

Former SMC pitcher Mincey helps solidify Gamecocks bullpen

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COLUMBIA — South Carolina pitcher Cody Mincey has been a stalwart for a Gamecock bullpen that entered the season with more questions than answers.

A two-year stint at Spartanburg Methodist helped turn Mincey into one of the most dominant relievers in the SEC. The Hartsville native is sixth in the league in ERA (1.04) among pitchers that have thrown at least 20 innings. He leads the Gamecocks in appearances with 28 and has recorded 44 strikeouts in 34 2/3 innings pitched.



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USC's Cody Mincey is sixth in the SEC in ERA (1.04) among pitchers with at least 20 innings.

Last year Mincey was the closer for SMC and helped the Pioneers reach the Junior College World Series. He said earlier this week that the SMC program and coaching staff helped him become the pitcher he is today.

"We were successful at SMC, too, so that kind of helped coming to a program like this. The transition wasn't all that tough," he said. "You don't always know how well you're going to do, but I expected to come in here and I was going to give everything I had to try to help this team as much as I could. I've been successful so far and hopefully I can keep it up down the stretch."

Mincey and USC closer Joel Seddon have anchored a bullpen that has been lights out this season.

Seddon led the SEC in saves this year with 14, four more than the next closest pitcher, and enters the postseason with a 0.85 ERA and 51 strikeouts in 42 1/3 innings.

He said the Carolina bullpen just tries to build off of what starters Jordan Montgomery, Jack Wynkoop and Wil Crowe are doing on the mound. As a team USC has a 2.37 ERA, the best in the SEC.

"(Pitching) coach (Jerry) Meyers always says just try to go in there and try to be as good or better as what they've been all game long," Seddon said. "That's what we try to do, try to go in there and throw strikes."

Seddon added that he and Mincey have a very similar approach as far as trying to get hitters out.

"We just try to go in there and throw strikes," he said. "We've got similar stuff with fastballs and sliders a lot. Those are our two best pitches probably. We just try to keep hitters off balance for the most part."

While pitching was the Gamecocks' strength all season, it let them down during the SEC tournament.

USC allowed a combined 19 runs in two SEC tournament games that likely cost Carolina a shot at a top eight national seed.

"We just didn't have our best stuff. That's baseball. Some days you go out there and you're the best you've ever been. Some days you go out there and you just don't have it. That's pretty much what happened," Mincey said. "We're trying to get back to the way we were when we were hot."

Still, Seddon believes the Gamecocks will be fine this weekend. USC is a perfect 16-0 at Carolina Stadium in the NCAA tournament.

"I don't really know what it is about Hoover (Ala., site of the SEC tournament). We just didn't show up ready to play. We thought we were prepared enough and we just kind of laid an egg," he said. "We've had some good practices out here and we've worked hard. We're just trying to stay confident going into the weekend."

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