

Bowden saw firing coming

WILLIAM FOLKS
common folklore

It was Terry Bowden's inability to get along with Auburn's trustees as much as his team's 1-5 start that cost the head coach his job, sources familiar with the Auburn program say. The 42-year-old's sudden resignation Friday made headlines across the country and was easily the week's top story in the SEC.

According to the *Birmingham News*, Bowden met with Auburn Athletic Director David Housel at 8:30 a.m. last Wednesday and was told there was "virtually no way" he would be back to coach the Tigers in 1999. Housel gave Bowden the option of continuing on as head coach until the end of the season, even urging the sixth-year coach to "fight this [and] do the best you can."

But Bowden, sensing his replacement had already been settled upon, resigned Friday morning after consulting with Auburn President Dr. William Muse and trustee Bobby Lowder Thursday evening. In these discussions it was made clear to Bowden that he was unlikely to receive the support of the Board of Trustees regardless of how Auburn finished the 1998 season.

While the reaction of his former players was mixed, it was clear that Bowden's status with the War Eagle elite was on shaky ground even before his team's lackluster start. When only lukewarm support was given to his contract extension prior to this season, Bowden's already poor relationship with UA donors suffered fur-

ther deterioration. Whether this was his doing or the fault of the school (as Bowden's father Bobby has suggested) remains uncertain, but the relationship was clearly on the rocks before the 1998 season started. Speaking of the contract extension, rumor has it a clause in the deal gave the university the right to terminate Bowden if the Tigers were ever in last place in the SEC West. They remain in that position this week, despite Saturday's 32-17 non-conference victory over Louisiana Tech under interim head coach Bill Oliver, the team's defensive coordinator.

Speechless

That's what USC Head Coach Brad Scott was for approximately the first three minutes of his press conference following the Gamecocks' 17-14 loss to previously winless Vanderbilt Saturday in Nashville. As Commodore fans stormed the field celebrating the end of a 22-game SEC losing streak, Scott silently contemplated the debilitating loss (and South Carolina's new conference-worst eight-game losing streak) before finally taking questions from the small contingent of reporters seated across from him beneath the Southeast stands of Vanderbilt Stadium.

Asked if the loss was his worst ever, Scott replied, "Yes. It ranks right up there with the worst."

Asked about his team's next game against Tennessee, Scott said, "I can't get over this one right now to start thinking about next week and Tennessee."

Asked if in his wildest dreams he ever expected this kind of season, Scott

said, "No. I never did. Never expected it. We were trying to play our way out of it. We felt like we had an opportunity to win a ballgame here that maybe would get our attitude and our momentum going into the last three ballgames, because we've got a tough stretch here with our last three ballgames."

Asked if he had anything to say to junior PK Courtney Leavitt, whose three missed field goals (at 35, 39 and 32 yards) helped cement the loss, Scott said, "There's not a lot you can say. I addressed the whole football team because we all had opportunities out there on both sides of the ball as well as the kicking game. We missed those field goals, and certainly that's big in our game, but we also missed some plays out there and gave up some opportunities on both sides of the football. It comes down to a kick, maybe, when you look at it after the game, but when you look at it over the course of the game, it shouldn't have been that close. It shouldn't have come down to a kick."

Scott said on Sunday that Leavitt will not handle the placekicking chores for the remainder of the season, and that Chet Tucker (a freshman walk-on) will be called upon to assume that responsibility. Leavitt has made four of 12 field goal attempts this season and has missed seven in a row.

"Winning For Ourselves"

While Saturday's 17-14 loss to Vanderbilt has resulted in a funeral-like atmosphere hanging over South Carolina's program, it has served to re-

vitalize the Commodore football team and build hope for the future under second-year head coach Woody Widenhofer. After dropping 11 consecutive games and 22 in a row in the SEC dating back to Nov. 18, 1995, Vanderbilt sophomore OT Darren Rothenberg talked about what the win over South Carolina (VU's first in eight tries) meant for his team and; more importantly, for the future of the Vanderbilt program.

"We know that winning feeling now," Rothenberg said. "It's hard to win football games when you don't know what it's like to win football games. You can tell a team over and over, 'This is what it takes,' but until they experience that feeling for themselves it isn't going to make any difference. We could tell we were getting better. Everybody in the program knew we were turning things around, it's just that it wasn't showing in the scores. We knew the effort was improving, but every week it got harder for us because we had to somehow equate that with another loss. This win will boost confidence for all of us. I think it's going to turn around our entire program."

Rothenberg said the week of practice leading up to the USC game was "the first fun week of practice I've had all year," and that the Commodore team "quit worrying about winning for the school and focused on winning for ourselves."

Vanderbilt's streak was the second longest in school history, as the Commodores lost 33 straight SEC games from 1976 to 1981.

Page claims title on Monday NITRO

INSIDER continued from page 6

to Hall, but Nash walked out of the arena rather than pinning his longtime friend. In a helpless heap, via count-out, Hall won the match, but Nash won the war.

Sting and Bret Hart matched up for the United States Title. Sting's recent demise continued, as he too received the beating of his life. Hart destroyed Sting with a baseball bat, delivering four solid shots to the head. Hart eventually knocked out Sting for the victory, and Sting was carted out of the ring, immobilized on a stretcher.

Hulk Hogan versus The Warrior was, thanks to Hogan, just as bad as everyone thought it would be, plain and simple. Hogan totally screwed up an attempt to burn The Warrior's face, instead igniting a spark at his own waist. Hogan also misused a blood capsule during the match. We were treated to many of the same moves the two did in their first meeting at Wrestlemania VI, just at a slower pace due to Hogan's significant aging since then. The inexplicably bloodied Hogan got the pinfall victory after Horace nailed The Warrior with a steel chair to the back.

In the night's main event, DDP took Goldberg to the limit. However, despite the bold predictions of the likes of Mike Tenay and Josh Rosen, Goldberg outlasted the People's Champion to retain his world title. Goldberg mangled his right shoulder early during the match in a collision with the ringpost, which prevented him from landing an early jackhammer on DDP. DDP did land a diamond-cutter, but the champ barely kicked out of the pin. Goldberg's 155th victory came as he countered a cutter with the jackhammer for the three count. This bout, about the best Goldberg has done, capped off an overall solid effort by WCW.

Now, the bad news: another NITRO run by Eric Bischoff. Rick Steiner was forced to make the announcement of who his tag-team champion partner would be. Bischoff's choice for Rick: Kenny Kaos from High Voltage. PLEASE! No wonder so many stars are upset with Bischoff.

Bischoff promised us Ric Flair in action. Instead he gave us footage from Flair's title loss to Hulk Hogan at 1994's Bash at the Beach, Hogan's inaugural match with WCW. PLEASE! We don't want to see on NITRO what we all have in our dusty video collections! Finally, we listened to Scott Steiner deliver one of the worst interviews in the history of wrestling. PLEASE, somebody cut him off.

NITRO had two flickering stars. The Warrior, re-signed, spoke for a few minutes and fended off the nWo. It's good to see that the old, rope-shaking, obey-no-rules Warrior might be here for the long haul. Finally, DDP captured the U.S. title from Bret Hart. However, Hart brutally attacked Page with a chair to close the show. I don't see how Page could be in any condition to defend his title anytime soon. Does anyone else see a U.S. title tournament on the horizon?

Men's, women's swimming teams win twice

■ Carolina/Clemson football game moved to 6:30 p.m. for ESPN2 audience.

staff writer **ISIS REYNOLDS**

The University of South Carolina men's and women's swimming and diving teams rebounded from losses to conference rival Florida on Friday to take two wins apiece over College of Charleston and Georgia Southern.

The Lady Gamecocks, who defeated Georgia Southern 53-35 and College of Charleston 51-37, were led by the diving of sophomore Michelle Davison. Davison, who holds the SEC record for the 3-meter competition, set a Carolina Natatorium record in the 3-meter (6 dives) category with a score of 362.30. That beat the old record set by Laura Pykett in 1995.

"Michelle is a tough competitor, and she really had a great showing today

in front of the home crowd," said Head Diving Coach Todd Sherritt. "The 1-meter record will be tougher for her to break, but for her to capture this record is outstanding."

The women were paced by the strong showing of their relay teams, including the 300-backstroke relay team, which posted a time of 3:02.35, and the 200-individual medley team, whose time was 1:52.43.

The men bounced back to win two meets on the day as well, as they beat College of Charleston 55-33 and Georgia Southern 51-37. The men won all but two events, and diver Chad Sheldon won both the 1-meter and 3-meter diving competitions.

"The team really swam well on Friday against Florida, and they were encouraged by the strong showing we had yesterday," said Head Men's Swimming Coach Keith Switzer.

Clemson Game Moved to 6:30 p.m.

For the third straight season, the South Carolina-Clemson game will be played at night.

The Atlantic Coast Conference told Clemson on Tuesday that its annual season-ending game with state rival South Carolina will start at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 21 and be broadcast nationally on ESPN2.

Brown Claims Bench Meet Title

The 1998 USC Bench Press Meet, an annual event co-sponsored by USC Campus Recreation/Intramurals and the USC Bodybuilding and Fitness Club, took place Sunday. Jermaine Brown claimed the overall championship.

Brown, who weighed in at 178 pounds, benched 405 pounds, giving him the overall title for pressing the

most weight in ratio with his body weight.

Winning the women's class was Jessica Carlson, who benched 155 pounds.

The men's division included six weight classes. The 148-pound winner was Matt Schilit, with a benched weight of 225 pounds. The 165-pound weight class-best was 320 pounds, benched by Steve Cerrato.

Brown claimed the 181-pound title, while Paul Haynes won the 198-pound class with a 340-pound press. The 220-pound class winner was Garrick Rogers who benchpressed 285 pounds. The heavyweight division winner, consisting of males weighing over 220 pounds, was Chicquoa James, who had the best weight of 440 pounds.

BCS Names UCLA No. 1

The Bowl Championship Series has brought the computer age to college football, releasing its first standings with UCLA ranked No. 1 and Ohio State No. 2.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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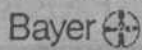


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