

**JOHNSTON** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

number 3 car flag on a victory lap around the track. That's a fitting tribute.

And as far as Ripken goes, well, something tells me there are other things he's done in his long career that would cement his legacy more than one home run in a glorified exhibition game. That whole streak of consecutive games played comes to mind.

Talk of saying these events were fixed basically reverses the glory that these men might have gained in their triumph. How much do you think it hurt Earnhardt Jr. to have a solid victory at racing's track of tracks, especially during the emotional time that I'm sure he had coming back to the place where his father died? To claim the fix kills the victory.

And what of Ripken? Can the man just not hit a home run? If that was Rafael Belliard hitting the home run off of Chan Ho Park, then I might get suspicious.

Remember, this is Cal Ripken,

the man who desperately runs away from the spotlight, especially now that his "farewell tour" is coming to a ballpark near you.

If these two events were fixed, what about other great moments in sports history?

Reggie Jackson hit three home runs in the 1976 World Series. I bet Steinbrenner was really wanting this crown, so he had the game fixed.

Jim Abbott's no hitter. Of course, this only happened because he has a disability and everyone wanted to see him pitch a no-hitter.

Super Bowl III. Well, Joe Namath was such a high-profile figure and possible marketing tool for the floundering AFL that I guarantee someone paid off the Baltimore Colts to lie down for "Broadway Joe."

Ridiculous, isn't it?

About as ridiculous as the casual throwing around of this really serious accusation. The reputations of Pete Rose and "Shoeless" Joe Jackson were ruined forever because of the hint of a fix.

So where does the fix come

from? Well sports fans, it comes from us. That's right, the fans. We as fans can get so wrapped up into our favorite teams that we live vicariously through them. To a point, it's not really a bad thing — they are our heroes, and we don't want to see them fail.

However, it's at that point — when we want them so hard to be superhuman that any fault can't be their own — is where we as fans fail. These sports figures are everyday folks like you and me, and they're human and make mistakes, like we all do.

Actually, they can't make mistakes, because they're on our team. It has to be something else besides either the fault of our team or the superior play of the other. Our team has to go undefeated and win the championship every single year. If they don't, there's something crooked going on.

In that line of thinking, maybe there needs to be a fix. A fix of attitude, a fix of perspective and a fix of priority.

# Around the SEC

■ **Tide softball claims more awards**

**TUSCALOOSA, Ala.** — Senior Kelly Kretschman, juniors Shelly Laird and Suzanne Olcott and freshman Jackie McClain were all named first team All-Americans by Easton. It's the fourth straight year Kretschman has claimed the honor and the second straight year for Laird.

■ **Arkansas-LSU game moved**

**FAYETTEVILLE, Ark.** — The football game between LSU and Arkansas has been moved to the Friday after Thanksgiving for the sixth straight season.

The game will be televised by CBS from Baton Rouge, La. The game is the season finale for both teams.

■ **Auburn OL named preseason All-America**

**AUBURN, Ala.** — Senior offensive tackle Kendall Simmons was named first team All-American by *The Football News*.

Simmons started all 13 games last season for the Tigers and was picked as an Associated Press third team All-American.

■ **Two Bulldogs named to Walker Cup**

**ATHENS, Ga.** — Georgia golfers Nick Cassini and Erik Compton were named to the U.S. Walker Cup squad Monday.

The tournament, which features amateurs from the United States against British and Irish amateurs, will take place Aug. 11-12 at Ocean Forest Golf Club in Sea Island, Ga.

## Lekote continues record-setting run

TRACK & FIELD ROUNDUP  
THE GAMECOCK

Sophomore track star Otukile Lekote, running for his native Botswana, ran a 1:44.47 in the 800-meter to win the event at the McGill International Distance Classic in Montreal July 11. Lekote was also named Athlete of the Meet.

The victory broke the Botswanan national record of 1:44.59. It's the second national record Lekote has set in his career, having already claimed the title in the 400-meter.

"I had to wait five minutes, so I couldn't go back to celebrate because time had passed," Lekote said. "I couldn't do a victory lap then because another event was on, but I was very happy."

The time also set USC and SEC records, but can't be considered for an NCAA record because it was run after the NCAA Championships. However, it's the fastest time by a college athlete in the event this year.

"That's a great time for OT. It shows everyone he is serious about

running at the World Championships and that he is ready," USC distance coach Andrew Allden said. "He will come back to Columbia and train for a couple of weeks prior to the World Championships and then should be ready."

Lekote has been training for the World Championships in Edmonton in August, where he will run in the 800-meter and the 4x400-meter relay. Lekote will also compete in the World University Games in Beijing, China, in August.

"I am not nervous now, and I know I stand a better chance to reach the finals if I go and compete, run my race," Lekote said, "I am still new in this track and field thing; the idea is to go and get experience. Getting experience might mean making the finals and getting a position in the finals. But right now, I am interested in getting world championship experience."



LEKOTE

## Edwards named All-America



Special to The Gamecock

Senior linebacker and Butkus Award candidate Kalimba Edwards was named preseason All-America by *The Football News*.

FOOTBALL ROUNDUP  
THE GAMECOCK

Kalimba Edwards continues to claim preseason awards, being named a preseason second team All-American this week by *The Football News*. The standout senior has also been named to other preseason All-American teams in *Street & Smith* (honorable mention), *Athlon* (first team) and *Playboy* (first team).

Last season, Edwards was one of the most formidable players on South Carolina's defensive squad, widely considered one the best in the SEC. Edwards, a 6-foot-6, 250-pound linebacker from East Point, Ga., finished the 2000 season with 74 total tackles, 11 for loss, and seven sacks. He also intercepted a pass against Tennessee, which was returned 81 yards for a touchdown.

Edwards earned several postseason honors upon completion of last season, including consensus first team All-SEC and third team Associated Press All-American.

He is expected to anchor the Gamecocks' defense this season from the outside linebacker position. He's also viewed as a leader of the defensive unit, which stems from his motto of "I don't like to lose."