

No. 25 Wiggins to lead women's tennis squad

By JAKE BROOM
 THE GAMECOCK

"Young, but experienced." That is how head coach Arlo Elkins describes this year's edition of the USC women's tennis team. After their 10th consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance in 2003, the future is bright for the Gamecocks.

Last year's team had four newcomers. The 2003 lineup consisted of three freshman, two sophomores and one junior. The young team reached the NCAA Regionals before falling to No. 5 seed Clemson. All of those players are returning, and the team looks to build on last year's 14-10 record.

There is only one freshman on the team this year, Megan McGavock, but overall the team is still fairly young. But youth doesn't always equal inexperience. The Gamecocks are led by a group of players with a lot of matches under their belts.

Leading the way for the

Gamecocks is Danielle Wiggins, a junior from Jacksonville, Fla. Wiggins compiled a 21-13 record overall and a 15-8 record at the No. 1 singles spot last season. Her stellar record and No. 25 national ranking has earned her a spot in the Riviera All-American tournament in Los Angeles early next month. The tournament is made up of last year's returning All-Americans and this year's top 32 individual players.

Another returning player that is expected to contribute heavily is Christyn Lucas, a sophomore from Miami, Fla. Lucas, ranked 111th in the nation, finished her freshman season with an impressive 21-12 record, with 12 of her 21 wins coming at the No. 2 singles position.

While Wiggins and Lucas provide the Gamecocks with nationally recognized individual standouts, the team as a whole is not far behind. Coach Elkins, in his 22nd year at Carolina, describes the team as "fairly equal top to bottom."

Elkins said that while the team is nowhere near setting a lineup, Wiggins would probably be its No. 1 player based on her ranking and past results.

The team will represent USC not only in the Southeast, but all across the country as well. At one point during the season, Wiggins will be playing individually in Los Angeles while the rest of the team plays in the USTA National Tennis Center Women's Collegiate Invitational in New York.

The team also has tournaments scheduled in Winston-Salem, N.C., Peachtree City, Ga., and the season opener in Greenville at the Furman Fall Classic.

This year's edition of the women's tennis team might be young, but that certainly doesn't mean they don't expect to succeed this year. The future is still bright, but the present is looking pretty good, too.

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

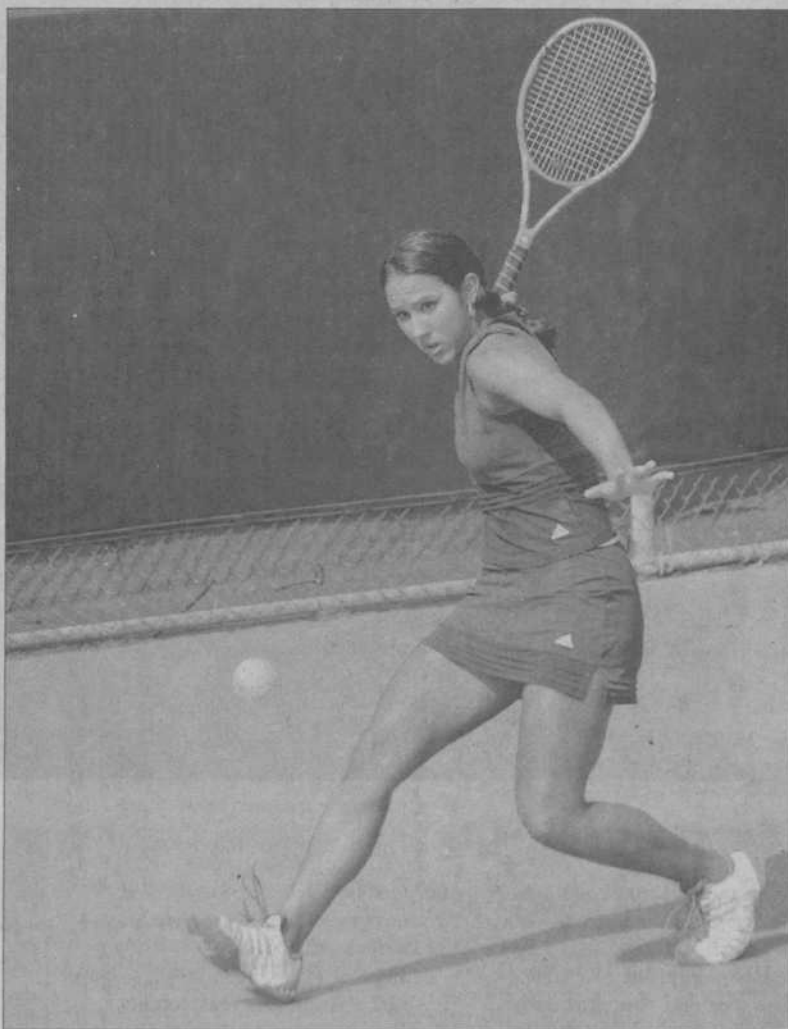


PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Junior Danielle Wiggins prepares for a forehand slam in a match during the 2004 spring season. Wiggins enters the season No. 25 in the nation.

We don't need no stinkin' QB controversy

■ Pinkins AND Newton will lead this Gamecock team to SEC success

It was a mild, mid-September afternoon where you could go long-sleeved or short-sleeved and still be comfortable. The 10-mile-an-hour winds made tossing around the football a tempting proposition, especially for those of us stuck in the bowels of the Carolina Coliseum seven hours a day.

After about 20 minutes of taking turns pretending to be Troy Williamson grabbing 50-

JOEL WALLACE

FIFTH-YEAR PRINT JOURNALISM STUDENT

yard touchdowns or Cory Boyd making one-handed circus catches, we talked about how cool it would be if one of the many football players who frequent the Coliseum walked by and wanted to get in a quick pickup game.

George Gause and Moe Thompson might have just gotten out of class and met up with Ko Simpson and Daccus Turman. We'd pick up teams and start playing a little three-on-three. We'd play two-hand tag, of course — I may be daydreaming, but I'm not stupid.

We'd be having a good time of it, heaving Hail Marys or trying to scramble on a broken play, and let's just say Dondrial Pinkins and Syvelle Newton happened upon us.

Would my friend and I argue about who gets whom? Do you think we'd stop the game and debate over who is a better quarterback?

It's just a game — you play for fun. Do you think either of them really cares? They both have their own strengths and weaknesses, and they're both going to play, so what does it matter?

People around here get more bent out of shape over a quarterback controversy than they do about the upcoming election. The beauty of this situation is there is no controversy. Both guys know their role.

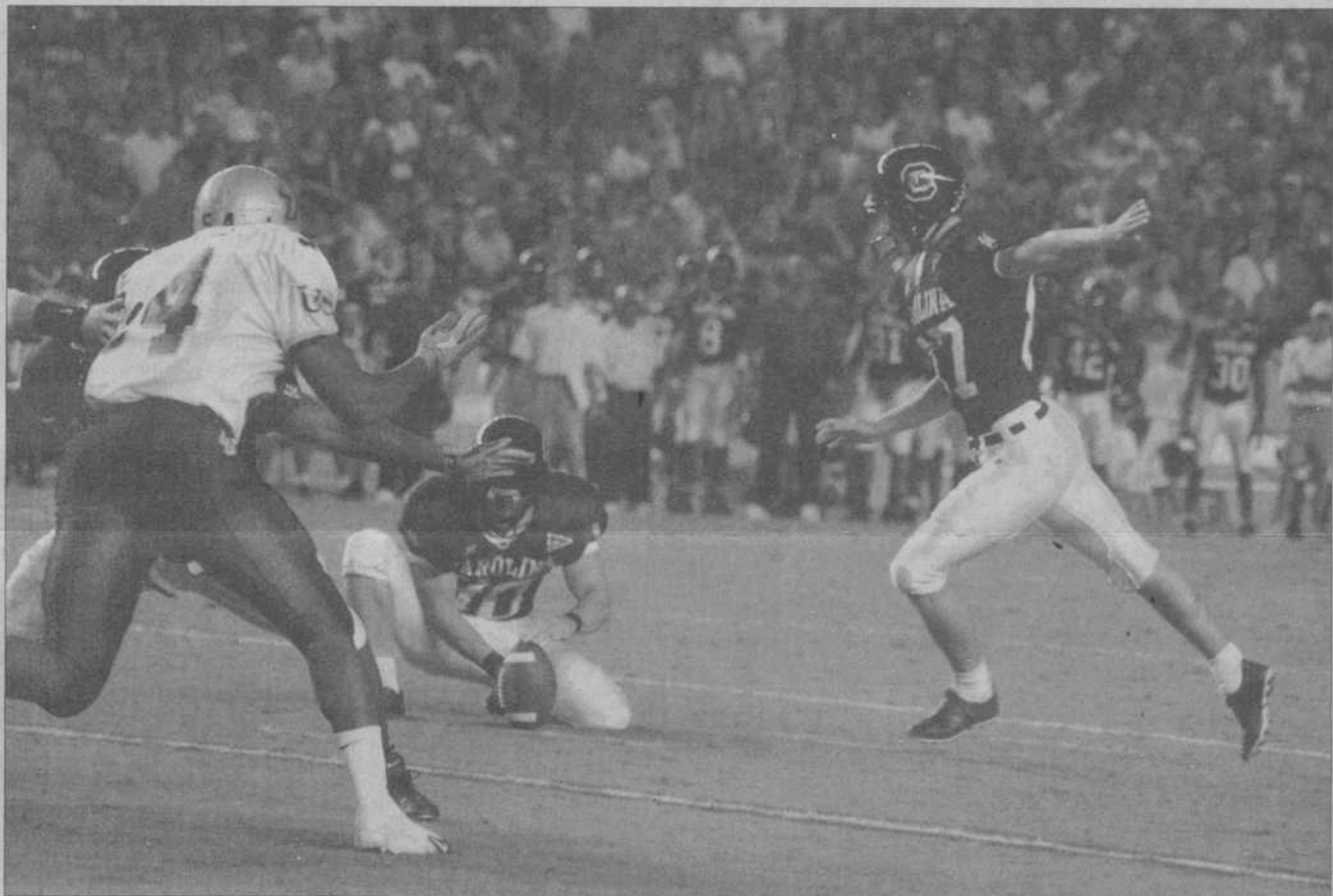
Newton sounded as good after the game as he looked during it. He deflected controversy as gracefully as he eluded South Florida's defenders Saturday. In just two games this year, Pinkins has already shown the poise and leadership ability that has been lacking in his previous campaigns.

Since they're both going to see a significant number of snaps this year, the only difference between this week and last week is now we have two guys we know are capable of leading our offense down the field and scoring points. I think Newton is going to be great, but I think it would be wise to use Pinkins while he's here and bring Newton along slowly.

He may have had the greatest debut of any quarterback in school history, but he hasn't faced the level of competition he's about to face in the upcoming weeks against SEC opponents, especially on the road.

Like Newton said, he's just the backup right now. Pinkins is back in the driver's seat, so USC fans should just sit back and enjoy the ride.

COLD FEET



KATIE KIRKLAND/THE GAMECOCK

Senior Josh Brown lines up a field goal Saturday against South Florida. Brown was 2-for-2 in the game and is 3-of-5 overall.

Holtz gives mixed analysis of special teams' execution

By STEPHEN FASTENEAU
 THE GAMECOCK

Quarterbacks aside, USC has a true controversy on its hands this week stemming from special teams, specifically the kicking game.

South Florida managed 189 kickoff return yards Saturday, the most against the Gamecocks this season. Four different Bulls had returns of 30 yards or more, with Andre Hall finishing with 111 yards on four returns.

"I was not pleased with how we covered kickoffs," USC head coach Lou Holtz said. "In fact, other than PATs and field goals, I

was not very pleased with our kicking game."

USC did improve on its field goal kicking woes last week. Josh Brown made both attempted field goals in the game, from 32 and 22 yards. Holtz said before the Gamecocks' opener against Vanderbilt that he did not want Brown to have to handle both the punting and placekicking duties. Brown made just one out of three field-goal attempts against Vanderbilt, and Holtz decided to go with Thomas Hooper and Charlie Carpenter against Georgia.

Hooper converted both of his PAT attempts, but Carpenter missed badly on a 44-yard field goal attempt, leading Holtz to

start Brown again against South Florida. At this point, Holtz said he feels that Brown is the Gamecocks' most consistent option.

Brown "is the best right now," Holtz said. "Ask me again (later) and that may change, but right now he's the best."

Holtz has traditionally preferred walk-on kickers as opposed to signing one to a scholarship but has said that would change if he found one worthy of signing in the future. Last week, Holtz explained that he was looking for his kickers to send the ball "end over end" as opposed to in a "helicopter" motion.

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MLB Twins clinch title

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Torii Hunter and the Minnesota Twins are used to celebrating in September. The playoff party never gets old, though.

The Twins clinched their third straight AL Central title Monday night with an 8-2 victory over the Chicago White Sox, then topped it off with a raucous celebration in the visitor's clubhouse.

Donning hats and T-shirts proclaiming them division champions, Minnesota players poured beer down manager Ron Gardenhire's back. Brad Radke sprayed anyone he could get. Even general manager Terry Ryan was doused with champagne.

"Three times!" Hunter screamed. "How about that?"

Not bad at all, especially for a small-budget team that was threatened with contraction just a few years ago. Now the Twins have reached the playoffs in three straight seasons for the first time in their 44-year history.

"Every year we've got to go out there and prove to somebody. But you know what? I like it," Hunter said. "We're the underdogs."

The Angels desperately want to join Minnesota in the postseason, and they gained some precious ground Monday night with a 5-2 victory over visiting Seattle.

Anaheim closed within 2 1/2 games of idle Oakland in the AL West and 4 1/2 of Boston in the wild-card chase despite playing most of the night without star right fielder Vladimir Guerrero, who was hit in the head by Ryan Franklin's 0-2 pitch in the first inning.

X-rays at a hospital were normal, and Guerrero returned to the dugout during the game.

"I don't think it was intentional. With

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SEC News & Notes

AUBURN, TENNESSEE PLAYERS EARN HONORS

Auburn senior quarterback Jason Campbell has been named the SEC offensive player of the week for his performance against then-No. 4 LSU on Saturday. Campbell engineered the Tigers' game-winning scoring drive in the fourth quarter of the 10-9 upset. On the drive, he converted a fourth-and-12 for 14 yards and a first down while under heavy pressure. Campbell then capped it

off with a 16-yard touchdown strike to Courtney Taylor.

The defensive player of the week award went to Tennessee's Kevin Burnett. The senior linebacker tallied a career-high 16 tackles in Tennessee's 30-28 win against Florida. The Volunteer defense held Florida to seven points in the second half while Burnett bolstered his tackles-per-game average to 12.

Tennessee place kicker James Wilhoit received the special teams player of the week award for his 50-yard, game-winning field goal in the Vols' win over the Gators.

BAMA, ARKANSAS GAME TO HIGHLIGHT WEEK 4

Mississippi State goes into Baton Rouge to take on LSU. MSU is

coming off an embarrassing loss to D-I-AA Maine, while the Tigers look to rebound after a loss to Auburn.

Ole Miss travels all the way to Laramie, Wyo., to play the Wyoming Cowboys of the Mountain West Conference. Wyoming beat Appalachian State in its first game of 2004 but lost the next week to Texas A&M.

After beating LSU in a crucial SEC West game, Auburn will host The Citadel. The Citadel is 0-1 on the year.

Vanderbilt will take on Navy in beautiful Annapolis, Md., this weekend. The Mids beat Vandy last year and are 3-0, while the Commodores are 0-2.

Alabama plays at Arkansas in a game that will be nationally televised on CBS. Former Miami quarterback

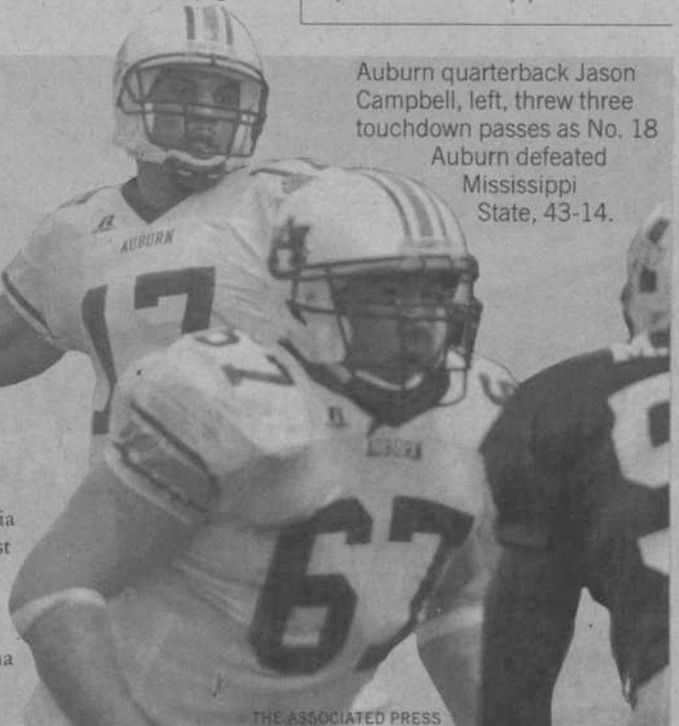
Marc Guillon will take over for Brodie Croyle who tore his ACL last week against Western Carolina.

Florida returns to the Swamp after a heartbreaking loss in Knoxville to play Kentucky. Last week, Kentucky handed Indiana its first loss of the season.

Troy makes its way to Columbia after losing to New Mexico State last week. The Gamecocks will look to get another win before taking on Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Tennessee will host Louisiana Tech, who lost to Miami 48-0.

Auburn quarterback Jason Campbell, left, threw three touchdown passes as No. 18 Auburn defeated Mississippi State, 43-14.



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