

ACC BASKETBALL

With their 81-61 win at North Carolina, the Duke Blue Devils became the first team in the history of the Atlantic Coast Conference to go through the season 16-0. The win also marked the worst defeat for the Tarheels at the Smith Center.

SEC TOURNAMENT

The 1999 SEC Men's Basketball Tournament begins play Thursday in Atlanta. Tennessee is the No. 1 seed in the East, and Auburn is the No. 1 seed in the West. USC's first round opponent is Ole Miss.

The Gamecock Sports

SCHEDULE

•Baseball vs. Wofford, 7:00 p.m. Wednesday, Sarge Frye Field.

NATE SAYS...

Nate says the Pentagon, in Arlington, Va., has twice as many bathrooms as is necessary. When it was built in the 1940s, the state of Virginia still had segregation laws requiring separate toilet facilities.

NBA deserves contempt



William Folks
Common Folklore

They're back. Like recurring back pain, dry skin, midterm exams or that pesky Mentos jingle you can't seem to get out of your head, the NBA and its players are back.

And on the heels of what was arguably the most tasteless, duplicitous and disgusting labor dispute in the history of professional athletics, the world's most notorious collection of self-serving millionaires is once again out to convince you, the hard-working fan, that you "still love this game."

This, despite the glaringly obvious fact that they have no such love to give in return.

With a barrage of free key chains, bumper stickers, beverage cozies and other assorted penny-ante merchandising efforts, NBA franchises around the league are trying desperately to survive their collective public relations debacle by using the most insulting and ingratiating of methodologies — trading lousy trinkets for lost trust.

My Kobe Bryant Beanie Baby is supposed to do that? C'mon.

After observing the first two weeks of 1998-1999's lockout-shortened season, I've reached the conclusion that, though the NBA (much like Bill Clinton) might survive such a callous display of pretentiousness and disrespect, it nonetheless deserves our scorn, our apathy, and all the well-principled, righteous contempt we true sports fans can muster.

Sure, the CNN-SI and "SportsCenter"-led media will embrace the sport like their prodigal son, bestowing eloquent praise and preparing the fatted calf of all highlight reels in a vain attempt to persuade us that the game hasn't lost its authenticity.

Don't be fooled. They're filling air time.

The Stuart Scotts, Rich Eisens, Inga Hammonds and Vince Cellinis of the world only appear revitalized because they've got something to talk about other than the Winter X-Games, John Elway's retirement or Mike Tyson's television toss.

So the next time you find yourself mesmerized by a two-second sound bite of Derrick Coleman dunking on some woefully out-of-position isolation defense, and you hear Scott rhetorically inquire, "Booyah, where my dawgs at?," I'll tell you exactly where they are: back in the limelight, but missing the point entirely.

Just ask Atlanta Hawks center Dikembe Mutombo, who used the occasion of Black History Month to encourage his comrades to at least attempt to rise above their historic insensitivity.

Last year, Mutombo staked \$2 million of his own money to start construction of a hospital in his native Congo.

Mutombo had hoped his NBA compatriots would chip in to foot the bill for the \$44 million facility, but with the notable exceptions of Sonics' guard Gary Payton and fellow Georgetown centers Patrick Ewing and Alonzo Mourning, response has been all but nonexistent.

"Booyah, NBA superstars, where are your priorities at?"

When Mutombo organized a summer trip to Africa last year, only Ewing and Mourning agreed to go.

But who did manage to make time in his schedule to go? Much-rebuked NBA commissioner, David Stern.

"When I talk to people about it, they say they'll go, but when it comes time to leave, I can't find anybody," Mutombo said. "The ones I can get are always worrying about where we'll stay or what we're going to eat." Typical.

Kids are starving in Africa and lacking the basic medical care we take for granted.

When Mutombo tried to do something about it, all his cohorts could do was worry about their own interests. This is the very attitude the NBA doesn't need right now.

Don't get me wrong. Not everybody in the NBA is a selfish, immature prima donna. Mutombo, Grant Hill and

USC squeaks by 'Dawgs on senior day

by Todd Money
Senior Writer

For the Gamecock men's basketball team, all's well that ... ends.

USC, looking to snag some small shard of momentum heading into this week's SEC Tournament, out-hustled, out-shot and out-ran Georgia, but still needed some clutch free throws down the stretch to top the Bulldogs in overtime, 70-66.

The Gamecocks (8-20, 3-13 SEC) now move on to face Ole Miss in the tournament's first round Thursday in Atlanta.

Georgia (15-13, 6-10) must play Alabama the same day.

After the game Saturday, however, the feeling for USC was one more of relief after a hard-earned win than of looking ahead.

"I knew we were going to pull it out," senior BJ McKie said.

"Things were going wrong ... but we're playing so well together, especially on both ends of the court."

Most onlookers probably weren't as sure.

The first half saw eight lead changes and about as much spirit and energy Frank McGuire Arena had witnessed since the circus came to town.

Georgia guard D.A. Layne, picking up where he left off in his 26-point performance three weeks earlier against the Gamecocks, began the game with a 3-pointer, and Carolina's William Gallman followed with a dunk on the other end.

The tone was set for a back-and-forth, hard-on-the-fingernails contest, and the sparse crowd in attendance got just that.

For the Bulldogs, though, it wasn't Layne doing most of the damage this time.

Sophomore Jumaine Jones, who has recently declared himself eligible for the NBA Draft, became his team's catalyst, scoring three of UGA's next four baskets, two of them 3-pointers.

Jones finished the first half with 10 points and nine rebounds, and had 19 and 16 for the game, respectively.

He also hit a team-high five treys in the game.

"Wow," said Gallman, Jones' primary defender.

"He [Jones] is a great player. I knew he was a good 3-point shooter, but I didn't know he was that good ..."

The long-range bombs were key to both teams' successes in the half.



Sean Rayford Photo Editor

Carolina's BJ McKie drives to the basket in Saturday's 70-66 victory over Georgia. For McKie, Bud Johnson, Recus Nix, William Gallman and Hagan Rouse, the win against the 'Dawgs was bittersweet because the game marked the final time the five would play at Frank McGuire Arena.

Georgia went 6-of-18 on threes, including three in a row at one point, and USC was 4-of-7.

Guard Ray Harrison also stepped up for the Bulldogs.

Harrison found the hole with ease, lighting up the Gamecocks for 12 of his team's last 17 points in the half, including two 3-pointers.

USC, meanwhile, relied on balanced scoring and tight defense, getting all of its bench into the game relatively early and holding the 'Dawgs to 34 percent field-goal shooting.

USC took a 32-30 lead into the locker room at halftime.

The second half was just as action-filled as the first, with the stars for both teams deciding much of what went on.

In USC's case, McKie came alive, knocking down shots on the inside

while continually being a force on defense.

For Georgia, Jones continued his hot hand from long range, even after verbal reprimands from the crowd for an earlier airball.

USC held a slim lead throughout the period before finally stretching it to eight, at 55-47, with just more than four minutes left.

At that point, things got wild.

Georgia struck for eight straight points, tying up the game on a Harrison 3-pointer.

After successful trips to the foul line for both teams, the Carolina lead was 59-57.

After Georgia center Jon Nordin drove under the basket for a shot with 10 seconds left, the game appeared to be USC's to win.

In effect, it was.

McKie took the ball downcourt, looked like he might shoot a three, and then drove inside.

He was called for a charge on his shot attempt, though, and with two seconds left, there wasn't enough time for either team to go for a realistic shot.

Overtime, then, was McKie time.

Although it was Senior Day for four other seniors on the USC club, McKie, the school's new all-time scoring leader, got by far the most applause in pregame ceremonies and seemed to be yearning for one more shining moment.

He would get it.

With the Gamecocks' lead at 68-66, and after already having been to the foul line three times in the extra period, McKie was sent there again after Georgia's Jones missed a 12-footer with 10.1 seconds to go.

Though McKie had gone only 7-of-14 from the line before then, he was,

in a word, confident. "I knew I was going to make those two," he said.

"I was hard on myself when I went to the line."

"I concentrated and blocked everybody out."

After sinking both shots, the lead was 70-66, and the outcome was history.

It was a sweet ending to a highly disappointing year for Carolina, which had lost seven straight games coming in, including 18 of its last 21, falling short of NCAA Tournament consideration for the first time in four years.

"It feels real good," McKie said. "With what all we've been through this year, and the fans have been supportive" he said.

"Everything really ended the regular season on a good note," Gallman said. "You never know what will happen."

Baseball wins series against Colonials

by Michael Strickland
Senior Writer

After losses to mid-major conference teams such as Charleston Southern, Old Dominion and Richmond, the USC baseball team took out its frustrations on George Washington, getting back on track over the weekend with a three-game sweep of the visiting Colonials.

Continued good pitching and the awakening of the Gamecock bats spelled doom for GW as USC (8-3) took the series by scores of 6-0, 9-2 and 15-10.

In Friday's 6-0 win, All-SEC performer and staff ace Kip Bouknight threw a complete game three hitter. Bouknight (2-0) set a career high of 14 strikeouts [three shy of the school single-game record] while walking only one batter.

The Gaston native turned in his most dominant performance in his brief tenure with the Gamecocks.

"I felt pretty good, and just wanted to do what I could to help the team win," Bouknight said. They gave me the runs to work with and made all the plays in the field."

As for going the distance, Bouknight said he wasn't too concerned.

"I got a little tired, but that helped my slider by slowing it down," he said.

Head Coach Ray Tanner was singing the praises of his sophomore right-hander.

"Fourteen strikeouts, complete game, wow! That's a tremendous effort."

While Bouknight completely shut down the GW offense, the USC bats came alive with several timely hits. Tanner took tight control of the offense, utilizing the sacrifice bunt many times to advance runners.

"I don't like to bunt that much normally, but it put us in position to get

some runs," Tanner said. Tanner even coached third base, at the suggestion of assistant Jim Toman.

"Coach Toman said, 'Hey, we've been struggling, so let's mix things up.'"

All of the plans worked. Junior Brian Roberts, who went 2-for-3 with three RBIs, opened the game with a home run to left field for the second time this season.

The Gamecocks resumed their scoring in the fifth as Marcus McBeth (2-for-3, two runs scored) opened the inning with a walk.

After advancing to second on a wild pitch by Colonial starter Adam Bellicic (2-1), McBeth scored on a Nate Janowicz single to right.

USC tacked on three insurance runs in the eighth on a homer by Tim Angiolini and RBIs from Roberts and Tripp Kelly.

Saturday's 9-2 drubbing of GW was much of the same for the Gamecocks. Starter Randy Hadden (2-0) worked seven solid innings to pick up the win. Hadden allowed two runs (one earned) on eight hits, all while striking out four.

Strong relief appearances by Jamie Poston, Matt Wilson and Brett Price finished the final three innings on the mound.

At the plate, Roberts again started the show in the first inning. Roberts walked and scored on a Janowicz double.

Roberts went 2-for-2 and scored four times Saturday. Janowicz was equally potent at the plate, going 2-for-2 with five RBIs, and scoring three times.

"I'm just trying to see the ball all the way in and take it the other way," said Janowicz, a junior from California.

Two runs in the sixth and a four spot in the seventh provided the winning margin for USC.

The Gamecocks closed the series with a 15-10 outlasting of GW.

Despite a shaky outing by winning starting pitcher Peter Bauer (3-1), who allowed five runs on seven hits in his five innings of work, the USC bats more than made up for the difference.

The Gamecocks scored four runs in the first inning, one in the second, two in the third and four more in the sixth.

Leading the charge was catcher Marcos Rios, who went 5-for-5 with six RBIs. Rios doubled twice and homered in his top performance of the season.

"I really saw the ball well today," the junior from California said. "I got a couple pitches to hit, and I drove them."

Helping in the offensive outburst again was Janowicz, who was 3-for-4 with four runs scored. Both Janowicz and Angiolini extended their hitting streaks to 10 games.

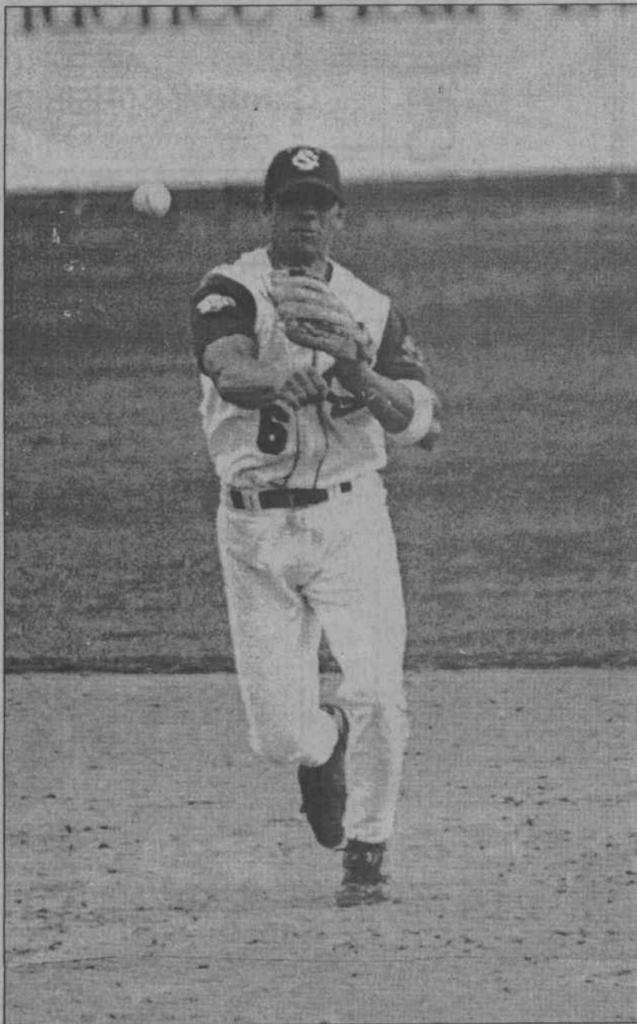
Roberts stole three bases, moving his total to 14 on the season.

Picking up the loss for GW was Thomas Baginski, who fell to 0-2.

Tanner said he was pleased with his team's play in the series sweep.

"We're happy to win three over a NCAA Tournament team like George Washington. We swung the bats better. I'm more encouraged, and we've come together to get back on track."

Up next for the Gamecocks is a Wednesday meeting with the Wofford Terriers, scheduled for 7 p.m. at Sarge Frye Field.



Sean Rayford Photo Editor

Gamecock shortstop Brian Roberts makes a throw to first base Sunday in Carolina's 15-10 win over George Washington.