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SPORTS

GAME SCHEDULE

BASEBALL vs. Florida, 7 p.m. Friday
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Drake in Raleigh, N.C. (NCAA), 11:30 a.m. Saturday
SOFTBALL at LSU, 2 p.m. Saturday
BASEBALL vs. Florida, 4 p.m. Saturday
MEN'S BASKETBALL vs. Syracuse, Tuesday

NIT QUARTERFINALS

TICKET TO NEW YORK

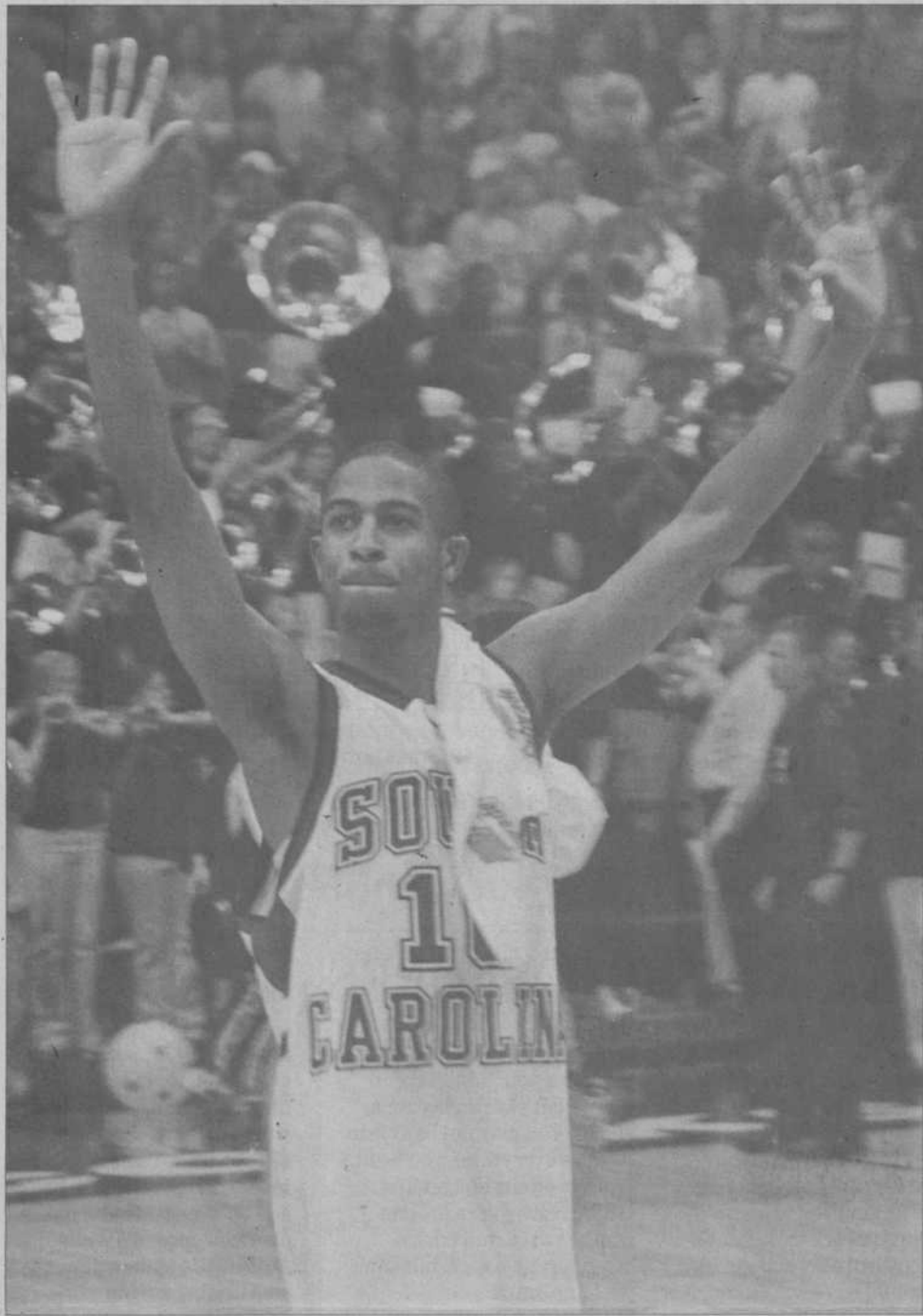


PHOTO BY CANDI HAUGLUM

Above: Jamel Bradley celebrates the Gamecocks' blowout of Ball State in the NIT quarterfinals Thursday night. Bradley was one of five USC players who scored in double digits for the second consecutive game.

Right: USC men's basketball head coach Dave Odom addresses fans after the game. Odom has brought the Gamecocks to the NIT semifinals in his first season at the helm.

PHOTO BY CANDI HAUGLUM



PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN

Carlos Powell helps cut down the net after the Gamecocks defeated Ball State to make it to the NIT semifinals.

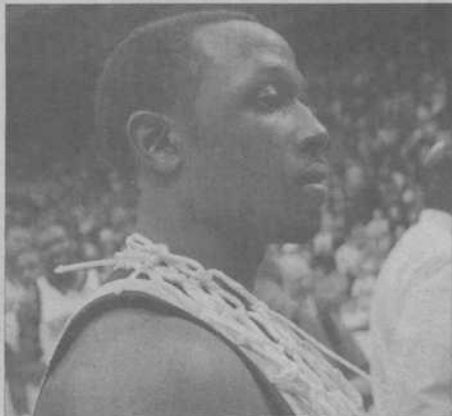


PHOTO BY CANDI HAUGLUM

Aaron Lucas had eight assists for USC.

GAMECOCKS WIN OVER BALL STATE SETS UP GAME WITH SYRACUSE

	Ball St.	47
	USC	82

BY CHRIS FOY
THE GAMECOCK

The USC men's basketball team had the opportunity last night to play in the NIT quarterfinals for only the third time in its history. The Gamecocks lost the first two times, but the third time was the charm against Ball State.

Carolina took no time in gaining control of the game and boasted a 48-12 halftime lead before holding on to win 82-47 and advance to the tournament semifinals in New York City. The Gamecocks (21-14) have now won four of their past five games.

After the game, USC head coach Dave Odom credited his team's effort all season with the way they played.

"We beat an excellent basketball team tonight," Odom said. "The difference [in the past five games] is in performance, not effort. All year, our team has been consistent in effort."

Rolando Howell's layup 14 seconds into the game started an offensive onslaught for the Gamecocks. USC went up 7-0 before Lonnie Jones hit a jump shot to put the Cardinals on the board 7-2. The Gamecocks then went on a 41-10 run that put the game beyond reach for Ball State.

The 12-point total in the first half was the Cardinals' lowest in a half all season, and it was the lowest total the Gamecocks have held an opponent to all season. Carolina shot 51 percent in the first half, while Ball State shot a dismal 18.5 percent.

The Cardinals saw a little more success in the second half, outscoring USC 35-34, but it was too late.

With about five minutes to go in the game, fans started a "We want [John] Chappell" chant right before Odom sent him and the rest of the squad that hadn't played onto the court.

The Gamecocks had five players score in double digits for the second straight game. Jamel Bradley had 17, Chuck Eidson and Carlos

Highlights

- ♦The 36-point halftime lead (48-12) was the largest of the season for USC.
- ♦USC's defense held Ball State to their lowest first-half output total of the season.
- ♦Carolina had five players in double figures for the second consecutive game. (Eidson, Kitchings, Bradley, Petravic, Powell)
- ♦A total of 20,355 fans packed the Frank McGuire Arena for USC's two NIT home victories.
- ♦The Gamecocks shot a season-high 94.4 percent from the free throw line, connecting on 17 of 18 shots.

Upcoming NIT Action

Friday, March 22
Villanova (19-12) at Temple (17-14), 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 23
Tennessee Tech (27-6) at Memphis (24-9), 2 p.m.

Powell each had 15, Marius Petravic scored 10 and Tony Kitchings tallied 12. Kitchings also nabbed eight rebounds in the game.

The Cardinals had two players score in double digits. Forward Theron Smith scored 12, while Patrick Jackson picked up 11.

USC scored 24 of its points off 22 Ball State turnovers, and 27 of Carolina's points came from the bench.

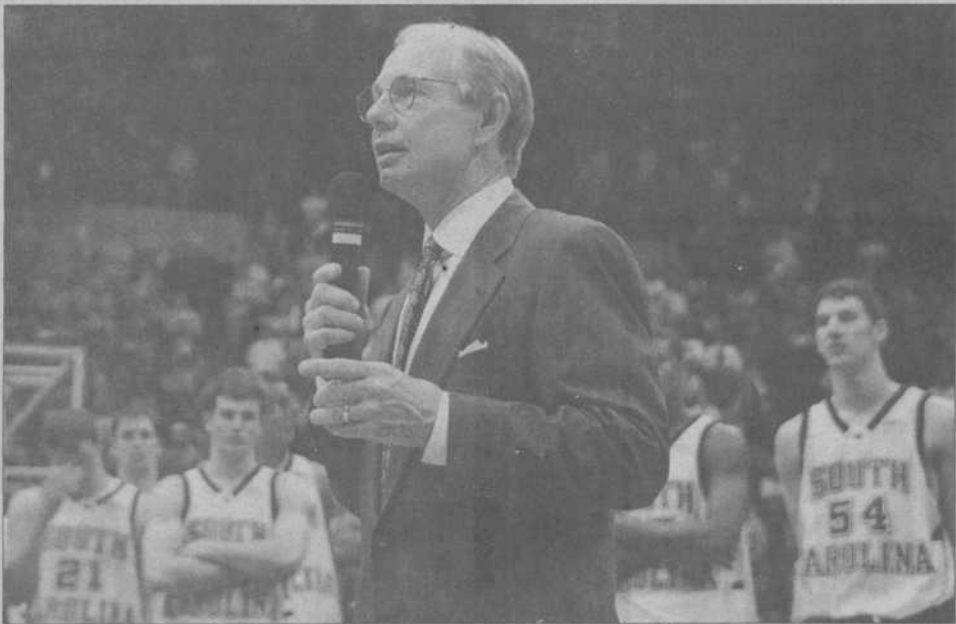
With the win, USC is now 9-7 all-time in the NIT. The Gamecocks will face Syracuse on Tuesday night in Madison Square Garden.

Senior guard Aaron Lucas rejoined in the win but was already looking ahead.

"We still understand what's ahead," Lucas said. "We're not going to get complacent as far as this one night is concerned."

"But, at the same time, we had another opportunity to show the fans we could play well ... and send this historical arena out on a good note."

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being a WINNER

Commercial puts Cocky in the Final Four

BY J. KEITH ALLEN
THE GAMECOCK

The USC men's and women's basketball players have been playing their hearts out, trying to advance to the championship of their respective tournaments. But one Gamecock already has his ticket punched all the way to the Final Four.

Cocky is starring in a nationwide television commercial as part of Anheuser-Busch's "Be A Winner" program.

The spot airs throughout the NCAA Tournament on CBS and tries to promote responsibility to student drinkers over 21.

Cocky said he was proud to associate himself with the brewer to encourage safe celebrating and ward against

drinking and driving.

Cocky shot the commercial in Los Angeles earlier this year and thought that the use of mascots would be an effective tool to reach college students. Cocky stars alongside other mascots such as the Maryland Terrapin, the Michigan State Spartan, the Penn State Nittany Lion and even the Clemson Tiger.

"You want it to happen so bad, and everything was so close. But it was still 0-11."

COCKY
USC MASCOT

The "Be A Winner" commercial is not Cocky's first foray into the acting world.

The jovial Gamecock was featured in an ESPN SportsCenter spot in 1997, co-starring with, among others, Roger Clemens, Evander Holyfield and then-Senator Bill Bradley.

The commercial ended on a sour note for the mascot, however, after he was run over by New England Patriots quarterback Drew Bledsoe. The commercial can still be viewed on www.espn.com.

♦ COCKY, SEE PAGE 9

BASEBALL

No. 4 Gamecocks smash Wofford

	Wofford	6
	USC	15

BY JAMES STARNES
THE GAMECOCK

All-American candidate Drew Meyer led the USC baseball team to a 15-6 drubbing of the Wofford Terriers on Wednesday night at Sarge Frye Field.

Meyer reached base and scored on four of his five plate appearances, stole three bases and drove in a run as No. 4 USC improved to 19-3 on the season.

Freshman southpaw Matt Campbell, pitching two scoreless innings and striking out five, registered his first win of the season for the Gamecocks. Carolina struck quickly by scoring four runs in the first inning, including a two-run home run by junior third baseman Brian Buscher. The Gamecocks added two runs in the second and one run in the third, and by the end of the fifth, the score was 11-0.

Trey Dyson led off the fifth with a monster home run clearing the Palmetto trees just left of center field and sailing into the night.

Through six innings, Wofford (15-9) did not have a base hit despite having the bases loaded in both the first and sixth innings. Terriers right fielder Travis Wilson finally got Wofford's first hit when he led off the top of the seventh with a single. Six Wofford players went on to reach base in the inning, and third baseman Matt Lein capped off the big inning with a three-run homer to make the score 11-4.

Wofford was able to add two more runs in the eighth and threatened to make a comeback. That notion was quickly forgotten, however, as USC added four more runs in its half of the inning to make the score 15-6.

With one out, two men on, and the Terriers looking to make it a little too interesting in the eighth, USC head coach Ray Tanner brought in junior Chris Spigner. Spigner walked the first batter he faced to load the bases, but then he struck out the next two to extinguish the threat. Spigner then pitched a perfect ninth and struck out two more batters.

Every player that started for Carolina got at least one hit, as

♦ BASEBALL, SEE PAGE 9

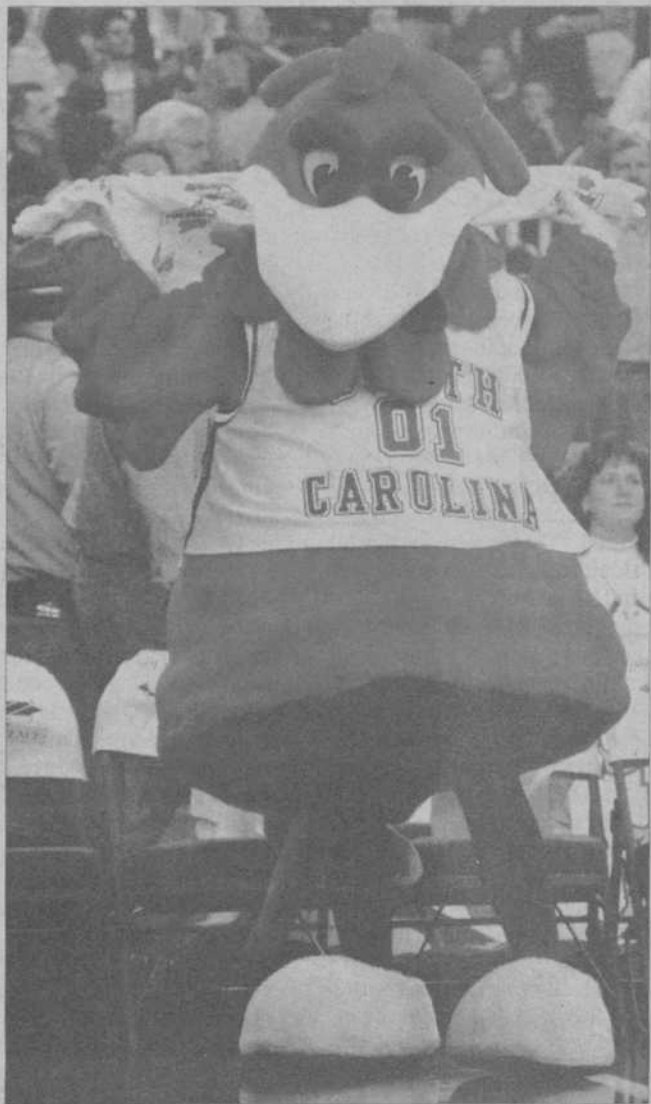


PHOTO BY ROBERT GRUEN

Cocky towels himself off after working the crowd during a timeout. The mascot is currently starring in a commercial on CBS for Anheuser-Busch.