



In the zone. Freshman Matt Cusick's 9-for-12 performance capped USC's 3-1 appearance at the NCAA Regionals against host No. 12 Long Beach State and unranked Pepperdine. Next up for the Trojans are the No. 2 Beavers of Oregon State at the NCAA Super Regionals in Corvallis, Ore. over the weekend.

Another Wright leaves USC

Redshirt sophomore cornerback Eric Wright becomes the latest Trojan to pursue other options.

By JEFFREY DAVENPORT
Contributing Writer

Cornerback Eric Wright has decided to leave USC after facing possible suspension or expulsion in response to drug possession charges stemming from late March. Wright will look to continue his career elsewhere.

"Eric came to the conclusion that it would be in his best interest to withdraw from school. We agree and support his decision," coach Pete Carroll said in a statement.

Wright, a red-shirt sophomore from San Francisco, had been suspended from the team since March 26 after he was arrested on suspicion of rape. In documents released by the Los Angeles District Attorney's office, 136 pills of the drug Ecstasy were also found in Wright's apartment that he shared with a teammate.

"It would be in his best interest to withdraw from school. We agree and support his decision."

◆
PETE CARROLL
head coach
USC football team

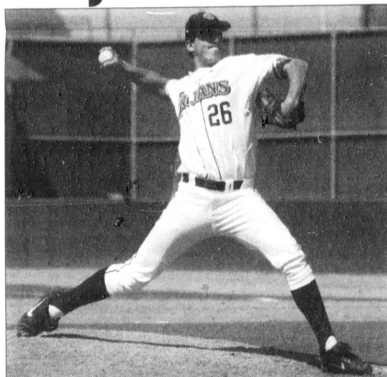
Although the district attorney did not file either the rape or drug charges due to insufficient evidence, Wright still faces possible punishment from USC.

In April, when the charges were dropped, Vice President of Student Affairs Michael L. Jackson said in a statement, "USC's standard of proof is different from the federal courts.

If what is alleged to have taken place occurred and is proven according to USC's standards, Mr.

◆ see Wright, page 10

Trojans ride Waves to victory



Sign of relief. Sophomore reliever Paul Koss recorded saves in all three Trojan wins over the weekend. He now has 14 saves on the season.

After Pepperdine forces a do-or-die game four, Hector Estrella hits key two-run triple.

By JEFFREY DAVENPORT
Contributing Writer

With the season hanging in the balance, the No. 16 Trojan baseball team defeated Pepperdine 5-2 in the NCAA Regionals at Blair Stadium in Long Beach on Monday. They will face No. 2 Oregon State in a Super Regional match-up in Corvallis, Ore. over the weekend. The win came after the Waves had forced a deciding game by upsetting the Trojans 9-2 on Sunday. USC also defeated No. 12 Long Beach State 6-4 on Saturday and Pepperdine on Friday 7-3.

In the deciding game, Pepperdine (41-23) out-hit the Trojans 8-4, but their pitchers could not find the strike zone, walking nine and hitting two.

"If they (Trojans) had been pounding the ball all over the yard,

the loss would have been easier to take. I feel that we beat ourselves," Pepperdine coach Steve Rodriguez said.

But USC (40-20) took advantage of their opportunities, coming up with clutch hits. In the bottom of the sixth inning leading 3-2, Roberto Lopez and Baron Frost drew walks off of Pepperdine pitcher Paul Coleman. With two-out, Hector Estrella lined a triple on a 0-2 pitch, scoring Lopez and Frost to stretch the lead to 5-2 and ultimately seal the victory.

"We wanted to leave it all out on the field," Estrella said. "I was looking for an away pitch and I got it."

Pitching on two days rest, Trojan starter Jack Spradlin pitched 4 2/3 innings, giving up two runs on four hits, with no walks and four strikeouts. Relievers Anthony Encinas and Paul Koss held the Waves scoreless the rest of the way. The defense behind the pitchers was stellar as well, highlighted by a diving catch by Lopez in the top of the ninth.

◆ see Baseball, page 11

Trojans deep-six the competition

Taylor Wood and Joshua Wooding post four-day totals of 283 (+3) and 285 (+5), respectively. Wood's performance earned him a seventh place tie while Wooding finished tied for 13th.

By ASHLEY ZELDIN
Sports Editor

One year after failing to make the third-round cut at the NCAA Men's Golf Championships, the USC men's golf team improved from 18th to sixth in the 30-team field over the last 54 holes at Caves Valley Golf Club in Owings Mills, Md. on Saturday for its best finish since 1995.

"We certainly would've liked to be closer to the title," USC coach Kurt Schuette said. "It's getting more and more difficult to even qualify for the NCAA finals, but last year it was disappointing not to make the cut and contend for the championship so we just used it as fuel for the fire."

The Trojans were led by junior

Taylor Wood and sophomore Joshua Wooding, who posted four-day totals of 283 (+3) and 285 (+5), respectively. Wood's performance earned him a seventh place tie while Wooding finished tied for 13th.

Junior Bradley Shaw compiled a 16-over 296, just in front of senior Ben Hayes' 298 (+18). Junior Tyler Ley shot a 304 (+24) for the tournament.

"Everyone played very well the last day," Wood said. "It was a good way to finish off the year."

"It really was a team performance," Schuette said.

Georgia went wire-to-wire as No. 1 to win the championship with a score of 1135 (+15). Last year the Bulldogs held off USC in the three-way tiebreaker for the 15th and final team spot in last year's tournament. The Trojans' combined 1159 (+39) was only six shots back from third-place Washington, the only

Pacific-10 Conference school out of six competing that placed ahead of USC. Washington junior James Lepp won the individual title on the third playoff hole after rallying from six-shots behind Pepperdine's Michael Putnam by shooting a course record seven-under 63 to force the playoff.

Although they had struggled in the previous rounds, Hayes and Ley turned in par-70 performances on the final day of competition to lead USC. Hayes had three birdies over the 7,129-yard course, while Ley's day was punctuated by six birdies that cancelled six bogeys.

Wood was the model of consistency, with only two bogeys on the day with a birdie to bring him to a one-over 71. Wooding and Shaw had two- and three-birdie showings to mark three-over 73s.

"By that time it was too late and we put ourselves in a hole we

◆ see Golf, page 10

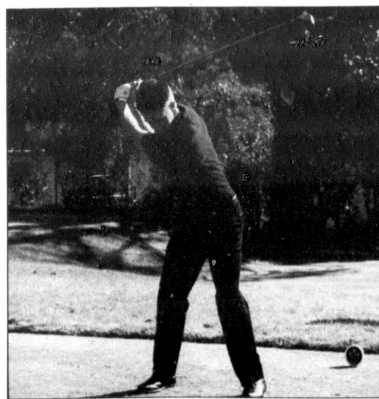


Photo courtesy of USC Sports Information
Four. Junior Taylor Wood led the Trojans in the NCAA Men's Golf Championships by helping USC to a sixth-place finish in Owings Mills, Md.

Wright

(continued from page 12)

Wright faces serious consequences for his actions.

According to USC's drug policies, "Use, possession, distribution or sale of illegal drugs, will subject the student to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or expulsion."



E. Wright



M. Wright



Washington

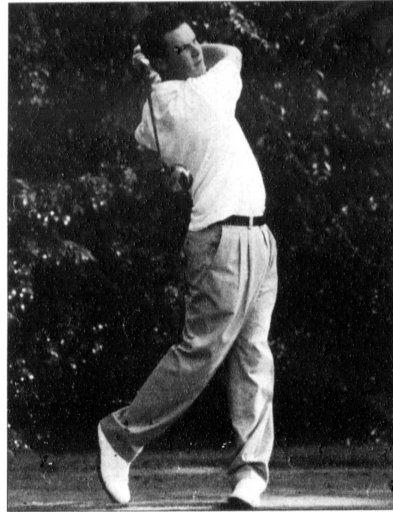
Wright, who intercepted a pass in the Trojans victory over Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl, will have to sit out one year before he can begin play with another team.

Wright's departure follows those of defensive lineman Manuel Wright, and running back Chauncey Washington. Manuel Wright will enter the NFL supplemental draft, and Washington will

seek to transfer. Both players had been declared academically ineligible.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Rocky Hinds also is considering a transfer after being listed third on the depth chart behind Heisman winner Matt Leinart and redshirt sophomore John David Booty. Rumors have it that Hinds fears the arm of incoming freshman Mark Sanchez, the highly-touted recruit out of Mission Viejo, Calif.

Golf: Wood, Wooding lead USC to best NCAA finish in 10 years



Follow through. Junior Bradley Shaw shot back-to-back rounds of 72 the first two days of the NCAA tournament to help the Trojans stay competitive.

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couldn't get out of unless we'd had a miracle round," Wood said.

Despite their strong round, the Trojans dropped to sixth from third place after 54 holes on cut day.

"We played well but other teams played better," Wooding said. "You don't have to play bad to lose spots. Golf's a really fickle game, that's just how it is."

"We actually played pretty darn well the last day," Schuette said. "We were trying to get close to the title, we gave everything we had. There were a ton of teams on our tail when we were in third."

Wood's three birdies for a two-over 72 led USC just before the cut. He ended Friday in a sixth-place tie with Wooding, who was four-over on the front nine and one-under on the back nine for a 73 (+3).

Hayes and Shaw turned in nine-over 79s, and Ley managed an 82 (+12).

"That third round, counting two 79s and an 82, really killed us," Wood said.

The Trojans were slightly handicapped by rainy conditions.

"It accounted for several shots. Every team in the morning shot higher scores than those in the afternoon did," Wood said.

stopped blowing, and (the afternoon wave) did better."

"It made for a long mentally tough day, but we bit the bullet and fought through it," Wooding said.

USC's second round total was the second lowest round Thursday, and moved the Trojans from the middle of the field to among the contenders.

"We just had a good day and it was nice to move up the leaderboard," Wooding said.

Wooding and Wood each shot two-under 68s. Wooding ended the day tied for 10th after a solid round highlighted by five birdies.

Wood's rally earned him a two-day total of even par. Shaw's 72 (+2), Hayes' 74 (+4), and Ley's 77 (+7) rounded out the USC effort.

The Trojans began the tournament with a relatively low round in which Wooding and Shaw were both two-under par after 13 and 10 holes, finishing at 71 (+1) and 72 (+2), respectively. Wood also shot a two-over 72, while Hayes and Ley recorded scores of 75 (+5).

"The guys showed a lot of fortitude and mental toughness actually getting (to the final round)," Schuette said.

Wood and Wooding earned All-American status with their strong tournament showings.

BRIEFS

Women's tennis freshmen named ITA All-American

Sophomore Jamil Al-Agba was the men's team's only All-American, the first since 2002.

USC freshmen Nicole Leimbach and Lindsey Nelson were named as ITA Singles All-Americans on Friday. No. 8 Leimbach was the Pacific-10 player of the year and finished with a 32-10 record in singles play. She lost in the first round of the NCAA Women's Tennis Singles Championships. No. 16 Nelson ended the season with a 35-8 record and advanced to the Round of 16 in the NCAA Championships.

By being named an ITA All-American, sophomore Jamil Al-Agba became the first men's tennis player to receive such an accolade since 2002.

Al-Agba, whose No. 20 individual ranking garnered the honor, made it to the second round of the singles tournament and doubles competition with senior Johan Berg. Al-Agba was also selected to the Pac-10 second team.

See Briefs, page 11

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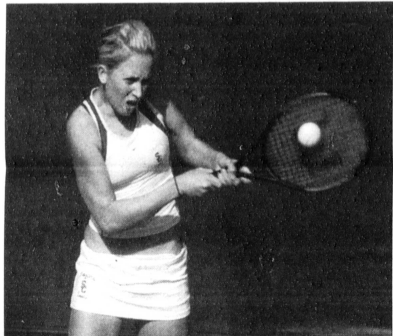
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Smashing. Freshman Lindsey Nelson's 35-8 singles record and NCAA Round of 16 appearance helped her earn ITA Singles All-American honors.

Classifieds

(continued from page 9)

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ACROSS

- Mold-y food?
- Gathering clouds, say
- Picnic racer's gear
- Fuzzy 86-Across
- Whatever she wants, she gets, in song
- Shrak, e.g.
- Betting odds, for example
- Speaker's place
- Overwhelm with humor
- Start of a quip
- Like a churl
- Way of the East
- Hilched, so to speak
- Notable time
- Do a salt's job
- Caterer's vessel

DOWN

- Something to pick?
- Matinee
- Full of substance
- Part 2 of the quip
- Con game
- Be over-sentimental
- Dig for
- Part of a dish's name
- Be anxious
- Salon supply
- Noshed
- One with pointed shoes
- National, again
- End of the quip
- Prefix with -cal
- Have coming
- Some produce
- Floored it
- Little dent

ANSWER TO TODAY'S PUZZLE

1	A	S	P	I	O	16	O	N	E	31	C	A	K
2	C	L	O	D	S	17	C	L	O	32	C	L	O
3	M	A	S	H	18	D	A	T	E	33	S	I	A
4	M	A	S	H	19	M	A	S	H	34	C	L	O
5	M	A	S	H	20	M	A	S	H	35	C	L	O
6	M	A	S	H	21	M	A	S	H	36	C	L	O
7	M	A	S	H	22	M	A	S	H	37	C	L	O
8	M	A	S	H	23	M	A	S	H	38	C	L	O
9	M	A	S	H	24	M	A	S	H	39	C	L	O
10	M	A	S	H	25	M	A	S	H	40	C	L	O
11	M	A	S	H	26	M	A	S	H	41	C	L	O
12	M	A	S	H	27	M	A	S	H	42	C	L	O
13	M	A	S	H	28	M	A	S	H	43	C	L	O
14	M	A	S	H	29	M	A	S	H	44	C	L	O
15	M	A	S	H	30	M	A	S	H	45	C	L	O

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