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# SPORTS

SOFTBALL vs. Alabama (DH), 5 p.m. Friday  
BASEBALL vs. Miss. State, 7 p.m. Friday  
EQUESTRIAN at Varsity Equestrian Championship in College Station, Texas, Friday  
WOMEN'S GOLF at SEC Championships in Lexington, Ky., Friday-Sunday

## Leaping forward

Track star Corey Taylor carries on USC, family legacies in hurdles

BY MATT ROTHENBERG  
THE GAMECOCK

The hurdles seem to be an event that suits USC men's track star Corey Taylor rather well. Taylor has met and surpassed numerous expectations throughout his life as a runner, leaping at the opportunity each time. As a member of the men's track team, which finished sixth at both the 2002 NCAA indoor and outdoor track championships and fifth at this year's NCAA indoor championship, Taylor has completely emerged as a force to be reckoned with.

Taylor, a native of Decatur, Ga., started running track when he was nine years old, participating in the East Atlanta club team. Two years later, he began hurdling and continues to do it to this day. But track wasn't Taylor's first sport of choice.

"I played soccer and I played basketball before I started running track, and I was the fastest guy on the team. The same coach that I had for the soccer team and my basketball team — Coach Johnson — he was coaching the track team," Taylor said. "He told me about it, and I went out there and tried it out. I ran the 100-meter dash and the 200-meters my first year. And then the second year, he thought he'd put me in the hurdles, and I've been running it ever since."

At Southwest DeKalb High School in Decatur, Taylor encountered some additional competition from former teammate and USC track standout Terrence Trammell.

Trammell, in turn, helped Taylor become a Gamecock, along with another current teammate, Clint Crenshaw. The coaching staff at USC also played a strong role in attracting Taylor.

"I went to high school with them. They talked to me about coming up here. It was a rebuilding year on the men's side, and I just came up here to run with them," Taylor said.

Taylor said he knew USC

ured, why not train with two of the best hurdlers in the world?" he said.

Frye noted that Taylor's background brought a good deal to USC.

"Athletically, he's meant fantastic things because he's continued to help us in the tradition of Carolina track by being an All-American. He's fallen in line with what's expected from an athlete," Frye said. "He brought the tradition of winning and came in behind Terrence and followed the high expectations from Terrence and those were the

things he brought to the table."

While at Carolina, Taylor has given his all to help the Gamecock cause. During his first two seasons, he had numerous top 10 finishes, but he managed to surpass those with a solid junior year. Taylor became an All-American, as he finished sixth in the 60 hurdles at the SEC Indoor Championships and eighth at the NCAA Championships in the same event. Outdoors, he helped the 4x100 relay team finish in third place at the SECs and fourth at the NAAs, earning him All-American status.

This year, he repeated his All-American status in the indoor 60 hurdles with a fifth-place finish at the NCAA Championships. In February, Taylor was named SEC indoor track athlete of the week after breaking a facility record in the 55 hurdles at the USC Invitational. He also finished first in the outdoor 110 hurdles at the Weems Baskin Relays nearly a month ago

♦ TAYLOR, SEE PAGE 10



Corey Taylor, who has been running track since he was 9 years old, is a three-time All-American in his time at USC. Taylor was named SEC indoor track athlete of the week in February.

PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

## Hitting his stride

After two years at community college, Brian Buscher has found a true home at Sarge Frye Field

BY HOLLI ARMSTRONG  
THE GAMECOCK

Trotting back to the dugout after his first at-bat, Brian Buscher is disappointed.

He can hear his coach already: "Don't worry about it; you are going to get three more at-bats." But the senior third baseman does worry about it, until he spots the Gamecock player in the clean uniform.

"Then I can't believe I am complaining about not getting a hit, and there is this guy sitting in the dugout who hasn't played a game, and he has a big smile on his face," Buscher said. "He is happy just to be standing there with us."

Buscher might not realize it, but the team's top hitter and the team's nonhitter have something in common: They are both grateful.

Two years ago, the Jacksonville, Fla., native was playing ball in a stadium that on a good day held enough people to fill a bus, and most of those folks were family. But Central Florida Community College offered Buscher what Carolina could not — a chance to start.

"When I got here, I had already played at least 125 games, so I understood the game on a college level instead of a high school level," Buscher said.

USC head coach Ray Tanner thinks that junior-college players are more mature and better prepared. Buscher is a testament to that.

"He was good from day one," Tanner said.

Good enough to lead the team in homers with eight and in hits with 55. He

recently went on a tear, hitting in 14 consecutive games. Buscher boils it down to luck.

"I remember a couple of games where I got one hit, and I hit it off the fist, and it went over the second baseman's head and just bloomed in there," Buscher said. "Then, the other day, I hit a couple of balls hard and didn't get a hit."

Buscher is quick to point out that 70 percent of baseball is failing, and you are

doing good to get one hit in every three or four at-bats. At times, it is hard to keep those numbers in perspective.

"He is extremely hard on himself," Tanner said. "Some people expect themselves to be perfect, and that is hard to

do in athletics and life in general."

"I've tried to tell him that all you can do is all you can do, and that is good enough. Many times he has said that he has let the team down, and he hasn't," Tanner said.

Hitting safely in 33 of 37 games is certainly not something to hang your head about. Neither is a .374 batting average or the respect of being named team captain. Last season, he set school records for a third baseman in putouts with 60 and in assists with 139. His fielding percentage of .938 was the best by a Gamecock in more than 25 years. He even managed to tack on a couple of grand slams.

"I'm not a rah-rah type of guy," said Buscher, who leads by example. "I never have been."

Instead, it is his discipline and dedication to the game of baseball that has made him successful. At age three, Buscher remembers carting his big red bat to the park, where his father, Bernard Buscher, who played professional baseball, would pitch to him. A year later, he was playing little league ball and getting in plenty of practice time playing pick-up games with the neighborhood kids. No wonder he takes such a serious, hard-working and, at times, stubborn approach to the game.

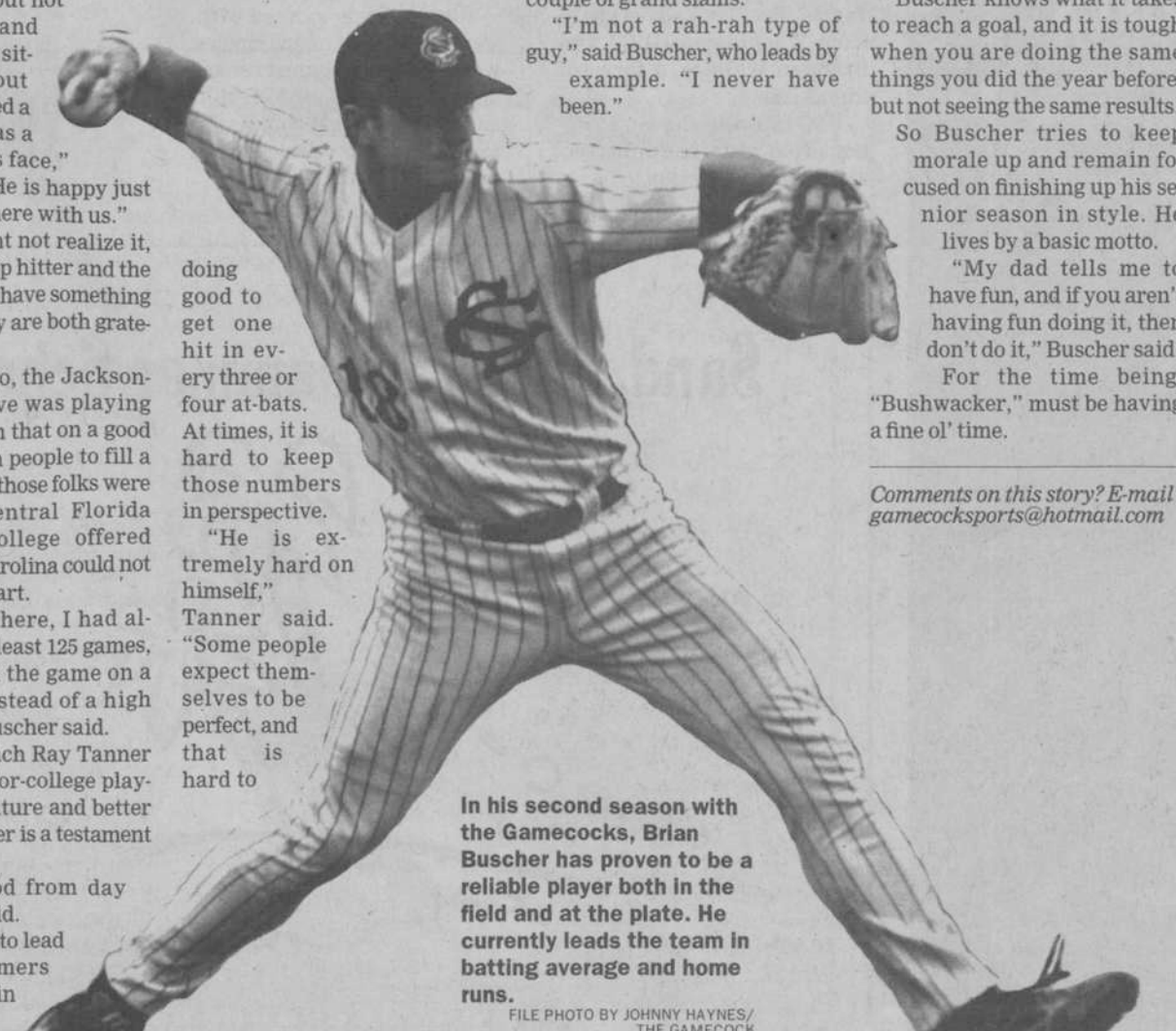
It will take all of those qualities for the Gamecocks to earn a bid to the SEC Tournament, hold a regional and return to Omaha.

Buscher knows what it takes to reach a goal, and it is tough when you are doing the same things you did the year before, but not seeing the same results. So Buscher tries to keep morale up and remain focused on finishing up his senior season in style. He lives by a basic motto.

"My dad tells me to have fun, and if you aren't having fun doing it, then don't do it," Buscher said.

For the time being, "Bushwacker," must be having a fine ol' time.

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In his second season with the Gamecocks, Brian Buscher has proven to be a reliable player both in the field and at the plate. He currently leads the team in batting average and home runs.

FILE PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/  
THE GAMECOCK

## Harris leads USC to victory

<b>W</b> WOFFORD	Wofford (6-26)	1
<b>C</b> USC	USC (25-12)	7

BY SHAWN ROURK  
THE GAMECOCK

Justin Harris went 3-for-4 at the plate and made shortstop plays deserving of ESPN's "Web Gems" as he helped to lift Carolina (25-12, 7-8 SEC) over Wofford (6-26) 7-1 on Wednesday at Sarge Frye Field.

"It feels really good because hitting has a lot to do with confidence. Over the last week or so, I've been picking up the ball out of the pitcher's hand and seeing it well. The balls are just seeming to fall in for me," Harris said.

Harris extended his hitting streak to 15 games with a double and two singles in the game. Harris is 16-for-24 in his latest streak,

the longest in the SEC right now. The senior did have one error during the second inning on a bad hop off the bat of Wofford's Blake Timanus, but made up for it with a diving stop that stole a hit from Wofford later in the game.

"I don't think you can explain those things. Sometimes, hitters go through periods where they don't feel that good, and other times they see it pretty good. And he feels pretty good right now," USC head coach Ray Tanner said. "He had two four-hit games down in Florida and hit the ball well tonight. I just hope it continues."

Freshman Conor Lalor went 6 1/3 innings to get the win and improve his record to 5-0 on the season. He struck out four and allowed only four hits during the game.

Carolina jumped on the board early when Jon Coutlangus walked, and Harris got on with a base hit. Brian Buscher hit a deep double to bring in one run and Landon Powell hit a sacrifice fly to bring in the Gamecocks' second run of the game.

That would be all Carolina

needed to win, but the team was not finished with its offense.

In the third, Buscher recorded his eighth homer of the season when he belted a shot over the right field fence to put the Gamecocks up 4-0.

Lalor was pulled in the top of the seventh inning after Timanus earned his sixth homer of the season and two other Wofford players strung together a couple of hits. Reliever Stephen Broome came in and replaced Lalor during a sticky situation: Two on base and no outs. However, Broome swept up the Terriers with three strikeouts to get out of the inning.

"We were pretty solid. Last time we played Wofford, it was a 29-run night, and I told our guys

**"We were pretty solid. Last time we played Wofford, it was a 29-run night, and I told our guys before the game, if you respect baseball, that doesn't happen very often."**

RAY TANNER  
BASEBALL HEAD COACH

before the game, if you respect baseball, that doesn't happen very often. Wofford's been playing better lately, and they hit some balls hard tonight. It was a good win for us," Tanner said.

Next up for the Gamecocks is a three-game series against Mississippi State this weekend. This is a conference match-up during which Carolina will look to keep itself tied with Tennessee atop the SEC Eastern Division standings.

The eighth-ranked Bulldogs will come into the game off a win against Samford at home.

The only thing missing from the equation is pitcher Aaron Rawl, who has been out for several games because of an injury to his hand. Rawl suffered the injury on March 23 against Tennessee.

Tanner said after the game that Rawl is possible, but not probable, to return to the rotation next week.

"He's out for the rest of this week. So we're just going to have to take it one week at a time right now," Tanner said.

The series starts today, and the first pitch is scheduled for 7 p.m.

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FILE PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/  
THE GAMECOCK

Justin Harris went 3-for-4 with three runs scored in Carolina's 7-1 win over the Wofford Terriers on Wednesday. Harris increased his hitting streak to 15 games with a double and two singles.