

Gareis has high hopes for softball team

RYAN WILSON Sports Editor

Tucked away behind the left field fence of Sarge Frye field is a place where Gamecock history is being made. The 33-9 Lady Gamecock softball team has quietly become one of the top teams in the nation and will participate in the Coastal Carolina round robin tournament Saturday and Sunday.

Senior pitcher Darlene Gareis has been a key factor in the Lady Gamecocks' success this season, and she wants to prove to the rest of the nation that Carolina is a force to be reckoned with.

"I want to take the team to Regionals, win Regionals and take the team to the World Series, and hopefully we can win that," Gareis said. "I think the team is good enough to win (the World Series). We have the bats, we have the defense, we have the pitching. With all that's on, this team is unbeatable."

The Pennville, NJ native has kept up her end of the bargain with a 16-3 record and a .95 ERA. with 82 strikeouts and a perfect game this season. This year Gareis has been given some relief by another rising star pitcher



USC pitcher Darlene Gareis

"I would like to be remembered as someone who gave everything they had to the team, that gave 150 percent on every single pitch that I threw."

Trinity Johnson.

Johnson, a sophomore transfer from Cal-State Fullerton, has an explosive fastball as seen by her 232 strikeouts and 17-6 record. She has also pitched a perfect game this season. Johnson's emergence has taken the pressure to produce off Gareis.

"It takes a lot of pressure off of me, although sometimes I like a little bit of pressure," Gareis said. "In the past I had to throw a lot of innings, and it's hard on my arm. One thing with me is I can throw a lot of innings because I have a drop ball and it's not quite as hard on you arm as throwing up pitches."

The pitching tandem has given the Lady Gamecocks a No. 8 ranking earlier this year, but they struggled last weekend on a Louisiana road trip, going 0-5 and dropped out of the top ten.

Gareis sees these losses as a learning experience and realizes that the team will have some bad moments.

"You have to look at what the team has done over the whole season, not just what happened this past weekend, which is something we would all like to put behind us and forget about it, but you have to learn from that," she said. "Things didn't click this weekend, we didn't win. Things clicked at the beginning of the year, we blew people away, nobody could touch us."

"If this team clicks, we are the best team in the country I would say. We can beat anybody if everything clicks. There is going to be times when things don't click, and I would rather that happen now than at Regionals. I see this team going to the World Series. We have the benefit of a lot of good coaching."

Gareis, a sports administration major, has plans to stay around athletics after graduation and will get a first-hand look as the softball team strives to become a national powerhouse.

"Right now I have an internship lined up with the Lexington Recreation Department to work with the different leisure centers and different fields working on the business side doing budgeting," Gareis said. "I am looking into getting a graduate assistantship for softball so I can get my masters."

Whether on the mound or one the bench, Gareis wants to be remembered for the effort she gave to make the Lady Gamecocks one of the best teams in the nation.

"I would like to be remembered as someone who gave everything they had to the team, that gave 150 percent on every single pitch that I threw," Gareis said. "I always tried my best, even if at times it wasn't good enough. Everything I was asked to do, whether it was lifting, or running or pitching, I gave 150 percent."

Ripken back on track to break Gehrig's record

Associated Press

SARASOTA, Fla. — The photographers clicked their shutters in rapid-fire fashion, the TV cameras whirred and autograph seekers scrambled to get their pens ready.

Cal Ripken had just emerged from the Baltimore Orioles' clubhouse, back in uniform for the first time in nearly eight months and eager to sharpen his skills before resuming his assault on Lou Gehrig's record streak of 2,130 consecutive games.

If all goes as planned, Ripken will pass Gehrig's mark Sept. 6 in Baltimore. Before then, he will be required to talk about The Streak until he no doubt becomes absolutely sick of the subject.

"I wish I knew how to handle it, but I'm going to try to do the best I can at retaining my focus on baseball and trying to approach this season just like I've done every other season," he said.

Regardless of the Orioles fare in the American League East this season, the focus will be on Ripken,

who has played in 2,009 consecutive games since May 30, 1982. The streak was threatened by the baseball strike and the possibility of replacement games, but that is no longer a factor, so Ripken is now free to pursue a baseball record that once seemed unreachable.

"It was a record I thought would never be broken," Orioles manager Phil Regan said. "For a guy to go that long without being sick, pulling a hamstring or breaking a finger — it's unbelievable."

Gehrig missed two starts during his string and occasionally was removed from a game after assuring the streak would continue. Ripken, who has started every game and missed just 148 innings, doesn't know all that much about the man whose record he is chasing. He once felt compelled to learn more about Gehrig but quickly abandoned the idea.

"I was afraid by knowing about him, it would spark an obsession that would change my approach," Ripken said. "So, although I'm curious, I have decided not to know so much about Lou. At some point, maybe

when it's all over, I'll sit down and learn a little bit about him."

Ripken apparently has a lot to learn, at one point saying of Gehrig, "I think he was a first baseman."

"I was raised with a work ethic and approach in that the object of team sports is to win. Do whatever it takes to win," he said. "It's important for you to rely on your teammates to make that happen, and therefore it was important for me to be counted on by my teammates to be in the lineup every day."

"I'm proud of the streak for the reason that my teammates can count on me to be in the lineup and hopefully do something during the course of the game to help us win. I come to the ballpark ready to play and wanting to play."

"I'm in as good a shape as I've ever been coming into spring training," he said. "My motivation suffered in January and February, but when spring broke in Baltimore I caught fire and really got up to speed."

"I'm very happy and content where I am right now."

SPORTS LOOK

Baseball

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Senate subcommittee voted for a partial repeal of baseball's antitrust exemption, the first step in what promises to be a difficult legislative path. The bill was approved 4-0 in a voice vote by the subcommittee on antitrust, business rights and competition.

Sen. Al Simpson, R-Wyo., urged President Clinton to appoint an independent baseball commissioner with authority to force players and owners to end their labor disputes.

NCAA Basketball

WACO, Texas (AP) — Baylor University's ex-basketball coach was acquitted of charges he helped five recruits cheat to get into the school. Three assistant coaches were convicted.

The federal jury found that although Darrel Johnson was responsible for the basketball program, he was unaware of improper help his assistants gave to enable the recruits to pass classes they needed to enroll at Baylor in 1993.

Johnson, who was indicted one day after Baylor fired him in November, was acquitted of all seven counts: four counts of wire fraud, two counts of mail fraud and one count of conspiracy.

The assistants — Gary Thomas, Troy Drummond and Kevin Gray — face up to five years in prison and fines of up to \$250,000 on each of the

wire fraud and mail fraud counts.

Tennis

AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. (AP) — Top-seeded Conchita Martinez beat Sweden's Asa Carlsson 6-1, 6-2 in the rain and wind to advance to the third round of the \$430,000 Bausch & Lomb Championships.

Also advancing were third-seeded Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria, No. 5 Amanda Coetzer of South Africa, eighth-seeded Sabine Hack of Germany and No. 9 Irina Spirlea of Romania.

USC Equestrian

The USC Equestrian team will host the regional competition this weekend at Softwinds Farm. Teams from Region II will be competing for a chance to advance to the Zone competition in two weeks.

The show is divided into two sections, individual riders who have accumulated enough points in their division to move up into a higher level and riders who have been chosen by their coaches to represent the team. The first and second place riders from each division will advance to the Zone competition April 22.

The show starts at 10 a.m. Sunday and there is no admissions or parking fees. Take Bluff Road 9 miles past Williams-Brice Stadium to Martin Luther King Blvd. Turn left onto MLK Blvd and go 1.5 miles. Softwind Farm is on the left.

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