

Nothing short of a regional will do for 2000 Gamecocks

BY JEFF ROMIG
SPORTS EDITOR

The goal is set.

Anything less than a berth in a regional will be a let down for the USC baseball team that sufficiently filled its holes from last year.

Brian Roberts leaves a void at shortstop. Drew Meyer, the Los Angeles Dodgers' second-round pick in last year's draft, steps in.

Infielder Jay Lambert is graduated.

John McHenry brings a .425 average and 40 stolen bases from Cerra Coso Junior College in California to second base.

Brandon Pack solidifies a shaky catching slot with good defense and a .360 JC average.

Chris Plummer brings solid JC credentials to the hot corner, as does Brennan Dees to right field.

When combined with a pitching staff that's considered to be the strongest piece of USC's puzzle, anything less than the goal set will be missing the mark for the 2000 Gamecocks.

"I came here with hopes of going far in the playoffs," Meyer said. "I think we've got the pitching to do it, and I think we've got the team to do it."

Kip Bouknight thinks the team's unity will play a major role in its success.

"Obviously, Carolina fans have noticed Carolina basketball," Bouknight said. "Why are they a little bit different this year? I'm a fan, and I go watch. I see unity there. I see guys going out there

and hustling-diving on the floor. Well, that's kind of how we are."

Coach Ray Tanner said he's pleased with the team he'll be fielding this spring.

"I like this team," Tanner said. "There's a lot of kids on this team who have been around for a little bit, and I think that's going to make a difference for us. I'm hoping that in the course of this season that experience and maturity is going to make a lot of difference."

Tanner's pitching rotation will be an integral part in any success the Gamecocks might have.

"Certainly on paper, pitching seems to be where we're strongest," Tanner said. "We lost Randy Hadden and Jason Pomar, but other than that, everybody's back and has some experience. I think our pitchers are good enough that they can give us a chance to win everyday."

Bouknight will be Tanner's No. 1 starter, coming off a 7-4 record with a 3.86 ERA.

He will be followed by fellow junior Peter Bauer, who was 5-3 in 1999.

"Kip has done a tremendous job since day one of his freshman year," Tanner said. "Pete had a great year his freshman year and a lot of experience last year. They're certainly as experienced as you can have in college baseball as juniors."

Sophomore Chris Spigner, who was undefeated in 1999 at 3-0, will be third in the rotation, and JC transfer Ernie Bascuas (8-3, 3.00 ERA in 1999) is the leading candidate to be the Gamecocks' fourth starter.

Tanner is as high on his pitching staff as he is on Meyer, whose decision to pass up Dodger blue to come to college came down to the wire.

"Any time you can get a player that good to come to school, it certainly means so much to your program," Tanner said. "He's a freshman and I expect him to have some bumps along the way, but he certainly has the talent to step in and play."

Sophomore Trey Dyson, who also started for most of his freshman year, knows what adjustments have to be made from the high school level to the Southeastern Conference.

"One thing about Drew is he's definitely not scared," Dyson said. "He's going to come out here and play as hard as he can everyday. I think he's adjusted pretty well."

Dyson returns at first base, as does Shane Nelson in left field. Marcus McBeth, who also saw time as a freshman, will be Tanner's everyday center fielder.

USC also welcomes back outfielder Nate Janowicz, who led the team in hitting for much of the season last year and anchored a solid defense. Janowicz, one of the few seniors, will be competing with newcomer Dees for a starting spot.

The Gamecocks will begin the new season today with the start of a two-game series against Charleston Southern at Sarge Frye Field. The first pitch is scheduled for 3 p.m.

2000 USC Baseball Schedule

February
4 Charleston Southern 3 p.m.
5 Charleston Southern 1:30 p.m.

Franklin Life Classic (Charleston, SC)
11 Old Dominion 1:30 p.m.
12 East Carolina 5 p.m.
13 The Citadel 5 p.m.

18 Delaware State 3 p.m.
19 Delaware State 1:30 p.m.
20 Delaware State 1:30 p.m.
22 Campbell 3 p.m.
25 College of Charleston 3 p.m.
26 College of Charleston 1:30 p.m.
27 College of Charleston 1:30 p.m.

March
3 Radford 3 p.m.
4 Radford 1:30 p.m.
5 Radford 1:30 p.m.
8 Furman 7 p.m.
10 at Auburn 7 p.m.
11 at Auburn 3 p.m.
12 at Auburn 2:30 p.m.
14 UNC Asheville 7 p.m.
17 Florida 7 p.m.
18 Florida 4 p.m.
19 Florida 1:30 p.m.
22 Wofford 7 p.m.
24 at Louisiana State 8 p.m.
25 at Louisiana State 5 p.m.
26 at Louisiana State 2 p.m.
28 at College of Charleston 7 p.m.
29 Elon 7 p.m.
31 Alabama 7 p.m.

April
1 Alabama 4 p.m.
2 Alabama 1:30 p.m.
5 The Citadel 7 p.m.
7 Mississippi State 7 p.m.
8 Mississippi State 3 p.m.
9 Mississippi State 1:30 p.m.
12 at Clemson 7:15 p.m.
14 at Vanderbilt 8 p.m.
15 at Vanderbilt 3 p.m.
16 at Vanderbilt 2 p.m.
18 Davidson 7 p.m.
19 Clemson 7 p.m.
21 at Kentucky 6 p.m.
22 at Kentucky 2 p.m.
23 at Kentucky 2 p.m.
26 at UNC Asheville 3 p.m.
28 Georgia 7 p.m.
29 Georgia 4 p.m.
30 Georgia 1:30 p.m.

May
5 at Arkansas 7:30 p.m.
6 at Arkansas 7:30 p.m.
7 at Arkansas 2 p.m.
10 at Duke 1 p.m.
12 Tennessee 7 p.m.
13 Tennessee 4 p.m.
14 Tennessee 1:30 p.m.
17 at SEC Tournament (Birmingham, Ala.)
18 at SEC Tournament (Birmingham, Ala.)
19 at SEC Tournament (Birmingham, Ala.)
20 at SEC Tournament (Birmingham, Ala.)
21 at SEC Tournament (Birmingham, Ala.)
26 NCAA Regionals
27 NCAA Regionals
28 NCAA Regionals

June
2-4 NCAA Super Regionals
9-17 College World Series (Omaha, Neb.)

2000 South Carolina Baseball Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	B-T	Ht.	Wt.	Class	Hometown (HighSchool/College)
1	Chris Plummer	3B	R-R	6-0	186	Jr.	Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. (Okaloosa-Walton JC)
2	Nate Janowicz	OF	L-L	5-10	183	Sr.	Atascadero, Calif. (Cuesta JC)
3	Matt Riddle	OF	L-L	5-9	174	Fr.	W. Columbia, SC (Brookland-Cayce)
4	Brett Price	P	L-L	5-10	155	So.	Batesburg, SC (Batesburg-Leesville)
6	Jamie Poston	P	R-R	5-11	174	Sr.	Lugoff, SC (Lugoff-Elgin)
7	Drew Meyer	SS	L-R	5-11	183	Fr.	Charleston, SC (Bishop England)
8	Marcus McBeth	OF	R-R	6-1	172	So.	Enoree, SC (Woodruff)
9	Marcos Rios	C	R-R	5-10	185	Sr.	Hayward, Calif. (Chabot JC)
10	Clint Collins	P	R-R	6-0	203	Jr.	Bamberg, SC (Bamberg-Ehrhardt)
12	Brennan Dees	OF	R-R	5-10	177	Jr.	Montgomery, Ala. (Chipola JC)
13	Steven Bondurant	P	L-L	6-0	166	Fr.	Matthews, NC (Providence Day)
14	Kip Bouknight	P	R-R	6-0	201	Jr.	Gaston, SC (Brookland-Cayce)
15	Steve Thomas	INF	R-R	5-11	169	So.	Tampa, Fla. (Plant)
17	Trey Dyson	1B	L-L	6-4	220	So.	Columbia, SC (Spring Valley)
18	Bryon Jeffcoat	INF	R-R	6-1	189	Jr.	W. Columbia, SC (Lexington)
19	Rico Bravo	C	L-R	6-1	203	Fr.	Evans, Ga. (Lakeside)
20	John Wesley	P	R-R	6-6	225	So.	Westbury, NY (Brevard JC)
21	Brandon Pack	C	S-R	6-3	212	Jr.	Salt Lake City, Utah (Cypress JC)
22	Jeremy Plexico	P	L-L	6-4	196	Fr.	Chapin, SC (Chapin)
23	Lee Gronkiewicz	P	R-R	5-11	183	Sr.	Lancaster, SC (Spartanburg Methodist JC)
25	Chris Spigner	P	R-R	6-1	202	So.	Columbia, SC (Cardinal Newman)
26	Tim Whittaker	C	R-R	5-11	207	Jr.	Conway, SC (Conway)
27	John McHenry	2B	R-R	5-10	174	Jr.	Sparks, Nev. (Carra Cosa JC)
29	Shane Nelson	OF	L-L	6-1	205	Sr.	McIntyre, Ga. (Young Harris JC)
32	Ernie Bascuas	P	R-R	6-1	187	Jr.	Miami, Fla. (Lake City JC)
34	Steven Whetstone	P	R-R	6-5	177	So.	W. Columbia, SC (Brookland-Cayce)
36	Scott Barber	P	R-R	6-4	203	Jr.	Belton, SC (Belton-Honea Path)
38	Peter Bauer	P	R-R	6-7	247	Jr.	Silver Spring, Md. (Paint Branch)
41	Bo Mobley	C	R-R	5-11	224	Fr.	Waverly Hall, Ga. (Columbus)
43	Tripp Kelly	1B	R-R	6-2	221	Jr.	Florence, SC (W. Florence)
46	Matt Wilson	P	R-R	6-0	183	So.	Belvedere, SC (North Augusta)



SEAN RAYFORD GAMECOCK SPORTS

Peter Bauer will be the Gamecocks No. 2 starter. Bauer was 5-3 with a 5.09 ERA in 1999.