



IN THIS SECTION

- ▶ **Coach Nancy Somera**
- ▶ **Coach Ben Somera**
- ▶ **Coach Damian Elder**
- ▶ **Professional Staff**

GAMECOCK VOLLEYBALL STAFF



Nancy **SOMERA**



2nd Season at South Carolina

QUICK HITS ON SOMERA

- ▶ Was hired by South Carolina in February 2005
- ▶ Spent six seasons as the head coach for Oregon State prior to becoming a Gamecock
- ▶ Led the OSU Beavers to only their second NCAA Tournament appearance in school history in 2001
- ▶ Worked as an assistant coach for Southern California from 1991 to 1998
- ▶ Played for the Women of Troy from 1985 to 1988, earning her bachelor's in journalism/broadcasting in 1989
- ▶ Still ranks among the top 10 in seven career statistical categories at Southern California
- ▶ Received her master's in education from Southern California in 1994
- ▶ Her husband, Ben, has been associate head coach for her at Oregon State and South Carolina
- ▶ Nancy and Ben have a 9-year-old son, Sam, and a 5-year-old daughter, Maile
- ▶ Is 10 victories away from reaching the 100-win plateau for her career

In February 2005, South Carolina ushered in a new era in Gamecock volleyball by naming Nancy Somera as its head coach. Somera has more than 20 years of Pacific-10 Conference volleyball experience both as a player and coach. She sports an overall career record of 90-112 (.446) in seven years as a head coach and has a 264-176 (.600) mark in 15 seasons of collegiate coaching.

In her first season at the helm of USC, Somera's Gamecocks finished with an overall record of 13-14 and were 5-11 in the Southeastern Conference. USC began the year winning six of its first seven contests with significant victories over Pittsburgh and NCAA participant North Carolina. After a rough patch in the SEC, South Carolina ended the season on a strong note with three straight wins, including a thrilling five-game match against Alabama.

Two Gamecocks earned recognition from the SEC for their performances in 2005. Shonda Cole was named second-team All-SEC for the second time in as many years and Marija Milosevic nabbed a place on the SEC All-Freshman Team. Cole also snagged honorable mention status on the AVCA All-South Region squad.

Before taking the reigns at South Carolina, Somera served six years as the head coach at Oregon State. During her tenure,

Somera guided Oregon State to a 77-98 (.440) record and led the Beavers to the NCAA Tournament in 2001 with a 17-12 record and a fifth-place finish in the Pac-10. Her teams were known for their defensive prowess and competitive spirit.

Under Somera, Oregon State achieved many firsts for its program, including its first NCAA appearance after joining the Pac-10. The tournament bid was just the second ever for the Beavers, who first went to NCAAs in 1983. Oregon State finished at .500 or better in one of the toughest volleyball conferences in the country in three of Somera's six seasons. Academically, Somera's teams led the Oregon State athletic department in team GPA for 9-of-15 terms.

During her stay in Corvallis, Ore., Somera coached one player to All-Pac-10 First Team honors and three players received honorable mention all-conference accolades. Two student-athletes also earned spots on the Pac-10 All-Freshman Team. Additionally, seven Beavers received academic praise from CoSIDA and 16 were awarded academic laurels from the Pacific-10 Conference.

Prior to OSU, Somera served as an assistant coach at Southern California for eight seasons. During that time, her duties included training the outside hitters and developing the floor defense and serving.



GAMECOCK HEAD COACH



The Women of Troy made eight consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances with Somera on staff from 1991 to 1998. Seven of the squads (1991, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998) advanced to at least the Sweet 16 and one reached the Elite Eight (1994). In 15 years of Pac-10 coaching, Somera was involved with training and mentoring 10 All-Americans and 21 All-Pac-10 award winners. Southern California was 174-64 (.731) overall and 100-44 (.694) in league matches with Somera and finished fourth or better in the Pac-10 in each of her eight years on staff.

Somera was an assistant coach at Golden West College in Huntington Beach, Calif., in 1990 before joining the Southern California staff. In her one season, GWC won the state championship.

Formerly Nancy Hillman, Somera was a four-year starter for Southern California from 1985 to 1988 and was a member of the 1985 Final Four team. She was an All-Pac-10 selection in 1987 and 1988, and was a three-year team captain that never missed a match due to injury or illness. During her four years as a player, the Glendale, Calif., native set five single-season and career records. Somera is still ranked among the top 10 in Southern California's career records for kills, kills per game, attacks, digs, digs per game, service aces and service aces per game.

During her senior season, Somera was awarded the Pac-10 Conference Gold Medal, which is given to one athlete in each sport who best demonstrates the qualities of leadership and outstanding scholastic achievement. She was also a four-year Scholar-Athlete Award honoree. In 1990, she was named to Southern California's All-Decade Team.

Somera graduated in 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts in journalism/broadcasting, and in 1994, she earned her master's degree in education from Southern California.

Somera and her husband Ben, who is the Gamecocks' associate head coach, have a 9-year-old son, Sam, and a 5-year-old daughter, Maile.



THE SOMERA FAMILY

Ben, Maile, Nancy and Sam

SOMERA YEAR-BY-YEAR

YEAR	SCHOOL	OVERALL			CONF		
		W	L	PCT	W	L	PCT
1999	Oregon State	8	18	.308	2	16	.111
2000	Oregon State	16	16	.500	6	12	.333
2001	Oregon State	17	12	.586	10	8	.556
2002	Oregon State	8	20	.286	2	16	.111
2003	Oregon State	16	16	.500	5	13	.278
2004	Oregon State	12	16	.429	5	13	.278
2005	South Carolina	13	14	.481	5	11	.313
TOTALS	7 YEARS	90	112	.446	35	89	.282

SOMERA VERSUS ALL OPPONENTS

Opponent	OSU	USC	All	Opponent	OSU	USC	All	Opponent	OSU	USC	All
Alabama	—	1-1	1-1	Georgia	—	0-2	0-2	Portland State	2-0	—	2-0
Alaska-Fairbanks	1-0	—	1-0	Gonzaga	1-0	—	1-0	Purdue	—	0-1	0-1
Arizona	1-11	—	1-11	Houston	—	1-0	1-0	Radford	1-0	—	1-0
Arizona State	5-7	—	5-7	Idaho	1-1	—	1-1	Sacramento State	1-1	—	1-1
Arkansas	—	0-1	0-1	Idaho State	2-0	—	2-0	Saint Louis	0-1	—	0-1
Auburn	1-0	2-0	3-0	Indiana	0-1	—	0-1	St. Mary's (Calif.)	2-1	—	2-1
Ball State	1-1	—	1-0	Kentucky	—	0-2	0-2	San Diego	1-0	—	1-0
Boise State	2-0	—	2-0	Long Beach State	0-1	—	0-1	San Diego State	1-0	—	1-0
Brown	1-0	—	1-0	LSU	—	0-1	0-1	San Francisco	1-0	—	1-0
Cal Poly	0-1	—	0-1	Mercer	—	1-0	1-0	San Jose State	0-1	—	0-1
Cal State Northridge	1-0	—	1-0	Minnesota	0-1	—	0-1	Southern California	0-12	—	0-12
California	5-7	—	5-7	Mississippi	—	1-0	1-0	Stanford	0-12	—	0-12
Campbell	1-0	—	1-0	Mississippi State	1-0	1-0	2-0	Stetson	1-0	—	1-0
Charleston	—	0-1	0-1	Missouri	2-0	—	2-0	TCU	1-0	—	1-0
Charlotte	1-0	1-0	2-0	Murray State	1-0	—	1-0	Tennessee	—	0-2	0-2
Clemson	—	0-1	0-1	Nevada	1-0	—	1-0	Texas Tech	0-1	—	0-1
Coastal Carolina	—	1-0	1-0	North Carolina	0-1	1-0	1-1	UC Irvine	1-0	—	1-0
Colorado State	0-1	—	0-1	Northern Arizona	1-1	—	1-1	UC Riverside	2-0	—	2-0
Connecticut	1-0	—	1-0	Northern Iowa	0-1	—	0-1	UCLA	2-10	—	2-10
Eastern Washington	0-2	—	0-2	Oral Roberts	1-0	—	1-0	Washington	3-9	—	3-9
Fairfield	0-1	—	0-1	Oregon	9-3	—	9-3	Washington State	6-6	—	6-6
Florida	—	0-2	0-2	Pacific	0-1	—	0-1	Western Illinois	1-0	—	1-0
Florida State	—	1-0	1-0	Pennsylvania	1-0	—	1-0	Winthrop	1-0	1-0	2-0
Fresno State	0-1	—	0-1	Pittsburgh	1-0	1-0	2-0				
Georgetown	1-0	—	1-0	Portland	6-0	—	6-0				



GAMECOCK HEAD COACH

UP CLOSE WITH NANCY

What would your ideal team look like?

"It would have a great blend of athleticism, size, skill, power and finesse. When I envision what great teams "look" like on the court together, I see a team that moves effortlessly around the court, in rhythm with one another, in control of where the ball is going and mentally on top of what is happening next. Everyone exhibits focused concentration, and it's clear that they play for one purpose only: to win!"

Where does your vision of that team come from?

"I suppose it comes from a lifetime of competitive sports, as a participant and spectator. I've been coached by some talented coaches who stressed technique and being fundamentally sound. I also learned at a very early age the importance of being strong mentally; that is, winners don't make mental errors. I don't believe a team can work in concert on a volleyball court together unless each player is disciplined in system and effort. It is too small of an area, with a ball that must stay up in the air. Without discipline and ball control, chaos reigns."

Where is this program in terms of building that team you envision?

"We are putting the pieces together. Our returning group was given a crash course last year on playing the game of volleyball at a higher level physically, emotionally and intellectually. Our additions to the program this year are a great blend of experience, skill, ball control and leadership, and we've committed several future prospects to compliment the 2005 and 2006 classes. We're developing gym role models so each year there will be more and more players doing it the right way so new players can learn faster."

What do you want your players to experience in your program?

"A championship, of course! Then, I want them to have an overall positive college experience. Volleyball is integral to that experience, but not exclusive. We really strive to provide balance to our players' lives so they can enjoy all that the University of South Carolina has to offer them academically, athletically, and socially. In the end, I hope each player feels confident in her abilities to achieve any goals she has after graduation. It's most gratifying when a player returns and comments that skills learned in our program helped her reach her goals."

What is the college experience at South Carolina like?

"It's a great blend of academic prestige, athletic heritage and fan support. South Carolina is a vibrant urban college with all the metropolitan conveniences, yet feel of a college town. There is a pulse in Columbia that is very attractive to the college-age student and young professional. Right now, leaders at USC are gaining a lot of momentum toward becoming a remarkable research institution and first-rate athletic department. Both the president and the athletics director share a vision to attract the most talented prospects to USC, whether it's faculty, coaches or student-athletes, and are willing to commit resources to making it happen. The year-round climate is hard to beat, and beaches and mountains are less than two hours away."

What parts of the game of volleyball are most important to you?

"I've always been about serve, pass and dig. Although the women's game has become more about power, it still comes down to which team can win the serve and pass game. Setting, hitting and blocking become a lot easier when you're executing those first three skills consistently and accurately. I've always believed that defense wins you matches, and while rally scoring requires that you are a proficient side-out team, the winner is the team scoring more points while serving, so you have to be able to defend."

How do you emphasize those areas within your program?

"We train a lot of defense and ball handling in a variety of different ways each practice. Anyone who plays for me quickly learns that the heart of our team starts with defense. Then they learn how to go to the floor! Becoming a good defensive player is more about effort and discipline than skill. Certainly, we don't ignore hitting and blocking. The execution of those two skills is where rallies end, and we want rallies ending with the ball on our opponent's side of the net. The foundation of our system, however, starts with serve, pass and dig."

What would you like to hear people say about your team?

"They play with passion, work hard throughout an entire point, are fundamentally sound and disciplined in system. To me, that's the definition of being competitive. I want people to say, 'That team competes hard.'"

How would you describe your relationship with your players?

"I like to see myself as coach, mentor, and friend ... in that order. I've always said I'm more interested in my players respecting me than liking me, but of course having both is ideal. I talk openly and honestly with all my players, so I know what they desire and if they are struggling from where they are coming. I want each player to be fulfilled by her role on the team, but I'm also aware that I'm not going to be the most popular person at times. That's OK. It's a lot like parenting at times. I think it helps that they know I've been where they are, so what I'm telling them is spoken from experience, not from thin air."

Are you able to share your playing experiences with your players?

"It's a different game than when I played. Athletes are bigger and more physical, but at 5-7 that was never my strength, so what I have to share is more about being competitive, playing smarter and having consistent technique. I'll still jump into scrimmages when I want to get a different perspective on what's going on within the team, and it helps them to see me compete. It helps them close the gap between what they're hearing me say and what I'm really looking for from them."

What has your coaching experience taught you?

"Nothing remains constant; change can be expected, so stay in the present, and don't dwell on the past or get caught up in the future. I've also learned that while I'm always evolving as a coach, it's important to stay true to my core coaching values, no matter how much it may rock the boat at the time."

What would you say those coaching values are?

"Discipline, consistency and fairness. I think discipline provides structure and boundaries, and whether we want to believe it or not, we all need that to be successful. I also believe that within a team setting, we all want to be treated fairly and for decisions to be made with consistency. The hardest decisions for me to make are ones where I have to decide between the good of the individual versus the good of the team, because it usually involves one of those values being challenged."

What experiences and people have shaped you as a coach?

"My own athletic experiences with coaches, including my parents, have shaped me. I had great coaching mentors when I was starting out in this profession who I still seek advice from today. I've been fortunate to coach with, among and against so many talented coaches at the universities of which I've been associated. A casual hallway conversation would often lead to positive results with my team at the time. I'm an avid reader, so I pick up a lot of ideas and theories by reading what other successful coaches, scientists and business professionals have done. And finally, I've learned more from my failures as a coach than my successes."

If you weren't coaching volleyball what would you be doing?

"With the proper training, I could see myself as a yoga instructor. I'd also love to host a cooking show on Food Network. More realistically, I'd be a sports administrator in a collegiate athletic department. But, I'm currently very happy as the South Carolina volleyball coach and plan to build this program to a championship level."

What does a future student-athlete need to know about you to be successful playing for you?

"I demand quality effort every day. I want to coach players who understand what it means to play with integrity: give your very best, regardless of the situation or outcome, and never give up. She would need to know loyalty and trust are the two most important things to me, and nothing destroys the two quicker than someone who cheats herself and her teammates because she won't discipline herself to give her best effort in everything she does."

GAMECOCK HEAD COACH



SOMERA'S YEAR-BY-YEAR RESULTS

1999 • Oregon State 8-18 Overall, 2-16 Pac-10

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/3	H	Portland State	3-1	W
9/3	H	TCU	3-0	W
9/4	H	Northern Iowa	2-3	L
9/4	H	Missouri	3-1	W
9/10	N	Texas Tech	1-3	L
9/11	N	Ball State	3-0	W
9/12	A	Alaska-Fairbanks	3-0	W
9/16	A	Arizona	3-2	W
9/17	A	Arizona State	0-3	L
9/21	H	Portland	3-0	W
9/24	H	Washington State	3-0	W
9/25	H	Washington	1-3	L
10/1	A	Stanford	0-3	L
10/2	A	California	2-3	L
10/8	H	Oregon	3-0	W
10/15	H	Southern California	1-3	L
10/16	H	UCLA	0-3	L
10/22	A	Washington	1-3	L
10/23	A	Washington State	0-3	L
10/29	H	California	0-3	L
10/30	H	Stanford	0-3	L
11/5	A	Oregon	1-3	L
11/12	A	UCLA	0-3	L
11/13	A	Southern California	0-3	L
11/19	H	Arizona State	0-3	L
11/20	H	Arizona	0-3	L

2000 • Oregon State 16-16 Overall, 6-12 Pac-10

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/1	H	Western Illinois	3-0	W
9/2	H	Stetson	3-0	W
9/2	H	Boise State	3-1	W
9/8	N	St. Mary's (Calif.)	3-0	W
9/8	N	Idaho	1-3	L
9/9	N	San Diego State	3-1	W
9/9	A	Portland State	3-0	W
9/15	H	Stanford	2-3	L
9/16	H	California	3-2	W
9/19	A	Oregon	3-2	W
9/22	N	Brown	3-0	W
9/23	N	Fairfield	2-3	L
9/23	A	Connecticut	3-1	W
9/28	A	UCLA	3-2	W
9/29	A	Southern California	0-3	L
10/6	H	Arizona	0-3	L
10/7	H	Arizona State	3-1	W
10/13	A	Washington State	1-3	L
10/14	A	Washington	3-1	W
10/17	A	Portland	3-1	W
10/20	H	Oregon	0-3	L
10/21	H	UC Riverside	3-0	W
10/26	H	Southern California	0-3	L
10/27	H	UCLA	2-3	L
11/3	A	Arizona State	1-3	L
11/4	A	Arizona	1-3	L
11/10	H	Washington	2-3	L
11/11	H	Washington State	1-3	L
11/16	A	California	3-2	W
11/17	A	Stanford	0-3	L
11/24	A	Long Beach State	1-3	L
11/25	N	Cal Poly	0-3	L

2001 • Oregon State 17-12 Overall, 10-8 Pac-10

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
8/31	H	San Jose State	1-3	L
9/1	H	Southern Illinois	3-1	W
9/1	H	Sacramento State	3-2	W
9/5	A	San Francisco	3-0	W
9/7	N	UC Irvine	3-2	W
9/7	N	Radford	3-1	W
9/8	A	Northern Arizona	2-3	L
9/18	H	Portland	3-0	W

9/21	A	Arizona	0-3	L
9/22	A	Arizona State	3-2	W
9/27	H	Washington	3-0	W
9/28	H	Washington State	3-1	W
10/5	A	Stanford	0-3	L
10/6	A	California	3-1	W
10/10	H	Oregon	3-1	W
10/13	A	Idaho State	3-0	W
10/19	H	Arizona State	3-0	W
10/20	H	Arizona	0-3	L
10/25	A	Washington State	0-3	L
10/26	A	Washington	3-2	W
11/2	H	California	3-0	W
11/3	H	Stanford	0-3	L
11/9	A	Oregon	3-0	W
11/15	A	Southern California	1-3	L
11/16	A	UCLA	0-3	L
11/19	H	UCLA	3-1	W
11/20	H	Southern California	0-3	L
11/24	H	Colorado State	1-3	L
11/30	N	Eastern Washington	2-3	L

2002 • Oregon State 8-20 Overall, 2-16 Pac-10

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
8/30	H	Idaho	3-0	W
8/31	H	Idaho State	3-0	W
8/31	H	Missouri	3-1	W
9/7	H	Boise State	3-0	W
9/7	H	Cal State Northridge	3-1	W
9/13	A	Minnesota	0-3	L
9/14	N	North Carolina	1-3	L
9/14	N	Ball State	2-3	L
9/19	A	Washington	0-3	L
9/20	A	Washington State	0-3	L
9/27	H	Stanford	0-3	L
9/28	H	California	2-3	L
10/3	A	Oregon	3-0	W
10/5	H	Eastern Washington	2-3	L
10/10	A	UCLA	0-3	L
10/11	A	Southern California	0-3	L
10/18	H	Arizona	0-3	L
10/19	H	Arizona State	1-3	L
10/25	A	California	3-0	W
10/26	A	Stanford	2-3	L
11/1	H	Oregon	1-3	L
11/8	H	UCLA	0-3	L
11/9	H	Southern California	0-3	L
11/15	A	Arizona State	0-3	L
11/16	A	Arizona	0-3	L
11/21	H	Washington	1-3	L
11/22	H	Washington State	0-3	L
11/26	A	Portland	3-1	W

2003 • Oregon State 16-16 Overall, 5-13 Pac-10

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
8/29	H	Gonzaga	3-2	W
8/30	H	Mississippi State	3-0	W
8/30	H	Northern Arizona	3-0	W
9/3	A	St. Mary's (Calif.)	3-0	W
9/5	N	UC Riverside	3-2	W
9/5	N	Georgetown	3-2	W
9/6	N	Fresno State	1-3	L
9/6	A	Sacramento State	1-3	L
9/12	N	Winthrop	3-1	W
9/13	N	Campbell	3-0	W
9/13	A	Charlotte	3-1	W
9/18	H	Stanford	1-3	L
9/19	H	California	0-3	L
9/25	A	UCLA	1-3	L
9/26	A	Southern California	0-3	L
9/30	H	Portland	3-0	W
10/2	H	Oregon	3-0	W
10/10	H	Washington State	3-1	W
10/11	H	Washington	1-3	L
10/17	A	Arizona	0-3	L

10/18	A	Arizona State	2-3	L
10/24	H	UCLA	0-3	L
10/25	H	Southern California	0-3	L
10/30	A	Oregon	3-1	W
11/6	A	Washington State	3-2	W
11/7	A	Washington	0-3	L
11/13	H	Arizona State	3-0	W
11/14	H	Arizona	1-3	L
11/20	A	California	1-3	L
11/21	A	Stanford	0-3	L
11/28	N	Pittsburgh	3-1	W
11/29	A	Pacific	0-3	L

2004 • Oregon State 12-16 Overall, 5-13 Pac-10

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/3	N	Saint Louis	2-3	L
9/4	N	Murray State	3-1	W
9/4	A	Indiana	0-3	L
9/10	H	Oral Roberts	3-1	W
9/11	H	Auburn	3-0	W
9/11	H	St. Mary's (Calif.)	2-3	L
9/17	N	Pennsylvania	3-0	W
9/18	N	Nevada	3-0	W
9/18	A	San Diego	3-2	W
9/24	A	Oregon	3-1	W
10/1	A	Washington State	3-1	W
10/2	A	Washington	0-3	L
10/8	H	Arizona	1-3	L
10/9	H	Arizona State	0-3	L
10/15	A	Stanford	1-3	L
10/16	A	California	0-3	L
10/21	H	Southern California	0-3	L
10/22	H	UCLA	2-3	L
10/28	H	Washington	2-3	L
10/29	H	Washington State	3-0	W
11/4	A	Arizona State	3-1	W
11/5	A	Arizona	0-3	L
11/11	H	California	1-3	L
11/12	H	Stanford	0-3	L
11/19	A	UCLA	0-3	L
11/20	A	Southern California	0-3	L
11/26	H	Oregon	3-0	W
11/27	H	Portland	3-0	W

2005 • South Carolina 13-14 Overall, 5-11 SEC

Date	H/A/N	Opponent	Score	W/L
9/2	N	Pittsburgh	3-1	W
9/2	A	Florida State	3-1	W
9/3	N	Mercer	3-0	W
9/6	H	Charlotte	3-0	W
9/9	N	Coastal Carolina	3-0	W
9/10	N	Purdue	0-3	L
9/10	A	North Carolina	3-1	W
9/13	A	Clemson	0-3	L
9/15	A	Charleston	0-3	L
9/16	N	Houston	3-1	W
9/23	A	LSU	2-3	L
9/25	A	Arkansas	2-3	L
9/30	H	Mississippi State	3-1	W
10/2	H	Mississippi	3-0	W
10/7	A	Georgia	2-3	L
10/9	A	Florida	0-3	L
10/14	A	Alabama	0-3	L
10/16	A	Auburn	3-1	W
10/23	H	Kentucky	1-3	L
10/26	H	Tennessee	1-3	L
10/28	H	Florida	0-3	L
10/30	H	Georgia	2-3	L
11/4	A	Kentucky	0-3	L
11/9	A	Tennessee	0-3	L
11/11	H	Auburn	3-1	W
11/13	H	Alabama	3-2	W
11/26	H	Winthrop	3-0	W



GAMECOCK COACHES



Ben SOMERA
*Associate Head Coach
2nd Season at USC*



Damian ELDER
*Assistant Coach
1st Season at USC*

When head coach Nancy Somera agreed to lead the Gamecock volleyball team, she was not going far without her top assistant and recruiter, husband Ben Somera.

Somera, now in his second season with South Carolina, was named associate head coach for Gamecock volleyball in February 2005 after six seasons as an assistant and associate head coach at Oregon State. Somera coordinates the recruiting efforts of the USC staff and oversees training of the middle blockers.

While at OSU, Somera coached the middle blockers for four seasons and spent two seasons with the setters. Under his tutelage, one of his setters earned honorable mention All-Pacific 10 honors, and two of his middle blockers finished the season ranked among the top 10 blockers in the Pac-10 Conference.

Somera's collegiate coaching experience began at Southern California in 1993 as a volunteer coach. He was then promoted to second assistant in 1994 and took the lead in the training and development of the program's middle blockers. While at Southern California, he cultivated three All-Americans at the middle blocker position.

In 1996, Somera left collegiate coaching to pursue a career in sales, but he continued to coach club volleyball. When his wife became the head coach at Oregon State in 1999, Somera returned to collegiate coaching.

Somera hails from LaCrescenta, Calif., and earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Southern California in 1995. Ben and Nancy have a 9-year-old son, Sam, and a 5-year-old daughter, Maile.

South Carolina head volleyball coach Nancy Somera announced the hiring of assistant coach Damian Elder on March 16, 2006. Elder came to Carolina from Stanford, where he served the previous two years as a volunteer assistant coach for the Cardinal's women's program.

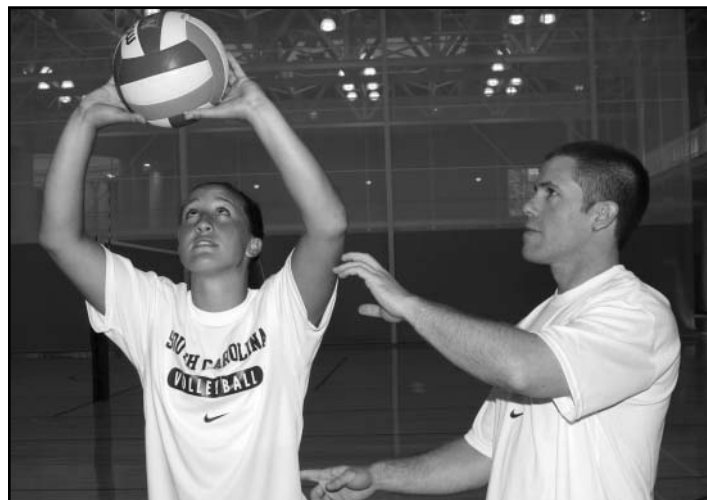
"We are very excited to have Damian join our staff," Somera said. "He brings a lot of energy and enthusiasm to the gym, and he is also a great technical skills coach and a great motivator. Being at Stanford, he had the opportunity to work with some of the best players in the world and gained great coaching experience. I have seen how he works with players and how he helps them play at the highest level of the game."

While at Stanford, Elder served on the 2004 NCAA championship staff and helped coach AVCA Player of the Year Ogonna Nnamani. Prior to Stanford, Elder was an assistant coach at Fresno City College in Fresno, Calif., where he helped his team finish second in its conference with a 25-6 record. From 1996 to 2003, Elder was a head coach at the Fresno Volleyball Club and served as club director from 1999 to 2002.

Elder got his coaching start at Bullard High School in Fresno, acting as the varsity head coach from 1997 to 2000. His teams compiled a 111-19 overall record during his tenure, good for an .854 winning percentage. Bullard H.S. was crowned section champions in 2000 and placed third in the California Division I State Volleyball Championships.

"I have always had a lot of respect for Nancy and Ben, and I am extremely excited about working with them and helping South Carolina reach the top level of competition," Elder said. "I'm really looking forward to the fall season having seen the energy and excitement the players brought to the gym during the spring."

A graduate of Fresno State, Elder earned his Bachelor of Arts in English in 2002.





LYNNE BEATTIE
Administrative Assistant

Lynne Beattie joined the volleyball staff in August 2005 as its administrative assistant. Beattie has worked for the South Carolina athletics department since 1998. Prior to volleyball, she served as the administrative assistant for the defensive coaches in the football office from 1998

to December 2004, and she held the same position for the varsity sports office from January to August 2005.

Beattie is responsible for mailings, newsletters and general administrative duties. She also serves as a camp coordinator and helps manage the Sideout Youth Fan Club and the mentoring group Women Helping Women Achieve.



TARA CHASE
Assistant Athletic Trainer

Tara Chase, ATC, is in her fifth year as a certified assistant athletic trainer for South Carolina, currently working with the volleyball and softball teams. Additionally, Chase is the coordinator of the USC Management Team of Disordered Eating and serves as the Gamecocks' representative

for the National Association of Collegiate Women's Athletic Administrators and District 3 Women's Athletic Training Committee.

The Marlboro, N.J., native Chase came to South Carolina from Charleston Southern, where she was the head athletic trainer for women's athletics and the assistant for football.

Chase attended Florida, receiving a bachelor's degree in exercise and sport sciences with a specialization in athletic training. She earned a master's in kinesiology with a concentration in athletic administration from James Madison in 2001. In 1999, Chase received a license in massage therapy from NCBTMB and the Humanities Center School of Massage Therapy and Bodywork.

The former Tara Lein, who married Brian Chase in May 2006, is a member of NATA, SCATA, AMTA, NCMTB, NACWAA, WATC and CATS.



DAWN ELLERBE
Director of Varsity Sports Marketing

Dawn Ellerbe was named director of varsity sports marketing for South Carolina in June 2005. Prior to joining the athletics department, Ellerbe worked at the school's Colonial Center in marketing and public relations.

An alumna of South Carolina and 2000 Olympian, Ellerbe was a volunteer assistant track and field coach for

the Gamecocks from 2001 to 2004 and was a member of the Home Depot's Olympic Job Opportunities Program, where she coordinated in-store promotions, workshops and served as spokesperson for Home Depot at national events.

Ellerbe was a four-time NCAA champion, six-time All-American and five-time SEC champion while competing for the South Carolina track and field team. The Gamecock track and field star received her bachelor's degree in journalism in 1996.

Upon graduation, Ellerbe began working toward a master's in communication at Wyoming while serving as a coach for the University. She coached in six NCAA Championships and developed eight All-Americans and three Mountain West champions during her tenure in Laramie, Wyo.

A native of Long Island, N.Y., Ellerbe is a member of the Public Relations Society of America.



MATT FREED
Assistant Director of Media Relations

Matt Freed began his duties as assistant director of media relations at South Carolina on Feb. 13, 2006, and handles publicity efforts for Gamecock volleyball, women's tennis and indoor track and field. He came to USC after spending two and a half years in the same position at TCU, serving as the primary media contact for women's basketball and tennis. Freed also assisted with several other sports at TCU and was responsible for all computer technology within the media relations department.

After graduating from TCU in May 2002 with a Bachelor of Business Administration in finance and a minor in mathematics, Freed became a graduate assistant in the Tennessee Lady Vol media relations office. In his one-year stint with Tennessee, Freed was the primary contact for volleyball and tennis. College Sports Information Directors of America judged his volleyball media guide sixth-best in the nation, while his tennis guide received second place. He earned his Master of Science in sport management from Tennessee in August 2003.

Freed is a member of CoSIDA and the United States Basketball Writers Association. He resides in Columbia, S.C., with his fiancée, Jessica Short, who is an admissions counselor for USC.



MATT JENNINGS
Assistant Strength & Conditioning Coach

Matt Jennings became the strength and conditioning coach for volleyball in April 2004. He also is in charge of the Gamecock men's basketball team.

Prior to joining South Carolina, Jennings spent four years at Wake Forest, where he worked primarily with men's and women's basketball, men's soccer and baseball. He was a strength and conditioning intern for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers during the 1999 NFL season.



PROFESSIONAL STAFF

He received a Bachelor of Arts in physical education and exercise sports science from North Carolina in 1996. Jennings also was a two-year member of the Tar Heel football team.

He completed a master's degree in sport administration from Tennessee in 1998 and as a graduate assistant, he worked with football, men's basketball and baseball. Jennings also oversaw men's cross country and men's swimming and diving.

Jennings is a member of CSCCA, NSCA and NASE, and holds certifications of SCCC, CSCS and CSSE.

Jennings and his wife, Jill, have three children: 4-year-old twins Delaney and Zachary, and 2-year-old Jacob.



EARLEEN MICHELS *Academic Counselor*

Earleen Michels joined the USC athletics department in July 2003. She is the academic counselor for volleyball and women's basketball and performs other C.A.R.E.S. (Carolina Academic Resources & Enrichment Services) duties assigned to the academic counseling staff.

Prior to South Carolina, Michels taught for 10 years in the Midlands/Greater Columbia area and worked in the state office of Fellowship of Christian Athletes, a non-profit organization interfacing with South Carolina public and private middle schools, high schools and colleges. She also worked overseas one year with K MAG, the Military Advisory Group to the Korean Army. In Skaneateles, N. Y., Michels worked as an EMT with the all-volunteer ambulance team, SAVES.

The Indiana native graduated from Purdue with a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education. After two years of field experience, Michels returned to Purdue and received a Master of Science in education. Michels has a daughter, Christina, and a son, Doran.



VAL SHELEY *Senior Associate AD/Senior Woman Administrator*

Val Sheley, who has experience as a former student-athlete, coach, athletics director and several other administrative areas, including compliance, academics and student-athlete development, is in her third year as senior associate athletics director and senior woman administrator.

Her responsibilities include administration of seven sports and the NCAA compliance office.

Her athletics career started in 1988 when she served as head of men's and women's track and field, then added the responsibilities of assistant athletics director/senior woman administrator at UNC-Asheville. From there, she went to the NCAA office working as a legislative assistant for the national organization.

Sheley is in her second stint with South Carolina during her college athletics career, having served as an associate athletics director for NCAA compliance at the school from 1995 to 2000.

In 2000, she left USC to become athletics director at Presbyte-

rian College, where she oversaw the school's 13 athletics programs and facility improvements for three years. During 2003-04, Sheley served as the interim associate athletics director for academic support and career development at Maryland.

Sheley has a bachelor's degree from Murray State, where she excelled as a track and field athlete. She earned a master's from Houston and is a graduate of the Sports Management Institute.

Sheley was a 1984 Olympic qualifier in track and field for Great Britain. Her husband, Mike, was a track and field All-American and NCAA relay champion at South Carolina.



NANCY WHEELER *Assistant Director of Operations/Event Management*

Nancy Wheeler was chosen as South Carolina's assistant director of operations/event management in July 2004.

Wheeler, a former Gamecock assistant swimming and diving coach, first came to South Carolina in 1999. In July 2003, she hung up her coaching whistle and moved over to administration. Wheeler served as the recruiting coordinator in the South Carolina Career Center from July 2003 to June 2004.

Hailing from Coral Springs, Fla., Wheeler was an 11-time All-America selection in swimming at Florida from 1988 to 1991. She graduated with a bachelor's in health science education and is currently pursuing a master's in HRTM at South Carolina.

The former Nancy Marley married Mike Wheeler, who works in state law enforcement, in July 2006, and the couple resides in West Columbia, S.C.



Shannon Pallardy
Graduate Assistant



Catherine Walker
Manager

