

USC BASEBALL

Tanner back at work after honor roll



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RALEIGH

THE SECOND annual Ray Tanner Celebration Tour found its way to the Raleigh Hot Stove League banquet earlier this week. Tanner, a native of nearby Benson, was presented the Will Wynne Award as the North Carolinian most outstanding in baseball. While it might seem from the outside as just another in a long line of honors to come Tanner's way, consider that the South Carolina coach is

now a three-time winner. Among those who have won three or more times are Hall of Fame pitchers Jim "Catfish" Hunter and Gaylord Perry, as well as former major-leaguer Roger Craig and current big-league star Josh Hamilton. Perhaps most telling of the evening was what happened following the banquet. Tanner immediately climbed into his car, along with USC assistant coach Chad Holbrook, and returned to Columbia.

They arrived at 2 a.m. Tanner was in his Carolina Stadium office seven hours later. "Back at it. You just keep going," Tanner said. "Occasionally, you hit a wall, but we were back (Wednesday) on the field. I guess it's mind over your body sometimes. You just keep pushing." After winning the national championship in 2010, Tanner pushed his way through more than 100 appearances from Rotary Club gatherings to

a USC commencement address. After winning another national title, Tanner again made in excess of 100 appointments from breakfast talks to being named the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce ambassador of the year. From the time the baseball settled into the glove of center fielder Jackie Bradley in June to secure USC's championship-clinching win over Florida



FILE PHOTOGRAPH/THESTATE.COM
Baseball coach Ray Tanner was in demand again during the offseason.

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USC WOMEN 61, MISSISSIPPI 43

3s add up to important win

USC ATHLETICS

Report received careful scrutiny

Van Horn is USC's 'lighthouse' in matters regarding NCAA compliance

By JOSH KENDALL
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When South Carolina handed in its 120-page response to an NCAA Notice of Allegations in December, Judy Van Horn felt good about it. Two weeks before that, she did not.

The document was nearly complete and university officials indicated it might be turned into the NCAA and released to the public before the Dec. 14 deadline when Van Horn decided it wasn't good enough.

"We locked ourselves up in a room and went through it line by line," Van Horn told USC's University Athletics Advisory Committee last week. "It came down to the wire."

Van Horn, the Gamecocks senior associate athletics director and senior woman administrator, walked the USC Athletic Advisory Committee through the school's response to its second case of NCAA major violations since 2005. South Carolina goes before the NCAA Committee on Infractions on Feb. 17-18 in Los Angeles.

The infractions committee will read the report, which Van Horn led a group in preparing, and then question school officials about its contents before releasing the school's sanctions four to eight weeks after the infractions meeting.

"I feel really good about (the report)," Van Horn said. "It takes the facts and puts them in the best pos-

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRACY GLANTZ/TGLANTZ@THESTATE.COM

Gamecocks guard Ebony Wilson and Mississippi guard Whitney Hameth battle for the ball as Rebels guard Valencia McFarland (3) looks on during Thursday's first half at Colonial Life Arena.

Gamecocks strengthen NCAA resume by routing Rebels

By ANDREW SHAIN
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USC's 3-point barrage from guards La'Keisha Sutton and Markeshia Grant overwhelmed Mississippi in a 61-43 win on Wednesday.

The victory was the second straight for the Gamecocks (15-6, 5-3) after a three-game losing streak and sets the team on a positive path for the final eight

INSIDE

A look at the numbers behind the USC men's victory over Alabama, **C4**

contests of SEC play. After two seasons of scrambling late and failing to snare an NCAA bid, the Gamecocks stand in a good spot with a 41st RPI ranking at the beginning of the week.

"I like where we are," USC coach Dawn Staley

said.

South Carolina dominated Mississippi in the first half behind 14 points by Sutton, who hit all four of her 3-point shots, to take a 35-16 lead into the locker room.

But the Rebels (12-9, 2-6) scored the final four points of the first half and started the second half making nine of their first 10 shots to

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USC guard Ieasia Walker shoots against Ole Miss.

NASCAR

France likes where road is leading

By JIM UTTER
The Charlotte Observer

There are big changes on the horizon for NASCAR.

They just aren't going to be all unveiled this season.

During his "state of the sport" address Thursday at the NASCAR Hall of Fame,

NASCAR Chairman Brian France said 2012 would be more about building on the success and positive trends started in 2011.

"The sport is in a very good place and we're going to work even harder to achieve the very best things for the sport of NASCAR well into the fu-

ture," France said on the final day of the Sprint Media Tour hosted by Charlotte Motor Speedway.

"We expect to have another highly competitive battle for the championship this year with our biggest stars and many new faces in the mix."

Tony Stewart won his

third Sprint Cup championship in dramatic fashion in the series finale and NASCAR saw increases in TV audience and in attendance at many tracks.

There are some changes this season, however.

The Cup series will move to the use of electronic fuel injection, but that's unlike-

ly to be noticed by fans.

NASCAR has tried hard to entice teams to return to the more traditional "big pack" racing at Daytona and Talladega, rather than the two-car drafting tandems that became commonplace in the past year.

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MAKING THE GRADE

For sixth consecutive year, Gamecocks top Fall SEC honor roll.

C4



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