



SPORTS

[Game Schedule](#)
MEN'S TENNIS at Clemson, 2 p.m.

SOFTBALL at Tennessee, 4 p.m.

BASEBALL vs. North Carolina at Fort Mill, S.C., 7:15 p.m.

WOMEN'S TENNIS vs. Ole Miss, 5 p.m. Friday

WOMEN'S GOLF at the Bryan National Collegiate in Greensboro, N.C., Friday

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UT sweeps USC in doubleheader

BY JONATHAN HILLYARD AND WES WOLFE

THE GAMECOCK

The USC softball team (17-10, 6-8 SEC) continued its run of bad luck, bumping its losing streak up to five games by losing a doubleheader to the Tennessee Lady Volunteers (36-8, 9-4) Tuesday in Knoxville.

UT 1, USC 0

In the first game, Tennessee's Monica Abbott dominated the Gamecocks. Abbott (29-4) steamrolled through the USC lineup for all seven innings allowing just four hits to only three batters. She retired the first six USC batters in succession and recorded nine strikeouts and did not walk a single hitter throughout the game.

Things were also tough on the Lady Vols offensively as USC pitcher Stacey Johnson pitched extremely well. Giving up just seven hits in six innings, Johnson's lone run came in the first inning off just two hits. The loss was the fourth of the season for Johnson, whose record fell to 9-4.

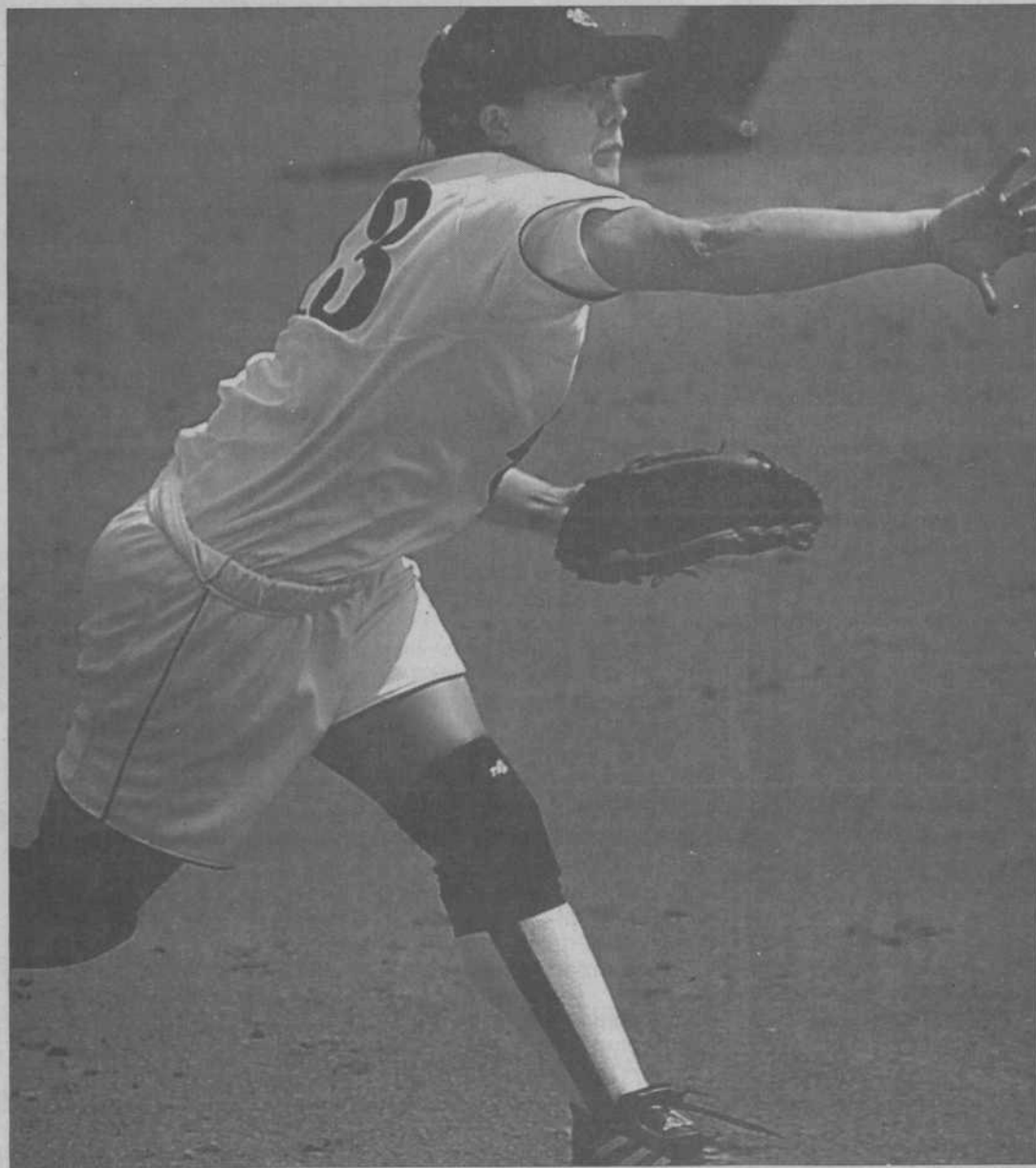
The Gamecocks had very few chances to tie the game, the first being in the third inning. With two runners on base and two outs, Abbott put an abrupt end to the rally by striking out left fielder Margaret Person. The scoring chances after that were few and far between as Abbott retired USC in three of their final four at bats.

UT 3, USC 2

The Lady Vols didn't let up in the second game, though Carolina had some hope.

With the score at a 0-0 deadlock in the second inning, third baseman Samantha Jennings hit a leadoff single to right field and advanced to second on a sacrifice bunt from first baseman Meghan Cornett. After shortstop Amber Curtis popped out, catcher McKenna Hughes singled to center field, which sent Jennings racing around third and heading for home plate. However, a throw from UT's center fielder arrived in time and Jennings was out at the plate.

In the third inning, though, the Gamecocks struck paydirt. Pitcher Aleca Johnson (3-2), who



Third baseman Samantha Jennings hit her seventh home run of the season in a losing effort against Auburn on Sunday. Jennings had one hit in the doubleheader with Tennessee on Tuesday.

ended up taking the loss for Carolina, singled to left field to begin the inning. Left fielder Chrissy Schoonmaker then walked, followed by a single on a bunt by center fielder Nancy Crane.

With the bases loaded, the stage was set for pinch hitter Tia Rogers to break the game open. However, Rogers lined out to UT second baseman Mandie Fishback. Carolina second baseman Kristin Hall was luckier, though, reaching second base on a fielder's choice and an error. Crane was tagged out at second, but Schoonmaker and Johnson both scored.

The Lady Vols put the kibosh

on the Gamecocks' hopes in the fourth inning, scoring the necessary three runs to win the game. After each USC hitter grounded out at the beginning of the inning, Tennessee catcher Kristi Durant doubled to center field. Ashley Cline came up to pinch run for Durant and advanced to third on a single by right fielder Lauren Mattox. UT then went back to the fast feet, putting in Marissa Monroe to run for Mattox. Designated player Amber Rhinehart followed the single by flying out to center field, but Cline was able to score and put Tennessee on the board.

UT got a break when a passed ball put Monroe on second base, but the play turned out to be immaterial when first baseman Angela Brewer hit a two-run home run to place the Lady Vols on top.

Abbott, who pitched a complete game for Tennessee in the first half of the doubleheader, came on in relief of Stacey Jennings (7-4) and was credited for her third save of the season.

USC will try to get a win in the final game of the three-game series today in Knoxville at 4 p.m.

Comments on this story? E-mail gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu

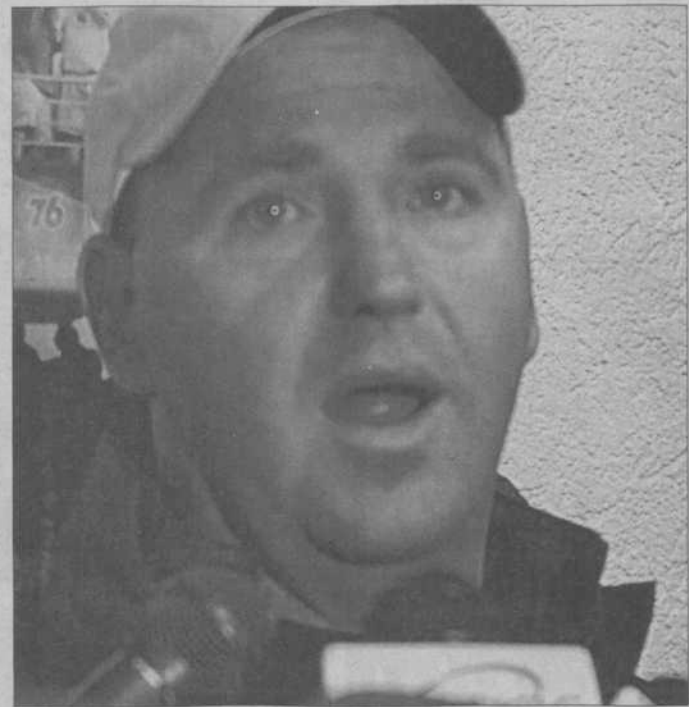


PHOTO BY JOHNNY HAYNES/THE GAMECOCK

Assistant head coach Skip Holtz talks about his father's injury to the media after USC's practice Tuesday.

Gamecocks' tough practice producing results, taking toll

BY WES WOLFE

THE GAMECOCK

The USC football team took the field Tuesday with one more team member on the injury list — but it wasn't a player, it was head coach Lou Holtz.

Running back Cory Boyd was moving in the backfield when he accidentally slammed into Holtz, who was knocked from his feet, according to USC sports information. Holtz then jumped back up, asked Boyd if he was OK, and resumed practice.

Holtz found out Monday he had broken his leg. The break, a hairline fracture in his left fibula, has left the 67-year-old coach with a noticeable limp, but otherwise unharmed.

"Coach Holtz is a tough man," Boyd said. "I think you'll see him bounce back pretty soon. When I ran into him, I was just hoping it wasn't him. When he got up, the first thing out of his mouth was, 'You OK?' I saw the film of it the next day and I closed my eyes. I didn't want to see it again. I feel badly that it happened."

In the post-practice press conference Tuesday, assistant coach Skip Holtz, who witnessed the incident, called it "one heck of a collision."

"He's getting around with a limp, but he's not going to let anyone know it's hurting," he said.

Ironically, Boyd is also on the injured list after spraining his ankle during practice Tuesday. The severity of his condition has yet to be determined.

Carolina's quarterbacks are getting cycled through and taking looks at the offense, though Skip Holtz said that each of the quarterbacks are simply being evaluated and thoughts about depth chart decisions wouldn't be made until later.

"No, not right now, I have not tried to do that," said Skip Holtz of making depth chart judgments. "I mean, I've been rolling them, like, every three plays, every two plays, etcetera, depending upon the drill. But right now I have not done that. We've said all along springtime is the time to evaluate and we'll evaluate from the scrimmages."

Skip Holtz also said positive things about the performances of underclassmen quarterbacks Blake Mitchell and Syvelle Newton.

"I just think that the freshmen are doing more than I thought they would be doing," Skip Holtz said. "I thought there would be a very large difference right now between the two upperclassmen quarterbacks and the two freshmen."

The Gamecocks are also continuing to experiment with of-

♦ FOOTBALL, SEE PAGE 11

NCAA tourney tests nerves, wallets

So we have come to the last weekend of the American gambling frenzy that is the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament.

Brackets have been busted, thousands of dollars have been wasted and people across the nation have missed out once again on hitting the jackpot. I know what most of you failed wagerers are thinking.

"Why did I ever waste my money on something so unpredictable as March Madness? Nobody I know will ever win one of those things."

Oh contraire, my friends, because this year is a brand new year. A very good friend of mine, in fact you could almost say that he and I are identical in personality and

good looks, is experiencing a brand new experience. This friend, who I advised not to do this because I myself would ever dream of doing such a thing, entered last weekend with a small glimmer of hope in his bracket. His Final Four was alive in the Sweet 16. This Final Four was in a bracket pool out of New York that could yield a prize of up to a million dollars.

Of course, with the number of people involved, he didn't think much about it and continued to watch the games out of enjoyment and glanced occasionally down at his bracket, which was still intact.

Thursday and Friday went by and things got interesting. With third-seeded Texas losing to seventh-seeded Xavier, giving Duke a basic gimme into the Final Four, and second-seeded Oklahoma State getting by red-hot third-seeded Pittsburgh, this really good friend of mine took a long, hard look at his bracket.

The Elite Eight was set and he went through his Final Four just to make sure. Duke, check. Connecticut, check. Oklahoma State, check. Then a frown came across his face as he saw his fourth Final Four team, Georgia Tech, was still alive, but would be without its leading scorer for a matchup with Kansas. So he placed the bracket down, once again dismissing it in order to alleviate his inevitable depression.

Saturday made things amazingly interesting. The Huskies of Connecticut would blow out Alabama, which was expected, and all of a sudden my friend, who honestly could be an identical twin, had one of his Final Four teams, with the other three games still left to play. Big deal, one team, millions of people can get one team in, nothing to get worked up over. So, still not focusing on what could be, my friend and I went to Applebee's,

where coincidentally, the St. Joseph's versus Oklahoma State game was on. When Oklahoma State's John Lucas hit a three-pointer with six seconds to go to send the Cowboys to the Final Four, a smirk came upon this young man's face. Dollar signs began to appear in his eyes, but only for a brief moment, as the smile subsided and life went on.

So we come to Sunday, and a 2:45 p.m. matchup between Georgia Tech and Kansas. Two hours later, things are still not settled and the game would be resolved in overtime. Once again the smile crept onto this young man's face as Georgia Tech cut down the nets on their way to the Final Four.

Can this be happening? Three out of the four Final Four participants are set, with Duke being the only team yet to claim its spot.

♦ TOURNEY, SEE PAGE 11

Final Four power on sidelines, not courts

BY EDDIE PELLIS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Looking at Duke's roster, it's easy to find a number of good players, but only one household name.

That would be the coach, Mike Krzyzewski.

Over the past decade or so, college basketball has slowly turned into a showcase more for big-name coaches than superstar players. That reality will be seen clearly this year at the sport's biggest event, the Final Four.

With apologies to Chris Duhon, Emeka Okafor, B.J. Elder and the rest, the coaches will be more recognizable than most of the players this week when Duke

(Krzyzewski) plays Connecticut (Jim Calhoun) and Oklahoma State (Eddie Sutton) plays Georgia Tech (Paul Hewitt, the only relative unknown).

There are many factors in play, although the prime reason for the shift is the large increase in players who leave school early to go pro. It forces coaches to adjust — not only their Xs and Os, but the way they recruit, too.

Indeed, more and more coaches are trying to recruit solid players — not stars, necessarily, but guys who can contribute for three or four years.

Florida's Billy Donovan gets praised for routinely collecting top-five recruiting classes, but

many of those recruits leave early and some, like Kwame Brown, never enroll. The Gators haven't made it out of the first weekend of the tournament in four years.

On the other hand, there are examples like Maryland's 2002 championship team. Two key players — Juan Dixon and Lonny Baxter — were seniors, and forward Chris Wilcox was a junior who left a year early.

"They developed depth, played eight, nine players, had a solid inside game and a very, very solid team," Hewitt said of the Terps.

That's not to say there aren't great players in college.

Just last season, Syracuse won a national championship largely on

the strength of freshman Carmelo Anthony. Orangemen coach Jim Boeheim knew Anthony might leave when he recruited him, but there were no regrets.

"I knew he would help us," Boeheim said last year. "I knew he'd be a special player. We were talking about him being the player of the year in college basketball. We weren't talking about being the freshman of the year. We thought he honestly had a chance to be the best player in college basketball."

Krzyzewski, meanwhile, has been a master of keeping players around for longer than many peo-

♦ DUKE, SEE PAGE 11



PHOTO BY MARK SCHILLING/THE GAMECOCK

Designated hitter Ryan Mahoney takes one of his four walks in the SEC series with LSU.

Battle of the Border to be a barn-burner

BY WES WOLFE

THE GAMECOCK

The No. 6 USC baseball team is in Fort Mill tonight to take on the No. 20 UNC Tar Heels in what has been termed the Battle of the Border, and surely to be a barn-burner with two teams that tied for the best recruiting class in the nation coming into this season.

The two teams have met in the postseason the past two years, with the Gamecocks (21-4, 2-4 SEC) taking both meetings. The first win was in the NCAA Regionals in 2002 and USC did it again in the NCAA Super Regionals in 2003. It has been 16 years since the two squads met in the regular season, when

UNC won the two-game series in Chapel Hill, N.C. USC is 4-2 against the Tar Heels since head coach Ray Tanner arrived in Columbia.

The Tar Heels (20-6, 4-2 ACC) are coming into today's contest on a tear, winning 16 of 19 games and taking two out of three against then-No. 15 Florida State. The one loss against the Seminoles was the only loss UNC suffered in five games last week.

Whitley Benson, a senior right-hand pitcher from Plymouth, N.C., will start the game for the Tar Heels. The start against the Gamecocks will be Benson's third of the year and

♦ BASEBALL, SEE PAGE 11