

Friday

January 1, 2010

Aiken Standard

SPORTS

Inside



To report a score or story idea: Call Cam Huffman, Sports Editor, at 644-2396 or e-mail to chuffman@aikenstandard.com

► FSU's Bobby Bowden will coach his final game today | 4B

► Evander Holyfield will fight bout in Uganda | 2B

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From the sidelines



Meyer wanted to keep medical issue quiet

► NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Wanting to protect his children and football team, Florida coach Urban Meyer was "very careful" about releasing information regarding his hospital stay following the Southeastern Conference championship game. He hoped to keep private his chest pain, ambulance ride and diagnostic tests — at least until he had a chance to tell those closest to him. According to a 911 recording, Meyer complained of chest pain and said his side was tingling before he was hospitalized Dec. 6.



Richt could be closing in on new coordinator

► ATLANTA (AP) — Mark Richt's search for a defensive coordinator may have landed on LSU's John Chavis. The search for Georgia's next starting quarterback will have to wait a couple months. Chavis, the LSU defensive coordinator and former long-time Tennessee assistant, on Wednesday declined repeated opportunities to deny that he has interest in the Georgia job. Richt's Bulldogs capped an 8-5 season with a 44-20 win over Texas A&M in Monday night's Independence Bowl.



Tyson won't face charges after scuffle

► LOS ANGELES (AP) — Mike Tyson and a photographer won't face charges after their scuffle at Los Angeles International Airport, city prosecutors said Thursday. Prosecutors found insufficient evidence to charge Tyson or photographer Tony Echeverria, spokesman Frank Mateljan said. The two men were arrested Nov. 11 after a scuffle in which each claimed they were struck by the other. Echeverria said a blow by the former heavyweight champion knocked him to the ground, and he was treated for a cut to the forehead. Tyson was traveling with his family when he was mobbed by photographers. His attorney Shawn Champion Holley said at the time that Tyson was protecting his infant daughter after Echeverria collided with her stroller.

Bobcats games to be shown despite dispute

► CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Time Warner Cable will continue to show Charlotte Bobcats telecasts even if cable system stops carrying one of the team's television outlets, SportSouth. Bobcats president Fred Whitfield said Thursday that all games scheduled for SportSouth will still be shown on the channel designated for SportSouth on Time Warner Cable systems in the Carolinas that normally carry the Bobcats, even if the rest of that network's programming is not shown.



Top 10 Local Sports Stories OF THE YEAR

Heartbreaking, heartwarming news



The past year was definitely not a dull one for sports in Aiken County. There were great individual achievements, impressive team victories, heartwarming stories and a few heartbreakers. Here is a look at the top 10 sports stories in and around Aiken County in 2009.

1. Tragedy strikes USC Aiken

The past year was pretty kind to USC Aiken's athletic department with one major exception. What started as a historic day as the Pacer basketball team played in its first Division II Sweet 16 against Augusta State turned into a nightmarish evening when point guard Javonte Clanton was killed in an automobile accident in West Virginia on his way back to his home in Columbus, Ohio. The USCA

campus mourned the loss of its friend, who had turned his life around at USCA and was becoming a model citizen as a part of the Pacer program.

2. A total Eclipse

Godolphin's Midshipman, who won the 2008 Breeders' Cup Juvenile, was selected as the 2008 Eclipse Award winning Two Year Old Male. He was trained in Aiken by Tim Jones. He was the first Aiken trained horse to win an Eclipse Award since 1996, when Dogwood Stable's Strom Song won the Two-Year-Old Female honors.

3. Fridge battles health issues

Aiken's own William "The Refrigerator" Perry was hospitalized in Aiken for more

Please see LOCAL, page 3B

UConn lost more than games this season

By TRAVIS HANEY
The (Charleston) Post and Courier

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The sports world is obsessed with winning. But, face it, you learn more from a loss.

Connecticut lost five football games by a total of 15 points this season, a stunning stat when you think about what kind of season the 7-5 Huskies were close to having.

Sure, they learned tons from those losses. After all, a three-game winning streak to close the season led UConn here to the Papajohns.com Bowl. But what about a loss of much more meaning and depth? What about something that makes a two-point defeat at Cincinnati or a four-point defeat at West Virginia seem silly by comparison?

As you all have read and heard by now, Jasper Howard was shockingly stabbed Oct. 17 on the Connecticut campus.

Coach Randy Edsall heard a helicopter buzz over his house



Members of the UConn football team raise their hands in prayer during an October candle vigil for their teammate Jasper Howard, who was stabbed to death during a fight.

late that night. Howard was inside, clinging to his life.

Hours later, Edsall was asked to identify Howard's body.

A police officer told Edsall it would be the longest walk of his life. He was right.

"As a coach, you have control over certain things," said

Edsall, who's been at UConn since 1999. "In this situation, you had no control. This is something that will just stick with me for the rest of my life."

How could it be? Howard wasn't just alive hours earlier. With 11 tackles and a forced fumble, he was one of the

team's MVPs in a 38-25 home win against Louisville.

Snap of the fingers. Blink of the eye. Plunge of the knife. He was gone.

"People come from all over the country to this team," sophomore running back Jordan Todman said. "But when you're with somebody six days out of seven every week, it's crazy. You are a family. You are brothers. We lost a brother. It hurt."

Todman had seen Howard at the on-campus party that turned tragically deadly. He'd even seen him after he was stabbed, as he was being wheeled to the ambulance.

Todman retreated to his dorm room, convinced that his teammate would be fine in the hospital's care. The team's captains rapped on his door in the middle of the night. They told him Howard was dead.

"You didn't want to believe it," Todman said.

Please see HOWARD, page 3B

Quality Road Aiken's top horse in 2009

By BEN BAUGH
Staff writer

It was quite a campaign for Spring Hill Farm's homebred Quality Road. In addition to setting two track records while winning stakes races, the bay 3-year-old colt amassed \$947,030 in earnings in 2009, increasing his lifetime bankroll to \$972,830.

The son of Elusive Quality, who is out of the Strawberry Road (AUS) broodmare Kobla, has been selected as the 2009 Aiken Trained Horse of the Year.

The Virginia-bred colt will be honored March 14 at the Aiken Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame and Museum. A reception will follow the ceremony, and memorabilia from Quality Road's racing career will be on display. The public is invited to attend.

Quality Road was both broken and trained in Aiken by Legacy Stable's Ron

Stevens. "Quality Road was a joy to have around and break and it was a pleasure to watch his career unfold," said Stevens. "We're honored to have been selected as the Aiken Trained Horse of the Year."

The Virginia-bred colt broke his maiden in his debut, a 6½-furlong race at Aqueduct on Nov. 29, 2008. But it was during his sophomore campaign where Quality Road would make an impact on the 3-year-old division as he scored three consecutive victories in stakes races.

It was while he was in the barn of trainer James Jerkens that Quality Road won the Grade II one-mile Fountain of Youth Stakes by 4¼-lengths at Gulfstream Park on Feb. 28. He followed by setting a track record in the 1½-mile Grade I Florida Derby on March 28 at Gulfstream Park.

It was after his Florida Derby victory that Quality Road stamped himself as the

favorite for the Kentucky Derby. Quality Road's Kentucky Derby hopes were derailed as he developed quarter cracks in both his right front and right rear hooves.

Quality Road was transferred to the barn of four-time Eclipse Award winning trainer Todd Pletcher. The 3-year-old colt didn't disappoint in his return from more than a four-month layoff, winning the 6½-furlong Grade II Amsterdam Stakes at Saratoga Race Course. Quality Road won by 2¼-lengths and established a track record at the distance. He followed those performances with a third place finish in the Grade I Travers, placing second in the Grade I Jockey Club Gold Cup.

In seven lifetime starts, Quality Road has four wins, placed second twice and finished third once.

Contact Ben Baugh at bbaugh@aikenstandard.com.

AT&T is latest to drop Woods

By PETER SVENSSON
Associated Press

NEW YORK — AT&T Inc. said Thursday it would no longer sponsor Tiger Woods, joining Accenture in dropping support for the world's top golfer, who's taking a break from the sport to focus on his marriage after his admitted infidelity.

The phone company hasn't used Woods' image extensively in advertising, but its logo

appeared on his golf bag. That deal had been billed as a "multiyear" agreement when it was signed early in 2009, after Buick ended its endorsement one year early because of its financial woes.

AT&T didn't comment on its reasons for dropping Woods, or how much the relationship was worth.

Gillette, a unit of the Procter & Gamble Co., also has said it won't air ads for its razors that include Woods or include him in public appearances.

Swiss watch maker Tag Heuer, a unit of luxury goods empire LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, also said that it would "downscale" its use of golfer Tiger Woods' image in its advertising campaigns for the foreseeable future.

Nike Inc. and PepsiCo Inc.'s Gatorade are other big sponsors that haven't severed their ties.



Woods