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The Bulldog tennis team proved that it was one of the best to walk the halls of WHS in compiling a 6-8 overall record. Under the tutelage of first year Coach Cliff Hopkins and led by a group of solid senior tennis players, the members of the team fought zealously to prove that last year's success was no fluke.

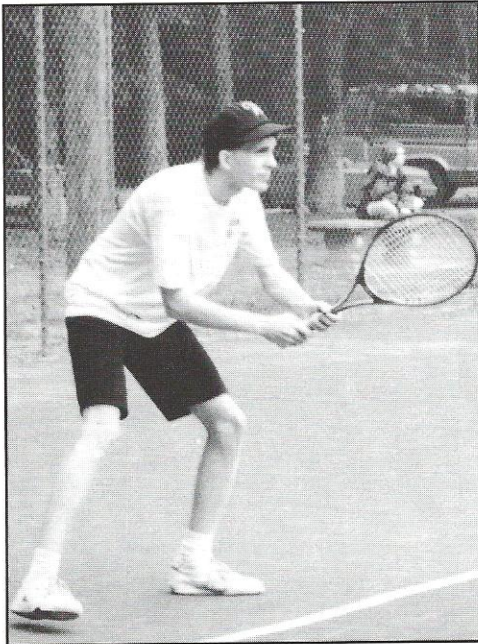
In the first meeting of the season, the Bulldogs played a much improved team from Beaufort. The Dogs lost that meet four matches to three as every match that the team lost ended in a third set tiebreaker. As proof to this, Michael Verner, who played in the first doubles spot, lost his match 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (8-6) in probably the longest match of the season. It lasted three hours. In another close match, Frank Ulmer and Michael Verner, who comprised the first seed doubles spot, lost to serve and volley specialists 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 7-6 (8-6).

"Basically, our goal was to play Wando and Summerville closely and to beat everyone else," said Senior Joey Hoats.

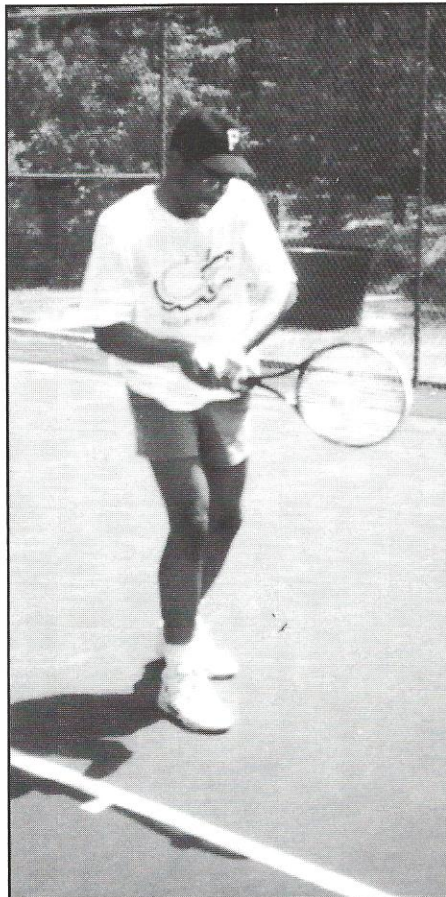
State division for tennis teams," said senior Heath Catterton. "Many of the Region 6AAA teams have someone who is ranked in the state, and some of the schools have three or four. It is just really hard to win matches against them."

For the first time, the Bulldogs played the Summerville tennis team twice, with the first meet not counting in the Region 6AAAA record books. In the blink of an eye, the Dogs were trounced seven matches to none and sent back home with their heads hanging in shame. Practicing every weekday and on some weenends, the team was much stronger for the rematch. In fact, three of the five singles matches went to three sets. Even the Summerville coach was impressed and said, "Walterboro tennis is really making a name for itself. You guys have really improved."

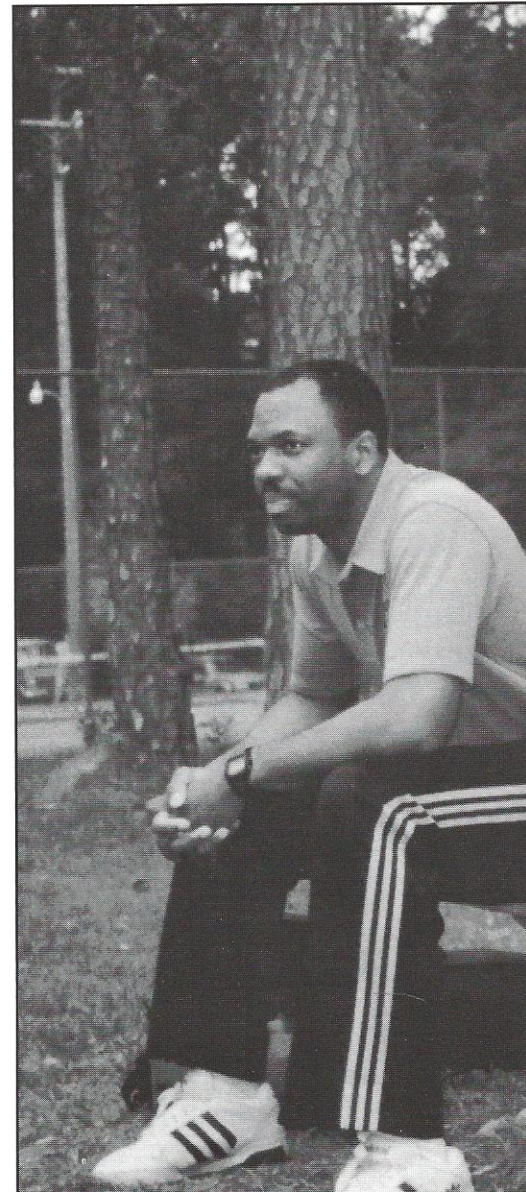
—Michael Verner



Junior Josh Smoak prepares to return against his Summerville opponent. Josh lost that match, the final one of the season, 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-4).



Senior Michael Verner hammers a backhand return of serve down-the-line. Michael played first seed singles and doubles for both his junior and senior years.



Coach Cliff Hopkins and freshman Holly Bottomly watch intently as fifth seed Andy Wilson battles into a tiebreaker. Coach Hopkins was a first-year coach, and Holly was a rookie on the team.