

Briefs

Gamecock freshmen top SEC honor roll

SEC Commissioner Mike Slive announced Thursday that USC topped the SEC Freshman Academic Honor Roll with 76 student-athletes.

Women's swimming and diving led all USC teams with 11 athletes. For men's teams, soccer led with seven.

The list has 469 freshman student-athletes from 12 schools and is based on grades from the 2004-2005 academic year.

Women's golf soars onto scholars' team

Six members of USC's women's golf team have earned spots on the National Golf Coaches Association All-America Scholar-Athlete team.

This is the second consecutive year USC has had more women's golfers on the list than any team in the country.

Junior Erica Battle, senior Tiffany Catafygiotu, sophomore Jenna Pearson and freshmen Caroline Rominger, Whitney Simons and Blythe Worley were recognized for academic achievement.

Will cycling live after Armstrong?

Watching American cyclist and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong cross the finish line at the end of the Tour de France's 10th stage to re-take the leader's yellow jersey last week made it hard to tell this was a man approaching the end of his professional career. However, that's just what the greatest Tour rider in history intends to do July 24 — hang up his wheels for good.

Cycling is in many ways an anomalous sport, and not just because its participants clad themselves in form-fitting Lycra; the 32-year-old Armstrong will walk away considered an old athlete in a sport dominated by those in their late 20s. The Texan has become a symbol of hope to the cancer community for his 1997 battle with testicular cancer. His Livestrong foundation, formed to advocate increased cancer research and awareness, sparked the colored wristband surge with their now ubiquitous yellow bangles seen on Hollywood stars and Olympians.



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But what is the future of American cycling after Lance's shadow has receded into the background — will the sport simply fade back into obscurity except on the Continent?

Greenville resident George Hincapie, Lance's lieutenant in the tour and teammate for more than a decade, won this year's 15th Tour stage. While George might not have the qualities of a Tour contender, it was a signal that an oh-so-American run at domination in yet another sport wouldn't fold like a stack of cards come next year.

Two other Americans on different European teams built around them for Le Tour are its top 10 — Gerolsteiner's Levi Leipheimer and Phonak's Floyd Landis, a former teammate of Lance. Another American, Tyler Hamilton managed fourth place overall in 2003, and Leipheimer was ninth last year.

With so many riders in their prime turning in continually improving performances, the future of American competition in Europe is bright. Big results where it matters, like France in July, coupled with a thriving domestic scene means you should give the next cyclist you see out training a wide berth and a friendly wave — he might just be the next Armstrong.

NCAA investigates USC

By JONATHAN HILLYARD
THE GAMECOCK

With USC's football opener only more than a month away, coach Steve Spurrier and the rest of the Gamecock faithful have yet another setback to deal with before taking the gridiron. USC released a summary disposition report Wednesday outlining 10 NCAA violations within the athletics department.

USC, according to the report, has recommended the Committee on Infractions place USC on a two-year probation during which the football program would lose two scholarships and would be allowed six less official visits during the 24-month span. The committee can accept this proposal or add additional penalties and is expected to rule on the matter at a meeting Aug. 12-14.

The football program was the target of what turned out to be just under a three-year investigation. In the report, six major violations are outlined, leading the NCAA to cite a lack of institutional control within the football program.

Four of the described violations are listed as dealing with recruiting and two as extra benefits, leading the NCAA to say in the report, "While this case involves a number of different types of violations, at least one theme emerged from three of the violations of this case. That theme involved efforts to keep or get several top football

student-athletes eligible but done so in violation of NCAA rules."

The full list of infractions can be found at uscnews.com.

The report's main target is former Associate Athletics Director Tom Perry, who is listed in all but one of the violations. According to the report, one witness reported Perry had an attitude of getting things done any way he could. USC terminated Perry in 2004 for "unethical behavior."

Former coach Lou Holtz is mentioned in one violation, described as "presence of media during recruiting contact". This incident occurred in January 2004, when Holtz met with then recruits Matt Raysor and Alonzo Middleton with a newspaper reporter present. Attempts by the media to get comment from Holtz have been largely unsuccessful, but Holtz shed some light earlier in the week in an interview transcribed by the AP.

"Five of the (10) violations were reported by us," Holtz said. "There was no money involved, no recruiting violations, no enticements. But nevertheless, you don't want to get any marks against you."

Former Athletics Director Mike McGee, who retired effective June 31, issued these remarks in a prepared statement.

"I believe that the NCAA's investigation of the university has been comprehensive and that the university has assisted in

the investigation in an open and honest manner. Any violation of NCAA legislation is unacceptable, and I regret that five violations not previously discovered by the athletics department were discovered," McGee said. "Carolina's athletics department has always been characterized by a strong commitment to full compliance with NCAA rules and the diligent pursuit of possible violations. The compliance program in place has been effective. When violations are discovered, they have been immediately reported to the NCAA, SEC and university administration, and swift and decisive corrective actions have been taken."

Spurrier, who in eight months has endured double-digit discipline problems among players and now has to deal with violations that occurred under someone else's watch, issued the following statement.

"These matters occurred before my staff and I arrived in November," Spurrier said. "Hopefully, the NCAA will agree to the penalties we are proposing, which I believe are fair, so that we can get this matter behind us. I'm excited about the future of Carolina football."

Spurrier will have his 2005 team all together for the first time Aug. 1 when preseason practice begins in Columbia.

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