

Softball to battle Coastal in Conway on Tuesday

■ **USC to break season series tie with contest on the road**

By **JASON SCHNEIDER**
THE GAMECOCK

USC's softball team will head to the Coastal Carolina Softball Field in Conway on Tuesday for a double-header against the Coastal Carolina Chanticleers.

The Gamecocks (20-12,5-3) will try to redeem themselves after getting swept handily against fourth-ranked Tennessee last week by scores of 9-1 and 12-0.

USC has played Coastal in two previous games this year, both during the Carolina invitational in February.

In the first game, which took place on Feb. 5, the Gamecocks rolled the Chanticleers 8-2. Picking up the win was freshman Jessica Barnes, who was pitching in her college debut.

In little more than four innings, Barnes gave up three hits, wielding

two earned runs. Aleca Johnson played the reliever role to close out the game.

The Gamecocks offensive onslaught was led by Senior Meghan Cornett, who went 3 for 3 in the game. The team tallied a total of 12 hits for the contest, and all eight runs were earned.

The teams next met two days later, but the results were quite different. This time, the Chanticleers' pitching was far more successful against the Gamecocks, as Coastal Carolina gave up five hits, only two earned runs and won 3-2.

USC never saw a lead in the game, as Coastal jumped all over freshman pitcher Katie Pouliot. Pouliot pitched only one and a third innings, but was pulled after allowing three earned runs on five hits.

The Gamecocks would not give up without a fight, however, as they tried to claw their way back in the seventh inning. With two outs and two runners in scoring position, freshman Becky Martinez came through with a clutch 2 RBI

single.

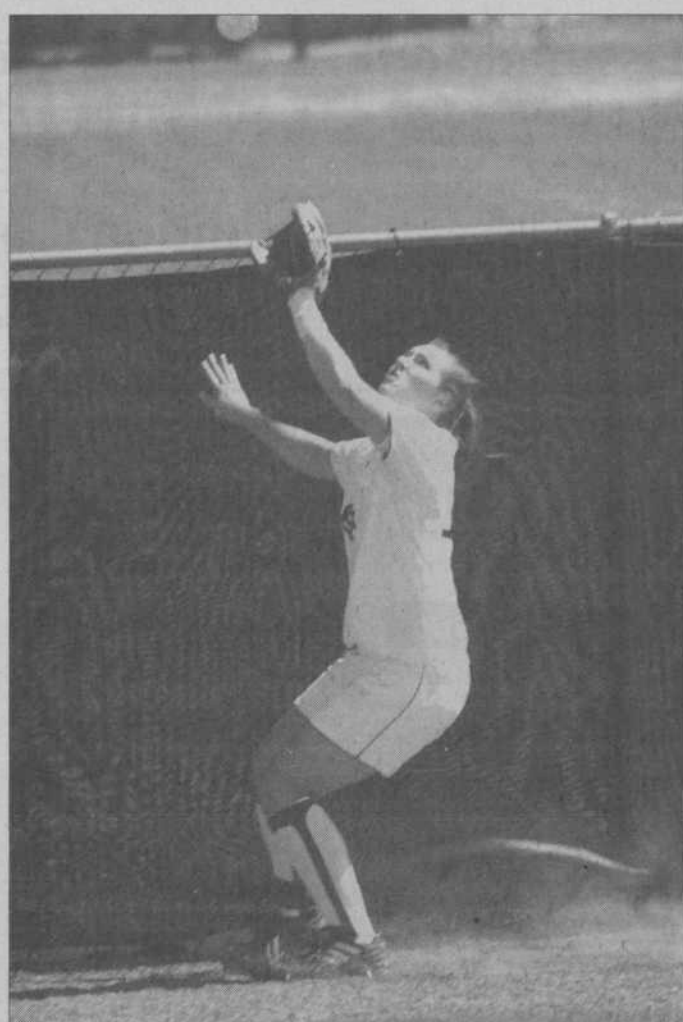
So, with the Carolina Invitational Championship on the line, the tying run at third and two outs, the game had fairy-tale finish written all over it. Unfortunately, the outcome resembled "Friday Night Lights" more than "The Natural," as pinch-hitter Kristi Hutchins struck out.

Since those two games, the Gamecocks saw some success, as they were able to climb as high as 14th in the national rankings. But as SEC play began, USC has struggled and has since dropped out of the rankings.

Coastal Carolina has not quite had the success USC has enjoyed so far. It is 11-11 and has not been able to crack the rankings.

As the Gamecocks head to Conway to take on the Chanticleers, USC will look to both rebound from the recent trouncing they suffered at the hands of the Tennessee Vols and to avenge the earlier loss to Coastal.

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KATIE KIRKLAND/THE GAMECOCK

Sophomore utility player McKenna Hughes backs up to the wall to try to rob a home run in a game played earlier this season. The USC softball team will play Coastal Carolina Tuesday in Conway.

■ **NIT**

Continued from page 10

plane," Odom said.

The Rebels will counter with an attack that has heated up. UNLV's leading scorer, Odaty Blankson, who averages 17.7 this season, poured in 19 in the Rebels' opening-round game against Arizona State. Two other players totaled 11 points, but it was the play of Ricky Morgan, who averaged just 4 points per game, that might have been most stunning. Morgan has started just 12 games this season, but shot lights-out against ASU, scoring 21 points en route to an 89-78 drubbing of the Sun Devils.

"You go back to the only nine o'clock game we played, Kentucky," Odom reminded everyone on Friday. That game was a Tuesday night showdown with the Wildcats that was also featured on ESPN. Carolina shocked the then-No. 3 team in the country 73-61.

"I think people will get excited about it. Hopefully our players will catch the fever as well. I'm excited about it."

Tickets for Tuesday's match-up are on sale now. Students can pick up tickets for \$4 at the Russell House starting today.

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Pitcher Ishii traded to Mets; Mondesi, Williams injured

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The New York Mets found a fill-in for injured pitcher Steve Trachsel.

Bernie Williams and Raul Mondesi hope to be back on the field in a few days.

With Trachsel sidelined for at least three to six months following back surgery, the Mets traded reserve catcher Jason Phillips to the Los Angeles Dodgers for left-hander Kazuhisa Ishii on Sunday.

Ishii will step into the No. 5 spot in the rotation behind Pedro Martinez, Tom Glavine, Kris Benson and Victor Zambrano.

"We were able to get a guy who has won. And I like having two lefties in the rotation. It gives us good balance," Mets general manager Omar Minaya said in

Port St. Lucie, Fla. "He just finds a way to win."

Ishii went 13-8 with a 4.71 ERA in 31 starts last season for Los Angeles. Often erratic, he walked 98 batters in 172 innings.

He is 36-25 with a 4.30 ERA in three seasons with the Dodgers since coming over from Japan.

"Of course I wanted to pitch for the Dodgers, but the Mets are a good team, too, so I want to pitch well for them," Ishii said. "I'll have to buy a coat because it's cold."

At Kissimmee, Fla., Mondesi injured his hamstring while running out a double during the Atlanta Braves' 2-1 loss to a St. Louis Cardinals split squa. The right fielder is expected to miss at least a few games, but he still plans to be ready for opening day.

"The doctor says one week at the most," Mondesi said.

But sitting out for any time at all could be costly for Mondesi, who is still regaining his timing at the plate after missing most of his troubled 2004 season with Pittsburgh and Anaheim.

"I didn't play much last year, so I need to play as much as I can to be ready for the season," he said.

At St. Petersburg, Fla., the New York Yankees played without Williams and Derek Jeter, losing 5-3 to the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

Williams strained his upper back during batting practice before the game. He is expected to miss at least a couple games.

"Hopefully, it's nothing serious," manager Joe Torre said. "He'll get treatment. That's all that's planned right now. We'll have to wait until tomorrow to see what it feels like."

■ **NCAA**

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making its first sweet 16 appearance after upsetting both No. 5 seed Alabama and No. 4 seed Boston College.

The SEC finished the first round 3-2 with Florida, Kentucky and Mississippi State all advancing. However, round two was unkind to the conference, as Florida continued its streak of five consecutive seasons losing in the first weekend, falling to Villanova in second-round action. Kentucky advanced to the sweet 16 after pulling away from Cincinnati late in its second-round game. Mississippi State battled through its second-round game with No. 1 seed Duke, but fell to the Blue Devils by 8 points.

The ACC continued to prove it is the best conference in college basketball, going 5-0 in the first round of the big dance. The second round was not as kind to the conference though, as Wake Forest and No. 5 seed Georgia Tech fell to West Virginia and No. 4 seed Louisville, respectively.

No. 1 seed North Carolina has been the class of the tournament so far, seemingly scoring at will in blowouts of Oakland and the Big 12's Iowa State. No. 1 seeds Washington and Illinois both made it through the weekend without real scares.

Play will resume on Thursday as the sweet 16 is narrowed down to the 2005 Final Four by the end of the weekend.

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■ **BASEBALL**

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one run in an overpowering display. Schmidt, a freshman, struck out 11 of the 22 batters he faced to dominate the first seven innings of the contest. When Land took over in the eighth inning, victory was nearly out of reach for Carolina as the Razorbacks already possessed a commanding seven-to-zero lead.

Rowlett was driven in from third base on an error by the shortstop, Tolleson. In the fifth, Dugger's double to right-field anchored a six-run inning. Dugger tallied six RBIs in the series.

With the losses, USC drops to 17-3 on the season and an unexpected 1-2 start to SEC play.

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- ◆ ALD inducted 627 new members on February 25, 2005;
- ◆ Brittany Sheppe, former ALD President, recently completed her term serving on the ALD National Council;
- ◆ Josh Black has been awarded a \$7,500 fellowship, the largest National ALD Award, and Anne Cooper Ellefson and Dargan Gore were each awarded \$1,000 undergraduate Trow Scholarships, continuing the USC chapter's national competitiveness;
- ◆ The USC Chapter annually gives out over \$1,000 in financial awards to its members;
- ◆ ALD participates in over 16 different service activities each year, including *The USC Challenge*, a yearly SC high school academic team competition

