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Baseball fired up for 2003 season

Landon Powell, Steve Bondurant lead the Gamecocks into a tough SEC schedule

BY BRAD SENKIW
THE GAMECOCK

The USC baseball team is up and running again this season and is looking to accomplish many of the same goals it had last year. USC head coach Ray Tanner has his team primed for another spectacular season.

"We want to be one of the last teams playing at the end of the year," Tanner said. "You want to be one of the best teams in the country and be playing at the end of the year when everyone else is at home."

The Gamecocks are coming off one of the best seasons in school history. Not only did USC compile a 57-18 record and capture the SEC East regular-season title, but the team also advanced in the College World Series to the final game against Texas. Carolina knocked off Georgia Tech, Nebraska and state-rival Clemson twice

in Omaha, Neb., before losing to the Longhorns, 12-6, in the National Championship game.

Tanner said it was great getting to the final game of the College World Series, and that knowing they didn't win means a lot to the players coming back this season.

"It's just assurance that this is the type of program that we have here, and it was a wonderful experience playing in the World Series. There are a lot of guys on this club who would like to do that again," Tanner said.

USC is already off to a great start at 8-1. The team has won seven straight games after dropping its second game of the season to Charleston Southern. Carolina took two games against the Bucs, and after winning three straight at the Berkeley Co-op Shootout last week, swept a series from

♦ BASEBALL, SEE PAGE 7



FILE PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/THE GAMECOCK

Nick Gardiner connects with a pitch against Charleston Southern. The Gamecocks won two of three games against CSU to begin their new season.

On the cover...

Lashinda Demus runs in the 2002 NCAA Track and Field Championships. She was the 2002 Track and Field News National Athlete of the Year.

PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK