



GAMECOCK SPORTS SCHEDULE

- Baseball vs. Clemson, 7 p.m. Wednesday
- Baseball at Georgia, 6:30 p.m. Friday
- Men's and women's golf at SEC Tournament, Friday-Sunday
- Softball vs. Florida, 7:30 p.m. Saturday

Kraft to transfer, but rest of team to stand by Odom



Special to The Gamecock

Travis Kraft won't be on the sidelines for USC next season.

■ Eidson coming back next semester

BY KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

When Eddie Fogler resigned last month, next season's men's basketball roster became very uncertain. Rumors of players transferring or leaving for the NBA swirled around Columbia.

Many players were taking a "wait and see" approach, waiting to see who the next coach would be, and then deciding if they felt they belonged.

After new coach Dave Odom met with each player individually Friday, only one player, Travis Kraft, expressed a desire to transfer. Odom announced Saturday that the sophomore forward would leave the Gamecocks after this semester to move closer his home in Mayville, N.D.

"Travis Kraft came to me Friday and explained his personal situation would be

best served by relocating back to North Dakota," Odom said.

Kraft wasn't in the "wait and see" category, according to Odom.

"It is apparent to me that his decision was made prior to my arrival at South Carolina," he said. "I respect his situation and his family's wishes, and we will do everything we can to aid in his transfer to another program."

Other players, including Chuck Eidson, were said to be thinking seriously about leaving the team, but Odom said Kraft was the only one who mentioned transferring. Odom met with Eidson and his parents last week and came out confident Eidson would be in the gamut and black next season.

"I think everything is going to work out so that he'll be back at the University of South Carolina," Odom told *The State*. "I do not have any fear that that will not occur."

"I have told him and his parents I want him here. I know his teammates

want him here. In his heart of hearts, he wants to be here. I know that. We're going to work diligently to make that happen."

Pat Eidson, Chuck's father, confirmed that statement to the newspaper last Wednesday.

"Right now, he's planning on going to USC," Pat Eidson said. "We were very impressed with Coach Odom."

Eidson, who set a school record his freshman season for steals and was named to the SEC All-Freshman team, tore his ACL against Vanderbilt and missed the second half of his sophomore season. He left USC for the rest of the semester to rehabilitate at his home in Summerville, and that departure was what initially sparked transfer rumors.

In losing Kraft, the Gamecocks lose one of their best pure shooters. Kraft's smooth jump shot won one game this season, a home game in January against Florida. The sophomore came into the game for the first time with a little more than a second left and drilled the game-

winning 3-pointer from more than 25 feet, sending the Carolina Coliseum into a frenzy.

When healthy, his shot could stretch the best of defenses. Unfortunately, that was rarely the case in his first two seasons as a Gamecock. This past season, a foot injury limited Kraft to only four games, and he earned limited playing time in each. He averaged 3.6 points and 1.0 rebounds over 29 games in two years.

When Odom arrived at USC, he said he wanted the players to give him a chance, and it looks as if the team has done that by staying. A solid nucleus of players has seemed to buy into the new coach, and that can only mean good things for the Gamecocks, who return four starters from last season and lose only two players to graduation.

The sports desk can be reached at gamecocksports@hotmail.com

Odom brings in a pair of assistants

FROM STAFF REPORTS

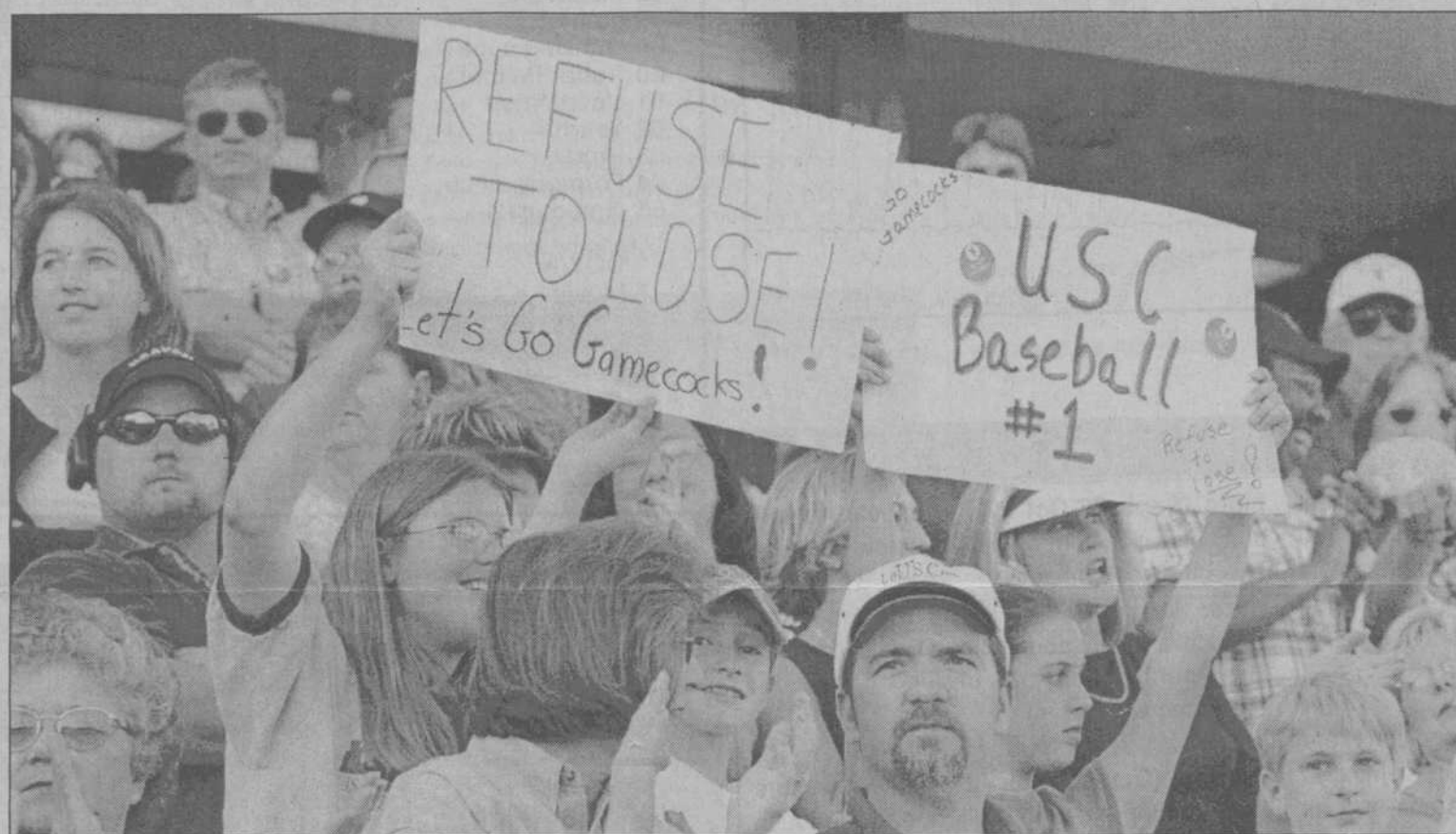
USC men's basketball head coach Dave Odom announced Monday the additions of Frank Haith and Barry Sanderson to the Gamecock coaching staff.

"I'm pleased to announce that Frank Haith and Barry Sanderson have accepted my invitation to join our staff at South Carolina," said Odom, who was named Carolina's 30th basketball coach April 10 after a 12-year tenure as the head coach at Wake Forest. "They are great coaches and even better human beings. Our players and our fans will enjoy getting to know them, and I expect they will quickly become very much a part of the University of South Carolina and the basketball family."

Haith just completed his fifth season on Odom's staff at Wake Forest, where he served the past four years (1998-2001), as well as on Odom's first staff (1990-91). A 1988 graduate of Elon College, Haith has held assistant coaching positions at his alma mater, UNC Wilmington, Texas A&M and Penn State. He has been part of six postseason teams in his coaching tenure.

Sanderson joined Wake Forest prior to last season and is a 1990 graduate of the University of Alabama. He has been an assistant coach at Arkansas-Little Rock, East Carolina, Lipscomb and Wake Forest in his coaching career, also serving as a student assistant at Alabama and a graduate assistant at Texas A&M and Georgia. Sanderson is the son of legendary coach Wimp Sanderson and the brother of Scott Sanderson, who graduated from South Carolina and played in 114 games from 1981-84.

Odom said that an announcement regarding the remaining staff positions will be made as soon as possible.



Sean Rayford/The Gamecock

Clemson will come in to rowdy Sarge Frye Field tonight to take on the Gamecocks. The Tigers won the last meeting of the two, 7-4.

USC in need of some breaks

BY KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

Any head coach will tell you that sometimes it takes a little more than talent and hard work to win games. Sometimes you need a few lucky breaks along the way.

While last year's Gamecock baseball team certainly had all of the above, this year's squad has seen little go their way at crucial moments during the season.

Case in point: last weekend's series at Mississippi State. The Gamecocks, fresh off a 6-2 win against the Bulldogs this past Friday, lost two heartbreakers on Saturday and Sunday by one run each.

On Saturday, USC fell 4-3 in 11 innings, and on Sunday, a three-run home run in

the bottom of the ninth by MSU's Jon Knott erased a two-run Carolina lead for an 8-7 Bulldogs win.

"It seems like every game we got into last year that was in the balance, we found a way to win," USC head coach Ray Tanner said. "It just seemed like it happened game after game after game. We just won so much."

At this point last season, the Gamecocks were rolling along at 36-4 and were atop the SEC standings. Now, they're 29-11 and sitting at .500 in the SEC with a 9-9 record. They've also lost their last three conference series and seven of their last nine conference games.

"We just haven't got a lot of the good breaks like we did last year," shortstop Drew Meyer said. "Last year, everything

was going our way, and this year, it's just the opposite. From now on, I guess we've got to make our breaks and quit expecting them just to come to us."

The No. 16 Gamecocks will have a chance to start turning things around tonight when they take on No. 12 Clemson (25-13) at Sarge Frye Field. It will be the third meeting between the rivals this season. USC blew out the Tigers 21-8 in the first meeting at Doug Kingsmore Stadium on March 3, but Clemson rebounded the next day to take down the Gamecocks 7-4 at Sarge Frye.

"It could be a big win for us," Meyer said of tonight's game. "It can be an energy boost for us, because right now, we're kind of down, and we're looking for things to build on. A win versus



CLEMSON AT USC

■ LOCATION: Sarge Frye Field

■ TIME: 7 p.m. Wednesday

Clemson would definitely do that."

Tanner agrees that a win tonight would do wonders for the Gamecocks' confidence going into a crucial three-

CLEMSON SEE PAGE 11

Baseball America's NCAA Top 25

1. Stanford
2. LSU
3. Nebraska
4. Rice
5. Notre Dame
6. Miami (FL)
7. Florida St.
8. Southern Cal
9. Ga. Tech
10. CS-Fullerton
11. Tulane
12. Clemson
13. Pepperdine
14. Tennessee
15. Arizona St.
16. USC
17. Central Fla.
18. Ole Miss
19. East Carolina
20. Baylor
21. S. Alabama
22. Stetson
23. Wake Forest
24. Texas
25. Miss. St.

Softball splits games with Furman

BY KYLE ALMOND
THE GAMECOCK

When the USC softball team dropped the first game of a doubleheader against Furman Tuesday night, it marked the team's third straight defeat. The Gamecocks had lost the last two games of a three-game series against Kentucky this past weekend.

However, the Gamecocks (31-15-1) was once again able to turn to freshman hurler Stacey Johnson to pull themselves out of their slump.

Johnson pitched a one-hit shutout in the second game of the doubleheader at Beckham Field, and the No. 19 Gamecocks were able to regain their winning edge with a 4-0 blanking of the Paladins (22-22).

Johnson has become a reliable source of efficiency for Carolina on the mound this season. With Tuesday night's win, she improved her record

to a team-best 16-4. She also added six strikeouts in the winning effort.

"[The win] was needed for our team in general as a booster," Johnson said. "Once you get into a losing streak, it's hard to get out of it, and I think it was good for us to jump on them early."

USC, after being trounced 1-0 in game one despite 14 strikeouts from Megan Matthews, got its offense going quickly in game two. Third baseman Adrianna Baggetta hit an RBI single in the first inning to score Megan Donohoo and give Carolina an early advantage.

"It's always good to get that insurance run," Johnson said after the game.

That run was all she would need. Donohoo added another RBI, and errors by the Paladins would bring in two more runs, but it wouldn't have mattered; Johnson had Furman's offense at her mercy.

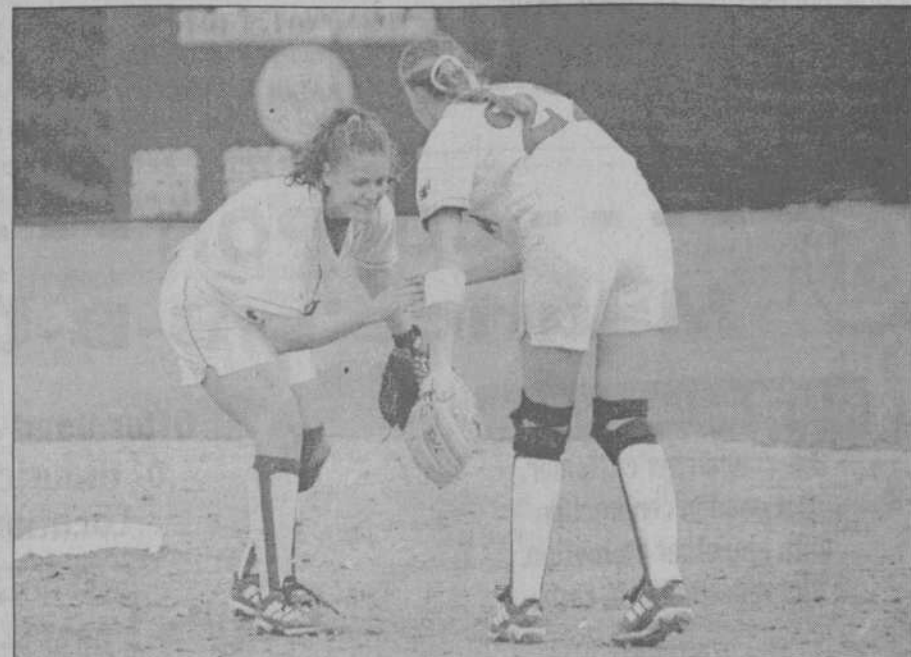
Despite her impressive record, Johnson is still waiting to pitch her best game.

"I still don't think I've thrown my best game yet, and I just hope to keep on improving," she said.

Baggetta finished 3-for-3 in the second game with a run scored and thinks the win will give the team confidence for its upcoming series with SEC East rival Florida. The Gamecocks have a steady lead in the division standings, but the Gators are right behind USC in the No. 2 spot and could threaten to move up with a couple of wins this weekend.

"I think this game will help us build (momentum)," Baggetta said. "It was important to get the first [win], it will get us on the right track."

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Aaron Hark/The Gamecock

Gamecocks Amber Curtis (left) and Debralee Troesh congratulate each other after a big play during a game against Tennessee earlier this season.