



- Men's soccer vs. U-17 Nationals, Wednesday
- Volleyball vs. North Carolina A&T, Sept. 1



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Unrealistic? Don't tell USC fans

After what seemed like the longest summer of my life, a new school year is finally here.

Every year, certain perpetual sights and sounds welcome students back to the capital city. What would a new school year at USC be like without ongoing construction to beautify the campus, or 600 sorority-girls-to-be strutting their stuff for a week, or the blazing, hot-as-(fill in the blank) sun baking our bodies and making sweat run down our faces?

With all of these Carolina traditions greeting us upon our arrival, one in particular seems to steal the show every year: unrealistic football expectations.

Carolina fans and students all seem to possess a certain biological gene that other schools' fans somehow lack. This gene combines all of the fanaticism of Carolina football with that of big-time SEC football. This, in turn, generates unearthly expectations for the upcoming football season at USC.

It's not uncommon to be sitting in a barber shop in Five Points and hear old guys there talk about how, with a little luck and a little coaching, along with some career years from players, USC has a chance to go 9-2 and maybe win a bowl game.

Students join in this time-honored tradition, as well. I've overheard people in the line at the Grand Marketplace talk about teams the Gamecocks "should beat."

"Dude, we'll beat N.C. State, we can beat Georgia, East Carolina can be beat," they say. "We'll lose to maybe Florida and Tennessee."

Talking up the football team is richer in tradition than the football program itself. If teams played at the level of fans' support and hopes, Carolina would be in the top five in the polls every year.

After 1998's debacle of a season, I was sure the talk would stop and people, myself included, would come to their senses and realize all USC needed to do to improve was win two games this season.

Alas, the arrival of one Lou Holtz trashed all those ideas. Enter the 11th winningest coach in college football history to stir up more talk. Every year seems to be the year Carolina football can make a name for itself. If Lou can't do it, I'll bet the farm and say no one ever will.

So, realistically, just how good or bad will Carolina be this year? Actually, things are looking up for the Gamecocks. USC returns only three starters on offense, six on defense. However, most of the players on the team earned a decent amount of playing time when they were thrown into the inferno that was last season, as the coaching staff went looking for answers.

In one of the few good coaching decisions of 1998, for example, coach Brad Scott used freshman quarterback Phil Petty in every game. Scott was preparing for the future, one that he, ironically, wouldn't be part of. Under offensive coordinator Skip Holtz's guidance, Petty can really blossom in the next three years.

The runningback position looks to have a lot of potential. With three Mr. Footballs in a stacked recruiting class — Andrew Pinnock from Connecticut, Ryan Brewer of Ohio, and homegrown Derek Watson — and a vastly improved Boo Williams, a star will stand.

Women's soccer wins scrimmage

SOCCER ROUNDUP

USC's women's soccer team defeated UNC Charlotte 6-2 in their only preseason scrimmage of the 1999 campaign.

The game was a rematch of last year's NCAA first-round contest, when the 49ers defeated the Gamecocks 2-0.

Carolina got on the board early in the first half on an Angela Austin corner kick. The 49ers answered with a goal by Emily Ulmer six minutes later.

Carolina took a 2-1 lead at the 15:42 mark with senior Leslie Lamb's first goal at forward.

Ten seconds later, UNCC tied the score when Carrie Hughes recorded her first collegiate goal. The Gamecocks then broke the tie for good with a 6-yard shot from senior Jennie Ondo.

Three other Gamecocks would go on to score goals in the second half to give Carolina the win.

Basketball schedule an eye-opener

BASKETBALL ROUNDUP

The last USC men's basketball schedule of the millennium has been released. The schedule for the 1999-2000 season features at least 19 games against teams that participated in postseason action last year. As part of the 29-game slate, Carolina will participate in the prestigious Puerto Rico Shootout.

The Gamecock hoopsters' first 2-1-2 weeks of action should serve as an immediate test for this year's squad.

The field in the Puerto Rico Shootout includes the likes of Michigan State, Texas, Providence, DePaul, Arizona State, American University-Puerto Rico and USC's first-round opponent, Virginia.

After the holidays, the Gamecocks will face five teams consecutively who made NCAA tournament appearances last season. Those include Tennessee, Kentucky,

1999-00 Gamecock Basketball Schedule

Home games in ALL CAPS; * denotes SEC games

Nov. 3	COURT AUTHORITY (exh.)	Jan. 15	KENTUCKY*
Nov. 10	LITHUANIA (exh.)	Jan. 19	Auburn*
Nov. 19	WOFFORD	Jan. 22	Georgia*
Nov. 21	THE CITADEL	Jan. 26	VANDERBILT*
Nov. 25-27	Puerto Rico Shootout	Jan. 29	Tennessee*
Nov. 30	CHAS. SOUTHERN	Feb. 2	FLORIDA*
Dec. 4	FURMAN	Feb. 5	Kentucky*
Dec. 16	Clemson	Feb. 9	Ole Miss*
Dec. 18	CAMPBELL	Feb. 16	MISSISSIPPI STATE*
Dec. 21	St. Joseph's (Pa.)	Feb. 19	ALABAMA*
Dec. 28	UNC CHARLOTTE	Feb. 23	LOUISIANA STATE*
Dec. 30	S.C. STATE	Feb. 26	GEORGIA*
Jan. 5	TENNESSEE*	March 1	Florida*
Jan. 8	Arkansas*	March 4	Vanderbilt*
Jan. 13	SYRACUSE	March 9-12	SEC Tournament (Atlanta, Ga.)

BRAD WALTERS GAMECOCK GRAPHICS

Arkansas, Syracuse and Auburn, four of which are conference opponents.

"Last year, I said prior to the season that I may have overscheduled that team, and that proved to be true to a certain extent," coach Eddie Fogler said.

"This year, especially with such a young team, our schedule will certainly prove to be demanding."

Carolina opens its regular season Friday, Nov. 19, hosting in-state rival Wofford.

Before they set out for Puerto Rico, the Gamecocks will host The Citadel. Upon their return, the USC men will conclude their November schedule with a home game against Charleston Southern.

The next game against an in-state rival will come Dec. 4, when Carolina battles the Furman Paladins at Frank McGuire Arena.

On Dec. 16, USC will meet the Clemson Tigers at Clemson.

Sixteen of the Gamecocks' 29 games are against SEC opponents, 12 of which were invited to postseason tournaments last season.

The Gamecocks will conclude their season with the SEC tournament, March 9-12 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, Ga.

Columbia over L.A. no-brainer for Gamecocks' new shortstop

BY JEFF ROMIG
SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

When Brian Roberts signed with the Baltimore Orioles after being selected as the 50th overall pick in the June 2 baseball draft, USC suddenly found itself without its shortstop and lead-off hitter.

Both of those roles were filled last Thursday, when top USC recruit Drew Meyer attended his first class as a freshman. Meyer was selected by the Los Angeles Dodgers with the 83rd pick in the draft, but the two sides were never in the same ballpark on contract matters. To Meyer, though, it wasn't about how much he could make.

"It's not a matter of money," Meyer said. "It's a matter of setting myself up financially, so I'll be satisfied for my life. Suppose I sign and break my arm, get in a car accident or just don't succeed? Then I'm stuck with no college experience, no memories from college and no education."

Meyer had a good idea he would be a Gamecock, even on draft day. "When they drafted me, I had it set in my mind that they weren't going to come up with the offer," Meyer said. "I haven't been counting on going pro. It was kind of like a storybook, and I already knew the ending."

It wasn't so cut-and-dry for the Dodgers. In mid-July, the organization sent its top representative to Charleston to meet with the Meyer family.

Meyer was out with some friends when his mother, Carol, called to let him know whom he would be meeting with. "She said, 'Hey, Tommy Lasorda's coming to the house on Monday.' I was like, 'Wow! Who? Say that again,'" Meyer said.

When the situation actually came to a head, Meyer was still a bit in awe. "We were all sitting in the den, and the next thing we knew, the doorbell rings, and we see him," Meyer said. "You're looking at him, and you're thinking Slim Fast commercials and video games. It's hard to realize that he's actually in your living room telling you jokes."

But the jokes had to end eventually. "That's when we saw the next side of Tommy Lasorda — the negotiating side. It was pretty serious," Meyer said. Could you say no to Tommy Lasorda? Essentially, that's what Meyer did.

The Meyer family told the Dodgers that Drew wouldn't sign for the \$667,000 the club's first-round pick, Jason Repko, another high school shortstop, had agreed to. That move surprised the Dodgers.

"That took them aback," said Meyer's father, Frank. "They said it would be difficult to offer their second pick more than they offered their first pick. They said that wouldn't work."

USC Head Baseball Coach Ray Tanner knew that if he was going to get Meyer, he'd have to deal with this whole recruiting process.

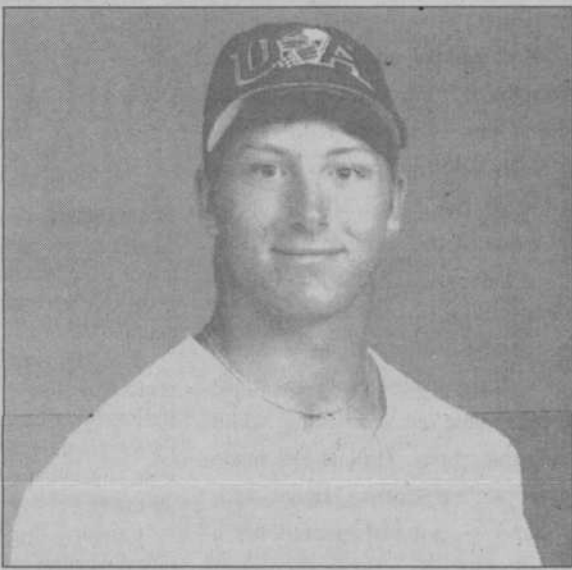
"I've always felt that he is going to be an impact player," Tanner said. "He hustles hard. He hustles on and off the field. He's talented."

As it looks now, the Dodgers made their choice, and for the next three baseball seasons, Tanner's Gamecocks will benefit from it. "He does all the things that it takes to be an impact player, and he's been successful," Tanner said.

And he has been — at every level. At Bishop England High School, Meyer's teams won two state championships. He then won a state legion championship in 1998, and this summer he traveled to Taiwan with the USA junior national team, starting for the squad and bringing home a gold medal. "My next two goals are a College World Series championship and a Major League World Series," Meyer said.

Judging from his track record to this point, Meyer's goals could very well become reality. Tanner can look forward to just penciling Meyer into his lineup each day and looking for good things to follow.

"We signed him to come in and play shortstop every day," Tanner said. "As good as he is, he's coming into a great league and he'll be a freshman. I'm not worried in the least about how he'll perform."



DREW MEYER'S CAREER STATS

Year	BA	AB	RS	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
1995	.468	64	12	30	7	1	0	10	5	7	8
1996	.373	119	41	44	10	3	3	29	18	15	22
1997	.500	106	53	53	13	3	7	32	22	15	27
1998	.456	103	53	47	8	4	7	31	25	10	33
1999	.493	69	45	34	11	2	8	19	26	1	27
Totals	.451	461	204	208	49	13	25	121	96	48	117

THE SLATE

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Eastern Division	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Str
Atlanta	77	49	.611	-	7-3	W-4
New York	76	49	.608	.5	7-3	L-1
Philadelphia	65	58	.528	10.5	3-7	L-1
Montreal	50	73	.407	25.5	5-5	L-3
Florida	50	73	.407	25.5	3-7	L-2

Central Division

Houston	75	50	.600	-	6-4	W-2
Cincinnati	73	49	.598	.5	7-3	W-2
St. Louis	63	62	.504	12	6-4	W-1
Pittsburgh	61	63	.492	13.5	4-6	L-2
Milwaukee	55	67	.451	18.5	3-7	L-3
Chicago	52	70	.426	21.5	2-8	L-1

West Division

Arizona	72	52	.581	-	7-3	W-2
San Francisco	64	59	.520	7.5	6-4	W-4
Los Angeles	56	68	.452	16	5-5	W-1
Colorado	56	70	.444	17	7-3	W-1
San Diego	55	69	.444	17	3-7	L-4

WILD CARD RACE

American League

Oakland	68	56	.548	6	7-3	W-2
Boston	67	56	.545	8	5-5	L-3
Toronto	66	60	.524	10.5	1-9	L-2
Seattle	60	62	.492	13	6-4	L-2
Chicago	59	64	.480	16.5	7-3	L-1
Baltimore	55	68	.447	20	5-5	W-1
Tampa Bay	55	69	.444	20.5	8-2	W-4

National League

Atlanta	77	49	.611	-	7-3	W-4
Cincinnati	73	49	.598	.5	7-3	W-2
Philadelphia	65	58	.528	10.5	3-7	L-1
San Francisco	64	59	.520	7.5	6-4	W-4
St. Louis	63	62	.504	12	6-4	W-1
Pittsburgh	61	63	.492	13.5	4-6	L-2
Milwaukee	55	67	.451	18.5	3-7	L-3
Colorado	56	70	.444	17	7-3	W-1

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Eastern Division	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10	Str
New York	75	48	.610	-	5-5	W-1
Boston	67	56	.545	8	5-5	L-3
Toronto	66	60	.524	10.5	1-9	L-2
Baltimore	55	68	.447	20	5-5	W-1
Tampa Bay	55	69	.444	20.5	8-2	W-4

Central Division

Cleveland	75	47	.615	-	7-3	W-3
Chicago	59	64	.480	16.5	7-3	L-1
Minnesota	51	71	.418	24	3-7	L-1
Kansas City	49	74	.398	26.5	3-7	L-3
Detroit	48	74	.393	27	4-6	W-1

West Division

Texas	74	50	.597	-	6-4	W-2
Oakland	68	56	.548	6	7-3	W-2
Seattle	60	62	.492	13	6-4	L-2
Anaheim	50	72	.410	23	4-6	L-1

SUNDAY'S TOP NEWS

• McGwire hits 50th home run; Cardinals split double-header with Mets

• Braves' Maddux chips bone in pitching wrist Saturday, could miss next start

• Hingis ends Seles' dominance, takes du Maurier Open in tennis

• David Gossett wins golf's U.S. Amateur Championship

• Dennis Rodman released from jail after being arrested on investigation of public intoxication

NASCAR PEPSI 400, MICHIGAN SPEEDWAY, BROOKLYN, MICH.

BY HARRY ATKINS
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BROOKLYN, Mich. — Bobby Labonte figured nobody was going to beat Dale Earnhardt.

But after watching Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon wear out one another in a tremendous duel for the lead late in the NASCAR Pepsi 400, Labonte shot past both of them Sunday for his fourth victory of the season.

"It was pretty awesome," said Labonte, who started 19th in the field at Michigan Speedway. "If you didn't clear both of them, you knew you were going to be in trouble."

Labonte decided to go for it on lap 183, diving low into the first turn.

"We kept trying that move a few times," Labonte said. "Jeff and Dale were awful strong there, and I couldn't get by them."

It was Labonte's third Winston Cup win at the 2-mile superspeedway in Michigan's Irish Hills region, where a crowd estimated at 153,532 looked on.

Unlike the June race at Michigan, when points leader Dale Jarrett won easily in a caution-free race, there was plenty of bumping and grinding which yielded six cautions for 26 laps.

The sixth and final caution came on lap 162, when rookie Tony Stewart tapped Jeff Burton, causing him to spin out and hit the wall past turn. When the race was restarted five laps later, it was a fierce battle to the finish.

"When you get side-by-side to the corner, you just don't go as fast," Labonte said. "So we got back in line behind Jeff, and he and Dale got together. I got low. The next thing you know I had a run down the front straightaway."

Labonte remained third in the standings.