

Billy brings us part two of his three-part series on the Gamecock football season.

WNBA Playoffs:
Houston 85
Charlotte 71

Cleveland 68
Phoenix 78

SPORTS

- Women's Soccer vs. UNC Greensboro (scrimmage); Sat., 3 p.m., Stone Stadium
- College Football Louisiana Tech @ Nebraska, Sat.

Nate says Mark McGwire blasted his 53 homer Sunday in Pittsburgh, Pa. He can break the record with nine homers in his last 32 games.

Freeman out for season

staff writer **JOE QUINN**

South Carolina's football team lost one of its top performers last Wednesday when All-America free safety candidate Arturo Freeman suffered a season-ending knee injury during the morning workout at Williams-Brice Stadium.

Freeman, a senior from Orangeburg, S.C., suffered ligament damage in his right knee during a kicking drill and will have surgery at a later date.

Freeman was a first-team All-SEC selection in 1997. He led the Gamecocks with six interceptions and was tied for the team lead with 92 total tackles.

"Arturo certainly is one of our best players and leaders on our team," said Coach Brad Scott. "We're very disappointed for him. He had prepared extremely hard for this season and had received a great deal of preseason recognition, and rightfully so.

"We trust that this will work out to be a positive situation for Arturo in the long run."

Freeman, who does have a redshirt season available, had been named to several preseason All-America teams, including the prestigious *Playboy* All-America squad.

Gamecocks conduct Saturday morning scrimmage



SCOTT

The Gamecocks scrimmaged for more than three hours Saturday morning at Williams-Brice Stadium.

Concentrating primarily on the running game, USC executed an opening 26-play drive, using nothing but running plays.

"I think our offense grew up out there today,"

USC coach Brad Scott said. "We wanted to test them and see if they could develop some toughness, and I think they did. I was pleased with our running game."

Both Anthony Wright and Phil Petty ran with the first-team offense. Wright completed a 55-yard TD pass to Zola Davis, while Petty had scoring passes of 30 yards to Carlos Spikes, 50 yards to Kerry Hood, and 25 yards to Trev Pennington.

Jonathan Martin, a true freshman from Columbia, looked good at fullback and caught Coach Scott's eye. Interceptions were recorded by Torry Johnson, Ray Green (returned 96 yards for a TD), O'Rondai Cox, Andre Goodman and Homer Torrance.

Coach Scott was not pleased with the play of the defense.

"Our defense did not perform up to the level it needs to," Scott said. "They got pushed around on the line of scrimmage. We need a lot of improvement there."

Single game tickets sold out for four games

With the opening of the 1998 football season only 12 days away, South Carolina has already sold out of single game tickets for four of its home games.



SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Senior defensive back Arturo Freeman will be out for the season with a torn ligament in his right knee. Freeman will have surgery at a later date.

Single game tickets to home games with Georgia, Mississippi State, Arkansas and Tennessee have all been sold.

The only way to obtain tickets to these contests is by purchasing a season ticket, and only a limited number of those remain. Tickets can be purchased by calling 1-800-4SCFANS.

Tickets are still available for the season opener against Ball State on Sept. 5 and the third home game against Marshall on Sept. 19.

Student distribution is this week in the Russell House.

Students must show a valid ID to obtain a ticket.

Men's soccer wins in scrimmage

Ryan O'Neill's header, the only goal of the second half, gave the USC men's soccer team a 3-2 win over Coastal Carolina in an exhibition match Saturday at Conway, S.C.

O'Neill took a pass from Kim Eriksen and redirected a header past goalie Robert Clark for the win.

In the first half, the Gamecocks led 2-0, but the Chanticleers got two goals in the final five minutes of the half.

Carolina will open up the regular season on Sept. 1 at 7 p.m. against Coker College at Stone Stadium.

Do disgruntled fishermen really know best about USC football?

WILLIAM FOLKS

COMMON FOLKLORE

Editor's Note: This is part one of a three-part series. The other two parts will run Wednesday and Friday.

I've come to expect it.

Summer fishing conversations on Pawleys Island will almost always turn to South Carolina football.

I suppose it's quite a natural progression when you stop and think about it, what with the steady alcohol consumption, the supernatural patience and those oft-occurring relapses of desperate pleading both activities seem to inherently require. Fishing serves as a vivid reminder to many Gamecock fans of the team they follow so loyally each and every fall; investing all that time, effort and emotion waiting on one, just one, tiny little bite of success.

Yet, unlike previous summers, where some semblance of a consensus was almost always reached concerning South Carolina's chances for the upcoming season, this year's opinion on the Island was off both ends of the chart. A consensus? Not really. It was more like a Jerry Springer panel trying to figure out which redneck missed the cue to start slapping the other.

Predictions of 4-7, 5-6, 6-5, and 7-4 popped up like lotto balls. Every once in a while, a particularly disgruntled fisherman might posit an 0-11 record, but those predictions were seldom given in numerical form and often accompanied by, shall we say, coarse vernacular.

The question? What do the (and I'll delete the disgruntled fishermen's expletives here) Gamecocks have this season?

A few possible answers? A) Absolutely nothing. B) Not very much or C) Shut up, I can't help it I go to school there.

Well, until last week at least, USC (picked to finish next-to-last in the SEC East by conference sportswriters) boasted one of the nation's premier safeties in Arturo Freeman, a senior from Orangeburg. A legitimate All-America candidate and arguably the best football player Carolina has had over the past three years, Arturo tore his right anterior cruciate ligament in a kick-blocking drill last Wednesday and will miss the entire 1998 season. It's unbelievable the bad luck one program can have. The only good news is Arturo (a star player from day one in Columbia) wasn't redshirted as a freshman and can return in 1999 for his senior year if he chooses to do so. My prayers certainly go out to him for a full recovery.

You know, perhaps if Carolina changed its name to the 'Swamp Foxes,' though, or maybe the 'Really-Loud-Chirping-Crickets,' (hey, even the 'Disgruntled Fishermen' would work) Freeman might be more inclined to come back. I'm starting to fear there might be something to this "Chicken Curse" after all.

At any rate, QB Anthony Wright, returning from a career-threatening knee injury that cost him two starts last season, must now join with All-SEC OT Jamar Nesbit and assume the undisputed senior leadership of Carolina's

football team. Both are NFL-caliber athletes who, together, can carry the squad, and Wright's remarkable comeback this spring has erased any doubts about his strength and determination.

As seems to be the case every season, the key to Carolina's bowl chances comes in the first four games. Last year a mediocre outing against Central Florida in the season-opener (coupled with the loss of All-SEC linebacker Darren Hambrick) signaled USC's rocky start. This year, Ball State comes to Williams-Brice to kick off a month-long homestand for the Gamecocks. USC Head Coach Brad Scott probably knows by now he doesn't just need a win, but a blowout over the Cardinals in order to gain some confidence for the Sept. 12 showdown with Georgia. An interesting commodity this season, Georgia lost 14 starters from last year's 10-2 squad, but captured one of the nation's top five recruiting classes to fill in some of those holes. Marshall and Mississippi State follow the last two weekends in September, and Carolina will need to capture both of these contests for a shot at a bowl.

USC's first road games of 1998 come against two of the most improved teams in the SEC, Ole Miss (Oct. 3) and Kentucky (Oct. 10). UK quarterback Tim Couch is as good a signal-caller as Carolina will face this season, so a big win over the Rebels would be the ideal scenario heading into Lexington.

Homecoming against Arkansas (Oct. 17) and the following week's road trip to Nashville, Tenn., should be two victories for the Gamecocks. Arkansas and Vanderbilt are perennial SEC cellar-dwellers, and USC peaked during this particular stretch last year, beating the Razorbacks and Commodores by a combined score of 74-16 in 1997.

It is hoped that this year we'll be able to see how things could have turned out had Anthony Wright remained healthy all the way through last season. Carolina's three final games (Tennessee — Oct. 31, at Florida — Nov. 14, and at Clemson — Nov. 21) are always the toughest of the year, as USC takes on two national championship contenders and one archrival. Tennessee may have lost All-American quarterback Peyton Manning, but tailback Jamal Lewis could be the SEC's best running back since Herschel Walker.

USC did play the Florida Gators close until the fourth quarter in last year's game, but part of that was thanks to two Arturo Freeman interceptions. How Carolina fares down the stretch without him is certainly a concern for the coaching staff.

Keep in mind, for the Clemson game, the visiting team has won the last seven contests, with USC's three consecutive wins at Death Valley unprecedented in school history. Without Raymond Preister, Nealon Greene and Anthony Simmons this season, the Tigers will be hard-pressed to break that streak.

Now that we know what USC is up against, how will they fare? Look for a preview of USC's new offense on Wednesday and check out Friday's Gamecock for a defensive preview.

Paterno isn't ready for retirement just yet

college press **EXCHANGE**

Jim Tarman, the former director of athletics at Penn State, was browsing through a turn-of-the-century corner store in Vicksburg, Miss., during a recent tour of Civil War sites when an elderly woman with a thick drawl asked him, "How much longer is that Joe Paterno going to coach?"

Amazing. Even little old ladies in the wilting heat of summer in the Deep South want to know the answer to one of college football's most pressing questions.

And the question is appropriate. After all, Paterno will be 72 in December, probably preparing to take on another bowl opponent at an age when the real challenge could be getting out of bed free of injury.

The question is appropriate because Paterno is nearing a milestone that will further his relentless success and remarkable longevity: his second victory in the coming season, his 33rd as Penn State's head coach, will be his 300th, making him the first Division I-A coach to register that many victories at the same university.

Think of it: 300 wins at the same school at the highest level of college football. It's a mark that quite likely will never again be reached. Not in this high-pressure, big-money era, when it's not unusual for a score of major-college coaches to be fired every year, when hot young coaches quickly turn their eyes toward the glamour of the NFL.

"I don't think it'll ever happen again," Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez said. "It's gotten much more difficult to stay in the business that long, let alone at the same place."

As for how much longer Paterno plans on pacing the sideline with his rolled-up cuffs, thick sunglasses and tie neatly in place, he says his health will determine that, because, he has admitted, he doesn't know what else he would do.

"I have to get up in the morning with something to do," he said. "And I don't golf."

In recent years, with Paterno past normal retirement age, he has been asked more frequently by recruits and their families if he'll remain in Happy Valley for the duration of the players' college careers.

He told members of his most recent recruiting class that he planned to stay for at least four more years. He said the same thing when he sat down with a financial adviser before he and his wife, Sue, gave \$3.5 million to the university to, among other things, endow faculty positions and scholarships.

"Sure, people ask me, but I don't think we've lost anyone because of it [his age]," Paterno said. "I think there will come a time when I'll tell them 'one or two more years' and identify my likely successor so they can size him up. But I'm counting on coaching four more years at least."

"When I decided to give some money away and sat down with my financial planner, and he asked how much longer I plan on coaching so he could determine how much I could give away, I told him four or five more years.

"I'm programmed for four more. But I've told recruits I could stay four, five years or 10 more years and walk across the street and have a heart attack, so . . ."

Defensive end Brad Scioli, a fifth-year senior from Upper Merion High, said that when Paterno arrived at his home in Bridgeport for a recruiting visit, his parents asked the coach how much longer he planned to stay on the job.

"And if he came to my house today and said four or five more years, I'd believe him," Scioli said. "You watch the way he runs around, listen to the things he says, the way he talks — it's great he still can do it at whatever age he is. Besides, he's got the life, you know?"

Waving his hand, shaking his head, Paterno dismisses talk of his longevity and the imminent 300th victory. (The Division I-A record

of 323 victories is held by Bear Bryant. The overall NCAA record of 408 is held by recently retired Eddie Robinson.)

Paterno said he had not planned on coaching this long when he arrived in State College in 1950 to assist Rip Engle.

"I think anybody who figures on staying in it as long as I have has got to be a little kooky," he said. "And maybe that explains it."

For the fact that he is nearing 300 victories, Paterno credits his longtime assistants, administrative support and a plethora of stand-out players.

"I hate to have people zero in as if this is a personal achievement, because it's a program achievement," he said. "In that sense, it's great."

Even if age is starting to catch up to Paterno, it appears that it still has a way to go, because the signs are barely visible. He remains quick-witted and has almost total recall of every game he has coached. He still has a bounce in his step, still demonstrates techniques to his players, and still has a head of thick, wavy hair, although some gray is seeping in.

For those who see Paterno as a comfortable CEO, a man who lets his underlings do all the dirty work, listen to Fran Ganter, Penn State's offensive coordinator. He has been working for Paterno for 28 years. To this day, he says, Paterno will take control of the offense from him when things aren't going well.

"If things are going great, he stays 30 yards away," Ganter said. "When he sees what the tempo is with the other team, he takes off that sport coat and says: 'Let me take over for a while.'"

"And when he does that, forget the automatics, forget the choices, forget the check-offs at the line of scrimmage. We're going. We're playing football. He's calling all the plays. The tempo of the game changes. And everybody gets going again."



SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Author William Folks, right, stands on the beach of Pawleys Island with his uncle, Robert, one of the disgruntled fishermen who think they know best.

Columbia may get hockey team

sports editor **NATHAN BROWN**

The East Coast Hockey League announced over the weekend that Columbia might be the new home of a minor-league hockey team.

The franchise was awarded to four doctors from Florence who go by the name Sports Docs Inc.

The members of the league voted unanimously to give Columbia the team. The Capital City was the only area awarded a franchise this Saturday, with several other locations hoping to receive a team.

"This has been a longstanding hope of a lot of people in Columbia," Mayor Bob Coble said. "I'm confident we'll have hockey in Columbia."

After the board's approval, the team's next major obstacle is whether it will be allowed to play in the facilities of the University of South Carolina.

"This is good news, but now the real work begins," said Stephen Imbeau, president of both Sports Docs Inc. and the South Carolina Medical Association.

Not only is the franchise looking for a home, but Sports Docs Inc. is also looking for local investors. The team has already cost the doctors an application fee of \$205,000, and the owners will have to shovel out around \$1.5 million to close the deal.

The Columbia team would compete in the East Coast Hockey League, playing against teams from Florence, Charleston, Greenville, Augusta and Charlotte.

If things go as planned, the team could be competing as early as 2001; however, it is more likely they'll begin play in 2002 after the completion of a new arena to be built in the Vista.