

**INSIDE**  
**HOKIES SPORTS**

The Official Magazine of Virginia Tech Athletics



**2012 FOOTBALL  
PREVIEW**

Kyle Fuller and Logan Thomas are just two reasons why Tech fans are excited about the upcoming season

**WHAT'S INSIDE:** Bill Roth and Mike Burnop are set to begin their 25th season broadcasting football games

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**MEGAN EVANS**

Coordinator of Strength and Conditioning for Olympic Sports

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**MORGAN O'NEILL**

Senior | Volleyball

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**HOKIE CLUB LEVEL:**  
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**WHAT YEAR DID YOU GRADUATE?**  
1989

**FAMILY:**  
HUSBAND - JOE, DAUGHTER - ALLISON  
(AGE 16), SON - RYAN (AGE 14)



## Q&A

**Q: Being a member of the Hokie Club and supporting Virginia Tech athletics is important to me and my family because ...**

**A:** I enjoy helping to provide athletics scholarships and to improve facilities to make the sports programs at Virginia Tech the best that they can be. Hokie football has been an integral and fun part of the fall for our family for many years.

**Q: Do you have a specific moment when you realized that you were a fan of Virginia Tech athletics and knew without a doubt that you were a Hokie?**

**A:** I felt a part of the Hokie family upon my entrance to Tech in 1985. But I'd say the 1999 win over BC at home was one of the turning points for me as a football fan. This past July, I took my daughter, Allison, an aspiring Hokie, on an official campus tour. They showed an impressive and spirited athletic video that got everyone excited, and I was very proud to be a Hokie.

**Q: Do you have any game day or tailgating traditions or superstitions? If so, what are they?**

**A:** We arrive at our lot as early as we are allowed. My husband, Joe, is a tailgater extraordinaire. His grill that hitches to the Suburban comes with us to every game, and we always have a nice spread with family and friends.

**Q: When you drive into Blacksburg for a game, are there any "must-do" things for you and your family?**

**A:** A Mike's Grill burger is a must for me, and we always visit the Campus Emporium for the latest in Hokie wear. And when the weather is right, we go tubing at the New River Junction.

**Q: Virginia Tech has had a lot of successful teams and wins over the years. Do you have a favorite team/season or game that stands out the most?**

**A:** My two most favorite wins were over Nebraska in 2009 and over Miami last season. I was at both of those games, and they were so exciting, especially the very end! My son, Ryan (then only 11), ran onto the field after the Nebraska game. He had a ball!

**Q: Why is being a volunteer/Hokie Representative important to you?**

**A:** It makes me feel more connected to Tech and helps me feel like I can help make a difference for young deserving athletes. It is rewarding to contribute to Tech athletics.

**Q: You have done an outstanding job as chairperson of the Tidewater Football Kickoff Dinner. Please tell us how you manage the event and how the other Tidewater Hokie Reps are involved.**

**A:** I do not do it alone! The group of reps that puts on our Kickoff Dinner is probably one of the best teams I have been a part of. We each have our strengths and execute on them to put on an event that improves every year. I am proud of my association with that event and that special group of people. We also are so thankful for our great sponsors, prize donors and guests! Be sure to join us next year!



## LETTER FROM LU

Welcome back! The summer is coming to an end and that means two things, the start of another academic year and new beginnings for several of our fall sports. We look forward to seeing each of you on campus this fall, and we are excited to kick off the football season in Lane Stadium on Sept. 3 against Georgia Tech. We appreciate all that you do to support Virginia Tech athletics, and I want to thank you for a record year in 2011-12, where \$27.6M was received.

The annual fund grew by \$1 million, however, the scholarship bill is again on the rise and will exceed \$11.2 million this fall. We ask that you consider upgrading your support and talk to your friends about the importance of the Hokie Club. If you have a friend who isn't currently a Hokie Club member, we hope that you will encourage him or her to support our student-athletes by joining the Hokie Club today!



Go Hokies,  
**LU MERRITT**

Senior Director of Development for Intercollegiate Athletics

## THE 2012 FOOTBALL SEASON

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Mon., Sept. 3, 2012  | Georgia Tech *       |
| Sat., Sept. 8, 2012  | Austin Peay          |
| Sat., Sept. 15, 2012 | at Pittsburgh        |
| Sat., Sept. 22, 2012 | Bowling Green        |
| Sat., Sept. 29, 2012 | vs. Cincinnati       |
| Sat., Oct. 6, 2012   | at North Carolina    |
| Sat., Oct. 13, 2012  | Duke *               |
| Sat., Oct. 20, 2012  | at Clemson *         |
| Thu., Nov. 1, 2012   | at Miami *           |
| Thu., Nov. 8, 2012   | Florida State *      |
| Sat., Nov. 17, 2012  | at Boston College *  |
| Sat., Nov. 24, 2012  | Virginia *           |
| Sat., Dec. 1, 2012   | Atlantic vs. Coastal |

\*Atlantic Coast Conference games

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## Five to be inducted into Tech Sports Hall of Fame

Former Tech receiver André Davis and former women's basketball great Amy Wetzel Doolan are two of five individuals to be inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame.

The five will be inducted at the Hall of Fame dinner held Sept. 7 at The Inn and Skelton Conference Center at Virginia Tech. The university also plans on introducing the group to Tech fans at half-time of the Hokies' football game versus Austin Peay the following day.

The five include:

- Davis, who set a Tech single-season record with 962 receiving yards during the Hokies' 1999 season and was a two-time win-

ner of the 100- and 200-meter dashes at the Atlantic 10 Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

- Wetzel, who finished her career fifth at Tech in career scoring (1,444 points), first in games played (129), first in free throws made (489), second in steals (235) and third in assists (399). She currently ranks sixth in scoring and holds the same spot in the other categories.

- Dave Braine, a former AD at Tech who was instrumental in getting the Hokies into the BIG EAST Football Conference, which later proved to be a steppingstone to national prominence and full membership into the league.

- Sharon McCloskey, the cur-

rent senior associate AD and senior woman administrator and a woman who has served as a pioneer for women in administration by rising through the ranks. She was the first female recruiting coordinator at the Division I level, and today, still serves as the administrator of the football program.

- Mike Sergent, a former thrower on the track and field team who was a four-time All-Metro selection and set the school record for the hammer throw. He finished seventh at the NCAA Championships his senior season to earn All-America honors.

The class of 2012 will bring the total number enshrined to 163.

## Hokies add Liberty to football schedule

Virginia Tech and Liberty will be meeting in football for the very first time, as the two schools agreed to play a game in Blacksburg during the 2016 season. Liberty replaces a game previously scheduled with Western Kentucky.

Tech AD Jim Weaver also shuffled other parts of Tech's football schedule. With the additions of Pittsburgh and Syracuse to the league, ACC officials agreed to move to a nine-game conference schedule in 2013, thus forcing league members to shed some non-conference games. The Hokies postponed a 2014 date at East Carolina and a 2015 home game against Akron.


### Here is Tech's nonconference schedule for the next four years:

**2013** - Alabama (in Atlanta), Western Carolina, Marshall

**2014** - William & Mary, Western Michigan, at Ohio State

**2015** - Furman, Ohio State, East Carolina

**2016** - Liberty, Wisconsin, at East Carolina

The Hokies are also slotted to play at Wisconsin in 2017. 

## Five delay enrollment

Five members of Virginia Tech's 2012 28-member recruiting class did not enroll for the second summer session or for fall classes, but all plan on enrolling at Tech at a later date. The five members include receiver Thomas Smith, defensive lineman Woody Baron, running back Jerome Wright, defensive end Seth Dooley, and tailback Drew Harris.

Harris, from Downingtown, Pa., and Smith, from Williamsburg, Va., and Wright, from Richmond, will spend the fall playing at Fork Union. Harris, a SuperPrep and PrepStar All-American, rushed for 617 yards and scored nine touchdowns for Downingtown East before missing the rest of the season with a knee injury. Smith, a first-team All-Group AA selection, caught

36 passes for 843 yards and 13 touchdowns his senior season for Lafayette High School. Wright ran for 607 yards and 15 touchdowns last season for Highland Springs High, and he also had 37 tackles and two sacks on defense. Baron and Dooley will concentrate on getting bigger, stronger and faster in preparation for spring practice next March and April.



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editor's desk | by Jimmy Robertson

# Tech freshmen hope to earn playing time in 2012

Two years ago, Tech head coach Frank Beamer and his staff played just two true freshmen – a couple of guys named Derrick Hopkins and Kyle Fuller.

A year ago, seven played, including a couple of projected 2012 starters in Luther Maddy and Kyshoen Jarrett.

Now, as this season gets set to kick off and with nearly all of Tech's first and second teams set, an intriguing question comes to mind – will any true freshmen out of what looks to be a talented 2012 recruiting class see the field?

The Hokies, predicted to win the Coastal Division yet again and ranked 20th in the ESPN/USA Today coaches' poll, opened practice on Aug. 7 and face relatively few questions heading into this season. Sure, there is conversation about the offensive line and the return of key defensive players from injuries, but for the most part, the staff knows what it has. Tech returns a great quarterback, three experienced receivers, a rising star at tailback, nine starters on defense and an honorable mention all-conference selection at kicker.

Things could certainly be worse.

But Beamer and his staff may need a few freshmen to shore up certain spots. And no spots need more bodies than those in the secondary, where the Hokies lack depth.

The top backup at both corner spots is Donaldven Manning, a true freshman who enrolled this past January and participated in spring practice. Expect Manning to play, but

also expect to see one or two of the trio of Davion Tookes, Desmond Frye or Donovan Riley to play.

"I'm working hard in the weight room and hoping to have a successful camp," Riley said. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to play in the fall.

"The coaches are motivating me to continue to work hard and to prove that I can compete at the collegiate level. I'm working countless hours to perfect my craft at the cornerback position, so that I can accomplish my goals of showcasing my skills as a true freshman."

On the offensive side of the ball, J.C. Coleman will play as a true freshman in part because he, too, like Manning, enrolled in January for the spring semester and participated in spring practice. Heading into fall camp, Coleman, from Chesapeake, Va., stood as the No. 2 tailback behind Michael Holmes. He rushed for 1,488 yards and 20 touchdowns as a senior.

A couple of other freshmen have a legit shot at playing this season, including Trey Edmunds and Joel Caleb. Edmunds, from Danville, Va., will start out at tailback, though Tech's staff plans on giving him a look on defense down the road. He rushed for an impressive 2,596 yards as a senior.

"I think that's where the real need is," Beamer said of putting Edmunds at tailback. "That's where a guy can come in and play and play a lot right now, and I think he has that kind of ability."

Caleb, from Midlothian, Va., stands as

arguably the top recruit in the class. He played quarterback in high school, but will be a receiver at Tech, and because Tech graduates three receivers after this season, the staff wouldn't mind playing him, provided he earns the right.

"I'm just working hard and letting them decide," Caleb said. "I have to do my part. I was out here this summer, getting work in and learning the techniques. The older guys, like Dyrell [Roberts] and Corey [Fuller] and D.J. [Coles], have been helping me and have been great. I'm just trying to give myself a chance to get on the field."

The rest of the freshmen class possesses a lot of potential, but Tech's staff feels confident in the depth at those spots and envisions the linemen and linebackers redshirting to get bigger and stronger. That makes sense. Playing on the line as a true freshman is a difficult proposition.

"The further you get away from the football, the more you can use your talent and get in there and play quickly," Beamer said.

The future looks bright, no matter which true freshmen play. They have developed a nice chemistry as a class, and their love of Tech provides a sense of optimism for the future of the program.

"It's been a lot better than I expected," Caleb said. "Just being around the team and learning from the older guys, it's been a lot of fun."

For some of the freshmen, the future is now. For others, it will come later.

For Tech and its fans, it appears to be bright. 

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# Storylines abound as Hokies gear up for 2012 season

What happens when you combine a stifling defense with an elite quarterback?

Well, that's a good place to start if you want to contend for another ACC championship and a spot in the BCS. And that's exactly where Virginia Tech sits as the 2012 season opener against Georgia Tech approaches.

The Hokies return nine starters on defense, and several other players who received major playing time in 2011 because of injuries, from a unit that finished 10th in the nation in total defense, seventh in scoring defense, and 12th in sacks last year. It marked the ninth time a Bud Foster-coached defense finished ranked among the top 10 in total defense, which was a remarkable feat considering the defense was crippled with season-ending injuries to several key players.

The net positive, however, is that Foster enters 2012 with more depth and experience in his front seven than he's likely ever had. And the talent level is sky high, too.

What else is there to watch for as the season begins?

## Hi, my name is Michael Holmes

Virginia Tech has seen three straight starting tailbacks declare early for the NFL Draft – Darren Evans, Ryan Williams and David Wilson. That's bound to catch up to any program, no?

Well, say hello to Holmes, who was a two-time Group AA Player of the Year in Virginia at Har-



Tech head coach Frank Beamer is confident that Michael Holmes and the rest of Tech's tailbacks can replace David Wilson for the upcoming 2012 season.

risonburg High School and the Blue Streaks' all-time rushing leader.

"He had a really good 15 practices in the spring," running back coach Shane Beamer said.

Holmes was named "top offensive newcomer" following spring ball and did have several terrific runs in spring scrimmages. But the Georgia Tech game will mark the first time most Tech fans will see the 5-foot-11, 208-pound tailback in action.

What should they expect? Well, he's not Wilson from a personality standpoint or skill set. Wilson did back flips at practice, chased rabbits on the Drill Field and was as flamboyant as they come. Wilson was dare and flare. Holmes is more power and dash, but he has all the skills needed

to be the next very good running back.

"I feel about Michael Holmes the way I felt last year about Logan Thomas," Tech head coach Frank Beamer said. "I think he's got a chance to be very good. When guys have done it in high school and are used to carrying the ball and not fumbling, that's good. I had a great feeling about Logan a year ago, and that's how I feel about him [Holmes]."

## Who else is back there?

Folks in Danville, Va., have been raving about Trey Edmunds as a tailback since he rushed for more than 2,500 yards and 33 touchdowns last year at Dan River High School. He starred as a



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linebacker, too, but the Hokies will start him out on offense.

Chesapeake's J.C. Coleman enrolled in January and went through spring ball with Holmes. He has a chance to get in the fold early, too. I'm also looking forward to seeing Chris Mangus, a Raleigh, N.C., native who turned down offers from hometown N.C. State, UVa and others when he signed with Tech in February. Like Holmes, that trio is untested other than practices, meaning the Hokies will have a youthful bunch carrying the ball.

The one veteran who will be key is Martin Scales, the converted fullback from Martinsville, Va., who, at 226 pounds, runs hard between the tackles. He should have his moments this year.

In the spring, Shane Beamer suggested that freshmen could total more than 90 percent of Tech's rushing total from the tailback position, and it's easy to see why. In Holmes, Coleman, Edmunds and Mangus, the Hokies have four highly touted, heavily recruited tailbacks coming in at basically the same time. To watch how each progresses this fall, and during ensuing seasons, will be fun.

### Biggest thing in town since Ron Burgundy

Logan Thomas spent part of his spring break in San Diego, working with quarterbacks guru George Whitfield, Jr., who's become well known in recent years after working with guys like Andrew Luck, Cam Newton and Ben Roethlisberger.

Thomas worked with Whitfield on footwork and mechanics. Among the drills – he would wade knee-deep out into the Pacific Ocean and then simulate taking drops against the current and waves, all the while keeping his balance and throwing mechanics the same. The Hokies'

coaches aren't about to move practice to the New River to simulate that drill, but they know in Thomas that the team has an elite quarterback who is as emotionally grounded as he is physically gifted. He set a Tech season record with 3,482 yards of total offense and registered the second-highest single-season passing total in school history when he threw for 3,013 yards.

This season, Thomas will be playing behind a rebuilt offensive line, playing without the top two receivers in school history (the graduated Danny Coale and Jarrett Boykin) and breaking in freshmen running backs (see above). So while his 2012 stats might not be as gaudy as last year's, he'll be the key guy if Tech is to have the success it wants. He seems to be up to the challenge.

"We're going to have a fun offense. There are some new faces out there, but we have some guys who have made some big plays before," Thomas said.

### The Pistol

As revealed in the spring, the Hokies will use their version of the "Pistol" offense this fall. How much we see it is still an unknown. What we do know is that Tech offensive coordinator Bryan Stinespring spent time in Austin last winter with University of Texas co-coordinator Bryan Harsin, who had great success running an up-tempo, no-huddle offense at Boise State for five years before moving to Texas.

The Pistol will allow the running backs to hide behind Thomas and get the ball quickly. It also allows Thomas to get the ball out of his hand quicker on quick slants without taking the time to drop back. When you look at the makeup of Tech's receivers and their athletic ability to make people miss if they get in space, the skills and size of the

Hokies' running backs, and Thomas' talents, you can see how this offense can be effective.

Thomas, in a way, is a fullback and a quarterback. He gives this offense an added dimension, as do the multiple formations.

### Freshmen in the secondary


Now, here is where things get dicey. There will be three true freshmen in the two-deep in the secondary. Read that again, and try not to gulp.

"I like the talent, but clearly there is no experience," defensive backs coach Torrian Gray said. "We have to get lucky. We just have to stay healthy this year."

Behind Kyle Fuller, January enrollee Donaldven Manning will be the primary backup. As for Desmond Frye, Donovan Riley and Davion Tookes, we don't know much other than two of them will be in the two-deep for the season opener. Like with the tailbacks, if you're going to have multiple players at the same position leave early [e.g. Brandon Flowers and Jayron Hosley], younger players are going to get on the field earlier, and true freshmen are going to play. That's going to be the case in the defensive backfield this season.

### The October-November derecho

The Hokies play at Clemson, at Miami and against Florida State in a tough three-game span late in the season. Staying healthy will be important heading into that stretch.

Of course, that's true for the entire league since the schedule is back-loaded for everyone, especially the contenders. But keep this in mind – since 2004, the Hokies are 27-2 in November, and that includes a 25-2 ACC mark. That's just a tremendous statistic. This year's stretch drive should be fun to watch. 



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# Tech's student-athletes have numerous role models within the department

by Reyna Gilbert-Lowry

With the recent birth of my first child, I've been thinking more and more about what kind of example I want to be for her, and the impact that my decisions will have on her as she gets older. As a working mom, sister, wife and friend, I know that the many roles I play will eventually impact whom she becomes later on in life. I am, in fact, her first role model. It also got me thinking about our student-athletes and what types of role models they are surrounded by within the Virginia Tech athletics department. They interact with coaches, trainers and senior administrators on a regular basis, and each of these individuals leaves an impression, whether they know it or not.

Each year, the department conducts an exit survey for student-athletes who have exhausted their eligibility to evaluate the department from the perspective of the student-athlete. One question asks student-athletes were there faculty/staff or administrators they could talk to if they had a problem or concern. After the 2010-11 academic year, more than half of those surveyed "strongly agreed" to having role models in faculty, staff or administrator positions. These results serve as a testament to the connections that these individuals have developed with our young adults.

Take senior associate AD and senior woman administrator Sharon McCloskey, who graduated from Tech in 1979, began working as an athletics


department receptionist in 1984 and was named senior associate AD in 1995. She has been the department administrator for men's and women's basketball, football, lacrosse and women's soccer. She knows the importance of setting clear goals and working hard to reach them, and she clearly epitomizes the phrase, "working your way to the top." It is important for young women who are interested in pursuing a career in intercollegiate athletics to have someone they can look up to and connect with, and McCloskey is an example of this.

It's not always easy to practice the Ut Prosim motto on a regular basis, but no one embodies its spirit better than head baseball coach Pete Hughes. Not only does he strive for success from his players on the field and in the classroom, but he also wants them to become better men before their time at Tech comes to an end. In 2010, he implemented the "19 Ways" program with his baseball team in honor of his mother, Alice, to encourage his players to find various ways to make a difference in the community.

On an annual basis, Hughes expects the team to be a part of 19 different occasions that positively impact an individual or organization. He has taken it upon himself to model what he wants his players to become following their tenures at Tech – a family man who is committed to helping others and living a life of true servant leadership.

Dr. Amy Doolan, formerly Amy Wetzel, currently serves as a team physician. As a standout point guard on the women's basketball team from 1996-2001, Doolan's impact was evident, as she is still a member of the 1,000-point club, ranks sixth on the all-time scoring list, and still holds the school record for games played, minutes played, and made free throws. She can relate first hand to the rigors of balancing life as a student-athlete, and this experience comes in handy when working with student-athletes in the Sports Medicine Clinic.

Doolan earned her osteopathic medical degree in 2007 from the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine. She completed a sports medicine fellowship and is currently an assistant professor in the Department of Family and Sports Medicine at VCOM. She provides family and sports medicine to the community through Academic Primary Care Associates in Blacksburg. She inspires student-athletes to use their gifts and talents to give back to Blacksburg and the surrounding communities.

Pursuing a career that plays a major role in the lives of student-athletes comes with a level of responsibility. The aforementioned individuals, along with many others, have each done an outstanding job of "modeling the way" for our young adults who will hopefully pay it forward for the next generation. 

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# *culture* **SHOCK**





## Ten Virginia Tech student-athletes traveled to a poverty-stricken part of the Dominican Republic this summer to hone their leadership skills in a different culture

by **Jimmy Robertson**

It was a sweltering, humid June day in one of the poorest sections of a relatively poor country, and both wrestler Devin Carter and volleyball player Cara Baarendse, two All-Americans at Virginia Tech in their respective sports, were enjoying a break from leading a camp, eating their lunch. Then, a few giggling, young children interrupted their solace.

In a matter of seconds, Baarendse and Carter found themselves engaged in a highly competitive game of ‘Duck, Duck, Goose.’ The kids laughed constantly throughout, and Carter, reserved as a person, found himself pulled out of his normal shell by smiles as bright as the ever-constant sun. By the end of the lunch break, he had developed a “secret handshake” with three of the kids, giving them the attention they craved and giving himself the warm feeling of making a difference.

Carter, Baarendse and eight other Virginia Tech student-athletes, including football players Derrick Hopkins and Zack McCray, volleyball player Liz Trinchere, women’s tennis player Carol Kahoun, women’s soccer player Katie DeTuro, men’s soccer player Nick Smirniotopoulos, women’s swimmer Meaghan Holloway and women’s track and field runner Madalyn Nuckols, all made a difference, spending 10 days in the Dominican Republic as part of a Virginia Tech-designed study abroad summer school course. The course, Self-Motivation and the Discovery of Leadership, focused on individual leadership skills and theories and was taught by Dr. Scott Geller, an Alumni Distinguished Professor at Tech and director of the Center for Applied Behavior Systems in the psychology department.

The course actually represented the latest step by the Virginia Tech athletics department

to transcend the normal and break the stereotypes of both student-athletes and athletics departments in general. On a larger level, administrators at Tech want to reshape an athletics department into an entity that not only produces quality student-athletes on the field or the court who help win games – though that obviously remains a big part of the equation – but also one that produces leaders in society.

“We’re intentionally trying to foster leadership among our student-athletes,” said Danny White, who serves as the director of student-athlete affairs within the Tech athletics department and went on the trip to the Dominican. “We feel like things such as this study abroad experience in association with this course give them an opportunity to apply leadership. There is a great deal to learn about leadership, but it doesn’t happen if you don’t teach it and then give an opportunity to lead.”

White, Jon Jaudon, Tech’s associate AD for administration, Reyna Gilbert-Lowry, an assistant AD for student life, and Dr. Gary Bennett, the athletics department’s psychologist, have been spearheading this bold initiative. Jaudon went to the Dominican, too, to coordinate logistics, along with Katie Cross, an associate director in the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services office who also has been helping with the initiative.

The Tech athletics department started down this path when it instituted “Habitudes” last year. Habitudes is a curriculum designed by Dr. Tim Elmore, who founded Growing Leaders, a non-profit organization created to develop emerging leaders. His curriculum focuses on teaching leadership habits and attitudes through the power of an image, a

conversation or an experience.

White, Jaudon, Gilbert-Lowry and Bennett taught the 10-week curriculum, which was a voluntary option for Tech’s athletics programs, and both student-athletes and coaches spoke highly of it.

“The curriculum focuses on character and values that serve as the foundation from which our students can display their skills,” White said.

Geller’s leadership course and the trip to the Dominican Republic represented the next step. The trip offered an opportunity to put psychology theories about leadership and self-motivation into practice, as the student-athletes would witness true poverty and work with young children who oftentimes are victims of that poverty.

In essence, this course was a perfect example of “service learning” – a method in which students learn formally in a classroom setting, but also get the practical experience of applying the knowledge within a community. Afterward, students reflect on their experiences. The goal is to motivate them to become engaged in making the world a better place.

“This was a new idea for us,” White said. “It’s an opportunity for them to learn how to lead and serve after being exposed to something they’d only read about in books.”

### EXPERIENCING THE CULTURE

The Tech contingent landed in the Dominican Republic on Friday, June 14, spending the first night at a resort in the popular tourist haven of Punta Cana. The next morning, they moved to The PUNTACANA Ecological Foundation, a facility that works in tandem with Virginia Tech on an array of projects – many related to the environment

and sustainability.

Once settled there, they took a drive 15 minutes inland to the town of Veron. They had received a briefing from Ben Hulefeld, the logistical coordinator for the Caribbean Center for Education and Research, but nothing could have prepared them for what they saw.

“It’s like the two areas were separated by a wall,” McCray said. “On one side, you see the rich side of the island, with all the resorts, and then you see the most extreme poverty.”

The group toured the town’s “hospital,” much of which had been constructed by the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM), a medical school that works in partnership with Tech. Roughly 200 patients visit this small clinic each day, with many of them being treated for HIV, as more than 88,000 Dominicans have tested positive for the virus. The emergency room consists of only a room and three tables. Expansion plans are in the works, with VCOM again leading the way.

Next came a visit to a public school. The situation wasn’t much better there. The classrooms consisted of anywhere from 30 to 70 kids, and classes only go through the eighth grade

“That’s all they get, unless they are fortunate enough to go to a university somewhere,” Trinchere said. “They have one or two classrooms per age group, and they all have to fit in one room. My mom is a teacher now, and if they have 25 kids, it’s like, ‘How am I going to handle this?’ These classrooms [in the Dominican Republic] will have, like, 40. It’s different there.”

On most days, the student-athletes went to their class during the evenings to discuss what they experienced. Shane McCarty, a graduate assistant for Dr. Geller, went on the trip and ran the class in the Dominican Republic. Any free time after that allowed them an opportunity to swim in the pool or lagoons nearby or just hang out.

The next day saw them visit the city of Higüey, the capital city of the province La Altagracia. They toured a church, and the females in the group were forced to cover up with colorful cloths so as not to expose bare legs. Again, this exposed them to a different culture.

After the church visit, Hulefeld led the group through a farmer’s market. Only this one didn’t fit the American perception.

Vendors sold fruit and vegetables, while others sold meat. There was dead meat everywhere, and the group saw guys chopping up cows and pigs in an area called “The Butcher’s Corner.”

The females felt uncomfortable, as the crowded aisles brought the group within close contact of Dominican males who made hissing sounds – the Dominican men’s way of trying to



Zack McCray (left) and Devin Carter (right, with sunglasses) put their leadership skills to the test with a group of young children in the Dominican Republic.

get the attention of females. The females among the Tech contingent made sure to stay close to the 300-pound Hopkins and the 250-pound McCray.

“That was probably the most shocking thing,” Trinchere said of the marketplace. “I was expecting a farmer’s market. A lot of the girls had trouble with that. It was a tight space, and the people were really forward. We were all walking pretty close to each other.

“It’s the culture. That was a test to the open mind. One thing I know – and a lot of the kids said the same thing – is that we wanted to keep an open mind and experience their culture. The market was the biggest test of that.”

#### KIDS AND CAMPS

For the next two days, the group got involved and worked with a non-government organization called Deportes Para la Vida (sports for life). This organization uses sports as a means to teach health and life lessons to young children. In this case, a group of five men, led by a Peace Corps volunteer, used sports games to teach life lessons about AIDS and HIV and both drug and child abuse. More than 60 kids showed up for the camp, and the Tech student-athletes assisted both days.

The Tech contingent then held sports camps over the next three days. Every camp featured children from both the public schools in the area and an international school for the kids with wealthier parents. There couldn’t have been a bigger difference between the two groups for obvious reasons, and that forced Tech’s student-athletes to be creative in integrating the two groups of kids.

The course called for the 10 student-athletes to organize and run the camps – McCarty, White, Jaudon and Cross stayed on the sidelines, so to speak, to observe. On the first day, DeTuro, Smirniotopoulos and Holloway ran a soccer camp. The second day consisted of a volleyball camp coordinated by Trinchere, Baarendse

and Carter. The last day, Hopkins, McCray and Nuckols ran a football camp. Kahoun organized the warm-ups for each of the sessions.

“It was exciting,” McCray said. “The first part of the week, they [the children] didn’t want to be there, and their parents were making them go. By the end of the week, they were bringing their friends. There were twice as many kids at the end of the week. It was nice – and inspiring.”

While running the camps, the student-athletes were able to draw upon lessons learned from the Habitudes curriculum, specifically, connecting with others. They relayed their experience to the images of chess and checkers – in checkers, all the pieces move the same way, but in chess, one moves each piece differently based upon its ability. So in the Dominican, they worked with two groups of children from different backgrounds, and they had to handle each group – and kid – differently to make the camps a success.

“At first, the international school kids were challenging because they were upper class and had a little bit more of an American attitude,” Trinchere said. “But then it worked out to be beneficial for us because they could translate because they had been taught some English at their school. Once they got past the ‘I’m too cool for this,’ stage, they were really able to help us communicate with everyone else. In the end, we found a role for them, and that was helpful.”

At the end of each camp, the Tech student-athletes used other concepts from their Habitudes classes to teach the young children about values, being a leader and life goals. The kids took to the concepts well, as most held lofty goals for themselves, such as being an astronaut or a policeman or the president.

“It was cool to integrate and be able to share some things that we had learned,” Smirniotopoulos said. “We were able to share some things that had helped us grow, and they seemed pretty responsive to the things we were telling them.”

The end of the third day of camps marked the end of the trip for the Tech contingent. Saying good-bye to so many children was the worst part of the trip for many. Following a day at the beach, the Tech group headed home – and more importantly to reflect on what they saw and learned.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

Days after landing in the U.S., Trinchere sat at her parents' home in Salem, Va., slightly depressed. She felt sadness over leaving the Dominican Republic, anxiety over the fate of the children she played with and helped, and guilt that she didn't do more.

"When I got home, my parents were like, 'Did you have fun? You don't seem happy,'" Trinchere said. "I told them that I feel a lot of different ways. Just leaving the kids and the DPV group was really hard. We knew they might not get a chance like this again. For us, it was an opportunity to do something fun with others. For them [the children], it might have been a once-in-a-lifetime thing. It wasn't a big deal for us, but for them, it was.

"I was glad to be home, but at the same time, there wasn't enough time. I feel like we could have done more."

Smirniotopoulos echoed similar thoughts.

"You go from feeling sorrow at seeing so much poverty, and that transfers to guilt," he said. "I don't deserve all that I've been given, and why is it fair for kids to grow up in such poverty?"

"But I could sit around and wish it were different, or I can use the opportunity that God has given me to do something about it. I knew the trip would have a powerful impact on me, but I didn't know how powerful."

The rest of the Tech student-athletes had similar responses – and it's exactly what the Tech athletics department wanted when it worked with Geller to plan the course.

Of course, now, the big question for these student-athletes is this – what will you do?

"We see interrupted poverty all the time in America," White said. "You can go to D.C. and see poverty for two blocks and then you see the homes of millionaires. But in Veron, you never see millionaires. It's a place of uninterrupted poverty.

"So now the question is how are they [the student-athletes] going to lead and serve after being exposed to something that they had only read about?"

Only time will tell. But their reflections of the trip and the course lead one to believe the future is about to become a better place.

"I thought it was so unfair that I flew back

into that comfort and luxury while I knew about all the poverty, misery and injustice going on in our world," Kahoun said. "And talking about it with outsiders wasn't satisfying at all because they just didn't understand my attachment and the emotions I went through in those few days. Everything was so overwhelming.

"It has definitely impacted me a lot – and in many ways, too. I was inspired by the kids, I was struck by grief, I was filled with hope for a better future – I was simply blown away. People were right saying that this experience would change my life. I feel more competent to step up and be a leader in order to make this world a better place."

The department administrators have made a big investment into developing future leaders and plan on continuing to do so. They hope to see 15 student-athletes go to the Dominican Republic each year for the next four years. Sixty student-athletes could come away feeling the way these original 10 felt.

Seventy student-athletes, in all, hoping to make the world a better place. Seventy student-athletes finding the leader within themselves.

For Tech, that's something truly worth more than any victory on a field or on a court.

For more insight on the trip, please read <http://univ3954.blogspot.com/> 

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## *pitch* PERFECT

Entering their 25th season broadcasting football games, Bill Roth and Mike Burnop have called nearly 300 contests and captured the hearts of Hokie Nation

by **Jimmy Robertson**

When you sit at a table with Bill Roth and Mike Burnop, you better get your stomach muscles ready. You're going to be laughing. Probably so hard, in fact, that your abdominals painfully begin contracting, and your face eventually contorts into a glee-induced agony.

Their stories flow so naturally, most dealing with their love of food

– hence their nickname, “the Buffet Buddies” – or their highway mishaps on road trips.

There was the time after a basketball game at West Virginia when Roth wanted Burnop to get a bag of popcorn for the return trip home. Burnop brought back a trash bag full of the stuff that barely fit in the front seat of the car. They ate nearly every bite

There was another time when Roth took a wrong turn into Ted Williams Tunnel in Boston. Rather than go through the tunnel and turn around, he kicked the car into reverse and backed up through one of the busiest thoroughfares in the world, earning himself the lovable nickname “Wrong-Way Roth” from Burnop.

Those two tales barely scratch the

surface of the yarns that these two friends and colleagues could spin. After all, they have nearly 25 years worth to tell.

The 2012 football season will mark the silver anniversary for Roth and Burnop as football broadcasting buddies on Virginia Tech's broadcasts. They became a tandem in 1988 and haven't missed a football game since, using professional tones, thoughtful analysis, and when appropriate, humor to provide a vision of Tech athletics for the legions of Hokie Nation listening around the world.

To celebrate their astounding run, the Virginia Tech athletics department commissioned a commemorative print. Also, the athletics department is conducting a contest entitled "Bill and Mike's 25th Season Countdown Presented by The Legends of Blacksburg."

Starting Aug. 13, Roth and Burnop will release two of their top-25 favorite football moments on the athletics department's website, [hokiesports.com](http://hokiesports.com), and each week, they will release two until Oct. 23 when they start releasing one a week. The top moment will be released the Tuesday before the Tech-UVa game.

After that, fans can register and vote to pick their top Roth and Burnop moment, with the grand prizewinner of a drawing getting a free dinner with the duo at the Virginia Tech athletics sponsor recognition dinner next spring, along with an assortment of other prizes.

It's the perfect way to celebrate with these two, who love food, love laughing and love the Hokies.

### The Beginning

Many may not know this, but Burnop actually got a five-year jump on Roth in the broadcasting world. In 1983, then head football coach and AD Bill Dooley tabbed Jeff Charles to handle the department's TV, radio, marketing and promotions responsibilities. Looking for a partner and wanting a former player to team with on radio broadcasts, Charles called Burnop, a former Tech tight end.

"I met with him, and I didn't know anything about it," Burnop said. "I thought it was the campus station, and he's like, 'No, no, no, we have a network through the state of Virginia. We have about 60 stations.' I was like, 'Whoa, 60?' I had no idea."

Charles ended up hiring Burnop over a few other candidates, and Burnop helped Charles for the next five seasons. Charles then decided to take a job at East Carolina as the radio voice for the Pirates – a position he still holds.

At the same time, Roth had just concluded his first season at Marshall as the voice of the Thundering Herd after being hired fresh out of Syracuse University by then Marshall AD Dave Braine.



For more than two decades, Mike Burnop's postgame interviews with Tech head coach Frank Beamer (right) have been widely popular among Tech fans listening over the radio or worldwide over the Internet.

Braine got the AD's job at Tech in 1988, and Roth decided to call Braine after hearing about Charles' departure.

"I said, 'I understand Jeff Charles left to go to ECU,'" Roth said. "He said, 'That's right. Are you interested in coming down here?' I said, 'Sure, of course.' He said, 'Okay, it's yours. Here's who you call.'"

It wasn't a tough decision for Braine.

"When I hired Bill at Marshall, he had a tape, and it was an NCAA lacrosse match," Braine said. "It was by far the best tape we heard, and then in the interview, he sold himself.

"So at Tech, we decided to take a chance on a young kid. He went to Syracuse, which has the best reputation among broadcasting schools. It's like the 'Cradle of Coaches' that Miami of Ohio used to be for football coaches. His pedigree was good, and he turned out better than we thought."

Roth, all of 22 years old at the time, came to Blacksburg that spring. When he got to town, he made a call to the guy who would ultimately be his partner in the broadcast booth for more than two decades. The two met for the first time in the Jamerson Athletics Center.

"I thought, 'Wow, this guy [Roth] is young,'" Burnop said. "I wasn't up on Syracuse's broadcasting school and all that stuff, but I thought he was okay. I thought, 'Hey, they [the Tech athletics department] added this young buck, and we'll just go and do Clemson [the 1988 season opener].'"

Roth and Braine decided they wanted to keep Burnop in his current role as the color analyst. Braine said that, too, was an easy – and smart – decision.

"Mike is such a likable and jovial guy," Braine said. "I don't know what the ramifications would have been if we hadn't kept him, but they wouldn't have been worth it."

The duo opened the season at Death Valley, and though Tech lost, the game kicked off an unprecedented run.

### Through the years

As most Tech fans know, in the early years of the Frank Beamer era, the Hokies weren't particularly good. That made for some interesting broadcasts and forced Roth and Burnop to walk a fine line. Get too critical, and you alienate your audience. Be overly optimistic and run the risk of being called a "homer," a tag that no one in the world of media wants.

Yet these two balanced it beautifully, particularly Burnop, who, as a former player – a Tech Hall of Famer after a great career from 1970-72 – could have become overly emotional at what he witnessed back then.

"We weren't going to be homers," Burnop said. "We weren't going to use 'we' and 'us' and all that. We were going to give the other team credit, and we weren't going to jump on the officials. We've never done that.

"Bill and I had to get a feel there at first. We got thrown in there against Clemson, and it wasn't a very good game. You just have to get a feel for each other as you go. I don't think it took too long for our chemistry to develop."

The two ultimately used humor as a way of making broadcasts a little more interesting to listeners during those lean times. Most of their jabs came at each other's expense, with their love of food and Roth's driving habits being common topics.

"Our teams weren't winning a lot back then," Roth said. "So there had to be some entertainment."

Over the course of time, the Hokies developed into a football powerhouse, and more Tech fans, from Norfolk to Richmond to Washington, D.C.,

and gradually throughout the world over the Internet, started listening to the network. Roth and Burnop became household names among Hokie Nation, with the radio network blanketing the state. They have evolved with their broadcasts over the years, embracing new technology and keeping in tune with the ever-changing interests of their listeners.

They have become immensely popular, too, largely because they play off their contrasting styles so well. Roth comes from outside Pittsburgh and is the smooth, polished play-by-play graduate from Syracuse's Newhouse School of Public Communications. This past year, he received the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association's Virginia Sportscaster of the Year honor for the ninth time. In contrast, Burnop is the southwest Virginia native and a former athlete, with quick wit, wholesome charm and deep insight of the game.

They simply mesh perfectly.

"They are good because they understand what the listeners want," said Jack Bogaczyk, who now works at Marshall as the Director of Publications and Editor of Herd Insider, but has covered television and radio topics for nearly four decades, including during stints at The Roanoke Times and Charleston [W.Va.] Daily Mail.

"They understand their audience bleeds Chicago maroon and burnt orange, but they are not blatant homers. They do not – and never have – avoided controversy if it occurs. And because they've been around so long, they can relate what's going on with the Hokies today back to when Frank Beamer first returned. They know the subjects (players and coaches) as well as the subject (football or hoops).

"They have solid reference points due to that. Some of what they do is historical. Some is hysterical. That's why they're good."

### Looking ahead

The Georgia Tech game will mark the 299th football game that Roth and Burnop will broadcast as a duo. In addition, the two of them are roommates on the road. Factoring in basketball games – Burnop became a full-time part of basketball broadcasts during the 1996-97 season – the two have shared a hotel room between 600 and 700 nights.

"That's almost two years of our lives – and I haven't gotten the remote yet," Roth joked.

They are the best of friends and have shared a lot over the years. Roth often goes on vacation with the Burnop family and watched as Burnop's three children grew up. They shared laughs and cries, as Burnop's wife, Ellen, and Roth's sister, Linda, battled lung cancer. On a basketball trip to Anaheim in 2010, Burnop – in spite of being saddened about his wife's struggles – went with Roth to Laguna Beach on an off day to visit with Linda and offer some much-needed humor and support.

This summer, Ellen Burnop passed away from lung cancer. Two weeks later, Roth's sister passed away.

They share that bond. But more importantly, they share a mutual admiration and respect for each other, both as friends and colleagues. That, too, comes across on the air.

"Mike's got one of those personalities that, as soon as he walks into a room, everyone gravitates to him," Roth said. "Mike also works really hard. He studies game notes and video and talks with our players and coaches. He's gotten to be an excellent analyst. Sometimes you don't recognize it until you go back and listen. It's like, 'Wow, Mike was right on that!' He can see it and articulate it to our fans, and I think they enjoy that."

Burnop shared similar thoughts about his cohort.

"Bill's popular because he's daggone good," he said. "People want to shake his hand because they see him on TV and hear him on the radio. He's 'the Voice,' and everyone wants a piece of the action. They can relate to him.

"He's so talented and creative that he can come up with things, and it sticks forever. It's like 'Touchdown Tech!' Everyone knows it and talks about it. It's his signature call. You hear that and you automatically think, 'That's Bill Roth.'"


They figure to stay in their current gig for quite some time. Burnop plans on running his business, New River Office Supply, and keeping his side job as a color analyst for the Hokies. Roth grew up as a Pirates fan and used to want to get into baseball. But Blacksburg and Hokie Nation would be hard to leave.

"I'm doing exactly what I want to do at a great place," Roth said. "Mike makes it a great place. One of my best friends in the world is my on-air analyst. I work with the winningest coach in college football who's as great to get along with as anyone, and we've also got the most amazing, passionate fans.

"I'm just so blessed."

Tech fans, too, have been blessed and can expect it to continue. When they hear Roth open a broadcast with his now-famous montage, "From the blue waters of the Chesapeake Bay to the hills of Tennessee, the Virginia Tech Hokies are on the air," they know they're about to be taken on an entertaining journey for the next few hours.

"I don't get to many games these days because I'm often fishing on Saturdays in the fall," said Braine, who is retired and lives in Blacksburg. "But I take my radio with me, and when I hear those words, that gets my heart pounding.

"Those two have a way about them. They get everyone going – and they keep them going." 

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The new Olympic Sports Athletic Performance Center features 15 racks for lifting and can accommodate double the number of student-athletes of the previous weight room.

# Tech's new Olympic Sports Athletic Performance Center a real gem

by Jimmy Robertson

Virginia Tech's Olympic sports got much better over the summer, and it wasn't necessarily because the coaches of those sports brought in better players.

Thanks to a donation from the family of W.A. and Mae Street, originally from Grundy, Va., the athletics department opened a brand new, \$1 million Olympic sports training center over the summer dedicated solely for the Hokies' Olympic sports. The new Olympic Sports Athletic Performance Center features more than 6,000 square feet filled with weights, barbells, weight racks and other assorted equipment designed to help one get stronger, bigger and faster. The new center also features an 1,800 square-foot mezzanine level designed with equipment to help enhance the functional movement of Tech's athletes and thus prevent injuries.

"This is something that's going to benefit so many people," said Tom Gabbard, Tech's associate AD for internal affairs. "You have to give credit to Mike Gentry [Tech's associate AD for athletic performance], Terry Mitchell [a director of strength and conditioning] and Megan

Evans [a strength and conditioning coordinator]. Jim [Weaver, Tech's AD] has always believed in letting the users tell the architects how they want a facility planned, and all those guys did a great job of making this project come together."

The Olympic Sports Athletic Performance Center sits in a spot that recently served as an auxiliary gym in Cassell Coliseum – a gym that had been previously used by the Hokies' wrestling program to train. But the wrestling program vacated that space when it received the entire third floor of the new football locker room building completed nearly two years ago. That third floor serves as the wrestlers' new practice area, with a training area and a sports medicine area adjacent to it. The third floor also houses their new locker room and the coaches' offices.

Gentry had long sought a new training center for Tech's Olympic sports athletes, so Weaver, Gabbard and the rest of the athletics administration decided to convert the old gym into such a center. Southland Construction won the bid for the job and basically gutted the gym, installing a new air conditioning system, new

lighting, new windows on both sides and new offices, while also building the mezzanine level for the functional movement area.

"It [the center] certainly exceeded our expectations, and I'm appreciative of Jim Weaver for letting us have that space," Gentry said. "I doubt anyone would recognize that it used to be an old gym. It really turned out nice, and the kids are excited about it. They'd come in and take pictures of it as it was being developed. So they're excited, and we're excited."

"The big thing it does is it gives us much-needed space. These kids have so much more going on now than when I first started, and they have so many demands on their time. With this space and the first-class equipment that we have, we can double up on teams if we need to and still meet their training needs."

Mitchell and Evans, who oversee Tech's Olympic sports, are especially pleased. Those two worked in the previous weight room on the bottom floor of the Jamerson Athletics Center and often spent a lot of time juggling training regimens for teams because of a lack of space. Some teams





possess rosters so big that Mitchell and Evans were forced to split the team for training. In some cases, specialized exercises spilled out into the hallways because of a lack of space, and Mitchell and Evans themselves shared an office that used to be a closet.

Simply put, Tech's athletic programs outgrew the space.

"Now, we can accommodate more athletes," Mitchell said. "We were in a place where we could fit 23 [athletes] comfortably, and when we designed it [the new performance center], we wanted to allow for double that number.

"With our [his and Evans] sports, the kids are competing Monday through Sunday. It's not like with football where you have a set schedule. But with this extra space, we can accommodate more kids, be flexible with times and get their training done."

The new center, of course, features all new weights and weightlifting equipment. In fact, it holds 15 lifting racks (10 full, 5 half) designed by Total Strength and Speed. These stainless steel racks possess the ability to convert to allow for different lifts (power cleans, squats, bench presses and other presses). With the five half racks, there is a dumbbell and kettle bell area, so an athlete could complete his or her training on one of the half racks without moving to another area.

"They [Total Strength and Speed] really worked with us and were willing to listen, and they tweaked the equipment specifically for us," Mitchell said. "Our racks work for any arm length and work for males or females, and we've got

spotter stands and a place to store the bar and the chains.

"So I really think the quality of our training is going to improve because we've got more space and more equipment. It's safer and user friendly."

The center includes unique equipment such as three "Pit Sharks," or machines designed for people who cannot squat with a barbell, and two "towers" that allow for working one's back muscles. Tech's strength and conditioning staff also will have five "tsunami" barbells at its disposal, becoming the first school to use this piece of equipment. This barbell is made of special composite materials that make it flexible, and thus, it activates muscles at a 20 percent greater rate. Muscles are three times more active using this barbell than a standard barbell.

The mezzanine level serves as the home for the functional movement screening area. Tech's strength and conditioning staff plans on screening athletes on various movements, and the results of the screening will let the staff know if an athlete is predisposed to specific types of injuries. If so, then he or she can work on any of the three "Freedom Trainers" – machines that can put athletes in a position to work on any deficiencies in movements to prevent injuries.

"If they're not functionally moving correctly, then we can use those machines to address that and prevent injuries," Mitchell said. "We haven't had that before."

"We've really got some cutting edge technology," Gentry said. "We can find out an athlete's needs and work with him or her."

The new center also includes a sound system, two large flatscreen televisions and a small area for a camera. The video staff wants to use this equipment to show the proper technique for various lifts and also for when it holds strength and conditioning clinics.


Also, outside the main entrance, there is a large, flatscreen television. This television will be used to display the training schedules for each of the various sports.

Mitchell and Evans have moved into new offices within The Olympic Sports Athletic Performance Center. There is also an office for graduate assistants and a small storage area with cabinets, a sink and an area for a small refrigerator.

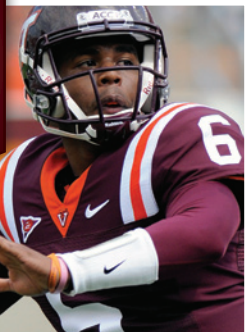
In addition to the obvious – having a brand new strength and conditioning center for current student-athletes to train and also to show recruits – the Olympic sport coaches like the new center because of its location. The baseball and softball coaches' offices are directly across the hall, while the track and field, swimming and diving, soccer and volleyball coaches' offices are just one floor above.

All in all, everyone has won out with this project.

"We want the coaches and athletes excited to train and to be proud of it," Gentry said. "And I think they are. We want to take care of them, and we feel this center does that."

"The best thing about this is that it's just for Olympic sports with their name on it," Mitchell added. "It's not a hand-me down. It's designed for them, and hopefully it'll motivate them and their passion for their sports." 

VT  
QUARTERBACKS  
2012  
PREVIEW



Mark Leal

### 2012 DEPTH CHART

- 3 Logan Thomas (6-6, 260, r-Jr.)
- 6 Mark Leal (6-1, 213, r-Soph.)
- 12 Trey Gresh (6-1, 212, r-Soph.)

# LEAL BIDDING HIS TIME BEHIND TECH'S STAR QB

by Jimmy Robertson

There is a longstanding joke in football that the most popular player on a team is the backup quarterback.

In Blacksburg, though, Tech fans, coaches and current players like their starter quite nicely, as Logan Thomas returns to the helm following a season in which he threw for 3,013 yards and 19 touchdowns and also ran for 469 yards and 11 touchdowns. He set a single-season record for total offense, and he goes into the 2012 campaign as a top candidate for national honors.

Mark Leal (pronounced Lee-al), Tech's backup, knows all this. The redshirt sophomore fully expects to spend another season on the sideline learning – and waiting.

"I have no choice," he said. "Patience is the key. Sometimes, it's hard because in high school, you're the starter. But in college, you've got to work your way up. Rarely do you come in and get to start. That's just how it is at this level."

Rest assured, though, that Tech's coaches feel quite comfortable with Leal, who played in three games last season and threw two touchdown passes. The coaches wanted to unleash Leal this spring, but he suffered a respiratory infection and missed the latter half of spring practice.

This summer, the Florida native was a leader in 7-on-7 passing drills and spent three or four days a week throwing to receivers to develop chemistry. He needs to be in top form, too, because Tech doesn't have another backup quarterback on the roster with game experience.

"Spring is the most important time for a guy like me, so that was hard," Leal said. "I still learned and did as much as I could. I spent the summer getting into the playbook because we changed some things offensively, so I need to

### A QUICK GLANCE

**Returning starter:** Logan Thomas (14 career starts)

**Starter lost:** none

**Projected new starter:** none

**Top reserves:** Mark Leal, Trey Gresh

**Newcomer:** Brenden Motley


**Breakout candidate:** N/A

**Notes:** Thomas set a Tech single-season record with 3,482 yards of total offense last season ... Thomas' 234 completions, 391 attempts and 3,013 yards passing all rank second in Tech history for a single season behind only Don Strock's records set in 1972 ... His 11 rushing touchdowns tied the school record set by Bruce Arians in 1974 for rushing scores by a quarterback in a season ... Leal played in three games last season – no other reserve quarterback on the roster has seen action from scrimmage.

understand what I've missed, and I developed my timing and chemistry with these young receivers we have. Those were the most important things for me."

Leal will be pulling for blowouts this fall in hopes of getting to play. He could have transferred to get immediate playing time somewhere else, but never gave it a thought. He's hoping his patience pays off.

"I knew when I came in that I was going to be behind someone," he said. "If I left, I'd be quitting on myself and the team, and that's not the person I am."

"Every day, I look at Lane Stadium. I know that, one day, that'll be me in the huddle, trying to win championships." 



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**2012 DEPTH CHART**
**TAILBACKS**

- 20** Michael Holmes (6-0, 208, r-Fr.)
- 4** J.C. Coleman (5-8, 192, Fr.)
- 25** Martin Scales (5-11, 222, r-Sr.)
- 22** Tony Gregory (6-0, 185, r-Jr.)
- 39** Daniel Dyer (5-9, 196, r-Soph.)
- 14** Trey Edmunds (6-2, 212, Fr.)

**FULLBACKS**

- 45** Joey Phillips (5-11, 234, r-Sr.)
- 32** Riley Beiro (5-9, 228, r-Soph.)
- 40** Greg Gaddell (5-10, 195, r-Soph.)

# HOLMES READY TO ASSUME MANTLE AS TECH'S NEXT GREAT RUNNING BACK

by Jimmy Robertson

Soft-spoken Michael Holmes is quickly becoming one of the more popular players on Tech's squad, as evidenced by the ribbing he gets from his teammates, even the lesser known ones.

For example, he occasionally gets grief from Scott Rolin, a walk-on free safety from Ashburn, Va., who played at Briar Woods High School. Rolin's Briar Woods team knocked off Holmes' Harrisonburg High squad 41-21 in the Group AA Division 4 state championship game in 2010, and the two recently got together to watch the game again on video.

"I still like to see what we did as a team," Holmes said, with a smile. "I tell him that they won because of the refs. That's always my excuse. A couple of plays got called back, so I say it was because of the refs. But it really wasn't. They beat us fair and square."

Holmes, though, may end up getting the last word, as the redshirt freshman appears poised to pick up where David Wilson left off from last season. He came out of spring practice on the throne at Tech's prestigious tailback spot, while also winning the Paul Torgersen Award as the top offensive newcomer of spring practice.

"I think it [spring practice] went well for me," Holmes said. "I think it went well for a lot of people, not just me. I still need work. I still need practice. There are things I need to work on. I need to get better as a blocker. I'm getting good at that, but I still need to get better. Practice and repetition makes you better."

Holmes' progress will go a long way toward

determining the fate of Tech's offense this season. Wilson set a school record with 1,709 yards rushing last season and took his gifts to the NFL, leaving a huge void at the position and within Tech's offense.

Holmes himself is the anti-Wilson. He isn't particularly flashy, but he possesses sneaky size (208 pounds) and speed, as those who saw his 60-yard touchdown run in one of the scrimmages this spring can attest. He patiently waits for holes to open, resembling former Tech tailback Lee Suggs in that regard. He patterns his game after Houston Texans' Arian Foster – a worthy comparison.

"He's so patient," Holmes said. "You want to hit the hole, but you wait for your blocks to develop. When you see the hole, you hit it."

Holmes will be fending off challenges from freshman J.C. Coleman and redshirt senior Martin Scales. Trey Edmunds, one of the top recruits in this past recruiting class, figures into the mix. Tech's coaches had planned to work Edmunds at whip linebacker, but decided his skills at tailback and their needs would make for a better fit.

Regardless, Holmes is ready.

"It's a competition, but we're teammates and we try to help each other each and every day," Holmes said. "We're all trying to get better."

Leading the way in front of Holmes and the rest of the tailbacks will be fullbacks Joey Phillips and Riley Beiro. Tech's staff doesn't use them very often, but both possess size and toughness – two prerequisites for the position.

As a whole, the group has a lot to live up to

**A QUICK GLANCE**

**Returning starter:** Joey Phillips (5 career starts)

**Starter lost:** David Wilson (15 career starts)

**Projected new starter:** Michael Holmes


**Top reserves:** J.C. Coleman, Martin Scales, Trey Edmunds, Riley Beiro

**Newcomers:** Holmes, Coleman, Edmunds

**Breakout candidate:** Holmes

**Notes:** Holmes rushed for more than 5,000 yards his final two years combined at Harrisonburg High School in Harrisonburg, Va. ... He also scored 82 touchdowns combined in that span ... Coleman rushed for 2,800 yards and scored 41 touchdowns his final two years at Oscar Smith High School in Chesapeake, Va. ... Scales played fullback last season, but has the skills and versatility to play both positions.

this season. The Hokies ranked second in the ACC in rushing offense a year ago (186.9 ypg) and third in total offense (413 ypg). But the unit lost nine starters.

"In the spring, we did well," Holmes said. "That was just a start. We've got a lot of practices ahead of us, and practice makes perfect. Everyone's trying to get better." 

**2012 WIDE RECEIVERS DEPTH CHART**
**FLANKERS**

**7** Marcus Davis (6-4, 232, r-Sr.)  
**80** Demitri Knowles (6-1, 177, r-Fr.)

**82** Willie Byrn (5-11, 177, r-Soph.)

**15** Joel Caleb (6-2, 211, Fr.)

**SPLIT ENDS**

**18** D.J. Coles (6-4, 226, Sr.)

**11** Dyrell Roberts (6-2, 195, r-Sr.)

**83** Corey Fuller (6-2, 196, r-Sr.)

**19** Kevin Asante (5-11, 181, r-Fr.)

**44** Christian Reeves (6-3, 209, r-Fr.)

# COLES AND COMPANY READY TO REPLACE TWO GREATS AT RECEIVER SPOTS

by **Jimmy Robertson**

For the second straight season, a returning wide receiver – a talented one key to the Hokies' fortunes – is coming back from a major injury.

Last year, Dyrell Roberts was coming back from emergency surgery for compartment syndrome in his thigh after taking a blow on the thigh during the 2010 Georgia Tech game. He spent a week in the hospital and the summer rehabbing.

This time, D.J. Coles is the one trying to come back.

Coles, arguably the toughest of Tech's receivers, tore the posterior cruciate ligament in his knee during his sophomore season. Then, he tore it some more in the ACC championship game against Clemson. He played in pain the rest of that game and during the Sugar Bowl and underwent surgery right after the season.

He took it easy this summer with his rehab to avoid re-injuring the knee. Now, with the season opener only days away, he said he was ready to go.

"I'm feeling good," Coles said. "I should be good by the season opener. I took it one day at a time because I didn't want to rush anything. I wanted to make sure everything was healed properly for the season opener."

Tech's staff needs a healthy Coles. He, Roberts and Marcus Davis form an experienced trio to replace record holders Jarrett Boykin and Danny Coale. Roberts has 63 career catches for 965 yards and five touchdowns and Davis has 54 catches for 874 yards and eight touchdowns.

But the team lacks depth behind them. Only two of the reserves – Corey Fuller and Willie Byrn – have caught a pass. They have a combined three career catches.

Both, though, got plenty of reps this spring, along with talented redshirt freshmen Demitri Knowles and Kevin Asante. Toss in redshirt freshman Christian Reeves and incoming freshman Joel Caleb – an All-American from Midlo-

**A QUICK GLANCE**

**Returning starters:** none

**Starters lost:** Danny Coale (54 career starts), Jarrett Boykin (45 career starts)

**Projected new starters:** D.J. Coles (3 career starts), Marcus Davis (10 career starts)

**Top reserves:** Dyrell Roberts, Demitri Knowles, Kevin Asante

**Newcomers:** Knowles, Asante, Christian Reeves, Joel Caleb, Josh Stranford, Mark Irick

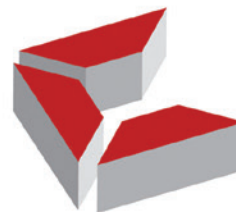
**Breakout candidate:** Coles

**Notes:** Boykin departed as Tech's all-time leader in receptions (184) and receiving yards (2,884) ... Coale ranked second with 165 for 2,658 yards ... Boykin (9) and Coale (7) combined for 16 100-yard receiving games – Tech's returning receivers have just four 100-yard receiving games in their careers (Davis – 2, Roberts, Coles) ... Davis had two 100-yard receiving games a year ago (Appalachian State and UVa).

thian, Va. – and the Hokies' staff has an interesting mix of experience, youth and talent.

As a senior, Coles understands this season represents his last and that he needs to be a leader, not just among the receivers, but also for Tech's entire offense.

"I'm ready for it," he said. "That's what you come here for. You come here to be a playmaker and set up and make plays. We had two great receivers here [Boykin and Coale], and now, it's our turn. I don't think there will be any letdown. I think we're ready for it." 



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## A QUICK GLANCE

**Returning starter:** none**Starter lost:** Chris Drager (24 career starts)**Projected new starter:** Eric Martin (2 career starts) or

Randall Dunn (no career starts)

**Top reserve:** Ryan Malleck**Newcomers:** Darius Redman, Duan Perez-Means (moved from defensive end)**Breakout candidate:** Dunn**Notes:** Martin and Dunn have combined for six catches in their respective careers (three each)... In contrast, Drager caught 20 passes in his career, including 15 last

season ... Both Martin and Dunn caught a touchdown pass last season ... Martin's came on a 2-yard reception at Duke, while Dunn hauled in a 7-yard touchdown catch against Appalachian State ... Malleck was one of seven true freshmen to play a year ago.

## DUNN HOPES PATIENCE PAYS OFF WITH PLAYING TIME AT TIGHT END

by Jimmy Robertson

Coming off a terrific spring in which he won a spring award – the Frank O. Moseley Award as the offensive player who exhibited the most hustle during offseason and spring workouts – Randall Dunn is challenging Eric Martin for the starting tight end job. The two stood neck-and-neck coming out of spring practice.

Winning the nod would be a validation of sorts for Dunn, who came to Tech as a receiver out of Ocean Lakes High in Virginia Beach, Va. He redshirted his first year, but in a December practice as the Hokies prepared to play Cincinnati in the Orange Bowl, he broke his ankle in five places and also his fibula. The injury and the rehab robbed him of some of his athleticism and prompted a position change.

“I went to them [Tech’s coaches] about moving to tight end,” Dunn said. “I was coming off an injury, and

I was a little bit bigger than I wanted to be at the time.”

Dunn went to tight end before his redshirt freshman year. He played in just one game that year and then in seven games as a redshirt sophomore. He played in all 14 games a year ago, but most of that came on special teams.

He resembles the rest of Tech’s tight ends in that respect. Chris Drager started every game last season, and as a result, Martin, Dunn and Ryan Malleck played sparingly. But now, after his great spring, Dunn figures to be used more extensively this season, particularly in the passing game. Slightly undersized at 240 pounds, he excels more in space and putting his receiving skills to use.


“I made some strides this spring,” Dunn said. “I grew in certain areas, and I became more familiar with the playbook. I’m able to see what’s going on

## 2012 DEPTH CHART

86	Eric Martin (6-2, 258, Sr.)
9	Randall Dunn (6-2, 240, r-Sr.)
88	Ryan Malleck (6-4, 244, Soph.)
48	George George (6-4, 268, r-Sr.)
81	Duan Perez-Means (6-4, 237, r-Soph.)
33	Darius Redman (6-3, 259, r-Fr.)

with the other side of the ball and recognize defenses – things I didn’t see before. I’ve still got a long way to go, but I’m happy with the improvements I made.”

He’s also happy with the move to tight end. He just hopes it all pays off this season.

“The injury put me in the right place,” he said. “All in all, I’m happy with the move, and I think the coaches will be, too, after this season.” 



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David  
Wang**A QUICK GLANCE**

**Returning starter:** Andrew Miller (14 career starts)

**Starters lost:** Blake DeChristopher (51 career starts), Jaymes Brooks (51), Greg Nosal (28), Andrew Lanier (29)

**Projected new starters:** Nick Becton, David Wang, Brent Benedict, Vinston Painter

**Top reserves:** Michael Via, Caleb Farris, Matt Arkema

**Newcomers:** none

**Breakout candidate:** David Wang

**Notes:** Via is the only player other than Miller with a career start – he started three games as a redshirt freshman ... Via missed spring practice while recovering from a torn ACL ... Becton has the most experience of any of the projected new starters, having played 441 snaps from scrimmage last year ... Wang was named the most improved offensive player of the spring ... Arkema played in four games last season as a backup at guard ... Farris could also serve as the backup at center, where he played last season.

## WANG ONE OF SEVERAL NEW FACES ON 2012 OFFENSIVE LINE

by Jimmy Robertson

David Wang wasn't in training for the Olympics this summer, but he certainly ran enough to give that impression.

Uncharacteristic of an offensive lineman, Wang ran extra sprints during the Hokies' off-season conditioning sessions as a way to prepare himself for the 2012 campaign. Coming off a broken foot suffered in the second game of last season – one that cost him the year – Wang wanted to make sure he got himself into prime physical condition in preparation for the season.

"It feels good," Wang said of his foot. "If it can make it through 23 110's [110-yard sprints] without hurting, then it should be good."

Last season, Wang's injury robbed the Hokies of one of their top backups along the offensive line. Line coach Curt Newsome had planned on rotating Wang to give Greg Nosal some rest, while also giving Wang some experience. But the broken foot – one of several injuries to have hindered Wang throughout his career – wrecked those plans. Two years ago, he was in the mix for

playing time and a shoulder injury kept him out, forcing him to redshirt.

"It's awful," said Wang, who may receive a "sixth" year from the NCAA down the road because of the injuries. "I feel like I get hurt right when it's coming up on the season or right at the beginning of the season. I put so much time into it, and then it all goes to waste and I have to do it [the work] again the next year."

Wang will be one of four new starters on the offensive line, as the Hokies lost nearly everyone off a talented and experienced unit from the past two years. Blake DeChristopher, Jaymes Brooks, Greg Nosal and Andrew Lanier combined to start 160 games in their careers. Tech allowed 17 sacks in 14 games for an average of 1.2 per game – a number that ranked 22nd nationally – and the offensive line was mainly responsible for that. Plus, the unit also paved the way for David Wilson to set the school's single-season rushing record and for Logan Thomas to set the school's single-season total offense mark.

## 2012 OFFENSIVE LINE DEPTH CHART

### LEFT TACKLES

- 54 Nick Becton (6-6, 317, r-Sr.)
- 69 Mark Shuman (6-7, 307, r-Soph.)
- 52 Nick Acree (6-5, 321, r-Soph.)

### LEFT GUARDS

- 76 David Wang (6-2, 288, r-Jr.)
- 64 Matt Arkema (6-3, 287, r-Soph.)

### CENTERS

- 74 Andrew Miller (6-4, 304, r-Jr.)
- 79 Caleb Farris (6-3, 309, Soph.)

### RIGHT GUARDS

- 55 Brent Benedict (6-5, 304, r-Soph.)
- 79 Caleb Farris (6-3, 309, Soph.)
- 63 Laurence Gibson (6-6, 303, r-Soph.)

### RIGHT TACKLES

- 71 Winston Painter (6-6, 309, r-Sr.)
- 67 Michael Via (6-7, 304, r-Sr.)
- 61 Darian Fisher (6-4, 285, r-Jr.)
- 70 Jake Goins (6-5, 305, r-Fr.)

So the Hokies go into 2012 hoping that a rebuilt offensive line can come close to the standard of the 2011 group. The rebuilding process started back in the spring, and it got off to a rather rough beginning when the unit performed poorly in the first couple of spring scrimmages.

"I walked out [after the scrimmages] thinking we had so much work to do, and Coach [Newsome] told us, 'That's not a way to start the spring,'" Wang said. "He told us there was no excuse for that, and I completely agreed with that. We didn't have any excuses. We should always be playing our best."

Andrew Miller, the only returning starter, anchors the unit from his center spot after starting 14 games a year ago. Wang will line up beside

him, and the coaches think highly of Wang, even though he's played in just seven games in his career. Brent Benedict, who has yet to play in a college game, and Caleb Farris, who played in four games as a true freshman a year ago, figure to use most of August to battle for the starting right guard spot.

Nick Becton, who played in 14 games last season behind Lanier, lines up at left tackle. Right tackle will be a battle between Winston Painter, who played well this spring, and Michael Via, a versatile linemen with the ability to play multiple spots. The rest of the unit features a small group of untested reserves.

"I think we have a lot of potential," Wang said. "It's difficult because we're a new group and

haven't played together a lot. But a lot of us have been on the second team and played when we've been up a lot in past years. We go in and work together, so we've got a little more experience than people think. But I like everyone. It's a good group."

As for Wang, he hopes to be at 295 pounds by the Georgia Tech game. But even without the bulk, he possesses the strength, hand quickness and footwork to follow in his brother Ed's footsteps. Ed Wang is currently on the Oakland Raiders squad.

"I'm more of a technician, and he plays more physical than I do," David said. "He is a really great player. I watched him throughout high school and here on Saturdays. It was a lot to learn, but he really molded me as a player." 



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James  
Gayle

## A QUICK GLANCE

**Returning starters:** James Gayle (15 career starts), J.R. Collins (15), Derrick Hopkins (14), Luther Maddy (7)

**Starters lost:** none

**Projected new starters:** none

**Top reserves:** Antoine Hopkins (17 career starts), Tyrel Wilson (2), Zack McCray, Corey Marshall (1)

**Newcomers:** Kris Harley, Justin Taylor, Matt Roth

**Breakout candidate:** Maddy

**Notes:** Tech's returning defensive linemen combined for 22.5 sacks and 36.5 tackles for a loss last season ... Gayle ranked tied for fourth in the ACC with seven sacks, while Collins was tied for sixth with six ... Gayle's 12.5 tackles for a loss ranked 11th in the ACC ... Dadi Nicolas has been suspended indefinitely from the team following an off-the-field incident ... In addition to Kwamaine Battle, the only defensive linemen not returning from last season are Isaiah Hamlette and Duan Perez-Means (moved to tight end).

# GAYLE, COLLINS ANCHOR WHAT SHOULD BE A LOADED DEFENSIVE LINE

by Jimmy Robertson

During a short interview in July, James Gayle made the observation that the Hokies faced a difficult schedule this upcoming season, one of the toughest schedules in the ACC.

When asked if he was one who analyzed the schedules when they came out, he stated "no."

"I just saw it on Twitter," Gayle said. "That's where everyone gets their information these days, whether it's the truth or not."

Joking aside, the Hokies do face a tough schedule, in that several opponents get off weeks before playing Tech. But those teams may need that added week of rest before taking on what appears to be a rather stout Tech defensive line.

Led by Gayle, the Hokies return all four starters on the defensive line. Thanks to last year's injuries that forced the staff to play a lot of younger players, Tech returns three other defensive linemen with at least one career start. In short, this group goes two deep at every position, and many

of the players possess enough versatility to rotate at any of four spots.

Looking for a breakout candidate? Try all of them, according to Gayle.

"I don't think anyone is going to have a breakout season because all of our defensive linemen are pretty good," Gayle said. "Even our backups are good. It's like we have two sets of starters. So I feel like everyone is going to have a breakout year."

Tech's defense played pretty well last year, finishing second in the ACC in total defense (304.6 ypg) and rushing defense (104.1 ypg) despite the rash of injuries on that side of the ball. The injury bug bit two defensive linemen – Kwamaine Battle and Antoine Hopkins – costing them the season, and Gayle himself missed a game with an ankle injury.

But minus Battle, the defensive line returns intact. The starters will be led by ends Gayle, and



## 2012 DEFENSIVE LINE DEPTH CHART

### STUD ENDS

- 99 James Gayle (6-4, 269, r-Jr.)
- 66 Tyrel Wilson (6-1, 228, r-Jr.)
- 87 Dewayne Alford (6-2, 247, Fr.)

### ENDS

- 42 J.R. Collins (6-2, 261, r-Jr.)
- 96 Corey Marshall (6-1, 267, Soph.)
- 95 Zack McCray (6-5, 256, r-Soph.)
- 91 Matt Roth (6-2, 241, r-Fr.)

### NOSE TACKLES

- 98 Derrick Hopkins (6-0, 306, Jr.)
- 97 Kris Harley (6-1, 282, r-Fr.)
- 93 Justin Taylor (6-2, 246, r-Fr.)

### TACKLES

- 92 Luther Maddy (6-1, 288, Soph.)
- 56 Antoine Hopkins (6-1, 313, r-Sr.)



J.R. Collins

J.R. Collins, along with tackles Derrick Hopkins and Luther Maddy, who figures to be challenged by Antoine Hopkins. Gayle led Tech with seven sacks, while Collins added six and led all defensive linemen last season with 57 tackles.

Tyrel Wilson, a valuable reserve who played great last year, returns, along with Corey Marshall, a top recruit who played last season as a true freshman, and Zack McCray, who has gotten bigger and stronger and will rotate between tackle and end. Marshall and Justin Taylor may do the same.


Gayle and Collins certainly headline the group.

Gayle, who earned second-team All-ACC honors a year ago after recording 38 tackles, including 12.5 for a loss, to go with the seven sacks, nearly won the Excalibur Award, the top honor in the strength and conditioning program. But a balky quad forced him to sit out one of the required events and prevented him from winning it. Still, he's bulked up to nearly 270 pounds without losing any speed.

"My expectations are to play better than I played last year," he said. "I want to stay healthy. I'm going to stay healthy. I feel like I've become a more complete player in the past year. The position as a whole has been new to me. I didn't start

learning the little things that could help me until last year. Now, I've gotten stronger, bigger, faster, and I know the game more."

That same thing could be said for all of Tech's defensive linemen. For that reason, many rank the unit as one of the best in the nation. Gayle is cautious about such accolades, but doesn't disagree.

"I'm pretty excited," Gayle said. "Everyone knows that a lot of guys got hurt last year, and I doubt that's going to happen again this year. I feel like we're going to be one of the most dominant defenses in the nation. That's just my opinion. We've got to wait and see what happens." 



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**LINEBACKERS**  
2012  
**PREVIEW**

**2012 LINEBACKERS DEPTH CHART**

**MIKE LINEBACKERS**

- 58** Jack Tyler (6-1, 236, r-Jr.)
- 36** Chase Williams (6-2, 235, r-Soph.)
- 47** Brian Laiti (6-3, 220, r-Soph.)

**BACKERS**

- 51** Bruce Taylor (6-2, 244, r-Sr.)
- 24** Tariq Edwards (6-2, 237, r-Jr.)
- 44** Josh Trimble (5-11, 200, r-Fr.)
- 41** Derek DiNardo (6-0, 210, r-Soph.)

**A QUICK GLANCE**

**Returning starters:** Bruce Taylor (22 career starts), Tariq Edwards (14)

**Starters lost:** none

**Projected new starters:** none

**Top reserves:** Jack Tyler (5 career starts), Chase Williams

**Newcomers:** Deon Clarke, Devin Vandyke

**Breakout candidate:** Tyler

**Notes:** Edwards ranked third

on the team last season with 71 tackles ... Edwards and Taylor combined for 124 tackles, 18.5 tackles for a loss, and 8.5 sacks ... Tyler finished with 42 tackles despite starting just four games ... Thirty-seven of Tyler's 42 tackles came after Taylor went down for the season with a Lisfranc injury ... Tyler averaged 6.2 tackles per game after Taylor's injury.

# TYLER GIVES HOKIES TESTED DEPTH AT MIKE LINEBACKER

by Jimmy Robertson

Jack Tyler spent the first summer session working an internship with a real estate company in Northern Virginia, learning how to manage properties as part of the requirements for a degree in residential property management.

Tyler has experience in managing things. In the last five games of last season, he managed Tech's defense from his mike linebacker position, and he managed that defense this spring, too, while Bruce Taylor continued to rehab from a Lisfranc injury suffered in the BC game last fall.

Taylor will be playing backer until Tariq Edwards returns from a leg injury, leaving mike linebacker to Tyler, who recorded 37 tackles in the Hokies' final six games. That included 12 against Georgia Tech, eight against Clemson and seven against Michigan in the Sugar Bowl. This spring, he earned the Frank O. Moseley Award as the defensive player who exhibited the most hustle during offseason and spring workouts.

"For me, personally, I thought spring went

great," Tyler said. "I felt more comfortable, and I thought I improved on some of the aspects I needed to improve. The biggest thing is that I think I instilled confidence in everybody else – coaches and other players – that they could trust me if I do have to play."

Taylor was having a great season before going down with the injury. In eight games, he recorded 53 tackles, including seven for a loss, and five sacks. He still earned honorable mention All-ACC honors.

Lisfranc injuries – an injury to the bottom of the foot – can be difficult on players. But Taylor looked good in the first few practices of the fall, and now Edwards' injury makes it imperative that Tyler continue to be ready.

"There is only one thing I can control and that's how I prepare," Tyler said. "I've got to come to work every day and prepare as if I'm going to be the starter. I've got to work hard every day. But I wouldn't say that changes anything. As a backup,

I came in with the mindset of getting better, and that doesn't change."

Edwards, who started 14 games and recorded 71 tackles, including 11.5 for a loss, sat out spring practice after undergoing surgery for a stress fracture in his left shin. Tech's sports medicine staff expects him back, but there is no timetable. Thus, linebackers coach Bud Foster has moved Taylor to backer and Chase Williams back to mike linebacker. Williams, who can play both spots, played well this spring next to Tyler.

"We come from similar backgrounds and enjoy similar things, so the chemistry was already there," Tyler said. "Then on top of that, we're playing together and always together in meetings and doing things together. When you have that relationship, it's just easier to play alongside of someone like that."

Tyler's and Williams' development has created depth at the linebacker positions. That depth has been tested in the past and may get tested again in 2012.

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## A QUICK GLANCE

**Returning starter:**Jeron Gouveia-Winslow  
(12 career starts)**Starter lost:** none**Projected new starter:** none**Top reserves:** Alonzo Tweedy (1 career start), Ronny Vandyke**Newcomer:** Vandyke**Breakout candidate:** Tweedy**Notes:** Tweedy's lone career start came against BC last season ... Tweedy recorded 10 of his 11 solo tackles in three games (3 vs. Miami and Michigan, 4 vs. Wake Forest) ... Gouveia-Winslow started the first four

games of last season before going down for the season against Miami in the Hokies' sixth game ... Vandyke won the Paul Torgersen Award this spring as the top defensive newcomer of spring practice ... Nick Dew left the program after the spring semester.

## TWEEDY HOPING TO STAY HEALTHY AND CONTINUE SOLID PLAY FROM THE END OF LAST SEASON

by Jimmy Robertson

Alonzo Tweedy was starting to show his potential early last season.

He recorded eight tackles in Tech's win over Miami and added six more in the Hokies' victory over Wake Forest. Then, he got the starting nod at whip linebacker for the Hokies' next game, one versus BC, after Jeron Gouveia-Winslow went down with an injury against Wake.

But that same injury bug, one that unfortunately likes Tweedy, bit him. Again.

Tweedy injured his ankle against BC and it cost him the next three games. He returned for the Virginia game, but didn't return to form until the Sugar Bowl. The injury marked the second straight year he's been limited, as he dealt with a groin injury for much of his junior year.

"It's been tough," Tweedy said. "I've tried to fight through it and help the team out. Hopefully, this

year, I can stay healthy and play the whole year."

Tech's coaches hope to see the Tweedy they saw against Michigan in the Sugar Bowl. He recorded three tackles, including one for a loss, and he played well in coverage. He played with speed – something he possesses in abundance, at least, when healthy.

"I just wanted to step up and step out instead of putting a freshman [Nick Dew] into a predicament where he didn't really know the playbook," Tweedy said.

Because of that game and because of his off-season, he finds himself in the mix with Gouveia-Winslow for the starting nod at whip. The two bring slightly different skill sets to the position, but plenty of experience.

Gouveia-Winslow saw limited action this spring because of his injury (Lisfranc), and Tweedy took advantage of the extra reps. He played fast and physical

## 2012 DEPTH CHART

43 Jeron Gouveia-Winslow (6-2, 210, r-Sr.)

28 Alonzo Tweedy (6-2, 193, r-Sr.)

37 Ronny Vandyke (6-3, 215, r-Fr.)

and was all over the field. For his efforts, he received the Coaches Award as the defensive player who had an exceptional spring.

"I think it went well," Tweedy said of his spring. "I tried to get better. I got more reps and I got back on top of stuff. I'm trying to get the starting job, or at least get some more playing time."

Expect Gouveia-Winslow, Tweedy and impressive freshman Ronny Vandyke to be on most of Tech's special teams. Tech's staff loves Vandyke, a redshirt freshman who won the Paul Torgersen Award as the top defensive newcomer during spring practice. VT

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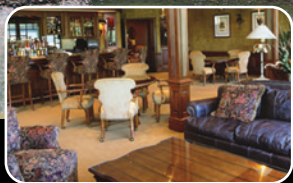
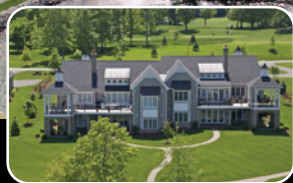
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## 2012 DEFENSIVE BACKS DEPTH CHART

### FIELD CORNERS

**17** Kyle Fuller (6-0, 193, Jr.)

**30** Donaldven Manning (5-9, 155, Fr.)

### BOUNDARY CORNERS

**1** Antone Exum (6-1, 224, r-Jr.)

**31** Donovan Riley (5-11, 200, Fr.)

**13** Davion Tookes (5-10, 171, Fr.)

## BONNER READY TO CONTINUE TREMENDOUS PLAY THIS SPRING IN TECH'S SECONDARY

by **Jimmy Robertson**

On a sweltering July afternoon, several of Tech's skill players participated in passing drills (voluntary, of course) directed by quarterbacks Logan Thomas and Mark Leal.

At the end of the session, Darius Redman, a backup tight end and a redshirt freshman, started to walk off the field with the others. But a familiar voice called out to him.

"Hold on, Darius. I'll work with you," Detrick Bonner said.

For another 20 minutes or so, Bonner defended Redman as he ran routes and caught passes from Leal. After each route, Bonner offered some tips to the young tight end on what to look for when he lined up against a defender and how to beat coverages on certain routes.

"I'll help anyone," Bonner said. "That's not an issue at all for me. I'm trying to help him [Redman] get better. He's got to get quicker, and he knows that. But as you're helping someone else, you're getting better. I usually have to stick with the tight ends during a game, and it's not easy, so that helps me."

Bonner's helping Redman was just another step in the maturation process of a guy who was arguably Tech's best defensive player in spring practice. The redshirt sophomore won the Dr. Richard Bullock Award during spring practice as the defensive player who showed the most improvement.

It came as a bit of surprise considering Bonner found himself moved to a different position at the

## A QUICK GLANCE

### ROVERS

- 34** Kyshoen Jarrett (5-11, 195, Soph.)
- 13** Boye Aromire (6-0, 197, Soph.)
- 2** Michael Cole (6-1, 199, r-Fr.)

### FREE SAFETIES

- 8** Detrick Bonner (6-0, 198, r-Soph.)
- 40** Wiley Brown (5-10, 207, r-Sr.)
- 26** Desmond Frye (6-2, 181, Fr.)

**Returning starters:** Kyle Fuller (20 career starts), Antone Exum (19)

**Starters lost:** Eddie Whitley (28 career starts), Jayron Hosley (26)

**Projected new starters:** Detrick Bonner (4 career starts), Kyshoen Jarrett

**Top reserves:** Donaldven Manning, Boye Aromire, Michael Cole, Donovan Riley

**Newcomers:** Manning, Cole, Riley, Davion Tookes, Desmond Frye

**Breakout candidate:** Bonner

**Notes:** Bonner started the last two games of the regular season last year and the Sugar Bowl game, as Tech's staff went with a nickel defense ... Fuller (President's Award for leadership during the offseason) and Exum (Don Williams TEAM UNITED Award as the player who put the team first) also garnered awards this past spring ... Tech's secondary has combined for just four career interceptions (Fuller - 2, Exum, Bonner).

start of spring practice. Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster and defensive backs coach Torrian Gray made several changes in the secondary, moving Antone Exum to cornerback and both Kyshoen Jarrett and Bonner to the safety spots. Bonner flourished.

"I was a safety in high school, so it just felt natural to me," the Georgia native said. "It felt like I was being freed instead of face to face with another person. I think I'm better at safety, and it showed this spring. I think the coaches got to see my natural ability."


Tech's secondary, which lost safety Eddie Whitley and cornerback Jayron Hosley, features

a lot of talent in Kyle Fuller, Exum and Bonner. Exum led the Hokies with 89 tackles last season, and Fuller, a first-team All-ACC selection, finished with 14.5 tackles for a loss, 4.5 sacks and two interceptions. Bonner started four games late in the year and had an interception.

But the Hokies need for Jarrett to continue to improve, and the staff needs to find some depth. Entering fall practice, only Boye Aromire, who can back up both spots, and Wiley Brown, a walk-on, have any experience – and most of their experience came on special teams last season. So they need to develop, along with newcomers like Donaldven Manning and Michael Cole, two freshmen.

"Our expectations are high," Bonner said. "We feel like we can be one of the best groups in the country. We worked hard all summer, and we've gotten better."

As for Bonner, he has high expectations for himself. He bulked up to nearly 200 pounds and spent a lot of time studying film to get ready for the season.

"It's crazy. You've got to know everything about the defense," Bonner said of his new position. "You've got to make calls and communicate and put people in the right position. It's hard, but it's also exciting. Every day, I got better, and I'm excited about the season." 

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**A QUICK GLANCE**
**Returning starter:**

Cody Journell (13 career starts)

**Starters lost:** Justin

Myer (played in 54 games in his career as the kickoff specialist), Danny Coale, Collin Carroll (snapper; played in every game the past four seasons)

**Projected new starters:** Michael

Branthover, Joe St. Germain

**Top reserves:** Brooks Abbott, Hunter

Windmuller, A.J. Hughes

**Newcomers:** Windmuller, Abbott, Hughes

**Breakout candidate:** Branthover

**Notes:** Journell earned honorable mention All-ACC honors a year ago ...

Branthover's 75-yard punt against Duke last season was tied for the second-longest in school history ... Branthover played in six games as a true freshman, seeing action after Scott Demler struggled for several games ... Freshman Hunter Windmuller was an All-Met selection by The Washington Post.

## BRANTHOVER ANXIOUS TO TAKE OVER AS HOKIES' PUNTER

by Jimmy Robertson

Tech head coach Frank Beamer spent a lot of time this past spring watching his kickers – and for good reason.

A year ago, the Hokies used three punters who combined to rank 108th out of 120 teams nationally in net punting, and also, starting placekicker Cody Journell missed spring ball tending to an off-the-field matter. So Beamer wanted to get an evaluation of all his kickers.

Michael Branthover figures to be the guy at punter this season after playing as a true freshman last season. He punted 25 times and averaged 36.6 yards per punt, with a long of 75 yards – tied for the second-longest punt in school history. He led Tech with seven punts inside the 20 and four punts of 50 yards or more.

But his lack of consistency resulted in him being replaced by Danny Coale toward the end of the sea-

son. So consistency has been his focus this summer.

"I don't think I was pleased with my efforts [last season] at all," Branthover said. "I've been training a lot this summer, and I do need to be better. I want to start off on the right foot. I've got a lot of goals I want to meet, and I think I can do a lot better. I definitely want to average at least 40 yards on every kick and have really good hang time. I tend to hit line drives some times, and that's not very good for the coverage team.

"Right now, I'm punting really well. Last season, I kept holding the ball too far inside and kept hitting the ball left. I'm kicking straight through the ball now and getting really good hang time."

Journell will return at placekicker after Tech AD Jim Weaver reinstated him to the team. He made 14 of 17 attempts last season on his way to earning honorable mention All-ACC honors. But the kickoff job remains open.

### 2012 SPECIAL TEAMS DEPTH CHART

**PLACEKICKERS**

- 89** Cody Journell (5-11, 178, r-Jr.)  
**13** Brooks Abbott (6-2, 182, Fr.)  
**5** Ethan Keyserling (6-2, 205, r-Soph.)

**PUNTERS**

- 38** Michael Branthover (5-8, 187, Soph.)  
**23** Hunter Windmuller (6-3, 170, Fr.)  
**24** A.J. Hughes (6-1, 190, Fr.)  
**5** Ethan Keyserling (6-2, 205, r-Soph.)

**SNAPPERS**

- 65** Joe St. Germain (6-0, 216, r-Soph.)  
**59** Eddie D'Antuono (6-6, 256, Fr.)

Joe St. Germain will replace four-year starter Collin Carroll as the snapper. 

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# GREAT expectations

Victoria Hamsher led the team with 150 blocks a year ago, and the Hokies will be counting on similar production this season.

## The return of four seniors, including stalwarts Cara Baarendse and Jen Wiker, have the Tech volleyball squad entering the 2012 season with hopes of returning to the NCAA Championships

by **Marc Mullen**

With almost 1,100 sets played by his front line and more than 1,000 career sets played by his four seniors, Virginia Tech head volleyball coach Chris Riley is confident in the Hokies' ability to score points this season.

But there are tasks to be done. No. 1 on that list is replacing Erin Leaser, who finished her four-year career in Blacksburg ranked third in career assists with more than 4,600.

"Losing Erin is a big loss. She was a great player, a great leader, but we've got some really good, young kids behind her," Riley said. "She helped bring the program to a level that allowed us to recruit kids like her. We expect Jordan [Fish] to do very well. She saw some playing time in the fall and had a great spring, and we expect some great setting stuff from Jordan.

"And Sydnee [Arnson], as a freshman, will come in and help us immediately as well. She is an athletic, fast kid who is a good setter and has a great presence on the court. We expect all

of our setters, with Allison [Munter] as well, to give us what we will be losing by Erin graduating."

Offensively speaking, assists in volleyball are tallied in much the same way as any other sport – a pass by a player that results in a point or goal – and with so many players who can deliver those results for the Hokies on the front line, the assists should pile up for whoever is playing in Leaser's absence.

The experience for the 2012 team starts with seniors Cara Baarendse (360 career sets played, 992 career kills) and Jennifer Wiker (320, 784) and is coupled up by juniors Victoria Hamsher (241, 388) and Samantha Gostling (166, 326). Add in senior Morgan O'Neill with 316 career sets in the back line (with 1,012 career digs), and the Hokies' core is solid.

"We are going to be pretty deep and experienced for the most part," Riley said. "Our two starting outsides have been playing since they

got here. Jen [Wiker] is a fifth-year senior and should be one of our leaders on our team on and off the court. Cara Baarendse, obviously, is a two-time All-American. We expect great things out of her, and she's playing well.

"Those are two that are going to make us really good offensively this year. We are expecting big things from both of our front-row seniors in that regard, and then Morgan and Liz [Trinchere] should be able to help us out defensively quite a bit."

When Felicia Willoughby graduated from Tech in 2011, she took a list of accolades that seemed almost unattainable – a three-time honorable mention All-American, a three-time All-East Region first-team member, and a three-time All-ACC first-team selection. But if Baarendse has her typical season, she will equal the accomplishments of Willoughby, as she has been a two-time selection of each of those honors.



Meanwhile, Wiker is fresh off of helping the USA White team to the gold medal in the 2012 U.S. Women's National Volleyball A2 Tournament in Columbus, Ohio. The A2 program featured just 48 college players selected from a field of over 200.

"Jen competed and trained with some of the best college kids in the country in Columbus for 10-12 days, and her team wound up winning the whole thing," Riley said. "That's a pretty big story. We've never had anyone selected to that."

"So for someone to be selected with just a handful of other ACC players is a real accomplishment for all the work she's done and how hard she's worked to get better and where we are going as a program and the kind of level of kid we are sending out."

Riley also is very excited about a freshmen class that includes Arnson, Alexa Swann, who was the Gatorade Player of the Year in Pennsylvania, Kennedy Bryan, an honorable mention AVCA All-American as a senior, and Kenedy McGrath, a defensive gem from California. With so much experience, he will rely on the upperclassmen to provide the leadership for the younger players, knowing that they should be able to handle anything that comes their way.

"Jen is definitely one of our leaders, her and Tori [Hamsher], who had an unbelievable

spring. We expect her to be our top middle this year," he said. "Both are very good leaders on the court with what they are trying to accomplish, and then with Liz and Morgan being seniors, they are playing a huge leadership role in what we are trying to accomplish."

"Our whole class of seniors has been here and through it for a long time. Nothing should unravel the seniors when it comes to a game or practice or anything that happens."

"They are great people, and they work so hard. I think the season will be a very positive one for those players and for our whole program. I've got a really great group right now that's really easy to work with."

In 2010, Virginia Tech advanced to its first NCAA Championship in a season that saw the Hokies go 6-0 on neutral courts and 11-9 overall away from Cassell Coliseum. It has been more than 15 seasons since the Hokies have posted a losing record at home (1996), but almost as long since registering a winning record on the road (1998).

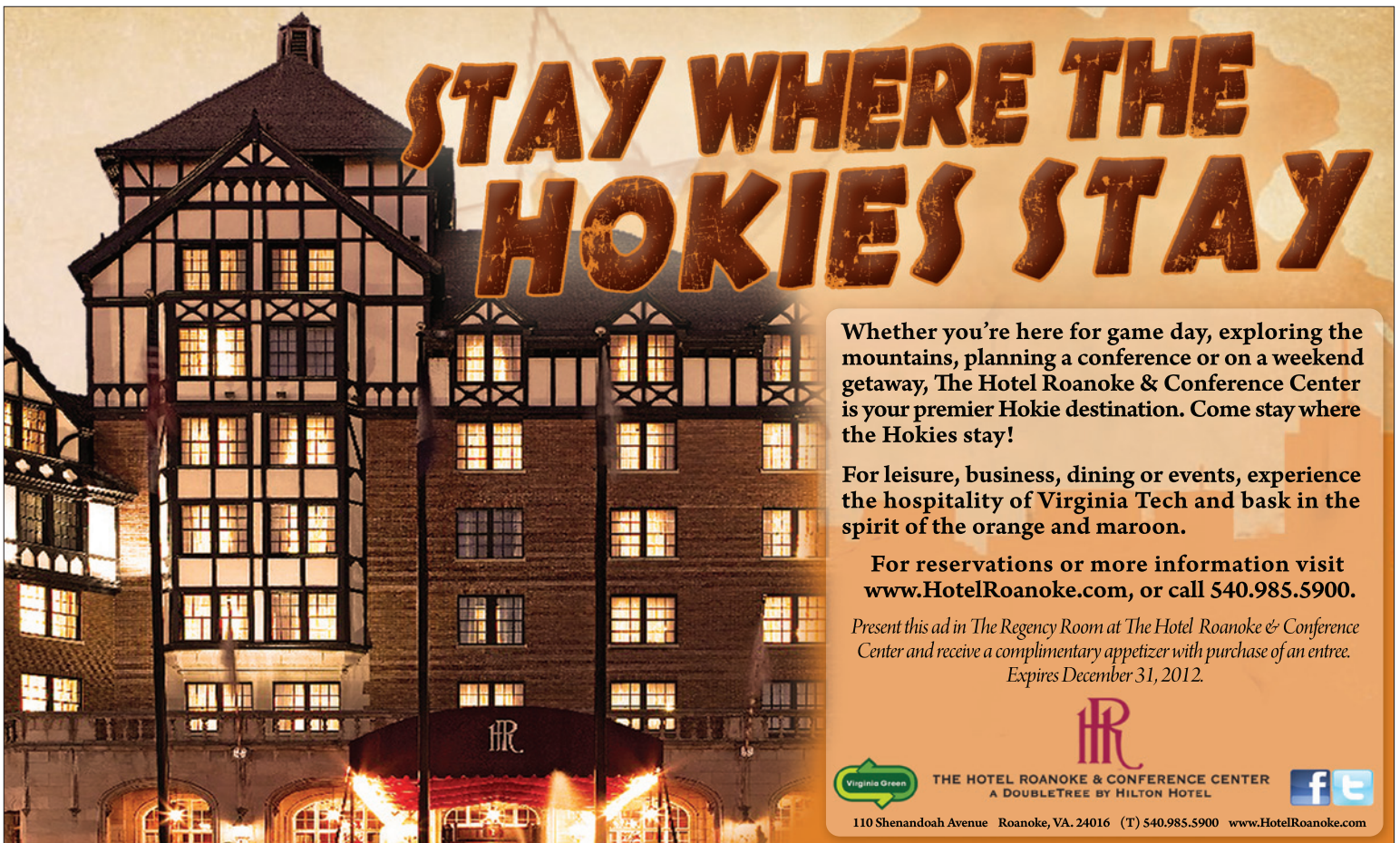
The Hokies might have been invited back to a second straight postseason if not for a pair of unfortunate losses on the road last year. Of their 13 losses, 10 were to NCAA teams, but they lost at Boston College (seven wins all year) and at Wake Forest (9).

"They both should have been wins," Riley said. "Home-court advantage in the ACC is a big thing, so that is why we are very good here [at Cassell Coliseum], but everyone else is good at their place, too. It is a challenge to win on the road, and that's why this year, same as in 2010, we're going on the road early and often to learn to play on the road."

"Because in our conference – we feel comfortable that we are going to win at home – we've got to be able to go on the road and win against teams that are comparable to us. For us, it's about going to Missouri early, playing against good competition in Missouri and Michigan."

"That's what we need, and that's the challenge that we have to have. Then going to High Point and getting to play Loyola Marymount, a top-40 team coming out, on a neutral court is a good challenge for us. Again, these are the kinds of things that we are looking forward to, and for us to grow as a program, we've got to be able to go on the road and win. That's the way we've got it set up."

The Hokies' 2012 season starts with the Tiger Volleyball Invitational hosted by Missouri on Aug. 24-25 before Tech will serve as the host of its own tournament Aug. 31-Sept. 1 – the only non-conference events at home this season for the team. 





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# Scoring a point of emphasis for Tech men's soccer team heading into 2012 season

by Marc Mullen

David Clemons scored two goals a year ago and could provide some much-needed offense for Tech this season.

When assessing his Virginia Tech team's 2011 season and looking ahead to 2012, head men's soccer coach Mike Brizendine came to the realization that a couple factors would determine any future success. And he started taking the necessary steps to get the team moving in that direction.

The first, which is apparent to anyone, is goal scoring. In 19 games last year, the Hokies scored just 15 goals in a season in which they finished 4-13-2.

"When I reflect back on last year, we started out losing to Howard, which was a very tough loss," Brizendine said. "We lost to Wisconsin in overtime, beat Cincinnati, beat [No. 1] UNC, and were down at Boston College, 3-1, and came back to tie that game.

"Right there, we win that game and who knows [the Hokies lost 4-3 to the Eagles]? That's how close our games were. We could have taken that momentum from there, and who knows what could have happened?"

"There is no secret that we can defend. We need to score goals. If we have one guy who steps up and scores eight goals, or by committee, four or five guys scoring three or four goals, this will be a very exciting season for us. We can't have three guys scoring two goals and expect to do well."

When the spring exhibition season opened for the Hokies back in March, the soccer staff believed it needed to shake up the offense and incorporate a new system, and Brizendine was satisfied with the results.

"There were certainly some bright sides to it,

and ultimately, at the end, we showed what we could do in that system by getting some results against some good teams, including American, who beat us the previous fall, and Liberty, who was an NCAA team," he said.

Aside from scoring more goals, the Hokies need to fare well in a couple of other areas. As always, the team needs to stay healthy, and Brizendine also hopes that experience will lead to better performances on the road.

"We didn't do well on the road, and that's got to get better," he said. "Now that these guys have some experience, we're little better seasoned. We have to have some success there. So we hope maturity will help us get over that hump.

"We also have to stay healthy. There were a couple of injuries that we had last year to guys, and David Clemons is a perfect example. He ended up being a leading scorer with only two goals (in 10 games).

"I think we have a very solid defense. Our goalkeeper position is going to be our most competitive position, and we have a very strong backline, so there are a lot of positives."


The Hokies top returning goalkeeper is junior Kyle Renfro, who posted a 1.25 goals allowed average, playing every minute of the season in net for Tech. The 25 goals he surrendered were the fewest by a Tech goalkeeper since the 2005 season.

The Forest, Va., native has been nothing but spectacular in his 26 games played so far, posting a 1.19 career GAA. To put that into perspective, the best four-year mark a Tech goalie has posted is 1.12 by Chase Harrison (2002-05). However, Renfro is far from Harrison's win total (41-7).

"With Kyle, he's done a lot to help his case as our starter, and he was very good in the spring," Brizendine said. "In front of him, we should do very well. Drew Ranahan is a redshirt sophomore, so he will be a third-year guy, and Austin Stewart (a redshirt junior) played in the back in the spring for us. We think that he can fill in a role there. Then there are our seniors, Devante Dubose and David Fiorello, who played in the back and at midfield, so the backline unit should be strong."

If the defense can repeat a performance from the 2011 season and the offense can score a few more goals, the Hokies could be a 10-win program in 2012. Consider these facts from a year ago – the Hokies went into overtime seven times and were just 1-4-2 in those contests. The previous three seasons, they were 1-2-5 in eight overtime games combined.

"Again, the reality is we're still in that building process, and that's one of those things where it takes some time," Brizendine said. "Last year, even though results-wise you wouldn't say this, you look through statistics, and we are moving closer to where we want to be. So we are pushing toward that and getting the momentum going in the right direction, and I think this spring was a springboard for that.

"Our guys are excited, and they know the direction we are heading. It has been a while since we've had some encouragement coming out of the spring, and so we are just going to try and build off that. It just takes time, hard work, diligence, and I think we have the right chemistry, the right make-up, and the right intestinal fortitude to get better. I'm excited about that." 



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## HOKIES *with* EXPERIENCE *and* TALENT

Kelsey Mitchell has started every game of her career at Tech and that experience will be a plus for the Hokies this season.

### The Tech women's soccer team returns several key parts from last year's Sweet 16 squad

by **Marc Mullen**

Glancing at the 2012 Virginia Tech women's soccer roster and parsing that against the Hokies' 2011 final stats from a team that posted a 14-8-1 record and advanced to the sweet 16 of the NCAA Women's Soccer Championships, it is hard to image anything that could spoil another double-figure winning season, a trip to the ACC Championships and an NCAA Tournament invite.

However, that is a great reason why Charles "Chugger" Adair is coaching the Virginia Tech team.

"As you go every year, you have new leaders emerge, and it's how do the upperclassmen help manage the team, help keep the team on a path that's going to be positive," Adair said. "We lost Brittany Popko, Katie Cramp, Brittany Michels and Rachel Beaumont. They were all very good leaders who understood the program and un-

derstood the dynamics of the program and could separate themselves from some of the issues that could derail a team.

"I think it's important for our seniors that are here, our leaders, to help manage that and help the staff manage that. It's not just on the field; it's off-the-field stuff as well. How we stay focused as a team, how we continue to grow and how we continue to build, that will determine our success."

Those four players lost to graduation were not just good leaders, but they were also winners. They became the first class at Tech to post four straight seasons with at least 10 victories and left the program with a four-year best 50 wins. The quartet also became the first graduating class to see the NCAA postseason tournament in each of their four years with the Hokies.

The Hokies' quintet of seniors this season can

only match a four-year run with another NCAA berth, but with 11 wins, the class would push past last year's class for the most wins in a four-year span. However, with all the recent success, instilling the sense that there is still more to accomplish is paramount to Adair.

"Letting the girls recognize it's a new season and it's a new team, with new team dynamics, that we are moving forward to get better and not just thinking that we're just going to show up," Adair said as in how to get his team motivated. "There are going to be new questions asked of this team and new things developed throughout the season, so we've been trying to grind that into them since they came back in January.

"I think we've done a good job in the past. Last year, we did talk about the seniors being the first four-time [NCAA] players in the program.

So we talked about a lot last year and this year, and we're going to need to get the mentality that this is the way it's going to be – the expectation that we make the ACC Tournament, the NCAA Tournament and then see what can happen from there.

“We need to continue to push the girls. I tried to remind them before they left [for the summer] that we haven't accomplished anything in this year. All the stuff that we did was in 2011, and 2012 is a new year and it started already when we started training. I tried to send them off with that thought that their preparation is extremely important to get us off on the right foot as we go into our non-conference and our conference season.”

Among the returnees that Adair will lean upon to make a successful transition into 2012 includes the team's top five point scorers from a year ago in seniors Kelly Conheeney (12 goals, six assists) and Anne Lumpkin (3 and 4), juniors Shannon Mayrose (9 and 3) and Jazmine Reeves (5 and 9) and sophomore Kelsey Loupee (2 and 7).

The team also has three seniors returning on the back line, each of whom started and played in all 23 games for Tech last year. They include Kelsey Mitchell, who has started every game (65) since arriving in Blacksburg, Amanda Gerhard (36 career starts) and Julia Goldsworthy (50). Add in talented goalkeeper Dayle Colpitts, and

the holes in a lineup look very limited.

“Yes, we do have three defenders coming back, but we'll be missing a center back – Michels, who was a four-year starter there,” Adair said. “Kelsey Mitchell slid in from right back into a center back role during the season for us. She's not a center back by trade, so we'll need to fill in that center back spot, but having three seniors will help us for sure.”

“Then we need to fill a role as a holding center mid or a center-mids job, which was Brittany Popko's. She did a lot of non-glorious work for us – ball-winning, kind of roll-up-your-sleeves-and-battle-for-the-ball work. So I think we'll miss that in the midfield.”

“I do think we have a number of players that can step in and do that job for us, one of them being incoming Ashley Meier or Kelsey Loupee. Katie Yensen did a good job for us playing in the midfield before. So we have a handful of kids who can step in and do that for us. Courtney Stutts, possibly. So we're just looking to fill that role as well.”

One last thing that Adair has pointed to that could slow down his team – at least at the start of the season – is the spectacle that is the 2012 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup that will take place in Japan this August and early September.


Two players – Colpitts and Meier – could have the opportunity to be called up by their respec-

tive national teams to participate in the event. Colpitts actually helped the Canadian team reach the world cup in the CONCACAF qualifier back in March, while Meier played for the USA team in a pair of matches in Japan in June.

“I'm looking forward to the year,” Adair said. “I'd be lying if I said that I wasn't a little bit nervous because of all the variables at the start of this season. I think we'll have to do a good job of sorting that out. Who goes and who stays, and we aren't the only team out there that's handling that. Illinois' coach (Janet Rayfield) is gone with the U-20 team, and everyone in our conference has that one special player missing for the start of the season.”

“I am looking forward to the challenge and the start of the season for us. I think the girls are as well. I have been pleased with their work rate in the offseason, their bonding and their preparations so far, from what I've seen and heard.”

The women's team kicks off its season by serving as the hosts of the Virginia Tech Tournament over the August 17-19 weekend against UNC Wilmington and Richmond. The schedule also consists of nine NCAA teams, seven that made the sweet 16 and three Final Four squads.

That makes for a tough test, but one the Hokies will be ready for if Adair has anything to say about it. 



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# Breaking from the pack

The Virginia Tech men's cross country team returns its entire squad, and the Hokies hope to sprint to an ACC championship

by Marc Mullen

A pair of All-Atlantic Coast Conference and All-South Regional performers in redshirt seniors Will Mulherin and Michael Hammond return for the Virginia Tech cross country team in 2012, and so does the entire squad that finished fourth at the ACC Championships last year.

So there are good reasons why Tech head cross country/distance coach Ben Thomas is quite optimistic about the upcoming season.

"On the men's side, as far as experience and level of returners, it should be the best team we've ever had, and our best chance to challenge for an ACC title," Thomas said. "Especially with the experience that we have coming back in Mulherin and Hammond.

"Mulherin is a returning All-American, and Michael Hammond certainly has the potential to be an All-American, and has been an All-American on the track [in the 1,500-meter run]. I'd love to see him do it in cross country. So that's a pretty good one-two punch."

Mulherin earned his All-America honor with a 30th-place showing at the NCAA Championship meet, becoming just the ninth cross country All-American at Tech. He also earned All-Region honors at the NCAA Southeast Regional with a fifth-place finish, and he became just the second Hokie on the men's side to be a two-time All-ACC runner in cross country after his seventh-place finish at the ACC Championship meet.

Hammond wasn't too far behind, although he did not advance to the NCAA meet. He earned All-ACC honors after a 10th-place finish at the conference meet and All-Region recognition after placing 19th at the Southeast Regional.

After his top guns, Thomas pointed to the experience and depth of the rest of his squad as a reason the Hokies are looking for an ACC title and a possible team berth into the NCAA Championships.

Jason Cusack, a senior who finished 30th and was the third Hokie across the finish line at the ACC meet, and juniors Leoule Degfae (35th at the ACC meet and 34th at regionals), and Jared Berman, (42nd and 49th, respectively) are three more upperclassmen who will provide leadership.

Sophomores Thomas Curtin, (30th and 54th, respectively), Kevin Dowd, who ran strong early

last season but was lost to injury, and redshirt freshman Darren Barlow round out the top guys on the men's side.

"Tommy Curtin ran well on the track in 5K, and he did really well in cross country last year as a freshman. I think he's going to be a player," Thomas said. "Leoule Degfae was 13th in our region in the 10K during outdoor track, which is really an outstanding finish, so that was a great ending point for track, and we think he'll have a lot of confidence off of that to really help us in cross [country].

"Jared Berman will be a big help, as will Darren Barlow and Kevin Dowd, who are two guys we redshirted last year and could really be a big boost. Darren had a really nice indoor season, while Kevin ran for us in both (indoor and outdoor) and made the NCAA Championships (1,500). He could be huge for us."

And Thomas' opinion on the legitimate possibility of hoisting a men's ACC cross country trophy – the only one Mulherin and Hammonds have yet to hold?

"It's so tight between who I think will be the top three teams, so we will really have to nail it on the day," he said.

For the women, Thomas believes the rebounding of his runners from injuries will determine if they can get back to where he'd like to see them – among the top five in the conference.

"We had some injuries last spring with [juniors] Courtney Dobbs and Madalyn Nuckols to be specific – two of our top four – so it's going to be dependent on how strong they can come back," he said. "We can replace Sammy Dow [lost to graduation] with Sarah Rapp [a sophomore], who had a really tremendous freshman year and has a chance to be our No. 1 runner.

"Junior Paige Kvartunas finally stayed healthy all year long, and I think that's going to help her a lot. Her freshman year (2009), she was all-region, and she needs to really step up for us."


However, getting back in the top five in the ACC on the women's side for the Hokies – which they attained in 2006 and 2007 – will be a difficult task when considering the conference had six teams ranked in the top 25 during the course of the 2011 season and four that advanced to the NCAA Championships.



Jason Cusack, who finished 30th last season at the ACC meet, is part of a deep and talented 2012 Tech men's cross country squad.

"The ACC is a tough league, and we are hoping to improve and get a top-five finish with this group," Thomas said. "If we get everyone healthy, this is the third year of a pretty experienced group, and hopefully, we can really move up on what we did last year, at least, in cross country."

Kaila Blackburn is a freshman and someone who could help out right away, and Thomas also mentioned that another junior, Taylor Crosson, also missed most of the spring to injury.

"They are all back running," he said. "It's just that October is coming pretty quick here, so if they can stay healthy and consistent, they could be very good. But we've got to see how fast they heal up and get back into real training mode." 



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