

- Walvieball puts its unbeaten record on the line vs. LSU.
- Shawn Singleton returns to make more enemies.
- Coaching update.

Virginia Tech Head Coach Frank Beamer has withdrawn his name from any vacant coaching positions. He announced this yesterday afternoon at a press conference in Blacksburg, Va.

SPORTS

- Friday, 7 p.m. Volleyball vs. Colorado St. **NCAA Tournament Austin, Texas**
- Friday, 7 p.m. Men's B-ball vs. Charleston **Food Lion MVP Classic Charlotte, NC**

Nate says a bowling pin needs to only tilt 7.5 degrees in order to fall down.

Wednesday, December 2, 1998

The Gamecock

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Gamecocks win third straight game

senior writer **BROCK VERGAKIS**

The Carolina men's basketball team remained undefeated at home by defeating the Jacksonville Dolphins 73-56, improving their overall record to 3-2 on the season. The game was closer than the score indicated, particularly in the first half.

Sloppy play by both teams allowed the Dolphins to mount a nine-point lead before Carolina came storming back. What allowed USC to stay in the game in the first half was Jacksonville shooting just as poorly as Carolina. Both teams shot less than 35 percent from the field.

"The shot selection was questionable in the first half," said Head Coach Eddie Fogler.

Part of what led to such poor shot selection was the scrappy defense of the Dolphins. Jacksonville attacked USC in their own backcourt, pressing on several occasions. The Gamecocks seemed to rush shots once they got the ball over halfcourt.

"This is the first full-court press we've seen; it's a good experience," Fogler said.

Also contributing to the Gamecocks woes in the first half was their poor play inside the paint. USC had difficulty getting defensive boards, leading to Dolphin second chances resulting in points for them.

On the offensive end, Carolina faced a clogged lane nearly every time forcing bad shots on the inside and risky passes to the perimeter. Taking away USC's inside game forced the guards to try to step up and score points. Launching 11 shots from beyond the 3-point line, Carolina only managed to sink three of them.

In the last five minutes of the half, USC finally started to show composure, giving a preview of the second half. A Bud Johnson block brought the crowd to its feet and led to six unanswered points for Carolina. Herbert Lee Davis also contributed to Carolina's turnaround, coming up with two steals leading to easy baskets and a 3-pointer in the final minute to give USC a 29-24 lead at the half.

In the second half, Carolina took control of the game and never let go. Play on the inside improved, particularly on the part of Johnson. He dominated inside the lane, leading both teams in total rebounds.

"My main focus is to rebound well," Johnson said. "Tonight I learned to stay under control."

Defensive boards led to offensive points for USC, and leading the attack was BJ McKie. McKie mesmerized the crowd in a one-on-one situation with a Dolphin defender. Faking a pass to the right, McKie put the ball in his left hand in mid-air for a soft layup, of which Fogler said, "I thought I was watching the NBA out there."

As play improved for USC, so did their confidence. They began playing with more intensity and emotion as the game continued. Carolina's shooting improved to nearly 50 percent from the field in the second half. Contributing to the shooting percentage increase was better shot selection as from quick, crisp passing.

Fogler opted to play McKie and freshman sensation Aaron Lucas together several times in a dynamic duo combination reminiscent of McKie and Melvin Watson. The pressure defense McKie and Lucas provided led to several Jacksonville turnovers.

"I think in the second half we had a whole lot of intensity," Lucas said. "The intensity picked up greatly."

While those two are good on defense, what makes them dangerous is their flexibility between point guard and shooting guard.

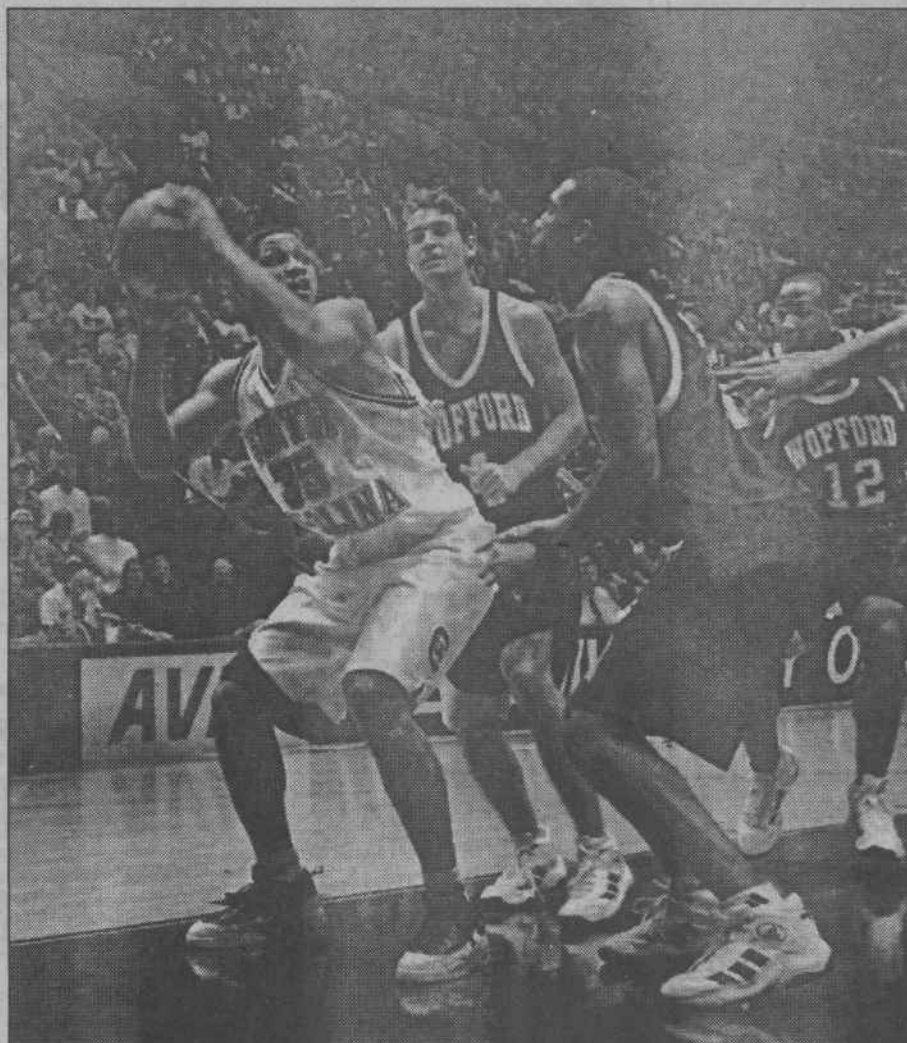
"We both come from the same background in high school, making adjustments to the two spots in college," Lucas said. "We have the ability to play both positions and set up others for a good shot."

The more Lucas has taken the burden of point guard off McKie, the more offense McKie has generated. The past two games, McKie has scored 20 points or more, compared to the 11 he averaged in the first three games.

Who takes over point isn't something that Fogler decides, as he prefers to let the two of them work it out for themselves.

"They're both playing both positions, I'm letting them work it out," Fogler said. "I'm not even telling them."

While McKie was the big scorer in Monday night's game, Lucas showed plenty of promise. Three of his shots rolled around the rim before finally spinning out. All his points came off free throws when he was fouled while driving into the lane.



SEAN RAYFORD Sports Photo Editor

Antonio Grant goes up for a shot last Monday against Wofford. Grant left the Jacksonville contest early with an injury.

"The shots are going to come, I'm not concerned with them falling right now," Lucas said. "I can concentrate on free throws so that I know I can make them."

Getting the shots to fall for Lucas should come just as it did for the rest of the team in the second half.

The Gamecocks had difficulty getting started against a very physical and athletic Jacksonville team but finished strong.

"We start slow against people who throw the first punch in the fight and come at you hard in the beginning," Fogler said.

The Gamecocks now hope to come out hard early in their next game against in-state rivals College of Charleston.

Carolina will take on the Cougars 7 p.m. Friday night in the Food Lion MVP Classic in Charlotte.

Hogan announces 'retirement'

MICHAEL STRICKLAND
wrestling insider

Last Thursday night on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "Hollywood" Hulk Hogan announced his retirement from pro wrestling. Hogan, 44, stated that he "had accomplished everything he wanted to" in the sport and felt the time was right for him to hang up the tights (reports are that the failure in his match with Warrior at Halloween Havoc was Hogan's signal that it was time to go).

He seemed very genuine in his speech, thanking the fans for all of their support throughout the years of title runs. Hogan did reaffirm his plans to run for president in 2000 under a third party platform.

Hulk Hogan made wrestling cool in the '80s in the WWF, starting with his appearance on MTV. In cartoons, he teamed with television star Mr. T to beat up the bad guys, and he defeated Sgt. Slaughter to defend the honor of all Americans.

Hogan was able to transcend the sport and gain fame in the general media. Despite a lack of skill, he was able to become one of the greatest pro wrestlers of all time. He was a hero to many of us as youngsters, urging us to eat our vitamins and say our prayers. Hogan, whose real name is Terry Bollea, even added three years to his career with his unpredicted heel turn, joining the nWo. Despite his recent demise, Hogan is a legend in wrestling. Don't think you've seen the last of Hulkamania, though. His yellow and red colors may ride again.

As for NITRO, WCW put on another good show. Scott Steiner officially replaced Hogan as the leader of the nWo black and white, which now seems a bit misdirected with the original three, Hall, Nash and Hogan, gone.

NITRO saw the Outsiders, Hall and Nash, team again in a match vs. Horace Hogan and Scott Steiner. Hall and Nash, one of the most dominant tag-teams ever, seem poised to reform and wreak havoc in WCW. It was Hall who turned on Nash months ago, but it was Nash who offered to be partners Monday night. The Outsiders, who should be back for real in January, totally dominated the two sacrificial lambs from the nWo, scoring a significant victory.

Chris Jericho's attitude finally caught up with him as he dropped the television title to Konnan. Jericho, thinking he had forced a submission from K-Dawg with the lion tamer, grabbed the belt and turned his back on the Wolfpac member. Konnan then utilized a cheap shot with the belt from behind, scoring the three-count and capturing the gold.

Ric Flair is set to get back in the ring thanks to old foe, yes, foe, Dusty Rhodes. Rhodes, an nWo member, was

the ref for a special match between Dean Malenko and Barry Windham. A Malenko win meant Flair would get a match with Eric Bischoff. Rhodes played along with the nWo ploy for a while, but then turned on Bischoff and gave the win to Malenko, setting up the Flair/Bischoff match for Starrcade. That match will have a reinstatement/retirement stipulation: if Flair wins, he books his own matches; if Bischoff wins, Flair retires. By the way, don't bet on a Flair loss.

Bam Bam Bigelow continued his feud with Goldberg, scuffling with the champ outside the Chattanooga, Tenn. arena until security split them up. Unfortunately, don't expect a title match between the two for quite some time. The Nash/Goldberg "contract signing" stated that Goldberg could not defend the title before his match with Nash.

In the main event, the U.S. title changed hands yet again, with Bret Hart whipping DDP for a solid 10 minutes. Thanks to no-disqualification rules, the Giant entered the ring and choke slammed the champ twice, allowing Hart to slap the sharpshooter on an unconscious Page. A fourth Hart-and-Page match is set for Starrcade.

WCW has apparently gotten the picture because they have already begun to set up the matches for Starrcade. As it looks, once again Starrcade will be a no-miss event.

Cheerleading squad makes nationals

staff writer **CHRIS DeGUIDO**

The USC varsity cheerleading squad has been invited to the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) National College Competition, to be held Jan. 8-10, 1999 at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

The squad qualified by submitting a "skills" tape, which included stunts and pyramids, cheers, chants, and tumbling. The tape score will be thrown out once the competition begins. The squad

is now working on a "crowd" tape, which will be judged by UCA judges. That score will count 25 percent at the competition.

"Our program has been in a transitional phase for the past few years, and we're all so excited to finally take the next step," said junior Laura Bokesch.

Along with USC, Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee and LSU made the competition from the Southeastern Conference. USC's squad was invited to the

semifinals by finishing seventh in the Division I-A South Region.

Carolina's mascot, Cockey, received an invitation to the finals by finishing in a tie for seventh place in the pre-competition judging.

Over winter break, these athletes will have two-a-days at which they will practice both in the morning and afternoon in preparation for the event. They will have a break Dec. 23-28 and will leave for Florida on Jan. 7.

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