

Some Gamecock assistants to have new duties in 2006

Michael Aguilar
THE GAMECOCK

The football season has come and gone, but some argue that the most important time for football is now.

"I always like to finish recruiting," USC football coach Steve Spurrier said. "Then, after all that, I like to evaluate the coaching staff and reorganize things."

Spurrier did just that. The coaching staff will see many changes this coming season. Tyrone Nix, who was a co-defensive coordinator and coached the defensive lineman, will coach the inside linebackers next season and also will remain as the defensive coordinator.

Nix also was relieved of assistant head coaching

duties.

"We didn't want him to have too much on his plate," Spurrier said of that move.

Ron Cooper will take over as the assistant head coach and will also move to coaching the secondary. He was in charge of the linebackers last season.

"I'm confident that if I'm not here, Ron (Cooper) can do a good job," Spurrier said.

David Reaves will take over as the recruiting coordinator in addition to being assistant quarterbacks coach. Reaves will also fill in if any of the other offensive coaches cannot be present. Specifically, he will be a backup for Fred Chatham, who was promoted to special teams coordinator in addition to being the tight ends coach.

Dave Wommack will switch from coaching the secondary to the outside linebackers.

The offensive coaching positions will stay the same with John Hunt coaching the offensive line, Steve Spurrier Jr. coaching the receivers and Rob Gillespie staying as the running backs coach.

"We are not getting rid of anybody," Spurrier said. "We are reorganizing a bit. I think it will help make us a better offense, defense and team."

The reorganized coaching staff will be on display during the annual Garnet and Black spring game, which is scheduled for April 8 at 2 p.m.

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Juan / THE GAMECOCK

USC coach Steve Spurrier talks with the media Monday. Spurrier would not talk about a potential replacement for departed coach John Thompson.

BASEBALL TO OPEN SEASON AGAINST ELON

AJ Bembry
THE GAMECOCK

Coach Ray Tanner and the Carolina baseball team will start the 2006 season when they begin a three-game series with the Elon Phoenix today at 3 p.m. The projected lineup for the Gamecocks could look a little different from last year's NCAA Regional team, when as many as three freshmen make their first career starts later today. Armed with a mixture of youth and veterans, the Gamecocks are ready to hit the diamond and get a good look at the makeup of this year's team.

"I know our guys are ready to play against somebody in a different colored uniform," Tanner said. "We've gotten a lot of quality work in, we've got some questions, but, you know, it's time to play."

Chief among those questions is how the team hopes to replace departed pitchers Zac McCamie and Aaron Rawl. The tandem won 18 games last season, tallying nine apiece. The coaching staff will get to look at right-hander Andrew Cruse when he takes the mound today. The sophomore from Cornelius, N.C., played in 14 games last season with a 3-1 record and a 3.54 ERA. Lefty juniors Arik Hempy and Forrest Beverly will round out the weekend rotation by starting Saturday and Sunday, respectively.

Although the starters have been named, a new face figures to see some time this weekend. Tanner said he hopes to use freshman lefty Will Atwood, the 2005 S.C. AAA high school player of the year, sometime during the weekend, but he said there is no specific timetable for when Atwood or anyone else will come out of the bullpen.

"I'm not one to do predetermined splits or try to get 10 guys in this weekend, but we'll probably go to the bullpen quicker than we ever have because we like our depth," Tanner said. "We think our starters are pretty good, but we know that we can put a guy out there that's probably just as good as the guy that started, so we'll probably use more pitchers than we have in the past."

Tanner said the depth at the pitching position made it hard to decide whom the starters were going to be for the weekend series.

"It was a very difficult process. I can't remember ever having to go through this process and spend this much time picking out a starter," Tanner said. "Sometimes you wonder who the No. 3 guy's going to be, but you always know who the front guys are based on their history, innings pitched before, but this was tough."

Today's game is set for a 3 p.m. Weekend games are set for 1:30 p.m.

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Carolina sweeps Gators

Odom's team beats top-10 Florida for second time in as many weeks

Andrew Abramson
THE INDEPENDENT
FLORIDA ALLIGATOR

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Perhaps Steve Spurrier's presence looms even over the basketball court, or maybe the Gators were still celebrating from a nationally televised win against Kentucky.

But to USC coach Dave Odom, simple mathematics explain the Gamecocks' stunning 71-67 victory against No. 7 Florida that put an end to the Gators' 20-game home winning streak.

South Carolina swept the season series with the Gators for the first time since 1998, and two of Florida's (20-3, 6-3) three losses have been at the hands of the Gamecocks. Thus, two of USC's (12-10, 3-6 SEC) three conference wins have come against the Gators.

"The greatest equalizer in college basketball — it doesn't make a difference about talent or who's better than who — is the 3-point line," Florida coach Billy Donovan said.

USC hit 10-of-21 shots from beyond the arc. Guard Tarence Kinsey and unheralded reserve swingman Bryce Sheldon both were 4-of-6 from behind the 3-point line.

Donovan, unusually calm after the loss, did criticize his forwards for allowing Sheldon to come off the bench and score 14 points.

"Get out there and make him a driver, let's see how many times he can finish going to the basket," Donovan said. "We allowed him to do what he does well and that's shoot the basketball."

Gators forward Joakim Noah led the Gators with 15 points, but he grabbed just three rebounds while turning the ball over a team-high five times.

Lee Humphrey appeared fully recovered from his separated shoulder suffered

in a bicycle accident — the guard scored 12 points off the bench, all from 3-pointers.

Odom credited his team's ability to contain Florida's Taurean Green, who he called one of the two best guards in the SEC. While Green put up 14 points, he shot just 3-of-9 to go with three assists and three turnovers.

The Gators led 60-56 with 4:13 remaining in the game, but Sheldon responded with a 3-pointer to bring the margin to one.

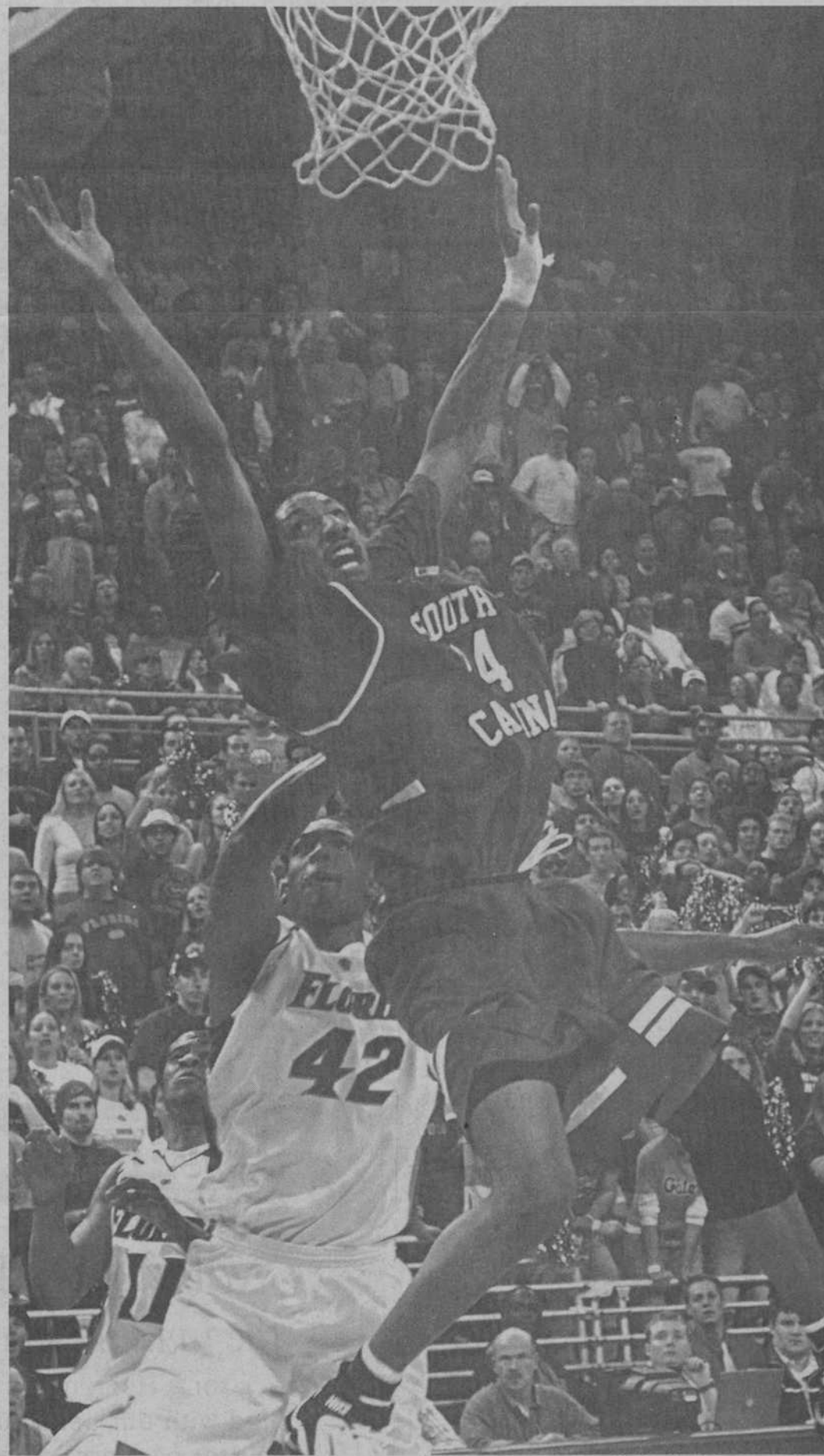
One play later, Noah nearly went for the dunk to give Florida a 3-point lead, but a steal by Tre' Kelley and a 3-pointer by Kinsey gave the Gamecocks a 62-60 lead they wouldn't relinquish.

The Gators had several chances to recover. With 28 seconds remaining and the Gamecocks up 67-64, Kelley threw a full-court pass to Renaldo Balkman that nearly went out-of-bounds. Instead, Balkman grabbed the ball under the basket, and Florida's Al Horford tried to send him to the free-throw line.

Horford ended up slapping Balkman in the head, sending him to the ground. The intentional foul put Balkman at the line and gave South Carolina another possession.

"I felt like we could win coming in, all the way through the game I thought we could win," Odom said. "But when I really felt like the door opened was ... the intentional foul. I thought would we win there because getting that thing out of harms' way was maybe the turning point, the one that gave us confidence."

Humphrey would eventually hit a 3-pointer, and Florida would have a final chance to send the game into overtime in the closing seconds, but the Gators couldn't get Humphrey an open look. Brandon Wallace



Phil Sandlin / The Associated Press

USC forward Renaldo Balkman loses the ball as Florida's Al Horford is called for an intentional foul in the final moments of the Gamecocks' 71-67 win against the No. 7 Gators on Wednesday. USC improved to 3-6 in the SEC in beating the Gators again.

blocked Green's 3-point attempt with eight seconds remaining.

The Gators are two games behind Tennessee for the SEC East lead before facing SEC West leader LSU on Saturday.

"You can be on top of the world [after defeating Kentucky] ... and you can come back and perform the way you did today," Donovan said. "It just goes to show that you're not as good as you think you are

and you're not as bad as you think you are.

"You better come with a level of focus and preparation and humility and understand who you are as a player and as a team."