

A look back at the year that was



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As much as I can't wait for the school year to end, there's one thing I'm going to miss more than anything: covering Gamecock sports on a daily basis. This year has been one of USC's best, and to experience it as sports editor of *The Gamecock* is something I'll never forget. It's truly been an honor. I will be passing the torch next semester, but I hope I've made *Gamecock Sports* a more readable, informative page than when I started. I also hope you've had a few laughs along the way.

Since August, I've worked my tail off to breathe new life into the section. My grades have suffered, my social life has seriously decreased, my vision is all but gone and I have carpal tunnel syndrome, but I think it was well worth it. We don't have the manpower or the resources to compete with *The State*, but considering what we have, I think we did a pretty money job. And judging by the lack of hate mail, you agree. Thanks.

Anyway, it's been a pretty memorable year for the Gamecocks, and I'm going to use my final column to look back at the year that was (and still is, for a few teams). Here are my Shiznit Awards for excellence in USC sports:

Male Gamecock of the Year: Phil Petty — Football

This one might come as a shock to most, but hear me out. I understand the defense was a big reason the football team

kicked so much tail this season, but last year, when we were 0-11, we had a good defense, too. When the offense turned around, the record turned around, and Petty deserves most of the credit for that. He had great talent around him, but his ability to protect the football and run the system efficiently was remarkable. He handled himself with class the whole way through, and he did the most with the least as far as raw talent goes. I never thought I would say this, but Petty has proved himself to be indispensable at the quarterback position.

Honorable mentions: Kalimba Edwards - Football, Jordan Quinn - Soccer, Guillaume Legat - Tennis

Female Gamecock of the Year: Demetria Washington — Track and Field

This was a competitive category, but Washington has proven herself worthy with her dominance indoors and outdoors for the Gamecocks. She won the NCAA indoor title in the 400 meters and added a second championship as the anchor leg of USC's 4x400-meter relay team. She was a three-time All-American, also qualifying in the 200. As the outdoor season continues, Washington continues to impress. Look for more NCAA titles when this season draws to a close.

Honorable mentions: Cally Plummer - Volleyball, Joyce McMillin - Softball, Teresa Geter - Basketball

Male Newcomer of the Year: Otukile Lekote — Track and Field

The freshman from Botswana isn't just one of the nation's best — he's one of the world's best. Running the fastest time in the 800 meters this season, Lekote is already grabbing headlines. He has a bright future at USC, and his humble attitude only makes him that much more appealing.

Honorable mentions: Rolando Howell - Basketball, Deandre Eiland - Football/Track and Field

Female Newcomer of the Year: Stacey Johnson — Softball

Johnson has made the softball team almost unhittable. Opposing teams don't get a break when star pitcher Matthews isn't on the mound. Johnson is almost as lethal.

Honorable mentions: Nihan Anaz - Basketball, Jessica Julin - Soccer

Coach of the Year: Lou Holtz — Football

Do I even need to explain this one? The man is a miracle worker. He changed the attitude of the football team, and everything else fell into place. He is a class act and a hilarious guy, and USC is lucky to have him.

Honorable mentions: Curtis Frye - Track and Field, Mark Berson - Men's Soccer, Eddie Fogler - Men's Basketball (OK, just making sure you're paying attention.)

Game of the Year: Football's 24-7 Outback Bowl victory over Ohio State

This one was a gimme as well. After heartbreak after heartbreak in football, the team redeemed itself and all of its fans with a New Year's Day upset on national television. By the time the final whistle blew in Tampa, everyone had forgotten about the Rod Gardner debacle and parted like nobody's business.

Honorable mentions: Men's basketball over Clemson, any of baseball's wins against Clemson

Best Individual Performance by a Male Athlete: Ryan Brewer at the Outback Bowl

No Derek Watson? No big deal. Brewer stepped up and lit up the Buckeyes for three touchdowns, tying an Outback Bowl record and forever etching his name into Gamecock lore. Brewer's big day was a victory not only for USC, but for the underdog in all of us. Ignored by Ohio State coming out of high school because he was too small, the versatile

tailback proved that heart and hard work go a long way when he trashed the team that said he wasn't good enough.

Honorable mentions: Baseball's Kip Bouknight coming four outs away from a no-hitter at Tennessee, Jordan Quinn's two goals in a win over No. 1 Virginia, Tennis' Guillaume Legat crushing the No. 1 player in the nation (Arkansas' Oskar Johansson), Otukile Lekote running world's best 800 time for 2001

Best Individual Performance by a Female Athlete: Golfer Kristy McPherson wins the SEC Tournament

The sophomore shattered the tournament record by six strokes, finishing nine under par and winning by three to become conference champion.

Honorable mentions: Teresa Geter scores 34 at Alabama, Demetria Washington at NCAA Indoor Championships, Softball's Megan Matthews one-hits No. 6 Alabama

Lifetime Achievement Award: Cleveland Pinkney — Football

Pinkney is the absolute best player to interview. I know a lot of sports writers are going to miss talking to him, myself included. He's down-to-earth (as you could tell by his thumbs-up picture in Monday's issue), funny and tells it like it is, even to his teammates. He was looked up to by the defense and was truly the team's rock. He was the Gamecocks' heart and soul, and it's going to be tough for Holtz to replace him. We'll miss you, C. P.

Honorable mentions: Kip Bouknight - Baseball, David Ross - Men's Basketball, Henry Ring - Men's Soccer.

SOFTBALL

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Matthews (20-11) got the win, striking out six over 11 innings. Matthews also took the win in the first game.

"I had great defensive backup, and we came through and got the runs," Matthews said.

"Although we didn't score as many as we would have liked to, we came back and got them."

Matthews' win Saturday broke an 18-game extra-inning winning streak by Alabama and a nine-game winning streak overall for the Crimson Tide.

"Anytime you beat a top 10 program, you got to feel good about

yourself," Compton said. "It's a great way to have 10 to 12 days off for right now, considering that we bounced back from our second game yesterday, which was a fiasco.

"We got ourselves out of some jams today, and we had some opportunities that didn't cash in. We kept battling, despite an early lead by Alabama, and we never doubted that we could find a way to score. I give the team credit for that."

Though the regular season has come to a close, the SEC Tournament will begin May 10 in Chattanooga, Tenn. USC will have the second seed overall for being the SEC East winner.

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HOLTZ

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Athletics department spokesman Kerry Tharp said he doesn't expect Holtz to need back surgery. Holtz underwent back surgery in 1995 when he was head coach at Notre Dame.

The accident kept Holtz from testifying at a U.S. Senate hearing on gambling in college sports. However, it didn't keep him off the golf course. He participated in a Lake City Gamecock Club outing last Friday.

"I can do everything normal," he

told *The Greenville News*. "It's just that I've got a lot of pain."

Though there aren't any torn ligaments in his right knee, Tharp said that it was "puffy."

"[Holtz] is limping a little, but he's swinging away," Tharp added.

The Gamecocks' coach will continue his spring schedule of speaking engagements and will head to the Middle East on May 12 to talk with U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Holtz also will speak to troops on an aircraft carrier.

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BASEBALL

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Taylor. Taylor came in and mishandled a bunt. The next batter, Moran, bunted runners to second and third. Kent hit a sacrifice fly on the next play to extend the lead to 5-3, and Eric Brandon retired the Gamecocks over the final two innings to pick up his third save of the season.

After Sunday's contest, USC and Auburn are tied for seventh place in the conference.

The top eight teams make the SEC Tournament. If the tournament were to start today, USC would be the seventh seed by virtue of the head-to-head tiebreaker over Auburn, which would be the eighth seed.

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Gamecock Sports wishes you a great summer!

Senior Graduates 2001

KEVIN TONEY ABBOTT
ALEXANDER BRYSON ANDERSON
STEPHE THOMAS ANDERSON JR
JARED WILLIA ATKINSON
LINDSAY CROMWELL BAILEY
DENTAVIUS LAMARN BARBER
JEFFREY ALLEN BEEMON JR
HARIKRASHNA B. BHATT
JOHN ANDREW BINDEWALD III
SETH THOMAS BLACK
BRUCE EDWARD BONDO
TRACY CHRISTINE BONDS
MIRANDA MICHELLE BOWEN
RUSSELL QUINTON BREWTON
TODD AARON BRIDGE
TERRY LEE BROWN
MARGARET COKER BUNDY
TASHA TINA BYRD
KENDRA LEE-IDA CAIN
NATHAN HUGHES CAMPBELL
SAMUEL NAMA CAOILE
RENATO ARRIGO CAROTTI
WENDY NOEL CARROLL
KATE HAVENS CASSONE
JASON MICHAEL CLARK
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STACI RAE DEFIBAUGH
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SARAH THERESA EIBLING
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JAMES RUSSELL FAKAS
WILLIAM WORTHY FOGLE
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MANDIE JO GREENE
JENNIFER LEIGH GULLEDGE
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MAYA MICHELLE HOLLINSHEAD
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SHEILA ANN HUDSON
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LAURA ANN HUTCHENS
LAURA MARIE JACKSON
PATRINA LYNETTE JOHNS
ELIZABETH BRADLEY JOHNSON
SHONDREYA DENAY JOHNSON
BENJAMIN CRAIG JORDAN
OMORO KING
AMY LOUISE KOSYDAR
DEBRA NORRELL KREPPS
JENNIFER LOUANN LEACH
DIDIER ROGER LECLAIRE

ADAM JOSEPH LENTZ
ANDREW DAVID LOPES
KATHERINE ELIZABETH LORENTZ
REBECCA WATSON LOVELL
AMANDA ELAINE LUCAS
MARC ROCCO MACCHIAVERNA
ERIKA ANDERSON MANGAN
SARAH CATHERINE MAXWELL
LESLEIGH FAYE MAYO
LUCINDY BINNICKER MCCALL
BRENDA HOWELL MCCOY
STACEY ROSEMARIE MCCRAY
BRIENNE LYNN MCCUNE
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