

GAMECOCK

SOFTBALL PREVIEW



2003

JSU Gamecock Softball 2003

McGinnis, Gamecocks hope to wind up on top of the Atlantic Sun

By Amado Ortiz
The Chanticleer Staff Writer

The 2003 Jacksonville State softball team will look to repeat last year's fast start, and keep the momentum going long enough to take their last shot at an Atlantic Sun Conference title.

The Gamecocks get things kicked off with a home game against Lipscomb on Feb. 12 at University Field.

Even though the Atlantic Sun is the seventh-strongest conference nationally, head coach Jana McGinnis remains confident that her Gamecocks will compete for the conference title.

The Gamecocks lost only two seniors from last year's team, which was ranked 18th nationally in defense. Add to that the fact that all of their starting pitchers are coming back, and it looks like McGinnis and the Gamecocks have the

pieces in place for a championship run.

McGinnis said the key difference from last year's team is maturity. "Last year's team was mainly freshmen (and) sophomores," the coach said. "This team is older and more sound defensively. We're really going to need our three seniors Stacey Smith, Veronica Davis and Allie Simons to step up their play."

The Gamecocks added some depth on the pitcher's mound with Eastern Arizona Community College transfer Emily Espensel. "Emily has great experience and should make an immediate impact," said McGinnis.

Other additions to the team include junior college transfer Janae Bonin, who McGinnis said will add versatility to the infield. Also new to the team is the lone freshman recruit, Becky Carpenetti, from Moody High School in Leeds.

Carpenetti brings a gutsy attitude and great defensive skills to a team that already boasts two preseason all-conference players in Allie Simons and Renee Hassan. Both are infielders and keys to the Gamecocks making an impact in conference play.

The Gamecocks will need the leadership and experience, as they own one of the toughest schedules in conference play. JSU plays at Ole Miss in their first tournament of the year and will host the University of Alabama on March 4. The Atlantic Sun schedule is one of the most demanding schedules from top to bottom in the NCAA.

The softball team will be tested early and often this season, but if by playing the best a team gets a chance to be the best, McGinnis and the Gamecocks should be near the top of the heap in their last year in the A-Sun.



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2003 JSU Softball Schedule

Day	Date	Opponent/Tournament	Location	Time
Wed	Feb. 12	Lipscomb	University Field	3:30 p.m.
Sat	Feb. 15	Ole Miss / Ole Miss Tour.	Oxford, Miss.	1:30 p.m.
Sat	Feb. 15	Miss. State / Ole Miss Tour.	Oxford, Miss.	3:45 p.m.
Sun	Feb. 16	Indiana State / Ole Miss Tour.	Oxford, Miss.	9 a.m.
Sun	Feb. 16	UT-Martin / Ole Miss Tour.	Oxford, Miss.	1:30 p.m.
Sun	Feb. 16	Nicholls State / Ole Miss Tour.	Oxford, Miss.	3:45 p.m.
Mon	Feb. 24	Tenn. State	Nashville, Tenn.	2 p.m.
Sat	Mar. 1	Savannah St./Bulldog Classic	Huntsville	11 a.m.
Sat	Mar. 1	Alabama A&M/Bulldog Classic	Huntsville	3 p.m.
Sat	Mar. 1	Jacksonville Univ./Bulldog Classic	Huntsville	7 p.m.
Sun	Mar. 2	#1 vs. #4/Bulldog Classic	Huntsville	9 a.m.
Sun	Mar. 2	#2 vs. #3/Bulldog Classic	Huntsville	11 a.m.
Sun	Mar. 2	Championship/Bulldog Classic	Huntsville	1 p.m.
Tue	Mar. 4	Alabama	University Field	6 p.m.
Fri	Mar. 7	E. Kentucky/Coll. of Charleston Inv.	Charleston, S.C.	10 a.m.
Fri	Mar. 7	St. Bonnies/Coll. of Charleston Inv.	Charleston, S.C.	4 p.m.
Fri	Mar. 7	Toledo/Coll. of Charleston Inv.	Charleston, S.C.	6 p.m.
Sat	Mar. 8	N. Illinois/Coll. of Charleston Inv.	Charleston, S.C.	10 a.m.
Sun	Mar. 9	Finals/Coll. of Charleston Inv.	Charleston, S.C.	
Tue	Mar. 11	E. Illinois	University Field	4 p.m.
Thu	Mar. 13	*Gardner-Webb	Boiling Springs, N.C.	12 p.m.
Fri	Mar. 14	Coll. of Charleston/Winthrop Tour.	Rock Hill, S.C.	2 p.m.
Fri	Mar. 14	Ohio/Winthrop Tour.	Rock Hill, S.C.	6 p.m.
Sat	Mar. 15	Marshall/Winthrop Tour.	Rock Hill, S.C.	2 p.m.
Sat	Mar. 15	Monmouth/Winthrop Tour.	Rock Hill, S.C.	6 p.m.
Sun	Mar. 16	Single Elimination/Winthrop Tour.	Rock Hill, S.C.	
Tue	Mar. 18	*Belmont	University Field	4 p.m.
Thu	Mar. 20	*Jacksonville Univ.	University Field	3 p.m.
Sat	Mar. 22	Colgate / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	7:50 a.m.
Sat	Mar. 22	St. Peters / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	9:40 a.m.
Sun	Mar. 23	Florida A&M / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	9 a.m.
Sun	Mar. 23	Dartmouth / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	12:40 p.m.
Mon	Mar. 24	Wright State / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	9 a.m.
Mon	Mar. 24	Towson / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	12:40 p.m.
Tue	Mar. 25	San Jose State / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	9 a.m.
Tue	Mar. 25	Towson / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	10:50 a.m.
Wed	Mar. 26	Wright State / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	9 a.m.
Wed	Mar. 26	San Jose State / Rebel Games	Orlando, Fla.	12:40 p.m.
Thu	Apr. 3	*Georgia State	University Field	3 p.m.
Tue	Apr. 8	*Samford	Birmingham	4 p.m.
Fri	Apr. 11	*Central Florida	Orlando, Fla.	2 p.m.
Sun	Apr. 13	*Stetson	Alabama	1 p.m.
Tue	Apr. 15	*Troy State	Troy	4 p.m.
Sat	Apr. 19	*Campbell	University Field	1 p.m.
Mon	Apr. 21	Birmingham Southern	Birmingham	5 p.m.
Wed	Apr. 23	Lipscomb	Nashville, Tenn.	2 p.m.
Fri	Apr. 25	*Mercer	Macon, Ga.	3:30 p.m.
Sun	Apr. 27	*FAU	Boca Raton, Fla.	1 p.m.
Thu	May 8	Atlantic Sun Conference Tour.	Troy, AL	

Bold type indicates home game
Asterisk (*) indicates Atlantic Sun Conference opponent

2003 Gamecock Softball Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	B-T	Ht.	Cl.	Hometown/Previous School
2	Stacey Smith	OF	L/R	5-3	Sr.	Oxford/Oxford HS
4	Samantha Gutierrez	OF/2nd	R/R	5-0	So.	Huntsville/Grissom HS
5	Rachel Countryman	SS	R/R	5-6	Jr.	Stelle/Ashville HS
7	Ashley Cling	OF	R/R	5-8	Fr.	Arcadia, Calif./Arcadia HS
8	Emily Espensel	P	R/R	5-8	Fr.	Sandy, Org./E. Arizona CC
9	Renee Hasan	IF	R/R	5-3	Jr.	Carlsbad, Calif./Carlsbad HS
10	Veronica Davis	P	R/R	5-8	SR	Carmichael, Calif./Saremento City CC
11	Jessica Ford	OF	R/R	5-9	Jr.	Sand Rock/Sand Rock HS
12	Allie Simons	IF	R/R	5-7	SR	Columbia, S.C./Richland NE
13	Melinda McDonald	C/DH	L/L	5-6	Fr.	Port Orchard, Wash./South Kitsap HS
16	Annie Davis	1st/OF	L/L		So.	Midlothian, VA/Monacan HS
17	Becky Carpenetti	3rd	R/R	5-3	Fr.	Leeds/Moody HS
21	Breanne Oleman	P/OF	R/R	5-5	So.	Salem, Ore./Salem Academy
23	Janae Bonin	IF	R/R	5-4	Fr.	Greshman, Ore./Mount Hood CC
31	Tera Ross	P	R/R	5-11	Jr.	Cooper City, Fla./American Heritage HS



Courtesy JSU/Steve Latham

Junior infielder Renee Hasan dives for the plate for the Gamecocks against Georgia Tech last season.

Hasan keeps defying opponents' expectations

By Mike Vaughan II
The Chanticleer Staff Writer

Renee Hasan is the type of player opposing teams don't usually fear at first glance.

She's the cute girl, a definite girl-next-door type. She's also 5-foot-3, not exactly Godzilla proportions. When teams see her play, though, their opinions quickly change, as the Gamecock junior is definitely a player to be dealt with. If they don't, she'll show them the old "dynamite in small packages" saying is understated.

Hasan is a Carlsbad, Calif., native, and a graduate of Carlsbad High School. A four year starter, she received the prestigious Most Inspirational award and the Iron Woman award from her school. She was one of the Top 25 in San Diego softball in 2000. Her team finished fifth in the National Finals in 1999. She has played softball in some form every year since her sixth grade year. She also participated in basketball and cross-country in high school.

She has been a big player since arriving at Jacksonville State in 2001. She started 50 games her freshman year, leading the team in at bats with 162 and finishing fourth in hits with 35 for a placement on the All-Trans American Athletic Conference freshman team.

Her sophomore season saw her start all 54 games for JSU, leading the team with a .306 batting average, 53 hits, 27 walks, and a .404 on-base percentage. She was also the only first team All A-Sun Conference member for JSU last year. She hit back-to-back home runs versus Stetson last year, a rarity for a lead off hitter.

She feels she can be a very positive leader for the Gamecock women this year, saying, "I think I lead in a positive manner. I like to work hard on defense and I try to be a very consistent hitter. I try to lead by playing (by) example and by my athleticism." Coach Jana McGinnis feels the same, saying "She stepped into a leadership role last year, and needed to be as a lead-off hitter," McGinnis said. "She works very hard during practices, she's the

... she's the first in to hit, the last one on the field to take extra balls for fielding and the other players see that and want to raise their playing level to match hers."

-- Jana McGinnis
JSU head coach

see Hasan, page 4

Lifetime of competition helps McGinnis to lead and succeed

By Jamie M. Eubanks
The Chanticleer News Editor

All her life, Jana McGinnis has played ball. She attributes who she is to athletics and she hopes to pass those qualities on to JSU's softball team.

McGinnis has a twin sister, Dana Austin, with whom she's been playing ball since they were two. The two grew up in Goshen Community just outside of Piedmont, Ala.

The twins played on a traveling women's softball team when they were 12. They played aside 20-year-olds and traveled across the southeast. In seventh grade they started on the varsity basketball team.

McGinnis recalled birthdays going uncelebrated because they were on the road. One of their older sisters scheduled her wedding around basketball games.

After high school, McGinnis and Austin received four-year basketball scholarships to JSU. The softball program didn't start at JSU until their sophomore year. Both practiced with the team, but when their basketball coach found out, they never returned to JSU's diamond.

McGinnis said she and her sister loved both sports, but they excelled differently. Austin excelled in basketball and McGinnis in softball.

McGinnis' expertise was in slow pitch softball, which is a totally different game compared to fast pitch. This kept her from accepting many requests by then University president Houston Cole.

She received her first job out of college at Cherokee County High School. There she coached basketball for one year. That year her team won a state championship.

The next year she came to JSU to be the head softball coach and has called it home since.



Courtesy Adam Storey

JSU's head softball coach Jana McGinnis, center, with assistants Julie Boland and Mark Wisener.

McGinnis studied the game, as any good coach would. She found that fast pitch softball is much like another favorite sport—basketball.

"There's so much strategy to the fast pitch game," according to McGinnis. "I think that's why I love this sport because in basketball there's a lot of strategy. There's a lot of thinking to it. It is not a boring game."

Away from the field, McGinnis is a wife and a mother. Juggling family and career can be difficult for anyone and she spends as much time with her team as she does her family. McGinnis has found that balance between the two.

"You give 110 percent," McGinnis said. "When I'm here at my work, it's 110 percent. When I go home, it's 110 percent to my family."

"I make that clear to my team," she said. "They know my priorities. My faith in God is number one, but my second priority during softball season is my family and softball. If it came down to where I had to choose, they know where I stand. Family is always the most important. And I would expect them to do the same."

McGinnis can't remember a time when she wasn't playing ball, but she said she wouldn't change anything. Sports have

instilled certain values that make her who she is.

Mental toughness, dedication and a good work ethic are the things she treasures from her experience with athletics.

"Have a goal in life and be dedicated to it," McGinnis said. "And work hard to accomplish that goal. Don't settle for mediocrity."

She encourages her daughter Peyton to have a goal in life, whether it be sports, painting or band.

When McGinnis and her husband Russ found out their eldest daughter Kinsey had lissencephaly, she attributes her positive attitude to her involvement in sports. Lissencephaly is a genetic disorder that effects the brain.

"We looked at it as a challenge," McGinnis said. "Growing up, Dana and I, because we had been through athletics, we always said if something bad is going to happen, let it happen to us."

McGinnis is looking for good things for her team this season. It will be the last season JSU competes in the A-Sun Conference. With all the returning players and the maturity they have gained over the last year, McGinnis is looking forward to a great season.

first in to hit, the last one on the field to take extra balls for fielding and the other players see that and want to raise their playing level to match hers." Veronica Davis, the Gamecocks softball ace, said, "It gives me a great feeling of confidence and relaxation with her behind me. I can relax more and throw more aggressively knowing if I make a mistake, I have her behind me ready to gobble up anything coming her way. She's also a great lead-off hitter, and she scores a lot of runs, which helps

as well."

Allie Simons, a fellow 2003 Preseason All-Atlantic Sun team member, said, "She's hard-nosed, and doesn't mind getting dirty to get to balls in the hole in the middle. We see her going for those balls and giving the effort she does and it makes us want to play harder to match her. She has a great eye at the plate and good pitch selection. She helps everyone after her recognize the pitches as they come in and it's a big boost for us to get ready for the opposing pitcher."

Simons says she owes her coaches

By Shane Dunaway
The Chanticleer Staff Writer

Dedication is a key to being successful in any sport, and one of the main holders of this key for the JSU softball team is Alison Simons.

Simons, a Columbia, S.C., product, plays shortstop for the Gamecocks. When she's not on the field, she's pursuing her degree, majoring in exercise science and minoring in nutrition.

During her time at JSU, Simons has developed a strong relationship with her teammates and her coaches.

"She is very dedicated to the sport and the team," said Jana McGinnis, JSU's softball coach. "She will do whatever it takes for the team to be successful."

Simons has done just that. Coming out of high school, she was originally a pitcher, but was asked to play first base her freshman year and has spent the vast majority of her softball career at JSU playing third base.

Last season, Simons was named to the Atlantic Sun Conference's second all-conference team, and during the preseason was predicted in the polls to be an all-conference



Courtesy JSU/Steve Latham

Junior infielder Allie Simons fields a ball for the Gamecocks during a game last season.

player this season as well.

She attributes her success at JSU to her coaches and teammates, who also hold her in high regard.

"I think Allie is a great player and she has motivated me to work harder," said Stacey Smith,

a JSU outfielder and Simons' teammate for four seasons. "She is a great leader on and off the field."

Simons is clearly a positive influence on the field, but she also has a positive impact off the field as well.

"They haven't just taught me about playing softball. They've taught me about life."

— Allie Simons
JSU infielder

Throughout her career at JSU, she has been affiliated with several religious organizations including Baptist Campus Ministries, the Wesley Foundation, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Simons has enjoyed the time she has spent as a JSU softball player and has especially enjoyed the privilege of playing for McGinnis.

"I have never played under a better coach than Coach McGinnis," said Simons. "She is truly dedicated and has a great work ethic, which inspires us to be better ball players."

Simons also credited the coaches for her diligence and work ethic she has incorporated into her everyday routine, whether it be on or off the diamond.

"They haven't just taught me about playing softball," said Simons. "They've taught me about life."

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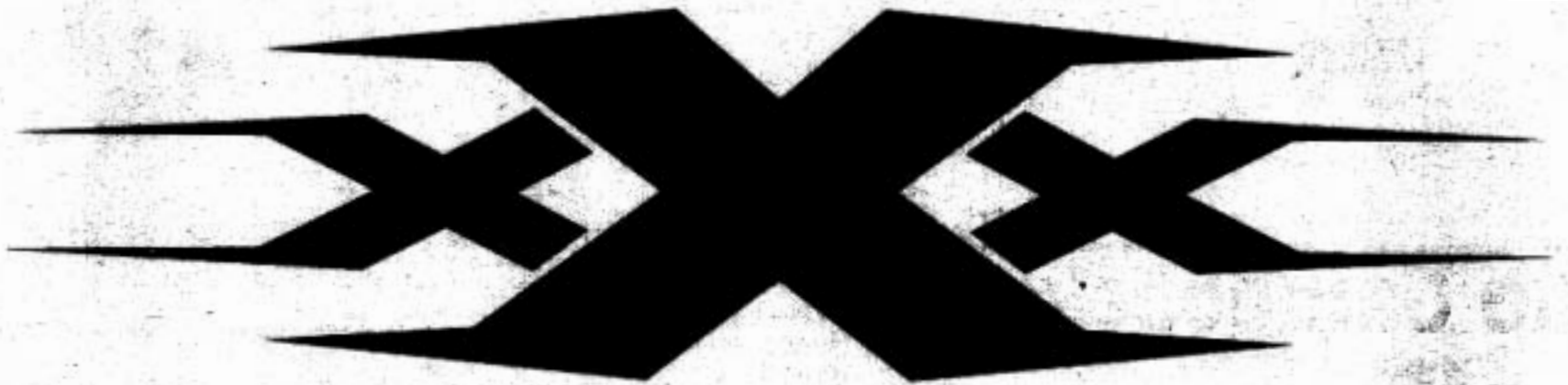


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