

GAMECOCK

BASEBALL PREVIEW



2003

JSU Gamecock Baseball 2003

Older, wiser Gamecocks hope to have an impact on Atlantic Sun this year

By Amado Ortiz
The Chanticleer Staff Writer

The JSU baseball team is hoping another year of experience will help it build on last year's strong finish, which followed a disappointing start.

The Gamecocks will be tested early as they open the 2003 season with a road series against Northwestern State beginning Feb. 14.

The first chance fans will get to see the Gamecocks at home will be Feb. 18 when JSU hosts Tennessee Tech at Rudy Abbott Field. Opening pitch is set for 3 p.m., and head coach Jim Case hopes

last year's great fan support continues.

Case said that last year's disappointing start was due to the Gamecocks' youth.

"We have to do a better job this year of getting better as the season goes on," the coach said. "We finished strong last year, but had our play been more consistent, we would have done some damage in the conference."

Leading the way this year will be 2002 Atlantic Sun Conference All-Freshmen Team player Brian Haskins. Haskins led the Gamecocks last year with a .325 batting average and five home runs.

Haskins also came up big with a team high 37 RBI's and was tied for the longest hitting streak of the year at 12 games.

Another player to watch this year will be junior pitcher Jessie Corn. Corn recorded a team high 59 strikeouts, and opponents had a batting average of .277 against him. Corn also has All-Freshmen team honors. Both he and Haskins will play a major role in how successful the Gamecocks are this season.

The main difference between this year's team and the one from last is maturity,

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JSU head coach Jim Case 3

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2002 JSU Baseball Schedule

Day	Date	Opponent/Tournament	Location	Time
Fri.	Feb. 14	at Northwestern State	Natchitoches, La.	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	Feb. 15	at Northwestern State	Natchitoches, La.	2 p.m.
Sun.	Feb. 16	at Northwestern State	Natchitoches, La.	1 p.m.
Tue.	Feb. 18	vs Tennessee Tech	Rudy Abbott Field	3 p.m.
Fri.	Feb. 21	at MTSU	Murfreesboro, Tenn.	3 p.m.
Sat.	Feb. 22	at MTSU	Murfreesboro, Tenn.	2 p.m.
Sun.	Feb. 23	at MTSU	Murfreesboro, Tenn.	1 p.m.
Tue.	Feb. 25	at Tennessee Tech	Cookeville, Tenn.	3 p.m.
Wed.	Feb. 26	vs Alabama A&M	Rudy Abbott Field	3 p.m.
Fri.	Feb. 28	vs *Stetson	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	Mar. 1	vs *Stetson (2)	Rudy Abbott Field	1 p.m.
Wed.	Mar. 5	at Alabama State	Montgomery	1 p.m.
Fri.	Mar. 7	vs *Belmont	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	Mar. 8	vs *Belmont (2)	Rudy Abbott Field	1 p.m.
Tue.	Mar. 11	at South Alabama	Mobile	6 p.m.
Wed.	Mar. 12	at South Alabama	Mobile	2 p.m.
Fri.	Mar. 14	at *Campbell	Buies Creek, N.C.	5 p.m.
Sat.	Mar. 15	at *Campbell (2)	Buies Creek, N.C.	12 p.m.
Tue.	Mar. 18	vs UAB	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Fri.	Mar. 21	vs *Florida Atlantic	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	Mar. 22	vs *Florida Atlantic (2)	Rudy Abbott Field	1 p.m.
Tue.	Mar. 25	at Alabama A&M	Huntsville	2 p.m.
Wed.	Mar. 26	vs Alabama State	Rudy Abbott Field	3 p.m.
Fri.	Mar. 28	at *UCF	Orlando, Fla.	5 p.m.
Sat.	Mar. 29	at *UCF (2)	Orlando, Fla.	12 p.m.
Wed.	Apr. 2	vs Birmingham-Southern	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Fri.	Apr. 4	vs *Gardner-Webb	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	Apr. 5	vs *Gardner-Webb (2)	Rudy Abbott Field	1 p.m.
Fri.	Apr. 11	at *Troy State	Troy	6 p.m.
Sat.	Apr. 12	at *Troy State	Troy	1 p.m.
Fri.	Apr. 18	vs *Samford	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	Apr. 19	vs *Samford (2)	Rudy Abbott Field	1 p.m.
Wed.	Apr. 23	at Florida	Gainesville, Fla.	6:30 p.m.
Fri.	Apr. 25	at *Jacksonville	Jacksonville, Fla.	6 p.m.
Sat.	Apr. 26	at *Jacksonville	Jacksonville, Fla.	12 p.m.
Wed.	Apr. 30	at Birmingham-Southern	Birmingham	6 p.m.
Fri.	May 2	at Louisiana-Monroe	Monroe, La.	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	May 3	at Louisiana-Monroe	Monroe, La.	3 p.m.
Sun.	May 4	at Louisiana-Monroe	Monroe, La.	1 p.m.
Tue.	May 6	at UAB	Birmingham	7 p.m.
Fri.	May 9	at *Mercer	Macon, Ga.	5 p.m.
Sat.	May 10	at *Mercer (2)	Macon, Ga.	11:30 a.m.
Tue.	May 13	at Alabama	Tuscaloosa	6:30 p.m.
Fri.	May 16	vs *Georgia State	Rudy Abbott Field	6:30 p.m.
Sat.	May 17	vs *Georgia State (2)	Rudy Abbott Field	1 p.m.

Bold type indicate home games
Asterisk (*) indicates Atlantic Sun Conference Opponent

2003 Gamecock Baseball Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	B-T	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Hometown
1	Shundell Russaw	OF	R/R	6-0	175	Fr.	Alexander City
2	Jason Horn	OF	R/R	5-9	170	Fr.	Montgomery
3	B.J. Burns	SS/2B	R/R	6-0	170	Sr.	Mobile
4	Taylor Talbot	OF/2B	L/R	5-10	160	So.	Glencoe
5	Clark Jinks	RHP	R/R	6-0	190	Fr.	Childersburg
6	Bret Pettus	SS/2B	L/R	6-1	175	Fr.	Demopolis
7	Matt Ruckdeschel	OF	R/R	5-10	185	So.	Powder Springs, Ga.
8	Clint Carroll	3B/2B	R/R	6-2	180	So.	Tuscaloosa
9	Richard Turner	C	R/R	5-10	175	Fr.	Madison
10	Cory Tucker	SS/2B	R/R	5-10	165	Fr.	Rome, Ga.
11	Bobby Hicks	3B/2B	L/R	6-0	185	Jr.	Keystone Heights, Fla.
12	Johnny Prosser	2B	R/R	5-9	185	Jr.	El Paso, Tex.
13	Josh Forrest	2B/RHP	L/R	5-11	170	Fr.	Heflin
14	Brendan Rubenstein	SS/2B	S/R	5-11	160	Fr.	Rochester, N.Y.
15	Brian Haskins	1B/3B	R/R	6-3	200	So.	Hokes Bluff
16	Danny Civello	3B/1B	R/R	6-3	180	Jr.	Mesquite, Tex.
17	Jase Kreitner	LHP	L/L	6-2	190	Sr.	Elmore
19	Dustin Brentz	RHP	R/R	6-4	220	Sr.	Pascagoula, Miss.
21	Jessie Corn	RHP	R/R	6-1	190	Jr.	Villa Rica, Ga.
22	Kerri Fair	OF	R/R	5-10	185	Jr.	Vincent
23	Brent Johnson	OF	R/R	6-0	210	Sr.	Chancellor
24	Travis Suereth	C/1B	L/R	6-2	210	Sr.	Gainesville, Fla.
27	Evan Conley	3B/SS	R/R	6-1	185	Sr.	Bradenton, Fla.
29	Bobby Wynns	RHP	R/R	6-4	210	Jr.	Gainesville, Fla.
30	John Chamblee	RHP	R/R	6-4	205	So.	White Plains
31	Dana Dawley	RHP	R/R	6-0	185	Sr.	North Port, Fla.
33	Scott Smith	C/OF	R/R	6-3	220	Jr.	Cumming, Ga.
35	Danny Andres	RHP	R/R	6-7	215	Fr.	San Clara, Man., Canada
36	Allen Buckley	RHP	R/R	6-6	215	Sr.	Clinton, Miss.
37	Josh Nix	RHP	R/R	6-3	235	Sr.	Fairhope
40	Trey Langham	C	R/R	6-4	200	So.	Hartford
44	Clark Andres	RHP/1B	L/R	6-5	225	Sr.	San Clara, Man., Canada

Long road leads Case back home

By Mike Vaughan II
The Chanticleer Staff Writer

Coach Jim Case is the type of coach players like to play for. Quietly intense, caring enough to know when to scold, and a drive to win; all these qualities mesh into a very good and very capable leader for the Jacksonville State baseball team. These qualities are also what built Case's character.

Born on Jan. 28, 1960, Case is a Birmingham native who was a three-sport letter winner at Ensley High School, located just outside of Birmingham.

Case also received all-city recognition for his playing time in both baseball and football. After leaving Ensley, Case studied at Louisiana Tech, where he received more playing honors, this time being named to the All-Southland conference team as a catcher.

His coaching regime began at Louisiana Tech, where he was a student assistant in 1983. He spent one season in Ruston, La., before leaving for Mississippi State in 1984, where he assumed the same graduate assistant role.

At MSU, he was primarily the catcher's coach, but tutored some hitting as well. While in Starkville, the Bulldogs won an amazing 71.2 percent of their games, going 129-52 over that span. This included six post-season appearances and a College World Series bid in 1985.

The year 1987 saw an opportunity for Case to return to his native home, Birmingham, and a coaching spot with the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Case would spend just over a decade in the Magic City,



Courtesy JSU Athletic Dept.

JSU's head baseball coach Jim Case.

The Case File:

- Age: 43
- College: Louisiana Tech (1982)
- Record: 23-31 at JSU (653-473-1 Overall)
- Other coaching jobs: Louisiana Tech, Mississippi State, UAB

primarily working with the battery, pitchers and catchers. UAB was also very successful during the tenure of Case, as the Blazers racked up 337 wins against only 272 losses and a tie.

UAB won the 1991 Sun Belt title, dancing to the NCAA tournament.

The 1992 season saw them follow up that title with one in their new conference, the Great Mid-West Conference.

Jim Case left UAB in 1997 to return to Mississippi State as an assistant coach, where he stayed for four years. Again, Mississippi State saw prosperity during his stay, advancing to the NCAA regionals all four years he was there.

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from Team, page 2

according to Case. "A lot of our young guys had to step in and mature quickly," he said.

This year's team won't have it any easier as the Gamecocks will play more games on the road than they do at home. JSU owns a tough non-conference schedule as they travel to play Southeastern Conference powers Alabama and Florida.

Stetson comes to town on Feb. 28 and March 1 for a series that promises to have an impact on conference tournament seeding. The Hatters were picked to finish first in the A-Sun's pre-season coaches' poll, and were picked second in the media poll to Central Florida. Both polls predicted Stetson will be the tournament champions, earning the automatic berth to the NCAA tournament.

JSU was picked to finish 10th in the 12-team league in both polls. But starting pitcher Corn said the Gamecocks should "surprise some people this year. There's a reason they play the games instead of letting the media decide. We'll make an impact in the conference and in the tournament."

Case and the Gamecocks feel they're the sleepers to watch in the conference. Given the way baseball seasons can surprise even the most knowledgeable forecasters, that statement is hard to argue.

Laid back Corn stands tall on mound for JSU

By Mike Vaughan II
The Chanticleer Staff Writer

Jessie Corn is definitely the definition of a visual oxymoron. On the outside, he's a fun guy to be around, joking around with the guys off the field and being a pretty cool customer. Once he crosses the chalk, however, Dr. Hyde comes out, and his competitiveness and tenacity is very easy to see.

Corn was born on July 16, 1982, in Villa Rica, Ga., where he attended Villa Rica High School. He accumulated a 34-5 record as a prep pitcher, including an 8-2 mark as a senior. He also batted .453, which is accumulated mostly at the shortstop position, where he played when he didn't pitch. He earned four letters in baseball, and three letters in basketball. He received all-conference recognition three

of the four years he played baseball, and was also named an all-state player.

Corn was named to the Freshman All-American team as an honorable mention in 2001, his first year at Jacksonville State. That season he finished 2-7 with a 4.50 ERA, also throwing 50 strikeouts and only walked 12 batters. His JSU debut was rather auspicious, as he appeared for four innings and struck out seven batters. His sophomore season saw Corn go 2-3 as his ERA was 5.70, but he finished second on the Gamecock staff in innings pitched with 72 2/3. He record-



Courtesy JSU Athletics

Jessie Corn, RHP

ed a team high 59 strikeouts and only 38 walks.

The 2003 season sees Corn being named as a team co-captain for the Gamecock baseball team. He is the ace of the pitching rotation after working on the mechanics and delivery of his four pitches. His leadership will be counted on for a young staff and a young team in general. "I feel I lead by example on the field, with my competitiveness and my teammates feed off that," said Corn. "I'm not overly vocal, but I can lift my mates when they need it."

Other players and coaches speak very well about Corn's playing abilities. Fellow pitcher Jase Kreitner said, "It gives us a big boost when he's out there. He gives us the feeling we always have a chance to win. He's definitely one of our best fielding pitchers."

Head Coach Jim Case also spoke glowingly about Corn.

"He can be a power pitcher, because his pitches can hit 90 miles an hour, but his forte is hitting his spots and getting his four pitches where they need to go. He throws a legitimate fastball, breaker, slider, and change-up for strikes and we feel any batter will have trouble when he's hitting those consistently. He's also very good at holding runners."

About Corn's leadership abilities, Case said, "He's grown a lot over the last year. He's matured and figured that he will need to be the leader and he needs to be the number one guy. He's doing a great job bringing along not only the pitchers, but everyone he talks to. We look for him to be very successful this year."

from Case, page 3

His last two years saw the Bulldogs advance to the NCAA Super Regionals, the equivalent of the Sweet 16 in basketball.

Case was named the head coach at Jacksonville State on April 17, 2001, where he replaced Coach Rudy Abbott, who won over 1000 games in 32 years at JSU.

Case inherited a team that lost six senior ballplayers from the Abbott era, and with all the new faces, the Gamecocks still played tough, leading nationally ranked Alabama 10-5 before losing late.

The Gamecocks closed out 2002 with a 23-31 record, finishing 10th in the Atlantic Sun

Conference. This pushed Case's career record to 653-473-1 for a 58.0 percent winning percentage.

The Gamecocks enter this year again with many new faces. Ten seniors graduated from the 2002 season, leaving many starting spots open and many depth concerns.

Case feels those will be

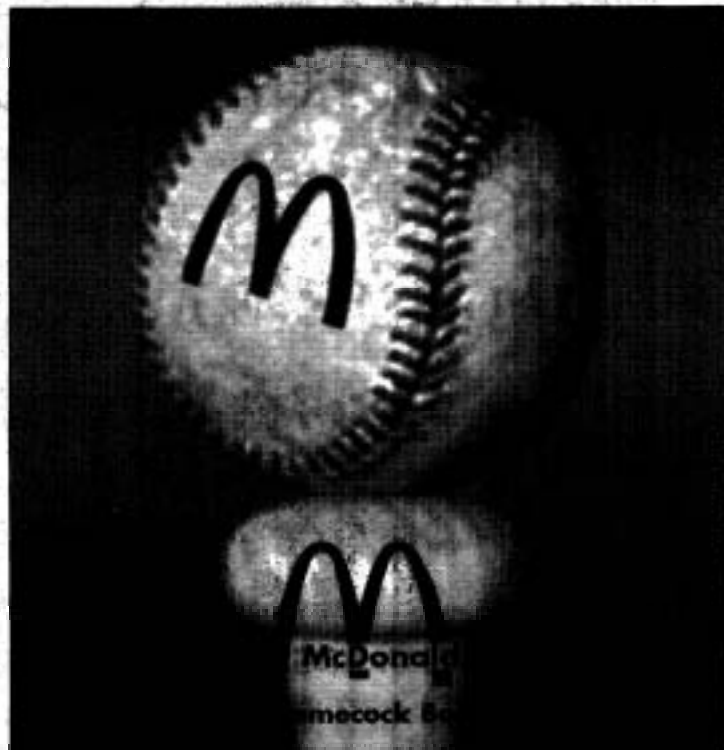
addressed, however.

"We did lose a lot of experience, but I am pleased with the new players we have coming in. In early games the youth may show, but we plan to be tougher and more cohesive by the time Atlantic Sun play starts."

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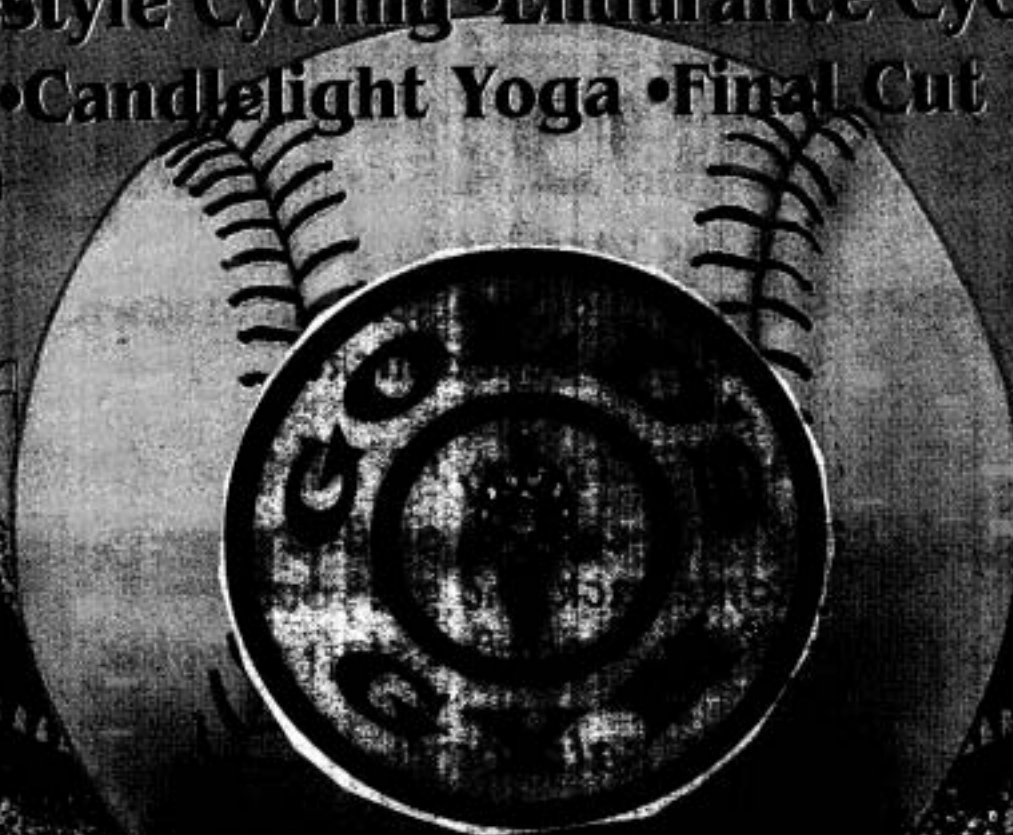
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