

sports

BRIEFS

MLB finally able to examine Mitchell

Major League Baseball has gotten its advance look at a draft of George Mitchell's report on drug use in the sport.

Baseball reviewed a draft Tuesday at the Manhattan office of DLA Piper, the law firm that Mitchell chairs, a baseball official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because Mitchell hasn't authorized any statements.

The report likely will be released Thursday, and commissioner Bud Selig does not plan to attend Mitchell's news conference, the official said. Selig could have his own news conference or hold a conference call, he added.

Baseball officials have said for several weeks that management would be able to examine the report on performance-enhancing drugs a few days before it is made public to make sure it does not contain any confidential information that if released would violate the collective bargaining agreement between players and owners.

Falcons coach Petrino resigns, expected to be hired by Arkansas

Barely 24 hours after another blowout loss with the Atlanta Falcons, Bobby Petrino was back in college football.

Petrino was hired Tuesday by Arkansas, capping a whirlwind day in which he stunningly resigned from the Falcons after just 13 games. Petrino succeeds Houston Nutt, who stepped down at Arkansas two weeks ago and became the head coach at Mississippi.

"Today was a day of decision," Petrino said at a late-night news conference in Fayetteville. "It was difficult on one side, very easy on the other. It was difficult to leave Atlanta, the staff, players, fans. The timing of it probably is the thing that made it most difficult. Coming to Arkansas was the easy part."

Petrino got a five-year deal worth \$2.85 million per year to take over the Razorbacks, according an athletic department spokesman.

In January, Petrino left as head coach at Louisville to take over in Atlanta, agreeing to a five-year, \$24 million contract handed out by a team that felt he could help Michael Vick reach his full potential.

However, the star quarterback came under investigation for a grisly dogfighting operation that led him to plead guilty to federal charges.

On Monday, Vick was sentenced to 23 months in prison without ever taking a snap for Petrino.

Lady Wildcats lose to Christ Church

Christ Church beat Blacksburg 40-12 Tuesday to keep the Lady Wildcats winless on the season.

Catherine Tate, one of the Lady Wildcats' key players, was held out for most of the game due to an injury.

"Christ Church is real good," Blacksburg girls basketball coach Donnell White said. "We are having a tough time right now getting our players believing and executing what we want them to do."

Blacksburg will start region play Friday against Chapman. The Lady Wildcats will play in the Landrum Christmas holiday tournament on Dec. 27-29.

Miles again says "NO" to Michigan

LSU coach Les Miles denied once again Tuesday he is interested in filling Michigan's head coaching vacancy.

Miles, who is spending this week recruiting for LSU, released a statement Tuesday in response to a report in the Detroit Free Press that the Tigers' coach had spoken with Michigan athletic director Bill Martin and school president Mary Sue Coleman late last week.

"I had a conversation with Michigan last week that covered a wide range of topics. I was doing nothing more than helping them with their search for a football coach, just as any loyal alumnus might do. It was nothing more than that," Miles said.



Photo by JOE L. HUGHES II

Gaffney forward Johnny Woods attempts a lay-up as a Rock Hill defender tries to draw a charge during Tuesday's contest. The Indians won the game, 68-43.

Indians rout Rock Hill

Gaffney's speed, defensive intensity too much for Bearcats to overcome in 25-point victory

By JOE L. HUGHES II
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If Tuesday night's performance by the Gaffney basketball squad is an indicator of things to come for the team, then the future is looking mighty bright for the Indians.

Gaffney, finally able to play at full strength after the return of football players David Dewberry and Johnny Woods, put the hammer down on Rock Hill with a 68-43 triumph Tuesday night.

The team, which has adopted the nickname "The Runtts" due to being outsized by most of their opponents, used that to their advantage by sprinting up and down the court—leaving the opposing Bearcats winded and frustrated.

"The effort was definitely good," Gaffney head coach Mark Huff said. "(Rock Hill) tried to run with us, which is playing right into our advantage. Fortunately, we were able to make it work."

However, the Indians began the contest rather sluggish, being beat up on the boards by the larger Bearcat squad. Rock Hill opened the game with a 6-0 run that prompted Huff to call a timeout to settle his team down.

"During that timeout I had to tell them that we had to do something on the boards," Huff said. "Five offensive rebounds is unacceptable. But we

made up for it by keeping to our gameplan and chipping away at them."

The Indians answered with an 18-8 run to end the quarter, primarily helped by the insertion of senior forward Johnny Woods into the lineup midway through the quarter as well as the accurate shooting of guard Jazz Palmer.

"Palmer's shooting really helped us during that stretch," Huff said. "We really began to feed off of what he was doing and things steadily started going our way."

Things continued to swing toward Gaffney in the second stanza as the team used a suffocating brand of defense to push the Bearcats into several turnovers on their own side of the court.

By halftime, what was once a 6-point Rock Hill lead had turned into a 40-19 advantage for the Indians.

"We forced turnovers, and that was all we could ask for on that end of the court," Huff said. "We simply stopped letting them have those easy buckets they were getting early on. Once we started doing that, we began to find our rhythm just a bit."

Gaffney pushed the lead to as much as 30 with close to six minutes left in the final quarter, with many of their starters having already begun preparation for the ride back down Highway 5.

But even during that time, Huff

could be seen on the sideline continuing to coach his team, trying to erase some of their mistakes.

"We got a little careless in the second half with the ball," Huff said. "There was a lot of good effort by all of the players. But the turnovers are way too high for us to get to where we want to be."

Palmer led the way for the Indians with 17 points, while Jeff Brown was right behind him on the stat sheet with 12. Dewberry, in his first game of action since being selected to the North-South All-Star game, had 11.

Huff, though pleased with the win, believes the team is far from where he hopes the team could be, putting part of the blame on the successful football season.

"We are still in the process of finding ourselves as a team," Huff said. "Many of our players missed four weeks of practice due to the football team making it to the round of 4 in the state playoffs. With two more playing in the North-South All Star game last week, this is really the first time we have been at full strength."

"I liked the way we played, but I know we can get better and believe with a few more days of practice and getting used to what each other is doing we will get there."

The Indians take on region rival Byrnes at home Friday.

Tip-off is expected to take place around 8 p.m.

Blacksburg defense seals win over Christ Church

By SCOTT POWELL
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Tanner Hamrick and Ken Littlejohn intercepted passes in the final seven seconds Tuesday to give Blacksburg a 44-43 win over Christ Church.

Blacksburg earned their first victory of the season with tough defense and just enough offense.

Hamrick scored after a turnover to give the Wildcats a 44-39 lead with 3:57 seconds left. The

Wildcats would not score again, but made timely defensive stops to prevent Christ Church from taking the lead.

"Our defense played extremely well," Blacksburg coach Travis Miller said. "Everybody who stepped on the court tonight gave 100 percent effort."

Ken Littlejohn led Blacksburg with 15 points and Rashad Earls added 12 points.

Blacksburg took a 9-8 lead midway through the first quarter and never trailed the rest of the game.

Blacksburg took a 25-22 halftime lead following a three point play by Josh Elmore with 33 seconds left. Reserves Myron Mitchell, Jonathan Gelok and Dean Craig provided valuable minutes for the Wildcats.

"Our subs played an excellent ballgame and earned big minutes," Miller said. "We still have a long way to go offensively, but anytime you can hold a team to 43 points then you have a good chance to win."

The win over Christ Church

300!

Extra practice scores Wilkins perfect game

By SCOTT POWELL
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Longtime Gaffney resident Bobby Wilkins handed Starmax Bowling Center its first perfect game Dec. 4.

Wilkins, 20, had stopped by Starmax for some extra practice when the strikes started coming and they didn't stop.



BOBBY WILKINS

After bowling three routine games, Wilkins finished the night with a perfect 300 game. This required the Gaffney resident to bowl 12 strikes in a row.

Perfect games are a rare accomplishment. Many professional bowlers have only a handful of 300 games to their credit.

Starmax Gaffney Management congratulated Wilkins on his achievement and welcomed him into the elite 300 Club as its first charter member.

Wilkins grew up in the Gaffney area and has been bowling at the Starmax entertainment center since it opened last February.

He started his bowling outing last Saturday with a 179. He had a 138 and 158 in his next two games before his evening ended on a perfect note.

But the Gaffney resident offered no secret to bowling success other than the tried and true method of simple practice.

"You need to get used to the lanes before you start bowling well," he said.

Wilkins offered the following advice for other bowlers in search of their own perfection.

"Just try your best and keep practicing!"

South Carolina loses defensive coordinator to conference rival

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier wished his former defensive coordinator well Tuesday and hoped it was a change that would work for all involved.

Tyrone Nix, Spurrier's defensive coordinator the past three seasons, left for Ole Miss to work with its newly hired coach, Houston Nutt as the team's defensive coordinator.

"Tyrone Nix is a good person, a wonderful family man and an outstanding football coach," Spurrier said in a statement. "We wish him the very best at Ole Miss except when they play the Gamecocks."

The Gamecocks travel to Mississippi for a game Oct. 4.

Spurrier would not take questions about Nix's departure, athletic spokesman Steve Fink said.

Nix had interviewed for the head coaching job at his alma mater, Southern Miss, but withdrew his name from consideration last week.

helped erase the sting of Monday's 50-48 loss to Landrum.

Blacksburg trailed 37-33 entering the fourth quarter. The Wildcats were unable to convert their scoring chances.

"We had many opportunities to win that ballgame," Miller said. "The ball just didn't go in the basket."

Littlejohn led the Wildcats with 20 points. Darrell Walton, Earls and Hamrick each had six points.

Blacksburg will begin region play Friday at Chapman.