the only sparks of the day with his power dunks.

The rookie game showed off the league's new talent and the shootout was close, but the crowd at America West Arena didn't really get going until Miner started doing his thing.

The best of his muscular dunks was one in which he approached the basket from the left side, spun 180 degrees, lowered the ball to his knees and slammed it backward through the basket.

His second move was a flying left-handed jam, and he completed his routine with a 360-degree spin and slam.

With rap music as the background, Miner's acrobatics made this one a no-contest. Last year's winner, Minnesota's Isaiah Rider, missed two of his four attempts in the finals while Miner hit three of four.

All were spectacular. "I tried to throw them down hard, that's what I try to do on all my dunks,"

said the 6-foot-5 Miner. "Judges like to see power from someone my size."

Miner scored 49.2 of a possible 50 points in the first round and had 46 points in the final against Rider and former USC star and Utah Jazz rookie Jamie Watson.

No one was happier for his teammate than Rice, who sat with Miner during the slam dunks and cheered him on. "He was saying there was a Heat wave in here," Miner said.

In winning the shootout in his second appearance in the contest, Rice beat the flashy favorite.

Rice, who has made 43.9 percent of his 3-pointers this season, was the last of four qualifiers after the first round. He scored 14 points, while Charlotte's Scott Burrell had 19, Miller 17 and San Antonio's Chuck Person 15.

None of the shooters in the 3-point contest took full advantage of the new 22-foot distance. Rice outscored Miller 17-16 in the final round, matching the third-lowest final-round total in the event's 10-year history.

Both Miller, who dazzled NBA fans with his 3-point shooting in last year's playoffs with the Indiana Pacers and last summer's World Championships for the United States, and Rice scored 19 points in the semifinals.

Rice won a coin toss before the finals and decided to shoot first.

The rookies had their turn in the spotlight, too, and went to overtime in the league's second rookie game.

Eddie Jones of the Los Angeles Lakers was the most valuable player even though his Green team lost 83-79.

Sunday's All-Star Game had already degenerated into a sloppy romp, complete with 7-footers Shaquille O'Neal,

Hakeem Olajuwon and Dikembe Mutombo shooting 3-pointers, when the real drama began.

As the West was wrapping up its 139-112 win Sunday, the Gorilla — the Phoenix Suns' mascot — nearly enticed Charles Barkley into the shot of his life. The Gorilla, launching himself with a hydraulic catapult, flew through the air for three spectacular dunks on which he barely avoided decapitation by the backboard. The All-Stars watched in amazement.

Then Barkley sauntered out to the Gorilla's takeoff spot and motioned to the catapult operator to prepare for another launch. Dan Majerle, Barkley's teammate on the West squad and on the Phoenix Suns, ran onto the court and wrapped his arms around Barkley.

"I'm a spontaneous type of person, and that looked like a lot of fun," Barkley said. "Besides, I could have hit the glass, hurt myself really good and collected the last two years' pay lying on my back."

As Barkley was being led back to the bench, Suns coach Paul Westphal jokingly tried to drag Olajuwon out for a catapult try. The Houston center politely declined.

The West led by 16 at halftime and coasted for most of the final two periods. Mitch Richmond of the Sacramento Kings, who didn't even make the top 10 in fans' All-Star voting for Western Conference guards, was the MVP with 23 points on 10-of-13 shooting.

While Richmond hit all three of his 3-point attempts, only one of the three big men connected from behind the arc.

O'Neal threw up an air ball from 3-point range in the third quarter. Olajuwon hit a 3-pointer from the corner seconds later. As with the rest of the evening,

the West had one-upped the East.

"I got that idea from Shaq when he shot that 3," Olajuwon said. "I said, 'Oh, that's a good idea!' So I went for a 3 also."

Mutombo, who had never before tried a 3-pointer, missed his attempt in the game's final minute.

"I just wish I would have made it," said Mutombo, who blocked four shots. "Then my record would be 1-for-1. But now my record is 0-for-1."

Karl Malone and Barkley, who wore knee-high socks in tribute to Suns teammate Elliot Perry, had 15 points apiece for the West. Olajuwon had 13 points and 11 rebounds. Gary Payton had 15 assists.

Barkley said his teammates claimed the high socks didn't look good.

"Everybody was saying that I looked fat," he said, "but I told them that I AM fat."

Despite his missed 3-pointer, O'Neal had his first good All-Star performance — 22 points, including a length-of-the-court layup and an over-the-back dunk on which he spun 180 degrees.

Anfernee Hardaway and Scottie Pippen had 12 points apiece for the East, and Hardaway added 11 assists.

But the West was in control throughout the contest.

"When it got to be 20 points, it was ridiculous," said David Robinson, who had 10 points for the West. "Some players started goofing around, and I think the crowd was a bit disappointed."

The East was without one of its assistant coaches. Orlando assistant coach Richie Adubato watched the game from a local hospital after feeling short of breath earlier in the day.

1995-96 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

September 1-2	CAROLINA CLASSIC	TBA
September 4	Davidson	TBA
September 6	UNC-GREENSBORO	7:00
September 8-9	University of Arizona Tournament	TBA
September 15-16	Michigan State Tournament	TBA
September 20	FLORIDA	7:00
September 22	Georgia	7:00
September 24	College of Charleston	6:00
September 29	ARKANSAS	7:00
October 1	LSU	2:00
October 6	UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI	7:00
October 8	MISSISSIPPI STATE	2:00
October 13	Auburn	7:00
October 15	Alabama	2:00
October 20	KENTUCKY	7:00
October 22	TENNESSEE	2:00
October 24 or 25	Clemson	7:00
October 29	Florida	1:00
November 3	Tennessee	7:00
November 5	Kentucky	2:00
November 12	GEORGIA	2:00
November 17-19	SEC Championship	TBA

ETHAN MYERSON / The Gamecock

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