

Softball team faces tough schedule

BY SHAWN ROURK
THE GAMECOCK

Going on long, back-to-back road trips is tough for any team; three can be even more of a challenge. The softball team, however, has taken the challenge and run with it this season.

Going 7-4 over the first 11 games this season, the Gamecocks are only one win off their pace that took them to the SEC championships last season. Although their 2003 schedule is comparably harder than last seasons', according to head coach Joyce Compton, that is exactly how she likes it.

"We've played better competition in the teams we've played this year than we did last year. Losses hopefully help you, especially when it gets that kind of competition," Compton said.

In the second and third tournaments they have played in this season, the Gamecocks will have

faced the 1st, 20th and 23rd-ranked teams in the nation. In the Lead-Off Classic Tournament the team went to this past weekend, USC had to face-off against Washington, Temple and Michigan. Washington is ranked 5th in the nation and Michigan is ranked 15th, stiff competition for a team that lost its number one pitcher last year in Megan Matthews.

"Our first two weekends, we were very solid. We're not the kind of pitchers to get us out of jams, and we know that. We're a pitching team that we need to play defense behind," Compton said.

USC is averaging a 2.77 ERA on the season. Junior Stacey Johnson is leading the pitching with a 1.13 ERA, while Melanie Henkes garnered a 2.94 ERA. Sophomore Aleca Johnson, who finished last season with a 1.39 ERA in 70.1 innings pitched, hit a road block early in the season and her ERA has

ballooned to 7.88.

The defense behind the pitchers has been consistent this year. The heart of the infield is exactly the same as last year, which Compton said is good for the team's chemistry.

"The defense should be consistent," Compton said. "I think we have a pretty good defensive squad. I think that we have a good chemistry. Three of our four infielders have played together."

Compton added that the outfield is still being shaken up at the moment to find out where everyone will fit in the lineup.

At the plate, the Gamecocks are beginning to get into a groove as the season progresses. In its past 14 games, the team is batting .237 with 45 RBIs.

Amber Curtis has led the offensive charge by batting .400 so far this season. Nancy Crane and Ashley Smith are both batting .296, while Smith has nine RBIs as



PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/THE GAMECOCK

The softball team gathers before a game earlier this season. USC will face several top-ranked opponents in conference play.

well. Danielle Quinones is right behind them, batting .286, and she leads the team in doublés with four.

"Really, from there on, we've been pretty inconsistent at the plate. That's been a big part of our problem," Compton said. "We just

haven't put enough good-at-bats throughout the lineup together right now."

Ahead of the Gamecocks, the schedule does not get any easier. When they start play in early

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2003 South Carolina Home Softball Schedule

March		
5 Wednesday	Virginia (DH)	3:00pm
8 Saturday	Mississippi State (DH)	1:00pm
9 Sunday	Mississippi State	1:00pm
12 Wednesday	Northern Illinois (DH)	3:00pm
15 Saturday	LSU (DH)	1:00pm
16 Sunday	LSU	2:00pm

April		
1 Tuesday	Tennessee (DH)	5:00pm
2 Wednesday	Tennessee	4:00pm
12 Saturday	Florida (DH)	1:00pm
13 Sunday	Florida	1:00pm
18 Friday	Alabama (DH)	5:00pm
19 Saturday	Alabama	1:00pm

All games at Bechtam Field.

2003 South Carolina Baseball Home Schedule

March		
2 Sunday	Clemson	1:30pm
4 Tuesday	Garner Webb	2:00pm
5 Wednesday	Furman	7:00pm
7 Friday	Radford	7:00pm
8 Saturday	Radford	4:00pm
9 Sunday	Radford	1:30pm
12 Wednesday	Western Carolina	7:00pm
14 Friday	Arkansas	7:00pm
15 Saturday	Arkansas	4:00pm
16 Sunday	Arkansas	1:30pm
19 Wednesday	Wofford	7:00pm
28 Friday	Vanderbilt	7:00pm
29 Saturday	Vanderbilt	4:00pm
30 Sunday	Vanderbilt	1:30pm



Baseball continued

April		
2 Wednesday	Clemson	7:00pm
16 Wednesday	Wofford	7:00pm
18 Friday	Mississippi State	7:00pm
19 Saturday	Mississippi State	4:00pm
20 Sunday	Mississippi State	1:30pm
22 Tuesday	UNC-Asheville	7:00pm
23 Wednesday	Davidson	7:00pm

May		
2 Friday	Kentucky	7:00pm
3 Saturday	Kentucky	4:00pm
4 Sunday	Kentucky	1:30pm
14 Wednesday	The Citadel	7:00pm
16 Friday	Georgia	7:00pm
17 Saturday	Georgia	4:00pm
18 Sunday	Georgia	1:30pm

All games at Sarge Frye Field

2003 South Carolina Men's Tennis Home Schedule

March		
7 Friday	LSU	2:00pm
9 Sunday	Arkansas	1:00pm
26 Wednesday	Clemson	2:00pm
April		
4 Friday	Georgia	2:00pm
6 Sunday	Tennessee	1:00pm
9 Wednesday	Wake Forest	2:00pm
11 Friday	Florida	2:00pm
13 Sunday	Vanderbilt	1:00pm

All matches at Sam Daniel Tennis Stadium

CAROLINA

2003 South Carolina Women's Tennis Home Schedule

February		
28 Friday	Mississippi State	1:30pm
March		
2 Sunday	Mississippi	1:00pm
16 Sunday	Kentucky	1:00pm
18 Tuesday	Tulsa	1:30pm
28 Friday	Auburn	2:00pm

All matches at the Maxcy Gregg Tennis Center

2003 Men's and Women's Track and Field

March		
21-22 Friday/Saturday	Weems Baskin Relays	

April		
5 Saturday	SEC Quad	
- Teams include: Tennessee, Florida, Kentucky and Vanderbilt		

9 Wednesday	State Meet	
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All meets at Weems Baskin Track

2003 Women's Golf Home Schedule

March		
14-16 Friday to Sunday	Lady Gamecock Classic	

Lady Gamecock Classic will be held at the University Club in Blythewood.

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