The Jacksonville State University community lost two of its most distinguished members this week, as both Jack Hopper and Gladys Carlisle passed away.

Hopper, a former JSU lobbyist and namesake of the campus cafeteria, died Tuesday, Nov. 6. He died at his home of a heart attack. Hopper was 62.

Hopper served as a public relations officer for JSU from the 1970s to the 1990s.

“Jack always showed a great deal of wisdom,” JSU President William Meehan said. Hopper also represented JSU before the state Legislature in Montgomery and was a local real estate developer. Hopper worked under five university presidents, according to Meehan. That service included a stint as athletic director during the tenure of Dr. Houston Cole.

“Jack Hopper was a respected member of the JSU family that will be greatly missed. He touched many student, faculty and staff lives in a positive and profound way,” Vice President for Administrative and Business Affairs Mr. Clint Carlson said. “His respect and love for this institution was without question. JSU Gamecocks that have gone before are celebrating his arrival.”

Gladys Carlisle died on Monday, Nov. 5, after a battle with stomach cancer. Carlisle, a native of Tuscaloosa, served on the JSU Board of Trustees for 23 years.

“Mrs. Carlisle was a faithful servant as a trustee for a quarter of a century and never missed a single meeting. She was a wonderful educator, and we’re very proud that our art annex carries her name,” Meehan said.

The university honored Carlisle’s service back in September, when it opened a new home for the visual arts at JSU. The Gladys M. Carlisle Fine Arts Facility houses classrooms for drawing, sculpture, design and photography. It opened to students in September, with a formal grand opening in October.

“We in the art department are extremely grateful for our new facility,” Dr. Carter Osterbind, interim head of the art department, said. “We are very happy that Mrs. Carlisle was able to come to the dedication, we are honored that the building is named for her because we know she gave so much to Jacksonville State University.”

Before her service to JSU, Carlisle was a public school teacher in Tuscaloosa. She served in that capacity for 35 years.
How did you spend the hour gained when Daylight Saving Time ended?

The hour gained when Daylight Saving Time ended could be spent in various ways. The options listed are:

- Sleeping: 61%
- Mourned the life you could have had: 15%
- Stayed up later: 9%
- Relived an hour of your life to right an injustice: 9%
- Other: 9%

“Sleeping. I have been so tired. I have been so stressed out that all I want to do is sleep.”

— Christina Cheatwood
Junior

Foreign language classes not able to meet growing demand

By Bethany Harbison
Copy Editor

Spanish instructor Eduardo Pacheco sought Jacksonville State University for its ideal location, mid-size campus and low cost of living, but was startled at what he found here. “When I came to interview, I was shocked to find that I would be one of only three foreign language professors,” Pacheco said. “Three people for 10,000 students?”

The requirements involved in earning a foreign language degree from JSU are similar to that of neighboring schools, but the faculty resources needed to help students attain that degree are sorely lacking, according to Assistant French Professor Dr. Ronald Koss.

The University of North Alabama has an estimated enrollment of 5,600 students and five full-time foreign language faculty members. With a similar enrollment of 5,719, the University of Alabama at Huntsville clocks in with seven. The University of West Georgia, with approximately 8,476 students enrolled, and Tennessee Technological University, both have 15 full-time foreign language faculty members.

See “Not enough,” page 3A

Foreign endeavor

Dr. Rebecca Turner returns from China

By Bethany Harbison
Copy Editor

Fresh from a world where the interstates are clogged with pedestrians, buses, bicycles, taxis and people pulling rickshaws, Dr. Rebecca Turner reveled in the extra hour of sleep allotted by Sunday’s Daylight Saving Time.

Turner, JSU’s vice president of academic and student affairs, returned last Wednesday from a two-week trip to Beijing, China. While there, Turner sought to establish and develop relationships with Chinese universities and educate Chinese students about the opportunities available in the United States.

“Dr. David Turner’s favorite Thanksgiving dish? Football. And you?”

Dr. Rebecca Turner returns from China

By Bethany Harbison
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“Dr. David Turner’s favorite Thanksgiving dish? Football. And you?”

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ONLINE @ thechanticleeronline.com

Heap o’ trouble

Caution tape serves as a barrier to a giant pile of garbage located on the hill above Rowe and Wallace Halls. For the full story, see page 3A. Photo by Matt McRae / The Chanticleer

See more pictures of garbage. You know you want to. Slideshow online now @ thechanticleeronline.com

Chanticleer multimedia

See “China visit,” page 3A
You might feel a little pinch . . .

By Anna Keefe
Staff Writer

JSU sought out high school students who may very well be the leaders of tomorrow for its 8th annual Emerging Leaders Day.

Over 200 high school juniors came to JSU’s Leone Cole Auditorium on Tuesday, Nov. 6, to learn more about being effective leaders in their schools and communities.

High school counselors selected the students who attended based on exhibited leadership abilities, according to Tracy Phillips, who works for JSU’s visitor center and was in charge of the event.

Students participated in leadership activity sessions that took place at Houston Cole Library and Leone Cole Auditorium. The activities focused on various leadership characteristics, including courage, initiative and positive attitude among others, according to Phillips.

Adam Green, from Counseling and Career Services, spoke at the library session. The afternoon group session was a presentation by Andy Green, admissions counselor, about 10 steps for choosing a college.

“I liked how he told us how many colleges to pick and how he said not to apply to just one,” Hope Hite, from Armuchee High School, said.

Hite added that she is not fully decided with her future plans, but has some idea.

“I know I am going to school, but I don’t know where I want to go yet,” Hite said. “I want to check out Bryan College and Samford. I want to major in Spanish.”

Jeremy Satcher, a student at Jacksonville Christian Academy, said that he enjoyed the parts about efficiency and courage.

“I don’t know where I want to go to school yet, but I think I want to go into education,” Satcher said.

Andrew Bollinger, also from Jacksonville Christian, said that he appreciated Adam Greene’s talk about commitment. He said that he plans on attending either JSU or the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

“I’m planning on majoring in computer engineering,” Satcher said.

JSU ambassadors, admissions counselors, Graduate Assistant Mandrascus Russell and JSU alumnus Tim King helped with the event according to Phillips.

Breezy Edwards from Ohatchee High School won the drawing for the one-year Leadership Scholarship.

Students were treated to lunch at Jack Hopper cafeteria and received giveaways and t-shirts.
You might feel a little pinch...

Students, faculty take part in blood drive at TMB

By Anna Keefe
Staff Writer

Students showed their willingness to make a difference and help a noble cause by donating blood at the TMB on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. The drive was sponsored by the SGA.

The goal was to have at least 63 students participate during each of the two days, a goal that was successfully met, according to blood drive committee head Shade' Nix.

Crissy Werner, account manager for the American Red Cross, said the organization needs frequent blood donations because there is no artificial substitute for blood.

"Volunteer blood donations are the only thing that keeps people alive," Werner said. "Every two seconds, someone needs a blood transfusion. One out of every 10 hospital patients will need a blood transfusion. A blood transfusion usually consists of three to four pints of blood."

The need for blood is great in this region, according to Werner. She said that in the Alabama and Central Gulf Coast region, the American Red Cross (APC) expects to collect 120 thousand pints of blood a year. High school and college students supply around 20 percent of that amount.

Only five percent of the nation donates, the American Red Cross's Vincent Allen said, and those are mostly of the baby boomer generation. He stressed the need for younger donors across the board.

"The blood type most in demand is O negative, according to Allen, because it can go to anyone. The second is O positive."

Werner added, "We really appreciate JSU. They do two drives a year with the SGA." Werner said, "We can always count on them. They've helped save thousands of lives."

There will be another blood drive at the TMB in the spring of 2008.

Students may also donate blood during the Red Cross's spring drive.

Dr. Hardy Jackson, head of the JSU history and foreign languages department, relaxes as he donates blood. The SGA and American Red Cross joined forces to hold a blood drive at the TMB on Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. Photo by Matt McRae / The Chanticleer

The Week in Events

Thursday, November 8
- Alpha Xi Delta Coin Collection, 2nd floor TMB, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm
- All I Really Need to Know Stone Center, Second Stage, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Tickets: $9/7/5
- Coffee House & Open Mic Night, TMB Auditorium, 7:00 p.m.

Friday, November 9
- All I Really Need to Know Stone Center Second Stage, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 10
- Veterans' Day Dinner, Stone Center Second Stage, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Tickets: $9/7/5

Sunday, November 11
- All I Really Need to Know Stone Center Second Stage, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Tickets: $9/7/5

Monday, November 12
- NAACP Toys for Tots drive, TMB main lobby, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 13
- Freshman Forum Bake Out Sale, TMB main lobby, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 14
- High School SGA Conference District VI, 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Rundown of the Monday, Nov. 5, SGA Student Senate meeting:
- Approved minutes from the Oct. 22 meeting.
- Passed a resolution urging university administration and Sodexo to increase the amount of flex dollars allotted to each student by 33 percent.
- Passed two related resolutions dealing with Homecoming activities. Both take effect in the 2008 school year.
- Passed a resolution asking the university to expand wireless internet capabilities at all residence halls and campus facilities.
- Passed a bill allocating $300 to Sakura-Union for the 2007-08 term.
- Passed a bill allocating $300 to Alpha Kappa Alpha Fraternity, Inc. for the 2007-08 term.
- Passed a bill allocating $300 to Common Sense Media for the 2007-08 term.
- Passed a bill allocating $300 to the Mimosa yearbook for the 2007-08 term.
Trash transfer point raising eyebrows, little concern

By Brandon Hollingsworth
News Editor

On a hilltop behind Rowe Hall, in an otherwise wooded area, lay piles of trash.

Within sight of Houston Cole Library, perhaps JSU’s most recognizable landmark, broken chairs, old toilets, discarded pipes, TV sets, microwaves, even an old recliner — items deemed obsolete are heaped one on another, waiting to be taken to larger landfills elsewhere.

It’s what Capt. Jerry Mize of the military science department described as a transfer point — a place where discarded items too large to be easily transported are stored, awaiting a move to a landfill.

The refuse heap has been in its current position atop the hill above Rowe and Wallace Halls for about a year, according to both Mize and ecology professor Dr. Robert Carter.

“I know that [the university] has had it at various places around campus,” Mize said.

Vice President for Administrative and Business Affairs Clint Carlson described it as a case of “out of sight, out of mind.”

“It’s a rather secluded area,” Carlson said. “It’s been there as long as I’ve been here.”

The waste comes from all over the university. JSU’s Physical Plant employees pick up discarded materials from academic and administrative departments and transport the larger items to the transfer point.

“If there’s no value to [the items], other than just for scrap purposes, that’s typically where it’s going to end up,” Carlson said.

Sometimes, according to Mize, the university gets one more use out of the rubbish, such as when wooden pallets are burned for the Homecoming week bonfire.

Most of the materials, though, remain on site for a few months before they can be transferred to the final destination, a landfill elsewhere in Calhoun County. JSU contracts with a private hauler to transport the materials to that landfill, according to Carlson.

As for environmental concerns and possible danger to the public, there seems to be little cause for concern. Some of Carter’s ecology classes conduct fieldwork in the vicinity with no known complaints. JSU’s ROTC division also holds classes and training exercises on the hilltop with no ill effect, according to Mize.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management investigates every complaint filed, but no one has notified the agency of the rubbish pile, said Jerome Hand, an ADEM spokesman.

Capt. Mize does not believe there is an environmental problem to be reported, saying that there appears to be no danger to students of faculty who work or hold classes near the site.

“Some things you may be concerned about with landfills, like [chemical] runoff...I’ve never seen any toxic stuff — oil, gas, stuff like that —- none of that is back there,” Mize said.

Carlson did not know of any specific environmental studies conducted before replacement of the scrap heap, but he noted that JSU places no hazardous waste on the site.

“We don’t put any chemicals up there, or things of that nature,” Carlson said.

Not enough: FL professors claim lack of funding crippling

Cont. from page 1A

language faculty members.

While JSU’s number of foreign language faculty has held steady at three, Koss, who has been at JSU for 18 years, explained that the demand for foreign language instruction is increasing as more departments include it in degree requirements.

“This fall, the criminal justice department began officially ‘highly recommending’ Spanish as a minor for every criminal justice major. Dr. Richard Kania, head of the department, said that though a Spanish minor is not required, it would be an excellent asset to graduates of the program. Kania said that the decision’s effect on foreign language courses has yet to be seen.

“We don’t know how much impact it is going to have.” Kania said. “We didn’t think it would not that much burden on our department.”

For three years, according to Koss, foreign languages could ideally use two more professors in Spanish and one more in French.

“We’ve been requesting it for three years,” Koss said. “Our request has been approved by the dean’s office. It’s gone to the academic and student affairs office in Bibb Graves, and that’s the last we’ve heard of it.”

Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Dr. Rebecca Turner said that while the university administration sees the need and wants to remedy the situation, the money is simply not there. Turner estimated that the cost of adding a new position would be about $100,000 yearly for salary and benefits.

“Positions require funding,” Turner said. “We’ve approved it, but I’ve just not been given the money to fund it. The money hasn’t been available to increase actively looking for sources of revenue to fund at least one of those positions.”

Due to the scarcity of funds, Turner said the positions would have to be funded one at a time. She hopes that the existing foreign language faculty will not have to wait beyond next fall for the first.

Koss said that the mixed messages he has received from university administration have been frustrating.

“Last year, Dr. Meehan asked me to do some radio spots about the importance of the foreign language, which I think is really ironic because we already have more students than we can possibly handle,” Koss said. “If it’s so important, where’s the faculty?”

According to Pacheco, the swelling rate of students that drop Pacheco, who is now in his 15th year, Suco has six classes and one independent study. Koss said that in the last 15 years, he and Suco have only had three or four semesters when they were not overloaded. He said a professor normally teaches four classes, and anything above that is considered an overload.

“The fact that we are constantly teaching overloaded really restricts our ability to do research and work on publications,” Koss said. “These are requirements for promotion.
impact if it is going to have," Kania said. "We didn't think it would put that much burden on them. We just didn't know."

A Spanish minor consists of 24 hours, and Koss is concerned that if even half of the 550 active criminal justice majors follow the suggestion, the two full-time Spanish faculty will not be able to keep up with the demands.

Koss said the history and foreign language departments have been submitting requests for more money so that I could fund the suggestion, the two full-time Spanish faculty will not be able to keep up with the demands.

Turner said the university administration elected to not raise tuition this year and will continue to be cautious about tuition increases.

"But I have not given up," Turner said. "I'm going to be concerned. We didn't think it would put that much burden on them. We just didn't know."

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YOUR VOICE

JSU: A transfer student’s nightmare

As a transfer student (with a degree) from a 38,000-student university, the change to JSU has not been easy.

The limited courses offered in my major, communications, takes some adjustment. Having a course I need offered only once a week is just odd and perhaps unacceptable to me. It leaves me wondering how parents or people who have regular jobs are able to attend JSU. I commute two hours round trip to the university, and with gas prices I can’t afford to go every day.

But those are just annoyances, really. My major problem with JSU starts with when I was basically lied to. I was told from the moment I applied to Orientation Day that I would probably need to take three or maybe four general education courses.

I found out this past week from my advisor that I will need possibly twelve. TWELVE? I could handle three or four, but TWELVE?

Not to mention, I also need to take two minor courses I’ve already passed. I already spent my time and money on history, math, and science. I am unwilling to do it all over again just because JSU counts the classes I took and passed as “electives” because they are not offered here.

Online courses are another major complaint of mine. I live an hour away from campus and cannot attend JSU every day of the school week. I was told when I applied that JSU has a great online system for courses and not to worry about when classes are offered. They knew I was a communications major, and apparently none are offered in this department at all.


If they would work with me rather than pushing me aside now that I am a student, I may stay. If they don’t, I am gone.

-Sheri Newton, JSU senior majoring in communications

Alumnus concurs with us

Music’s state of the union

A call to action

If you’ve been reading this editorial page over the past two weeks, you may have noticed an explosion of complaints about the structure and administration of the communications department.

If you haven’t, allow us to fill you in: There’s been an explosion of complaints about the department.

Personal attacks have been launched, axes have been ground, nerves have been frayed. And now it’s time to reach a resolution.

The problem with complaining is that, if no action is taken, all you have at the end of the day are words. The department of communications, its administration, students and faculty are working together to solve the problems discussed in previous editorials from an internal standpoint.

A series of meetings held this week and the last have helped clear the air and separate fact from fiction, but again, words beget more words. Our concerns deserve action, and we feel that action is being taken.

To be fair, there have also been complaints from the administration: about our fact-checking, and about the possibility of personal grudges getting in the way of an accurate portrayal of events.

Those are wholly reasonable concerns, and administrators are justified in asking about them. Our accountability is just as important as the department’s.

Indeed, if it were just us, just a lone voice in the woods, the administration might have a point.

Perhaps the dissent wasn’t nearly as widespread as we portrayed. Perhaps it was the work of one or two students dissatisfied with their grades or class performance.
Music is timeless. It is hard to find a person who is not influenced by the music their parents once listened to. I can still remember listening to The Beach Boys, The Temptations, Creedence Clearwater Revival and learning about “The Tears of a Clown” from Smokey Robinson & The Miracles on Oldies 106.9 FM.

These artists are legends because they truly meant something to their generation and because their music is still enjoyed by people today.

Our parents’ generation left us with some classic music, but what are we leaving behind for our children? Where did things begin to change?

Each genre of music started out with its own early legends. Rock music had The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones and Elvis.

Hip-hop, the most successful genre in music today, also had its legends—The Sugarhill Gang, Run D.M.C., Tupac, Notorious B.I.G., and Snoop Dogg. The reason these artists were able to reach this status is because their music had meaning or because they were original.

Unfortunately, music has lost such originality.

The leveling point for rock music hit during the hair-metal era of the 1980’s. It was all about the sex and the drugs—not about the rock n’ roll.

The effect was an opiate for the masses complete with unoriginal sounds, bad hair and a lot of bands with nearly the same name.

The formula that the record executives created—to be successful, sound the same as whatever is popular—is still in effect today.

How much longer can we allow Nickelback to make the same song, change up just a few riffs here and there, give it a new title and try to package it as their new single?

It’s time to stop the insanity.

People keep buying the same thing—just by a different artist—and the record execs know that this is what sells.

And now, they are doing it to hip-hop music.

If the bass rattles the car and you can party to it, it is a hit. Lyrics about the booty + lyrics about alcohol + a lot of bass = sales.

It is the same leveling off that occurred with rock music some 20-odd years ago.

Rock and hip-hop aren’t so different after all.

A prefabricated sound has taken over the airwaves, and we as consumers are helping to support it.

This is not to say that there hasn’t been any legends to arise from the ashes that lay in the wake of the industry.

U2 arose out of one of the leveling-off phases in rock. Outkast was able to bring a new and innovative sound to the hip-hop genre with the release of Stankonia. These two artists will go down as timeless, but is that enough?

What will our generation of music listeners leave behind? Who else will be our musical legacy?

If we keep buying and downloading the same music all the time, further generations will be left with a void.

Matt McRae is the photo editor of The Chanticleer. He can be reached by phone at 782-8521 or by e-mail at chantyphoto@gmail.com. You can read his weekly music blog at mattonanisland.blogspot.com.
Another rivalry week

Gamecocks host another rival this weekend

By Patrick Swafford
Sports Editor

College football teams are defined by their rivalries. Jacksonville State put a sense of finality to an in-state rivalry last weekend and prepares for its most heated this weekend.

The Gamecocks completed the final chapter of their long-standing rivalry against Samford with a definitive statement.

The Gamecocks held Samford's explosive offense to four field goals in a 24-12 win Saturday in Birmingham and took an overall 22-21-2 all-time series lead.

JSU (6-3, 5-1 Ohio Valley Conference) shut down a Bulldog team that scored 59 points and ran up 654 total yards, keeping them from scoring a single touchdown.

Offensively, the Gamecocks accomplished something they haven't done all season-long, have a single running back rush for over 100 yards.

Daniel Jackson became the first running back to accomplish the feat in almost a year after an 18-carry, 103-yard performance to lead the rushing attack.

Defensively, JSU did what it had done twice before in OVC play; shut down a premier running back and essentially eliminate Samford's entire offensive threat.

Samford's Chris Evans rushed for 20 yards, and no other Samford running back reached the 50-yard mark.

This weekend, two teams with identical records and identical postseason hopes will clash in another of the OVC's best rivalries.

JSU shares no geographical ties with the Panthers. In fact, no OVC school is farther from Jacksonville than EIU.

"From a competitive standpoint, you couldn't have a greater rival or a more defining game against a comparable opponent this late in the season," Crowe said.

With the recent history both teams have, this game might actually be the best rivalry on the schedule.

"Eastern Illinois is ten times bigger," senior nose tackle John Scott said. "They like to play smash-mouth football just like us, so it's going to be a real good fight."

It seems like every year this game means more than just a simple win or loss. Generally, a conference title hangs in the balance.

In each of the last two seasons, the Panthers ended JSU's playoff chances.

While an OVC title may be out of reach for both teams, it is expected than an 8-3 overall record might secure an at-large bid.

"It always comes down to the last game between us and them," Jackson said. "It used to be between us and them to determine the conference championship. This year, it pretty much determines the playoffs."

The race for the postseason

By Jared Staubs
Staff Sports Writer

JSU will be hosting Eastern Illinois Saturday in what amounts to an elimination game for both teams.

The teams are currently tied for second in the OVC at 6-3, with Eastern Illinois Saturday would add to what is quickly becoming a strong resume.

"I think one thing that we can say is that if we win out, we will have a longer winning streak than any of (the other potential at-large teams)," he said.
I'm talking about 0-16.

If you ask me, losing every game in a season is next to impossible, unless you pull a 1919 Chicago White Sox and throw the game.

Winning them all requires a team to be on its game week after week, much like Tom Brady and company have been doing.

Come on. They're running up the score like a Steve Spurrier-coached football team.

To lose every game requires a feat greater than Tom Brady's supermodel-dating charm.

It's never been done before and the Dolphins, yes the same franchise that went unbeaten 25 years ago, might be bad enough to do it.

To pull this off, you've either got worse luck than anyone in the history of the world, or you've got to be worse than most of the jokes I tell.

While the Patriots were just acquiring the likes of Randy Moss and Wes Welker this season to aid their quest to win another Super Bowl, the Dolphins have seemingly lost everything.

They lost quarterback Trent Green with a serious concussion and running back Ronnie Brown went down with a knee injury against the Patriots.

Injuries aren't good enough, though. This team's got to suck to pull this off.

Stupid decisions help and Miami made a huge one on draft day.

They passed over Brady Quinn to draft Ted Gin. Quinn has spent the season on the bench in Cleveland, and Gin has done just as much while playing every week.

I love a good train wreck, and Miami looks to be just that.

Now that I've said this, watch them beat Buffalo by 50.

Patrick Swafford is the sports editor of The Chanticleer. He can be reached at 782-5703 or at chantysports@gmail.com. You can also read his blog every Monday at chantysports.blogspot.com.
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In college athletics, every coach is in the last year of their contract.

— Mike LaPlante
Head coach, men’s basketball

For LaPlante, it may be a case of . . .

Now or never
By Patrick Swafford
Sports Editor

It seems like basketball coaches, above all others, are always on the hot seat.
One bad season could mean the difference in a contract extension and being shown the door.
Take a season where a team loses 21 total games—including eight at the last second—and you'll see why Jacksonville State men's coach Mike LaPlante might be feeling the heat.
"In college athletics, every coach is in the last year of their contract," LaPlante said.
"Nobody wants to win more than the head coach. This is your painting, your creation, your masterpiece. Nobody wants to win more than I want to win. Nobody's working harder than I'm working to try to get us in position to be successful."

Bouncing back

Last season was a tough one for JSU fans to endure. The Gamecocks lost 21 games last season (including the low point that was a 100-69 loss at home to UMass) and LaPlante's critics have all the ammunition they need.
"The perception can be that we had a bad year last year," LaPlante said. "But, we finished 7-13 in the conference, and on the last day we have to win to get into the tournament.
"Well, we won, but we needed Austin Peay to beat Morehead State. It didn't happen for us."
The Gamecocks lost eight games by three points or less, five of which were at the last second.

Two of those came at the hands of in-state rival Samford.
"If a couple of balls bounced our way, now, maybe the perception of those outside influences are saying 'Boy, they're doing a great job' only because the ball bounced our way," LaPlante said.
"We wouldn't have done any different of a job than what we're doing..." See "COVER STORY," page 3B
Youth movement

Gamecocks open 2007-08 season with eight new players and only five returners

By Jared Gravette
Staff Sports Writer

Coming off of a season that saw the Jacksonville State women's basketball team finish at the bottom of the Ohio Valley Conference standings with a 7-21 record, it's hard to imagine the Gamecocks going anywhere but up in Becky Geyer's second year as head coach.

Last year's squad didn't exactly fit into coach Geyer's offensive scheme, and the Gamecocks struggled to compete, but thanks to a bevy of fresh new faces, things should be different this season.

"I think that we are just a lot deeper than we were last year," Geyer said. "We went out and recruited seven freshmen and one junior college kid. So, we have eight new people on our team. Plus, we get Courtney Chessher back who had to redshirt last year. So really, nine of 13 kids are brand new."

One of the main concerns coming into this season is the experience factor. The Gamecocks will enter the season as, one of the youngest teams in the country.

JSU's four returning players, all sophomores, combine for only 38 career starts.

"We've bonded together because of what we went through last year," Jolie Efekohae said. "We knew, coming out, that we were going to be the older people on the team. We're going to have to show the freshmen what we went through last year and help them out."

Erica West is the only other returning player from last year's squad. She spent a lot of her time on the court last year in the post, which isn't her natural position.

"Erica West is returning, and she has come night and day from a year ago," Geyer said. "The tough part for Erica a year ago is that we had to play her at a four or five position, and she is not a four or five. She is a three."

The most exciting part of the upcoming season will likely be the incoming freshmen. Coach Geyer put together an outstanding recruiting class, and these new players will have the chance to make an immediate impact.
we went through last year and help them out."

Efezokhae is the most experienced player returning for JSU and will likely be burdened with carrying the load for the Gamecocks.

"I think we have better chemistry this year," Efezokhae said. "I just think we work well against other teams."

She started 23 of 28 games last season, leading the team in rebounding and blocked shots on her way to earning OVC All-Newcomer honors.

"She's pretty special, and she has spent time improving her skills. She has spent a lot of time on her ball-handling skills," Geyer said. "She is just so versatile. I think you are only going to see her continue to get better as the year goes on. We will rely on her tremendously."

Efezokhae will likely be spending most of her time in the post, but she does have the ability to play the wing if the situation calls for it.

Eren McMichael and Kelsey Johnkin bring back much-needed experience in the JSU backcourt.

"We are moving Eren to shooting guard and letting her be in the area that really is her strength, and that is shooting," Geyer said. "She is one kid that really has the green light to just

Sophomore Jolie Efezokhae returns as JSU's highest returning scorer. Last season, Efezokhae averaged 11.5 points and 5.9 rebounds per game and was named to the Ohio Valley Conference Newcomer team. Photo by Steve Latham / Jacksonville State University

"On the other hand, I would rather go into battle with the team we have right now for the next four years than any other team in the league. I would pick this team over anybody."

— JSU head coach Becky Geyer

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MEN'S HOOPS

With all five starters returning, the Gamecocks are looking for improvement...

Across the board

By Jered Staubs
Staff Sports Writer

The JSU men's basketball team will no longer be a one-man show.

Leading scorer and rebounder Courtney Bradley is gone, but coach Mike LaPlante says it may be a case of addition by subtraction.

"It's hard to replace a first-team, all-conference guy, but we might be a better team because we have a little bit more depth and you'll see it spread out more evenly," he said.

"Last year we had to rely on Courtney Bradley having a big night, and if he didn't have a big night we had a very difficult time winning. This year, I think one guy might have an off night, but two or three other guys can pick him up."

While the Gamecocks are a relatively inexperienced group overall, four players return that started at least 10 games last season.

"I think our strength is going to be our nucleus forwards, most are unproven."

"I think we've got more shooters this year so we can spread them out a little more," Ginn said. "It makes it easier on the big guys. If we spread it out, they'll get a lot more one-on-one opportunities."

Brown is the most likely to take advantage of those opportunities early in the season. He is the only returning starter to average in double figures in points last year, with 11.5. The senior forward is also the school's all-time leading shot blocker.

LaPlante believes Erik Adams and Amadou Mbojji also have the potential to be all-conference level players.

"We may not have the best player at (those) positions in the league, but as a group of three, we'll be as good as anybody in the league," he said.
Cover Story: LaPlante develops plan to improve program

Cont. from 1B

if the outcomes of these close, one-point losses were different. Making do with less

While LaPlante’s critics have been outspoken about wanting him out, few realize just what JSU’s head basketball man has accomplished with the resources given.

He’s won more with less-than-average financial commitments when compared to the rest of the Ohio Valley Conference. Don’t take that as an excuse for LaPlante, though. He wants to raise the stakes.

LaPlante formed a planning committee to determine what JSU’s level of financial commitment to the program was in comparison to the rest of the OVC and other regional schools that recruit against JSU.

The results showed the type of hole JSU was in. “One thing I have done with the Strategic Plan is to say ‘I’m right on board,’ “ LaPlante said.

“You have to have a plan to get there. I hope the Strategic Plan points out that if you want to be successful against your competition, you better have similar resources and facilities to your competition.”

According to the plan, out of the 11 teams in the Ohio Valley Conference, JSU ranks ninth in total budget, spending under $650,000 a year.

The OVC’s top four teams, Murray State, Samford, Eastern Kentucky and Tennessee Tech, spend an average of over $1 million per year. Basically, JSU’s men’s basketball program, while not getting the desired results on the court, has less to work with than almost any other OVC program.

However, that’s not to say that a bottom-tier team, spending-wise, is playing like a bottom-tier team.

In the past five years, JSU has the sixth best overall record in the conference, better than Morehead State, SEMO and Tennessee State.

All three of those schools have a larger budget for their basketball programs than do the Gamecocks.

Comparing JSU’s financial commitment to the OVC is one thing. To compare it to four regional teams that LaPlante and his staff recruit against is just down right frightening.

Western Kentucky, South Alabama, Chattanooga and Middle Tennessee State spend an average of $1.3 million a year.

The average difference between them and JSU is more than the Gamecocks’ total budget.

The budget isn’t the only aspect where JSU’s program lacks.

Pete Mathews Coliseum is the only arena in the OVC that can be called small and old.

There are smaller arenas, like Samford’s brand new Pete Hanah Arena, a 5,000-seat venue that was completed earlier this year to the tune of $32 million.

And there are older arenas, like Eastern Kentucky’s McBrayer Arena (built in 1963), which seats 6,500 compared to Pete Mathews (1974), which seats 5,500.

Discontent

The most vocal members of Gamecock Nation can be found on Internet forums, expressing their displeasure of LaPlante’s methods.

But the coach is fine with that. “From the fans’ perspective, that’s their right,” LaPlante said.

“The fans want you to win. They want you to win championships, and they want you to be competitive. From that standpoint, that’s all expected.”

“You want people that are passionate about your school and your program. That’s what makes it fun to cheer for your team or even cheer for your coach.”

The skeptics will jeer. They’ve being doing it for at least a year now.

If LaPlante wants to silence them, a strong showing in the OVC will probably do the trick.
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