Baseball finishes third in Big South, Tucker earns national honors

The Birmingham-Southern Panthers baseball squad wrapped up another successful campaign in the spring with a 36-21 overall record, including a stellar 18-6 record in Big South Conference play.

The 2005 Panthers, on its way to a third place finish in Big South Conference regular play, reeled off a pair of nine-game winning streaks during the season before being eliminated by top-seeded Coastal Carolina in the league tournament.

In its first two seasons in the Big South, BSC has compiled a 45-13 (.776) mark in league and tournament play. The 2005 season was just its second in NCAA Division I competition, and came after having to replace 18 lettermen from last season’s Big South regular season champion team.

Senior first baseman Adam Tucker turned in one of the best seasons in BSC history, leading the Panthers with a .354 batting average, a .729 slugging percentage, 25 home runs, 73 RBIs, 81 hits, 52 runs scored, and 167 total bases. He finished the season leading the nation in home runs per game (.44) and tied for second in home runs hit. He ranked ninth in slugging percentage and 13th in RBIs per game at 1.28. Tucker also led the Big South Conference in home runs, RBIs, slugging percentage, and total bases. His 25 home runs set a single-season school record, and his 167 total bases tied a BSC single-season mark. Tucker wrapped up his career at BSC ranked third in home runs with 42.

The Webb native garnered Second-Team All-Big South Conference, ABCA All-South Region, and NCBWA Second Team All-American laurels. Named a Dick Howser Semifinalist, Tucker earned Choice Hotels/Big South Conference Player of the Week twice, and was tabbed Louisville Slugger National Player of the Week.

Outfielder Billy Froehlich of Westlake, Ohio, was named the Big South Conference Freshman of the Year, Second-Team All-Big South Conference, and Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American.

Froehlich took over as the everyday left fielder during the Miami (Ohio) series, and finished second on the team with a .331 batting average. He also led the team with a .491 on base percentage.

Sophomore pitcher/outfielder Brandon Hynick of North Royalton, Ohio, and junior catcher Blake Burton of Atlanta joined Tucker and Froehlich on the Second Team All-Big South Conference team. Relief pitcher Bailey Pratt, a sophomore from Chattanooga, represented the Panthers on the Big South All-Academic squad.

Hynick, along with junior David Horne from Alpharetta, Ga., led the BSC pitching staff with eight wins apiece. Hynick struck out a team-high 74 batters, and pitched 99.2 innings. Pratt had a team-low 2.01 ERA, and recorded three of the team’s eight saves. Freshmen Mark Doll of North Forsyth, Ga., and Blake Martin of Boaz, gave BSC fans a glimpse of the future pitching staff, posting 4-1 and 3-1 records, respectively.

Birmingham-Southern opens the 2006 season on Feb. 17 at Austin Peay. The first home weekend series is against Miami (Ohio) University on March 3-5 at Scrushy-Striplin Field.

BSC Sports Show is on the air

The Birmingham-Southern Sports Show is a 30-minute news magazine program profiling the teams, student-athletes, coaches, seasons, campus, and academics at BSC. It airs at 2:30 p.m. CST, in the fall (immediately following SEC football) and at 11:30 a.m. during the winter and spring, on WB, Channel 21, in Birmingham.

The sixth season of the BSC Sports Show will air weekly through April 15, 2006.