

SEC AWARDS

Southeastern Conference champion Auburn dominated the 1999 SEC coaches' postseason awards, as coach Cliff Ellis was voted Coach of the Year. Tiger forward Chris Porter was selected SEC Player of the Year.

TRACK AND FIELD

The United States Track Association selected Gamecock track and field coach Curtis Frye as its Regional Indoor Coach of the Year.

Gamecock Sports

SCHEDULE

•Baseball vs. Duquesne, 3 p.m. today, Sarge Frye Field.
•Softball vs. Alabama, 3 p.m., and vs. Maryland, 5 p.m. today, at Tampa, Fla.

NATE SAYS...

Nate says the airplane Buddy Holly died in was the "American Pie," the title of the Don McLean song.

Friday, March 5, 1999

The Gamecock

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Spigner, Janowicz propel USC to win

by Todd Money
Sports Copy Editor

In a matchup of freshmen starting pitchers Wednesday, South Carolina's bats came alive early and fast, and the Gamecocks shredded Wofford, 13-3.

Chris Spigner, making his second collegiate start, got his first win in a Carolina uniform. The Hopkins native muted the Terriers (1-6), pitching five scoreless innings for the victory.

"It's a dream come true," Spigner said. "Everybody backed me up, they were loud, they stayed behind me the whole time. That's all I could ask for."

"For being a true freshman, [Spigner] was really good," USC coach Ray Tanner said. "He's had two good outings in a row now, and that's encouraging."

Wofford hurler George Lehr, making the first start of his college career, didn't have the same good fortune. Lehr was bombarded for nine runs, four of them earned, in just 3 2-3 innings.

Though there were two errors made behind him, Lehr certainly hurt his own cause, hitting three batters and walking two, throwing three wild pitches, and making an error himself.

The Gamecocks (9-3) took advantage, scoring 10 runs in the first four innings on just eight hits.

In the bottom half of the first, center fielder Nate Janowicz took a Lehr pitch high over the left center field wall for his second dinger of the season, a solo shot.

He wasn't done, though. Coming up again in the second with two outs and Shane Nelson on second and Clint Collins on third, Janowicz hit a hard single to left, scoring both runners.

"I'm just trying to let the ball get deep in on me, see it all the way in

and just try to cover it," Janowicz said afterward.

USC got another run in the third, when catcher Marcos Rios scored from second base on Terriers' shortstop Danny Slade's error. That made the score 5-0, Gamecocks.

The game wouldn't get out of hand until the fourth inning, however. After the Terriers failed to get past first base in the top half, the Gamecocks led off with Brian Roberts, who was hit by a pitch.

With Janowicz batting, Roberts stole second, his 18th swipe in 12 games, and then reached third on a wild pitch by Lehr.

After Janowicz walked, Roberts came home on a misplayed pickoff attempt that saw Janowicz seemingly caught between first and second.

Lehr muffed the ball when he went to cover first, however, letting Janowicz reach second and USC take a 6-0 lead.

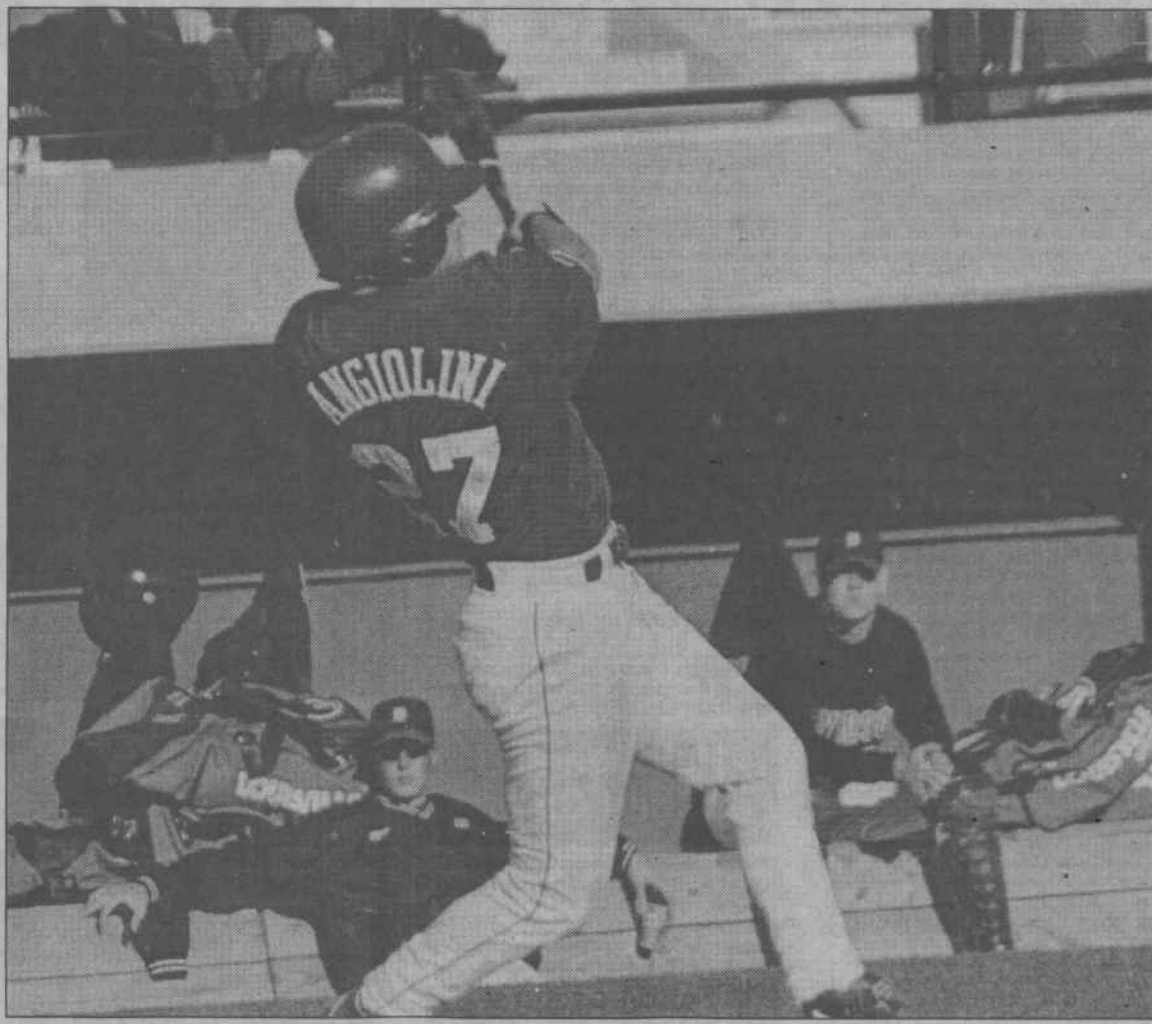
Adam Poe came up next for the home club, drawing another wild pitch from Lehr, which gave Janowicz third base.

After a sacrifice fly by Poe and a groundout by Tim Angiolini, Rios singled to left. Lehr walked Bryon Jeffcoat, the next batter, and was removed in favor of Irmo native B.J. Turner with Gamecocks on first and second and two out.

Turner didn't fare any better, walking the first batter he faced, Mic Knox, before Nelson singled home Rios and Jeffcoat.

When Carolina's Clint Collins brought home Knox with a liner up the middle, the score was 10-0, and many fans, likely fed up with the blustery winds and chilly temperature of the night, headed home.

Wofford got its first run of the game after a pair of consecutive throwing errors by USC third baseman Collins in the sixth.



Sean Rayford Photo Editor

Gamecock designated hitter Tim Angiolini is hitting more than .500 so far this season, with two home runs and 22 RBIs. USC's record is 9-3. The team will host Duquesne at 3 p.m. today.

Then, in the eighth, Gamecock pitcher Brett Kondro came on and got the first two outs before the Terriers struck for four hits and two more runs, making the score 10-3.

In the bottom half, USC added three runs, two of them on Nelson's second homer of the year and another when Jay Lambert scored from third

on a Tate Osterman wild pitch. Carolina's bullpen did well, just as it has most of the season, giving up two runs in four innings.

Also, Wofford's 1-2-3 hitters in the lineup went a combined 1-for-15 in the game, with eight strikeouts.

"We really swung the bats well, we got some runs on the board," Tan-

ner said. "I'm extremely pleased with our pitching staff."

Box Score

by inning	R	H	E			
WOFFORD	000	001	020	3	7	5
CAROLINA	131	500	03x	13	11	3

Winthrop looks to Charleston for NCAA Tournament advice

by Pete Iacobelli
Associated Press

With tickets to sell, hotels to book and tubas to tote maybe halfway across the country, athletics director Tom Hickman needed fast advice on Winthrop's first NCAA tournament appearance.

Who better to call than his counterpart at the College of Charleston, Jerry Baker?

"I want to get as much knowledge of this as I can," Hickman said, laughing. "We haven't gone through this a lot."

But the College of Charleston has.

When both Winthrop and Charleston locked up NCAA bids, some officials gladly deepened the relationship between the two schools since former Cougars assistant Gregg Marshall took over at Winthrop this past April.

Sort of like a big brother watching out for a little brother?

"In a sense, it is," Charleston assistant athletic director Tony Ciuffo said.

"We know they accomplished what they did without help from anyone. But I feel there's a relationship there," As does Hickman.

Since Winthrop won the Big South Conference tournament last Saturday, he essentially had to arrange four days and three nights for a party of players, coaches, officials, cheerleaders, band members and support staff traveling as close as Charlotte to as far away as Seattle.

Hickman had already called on Radford athletics director Greig Denny, whose Highlanders went to the NAAs last year.

Baker, traveling to Columbia, said Hickman came down in midseason and spent a day trailing Charleston officials and asking about how they run their sports programs.

Baker said they're glad to help Winthrop, but just as happy to help any school asking for guidance.

"We mostly get calls from schools looking to move to (NCAA) Division I," Baker said.



KRESSE MARSHALL

"They're looking around for those programs that have had success, and they call us."

Ciuffo had called on Winthrop sports information director Jack Frost earlier this week to offer congratulations.

But Frost picked Ciuffo's brain clean of all NCAA requirements and experiences before they hung up.

It has been a busy time for Frost and his staff.

CBS Sports is visiting campus to film stories and footage for its NCAA coverage. The Los Angeles Times will spend a week with the Eagles, Frost

said, for a diary of one of the tournament's longest shots.

Ciuffo has dealt with the onslaught every year since 1994, when Charleston made the first of its three previous NCAA appearances.

Then the Cougars were the tournament darlings whose coach, John Kresse, moved South from New York to lead a former NAIA club to the biggest dance in college basketball.

Marshall spent eight seasons on Kresse's staff.

He was an assistant on Charleston's first NCAA tournament team and keeps a painted, commemorative basketball on a high shelf behind his desk.

Marshall said one of the hardest things was calling Kresse in 1997 after the Marshall Thundering Herd, his new team, missed the NAAs while Charleston made it.

He said the emptiness was overwhelming. Now, both he and his mentor are in.

"It'd be wonderful if we were in the same place so Coach Kresse could come

in our locker room and I could go in his," Marshall said. "It'd be great."

Baker and Ciuffo say Charleston has rolled out its plan for NCAA arrangements.

There was such a lull, Baker was leaving the office for a few days before Sunday's bid party at the USS Yorktown.

"There's only so much you can go over," he said.

Meanwhile, Marshall and Winthrop have had trouble keeping focus just on basketball.

Practice on Wednesday started 30 minutes late because of all the cameras and reporters. "It was worse than media day," Frost said.

Hickman had to plan for NCAA football playoffs while an administrator at Ferrum (Va.) College between 1985-88.

That prepared him for some of the NCAA logistics rush, "but this has been fairly time consuming," he said.

USC begins series with Duquesne today

by Jared Kelowitz
Assistant Sports Editor

This afternoon, the USC men's baseball team begins a three-game series with Duquesne. The Gamecocks will host the Dukes as part of a 10-game homestand that won't end until the St. Patty's Day finale against Elon.

Today's contest at Sarge Frye Field will be Duquesne's first game of the 1999 campaign. Coach Mike Wilson puts a team on the field that includes one preseason All-American and eight returning starters. In all likelihood, the Dukes will make a run at the Atlantic 10 Conference title.

Junior B.J. Barns has rewritten the Duquesne record books in just two years. Last year, Barns, who both pitches and plays the outfield, hit a school-record 20 home runs, knocked in 58 RBIs, scored 55 runs and compiled 71 hits, while also leading the team with a .420 batting average.

Last season, the Dukes broke a school record with a tally of 22 wins and got their first-ever berth in the Atlantic 10 championship.

Stalls in an All-Atlantic 10 senior catcher who, with Barns and Swished, combined for 53 round-trippers, and was on the top three on the team in RBIs and batting average as well. Though the club is filled with great hitters, much of their success last season

could be attributed to their aggressiveness on the basepaths. The Dukes set team records in steals (85) and runs scored (326). USC catcher Marcos Rios should have his hands full with junior outfielder Rocky Kravetz, who was the team's leading larcenist a year ago, with 12 steals on 15 tries. Close at his heels

to back me, so I'm just gonna try and go as long as I can and do whatever's necessary to help the team."

So far this season, the Gamecocks have compiled a record of 9-3, with three starters recording at least two victories each.

Along with Bouknight, junior Randy Hadden and sophomore Peter Bauer have also helped to pick up the slack for the Gamecocks' offense. Hadden is 2-0 and has an ERA of 1.35, while Bauer, 3-1 on the season, is second on the team in strikeouts.

"Early on, there were a few games in which we did not hit well, but the pitchers picked their game up a notch and kept us in the games," coach Ray Tanner said. "The pitching staff has done great so far. I am extremely pleased with them."

The last few games, Carolina's bats have begun to wake up. USC swept George Washington last weekend with scores of 6-0, 9-2, and 15-10. Wednesday evening, the Gamecocks blew out Wofford 13-3. The leading hitter on the team so far is senior outfielder Tim Angiolini.

The Gamecocks' offensive arsenal is well-distributed, though, as the first seven hitters in Wednesday's lineup were batting over .300, with six of the seven clearing the .400 plateau.

"I really don't know what to expect today."

Kip Bouknight
USC Pitcher

was senior second baseman Jaime Pagone, thieving 10 bags on 13 attempts.

The man who will have the task of stopping this potent offense today is Kip Bouknight. Bouknight, arguably USC's best pitcher, is 2-0 on the season with a 1.00 ERA. "I really don't know what to expect today," Bouknight said.

"I guess I'll look at the scouting report and just try to make some good pitches. I know our defense will be there

SUNSHINE STATE-BOUND



Sean Rayford Photo Editor

The USC softball team made its debut in the 1999 USA Today poll for the first time this season at No. 13. The Lady Gamecocks enter today's game against Alabama in Tampa, Fla., at 13-4.

NASCAR hopes for closer racing in Las Vegas

by Mike Harris
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Mark Martin suspects it might be the same old thing, new rules or no new rules.

Martin won the inaugural Las Vegas 400 last March, leading a rout where Ford captured 13 of the top 14 places. NASCAR didn't like the look of that race — along with some others — and changed the aerodynamic rules before the last race of the season in hopes of evening out the competition.

But Martin, coming off a victory in Rockingham, N.C., says additional downforce won't necessarily make the Winston Cup series more competitive or bring slower cars closer to the front.

"The spoilers and air dams making better races is yet to be seen," he said. "I think you will be able to run side by side, where before it was difficult to do."

"If you had a 10th-place car at Las Vegas and everybody just put spoilers and air dams on, you'd still have a 10th-place car. So I think you've got to figure out how to get your car driving as good and going as fast as the guy that's leading."

But Rusty Wallace's crew chief thinks the move mandated by NASCAR before the final race last year to raise the rear spoilers and lower the front air dams — giving the cars more traction in the turns — could make the second Winston Cup trip to the Las Vegas Motor Speedway a memorable one.

"The likelihood of a driver being able to run away with the thing is not too great," Robin Pemberton said. "The tire grip and driver-control aspects really make me feel like this could be a race that they talk about for many months to come."

"We're all just hoping that it's us that they're doing the most talking about."

It won't take much for that to happen. Wallace finished third last year in the inaugural Las Vegas race, when Martin led a Ford sweep of the top seven positions.

"The new air dam and spoiler rules now in effect are going to make the competition really tight," Pemberton said. "The cars are going to be able to race two abreast and maybe even three abreast in some instances."

That might help the General Motors cars, badly outrun in Las Vegas and not much of a factor for most of 1998. The only Chevrolet to prosper last year was that of Winston Cup champion Jeff Gordon, a winner in a record-tying 13 of 33 races.

Bobby Labonte's Pontiac won twice, but there were only three more GM victories. Fords won the other 15 races.

"Hopefully, with the new spoiler rules, all the GM cars can be better," Gordon said. "I know the Fords haven't slowed up any."

Gordon is seeking to tie a record with his third straight championship and fourth overall. A year ago, he finished 17th on the 1 1/2-mile Las Vegas oval.

"It was just a matter of not being able to run the car competitively under the circumstances. We just weren't very good," he said.

This is the third event of the 34-race season. The first two races do not reflect what's in store at many tracks.

At Daytona International Speedway, where cars always run with power-robbing carburetor restrictor plates, Gordon won the season-opening Daytona 500. Chevys took four of the top five spots there.

At the Dura-Lube 400 two weeks ago at North Carolina Motor Speedway was perhaps a better example of the aerodynamic rules. Fords took four of the top five spots, but GM managed a top-10 split.

But speeds on that 1.017-mile oval are about 12 mph slower than those in Las Vegas, where downforce will be a bigger issue because the track is banked at just 12 degrees in the corners. At The Rock, the banking ranges from 22 to 25 degrees.

Gordon's crew chief, Ray Evernham, called the Las Vegas finish last year "embarrassing," and vowed a massive effort to solve the problem.

If he is to make a move toward the top of the standings, Gordon can't have another Rockingham. After winning at Daytona, he fell to 10 spots by finishing 39th at Rockingham — the victim of a rare Hendrick Motorsports occurrence, a blown engine. "Nobody who is competing for the championship can afford two bad races in a row," Gordon said. "We just hope we're as competitive in Las Vegas as we think we will be."