

Patrick Kinmartin

Associate Sports Editor

Cruellest joke of all could hit Williams

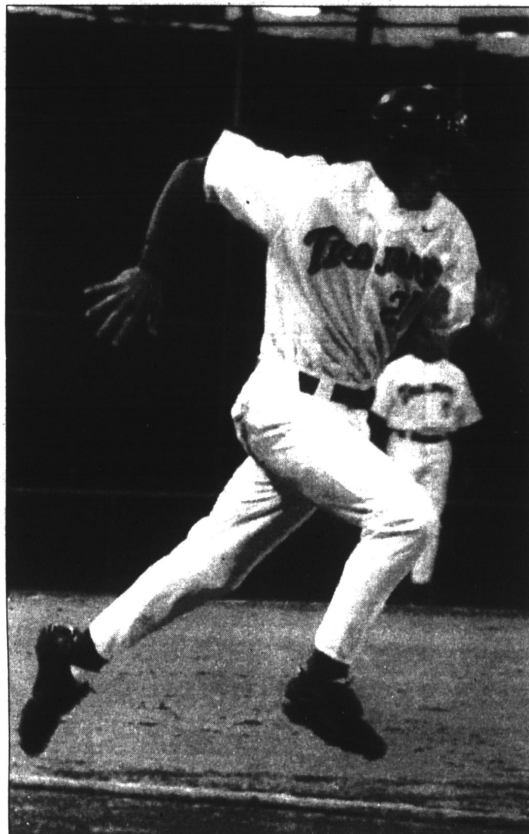
I admit, I've seen some whoopers in my day — tying the geek's shoelaces together, spiking the punch at prom, super-gluing quarters to the ground — but nothing can compare to the fast one the United States' judicial system is about to pull on Maurice Claret and former USC receiver Mike Williams.

In what could turn out be a rather harsh April Fools' hoax on the two players, this week a three-judge panel of the U.S. 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals in New York scheduled a hearing on April 19 or 20 of the league's appeal on the original order in the Maurice Claret case.

The appeals court will consider whether to affirm or reverse the Feb. 5 order of U.S. District Judge Shira Scheindlin that declared Claret eligible for the draft and allowed Williams to enter as well despite being a college sophomore.

Both have hired agents and are no longer eligible to play college football. If the court rules favorably on the NFL's appeal, they will be blocked

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Clutch. Here, shortstop Blake Sharpe legged out an infield single in the first inning. But, his heroics surfaced in the eighth, when his single was responsible for USC's game-winning run.

Trojans look extra Sharpe in comeback

Shortstop Blake Sharpe knocks in game-winning runs in USC's come-from-behind 6-4 win Wednesday against Cal State Fullerton.

By PAUL RIETZ
Staff Writer

A win is a win. And the Trojans have been getting quite a few of them lately.

After defeating Cal State Fullerton, 6-4, in a nonconference game Wednesday night at Dedeaux Field, USC has won four of its last five and is primed to begin Pacific-10 Conference play, which begins Friday at Arizona State.

Shortstop Blake Sharpe was the hero for the Trojans, hitting a clutch two-run bases-loaded single into left field in the bottom of the eighth to put USC ahead for good. His two-RBI game keyed a patient if ordinary offensive assault for USC, which took advantage of four errors by the Titans and a couple favorable calls by the home plate umpire.

Jon Brewster led off the game with a solo home run and, combined with a throwing error later in the first, the Trojans (13-14) jumped out to a quick 2-0 advantage.

Although the Titans (15-14) would pin four runs on Clayton Wentworth, who came on in relief of starter Michael Friedman, USC's

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Numbers

- 2** Number of runs USC starter Michael Friedman lasted
- 3** Number of runs USC scored in the eighth.
- 4** Number of errors Fullerton committed
- 7** Innings in which Titans' assistant coach Dave Serrano was ejected.



Three's a charm. USC's Ben Hayes finished in a tie for third after shooting five strokes under par at the National Invitational Tournament in Tucson, Ariz.

USC keeps raising up in Arizona

Men's golf continues to show improvement with a third-place finish in Tucson, Ariz.

By EVAN FERRARO
Staff Writer

The pieces of becoming a top national squad are rapidly coming together for the fast-improving No. 17 USC men's golf team.

Led by the strong play of junior co-captains Ben Hayes and Nico Bollini, the Trojans fired a three-under-par total of 861 to finish third in the National Invitational Tournament, held at Tucson National Golf Club in Tucson, Ariz. The 54-hole event, which ran from Sunday through Tuesday and included nine teams ranked in the top 25, was won by No. 8 Arizona State with a three-round total of eight-under 856, leaving them two shots clear of No. 10 Arizona and five strokes ahead of USC.

The tournament marked the team's most consistent and explosive showing of the year thus far. In the first round, the Trojans blistered the Tucson National layout with a six-under-par total to leave them the sole occupant of second place, three shots

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Away they go. Members of the USC Cycling Club wake up at 5 a.m. some mornings to ride 40 miles — "it's just absolute freedom," one rider says.

CHAIN LINK

With rides up to 80 miles in distance, USC's cycling club unites bikers of all kinds.

By ASHLEY ZELDIN
Staff Writer

Every Monday and Wednesday, USC cycling team member Chris Duffy wakes up at 5 a.m. to go on a 40-mile ride before class.

On Tuesdays and Fridays, he rides 60 to 80 miles after class.

On weekends during the season, he races; in the off-season, he completes 80-mile rides, too.

"There's something about going

out and riding and being self-sufficient for four or five hours," Duffy said. "It's just absolute freedom. I don't have to answer to anybody."

The freshman anthropology major is only one of the dedicated, promising prospects on the growing team.

Formed in the late 1970s, the cycling club was "pretty big and pretty popular," cycling club president David Clayton said. A graduate student majoring in mechanical engineering, Clayton has been with the

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Cycling: One USC biker hopes to be racing at top level in '05

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team for three and a half years, having joined the team in the fall of 2000 when he started his graduate work at USC.

"(The team) slowed down and died out, and then it was reformed in the early 1990s for a few years until it died out completely," Clayton said. "In the fall of 1999, a couple of freshmen started school here and they reformed the club again."

Since then, the cycling club has been rolling right along for almost five years straight.

"We race against pretty much all the schools in California — all the Pac-10 schools, all the non-Pac-10 schools ... pretty much any school in the western region, meaning California and Nevada," Clayton said. Some of USC's biggest in-state rivals on the road are Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and UC San Diego, he said.



Jacobsen

Collegiate cycling consists of two separate seasons — mountain biking and road cycling. Mountain biking is the season for USC's conference in the fall, starting in late October — "when the quarter schools start," Clayton explained — until the end of the first semester. Mountain biking, which covers terrain up mountains, off road and uphill, is sometimes impeded by snow, Clayton said. The mountain biking squad is comprised of about five to 10 members, and 10 more practice with the team but do not race.

Similarly, the road cycling crew consists of about 10 members who race and another 15 to 20 riders who work out with the team but do not participate in races either.

Road cycling, on the other hand, takes place in the spring semester, from the first week of February through early May.

The national competition races take place in mid- to late-May, hosted by a different school every year. Last year, Cal was the site of the competition, and this year's nationals are slated to be held at the Wisconsin.

"I've never actually gone to nationals," Clayton said. "It's kind of qualifying. You do all these races throughout the year, and (you) score points based on how well you do. I think our conference typically sends four to five schools to nationals, plus a couple of individual qualifiers that are not on one of those top teams."

USC's nationals hopeful is Alan Jacobsen, Jacobsen, a graduate student in mechanical engineering working toward his doctorate, is currently in third place overall in conference com-

petition.

"He has a very good shot with the way things are going right now of qualifying for nationals," Clayton said. "He's our only 'A' rider this year, so he's the only one who has a chance of qualifying."

Last year, two members of the cycling club, both seniors, qualified for nationals — Michael Nuñez in mountain biking and Dan West in road cycling.

"In collegiate cycling, there are no 'varsity' teams," Clayton said. "Almost throughout the entire country, it's just club sport." The national body is USA Cycling, which supports the collegiate organization, the National College Cycling Association.

"There (are) different regions, the Western College Cycling Conference that we're in, and there's the Eastern, Midwest, South (and) Northwest (Conferences)."

In each conference there are three levels "A," "B" and "C." The "C" level is for beginning riders, while "B" is the intermediate level, and "A" is for "the really fast guys," Clayton said. "There (are) professional riders in the 'A' races. It's pretty difficult."

There is another distinction between schools. Those with enrollments of more than 15,000 are considered Division I, and those with less is regarded as Division II. Being a Division I team adds to the level of difficulty in the WCCC.

"We have a presence in our conference now," he said. "We probably have the toughest conference in the country." Cal won last year's nationals, and UC Davis is traditionally in the top five teams nationally, he said.

Duffy, who has only been riding for one year, is already a "B" rider.

"He's still pretty new," Clayton said, "but given his level of improvement so far, he'll probably be racing 'A' next year, which would be pretty remarkable to race 'A' (in) your second year."

Duffy said that he will definitely be competing in the "A" level next season.

"It's a goal for me to go to collegiate nationals and to race bikes professionally," Duffy said. "I'm going to work with my coach this summer to do 200- to 300-mile rides." He plans to race consistently twice a week throughout the summer, as well as to compete in stage races. "I'll carry that over to my training in the fall for spring 2005 racing," he added.

Other upcoming talent includes another freshman, architecture major Arthur Page.

"He's really strong," Clayton said. "If he sticks with it, he should be a really good rider for us. We have a lot of other new members, and the sky's the limit for them."

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What's up next

Friday

Baseball @ Arizona State, 7 p.m.
 Women's water polo vs. San Jose State, 5 p.m.
 (McDonald's Swim Stadium)
 Men's tennis vs. Stanford, 1:30 p.m.
 (Marks Tennis Stadium)
 Women's tennis @ Stanford, 1:30 p.m.
 Women's golf @ Arizona State

Saturday

Baseball @ Arizona State, 1 p.m.
 Women's water polo vs. Stanford, Noon
 (McDonald's Swim Stadium)
 Men's tennis vs. Cal, Noon
 (Marks Tennis Stadium)
 Men's volleyball vs. UC Irvine, 7 p.m.
 (Lyon Center)
 Women's tennis @ Cal, Noon
 Women's golf @ Arizona State
 Women's rowing @ San Diego

Sunday

Baseball @ Arizona State, 1 p.m.
 Women's golf @ Arizona State

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