

# Gamecock Athletic Update

(through April 15, 2015)

**Football** (10-2, 8-0 OVC in 2014): Jacksonville State held its annual J-Day Spring Football game on April 11th with almost 4,000 fans in attendance. The Gamecocks open the 2015 season at Chattanooga on Sept. 5, before traveling to Auburn on Sept. 12. The home opener is Sept. 19 against Tennessee State. Jacksonville State claimed the school's 19th overall championship and fourth Ohio Valley Conference Championship in 2014. JSU earned the No. 3 national seed and a bye in the first round of the FCS Playoffs. JSU won 10-straight games and became the first Gamecock team to go undefeated in OVC play. Senior Max Holcombe was named the Male Eagle Owl Award winner, which is awarded to the top male student-athlete at Jacksonville State.

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE	TIME
Sept. 5	at Chattanooga	Chattanooga, Tenn.	TBA
Sept. 12	at Auburn	Auburn, Ala.	TBA
Sept. 19	Tennessee State (Band Day/Red Out)	Jacksonville	1 p.m.
Sept. 26	at UT Martin	Martin, Tenn.	TBA
Oct. 3	Mississippi Valley State (Preview Day)	Jacksonville	1 p.m.
Oct. 10	OPEN		
Oct. 17	at Tennessee Tech	Cookeville, Tenn.	TBA
Oct. 24	at Austin Peay	Clarksville, Tenn.	4 p.m.
Oct. 31	Eastern Kentucky (Homecoming/Family Day)	Jacksonville	1 p.m.
Nov. 7	at Eastern Illinois	Charleston, Ill.	1 p.m.
Nov. 14	Southeast Missouri (Hall of Fame)	Jacksonville	1 p.m.
Nov. 21	Murray State (Southerners Reunion)	Jacksonville	1 p.m.

**Soccer** (11-10-1, 6-4 OVC in 2014): The Jacksonville State soccer team had the opportunity to travel to Spain during Spring Break to compete in two exhibition games. The team had the opportunity to tour many of the soccer facilities and was able to train in a couple of them during the week. JSU is coming off one of its best seasons in the program's history as it played for the OVC title last November. The Gamecocks were the No. 5 seed in the tournament after finishing the regular season at 10-9 and 6-4 in the OVC. Jax State knocked off UT Martin in penalty kicks in the opening round, before ousting Southeast Missouri, the regular season champion and host

**Volleyball** (18-16, 9-7 OVC in 2014): JSU made great improvements under first-year head coach **Terry Gamble** and was in first place after the fifth week of the season. The Gamecocks qualified for the OVC Tournament for the first time in three seasons and was the No. 4 seed after finishing above .500 overall and in OVC play for the first time since 2010. JSU dropped a five-set heartbreaker on the match's final play to Tennessee Tech in the first round of the tournament. Senior **Nicole Merget** earned All-Ohio Valley Conference honors after recording

120 blocks, fifth-most in school history. She became the 17th player in school history to join the Gamecocks' 1,000 Kills Club. She also finished fifth in school history with a .259 career attack percentage. Freshman **Allyson Zuhke** was named to the OVC All-Newcomer Team.

**Cross Country:** The Gamecocks wrapped up the 2014 season at the Ohio Valley Conference Championships, which were held at Oxford Lake in Oxford, Ala., but hosted by UT Martin. The JSU women placed ninth in the field, while the Gamecock men finished 11th in the men's 8K that followed the women's 5K. The JSU women had five individuals set personal marks. Sophomore **Ju-ells MeLeod** paced the Jax State contingent in the women's championship. The McDonough, Ga.-native covered the layout in 18:34.15 to place 30th. The mark was her career best, replacing her previous top mark of 18:60.0, which was recorded on the same course earlier this season at the JSU Foothills Invitational. Senior **Whitley Towns** turned in a time of under 18 minutes as the Boaz, Ala.-product crossed the finish line in 18:46.34 to card a personal best. On the men's side, senior **Mickey Sanders** was the top finisher for the Gamecocks with a time of 26:00.11. The time was a season-best in the 8K for Sanders as he placed 35th in the individual standings. Sophomore **Stephen Payne** finished behind Sanders with a mark of 27:05.59. Sophomore **Ben Pryor** and senior **Paul Lueck** carded times of 29:00.52 and 29:13.06 respectively.

**Golf:** After a great fall, the men's golf team continued its impressive play in the spring. The Gamecocks won back-to-back tournaments in March, claiming the Tennessee Tech Bobby Nichols Intercollegiate and then winning their home tournament, the Grub Mart Intercollegiate, at Silver Lakes. They finished fifth out of 20 teams at the Florida Atlantic Slomin Autism Championship to wrap up the regular season. With the OVC Championship coming up this weekend at The Shoals on the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail in Florence, the Gamecocks are ranked 123rd in the GolfStat National Ranking, 33 spots ahead of the closest OVC school, Austin Peay. Senior **Tomasz Anderson** finished in the top 10 in all nine events he played in in 2014-15 and enters the OVC Championship ranked as the 33rd best player in the nation by GolfStat. He won the Bobby Nichols and the Grub Mart to run his school record for career wins to seven. Anderson is also ranked as the No. 8 European player in the standings for the Palmer Cup, the collegiate equivalent to the Ryder Cup.

The JSU Women start the OVC Championship today at Hampton Cove on the RTJ Trail in Huntsville. Junior **Melania Bajo Geijo** is coming off a second-place finish at Chattanooga last week that earned her the OVC Female Golfer of the Week honor.

Former Gamecock **Danny Willett** made his Masters debut this month and made the cut to finish 38<sup>th</sup>. He received national attention for a 64-foot eagle putt on No. 13 in the opening round that was shown on national highlights throughout the weekend.

**Men's Basketball:** Concluded the 2014-15 season in early March. The Gamecocks posted an 11-3 record in Pete Mathews Coliseum, the best home season by a JSU team since 2003-04. That home record included a 72-70 win over OVC Champion and NCAA Tournament team Belmont on Feb. 11, the program's first over the Bruins since they joined the OVC. Four seniors concluded their careers at JSU, including guard **Darion Rackley**, who finished with 1,326 career points, 12<sup>th</sup> on the school's career scoring list and second on the JSU Division I scoring list. Fellow senior **Avery Moore** scored 1,096 points in his Division I career that saw him play two years at FAMU, making he and **Rackley** the first 1,000-point scorers on the same JSU team since 2010-11. **Rackley** was named the OVC Player of the Week on Feb. 16, the first Gamecock since 2013 to earn the honor and JSU's first outright winner since 2010. Senior **Jamal Hunter** blocked a school-record nine shots in the final game of the season at Morehead State, also giving him the school's single season record of 63 blocks and making him the fourth player in JSU's Division I history to block over 100 shots in a career. A transfer from East Mississippi Community College, he is the first two-year player with 100 blocks in a JSU uniform.

**Women's Basketball:** The women's basketball team turned in another historical season as the Gamecocks wrapped up the 2014-15 campaign at 19-10 overall and 10-6 in the OVC. JSU made its second consecutive trip to the OVC Women's Basketball Tournament and faced Belmont in the opening round. The 19 overall wins is the most in JSU's NCAA Division I history, surpassing the 18-wins set by the 2003-04 squad. JSU ranked among the nation's leaders in fewest turnovers per game. The Gamecocks averaged just 11.2 turnovers per game, ranking them fourth in NCAA Division I Women's Basketball. Jax State led the OVC in six different statistical categories, including a league-best 59.6 scoring defense mark. For the first time in Jacksonville State's NCAA Division I Women's Basketball history, two players earned all-conference honors in the same season as senior **Candace Morton** and junior **Destany McLin** were tabbed to the All-Ohio Valley Conference Second Team. It marks the second consecutive year that Morton has earned All-OVC Second Team honors. Last season, she became the first All-OVC selection since 2006 after a superb junior season. The Lexington, Kentucky-guard has etched her name throughout the JSU record book and has become just the eighth player all-time at JSU to have earned all-conference honors multiple times. The last Gamecock to earn all conference honors twice in a career was Shanika Freeman in 2004 and 2005. Freeman was an All-OVC First Team selection. Morton joins Freeman, Lisa Baswell (1999, 2000) and Alfredia Seals (1996, 1997) as the fourth player at JSU as an all-conference honoree twice in a career in the program's NCAA Division I history.

**Rifle:** For the fourth consecutive year and the ninth time overall, the Jacksonville State rifle team claimed an Ohio Valley Conference Rifle Championship in February at its home range on the JSU campus. The Gamecocks, who won the OVC Smallbore crown with a 2311, the Red and White capped off the weekend with a 2351 in the air rifle to win the overall championship with an aggregate mark of 4662. JSU edged Murray State by 18 points as the Racers gave JSU a battle throughout the weekend. JSU's air rifle score was bolstered by **Cole Tucker's** 591 and **Samantha Bullard's** score of 589. **Dan McCall**, who had a 584 in smallbore and finished with a 578 in air rifle. The trio were all named to the OVC Air Rifle First Team. **Bullard** and **Brooks** also were named to the OVC Smallbore First Team. Jax State head coach **Ron Frost** shared 2015 OVC Coach of the Year honors with MSU's Alan Lollar. It marks the sixth time that Frost has claimed the league's top coaching honor, which is voted upon by his peers. For the 14th time in the program's history and the fifth consecutive year, JSU competed for a national championship at the NCAA Rifle Championships in Fairbanks, Alaska. The Gamecocks posted the third-best mark in the air rifle competition at the 2015 NCAA Rifle Championships on Saturday and maintained fifth place in the overall standings. The finish was the best since the 2011 season. JSU turned in an air rifle mark of 2362. After JSU's 2302 score in smallbore, Jax State finished with an aggregate total of 4664, which was just shy of the top three totals as Texas Christian and Nebraska registered a two-day total of 4667.

**Baseball:** The Gamecocks just reached the midway point of the season and looking to finish strong as they look to make the OVC Tournament. Through five OVC weekend series, JSU stands at 7-8 in the league, which includes series wins over Eastern Illinois and Austin Peay. The Gamecocks hosted the Air Force Academy in a three-game series and celebrated Military Appreciation Weekend. The squad wore blue hats with stars and stripes inside the J on the hat throughout the weekend. Senior **Travis Stout** became the OVC's all-time career saves leader with his 36<sup>th</sup> career save against EIU. Stout now has 40 career saves on the season, ranking him in the top-10 on the NCAA's career saves list. Junior **Gavin Golsan** currently ranks fifth in NCAA Division I Baseball in steals. Golsan has swiped 23 stolen bases in 24 attempts. Senior **Ryan Sebra** entered the weekend at Southeast Missouri on a 15-OVC game hitting streak. **Sebra** has hit safely in every conference contest entering the SEMO series.

**Softball:** The Gamecock Softball team entered last week with a 26-13 record and a 9-5 record in Ohio Valley Conference play. They have wins over three Atlantic Coast Conference programs so far, beating Virginia, Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech, while also defeating No. 25 UAB on the road in March. At one point, JSU won eight in a row and 15 out of 17. Senior **Sara Borders** has moved into second in school history in home runs and RBI, third in doubles and fifth in at bats, hits and runs scored. She graduated in December with a 3.86 GPA, earning her degree in exercise science and wellness with a nutrition minor and was recently named the school's female Eagle Owl Award winner at the annual

senior banquet. The Gamecocks have just four home games and seven total games remaining before the OVC Tournament that begins on May 6.

**Tennis:** After a 35-year career that includes 20 conference championships and 812 wins, Jacksonville State's **Steve Bailey** announced that he will retire as the University's men's and women's tennis coach at the conclusion of the 2015 season. **Bailey** has coached 24 All-OVC selections on the men's side since JSU entered the league in 2004 and 13 All-OVC selections on the women's side. **Viviane Marani** was named OVC Player of the Year in 2008 on the women's side, while **Scott Robertson** was named the OVC Freshman of the Year in 2006 under his tenure.

The Jacksonville State men's tennis team clinched its 11th consecutive Ohio Valley Conference Tournament berth on the final weekend of the regular season. The Gamecocks, playing one of the league's toughest overall schedules, finished the regular season at 11-11 and 6-3 in OVC play. JSU sophomores **Jefferson Wendler-Filho** and **Dylan Gee** have earned OVC Player of the Week honors this year. The duo of Wendler-Filho and Gee posted a combined OVC singles record of 12-2. Gee finished the conference slate 7-0 in singles.

The JSU women made a late-season push to make the OVC Tournament, but fell one match out of the six-team field. The Gamecocks, who started conference play 0-3, finished the conference slate by winning four of its last seven in league play and five of the last eight overall. Jax State wrapped up the 2015 season 7-13 overall and 4-6 in the league. Sophomore **Sadey St. Amant** turned in a solid season as she went 7-2 in the conference at the No. 6. St. Amant finished the season at 8-4.

### **Compliance Update**

The office of compliance at Jacksonville State University is continually taking the steps to ensure NCAA Rules and Regulations are being followed. The National Letter of Intent signing period for prospective student-athletes enrolling in the 2015-2016 academic year for Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Rifle, Tennis, Golf, Cross Country, Track & Field and Volleyball begins April 15, 2015.

An all student-athlete meeting was held on February 16, 2015. Included in this meeting was rules education pertaining to NCAA regulations as well as other pertinent student-athlete development information. Mr. Greg Seitz and Mr. Brian Howell, Circuit Court Judge also addressed the student-athletes.

The Student-Athlete Advisory Committee sent military veteran, Sgt. Ben Tomlinson to the OVC Basketball Tournament in Nashville, TN on March 6-7, 2015 in conjunction with the Hoops for Heroes project. Sgt. Tomlinson is a wounded warrior from Jacksonville, Alabama. Sgt. Tomlinson was able to enjoy a relaxing and fun weekend of Ohio Valley Conference Basketball that included special recognition at the tournament, meals, gas vouchers and a hotel stay. On Wednesday, April 15, 2015 the athletic department will celebrate National Student-Athlete Day sponsored in part by the NCAA. National Student-Athlete Day is a way to celebrate outstanding student-athletes who have achieved excellence in academics and athletics while having made significant contributions

to the community. Festivities will be held at the baseball game vs. Alabama State starting at 6:00 p.m.

### **Athletic Development**

- Funded softball “Fan Day” t-shirts
- Hosted the Athletic BOV at the Dream Ranch in Guntersville
- Added Tony Ingram, C.O.O of CSX Railroad and JSU football coach and V.P. of the PGA Champions Tour, Jack White to the BOVA
- Top O’ the River of Gadsden (Bill Sharp) hosted the Grub Mart Invitational Golf Match dinner for eight teams
- The Athletic Development and the Gamecock Club purchased 350 OVC Championship Rings (Six Teams) for the student-athletes, coaches and support staff “championship cost money”
- Purchased new Cocky uniform
- Added Ronnie Watkins Ford of Gadsden to our “Dealer” program

### **Marketing and Promotions**

Baseball held military appreciation weekend at the end of March and our own Scott Austin threw the first pitch on Saturday’s game. We had Calhoun County Chamber weekend for softball and baseball. AlaTrust Credit Union hosted SGA night at softball during the Georgia Tech game on April 15, where they provide hamburgers and hotdogs to all JSU students. The office is continuing to work on advertising contracts for 2015-2016 season.

The cheerleaders and Cocky attended the OVC women’s basketball tournament. Cocky had appeared in the City of Heflin’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Cocky and a few cheerleaders attended Rainbow Omega Event with the football team and grand opening of the new cerebral palsy center. The cheerleaders continue to raise money towards nationals by selling Cocky calendars, teaching stunt clinics and judging many high school cheerleading tryouts. The cheerleaders and Cocky attended nationals the weekend of April 10<sup>th</sup> at Daytona Beach and held a show case in Pete Mathews Coliseum before they left. There were approximately 400 in attendance.

### **Broadcasting**

The annual Senior Banquet was held on April 13 with more than 190 attendees. We will honor 71 seniors on this night. This group included student-athletes, student trainers and student support staff. Each senior will receive a ring. These rings are gifts of the Gamecock Club.

The radio broadcasts now feature our baseball and softball teams. From February through the end of the seasons, we will broadcast approximately 90 baseball and softball contests. This includes both home and away games. All broadcasts are also available via internet streaming and with the TuneIn radio app. We have also begun using a second internet site for streaming (Network 1 Sports) which allows us to broadcast games that are played at the same time. As part of the OVC Digital Network, we will provide video web streaming of seven of each baseball and softball contests. The video web streaming will be produced by JSU Television Services with the help of communication students.

Production of "Inside Gamecock Athletics", our 30-minute weekly half-hour television show, will continue into the month of May. The focus of the show is now on the spring sports. The spotlight will mainly be on baseball and softball, but we will also feature our golf, tennis and track teams. The show is produced on campus by our own JSU Television Services. The show can be seen in the local market and throughout the state on ACN (Alabama Cable Network).