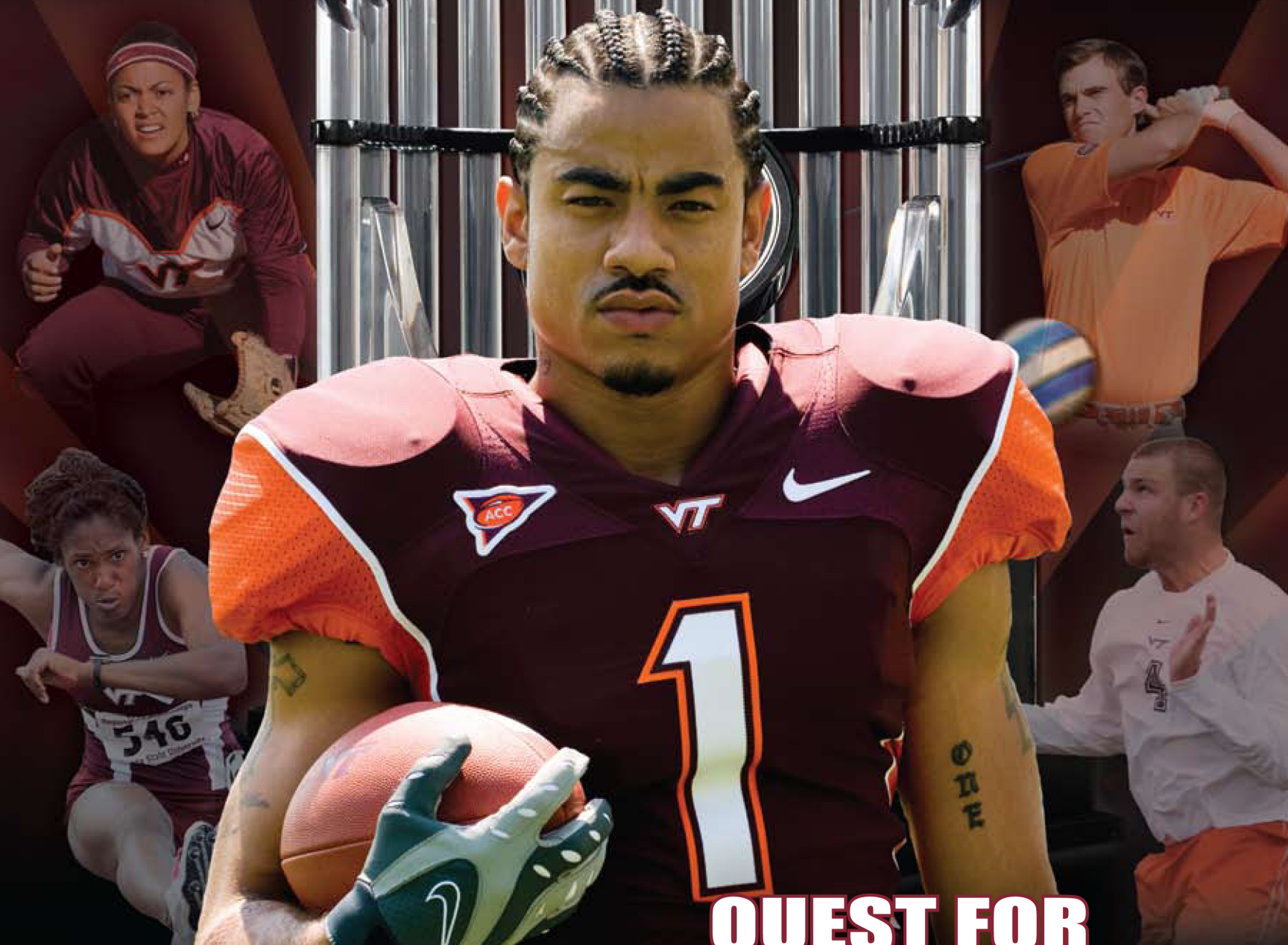


INSIDE

HOKIESPORTS

The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics



**QUEST FOR
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MOMENTS
BEGINS ANEW**

Vol. 1 No. 1, August 2008 • \$4



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"Unlike any other property I have ever owned – just a great place and simple to own."

Collegiate Inn Owner:
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VT Alum, BSEE - 1983

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Collegiate Inn Owner:
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"I realized purchasing a hotel-condo not only gives me a place to stay during the busy football season but it's actually a solid investment too."

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5 Hokie Club News

11 From the Editor's Desk
2008 Hokies should be better than expected

12 Kroger Roth Report
New perspective may lead to more success for Glennon

14 VT News & Notes

16 Sean Glennon Feature
Last call for battle-tested veteran

20 Jim Weaver Q&A

22 All-Position Football Previews
Get a look at the 2008 Hokies

36 Men's Soccer Preview
Experience helps prepare for encore

39 Women's Soccer Preview
Balanced Hokies take aim at postseason

42 Volleyball Preview
Volleyball team returns with new look

45 Cross Country Preview
Well-traveled LaPenna leads the way

Letter from AD Jim Weaver

Published by the
Virginia Tech Athletics Department

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Greetings Hokie Nation,

I hope this letter finds all of you doing well and excited about the upcoming 2008 sports season, and about some of the changes we have in store for you.

As we enter our fifth season in the Atlantic Coast Conference, we continue to look at ways to better not just all of our sports, but also our entire athletics department as a whole. That encompasses sports training, sports medicine, compliance, marketing, student life, athletics communications and many other areas.

It also includes upgrading our departmental publication, and having said that, I present to you the debut issue of *Inside Hokie Sports*. After careful research by the publications staff, the athletics communications office and the marketing department, we have decided to change the format of our in-house publication from a newspaper to a magazine. This will be a full-color, glossy publication that will focus on our department, providing you features, columns, note-

books and other information in a clean, professional-looking format. It will be presented to you 11 times a year, starting with this issue.

We have also decided to send *Inside Hokie Sports* to every single member of the Hokie Club. We realize the importance of every single member in our Hokie Club and this is a way for us to express our gratitude for all of their hard work and contributions in support of our athletics program here at Virginia Tech. As a result, we want every single member to get this new and exciting publication.

We are truly excited about this publication and we think you will be, too. We have a lot to be proud of here in Blacksburg, and as we work to continue our improvement in all phases of our department, we look forward to even better days ahead.

See you at the games this fall!

Sincerely,

Jim Weaver Director of Athletics, Virginia Tech

UPCOMING EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

MEN'S SOCCER

Hawthorn Suites Hokie Invitational

Sept. 5 vs. Hofstra 8:30 PM
Free Posters & Magnets

Sept. 7 vs. Xavier 4:00 PM
Free Posters & Magnets

Sept. 12 vs. Duke 7:30 PM
Free VT Soccer Glass

VOLLEYBALL

Hawthorn Suites Hokie Invitational

Aug. 29 vs. UMES 7:00 PM
Free Posters & Magnets

Aug. 30 vs. Win. Salem. Noon
Free Posters & Magnets

vs. Co. Carolina 7:00 PM
Free Posters & Magnets

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Hawthorn Suites Hokie Invitational

Aug. 29 vs. Evansville 7:00 PM
Home Opener!

Aug. 31 vs. George Mason 7:00 PM

Sept. 5 vs. Texas A&M 6:00 PM
Free Car Flags & Magnets

Sept. 7 vs. G. Washington 1:30 PM
Free Posters & Magnets



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Letter from Lu

Dear Hokie Club Members,

Fall is here and over 500 Virginia Tech student-athletes are back on campus getting ready to build on one of the best years in the history of Virginia Tech athletics. With four ACC Championships in the sports of football, women's indoor track & field, women's outdoor track & field and softball, the Hokies finished in 37th place in the 2007-08 Sports Academy Directors Cup. This marks our highest finish. With all of this momentum, it is no wonder that so many members of the Hokie Club are as anxious as our student-athletes to get back to Blacksburg.

From a fundraising perspective, the Hokie Club has been setting high marks as well. For the fiscal year of 2007-08, the Hokie Club reported its highest dollar amount ever raised, \$26.4 million. With the cost of scholarships on the rise and with facility projects ongoing and on the horizon, the need for financial support for Virginia Tech athletics is crucial to our success.

As AD Jim Weaver often says in reference to the need to building capital projects, "if you are standing still, you are behind." Because of this drive and desire to see Virginia Tech athletics as the very best athletics program in America, we are constantly looking for ways to improve. One of these ways is through our involvement in the newly created *Inside Hokie Sports*. **We are pleased to announce that starting with this issue, all Hokie Club members at the Hokie Club giving level (\$100) and above will receive a complimentary subscription to the newly formed *Inside Hokie Sports* magazine as long as ACTIVE membership status is maintained.** We as a staff feel that it is our obligation to constantly look for new ways to improve the benefits for our membership and we feel that this is a wonderful opportunity.

The Hokie Club plans to play a key role in each issue by having dedicated space to inform, educate and promote the Hokie Club and its members. The Hokie Nation section of *Hokiesports the Newspaper*, which has been appearing monthly for over three years, will now be updated with a new Hokie Club section. We plan to expand our reach with this section to include feature articles on donors, outline the various ways to make a gift to the Hokie Club, and highlight the many events that Hokie Club members attend throughout the year.

As you can see, we have a lot to be proud of here at Virginia Tech. As our student-athletes continue to reach new levels of success both on the playing fields and in the classroom, we are ever reminded why we love this place so much. We are looking forward to the 2008-09 year and as always are looking forward to seeing you in Blacksburg soon!

Go Hokies!

Lu Merritt

Director of Development for Intercollegiate Athletics





R.T. Avery and grandson Raymond at Lane Stadium.

R.T. & Brenda Avery

Current Hokie Club Role:

R.T. is serving as the President of the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund

Family members:

Two sons, Andy & Ray, and daughter-in-law Susan. Two grandchildren, Raymond & Caroline. Don't forget Winfree, our golden retriever.

Q: What year did you graduate?

A: 1971

Q: What is a Hokie?

A: Anyone who LOVES Virginia Tech!

Q: Is the Hokie Nation "real?" How?

A: Without a doubt. Look at the days following April 16th.

Q: What is your best memory of Virginia Tech athletics?

A: So many. The 1994 football game at UVA; the 1999 Sugar Bowl, the 1999 win over Boston College, which sent us to the Sugar Bowl playing for the national championship

Q: How did you get involved with the Hokie Club?

A: I joined after graduation. My father had been a member since the Hokie Club started, I think. My father was in the class of 1943.

Q: Describe your perfect day at Virginia Tech.

A: Being with family and friends, good weather, and of course, a Hokie victory.

Q: What are your tailgating traditions?

A: Get there in time for "The Walk" and get inside and in our seats before kickoff.

Q: Have you ever run out of "The Avery Tunnel" before a football game?

A: Yes. (Editor's note: Avery Tunnel, which the football team uses to enter Lane Stadium and run out before the game, was named after R.T. and Brenda as a result of a gift made during the Merryman Athletics Center capital campaign)

Q: What is the farthest away you've ever traveled to watch the Hokies play?

A: In 1993, we flew to the Oklahoma game. In 2003, we drove to Texas A&M, then turned right and drove to Western Michigan for the next game.

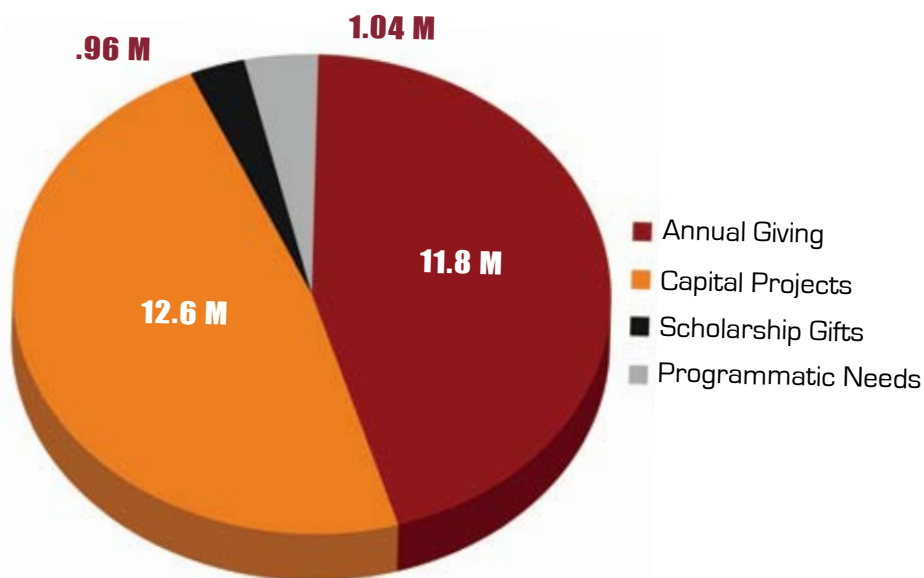


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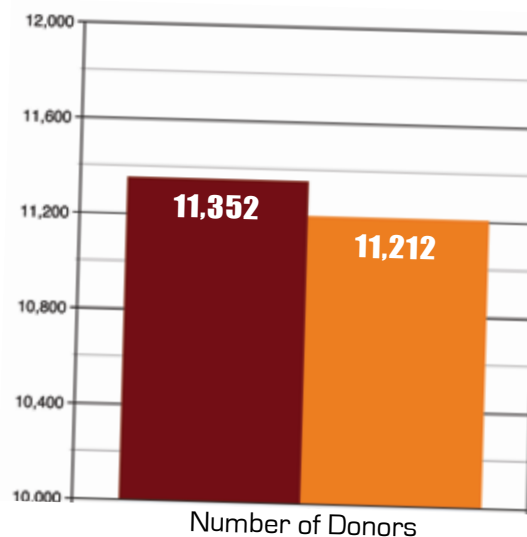
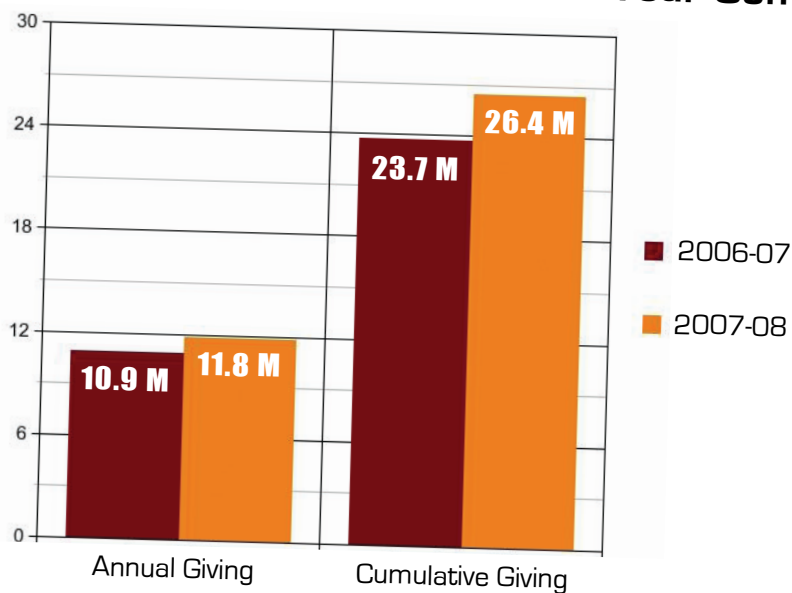
Hokie Club Finances

Fiscal year comparisons from 2006-07 to 2007-08 show that fundraising has increased in both annual giving and overall (cumulative giving). Annual giving represents approximately 10,255 Hokie Club members that make a gift at one of the seven annual giving levels from Hokie Club (\$100) through Diamond Hokie (\$10K). Cumulative giving represents Annual giving totals, larger one time or pledged gifts in support of either athletic scholarships or capital projects such as the basketball practice facility and programmatic needs of the athletics department.

Giving totals for Fiscal Year 2007-2008



Fiscal Year Comparisons



For more information on supporting Virginia Tech athletics, contact us at:

Virginia Tech Athletic Fund
 P.O. Box 10307
 Blacksburg, VA 24062-0307
 (540) 231-6618
 (540) 231-3260 (Fax)
 Hokieclub.com



Hokie Club Parking

Many of the parking lots on campus are reserved for Hokie Club members on football game days (see map). Parking in these lots requires a valid parking pass that is mailed before the beginning of the season to qualifying Hokie Club members. Opportunities to purchase a season parking pass for home football games is a benefit of Hokie Club membership and all parking passes are assigned according to the Hokie Club Point Priority System. Hokie Club members are limited to one parking pass per membership.

On football game days, a valid parking pass is required for entrance into these parking lots. Upon entering, parking passes must be visibly displayed on the vehicle's rear view mirror or dashboard and must remain there at all times while the car is in the parking lot. Vehicles without a valid parking pass are subject to being ticketed or towed at the owner's expense. Lost, misplaced or stolen parking passes will not be replaced and parking passes are not available on game day. Tailgating is permitted but must be confined to the area immediately behind your vehicle. Parking lots will be monitored through the end of the game. Additional parking information for football is available on the Parking Services website at: www.parking.vt.edu/football.htm

PUBLIC PARKING

Public parking is available on game day for a \$10 fee in designated parking lots (see map). Please note that Lots P2 and P5 may close during the 2008 football season due to construction. Parking information is available at www.parking.vt.edu/football.htm. Satellite parking is available at Blacksburg High School and the new Blacksburg Middle School. Blacksburg Transit provides a shuttle service from the satellite parking lots to the stadium.

DISABLED PARKING

See Disability Accommodations.

CAMPER/RV PARKING

Hokie Club members who have purchased parking passes for RV/campers are located either in Lot 3 or 16. In order to park in either of these lots, a season parking pass must have been purchased in advance. A limited number of RV/camper parking spaces are available in Lot P6 and in the Public RV lot off Prices Fork road (see map). Lot 17 is no longer an RV lot. There is a \$30 charge for camper parking.

BUS PARKING

A very limited number of parking spaces are available for buses. Game day passes may be purchased in advance by calling (540) 231-6731.

Hokie fans are known for their support of the Virginia Tech football team and how they have made Lane Stadium one of the finest "home fields" in the country. A big contributor to that enthusiasm is the tailgating and pre-game spirit built before the kick-off.

As we continue with that long standing tradition let us not forget "Hokies Respect" and our goal of creating a first class environment to lend our support to the Hokies while maintaining a safe and fun environment for all Hokies and our visitors.

1. For safety reasons as well as emergency access if necessary, the following is NOT PERMITTED in the parking lots:

- A.** Throwing objects – This includes, but is not limited to, footballs and frisbees.
- B.** Blocking the roadway - Placing tables, chairs, or other items that may extend into the roadway beyond the bounds of the parking space provided is not permitted.
- C.** Blocking the sidewalks - The sidewalks must remain open for pedestrian travel.
- D.** Sound Systems/Noise amplification - This includes bands and DJ entertainment.
- E.** Cutting, removing, or destroying the boundary ropes or signs.
- F.** Destroying landscaping or fencing.
- G.** Underage drinking.

2. Parking Lot Hours of Operation:

Saturday Games	Arrival	Departure
RV's	after 3 p.m. Friday	5 p.m. Sunday
Cars	6 a.m. Saturday	6 a.m. Sunday
Thursday Game	Arrival	Departure
RV's	12 p.m. game day	6 a.m. following
Cars	5 p.m. game day	6 a.m. following

3. Bus Parking on Washington Street:

- A.** There are currently 10 bus spaces on Washington Street. A season pass is \$1,050.
 - B.** In the event all spaces are not taken by the use of a season pass, the charge will be \$200 per game.
- NOTE:** Game-by-game requests are to be made after August 1.

4. Improper use of parking passes:

- A.** All cars in the contributor lots must keep their parking pass displayed at all times, or be subject to towing.
- B.** The owner of the pass is responsible for any violations of the policy due to someone using the pass. (e.g., if you lend it out or sell it and there is a violation, you, as the owner of the pass, are responsible if any penalty occurs).

5. Enforcement of the policy:

- A.** First violation a ticket will be issued (\$30).
- B.** Second violation will result in a loss of the pass for an indefinite period of time.

Corporate/Professional Tailgates - Recently, there have been several corporate/professional tailgates "popping up" around campus. These tailgates are not allowed and no corporate signage is permitted at any time unless prior written approval by the Department of Athletics and ISP Sports has been obtained.



The following represents annual giving donors (gifts from \$100 to \$10,000 annually) who have either joined as new Hokie Club members or have upgraded their Hokie Club membership since January 2008. We want to celebrate these commitments of helping improve Virginia Tech athletics by recognizing them and by saying Thank You!

New members

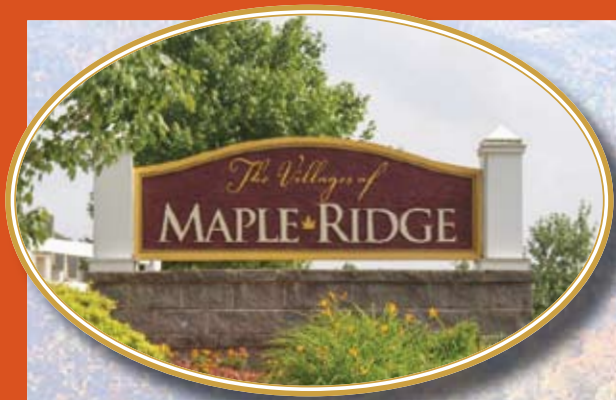
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Upgrading members

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THE HUDSON TEAM





FROM THE
**EDITOR'S
DESK**

Jimmy Robertson

A young Tech team could well be back in ACC title hunt again

Following the Hokies' first practice in preparation for the 2008 season, Macho Harris met with a small throng of media members to discuss the opening day's events and then engaged in a serious conversation with a gentleman whom few recognized.

That gentleman was Billy Conaty, a former Tech center (and current Rutgers law student), and they seemed an odd twosome standing there, one a saucy defensive back while the other a blue-collar offensive lineman. Yet Conaty had Harris' full attention and well he should, too, because Conaty played in "The League" for nearly a decade. He was, and is, as professional as they come, and tough as a piece of Hokie stone. The guy once played with a broken leg, and the scar from the surgery remains quite noticeable.

"Just keep doing what you're doing," Conaty told Harris.

For Harris, that means one thing – making plays.

An All-ACC player a year ago, Harris is the Hokies' best defensive back, their best punt returner and may very well be their best receiver, at least until some of the young guns mature. In the very first practice, he made a nice move to beat a defender and hauled in a pass for a touchdown, pretty much cementing his status as at least a part-time player for this upcoming season at a spot where the Hokies appear to have the most questions.

"He'll play a part, but how much of a part, that's the deal," offensive coordinator Bryan Stinespring said. "There are two questions, really. How much can he assume? From a talent standpoint, everything. Logistically, though, it's a different deal.

"And how well will those receivers respond? That's the unknown factor."

Contrary to what many believe, though, Harris isn't the Hokies' only playmaker. He's just their best one – and their most experienced.

Harris gets a lot of the ink and he deserves it. But this isn't a one-player team. This isn't a team void of talent, even though 22 seniors departed. Privately, Tech's coaching staff loves this 2008 team. Even with the attrition, they have options and they know those guys can play.

Stinespring gets to pick from two quarterbacks, both of whom could start for nine or 10 other teams in the ACC. They have three or four tailbacks, four starters returning on the offensive line, and three solid tight ends. Defensively, they lost seven starters, and heading into this season, they lack depth. But the talk in Blacksburg is that Bud Foster's unit may actually be faster than last year's.

"This group can flow," Harris said. "We can run. This group is young and hungry. We're working hard and making each other better. I can't wait. When they see that lunch pail, they know it's time to go to work."

Most Tech fans think this team is too young to compete for another ACC title. Yet media members picked Tech to win the Coastal

Division, even with the personnel losses.

"We're the only ones on our side [division] who lost 12 guys to the NFL," Foster jokingly chastised the media after the first practice.

Of course, the picking of Tech to win the division also could be seen as an indictment of the league. Right now, no team on the Hokies' schedule is ranked, and yes, they do go to Florida State, Miami, UNC and BC, but they've also lost just one conference road game since joining the league. And as one scribe pointed out later, who else would the media have picked anyway?

"I couldn't pick North Carolina [who was picked to finish second]," this person said. "They had to go to overtime to beat Duke in the last game of the year in Chapel Hill."


In the end, it doesn't matter. We all know it doesn't matter where you're picked. It matters where you finish.

To get where the Hokies want to go, they need to find some receivers – out of a group that includes eight freshmen. But they've certainly got a great one who is more than ready to go.

"Whatever I can do to help the team, I'm up for it," Harris said. "I'm up for any challenge. I'd be a long snapper, if they need me. Any challenge, I'm up for it."

He's a difference maker, but by the end of the season, it's a safe bet to say he won't be the only one.

As Conaty said, just keep doing what you're doing. That's what this team needs to do.

If that happens, there's no doubt here that this young group will be back in the ACC title hunt again. 

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it's all about your home team.**



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Bill Roth

New perspective may lead to even more success for Glennon

It was Sean Glennon's shining moment.

Virginia Tech trailed Boston College during the third quarter of the 2007 ACC Championship game when the Hokies' quarterback got the play from the sideline.

'Smash B COP'

The play is a corner-post passing route to receiver Eddie Royal. Glennon called the play in the huddle, and then led the team to the line of scrimmage.

The Hokies had run that play just once during the entire 2007 season, and it resulted in a touchdown – also to Royal – in the game at Virginia.

"We broke the huddle and the first guy I looked at was [Jamie] Silva [BC's safety], who was lined up right across from Eddie," Glennon recalled. "I knew Silva would try to jump the ball. He's a big ball-hawk, which is what makes him a great safety. He's always trying to read my eyes."

Sure enough, Silva bit just slightly on Glennon's pump fake. Royal faked the corner route and cut to the post. The pass was delivered on the money. Royal leaped to catch it as Silva arrived a half-second late for a 24-yard strike.

Touchdown Tech!

The score gave the Hokies their first lead of the day in a 30-16 win in Jacksonville.

"It was the greatest feeling in the world," Glennon said eight months later about a game in which he threw for 174 yards and three

touchdowns.

But it wasn't just the jubilation of throwing the winning touchdown and securing the ACC title that created that feeling of triumph. And no, it wasn't the personal accolade of being named the championship game's MVP either.

The highest of highs sometimes follow the lowest of lows. And Glennon had endured his own personal nightmare during the 2007 regular season.

By now, you know the story.

Glennon was pulled during the LSU game in Baton Rouge and replaced with freshman Tyrod Taylor. Glennon watched from the bench as Taylor started in five straight Tech victories. When Taylor was injured, Glennon returned and played the best football of his career.

And now, Glennon admits that his 2007 success wouldn't have occurred if he hadn't been benched in the season's second week.

"I'm not going to lie. It was terrible," Glennon said about being pulled. "Being the (2006) starter and having a decent year. I got MVP of the spring and did well in August camp. Things looked good, but they unraveled at LSU."

That's when Taylor, a true freshman, replaced Glennon.

"The worst thing about it, and what hurt the most, was that it was a left hook out of nowhere. I never saw it coming," Glennon said.

The starter-turned-backup was an excellent teammate. He helped Taylor in practice and celebrated the rookie's success.

But inside, he was miserable.

"I saw how much I missed by being on the sidelines. And I didn't feel part of the celebrations after games when everyone was celebrating," Glennon said. "I missed it. I missed football. You lose sight of it because you're under so much pressure. We look at it as a business too much. You've got to have fun.

"I took the attitude that if I ever got back out there I was going to enjoy it."

But it was hard. Glennon got into the Ohio game at Lane Stadium was booed.

"My mom stopped coming to games after the Ohio game," Glennon said. "She came to Blacksburg for the William & Mary and UNC weekends because she wanted to see me and do dinner, but she didn't go to the games. It was hard on her"

There were hateful e-mails and phone calls.

"I was not in a good mood for a couple of weeks," he said.

But when Taylor got hurt at Duke, Glennon came in, went 16-of-21 and threw two touchdowns. Two weeks later at Georgia Tech, he threw two more touchdowns and ran for a third in a 27-3 win.

Football was fun again.

"I was out there throwing the ball around like we'd throw it in the back yard," he said.

And the fans were cheering again, too.

"People get fired or demoted at work. It happens," Glennon said. "The pass to Eddie in the ACC Championship game was the best moment of my athletic career because of all that happened during the season.



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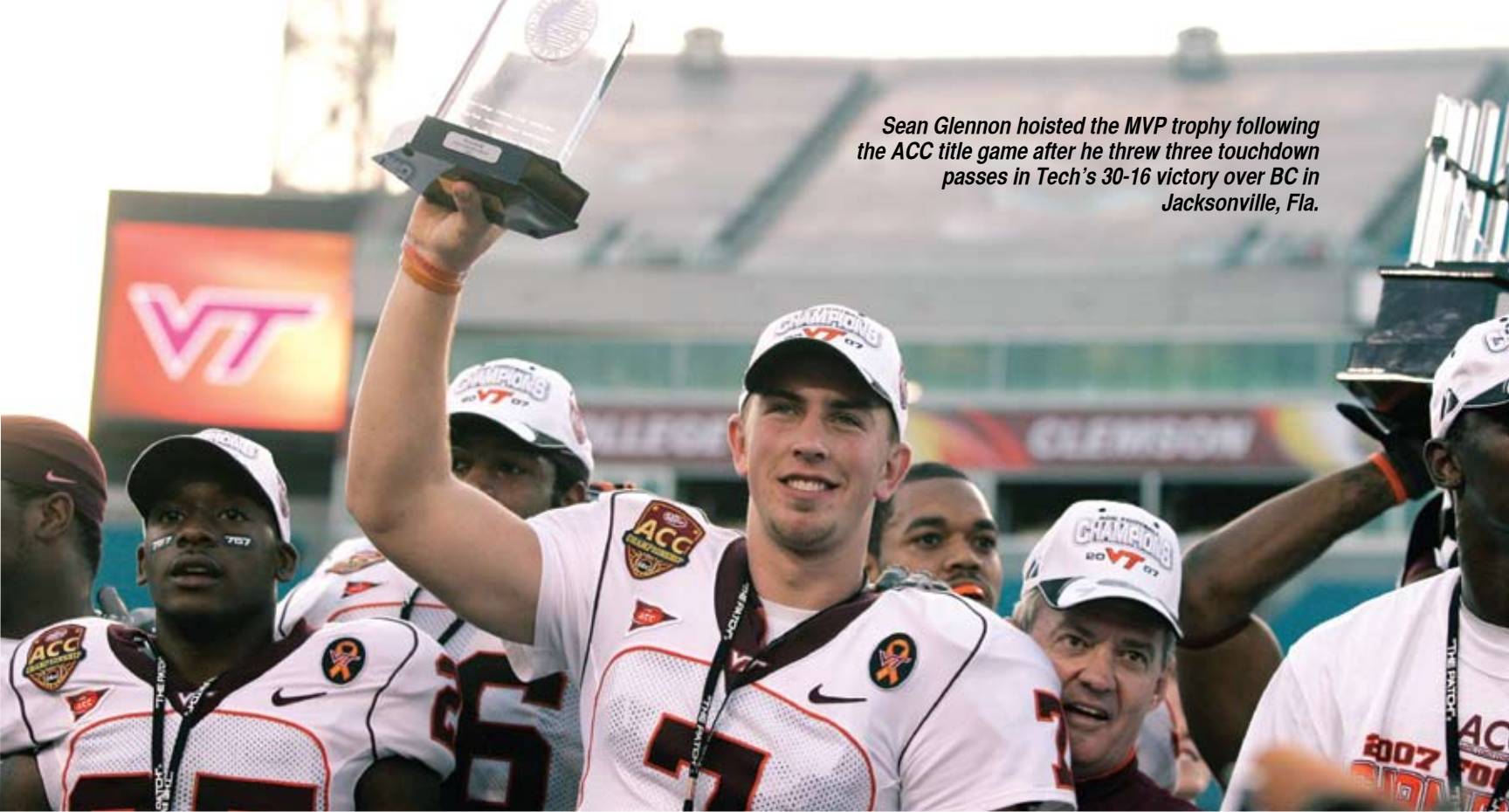
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Sean Glennon hoisted the MVP trophy following the ACC title game after he threw three touchdown passes in Tech's 30-16 victory over BC in Jacksonville, Fla.

"As bad as last year was, I wouldn't trade it. Playing my best football, winning the ACC title, going to the Orange Bowl – who knows if it happens if I don't get benched?"

Glennon claims the experience has made him a better quarterback and a stronger guy.

"All that stuff, it built a lot of character," he said. "Life is going to be full of disappointments. College football has been good for me as a person in that I've learned how to take criticism and learned how to take disappointments."

And now, even though he's fifth-year senior, he's in a quarterback battle again with Taylor as the 2008 season approaches.

What if Tech coaches opt to employ a two-quarterback system again in '08?

"I wouldn't be disappointed, but I'd prefer to be the one guy," Glennon said. "It probably makes the preparation for us more difficult to have two."

The two-quarterback system worked until the Orange Bowl, a 24-21 loss to Kansas.

"Kansas had a game plan," Glennon said. "They said 'we're gonna blitz the crap out of Tyrod and make him throw quick.' And when I was in the game, they'd drop back in coverage. They were going to make it tough to throw, and for Tyrod, make it tough for him to have time to improvise. Kansas brought the

house every play. He was a true freshman."

But this year, Taylor should be better, a year older and more experienced. Glennon insists he'll be better, too.

"Oh, I have a little different mentality this year," he said. "This is my last year. There is pressure in that, but 99 percent of kids would trade positions with me in a heartbeat. I'm going out and enjoying it. Have fun while you can."

That pass to Royal in Jacksonville was a cherished moment for Glennon.

And thanks to his newfound perspective, he's likely to have many more starting this fall.



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News&Notes

.... By Jimmy Robertson

Taylor, Younger lead way in testing

As expected, defensive tackle Demetrius Taylor and fullback Kenny Younger paced the football team's testing in the strength and conditioning program in late July, with Younger earning Excalibur Award honors – the top honor in the strength and conditioning program – for the third time. In all, 11 players earned Super Iron Hokie honors, with 25 others earning honors as well.

Taylor, a 6-foot, 256-pound redshirt junior, led the team in three categories – the bench press (430 pounds), the power clean (390) and the push jerk (400). Also, his 460-pound front squat was a position record for a defensive tackle.

Younger, a 5-11, 230-pound junior walk-on from Richmond, recorded a team-best 485-pound front squat – also a position record for a fullback – and ran the 10-yard sprint in a team-best tying 1.59 seconds. Younger also finished second in the bench press (425 pounds) and push jerk (380), and tied for third in the power clean (341).

Another walk-on, Ron Cooper, a 5-10, 189-pound redshirt sophomore from Richmond, led the way in the vertical jump, recording a leap of 41.5 inches. That number marks a new position record for a free safety.

Three other position records fell. Zach Lockett set a receivers record in the front squat with a lift of 405 pounds, while walk-on Dylan McGreevy set a whips record with a 420-pound lift. Kam Chancellor set a safeties record in the bench press with a 375-pound lift.

Here's a look at the top five in each test:

Bench press

D. Taylor (430)
Younger (425)

Front squat

Younger (485)
Boone (470)

Friday (410)
Graves (410)
Render (410)

Power clean

D. Taylor (390)
Marshman (370)
Muncey (341)
Younger (341)
Br. Warren (341)

Vertical jump

Cooper (41.5 inches)
Terry (40)
Sturdivant (39.5)
T. Taylor (38)
Garner (36.5)

D. Taylor (460)
Perez (450)
DeChristopher (450)

Push jerk

D. Taylor (400)
Younger (380)
Wang (370)
Rivers (370)
Perez (360)

10-yard sprint (Sec.)

Younger (1.59)
Grimm (1.59)
Coale (1.61)
Muncey (1.61)
Harris (1.63)

Williams the fastest freshman

Lorenzo Williams, a 6-2, 195-pound cornerback from Fayetteville, N.C., recorded the fastest times among the freshmen after Mike Gentry's strength and conditioning staff tested the entire group in four categories – the bench press, the 40, the vertical jump and the 10-yard sprint.

Williams ran the 40 in 4.43 seconds and the 10-yard sprint in 1.63 seconds. Dyrell Roberts, a 6-2, 183-pound receiver from Windsor, Va., finished second in both categories.

Jake Johnson, a 6-2, 239-pound linebacker, recorded the highest bench press at 410 pounds, while Marcus Davis, a 6-4, 222-pound receiver, led everyone in the vertical jump with a leap of 38 inches.

Here's a look at the top five in each category:

Bench press

Jake Johnson (410)
Vinston Painter (410)

40-yard dash (Sec.)

Lorenzo Williams (4.43)
Dyrell Roberts (4.45)

Dwight Tucker (340) Ryan Williams (4.48)
Joe Jones (330) Marcus Davis (4.51)
George George (330) Eddie Whitley (4.59)

Vertical jump

Marcus Davis (38 in) Lorenzo Williams (1.63)
Lorenzo Williams (35) Dyrell Roberts (1.65)
Ryan Williams (35) Marcus Davis (1.65)
Jarrett Boykin (35) Ryan Williams (1.71)
Dyrell Roberts (34) Jarrett Boykin (1.71)

10-yard sprint (Sec.)

Football roster shake-up

Four offensive linemen are no longer with the Tech program, with one of them transferring and one giving up the sport while still sticking with the program as a graduate assistant.

Brandon Holland, a 6-4, 325-pound native of Roanoke, Va., transferred to UNC Pembroke just a couple of weeks ago. Holland, a rising junior, played just 63 snaps from scrimmage last season and 57 on special teams.

Eric Davis, Matt Welsh and Clark Crum all have given up football. Davis, a back-up guard on last year's team who did not play a snap, graduated and continues to work in the athletics department while pursuing a master's degree. Welsh graduated as well and gave up the sport after playing 196 snaps last season. Crum, a red-shirt freshman a year ago, did not play a snap and gave up football because of personal reasons.

Also, on another roster note, three members of Tech's 31-member 2008 recruiting class will be enrolling in January of 2009. The three include Ben Barber, a 5-10, 190-pound athlete from Alexandria, Va.; Eric Martin, a 6-2, 240-pound tight end from Woodbridge, Va.; and Leon Mackey, a 6-4, 275-pound defensive end from Wilmington, Del., by way of Hargrave. Two others – running back Tony Gregory from Virginia Beach, Va., and D.J. Coles, a receiver from Goochland, Va. – are going to prep school, while another, Derrick McCoy from Amherst, Va., is going to junior college. Peter Rose, also from Amherst, was released from his scholarship following an off-field matter.



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AFTER HELPING LEAD THE HOKIES TO THE ACC TITLE LAST SEASON, SEAN GLENNON'S HOPING HIS ATYPICAL CAREER ENDS THIS SEASON IN CROWNING FASHION

By Jimmy Robertson

The two-bedroom apartment resembled that of the typical college student, a slightly unkempt mess of furniture, clothes, pictures and posters. A rather nice Vizio television sat in one corner attached to an assortment of wires and cables, all of which intricately connected to a cable box, a DVR and video game control boards.

Ike Whitaker, Sergio Render and Devin Perez made themselves at home, and Sean Glennon certainly didn't care. They may not have been his genetic brothers, but they were his *boys*.

Glennon walked back to his bedroom, eager to show off his collection. Two stands sat on each side of his television and both were full. His collection of video games and DVDs numbers over 150 and featured a wide range of tastes – from his favorite, *Braveheart*, to *Ocean's Eleven*, *Twelve* and *Thirteen* to old episodes of *Seinfeld* and to *Entourage*, an HBO series. Lots of people collect stamps, and some collect coins. Glennon's addiction is movies.

As Glennon posed for photos, his buddy, Render – as 300-pound offensive linemen often do – first made the trek to the kitchen, where he reached into a cabinet and plucked out a small bowl. Then he got a spoon and opened the freezer. He scooped out a hefty helping of ice cream before heading back into the living room.

"Serg, you're eating ice cream this early?" Glennon questioned as he made his way into the living room. A glance at a watch revealed the time as not quite noon. "I wonder what Coach [Curt] Newsome would say about that."

A couple of friendly jabs later and the attention then turned to the television. One of them had loaded a video game. What started as a photo shoot turned into a battle of testosterone-filled wills

LAST CALL



– though not overly so. The jabs flew, but so did laughter.

It seemed so normal – four guys in Glennon’s semi-clean apartment playing video games and poking fun at each other. Glennon himself seemed as relaxed as ever, a smile on his face and not a care in the world. Rather, on that day, he seemed like the typical college student.

Relaxed? Typical? Those adjectives describe most college students. But when you’re a quarterback of a top-20 program, you can’t be either.

Sean Glennon has found this out.

A man named Rowlie Dech started Glennon on this zany path many, many years ago. Suffice it to say, the man with the funny name is not exactly a household name.

Dech, pronounced ‘Deck’, is not a college coach. He’s not a high school coach. And at the time he met Glennon, he wasn’t even a football coach.

Dech served as the assistant coach for Glennon’s Little League all-star baseball team when the Glennons lived in New Jersey. A pitcher, Glennon impressed Dech with a rocket right arm, and Dech saw potential in using that right arm in another sport.

“He asked me if I wanted to play quarterback for him on a Little League team that

fall, and I said, ‘Sure,’” Glennon said. “I had a good arm for baseball, so I guess that’s why he asked me. I was playing soccer in the fall at the time, but I didn’t like soccer that much. So I said, ‘Sure, I’ll play’ and stuck to it.”

He’s been a quarterback ever since. It’s really all he knows. Some kids bounce between running back and receiver and defensive back, or any combination therein. Not Glennon. He is and always has been a quarterback.

He’s always been a winner, too. When he matriculated at Westfield High after a family move from Texas to northern Virginia, he proceeded to lose one game his final two years. He achieved perfection his final season, leading Westfield to an undefeated season and a state title in Virginia’s highest classification.

Now, though, those days seem like decades ago.

“It’s still fun,” Glennon said of football. “There’s a little more pressure now. In high school, there wasn’t that much pressure. I just went out and had fun.”

That Glennon says football is still fun given what has transpired for the past four years at Virginia Tech speaks more than volumes. It speaks encyclopedias.

His career has been unorthodox and anything but easy. He played as a true freshman and then redshirted when he couldn’t beat

out the second Vick for the starting nod. When university officials sacked Vick from school for an array of off-field transgressions, they all but left the program into the hands of Glennon.

Glennon then did what he’s always done – win. The Hokies went 10-2 in the regular season in his first as a starter.

But for some reason, he never seemed to truly win over Tech fans. Perhaps they were spoiled by the ever-popular Bryan Randall. Maybe they expected more because of the possibilities that existed with the talented Vick. Or maybe Glennon’s 11 interceptions served as the more practical reason.

Unfortunately, the Chick-fil-A Bowl only made matters worse.

It was, without question, a horrific night. He turned the ball over four times in the second half as the Hokies saw a 21-3 halftime lead evaporate and ultimately turn into an ugly 31-24 loss to Georgia.

It wasn’t entirely his fault. He spent most of that half running for his life. One time, when he fumbled, he nearly got decapitated by Georgia defensive end Charles Grant. He never saw Grant coming. On one of his interceptions, the ball was tipped – right into the hands of a Georgia defender.

After the game, Tech’s players looked stunned. Most didn’t know what to say, and a



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lot of them refused to talk anyway.

Not Glennon.

"I take responsibility for what happened," he said that night. "Regardless of whether they were bad breaks or not, they were still turnovers. It's hard for our defense to keep them from putting points on the board when they're constantly getting good field position."

For sure, it was a true showing of character.

Unfortunately, he'd get the chance to do it again.

It's not easy being the parent of a student-athlete. Regardless of the score, parents sit coiled for 60 minutes, clenching teeth and clasp hands while living and dying on every snap. They exhaust themselves more than the players without ever having made a tackle or caught a pass.

And if your son is the quarterback, your tension is ten-fold.

Ask Nancy Glennon, who, just because of her very nature, suffers more than most moms. Last year, she couldn't bear to watch.

Really, she couldn't watch.

Sean lost his starting job following the Hokies' disastrous 48-7 debacle at LSU – the worst loss in the Frank Beamer era. He was pulled from the game late in the first half in favor of Tyrod Taylor and Beamer, citing a need to get a more mobile quarterback in there because of some issues on Tech's offensive line, named Taylor the starter two days later.

"That," Glennon said of getting demoted, "was the worst."

It was a long flight back from Baton Rouge and the nightmare continued when Glennon hitched a ride with Eddie Royal back to his apartment. He could only shake his head when he looked at his Toyota 4Runner in the parking lot – it had been egged, which only added insult to injury.

The next Saturday, Nancy Glennon went to her usual seat at Lane Stadium with her husband, John, for the Hokies' game with Ohio. After hearing a few catcalls and seeing Sean suffering on the sideline and knowing the pain he felt, as only a mom could, she couldn't bear it.

She picked up her things and left the stadium. Then she proceeded to walk to the Drill Field, where she sat near the memorial commemorating those who lost their lives on April 16th and read a book during the football game.

"It's tough on a mom," she said. "I talked with Chad Henne a while back and his mother went through some of the same things when he was at Michigan. Those kids are out there trying their hardest. That's all they're doing. But when you're a quarterback, you're going to get most of the blame. That's just part of it. My husband can handle it, but it's tough for me."

Glennon's career appeared to be at a crossroads. Bitter at the world, he contemplated leaving Tech.

It would have been hard to imagine then that Glennon ultimately would play a huge role in saving Tech's season.

In addition to watching movies and playing video games, Glennon also loves to play golf as a way to relax. Outside of football, it's his favorite pastime.

"Once in a while, I'm pretty good at it," he said, smiling, when asked to handicap his game.

Down the stretch last season, he was the football equivalent of a scratch golfer at quarterback. On the third play of the second quarter against Duke, Taylor injured his ankle and in came Glennon, who proceeded to throw for 258 yards and two touchdowns in an easy Tech victory.

"I got so many positive e-mails after that Duke game," he said. "It was really, really nice. There are a few bad apples who are going to be jerks and say what they have to say, but I'm not lying when I say that nine out of 10 people [Tech fans] are supporting me."



GLENNON THE GOLFER

- **Favorite course:** Pete Dye River Course in Fairlawn, Va.
- **Lowest score:** 82 at a course in Ocean City, Md.
- **Hole in one?:** "No, but I've been within a foot or two."

• **Ever had lessons?:** "Not really. I've gotten some tips from some people, but never really had a lesson."

• **When he started playing the game?:** "In college."

• **Favorite playing buddies:** Cody Grimm, Matt Reidy, Steve Borja, Grant Throckmorton.

• **Favorite pro golfer:** "C'mon, who do you think? Tiger, of course. He may be my favorite athlete."

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT SEAN GLENNON:

- **Favorite music:** rap and R&B
- **Last song downloaded:** *Carter III* album by Lil Wayne
- **Last book read:** *Angels and Demons* by Dan Brown
- **Pregame ritual:** listen to the same songs, wake up at 7 past the hour, pray
- **Favorite movie:** *Braveheart*
- **Favorite TV show:** *Seinfeld*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Entourage*
- **Professional goal:** long NFL career, then broadcasting

Sean Glennon (right) enjoys playing video games with his friends, including Devin Perez (sitting in the front), Ike Whitaker (pointing) and Sergio Render (sitting).



His performance marked the start of a dazzling run to the ACC championship. He played well two weeks later against BC and then shredded Georgia Tech in Atlanta. Beamer and his staff ultimately decided to go with a two-quarterback system once Taylor returned, with Glennon starting, and it led to the Hokies winning their second ACC crown since joining the league.

"I was honestly OK with it," Glennon said of the rotation. "I mean, I thought, 'This was a lot better than what it was a few weeks ago.'

"I don't think this is a selfish statement because I think anyone would agree, but yes, I'd like to play every snap. If they left it up to me, I'd be out there every snap. Was it perfect? No. But could I live with it and work it? Definitely.

"I was going to make the most of it when I was out there, whether it was 20 snaps a game or 50 or 100. I was pleased with how I played when I was in there."

He should have been. In the seven games leading up to the Orange Bowl, he completed

Glennon has one more season left. One more chance to respond to critics. One more chance to overcome challenges.

Yet he's not even guaranteed a starting job, which comes as a surprise considering he's 16-6 as a starting quarterback at Tech, a winning percentage of better than 70 percent. The quarterback rotation, though, sputtered in the Orange Bowl, as the Hokies continued a disturbing trend of poor bowl performances with a loss to Kansas. Glennon did not play poorly, but not great either.

And the presence of Taylor looms. Glennon and Taylor came out of spring at the top of the depth chart, and Tech's staff hasn't ruled out using both again – just like last year.

It doesn't matter to him. He only asks for one thing – the opportunity. He wants the opportunity to win a second consecutive ACC crown and to put an end to the Hokies' recent bowl game struggles before he pursues an NFL career.

And that's the amazing thing. If he ac-

"I've had a lot of ups and downs. A lot of people have asked me if I wished I had gone somewhere else, to play in a system better for me or be in a better situation. If I could do it all over again, I'd do the same thing I did."

98-of-152 (64.4 percent) for 1,311 yards, with 10 touchdowns and one interception. The turnaround culminated with him being named the most valuable player of the ACC championship game.

"I think one of the reasons I played so well at the end of last season was that I removed that pressure," Glennon said. "I took it back to high school and was just playing to have fun. I could care less about what anyone was going to think or say about me in the papers the next day. I was just going to play. That relaxed me more and I started playing the type of football I felt I should be playing."

Like a lot of great golfers, he kept grinding away. He's a pure example of staying the course, a calm hand in a driving storm. He gets described as being 'smart' and being a 'heady' quarterback, or a 'pocket passer.' All those fit, yet his work ethic and his competitive desire are underestimated. He refuses to be beaten down – or rather, he refuses to stay beaten down. He loves challenges and he's faced more than his fair share at Tech.

"When bad things happen to him, Sean just gets better," Whitaker said. "I think he thrives on it. He's not the type who's going to fail. He's only going to work harder and find a way to get better."


completes those, he could be – and should be – remembered as one of the greatest Tech quarterbacks ever. But would Tech fans remember him in that way?

It's beyond his control.

"I've had a lot of ups and downs," Glennon said. "A lot of people have asked me if I wished I had gone somewhere else, to play in a system better for me or be in a better situation. If I could do it all over again, I'd do the same thing I did.

"Not everything has gone perfect for me, but I've won an ACC championship. I've played in a BCS bowl. I've had some stuff to deal with, but I think it's made me a better person. I've also had a lot of highs. Being named the MVP of the ACC championship game and playing in a BCS bowl and earning the respect of a lot of people, it's been great. I've had a lot of character-building experiences here, but I've had a lot of fun, too."

He hopes the fun continues. He hopes this season is as normal as a bunch of college guys playing video games and cracking on each other in a cluttered apartment.

Normal certainly is richly deserved for him. Yet even he probably would admit, given his past history, somehow normal probably won't be the case. 

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Q&A WITH JIM WEAVER

By Jimmy Robertson

Tech AD provides answers on a wide array of topics

Virginia Tech is entering its fifth season in the ACC and there is a lot of going on within the athletics program. We sat down with Jim Weaver, director of athletics, as part of our annual Q&A to get his thoughts on a wide range of topics.

Q: Virginia Tech has won nine conference championships since joining the ACC, surpassing, we believe, everyone's expectations. What do you think has led to the school's success so far?

JW: I think the fact that being in the ACC has enabled our coaches to enhance their recruiting efforts and it shows that we had the right head coaching leadership in place, and that we were confident that we could be successful in this conference. We're fifth in the conference in terms of championships won since we joined the league. To do that in such a short period of time – that's something to be proud of.

Q: Facilities are a never-ending topic here at Tech. How is the basketball practice facility coming along since ground was broken on the project in late April?

JW: I think it's coming along fine. It's going to give our basketball programs the kind of facility they need to recruit to, and it'll allow us to compete with the top schools in the country for recruits.

Ours is an enterprise that if you don't invest in it, you won't realize the success. There are a lot of people aspiring to achieve the same things we are and it's important that we continue to move forward.

Q: What can you tell us about the next project – the construction of a new football locker room and players' lounge next to Jamerson?

JW: We have to go to the Board of Visitors and we're working on getting all that information in place. But that's our next big project and it needs to happen. We're working hard and trying to have that ready for the 2010 year. You don't wait until something is totally broke to fix it. You try to move forward while you have the momentum.

Q: Why this particular project as opposed to building a new field house, as you've stated in the past that you wanted to do?

JW: The field house is not as high of a priority. The football locker room is used on a daily basis whereas the field house is only used when the weather is inclement and for

"We're fifth in the conference in terms of championships won since we joined the league. To do that in such a short period of time – that's something to be proud of."

our indoor track teams or for some sports to get ready for the spring season. We still want to turn that into a full-time track facility and still build a field house. That'll be next on our list of priorities.

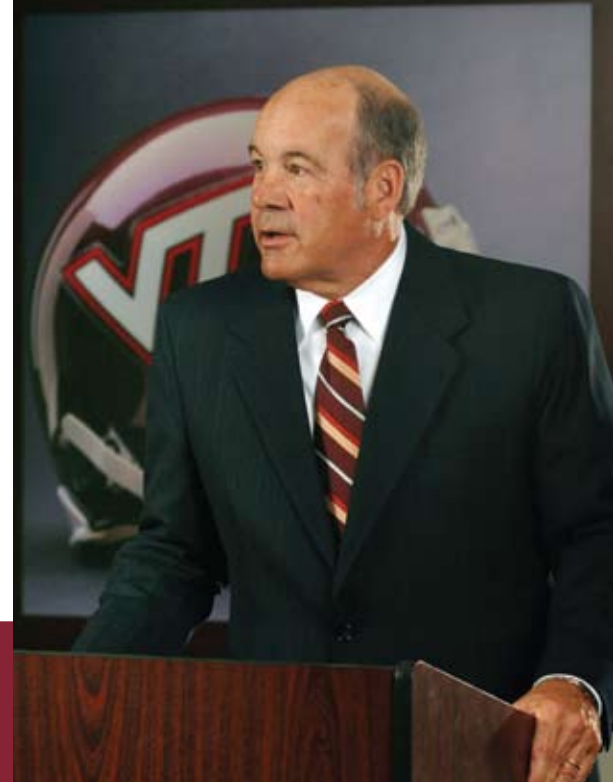
Q: What can you tell us about scheduling, and in particular, about perhaps playing Alabama in the season-opening Chick-fil-A College Kickoff next year?

JW: We made the decision back in the spring that we would avail ourselves to that opportunity and we were able to move the Cincinnati game to 2012 [season opener in 2009]. Talks with Alabama were in the works, and if it wasn't Alabama, then it would be another SEC team. If that doesn't happen, then we're guaranteed a home game next year by the TV entity [ABC/ESPN] without having to return the game at a later date.

As far as the rest of our scheduling, we're fully booked pretty far out [through the 2012 season]. We've also got Nebraska [2008-09], Syracuse [2010-11], Pittsburgh [2012-13], Ohio State [2014-15] and Wisconsin [2016-17] all on our schedule in coming years.

Q: There was a story in USA Today about Ohio State paying Navy \$1.4 million to come to Columbus for a home game. Other schools are paying in excess of \$800,000 for games. How does the rising cost of games affect your scheduling philosophy?

JW: It makes things difficult. The people who are paying those huge guarantees are the people who have 90,000-seat stadiums and above. We're at 66,000 so it's difficult for us to pay those guarantees.



The highest we had ever paid was \$500,000, but this year, we're paying Western Kentucky \$850,000 and I have a major problem with that. We tried to help out the Mid-American Conference when they wanted to push the Bowling Green game back to 2012. They said they would help us find an opponent and never did. And I was not going to play two I-AA teams [Furman is on Tech's schedule]. Unfortunately, we had to pay a huge guarantee.

Now, the money averages out this year [on a per-game basis] to what we'd normally pay because we're going to Charlotte [for the ECU game] and to Nebraska. But I'm still not happy about it.

Q: No one talks about energy costs related to athletics, but does that concern you?

JW: I'm worried to death about it. We've met as a staff numerous times about that subject matter and we have strategized how we're going to go about that. We have 2-3 different approaches that we're going to take to help our programs make ends meet. I don't want to get into those right now because we haven't talked with all the coaches about it.

By the same token, I think the energy crisis is going to push intercollegiate athletics to think about a number of things. I can see the foreign tours going by the wayside. I can see the non-traditional competitions going by the wayside. And certainly, I think people are going to have to schedule more on a regional basis. It doesn't make sense for a lot of sports to go to the West Coast to compete. I think that will all come to the forefront in the next year or two.

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– Bobby Bowden, Coach, Florida State football

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2008 HOKIE FOOTBALL



POSITION PREVIEWS

By Jimmy Robertson

QUARTERBACKS DEPTH CHART

7 Sean Glennon (6-4, 224, r-Sr.)

A smart and tough competitor who makes good decisions and shows good pocket presence.

5 Tyrod Taylor (6-1, 206, Soph.)

A very good runner and an underrated passer who is still learning Tech's scheme.

12 Cory Holt (6-4, 215, r-Sr.)

Veteran is back at QB from WR

BOTH QUARTERBACKS READY TO LEAD THE TEAM IN 2008

A lot of coaches around the nation are searching for a top-notch starting quarterback at this time of the year.

At Tech, the coaches find themselves in the rare situation of having to decide between two top-notch signal-callers.

Down the stretch last season, Tech's staff played both Sean Glennon and Tyrod Taylor, and for the most part, the system worked well. Tech's staff hasn't ruled out the possibility of rotating both during the 2008 season. In fact, they haven't ruled out anything.

So both worked hard over the summer and into August and both kept preparing. For Glennon, that also meant working a stint at the

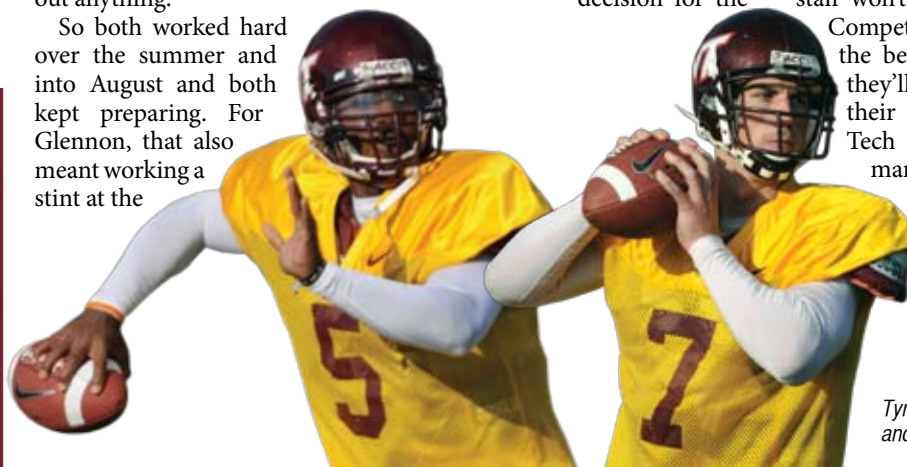
2008 Manning Passing Academy, a camp in Louisiana put on by NFL quarterbacks Peyton and Eli Manning. The quarterbacks who worked as counselors also got to work on their own games.

"It was cool for us just to watch what they [the Mannings] do and how they do it," Glennon said. "But the most important part was just being able to pick their brains. The thing for me was being able to ask what they look for when they watch film and tips on how to make it to the next level."

This season needs to be played first, and the decision for the staff won't be an easy one.

Competition brings out the best in each - and they'll need to be at their best this season.

Tech faces question marks at both receiver and running back, meaning strong quarterback play is paramount. 



Tyrod Taylor and Sean Glennon

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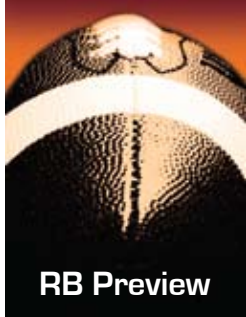
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RB Preview

LEWIS IS BACK

and a key part among a large contingent at tailback

That Kenny Lewis Jr., came back sooner than expected from his serious shoulder injury comes as no surprise.

That he came back at least two months beforehand defies all logic. In fact, it's borderline ridiculous.

Lewis felt his left shoulder tear during his freshman year while taking on linebackers during blocking drills, and finally, a torn labrum ultimately required surgery this spring.

Tech's sports medicine staff predicted 4-6 months of rehab before full recovery. Yet Lewis became a medical marvel. Two months before the four-month mark, he was cleared to do everything – lift, run, catch passes, block, etc.

"Mike Goforth [assistant AD for athletic training] is probably going to get mad at me for saying this," Lewis said. "But I went online after my shoulder surgery and did some research on the rehab. I started doing things at week 1 that I wasn't supposed to do until week 5.

"The day after the surgery was probably the most pain I had. After that, I started feeling better, so I started to push it. I escalated things depending on how I felt and I wasn't feeling bad, so I started doing more and more."

Lewis, a 5-foot-9, 200-pound junior, had plenty of motivation. As the Hokies head into the 2008 season, they face a lot of unanswered questions pertaining to the tailback spot. The competition remains fierce as a quintet of horses have shown a variety of skills, but none has proven to be the true 'Stallion.'

Lewis figured to be the frontrunner heading into spring. As Branden Ore's understudy a year ago, he rushed for 205 yards and four touchdowns – third most on the team. But the injury opened the door for guys like Jahre Cheeseman, Dustin Pickle, Darren Evans and Josh Oglesby, and their improvement inspired him to get back as quickly as possible.

"Mike told me not to push it [the rehab] too hard, but the opportunity was just too great for me," Lewis said. "I've been behind Branden for two years, and he was a great back, so I can't blame the coaches for that. But when Aug. 30th comes around, I want to be out there and I didn't want the injury to hold me back. If I'm not out there, I want it to be because I'm not good enough."

Lewis, Cheeseman and Pickle all possess limited experience. Cheeseman, a 5-10, 204-pound redshirt junior, rushed for 133 yards and a touchdown a year ago, and Pickle, a 5-10, 185-pound senior, rushed for 47 yards.

Cheeseman appeared to be making a move toward the top spot on the depth chart this past spring, but a broken left leg derailed his momentum. He's now close to 100 percent and ready to compete for the job.

Evans and Oglesby are two redshirt freshmen who gained some valuable reps with Lewis and Cheeseman out. The 6-0, 215-pound Evans showed some power, while the 5-11, 211-pound Oglesby showed a little more wiggle. Evans headed into August practices slightly ahead because of his knowledge of the protections.

Then there's Ryan Williams, the hot-shot incoming freshman from northern Virginia who ranked as one of the best high school running backs in the nation a year ago. He will get a close look as the season approaches.


"That's just what Division-I football is all about," Lewis said. "There are always going to be great players coming in here. Look at Darren. He had almost 70 touchdowns his senior season. Everyone's good at this level, and that should make all of us better."

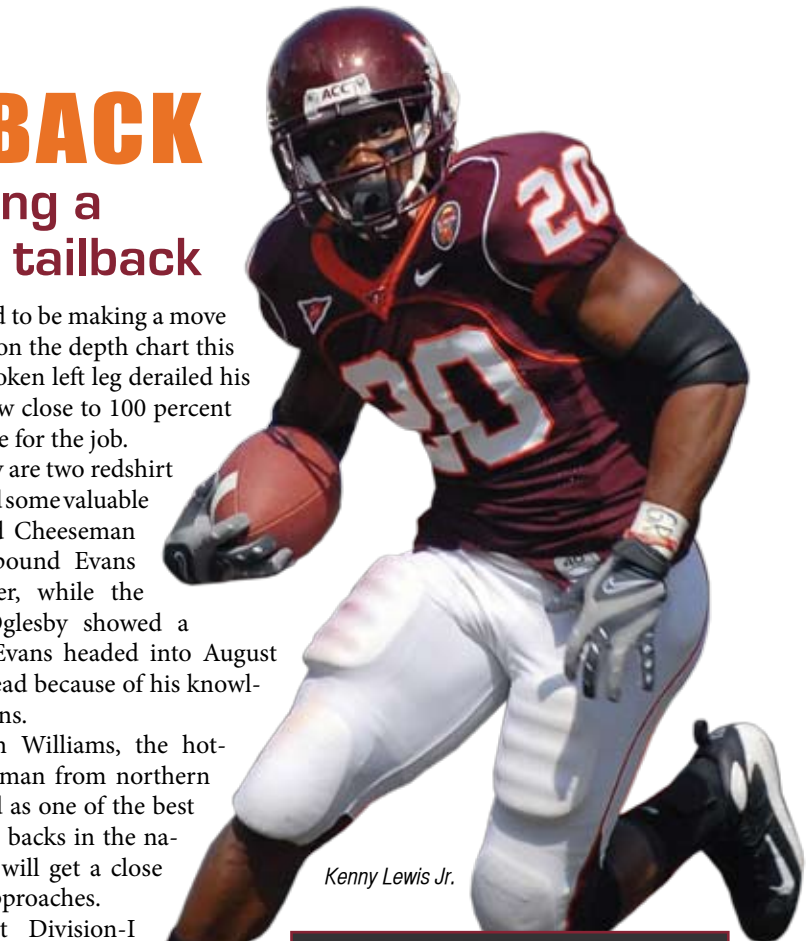
At the underappreciated fullback spot, Kenny Jefferson, a 5-9, 209-pound redshirt junior, leads the way. He simply knows how to block, as do Devin Perez and Kenny Younger, the two players behind him. These three give running backs coach Billy Hite the most depth at fullback that he's ever had.

Tech's staff hopes to run the ball better this season. A year ago, the Hokies rushed for an average of just 133.6 yards per game – a stat that rated seventh in the ACC. But that number figures to rise behind a much-improved offensive line and a renewed emphasis on being physical.

Provided, of course, that a Stallion or two emerges from the group.

"I feel like we've got a lot to prove," Lewis said. "None of us had the chance. Branden was a solid back, so why throw a ripple in the water when you've got him?"

"But I'm going to tell you this. Once we get our rotation set, we're going to have a punishing running attack. That's always been the emphasis at Virginia Tech and we're going to get back to it." 



Kenny Lewis Jr.

RUNNING BACKS DEPTH CHART

TAILBACKS

- 20 Kenny Lewis, Jr. (5-9, 200, Jr.)**
Is fully recovered from a torn labrum. Not overly big, but combines a tremendous work ethic with outstanding speed and quickness.
- 27 Jahre Cheeseman (5-10, 196, r-Jr.)**
Is recovering from a broken left leg suffered in the spring. Not a burner, but is a tough, physical runner.
- 32 Darren Evans (6-0, 210, r-Fr.)**
A big back who is physical and tough.
- 25 Josh Oglesby (5-11, 210, r-Fr.)**
Has size and speed, and can make a move in the open field.
- 35 Dustin Pickle (5-10, 185, Sr.)**
One of the most unselfish guys on the team. Will help out on special teams.

FULLBACKS

- 42 Kenny Jefferson (5-9, 209, r-Jr.)**
Is an outstanding blocker who knows how to get leverage and get underneath people.
- 44 Devin Perez (5-8, 239, r-Jr.)**
An incredibly strong player who will help extensively in goal-line situations and on special teams.
- 31 Kenny Younger (5-11, 230, Jr.)**
One of Tech's top performers in the strength and conditioning program. Still getting a feel for the fullback spot.



OL Preview

HOKIES WITH RARE EXPERIENCE AND DEPTH ON THE O-LINE THIS SEASON

On most occasions – actually, on just about every occasion – watching an offensive lineman run sprints is a rather painful experience.

In fact, most don't run. Instead, they lumber.

But Ed Wang has been proving to people that he isn't 'most.'

During nearly every afternoon this summer, in the heat of the day, the 6-foot-5, 310-pound, Wang breezed through a series of 110-yard wind sprints and other conditioning drills designed to put him and every other player in optimal physical shape. His body glistened with sweat, while his long black hair flowed wildly behind him.

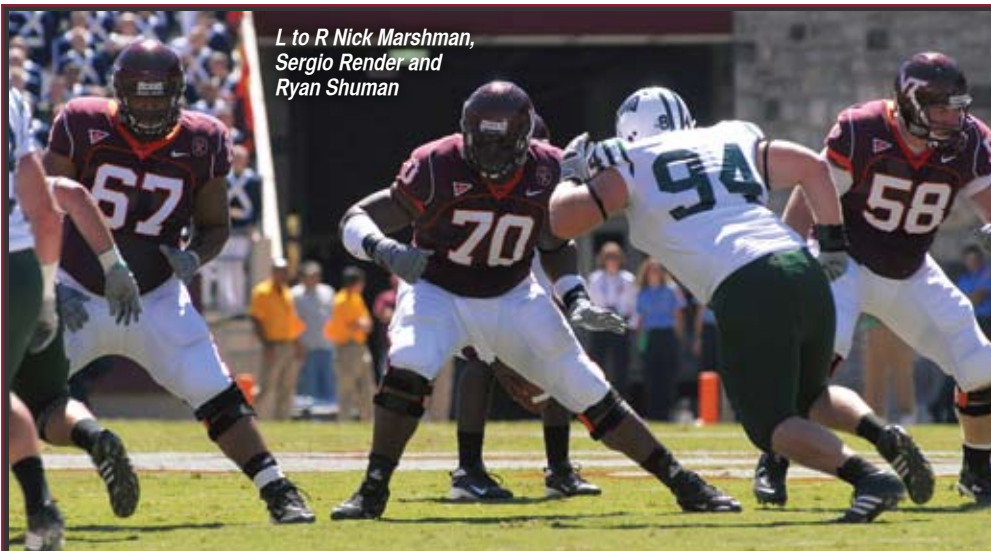
That hair and his broken leg suffered at the beginning of last season prompted a few members of the athletics communications office last year to coin him as 'Barbaro,' a reference to the former Kentucky Derby winner who later suffered a broken leg that ultimately proved to be fatal. Wang's injury obviously didn't reach those proportions and while he may not run quite as fast as that Barbaro, he certainly ranks as one of the main thoroughbreds on what figures to be a very good offensive line.

One of four starters returning, Wang stands as a key figure on the Hokies' 2008 offensive front. He takes over the critical left tackle position vacated when Duane Brown departed after an outstanding career that culminated with him going in the first round of this past April's NFL Draft to the Houston Texans.

"I'm looking forward to it," Wang said. "I had a feeling that I was going to be moved there and it hasn't been that big of an adjustment. Everything's reversed as far as what side you line up on and your stance, but basically, you're doing the same thing.

"The only real difference is there's more pressure. There's a lot more pressure at left tackle. One slip-up and that could be it for our quarterback. But that just pushes me every day. I know I have to get better."

Wang missed the first six games of last season after suffering a broken lower leg when a defensive lineman rolled up into him during a non-contact drill. It was the



L to R Nick Marshman, Sergio Render and Ryan Shuman

HOKIES' 2008 OFFENSIVE LINE DEPTH CHART

RIGHT TACKLES

62 Blake DeChristopher (6-5, 299, r-Fr.)

Big, strong, tough and smart. Those traits should help him overcome a lack of game experience. Had an excellent spring and summer.

64 Richard Graham (6-6, 284, r-Jr.)

A smart, heady player who can play multiple positions, which is a nice luxury to have as a coach.

RIGHT GUARDS

70 Sergio Render (6-3, 308, Jr.)

Entering his third year as a starter. A bruising, physical player who plays with a mean streak. Possesses tremendous strength. Is getting better in pass protection. Has all-conference ability.

68 Jaymes Brooks (6-2, 304, r-Fr.)

A lot like Render, though not as big nor as strong. Still learning the blocking schemes, which caused him to be a bit inconsistent this spring.

CENTERS

58 Ryan Shuman (6-3, 293, r-Sr.)

Rugged player who missed spring practice following surgery on his left knee. A competitor who plays with great effort. Anchors Tech's line.

60 Beau Warren (6-3, 281, r-Soph.) Gained valuable experience last season. Is undersized, but not afraid to battle inside. Added weight and strength will help him this season.

52 Barrett Mears (6-5, 291, r-Soph.)

A smart walk-on whom the coaches are high on.

LEFT GUARDS

67 Nick Marshman (6-5, 339, r-Sr.)

Settled in at guard at the end of last season and really played well this past spring. An athletic player for someone his size. Has his weight under control after staying in Blacksburg all summer.

69 Hivera Green (6-3, 304, r-Jr.)

Did not play from scrimmage last season, but was the surprise of spring practice. Limited athletically, but played physical football, which enabled him to move up the depth chart.

76 William Alvarez (6-4, 327, r-Fr.)

Is big and athletic. Still needs to get in better condition. Still learning the system, but made strides this spring and summer.

LEFT TACKLES

77 Ed Wang (6-5, 310, r-Jr.)

Strong, physical and athletic. The most athletic of Tech's offensive linemen. Still needs to be more physical at the point of attack. Could have an all-conference year.

75 Greg Nosal (6-6, 281, r-Fr.)

Made great strides after being moved to tackle this past spring. Has a nice frame. Will get better as he gets stronger, but shows good footwork in pass protection. Still learning the position.

71 Aaron Brown (6-6, 320, r-Soph.)

Had his best spring, but still has some improving to do. Has been bothered by a shoulder injury.

absolute worst position for the Hokies to suffer an injury because of a severe lack of depth along the offensive front. Not coincidentally, Tech's offense struggled, and then when he came back, that same unit flourished, as he stabilized the line.

With three other starters returning along with him, he doesn't anticipate the line incurring the same type of struggles as last season. Nor do Tech's coaches and fans. In fact, those who bleed orange and maroon are talking about the offensive line being a strength.

"I think we're going to be a lot farther ahead," Wang said. "We're working hard and everyone has stayed here the entire summer. We all took the initiative to do that and we had a good summer. But we can't take one day off."

"Every year, we've heard the criticism. We want to be the strength. It's not cool to always be the soft spot."

There should be nothing soft about this unit. In addition to Wang, starters Nick Marshman and Sergio Render return at the guard spots, while Ryan Shuman returns at center. After bouncing from position to position, Marshman, a 6-5, 339-pound redshirt senior, played very well at guard last season and figures to flourish this season now that he can stay there. Render, who has been a

starter his entire career, stands as an all-conference type of player, and Shuman, an 11-game starter a year ago, is more than steady at center. Those four starters combined for 46 starts a year ago, thus giving the Hokies plenty of experience along the front.

The fifth starter will be right tackle Blake DeChristopher, a 6-5, 299-pound redshirt freshman. Tech's staff found itself tempted to play DeChristopher last season, but felt he needed to get stronger and needed to learn more and that move may pay huge dividends.

"He listens," Wang said as to why DeChristopher has moved into a starting role. "You don't have to repeat things to him. He's good and he's only going to get better. I think he'll be more than able to hold down the right side."

One thing that makes this unit stronger is depth. For the first time in a decade, Tech has talented back-ups at virtually every spot, albeit very young back-ups for the most part.

Richard Graham, a 6-6, 284-pound redshirt junior, ranks as the top back-up and the savvy, smart Graham possesses the ability to play just about every position on the line. Beau Warren, a 6-3, 281-pound redshirt sophomore, started two games last season when Shuman went down with a knee injury and played very well. Graham and Warren


both got more than 200 snaps under their belt last season.

Hivera Green, William Alvarez and Jaymes Brooks will be fighting for playing time at the guard spots. Green did not see a snap from scrimmage last season, but moved into a back-up role after a very good spring. The latter two are talented redshirt freshmen who get better with each rep.

Greg Nosal and Aaron Brown serve as the back-ups – along with Graham – at the tackle spots. Nosal, a redshirt freshman who moved from tight end to tackle right before the start of spring practice, drew rave reviews for his work at his new position.

"We've got a young o-line," Wang said, a reference to having just two seniors on the unit. "But everyone is working hard and we have to keep doing that. ECU, you know they're working hard. They've got their front eight back and our line said last year that they were one of the best defensive fronts we faced. So we've got to keep working and get better."

Judging from the work that unit put in this summer, they're off to a great start, one that could lead to future success.

And after all, that's the reason they ran all those sprints and did all those tortuous conditioning drills – even if it wasn't pretty to watch. 

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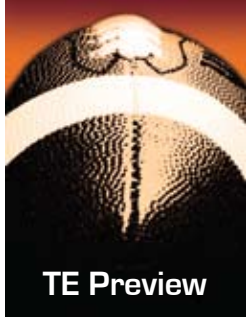
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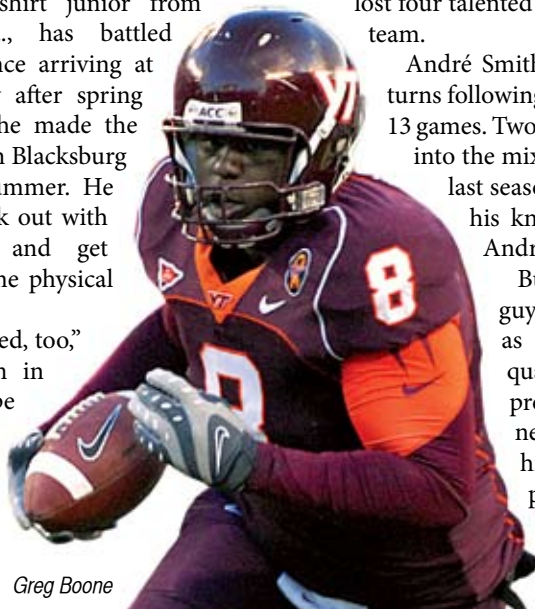
BOONE READY FOR PROMINENT ROLE AT TIGHT END

Greg Boone is starting to get really serious about football.

He's always been serious, but he decided to take that up to another level shortly after spring practice.

Boone, a redshirt junior from Chesapeake, Va., has battled weight issues since arriving at Tech. So shortly after spring practice ended, he made the decision to stay in Blacksburg for the entire summer. He sacrificed to work out with his teammates and get himself into prime physical condition.

"I'm glad I stayed, too," Boone said. "I'm in a lot better shape now than I would be if I had gone home. None of the coaches really told me



Greg Boone

to stay the entire summer. I just took it upon myself. I knew if I went home, I'd be lazy and come back out of shape."

The Hokies will need their spring offensive MVP more than ever heading into this season. Sam Wheeler isn't 100 percent yet. Plus, Tech lost four talented pass catchers off last season's team.

André Smith, a redshirt sophomore, returns following a season in which he played 13 games. Two redshirt freshmen also figure into the mix - Chris Drager, who played last season until tearing a ligament in his knee in the fourth game, and Andrew Lanier.

But eyes will be on the big guy - Boone. He came to Tech as a *SuperPrep* All-American quarterback. Injuries, weight problems and adjusting to a new position have prevented him from reaching his utmost potential.

That, though, may be changing. 

TIGHT ENDS DEPTH CHART

8 Greg Boone (6-3, 280, r-Jr.)

Big, strong, physical and fast. Is in the best shape of his life. Has good hands and is nearly impossible to bring down in the open field. Will be counted on extensively and could be a force this season.

88 André Smith (6-4, 260, r-Soph.)

Has the size and athleticism to have an impact this season. A solid blocker at the point of attack and a big target who can work the middle of the field.

86 Chris Drager (6-3, 238, r-Fr.)

A smart, young player looking to bounce back from a torn ligament in his knee.

18 Sam Wheeler (6-3, 269, r-Jr.)

Still trying to recover from a devastating knee injury suffered in the middle of last season.

94 Andrew Lanier (6-5, 263, r-Fr.)

Surprised many this spring by showing good hands and an ability to make plays.

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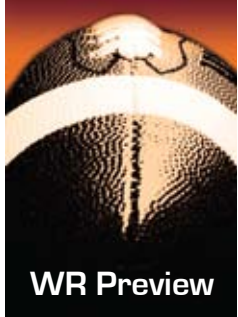
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WR Preview

DILLARD'S INJURY LEAVES HOKIES YOUNG AND INEXPERIENCED AT WR



Danny Coale

In analyzing the Hokies' 2008 wide receiving group, one could start by astutely pointing out that the team lost four talented wideouts from last season's group, three of whom rank in the top 10 in virtually every career receiving category.


But Tech's biggest loss probably came over the summer. That's when Brandon Dillard, a redshirt junior who made the biggest plays in the spring game, shredded his Achilles tendon during a player-organized passing drill, putting him out of commission for this season. Dillard was slated to go into this season as the Hokies' most experienced wideout and all but cemented his job as the starting flanker with his performance

over the spring.

The staff now pins its hopes on a group that features a quarterback-turned-receiver, a redshirt sophomore known more for his play on special teams and eight freshmen – yes, eight. Tech head coach Frank Beamer wants to narrow the group down to six whom he can count on once the season starts.

Ike Whitaker possesses the most experience, but he only caught three passes a year ago and finds himself in a major battle to get any playing time. Zach Lockett, a beast on special teams, is the only other player among the group to have caught a pass in a collegiate game – he caught two last season.

At press time, Lockett and Danny Coale stood atop the depth chart at the receiver spots. Coale, a redshirt freshman, appears to be a rising star, combining athleticism with instincts for the position.

Tech's staff figures to play at least a couple of true freshmen this season among the five currently working at receiver. That group includes one of the state's best in Dyrell Roberts, a 6-2, 190-pounder from Windsor, Va., along with the talented Marcus Davis – both of whom were No. 2 on the depth chart at the time of this printing. 

WIDE RECEIVERS DEPTH CHART

FLANKERS

16 Zach Lockett (6-3, 217, r-Soph.)

Tall and physical. Needs to work on his ball skills. Excels on special teams.

11 Dyrell Roberts (6-1, 183, Fr.)

The most impressive of the freshman receivers in the early going.

29 Xavier Boyce (6-3, 205, Fr.)

Needs to get stronger and learn the position, but has a nice frame.

85 Ervin Garner (5-9, 162, r-Fr.)

Has outstanding speed and could help in the return game.

83 Patrick Terry (5-11, 190, r-Fr.)

Also has great speed and athletic ability.

SPLIT ENDS

19 Danny Coale (6-0, 203, r-Fr.)

Promising prospect with good athleticism and great hands.

4 Marcus Davis (6-3, 228, Fr.)

Huge target with size and speed. Still learning the position.

30 Jarrett Boykin (6-2, 201, Fr.)

Another big, polished target with size and speed.

13 Randall Dunn (6-1, 233, Fr.)

A lot like Davis, but not quite as strong or fast.

87 Prince Parker (6-5, 236, r-Soph.)

A walk-on who needs to get stronger.

3 Ike Whitaker (6-4, 220, r-Jr.)

Tall, fluid athlete who's getting better as a receiver.

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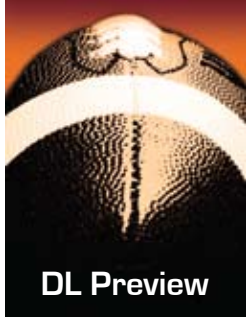
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DL Preview

WORILDS EXPECTING BIG THINGS FROM D-LINE

in spite of personnel losses



On a sweltering July afternoon, a large contingent of football players gathered on the practice field outside the Merryman Center to run a series of sprints as the ‘conditioning’ part of strength and conditioning.

It was a brutal task under an unforgiving sun, and some of Tech’s players struggled to finish the sprints in the required time. At the end, as those same players tried to recover, Jason Worilds gathered the group in a circle and delivered a scathing tirade.

In short, he told his teammates that what had just transpired wasn’t good enough.

“I don’t know if you’d call me the leader [of the team],” Worilds said. “I just refuse to let anyone slack off. When it’s the weekend, you can rest, but during the week, it’s time to go to work. It’s a ‘work’ week. That day, I didn’t feel like we had worked to the best of our abilities, so I let them know.

“That’s the type of person I am. I’m going to say what’s on my mind – no matter the consequences.”

A combination of graduation losses along the defensive front and Worilds’ sterling play this past spring give him a little more juice in the locker room heading into the season. His teammates always knew he possessed the ability to be a great player, but the 6-foot-2, 254-pound redshirt sophomore dazzled even his most ardent supporters from his defensive end spot during spring practice, making plays all over the field on his way to being named the spring’s most valuable defensive player.

“I thought I took a step forward,” he said. “But I’m not close to where I want to be. I’m just trying to get better, watching a lot of film and seeing things that I can get better at. Then I want to attack those things.”

Tech will need the type of play he exhibited this spring from the rest of its defensive line as well, as the Hokies lost four key contributors off that front from a year ago, including three starters. Chris Ellis, Barry Booker and Carlton Powell departed, along with steady sub Kory Robertson. The four of them

combined for 147 tackles, 85 hurries and 16 sacks.

In addition to Worilds, who recorded 17 tackles (4.5 for a loss) and 2.5 sacks last season, Orion Martin figures to carry some clout in Tech’s locker room this season. Martin, the lone returning starter on the defensive front and a guy who will be at the other end spot opposite of Worilds, is a redshirt senior and a very good player in his own right. He finished seventh on the team in tackles a year ago with 58 and added 6.5 sacks. He also played fantastic football in the Orange Bowl, leading the way with two sacks.

Backing those two guys up will be Nekos Brown and Steven Friday. Brown, a 6-2, 245-pound junior, could be considered a starter. He played in all 13 games a year ago, finishing with 21 tackles (10 solo) and two sacks. Friday, a 6-4, 240-pound redshirt sophomore, made an impression this spring after getting bigger and stronger and has played his way in a back-up role after playing in just three games last season.

The tackle spots bear some watching. Booker, Powell and Robertson kept teams from pounding the Hokies up the middle, and Tech’s staff hopes that some younger guys do the same. Coming out of spring, Cordarrow Thompson and John Graves led the way.

After battling weight issues for three years, Thompson, a 6-2, 303-pound redshirt junior, finally has gotten his weight into the 320 range. As a result, he enjoyed his best spring practice. Graves, a 6-3, 282-pound redshirt sophomore, possesses all-conference ability.

Demetrius Taylor, a 6-0, 256-pound ju-

nior, ranks as the third tackle. Though he lacks ideal size, he was the biggest surprise of spring practice and played his way into a prominent role.

After that, a bunch of freshmen will be trying to get on the field. Justin Young, Kwamaine Battle and Khalil Latif are all redshirt freshmen with some skills, but all lack experience. Courtney Prince enrolled this past January and will be given a look, but he may end up redshirting.


It’s that unknown up the middle that causes queasiness among Tech fans.

“I think people who don’t expect a lot out of us are going to be surprised,” Worilds said. “We’re going to be another typical Virginia Tech defense. We’re going to be fast, physical and athletic.”

If they follow his lead and work ethic, they’ll be just fine. Worilds arrives in the weight room before any of his teammates and usually is the last to leave, constantly challenging Tech’s strength and conditioning staff to come up with lifts to make him better.

It also bears mentioning that he took two classes during the second summer session and worked a part-time job.

“It was hard,” Worilds said of his summer load. “But I don’t make excuses. I do everything to the best of my ability and get it done.”

If his teammates didn’t know that before this summer, then they quickly found out. And if this line puts into it what Worilds has, then they should be very good in spite of their relative inexperience. 

DEFENSIVE LINE DEPTH CHART

STUD ENDS

6 Jason Worlds (6-2, 254, r-Soph.)

Probably the most physically gifted of all of Tech's defensive linemen. Is explosive and fast coming off the edge. Had an exceptional spring and appears poised for a breakout campaign.

82 Steven Friday (6-4, 240, r-Soph.)

A young player who has finally gotten strong enough to help on the defensive line. Hopefully he'll continue to improve and be able to work into the rotation at defensive end.

98 Jacob Gardner (6-0, 236, r-Sr.)

A walk-on who has worked some at defensive end, but may figure in more as a snapper.

ENDS

90 Orion Martin (6-2, 255, r-Sr.)

A fantastic person who serves as one of the leaders of this unit. Has made himself into a fine player with his tremendous work ethic and devotion to the strength and conditioning program.

47 Nekos Brown (6-2, 245, Soph.)

Has gotten bigger and stronger. Has all the tools, but needs to put it all together.

85 Chad Carlson (6-2, 241, r-Soph.)

A walk-on who had his best spring practice and provides depth at the spot.

NOSE TACKLES

91 John Graves (6-3, 282, r-Soph.)

An impressive-looking player who has all-conference ability. Has quickness and strength. He's going to be counted on heavily to help make up for the loss of former stalwarts Carlton Powell and Barry Booker.

56 Demetrius Taylor (6-0, 256, r-Jr.)

The biggest surprise coming out of spring practice. He's not big enough, but has incredible strength and a nice feel for getting off blocks.

92 Khalil Latif (6-3, 269, r-Fr.)

A young prospect with size and strength, but who's rough around the edges. Needs to learn the system better and be more consistent.

59 Courtney Prince (6-2, 257, Fr.)

A hard-working player with some tools. Needs to improve his quickness and learn the scheme. May be a year away from helping. Could still redshirt.

TACKLES

95 Cordarrow Thompson (6-2, 303, r-Jr.)

Has gotten into the best shape of his career, which should allow him to maximize his natural abilities. He and Graves should form a nice tandem inside.

96 Justin Young (6-3, 280, r-Fr.)

A player who is smart and has some tools. Tech's staff would love to see him turn it up and wreak havoc to help out the defensive front.

93 Kwamaine Battle (6-0, 271, r-Fr.)

Showed promise during preseason practices last August, but injuries to both shoulders forced him to redshirt. Underwent surgery on both and missed spring practice. Has some explosiveness and quickness, but hasn't been able to show them.



Orion Martin

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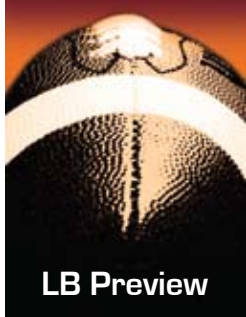
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LB Preview

TWO SENIORS WITH HUGE SHOES TO FILL, but finally glad to see their time come

Every year, players come and players go. Most fans realize this, too. They know that college football is a cyclical entity.

Yet even though they know this and fully understand it, they feel a sense of anguish when certain players – great players – see their eligibility expire.

Such is the case for Tech football fans, who saw some great players move on following the Hokies' loss to Kansas in the Orange Bowl. And none of those players were more critical to Tech's success the past four years than standout linebackers Xavier Adibi and Vince Hall, arguably the greatest tandem of linebackers ever at Tech.

So as Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster planned to replace Hall and Adibi, he focused his effort on two rising seniors returning – Purnell Sturdivant and Brett Warren. Perhaps surprisingly, and definitely quietly, the two of them flourished this spring.

“We know what the expectations are here and we know what people are thinking,” Sturdivant said. “Our goal is to try and be as prepared as possible and to do everything we can to help this team win.”

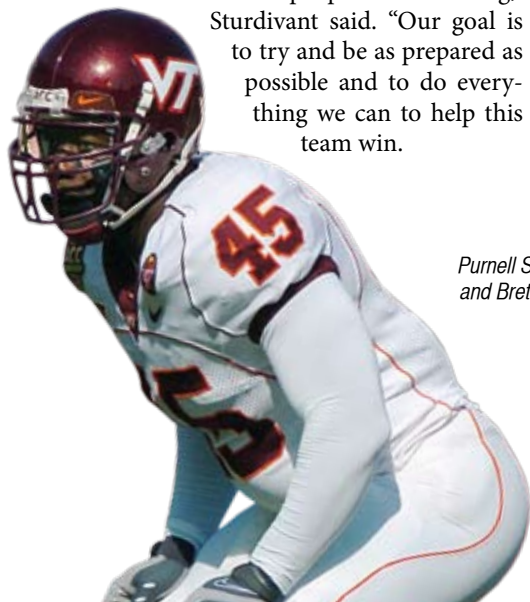
“We know it’ll be a challenge. But I love a challenge. I’m up for it. This is an opportunity for me and Brett to go out and have a helluva year.”

Sturdivant takes over for Adibi at backer. He gave fans a glimpse of his abilities in the William & Mary game last season when he recorded 10 tackles and three sacks. He also intercepted two passes.

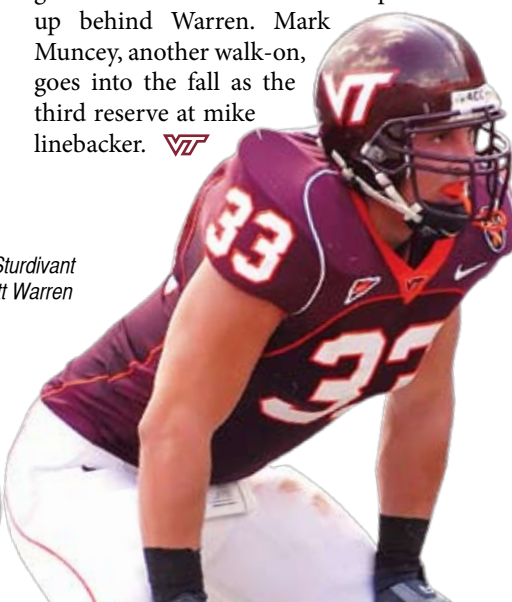
Warren, a 6-1, 237-pound redshirt senior, will be lining up beside Sturdivant, taking over Hall’s vacant mike linebacker spot. He is more of a known presence after starting four games last season while Hall recovered from a broken wrist.

Depth at the backer and mike linebacker spots, though, remains a concern. Jonas Houseright, a redshirt senior, goes into the season as the back-up behind Sturdivant, with redshirt freshman Hunter Ovens third on the depth chart.

Barquell Rivers, a redshirt freshman, goes into the season as the top back-up behind Warren. Mark Muncey, another walk-on, goes into the fall as the third reserve at mike linebacker. 



Purnell Sturdivant and Brett Warren



LINEBACKERS DEPTH CHART

BACKERS

45 Purnell Sturdivant (5-10, 225, r-Sr.)
Not the biggest guy in the world, but he’s extremely strong and powerful. He also has some speed.

89 Jonas Houseright (6-0, 224, r-Sr.)
Has added much-needed weight and strength, and could help this fall.

40 Hunter Ovens (5-11, 203, r-Fr.)
Needs to get bigger and stronger, and become more assertive on the field.

MIKE LINEBACKERS

33 Brett Warren (6-1, 237, r-Sr.)
Blends a nice combination of size and strength with terrific instincts for the position.

52 Barquell Rivers (5-11, 229, r-Fr.)
A stocky and strong player who has worked himself into better shape and only needs to be more consistent.

36 Mark Muncey (5-11, 231, r-Jr.)
A hard-working walk-on who may figure in on some special teams this season.

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W&R Preview

YOUNGER MARTIN TAKING ON MORE OF A LEADERSHIP ROLE

Cam Martin is trying to shed his image.

No, not the one in which he is a tremendous football player. No one wants that part of him to disappear.

And no, not the one in which he provides leadership. This year's defense needs that.

Instead, the whip linebacker is trying to become more of a vocal presence on Tech's defense, which belies his soft-spoken nature.


"I take on the leadership role by example," Martin said. "But I will speak up if something is out of place. I may be quiet, but I also want to win, and if something is not right, then I'll speak up. It's only right to step up and say something."

Martin finished fifth on the team in tackles last season with 78, and had 4.5 sacks and an interception. He missed some time with a knee injury suffered in the ACC title game and re-injured in the bowl game. It still bothers him somewhat – thus causing concern among the coaches – but he continues to rehab it and hopes to have it 100 percent before the opener.

Cody Grimm and Dylan McGreevy back up Martin at the whip linebacker spot. Grimm really understands the game and possesses the instincts to play several different positions.

Following Kam Chancellor's move to safety, Dorian Porch and Davon Morgan are battling for the rover job. Morgan, who played last year as a true freshman, could see a lot of action this fall even if he doesn't win the starting job.

Martin, though, will be the leader of coach Jim Cavanaugh's group, and his expectations will remain the same.

"I've got to stay healthy and get better in everything," Martin said. "I want to win the ACC and that should be everyone's expectation." 

WHIPS AND ROVERS DEPTH CHART

WHIP LINEBACKERS

41 Cam Martin (6-1, 214, r-Jr.)

A tremendous player with all-conference ability. He's fast, strong and smart, and one of the main leaders on this defense.

26 Cody Grimm (5-11, 207, r-Jr.)

A solid back-up with the ability to start. A very good tackler for someone his size and he really understands the game.

46 Dylan McGreevy (5-11, 212, Sr.)

Made great improvement over the spring and provides depth. Will most likely help on special teams.

ROVERS

2 Davon Morgan (6-0, 196, Soph.)

Is a good tackler and has excellent ball skills. Is still making the transition to a new position, but could easily win the starting job.

24 Dorian Porch (5-11, 210, r-Jr.)

Put together a splendid spring. His physical skills were never in doubt, but he showed much more of an understanding of the game this spring. Is in a battle with Morgan for the starting role.

30 Alonzo Tweedy (6-2, 184, Fr.)

Young prospect still learning the position. Can run and hit. May end up redshirting.



Cam Martin



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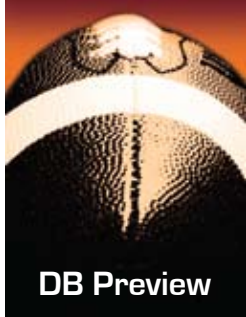
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DB Preview

CHANCELLOR'S NEW ROLE TO SOLIDIFY TECH SECONDARY

Kam Chancellor was one of the few Tech football players who actually went home for the first summer session.

The prevailing thought might be that he went home and spent some time relaxing, recharging before coming back to Blacksburg for the second summer session to begin preparations in earnest for the 2008 season.

But his time back in Norfolk was anything but a vacation.

The 6-4, 224-pound junior worked for Pepsi during that time period. This wasn't part of an internship, but rather, a manual labor position. He woke up early and bounced from store to store, stocking shelves and making sure they looked neat. Then once he got his paycheck, he only kept a sliver of it.

"I've got to look after my family," Chancellor said. "My mom's had some tough times."

As expected, he refused to shirk his off-season responsibilities, working out daily at Mount Trashmore, a city park in Virginia Beach. That type of sacrifice has endeared him to both his teammates and his coaches. But it comes as no surprise. When Tech's staff asked him to move to safety this past winter, he told the coaches to put him wherever it benefited the team the most.

The rover-turned-safety flourished at his new home this spring, and he not only anchors Tech's 2008 secondary, but he also anchors this defense. Without him to get everyone lined up in the proper position, Tech's vaunted defense would be as dysfunctional as today's Congress.

"I thought I had a good transition to safety," Chancellor said. "I liked the move. I like being in control of our defense and getting everything set up. You can put the blame on my shoulders if something goes wrong."

"I thought it was the best fit for me personally, too. I'd like to think I have good range and can tackle. I can do all that at safety and still be the leader of the defense."

Chancellor, who started all 14 games and finished with 79 tackles, an interception and a fumble recovery last season, is one of two starters returning in Tech's secondary, joining Macho Harris. Tech lost two integral parts in cornerback Brandon Flowers, a second-round pick of the Kansas City Chiefs, and steady safety D.J. Parker, the man whom Chancellor replaced.

Harris, a senior from Highland Springs, Va., ranks as the best athlete on the team. An All-ACC player a year ago, he tied for

the team lead with five interceptions and led the team with 16 passes defended. For good measure, he added a 100-yard kickoff return for a touchdown.

Harris may be pulling double duty this fall. Tech's staff worked him at receiver for most of spring practice to take advantage of his playmaking skills, and given Brandon Dillard's season-ending Achilles injury, Harris may need to play even more at receiver than originally anticipated. How that will affect his play on defense remains to be seen.

Defensive backs coach Torrian Gray set about finding another cornerback this spring, and Stephan Virgil, a 5-11, 186-pound junior, came out of spring practice in the top spot at field corner. He lacks top-end speed, but makes few mistakes.

"He's got a great work ethic and has good cover skills," Chancellor said of Virgil. "He can make a tackle. He just hasn't had a chance to prove himself yet."

Rashad Carmichael, a 5-10, 190-pound redshirt sophomore, and Cris Hill, a 5-11, 183-pound redshirt freshman, also figure in the mix at the two corner spots. Carmichael has the tools, but wasn't as consistent as he needed to be this past spring. Hill only needs experience. He could be the next great Tech corner.

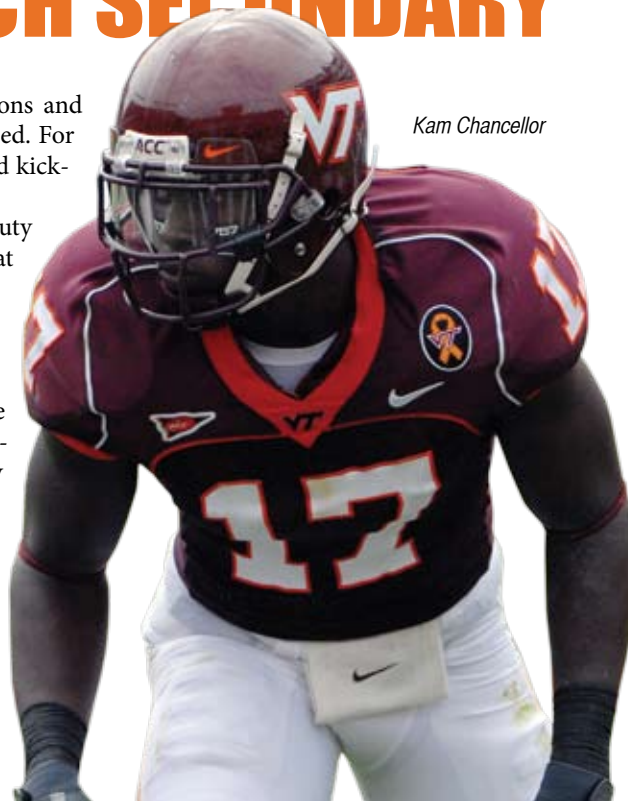
Depth could be an issue at safety behind Chancellor. Tech entered the fall with Matt Reidy and Ron Cooper as the back-ups there. Reidy was moved from rover, but is a steady, smart player who shouldn't have any trouble learning the position. Cooper, a 5-10, 189-pound junior, is a walk-on who had a great summer. Gray also could give Davon Morgan a few reps at safety. Morgan played the position last season before being moved to rover before spring practice.

"We just need to get some chemistry and get our rotation down," Chancellor said. "We're young, but as long as everyone knows the game plan each week, we'll be alright. We've just got to work together."

Having a smart, talented guy like Chancellor back there makes up for a lot of inexperience. And he can't wait to get this season started.

After all, playing football sure beats stocking shelves. 

Kam Chancellor



DEFENSIVE BACKS DEPTH CHART

FREE SAFETIES

17 Kam Chancellor (6-4, 224, Jr.)

Big and physical; fast and smart. Adjusted to a new position with ease this spring.

23 Matt Reidy (6-1, 217, r-Jr.)

A walk-on who was moved from rover. Should see plenty of time on special teams again this fall.

34 Ron Cooper (5-10, 189, Jr.)

A walk-on who has played his way into the mix at safety.

BOUNDARY CORNERS

1 Macho Harris (6-0, 194, Sr.)

Maybe the most gifted athlete on the team. Has an uncanny ability to make plays.

21 Rashad Carmichael (5-10, 190, r-Soph.)
Has the physical tools. Needs to play with better technique and more consistency.

81 Jacob Sykes (6-0, 189, r-Fr.)

Learning the spot after being moved from WR.

FIELD CORNERS

22 Stephan Virgil (5-11, 186, Jr.)

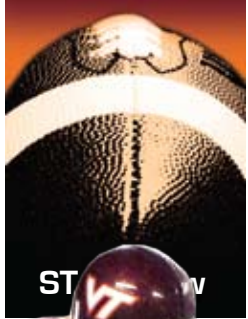
Has a nice feel for the game. Not blazing fast, but is smooth and plays faster than his 40 time.

9 Cris Hill (5-11, 183, r-Fr.)

Has great speed and ball skills. Still needs to get stronger. A player who gets better with every rep.

15 Eddie Whitley (6-0, 179, Fr.)

Young prospect who has impressed so far.



BOWDEN HEADLINES UNKNOWN SPECIAL TEAMS GROUP

A year ago, Tech head coach Frank Beamer went into

inside the 20 and booming 18 beyond 50 yards. But Dunlevy departed along with snappers Scott King and Bart McMillin, and holder Grant Throckmorton. Thus, Beamer – who handles most of the special teams duties – finds himself overhauling the unit again.


fall practices not quite knowing about his team's kicking situation. Suffice it to say, things worked out fine. After all, Brent Bowden averaged 42.5 yards per punt and Jud Dunlevy made 21 out of 26 field-goal attempts.

Beamer's hoping things work out just as smoothly again.

Bowden returns and will be fine after a solid first season as a starter, placing 28 of his 88 punts

Dustin Keys figures to win the kicking job after an outstanding spring. But he'll get competition every day from the trio of Chris Hazley, Tim Pisano and Matt Waldron. Beamer is hoping that someone will emerge to do kickoffs – no one really impressed in this area during the spring.

Collin Carroll and Matt Tuttle snapped well throughout the spring, giving Tech some depth at the spot.

In the return game, Macho Harris will get the first crack at trying to replace Eddie Royal, an All-ACC returner from a year ago who returned two for touchdowns. Harris returned a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown last season against Clemson and has the ability to be a great one. He may do both punts and kickoffs this season. 

SPECIAL TEAMS DEPTH CHART

PLACEKICKERS

6 Dustin Keys (6-2, 212, r-Sr.)

Was tremendous during the latter part of spring and is the favorite to win the job.

9 Tim Pisano (5-9, 169, r-Fr.)

Has a strong leg and is looking for consistency.

2 Chris Hazley (6-1, 185, r-Soph.)

Had a 42-yarder in the spring game.

4 Matt Waldron (5-11, 186, r-Soph.)

Sidelined with mono in the spring and is working his way back.

PUNTER

97 Brent Bowden (6-3, 202, r-Jr.)

Has the potential to be an all-conference punter.

30 Brian Saunders (6-0, 206, r-Soph.)

Keeps getting better and is a solid No. 2 option.

SNAPPERS

50 Collin Carroll (6-3, 220, r-Fr.)

Had impressive prep credentials and will get to display them this fall.

63 Matt Tuttle (6-0, 228, r-Jr.)

A hard worker who had a good spring as a snapper.

Brent Bowden

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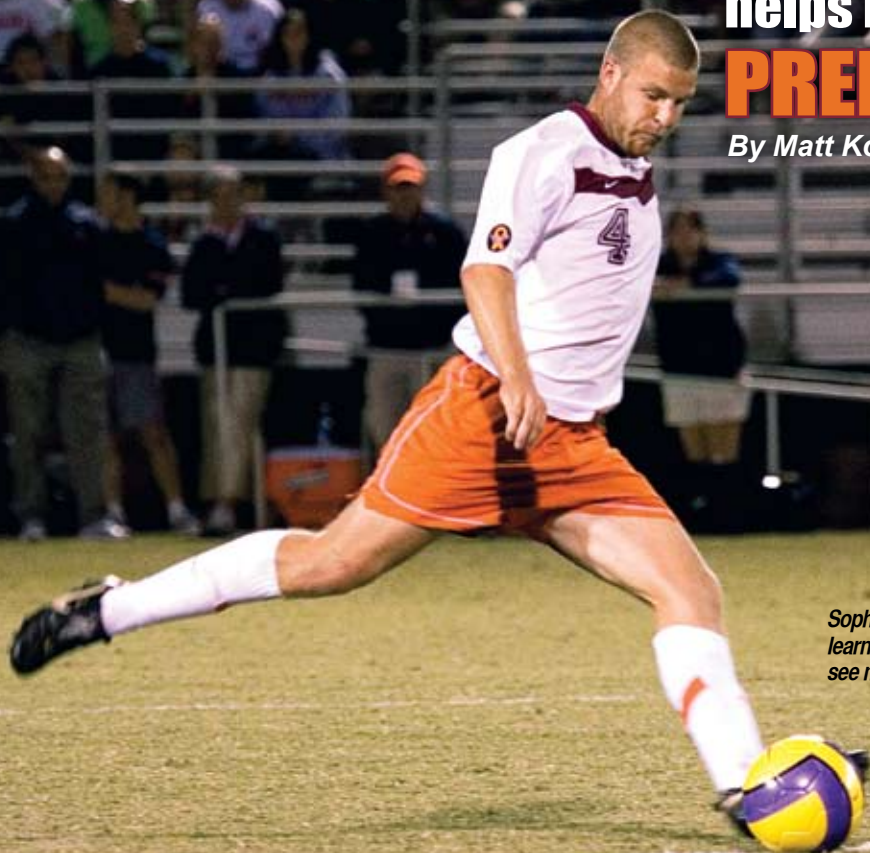
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COLLEGE CUP EXPERIENCE

helps revamped men's soccer team

PREPARE FOR ENCORE

By Matt Kovatch



Sophomore James Shupp used last season's College Cup as a learning experience, and he returns to lead a Hokie defense that will see many new faces in 2008.

What's done is done. Live and learn. Don't rest on your laurels.

Each of these sayings is commonly used to describe when it's time to move on, either from something bad or something good. They're also sayings that can be used to describe the mindset of the Virginia Tech men's soccer team as it prepares for the 2008 season, though what they're moving on from is hardly anything bad. In fact, it couldn't be much better.

The Hokies had far and away the best season in program history – and one of the best in Tech's entire athletics past – in 2007 when they went 14-4-5 and advanced to the NCAA College Cup, soccer's version of the "Final Four." Though Tech lost in the semifinal to ACC foe and eventual national champion Wake Forest, what was accomplished last year will certainly be tough to match.

But if there's a man to lead the attempt at doing so, it's head coach Oliver Weiss, who enters his seventh season at the helm. He had bold expectations last year and met them, and he's likely to have similar expectations again this year. But like always, there are questions to answer and holes to fill, and how that is done will determine the Hokies' success.

WHAT'S DONE IS DONE

Watching the Hokies in the College Cup last December on ESPN was a little surreal for anyone who's followed the team. Men's soccer has a good following at Tech and many of the home games have large crowds and a big-time atmosphere, but to see the boys from Blacksburg as the subject of a full-blown telecast by the worldwide leader was a special thing to see.

Ask Weiss for his thoughts about it, though, and he offers no sense of awe.

"It was nice," he said bluntly. "But I live in the present. It was disappointing that we didn't get another game, but all of us agreed that it [the College Cup] was where we should've ended up on the year given our conditions, our talent and our lack of injuries. If we had not gotten to the College Cup, we would've underachieved."

While it may be tougher for others to temper their excitement similarly – such as rising sophomore James Shupp ("It was a great atmosphere, and to tell you the truth, for the first 10 or 15 minutes of the game, I was like 'Uhh, what do I do?') – it's good for the man in charge to keep a level head. After all, he's got a lot of new minds to mold.

Only a handful of players with significant

minutes return to the pitch in 2008, meaning more than half of this year's roster will consist of brand-new faces. The Hokies lost four seniors and each of their four one-year foreign students who played significant roles last year. But what made this year's recruiting class even larger (14 players in all) was three more recent losses that will leave Tech with a much different look.

A pair of would-be senior defenders, Alexander Baden and Bryan Collier, departed and left Shupp as the lone returnee on the back line. Collier opted not to come back for his fifth year of eligibility, while Baden went down with a torn ACL and is out for the season. The biggest loss of all, though, is All-American forward Patrick Nyarko, who was drafted after his junior campaign by the Chicago Fire in the Major League Soccer SuperDraft. So with much of his roster now gone, what's done is indeed done, but Weiss doesn't seem worried.

"It was hard to replace guys at the last minute unless I did something creative, so that's what I did," Weiss said. "I'm very happy with who we've got coming in here."

Weiss' creativity led to a diverse group of recruits. New to the team will be seven Americans, including Blacksburg High stars

2008 ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Yr.	Hometown
1	Brendan Dunn	GK	6-2	190	Jr.	New Rochelle, N.Y.
2	Alexander Baden	D	6-2	182	r-Sr.	Visselhövede, Germany
3	Tobias Hottner	D	6-4	190	So.	Oberhaching, Germany
4	James Shupp	D	5-11	165	So.	Downingtown, Pa.
5	Clarke Bentley	MF	5-10	150	So.	Marietta, Ga.
6	James Gilson	D/MF	5-10	160	Jr.	Greenwood Lake, N.Y.
7	Luiz Yamashita	F	5-10	178	Fr.	Miami, Fla.
8	Jonas Weidner	D	5-10	158	Jr.	Berlin, Germany
9	Emmanuel Akogyeram	F	6-0	165	Fr.	Labone, Ghana
10	Charlie Campbell	MF	5-8	150	Jr.	Mundelein, Ill.
11	Philip Aseweh	F	5-9	155	Fr.	Navrongo, Ghana
13	Terry Boland	F	6-1	170	So.	Brentwood, Pa.
14	Jan Hausfeld	F	6-1	172	So.	Hannover, Germany
16	Hunter Cheatham	MF	5-10	150	Fr.	Richmond, Va.
15	Kadeem James	MF	5-5	145	Fr.	Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
17	Demanya Dogbey	MF	5-9	160	Grad.	Accra, Ghana
18	Craig Brutus	D	6-2	170	Jr.	Levittown, Pa.
19	Jeremy Williams	D	5-10	160	Fr.	Blacksburg, Va.
20	John Snyder	MF	5-9	145	Fr.	Bethesda, Md.
21	Craig Burnell	D	5-6	150	So.	Wells, Maine
22	Scott Dillie	MF	6-3	195	Sr.	Pittsburgh, Pa.
23	Taylor Walsh	D	6-1	180	Sr.	Roanoke, Va.
24	Michael Breske	MF	5-11	165	Fr.	Blacksburg, Va.
25	Thomas St. Germain	GK	6-0	190	Fr.	Los Alamitos, Calif.
27	Stefan Caulfield	GK	6-2	175	Jr.	Toronto, Ontario, Canada

2008 SCHEDULE

Fri, Aug. 29	at Portland
Sun, Aug. 31	vs. Washington
Fri, Sept. 5	Hofstra
Sun, Sept. 7	Xavier
Fri, Sept. 12	Duke *
Sun, Sept. 14	at St. John's
Sun, Sept. 21	at Clemson *
Fri, Sept. 26	Virginia *
Tue, Sept. 30	George Washington
Sat, Oct. 4	at Wake Forest *
Tue, Oct. 7	Radford
Fri, Oct. 10	Maryland *
Tue, Oct. 14	UMBC
Sat, Oct. 18	at North Carolina *
Tue, Oct. 21	Appalachian State
Sat, Oct. 25	at High Point
Sat, Nov. 1	at NC State *
Fri, Nov. 7	Boston College *
Nov. 11-16	ACC Championships

Head Coach: Oliver Weiss

Assistant Coaches: Michael Brizendine
Chase Harrison

Volunteer Assistant Coach: Kip Brundage
Student Assistant Coach: Sebastian Schuff

Michael Breske and Jeremy Williams, and seven foreigners – four from Germany and three from Ghana.

Two of the Ghanaians – Emmanuel Akogyeram and Philip Aseweh – along with Miami's Dade County player of the year, Luiz Yamashita, will be looked upon to replace some of the 37 goals that were scored last year by Hokies who are no longer with the team. The third Ghanaian newcomer, Demanya Dogbey, is a defensive midfielder who will join returnees Scott Dillie, Charlie Campbell and James Gilson in the all-important midfield.

"This is a new year and a new team," Weiss continued coyly, as if he's found some gems but wants to keep them under wraps until it's time to unleash them on the field. "These guys will be very good. The worst thing you want to see is someone tooting their own horn and then nothing happens.

"It's hard to say [how good] because I don't know the majority of the players inside and out yet. There are challenges to making this as good of a year, or even a better year, but the potential is there for it – I can guarantee you that."

LIVE AND LEARN

Playing in the atmosphere of the College Cup was an invaluable experience to all of the Hokies involved, but perhaps none more so than Shupp, the Downingtown, Pa., native who made the ACC's all-freshman team last

year and returns as the young leader of a somewhat unknown defense.

"It's still heartbreaking every time I watch it because at one point, the game could've went either way," he said of the 2-0 loss to Wake Forest. "It seasoned me a little bit and should help me to play the regular-season games a lot more calmly and smartly. Having played in a game like that, now maybe I have something to offer to some of our new first-year players to help them be more comfortable."

That's something he'll definitely need to do, because he will be joined on the back line by three new yet-to-be-determined starters. Williams is an option, as are returning substitutes Taylor Walsh and Craig Burnell. Additionally, German natives Jan Hausfeld and Tobias Hottner should see time because of their international experience and the ability to add offense from the back. Whoever it is, Shupp will be the one anchoring it all in the middle, and he's up for the challenge.

"Soccer is a common international language, so we know how to play," he said. "It's just a matter of learning to play with each other."

Because of the young nature of this year's squad, Weiss said it is imperative that many of his players act and lead a year older than they actually are.

And because of a slight gaffe in that season-ending loss to the Demon Deacons, Shupp is mentally prepared to do so. If you watched the game, you'll remember that Wake's first

goal came off of a set piece, a free kick that was awarded because of a foul in the corner. A foul that was committed by an overly aggressive Shupp.

"Looking back at that foul, yeah, I did it," Shupp remembered. "Yes, it did create that opportunity, and yes, they did score on it. If I didn't commit the foul, maybe it would've stayed a 0-0 game and maybe we would have won – you never know. Do I regret it? A little bit, but I've learned from it and it's made me a much better and more mature player."

Shupp's newfound on-field maturity will certainly come in handy, as Tech can't reasonably expect to score 51 goals again, a figure that ranked fifth in the nation. The Hokies may need to rely more on their defense, and the chemistry developed between Shupp and junior goalkeeper Brendan Dunn will be paramount to its success.

"I think that's something that is commonly overlooked," Shupp said of a defender's relationship with his goalkeeper. "It's reassuring to know that once you get that connection with a goalie, you know who is responsible for getting any given ball. Him and I understand each other pretty well."

Dunn split time between the pipes as a freshman and was then relegated to a backup role last year behind German Markus Aigner. Weiss said he trusts that Dunn will get the job done this year, but Tech's two other keepers, third-year Canadian Stefan Caulfield and freshman Thomas St. Germain, are capable

replacements.

“Dunn sat last year and he was humbled, but he got great grades and he has matured,” Weiss said. “He earned that spot and now it’s up to him to defend it against the other two.”

DON'T REST ON YOUR LAURELS

Think Weiss is satisfied with what the Hokies accomplished in 2007? Think again. He’s often said over the past couple of years how he was tired of Virginia Tech being the underdog of sorts and how important it was to stay the course in achieving elite national status. Well, guess what happened last year with that run to the College Cup? Exactly what he wanted to happen, but he’s not about to get blindsided by the next wave of ‘underdogs.’

“In preparation for playing us this season, I think every coach will remind their team that Virginia Tech was in the final four last year,” Weiss said. “But if I pay too much attention to how other people view us, I’ll lose track of my own team.”

What his own team is trying to do now is capitalize on all of the good fortune that came its way last fall.

“When you make steady progress, you can’t lose sight of [when you get to where

you want to be],” Weiss explained. “Well, forget the progress, we’re there. Now it’s time to cash in on all the hard work that we did.

“The responsibility lies on us now to defend the status that we’ve achieved. We can’t take it for granted – we have to realize that every game, people are looking at us as a team that should be ranked and competing for a national title. Can we understand that and use it

“There are challenges to making this as good of a year, or even a better year, but the potential is there for it - I can guarantee you that.”
- Head coach Oliver Weiss



to our advantage? That will be the deciding factor this year.”

In fact, Weiss and the Hokies are already preparing for the 2008 postseason. They’re doing so by playing their season-opening tournament in Oregon against NCAA tournament regulars Portland and Washington.

“West Coast soccer is very good,” Weiss said. “We need to expose ourselves. We need to cover new ground and constantly improve on something. What if we get thrown into a

second-round game out there like Cal did with us here this past year? If so, then we can draw on this experience. [The trip forces us] to go through it, learn something, and then the experience hopefully pays off at the end of the season.”

Here’s hoping the end of the season includes an epilogue to the storybook run that was 2007.

“It was very special and I’m hoping we can repeat it,” Shupp concluded.

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Women's soccer team returns balanced and aiming for an NCAA berth

By Matt Kovatch

Anyone questioning the motivation or intent of this year's women's soccer team needs to look no further than sixth-year head coach Kelly Cagle. She and her husband, Dan, welcomed their second child, a daughter, Nancy, on July 31st. And when the Hokies' preseason camp started not even two weeks later, Cagle was there ready to go. Not full-time yet

for this year's version of the Hokies, one that could very well be the best in the program's 16-year history.

"If we can work tirelessly on a daily basis and support the concept that our team comes first, then along with the talent that we have, I think its going to be our best fall," she said.

Jukich agreed wholeheartedly.

"We are going to the postseason this year - I know we are," the Clifton, Va., native said. "It was by a tiebreaker rule that we didn't get into the ACC tournament, and I think everyone has a bitter taste in their mouths from

"We are going to the postseason this year - I know we are. That's everyone's No. 1 goal right now. No one wants to leave this season without taking our seniors to the postseason, and that's what we're all going to be working for this year." - Junior forward Emily Jukich

- Nancy wouldn't allow that - but enough to start pushing the buttons of what looks to be a promising season in 2008.

"She's so committed," junior forward Emily Jukich said of her coach a few days after the birth. "She's hardly taking any maternity leave. She'll be back in like a week ... two at the most. She just can't stand to be away. She's crazy ... in a good way."

While Cagle tried to downplay her first few weeks as a second-time mother ("It's not like Blacksburg's a big town, I'm only a mile away," she rationalized.), one thing she couldn't downplay was her excitement and expectations

that. That's everyone's No. 1 goal right now. No one wants to leave this season without taking our seniors to the postseason, and that's what we're all going to be working for this year."

If anyone is qualified to judge whether this team is Tech's best or not, it's Cagle. After all, the Hokies have only had three records of .500 or above in the history of the program, and all three have come under her watch (9-9 in 2003, 11-9 and an NCAA Tournament appearance in 2004, 8-7-3 and tied for eighth in the ACC at 3-5-2 in 2007).

"We've done a lot, but I think people lose sight of that because of the 10 years of struggles prior to that," Cagle pointed out. "But it's no longer good enough for us to simply be .500. We grew really fast over a short amount of time, and there's not one person involved with this program who doesn't have expectations to go to the postseason. It will be a disappointing year for us if we don't do that."



2008 ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown
0	Kristin Carden	GK	6' 1"	Fr.	Virginia Beach, Va.
00	Sarah Mather	GK	5' 10"	Fr.	Sparks, Md.
2	Brittany Michels	MF/F	5' 11"	Fr.	Virginia Beach, Va.
3	Stephanie Hylton	D/MF	5' 5"	r-Fr.	Springfield, Va.
4	Ashley Seldon	MF/F	5' 4"	Sr.	Midlothian, Va.
5	Kristi Sieber	D	5' 9"	Jr.	Leesburg, Va.
6	Kelly Lynch	D/MF	5' 3"	So.	Mullica Hill, N.J.
7	Katie Cramp	MF/F	5' 7"	Fr.	Clifton, Va.
8	Megan Strawther	D	5' 11"	Jr.	Los Alamitos, Calif.
9	Julian Johnson	F	5' 9"	Jr.	Norfolk, Va.
10	Emily Jukich	F	5' 4"	Jr.	Clifton, Va.
11	Kylie Stankovics	D	5' 6"	Jr.	Brick, N.J.
12	Niki King	MF/F	5' 1"	So.	Media, Pa.
13	Mauri Liberati	MF	5' 11"	Sr.	Warwick, Md.
14	Laurie Beth Puglisi	F	5' 10"	Sr.	Arlington, Va.
15	Brittany Popko	MF	5' 10"	Fr.	Leesburg, Va.
16	Jordan Parsels	D	5' 5"	r-Sr.	Woodbridge, Va.
17	Robin Chidester	F	5' 10"	Jr.	Virginia Beach, Va.
18	Jessica Varela	MF/F	5' 3"	So.	Midlothian, Va.
19	Ashley Owens	GK	5' 10"	r-Sr.	Greensboro, N.C.
20	Jennifer Harvey	MF	5' 6"	So.	Roanoke, Va.
21	Kim Hickey	D	5' 4"	Sr.	Richboro, Pa.
22	Amanda Gerhard	MF/F	5' 7"	Fr.	Catasauqua, Pa.
23	Kelsey Billups	MF	5' 6"	So.	Richmond, Va.
25	Rachel Beaumont	MF	5' 7"	Fr.	Bent Mountain, Va.
26	Marika Gray	F	5' 7"	So.	Alexandria, Va.

2008 SCHEDULE

Aug. 23	at Davidson
Aug. 29	Evansville
Aug. 31	George Mason
Fri, Sept. 5	Texas A&M
Sun, Sept. 7	George Washington
Fri, Sept. 12	vs. Cal State-Fullerton
Sun, Sept. 14	vs. Charlotte
Sun, Sept. 21	James Madison
Thu, Sept. 25	at Miami *
Sun, Sept. 28	at Florida State *
Thu, Oct. 2	at Clemson *
Sun, Oct. 5	NC State *
Thu, Oct. 9	Virginia *
Sun, Oct. 12	at North Carolina *
Wed, Oct. 15	Longwood
Sun, Oct. 19	Maryland *
Sun, Oct. 26	at Boston College *
Thu, Oct. 30	Wake Forest *
Sun, Nov. 2	Duke *
Nov. 5-9	ACC Championships

Head Coach: Kelly Cagle
Associate Head Coach: Charles "Chugger" Adair
Goalkeeper Coach: Matt Gwilliam

While the Hokies are looking to buck the trend of finishing in the vicinity of .500, one trend they certainly wouldn't mind continuing is the recent run of star freshmen they've had. In fact, Tech has placed at least one player on the ACC's all-freshman team in each of the past four seasons, and this year's crop of recruits presents no shortage of potential successors.

"This is one of the best recruiting classes I've seen," Jukich commented. "They all have tremendous potential to have a breakout season. I don't know if I could pick just one. I've seen them all play and I'm really excited for them to get here."

One rookie whom the Hokies are high on is midfielder Brittany Michels, a 6-footer who tackles hard and is great at winning balls in the air. She should impact the team immediately whether she starts or is in the rotation, and she has earned rave reviews for her work ethic and offseason commitment. From the defensive standpoint, Brittany Popko is another tall, central player who is vocal and could also start right away, and goalkeeper Kristin Carden is a phenomenal athlete who could push incumbent senior Ashley Owens for playing time. Meanwhile, Amanda Gerhard is a versatile midfielder/defender who could also make an early splash.

No matter which of the newcomers plays a significant role this year, they'll be joining a talented group of returning players who are about as balanced as one could ask for on a team. Tech's starting goalie is back in Owens, as are the Hokies' two best defenders and five top point scorers.

One might think that the strength of this team might be its attack, considering who returns on offense. Senior captain Laurie Beth (L.B.) Puglisi has tallied 17 goals in three seasons, Jukich has scored 10 in two, and sophomore Marika Gray netted eight in a rookie season that saw her named to the All-ACC second team. Meanwhile, junior Julian

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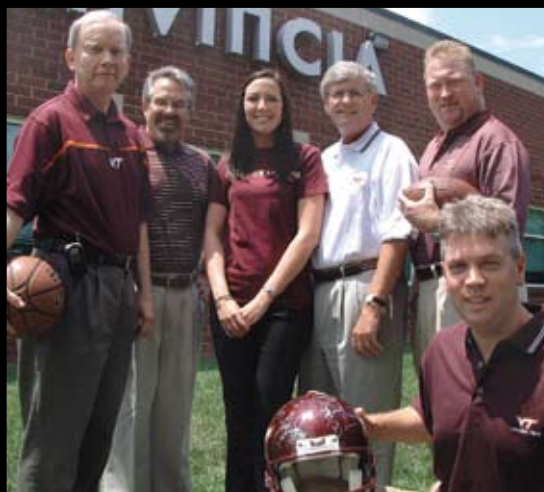
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Johnson is already tied for Tech's career lead in assists with 17 after only two seasons. But ask Cagle, or even Jukich herself, what the identity of this team is and they will point to the defense. It's a defense that allowed just 20 goals in 18 games last year, and in the powerful ACC, you can't compete if you're always fighting from behind.

"The longer we can stay in each game by protecting our goal, especially with the likes of Marika and L.B. on our set pieces and Julian's long throw-in, we have the potential to score until the final horn," Cagle explained. "If we're in games defensively, I think we can be in games all the way up to the end with the attacking presence that we have."

"I think we're going to have a really strong back four with Kim Hickey leading the way," Jukich added. "I think they're going to be a really tough four to get behind."

Hickey, a senior, and sophomore Kelly Lynch, who was one of those all-freshman team selections a year ago, played every single minute of every single game last year at the middle back spots, and Cagle can't speak highly enough about them. In addition to Popko, fifth-year senior Jordan Parsels and sophomore Kelsey Billups could also be looked to for help.

Integral to every defense, of course, is the goalie, and Cagle is delighted not only to have Owens back, but also to finally have some backups in Carden and fellow freshman Sarah Mather. Owens was the only keeper remaining by the end of last year, and after Owens suffered an injury late in the season, forward Robin Chidester was actually forced to play the net in an emergency role.

"Our goalkeeping situation last year was pretty thin," Cagle said. "It kind of hurt us and it put a lot of pressure on Ashley. We're

ing on the door.' With upsets in 2007 over then-No. 10 Boston College and then-No. 13 Tennessee, Tech finally kicked in the door, but they still got locked out of the postseason. That was likely due to a sloppy loss at George Mason and a tie with Loyola (Md.), so this year, Tech's staff is preaching the importance of consistency.

"Something we need to realize is that a 20-game season is actually very short," Cagle said. "We tried to press that point last year and I don't think [the players] really got it. We can't drop games prior to heading into our ACC season because that schedule is such a bear. We've got to set ourselves up for success in our conference."

While the losses probably stung more than the wins satisfied, it is important to take those confidence-building victories and move forward.

"[Those wins] were really important," Cagle finished. "It identifies you with being



"There's not one person involved with this program who doesn't have expectations to go to the postseason. It will be a disappointing year for us if we don't do that."


- Head coach Kelly Cagle

going to get some depth in that position this year with the two freshmen. With the competition this year, I think it's going to prepare us a little bit more to help Ashley be as sharp as she needs to be or for us to be able to make changes if we need to. It's just going to give us some options."

There are options all around on this roster, and with options come wins. Cagle talked prior to last season about all of the Hokies' close losses, and how she was tired of 'knock-


able to win at that level - we've beaten some big-time opponents in our early stages of growth.

"I don't want to say those wins were in vain, but because of some of our losses, we were kind of fighting more for our record at the end of the season than anything else. We want to be fighting for bids and placement in the NCAA Tournament."

And if the Hokies live up to their potential, that's exactly what they'll be doing. 

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VB PREVIEW

It was a sticky mid-summer afternoon and Taylor Parrish had just spent about 10 minutes in one of the back gyms of Cassell Coliseum discussing the outlook of the 2008 volleyball season. She spoke about how much she and the team had been playing throughout the summer, all the hours she had spent in the weight room since the beginning of June, and how well the seven freshmen were meshing with the returning players. But it wasn't until the interview was over that what she said really sunk in.

"Have a great night," she said as she scurried off to another workout, before catching herself. "Errr afternoon. I don't even know what time it is anymore – I'm here all the time."

For Tech volleyball fans, that's the best thing Parrish could've said – because it's true. If you happened to be strolling through the concourse of Cassell Coliseum at any given time on any given day in July, you were likely to see Parrish and the rest of the Hokies down on the court doing something volleyball-related. If it was 9 a.m., they were instructing children at one of the many camps that were held throughout the summer. If it was 5 p.m., they were just gathering for their daily intra-squad scrimmage, a player-organized deal that began at the start of the second session of summer classes when the freshmen arrived.

No matter how you look at it, the Hokies' summer dedication has given them a jump-start on a season that will hopefully better resemble the 17-14 (11-11 ACC) sixth-place finish from 2006 than the 14-18 (8-14 ACC) ninth-place finish from last year. There will be seven freshmen entering the fold this fall, but leading the way will be Parrish, an outside hitter from Nashville, Tenn., who was a freshman herself just two short seasons ago.

Now a junior, she finds herself in the unique role of being a team leader with half of her career still remaining. Sure, there are two seniors on the squad this season – middle blocker Kristen Cunningham and fellow outside hitter Sarah Munoz – but Cunningham just saw her first action in Blacksburg last year after transferring in from Kentucky and Munoz played a scaled-down role in 2007 compared to her first two seasons.

Meanwhile, Parrish has led the team in kills in back-to-back campaigns and she was the one at the forefront of this summer's training regimen.

"It's kind of surreal," she said when asked about the sudden onset of her status as a veteran. "A couple of the other juniors and I were talking about this. For the first part of the summer, we didn't have any seniors here, so we felt like we were the leaders of the team. And for the most part, we are the upperclassmen – we are the leaders. It's weird to think about it, but it's an easy transition for me. I like being put in that position."

Two of the juniors whom Parrish spoke of are Michelle Lang and Jill Gergen – both of whom will likely see important roles. Lang has served as the team's setter in each of her first two seasons, while Gergen will likely be given the first shot at supplanting the departed Amanda Cloyd as the starting libero.

But before anyone starts making any assumptions, know this – there are a lot of decisions still left to be made in terms of playing time and starting roles.

"Every spot is up for grabs," head coach Chris Riley said.

New-look volleyball team gets head start on season with summer full of workouts

By Matt Kovatch



"Everyone is trying to fight for a role right now, and that kind of competition within the team is going to be really good for our program." -Taylor Parrish (above)

2008 ROSTER

No.	Name	Pos.	Ht.	Yr.	Hometown
1	Kristen Cunningham	MB	6' 1"	r-Sr.	Fairfax Station, Va.
2	Jillian Gergen	DS	5' 6"	r-Jr.	Topeka, Kan.
3	Betsy Horowitz	MB	6' 2"	Jr.	Charlotte, N.C.
4	Taylor Parrish	OH	6' 0"	Jr.	Brentwood, Tenn.
5	Erin Leaser	S	5' 10"	Fr.	Allentown, Pa.
6	Jessica Emanuele	OH	5' 10"	So.	Rockville, Md.
7	Justine Record	OH	5' 8"	Fr.	Redwood City, Calif.
8	Michelle Lang	S	6' 0"	Jr.	Valparaiso, Ind.
9	Jessica Woody	L	5' 7"	Fr.	Rowlett, Texas
10	Sarah Muñoz	OH	5' 11"	Sr.	Encinitas, Calif.
11	Amy Wengrenovich	OH	5' 10"	So.	Lancaster, Pa.
13	Jennifer Wiker	OH	6' 3"	Fr.	Charlotte, N.C.
14	Gemma Donovan	S	5' 6"	Jr.	Springfield, Va.
15	Felicia Willoughby	MB	6' 0"	So.	Pleasanton, Calif.
16	Kirsten Higareda	L	5' 5"	Fr.	Woodbridge, Va.
17	Alison Blasingame	OH	6' 2"	Fr.	Yorktown, Va.
18	Kirsty Blue	MB	6' 1"	Fr.	Geneva, Fla.

Head Coach: Chris Riley (Jacksonville University, 1993), 3rd year

Assistant Coaches: Jayme Gergen (Georgia Tech, 2005), 4th year
Shelbylynn McBride (George Mason, 2003), 3rd year

"These [freshmen] coming in are so talented that we're not going to just give spots away because you've played there for two years or because it's your turn. This is Division I – the best players play. I want the best seven to be on the floor, and I think the team wants that, too. We'll see how much that experience pays off for the upperclassmen and see how quickly the freshmen can step in and contribute."

Riley said that meshing his sizeable freshman class with the returning players will be his staff's biggest challenge, and it will certainly be the story to watch in the early going. How much the freshmen end up contributing remains to be seen, but one thing's for sure – Parrish and sophomore middle hitter Felicia Willoughby have set the bar very high. Both made huge splashes when they were freshmen – Parrish was named to the ACC's all-freshman team in 2006 after finishing 10th on Tech's single-season kills list, while Willoughby was named the conference's freshman of the year last season after leading the league in blocks and setting several school records in the defensive category. It's a nice little trend the Hokies have going for them, but who's next?

"It's hard to tell ... right now, all of us [upperclassmen] are fighting for positions with all of those freshmen," Parrish said. "I can see multiple freshmen coming in – Erin [Leaser] could come in and set sometimes, and Justine Record is a great outside hitter. Our middles

2008 SCHEDULE

Aug. 29	Maryland-Eastern Shore	Blacksburg, Va.
Aug. 30	Winston-Salem State	Blacksburg, Va.
Aug. 30	Coastal Carolina	Blacksburg, Va.
Sept. 5	at Marshall	Huntington, W.Va.
Sept. 6	vs. Western Kentucky	Huntington, W.Va.
Sept. 6	vs. E. Tennessee State	Huntington, W.Va.
Sept. 12	vs. UT-Martin	Fayetteville, Ark.
Sept. 13	vs. Lamar	Fayetteville, Ark.
Sept. 13	at Arkansas	Fayetteville, Ark.
Sept. 19	at UNC Wilmington	Wilmington, N.C.
Sept. 20	vs. UNC Asheville	Wilmington, N.C.
Sept. 23	Virginia *	Blacksburg, Va.
Sept. 26	Clemson *	Blacksburg, Va.
Sept. 27	Georgia Tech *	Blacksburg, Va.
Oct. 3	at Maryland *	College Park, Md.
Oct. 5	at Boston College *	Chestnut Hill, Mass.
Oct. 9	at North Carolina *	Chapel Hill, N.C.
Oct. 10	at NC State *	Raleigh, N.C.
Oct. 17	Wake Forest *	Blacksburg, Va.
Oct. 18	Duke *	Blacksburg, Va.
Oct. 24	Florida State *	Blacksburg, Va.
Oct. 25	Miami *	Blacksburg, Va.
Oct. 31	at Georgia Tech *	Atlanta, Ga.
Nov. 1	at Clemson *	Clemson, S.C.
Nov. 7	NC State *	Blacksburg, Va.
Nov. 8	North Carolina *	Blacksburg, Va.
Nov. 14	Boston College *	Blacksburg, Va.
Nov. 15	Maryland *	Blacksburg, Va.
Nov. 20	at Wake Forest *	Winston-Salem, N.C.
Nov. 21	at Duke *	Durham, N.C.
Nov. 28	at Virginia *	Charlottesville, Va.

are doing really well, too. Everyone is trying to fight for a role right now, and that kind of competition within the team is going to be really good for our program."

While Parrish is keeping the right mindset in saying that competition is still open, it would be silly to think that she wouldn't reprise her role as the offense's main weapon and that Willoughby wouldn't remain the key cog along the front line. But the question is, who will be joining them?

On attack, Munoz is the team's active career leader in kills with 891 and will look to bounce back to her sophomore totals after seeing her numbers drop as junior, and sophomore Amy Wengrenovich returns after debuting nicely in a part-time role.

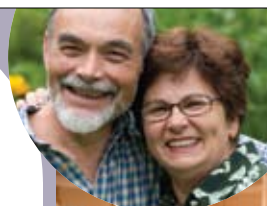


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Jumping into the mix on the outside will be a pair of freshmen – Record from California and 6-foot-2 converted middle blocker Alison Blasingame. Record can play on either side, but she's a lefty and will prove to be most valuable taking her swipes from the weak (right) side of the net. Jessica Emanuele is back for her second year in the program, but did not play last season due to a knee injury. Finally, Jennifer Wiker is imposing at nearly 6-4, but will likely redshirt to gain experience and strength.

In the middle, Tech's opponents will certainly be on the lookout for Willoughby ("She's actually gotten better offensively than what she was last year," Riley said. "We're looking forward to the same thing. She's still going to be a big part of our offense, and she's obviously the best blocker in the conference."), but that doesn't mean there will be a hole in Tech's conference-best blocking wall when she rotates out of the front row. Betsy Horowitz, a junior, and Cunningham split time as the other middles a year ago and finished second and third, respectively, on the team in hitting percentage. Cunningham also chipped in the team's third-best block total in 2007, and freshman Kirsty Blue provides another option if she doesn't stick as a weak-side hitter.

Rounding out the Hokies' solid defense will be one of three liberos, Gergen or freshmen

Kirsten Higareda and Jessica Woody. Gergen probably has the early advantage because of her experience and vocal leadership, but Higareda and Woody are both very athletic and will likely find some time on the court.

But Riley is not worried about his defense. That's easy to understand considering that Tech led the league in blocking last year with 3.26 stops per game, but he said that is nothing with which to be satisfied.

"As good as we are [at blocking], it's kind of a misleading stat because it's a small part of the game," he explained. "For a team to block 3.5 balls a game or a team to block 4.5 balls a game is still only a 1-point difference in the score. (And he's right. Looking at the ACC stats from last season, the per-game differential between the top team and the bottom team was just 1.3 blocks. Meanwhile, in the kill category, it was a larger figure of 5.69 per game.)

"So for us to be better, we've got to be better offensively. Our defense is good and our blocking is good, so if we stay exactly the same [defensively], I'll be happy with that. But if we can score more and out-kill opponents, we'll be a much better team."


For a team to get better offensively, a lot depends on the setter, and that will be one of the main areas of competition this season. Lang has done an admirable job in her two seasons and is invaluable in the front row as

a blocker, but the team has had few other options. Walk-on junior Gemma Donovan has done a great job as a back-up, but her height (5-6) prevents her from playing in the front row. That's why the team is excited about the addition of Leaser – so much so that Riley is toying with the idea of using a 6-2 formation (where Lang and Leaser would lineup opposite from each other in the rotation so one is always eligible to attack) to keep them both on the floor.

"They're both solid setters, and for us, consistency is more important than athleticism," Riley said. "We'll see – it's good to have some competition in that spot."

Whoever ends up winning the various competitions will be determined in the preseason, but because of the Hokies' daily workout sessions in the summer, things are in better shape than they've been in quite some time. Just consider this little nugget that Parrish offered on that day back in July.

"We're a lot farther along than I ever thought we would be at this point in time," she said. "We're probably farther along now than we would've been halfway through the preseason had [the freshmen] not been here [for the summer]."

That's a bold statement, but why should anyone doubt her? After all, she's the one who's been living in Cassell Coliseum every night ... errr afternoon. 

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Well-traveled LaPenna leads the way

as cross country teams prepare for a return to the trails

By Matt Kovatch



Photos courtesy of Paul LaPenna

Go ahead and look up Estes Park, Colo., on Google Maps. Don't be alarmed when a large, green blob appears on your screen, though. That's not an error – that's the Rocky Mountain National Park.

Now click on the 'satellite' or 'terrain' options in the upper right portion of the map. What you see now are the Rocky Mountains. As well as Paul LaPenna's summer training trails.

Sometimes a student-athlete will forgo a summer of a relaxation at home to spend time in Blacksburg working out and getting in shape for the upcoming season, and they'll call it a sacrifice.

But LaPenna, a senior on the Tech men's cross country team, has taken it a couple steps farther – both figuratively and literally.

LaPenna has spent his summer living in the nether regions of Colorado, running miles upon miles thousands of feet above sea level.

He's there for another purpose, though. The Londonderry, N.H., native is involved in the Christian community on Tech's campus,

and each summer, students have the opportunity to participate in leadership training at churches around the country. Virginia Tech is usually paired with a location in Wilmington, a sunny, sandy locale on the shores of southeastern North Carolina.

Always in running mode, though, LaPenna recognized that wouldn't be conducive to his other training – his cross country training. So instead, he flew off to Estes Park, a town

located about an hour and a half northwest of Denver and about 8,000 feet above sea level. Sure, he has to make a special trip down the mountain and into civilization once or twice a week just to check his phone messages, but the hilly trails of the Rockies have proved to be invaluable to his preparation for the upcoming season.

Denver airport in late July. "It's good training. It's all in the national park so I'm on trails for literally every run. I figured it would be a good way to get ready for my senior year."

And ready he'll be, especially after turning in totals of 90-100 miles per week in the high altitudes. One of his more recent treks was a 15-miler that saw him climb a net total of 4,000 feet up and down one of the tougher terrains in the range, but he's not counting on

that allowing him to coast through the fall season.

"Right when I get back, I'll have about two weeks where I feel like Superman, but it doesn't really last much longer

"It could be fun for the guys this year. To really have a chance at making nationals, [they] are going to have to be at a high level and they're setting themselves up for that."

- Coach Ben Thomas

located about an hour and a half northwest of Denver and about 8,000 feet above sea level. Sure, he has to make a special trip down the mountain and into civilization once or twice a week just to check his phone messages, but the hilly trails of the Rockies have proved to be invaluable to his preparation for the upcoming season.

"I don't know yet about racing an 8k or a 10k, but aerobically, I'm probably in the best shape of my life," LaPenna said from the

than that," LaPenna explained. "You produce more red blood cells when you're training at a high altitude to compensate for a lack of oxygen. When I go back down to sea level, they will start being broken down, so I'm not really relying on that. Regardless of the altitude training, though, I still feel like I'm just very, very fit."

Tech head coach Ben Thomas outlined a 12-week summer training program for each of his athletes, and LaPenna has admitted

Cross Country Schedule

Fri, Sept. 5, 2008
 Fri, Sept. 19, 2008
 Fri, Oct. 3, 2008
 Sat, Oct. 18, 2008
 Sat, Nov. 1, 2008
 Sat, Nov. 8, 2008
 Sat, Nov. 15, 2008
 Mon, Nov. 24, 2008

Virginia Tech Cross Country Relay
 Virginia Tech Alumni Invitational
 at Highland Duel
 at Chile Pepper Invitational
 at ACC Championships
 Hokie Open Race
 at NCAA Southeast Region Championships
 at NCAA Championships

6:30 p.m. Blacksburg, Va.
 9 a.m. Blacksburg, Va.
 6 p.m. Boone, N.C.
 10 a.m. Fayetteville, Ark.
 11 a.m. Chapel Hill, N.C.
 9 a.m. Blacksburg, Va.
 11 a.m. Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Noon Terre Haute, Ind.

that he's guilty of adding a few miles here and there. But that's just a testament to how determined he is.

"Paul wants to be good and he's always been committed," Thomas said. "He's worked through a lot with injuries and so on, but the key with him has always been to maintain his consistency. He's willing to work hard but his body hasn't always allowed him to stay healthy enough to get in the amount of work he needs to in order to be where he wants to go, which is an All-American level."

LaPenna has stayed healthy so far this summer, and he will combine with fellow senior Billy Berlin and junior Devin Cornwall to give the Tech men's team a trio that has a good shot at improving upon last season's finishes of fifth in the ACC and seventh at the NCAA Southeast Regional.

"It could be fun for the guys this year," Thomas said. "I'm excited because [LaPenna, Berlin and Cornwall] have all had good summers, and those are our key guys. To really have a chance at making nationals, those three are going to have to be at a high level – an All-ACC level and certainly an all-region level ... top-15, even – and they're setting themselves up for that."

The key to success in cross country is having a solid pack of seven runners, and the Hokies have a group of five more who have the potential to narrow the gap to the big

three. The Padilla twins, Chris and Phillip, have progressed in each of their three seasons and will be counted on to do so again as seniors. Then there are sophomores Eddie Judge and Ryan Witt, each of whom had strong track seasons after finishing fourth and sixth, respectively, in the 1,500 meters at the U.S. junior nationals and have the ability to develop into reliable distance runners.

Finally, there is freshman Michael Hammond from Midlothian, Va., a Foot Locker national semifinalist from a year ago (meaning he was one of top 32 high school cross country runners in the nation).

"He's excited and he wants to come in and contribute right away," Thomas said of Hammond. "And I think he can. He could very well develop into one of our top five guys."

Much like the men's team, the women's squad also has a solid group of three runners – seniors Tasmin Fanning, Jess Fanning and Erin Reddan – to lead the way in the early going. But unlike the men, there is big question mark after that.

"It's going to be an interesting mix," Thomas said. "After those top three, it's going to be up to some freshmen and returning sophomores to step in and try to close that gap."


In addition to Natalie Sherbak, whose cross country eligibility ended last season, the

Hokie women lost one key contributor, and one with great potential, from a team that is only two years removed from advancing to the NCAA Championships and that took fifth place at both the ACC and Southeast Regional meets in 2007.

It figures to be a rebuilding year for the women, but with a runner as good as Tasmin Fanning, it's wise for Tech's opponents not to overlook the Hokies. Fanning qualified for nationals last season as an individual and ended up an All-American with a 12th-place finish, the best finish by a Hokie in school history. Then over the summer, she placed ninth in the 5,000 meters at the U.S. Olympic Trials.

"Having that whole experience and competing with the best American elite runners gives her all the confidence in the world," Thomas said. "The sky is the limit with her."

Jess Fanning is a three-time all-region finisher and Reddan has improved tremendously, but it's up to some youngsters – sophomores Lindsey King and Jess Trapeni and freshmen Sammy Dow and Laura Greene are some names to watch – to step up and fill some holes in the roster.

No matter who ends up stepping into prominent roles for either team, one thing's for sure. If they're preparing half as hard as LaPenna, the Hokies will be in good shape – in more ways than one. 

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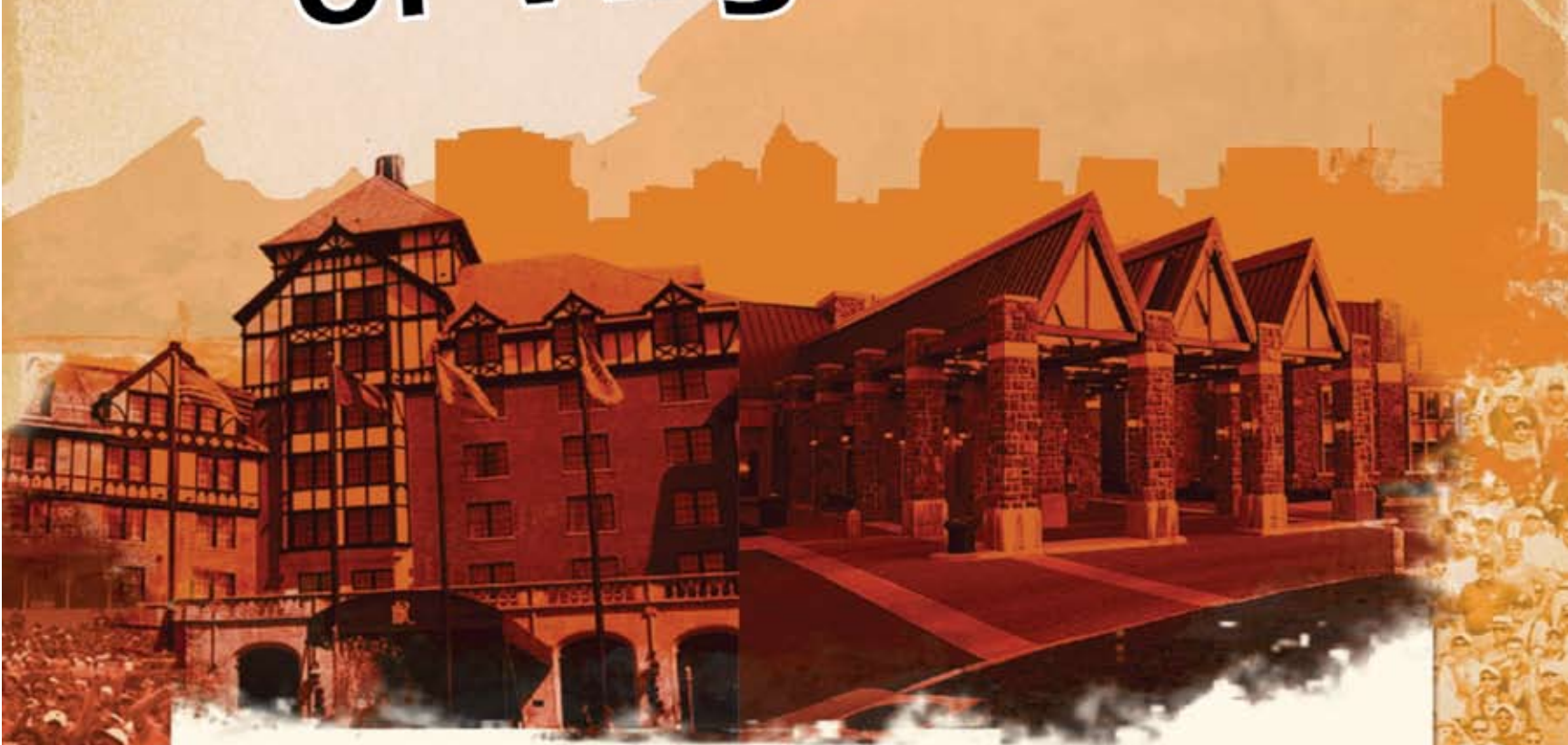
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