

**INSIDE**

# HOKIE SPORTS

*The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics*

## ATHLETES OF THE YEAR



Dorotea Habazin and Alexander Ziegler are Inside Hokie Sports' athletes of the year after both won national championships in the hammer throw.



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Top 10 moments of the year  
on page 20.



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Hokie Club News ..... 4  
News & Notes ..... 9  
From the Editor's Desk ..... 11  
*Cody Journell ready for his chance as Tech's kicker*  
Kroger Roth Report ..... 12  
*Wilson strives to be great - on the track and on the field*  
Compliance Corner ..... 14  
Track & Field Spotlight ..... 16  
*Marcel Lomnický - from figure skater to one of the nation's best in the hammer throw*  
Top 10 Moments ..... 20  
*The top 10 sports moments of this past school year*  
NCAA Track Championship ..... 22  
*Ziegler and Habazin claim national titles at NCAA Championships*  
Athletes of the Year.....24  
*Ziegler and Habazin are co-athletes of the year*  
Sport-by-Sport: AOTY .....25  
*A breakdown of each sport's athlete of the year*  
Baseball Review ..... 44  
*Tech baseball squad looks ahead to 2012*  
Great Moments in History..... 45  
*May 27, 1994 - Metro Baseball Champions*

**On the Web...**

HokieSports Weekly is a new online magazine. This publication gives a photography heavy glimpse into the most recent week in Virginia Tech Athletics. Fans can view or subscribe to this FREE publication at ...  
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## DOWN BY THE RIVER

The Pete Dye River Course of Virginia Tech was the host for the NCAA regional on May 19-21. The course proved to be not only a beautiful place to hold a national event; but also showed that it could be fair and tough to elite golfers. The Hokies finished sixth.







### THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

“My time at Virginia Tech has been great. I want to thank all Hokie Club members for their support.”

**Blake Redmond** - Junior - Golf

“Virginia Tech was a four-year experience where I made a lifetime of memories and relationships on and off the golf course. Thank you, and I will always be a Hokie!”

**Aaron Eckstein** - Senior - Golf





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## Marshall Bates

**Current Hokie Club level:**

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**Hokie Club member since:**

1979

**Currently resides:**

Cary, N.C.

**Family:**

Wife – Tink

Daughter – Danielle (VT 2003, 2005)

Son – Chad

**Graduation year:**

1970



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

**A:** The Hokie Club is a superb way of giving back to a great university. Athletics remain a large part of the student experience, and I believe alumni should support that for future Hokies.

**Q: What makes the Research Triangle area (Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill) such a great community for the Hokies?**

**A:** Cary and the Triangle area of North Carolina has been a great place for us. It became greater in 2004 when Virginia Tech joined the ranks of ACC members. Our local Raleigh-Durham Hokie Club has grown a lot over the 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:** The first football game in September of 1965 sitting in a brand new, almost finished Lane Stadium was all it took for a new freshman to be a lifelong Hokie.

**Q: Do you have any game day or tailgating traditions or superstitions?**

**A:** Simply tailgating with family and friends. Several of us park together, and we have seen sons and daughters go through the Tech experience. Football weekends have grown from a bag of peanuts and a case of adult beverages to what is a grand experience today. Playing the Tech Triumph CD is mandatory as we drive to the parking lot.

**Q: Virginia Tech athletics has undertaken tremendous facilities growth and renovations. Do you have a favorite project?**

**A:** The expansion of Lane Stadium. Sitting in Lane Stadium for the first game in September of 1965, I couldn't imagine what it looks like today.

**Q: Looking at the upcoming 2011-12 academic year, what athletics event or game are you looking forward to the most?**

**A:** The Miami game – it's always a battle on the field.

**Q: My all-time favorite Virginia Tech football player is ...**

**A:** Frank Loria – he returned punts like none other. He was the most electric player of that era. His magnificent return against the University of Miami was the highlight of that game for all of us.

**Q: My all-time favorite Virginia Tech student-athlete from another sport is ...**

**A:** Duke Thorpe – he was a remarkable basketball player who seemed to deliver the timely score or needed rebound.



# A Letter From Lu

The year of 2011 marks the 140th year of Virginia Tech and the university proudly celebrated commencement May 13. We said goodbye to many outstanding student-athletes who gave us memorable moments during their careers.

Let me express my appreciation to all of you for your great support of the athletics program through your generous gifts and your attendance at our games both here in Blacksburg and on the road. It has been another successful year for Virginia Tech athletics.

When all of our students return to campus for the start of classes on August 22, the Hokie Club will have been billed for the fall tuition payment. The Board of Visitors recently voted to increase the cost to attend Virginia Tech, and as a result, the tuition bill for athletics will be higher. The Hokie Club pays the \$10 million scholarship bill from the annual fund (79 percent) and from earnings from the Athletic Endowment Fund (21 percent). It is important that we continue to grow the annual fund and seek new endowment gifts so that we can continue to fulfill our commitment to the student-athletes. Our members give for a variety of reasons and whether your reason is to give back to the University that gave you so much, or whether it is because you love Hokie athletics and you want to play your part to help the program succeed, or whether it is to receive that prime seat and parking location, you are helping the Hokie Club to fulfill its mission of providing the best for our student-athletes. I hope that you will continue to maintain, if not increase, your annual support.

Speaking of our student-athletes, several teams finished the spring season on a high note by advancing to NCAA play. The men's tennis team defeated Vanderbilt in the opening round, while the golf team was the host for a NCAA regional at The Pete Dye River Course of Virginia Tech. The Hokies finished sixth among 13 teams. Men's and women's track and field programs have also had a great postseason, having 21 athletes qualify for the NCAA Championships.

Virginia Tech's athletic teams put together an impressive performance in the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR). This scorecard tracks classroom performance of Division I teams and takes into account eligibility and retention of student-athletes over a four-year period. The most recent APR scores are based on 2006-2010 academic years. Tech's combined four-year rate of 981 is 11 points better than the national average of 970. Three Tech teams finished with perfect 1,000 scores – men's tennis, men's cross country and golf. This is men's cross country's third straight year of perfect performance and the second straight year for golf. Women's swimming (998), women's soccer (992), lacrosse (992) and volleyball (990) were close to perfection.

The 2011 edition of the Orange and Maroon Tour is now complete. Hokie Clubs in 17 areas were hosts for events and I know our coaches and staff had a great time and appreciated the warm welcome at each location. Thank you to all of the Hokies who attended and supported each event and Hokie Club Presidents, Hokie Reps, and local event sponsors, who worked hard to make these events successful.



We have announced the reseating of Lane Stadium in 2012 and Cassell Coliseum in 2013. It has been seven years since we initially conducted a reseating of these facilities and over \$218 million has been raised in support of our athletic programs.

I will provide more information in future articles on the reseating process as our committee is currently hard at work preparing for the process. It will be very similar to the initial reseating in terms of the loyalty ladder and each member's giving history being rewarded in terms of priority rankings.

Have a great summer and please stop by and see us if your travels bring you to Blacksburg.

*Go Hokies!*  
*Lu Merritt*

Director of Development, Intercollegiate Athletics





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## NEWS &amp; NOTES

### TECH EXCELS IN LATEST NCAA APR

Virginia Tech's athletics teams put together an impressive performance in the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR) program, according to the recent data released by the NCAA.

The APR is a scorecard that tracks classroom performance of Division I sports teams, and it takes into account eligibility and retention of student-athletes over a four-year period. The most recent APR scores are multi-year rates based on the scores from the 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10 academic years.

Tech's combined four-year rate of 981 is 11 points better than the national average of 970. An APR score of 925 or higher is what teams first look to meet to avoid immediate penalties (involving the possible loss of grants-in-aid).

Three Tech programs finished at perfect 1,000 scores – men's tennis, men's cross country and golf. The men's cross country team has scored 1,000 for three straight years, while the golf squad has scored 1,000 for the second straight season.

The Tech football program scored a 955 – nine points higher than the national average. Also, the men's basketball program came in at 985, 40 points higher than the national average and tied for second among ACC schools with North Carolina and NC State (behind Duke).

For more details, please check out this link on hokiesports.com - <http://www.hokiesports.com/cc/recaps/20110524aaa.html>.

### WILLIAMS, ODOM NO LONGER WITH FOOTBALL PROGRAM

Lorenzo Williams and Quillie Odom informed Tech's football coaching staff that

they do not anticipate returning to the program – though both plan on continuing coursework toward their degrees.

Williams, a whip linebacker who would have been a redshirt junior, missed all of last season with a foot injury (Lisfranc sprain) and has been hampered by injuries throughout his career. He recorded six tackles in 2008 as a true freshman, but redshirted in 2009 and then missed last year.

Odom, who also would have been a redshirt junior, played sparingly in his career, recording six tackles. He missed last season while redshirting.

### GREENBERG NAMES ASSISTANT COACH

Tech men's basketball coach Seth Greenberg named former Maryland assistant Robert Ehsan as an assistant coach, filling the spot vacated when Adrian Autry took an assistant's job at Syracuse.

Ehsan spent six seasons at Maryland under recently retired coach Gary Williams and has many ties to the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore areas – where Tech has recruited successfully in the past. He played four seasons at the University of California-Davis.

"Robert Ehsan is a perfect fit for our basketball staff," Greenberg said. "He has excellent ties to the DC/Baltimore area, as well as nationally. He has tremendous enthusiasm and passion for teaching the game of basketball and has an uncanny ability to connect with young people."

In other basketball news, Manny Atkins, a small forward, has decided to transfer to Georgia State, where he hopes to be more of a focal point. Atkins, who would have been a rising junior and a

potential starter next season, played in 33 games this past season, averaging 4.9 points and two rebounds per game.


Atkins averaged 3.8 points and 1.7 rebounds for his career at Virginia Tech, playing in 56 games and making one start in his freshman season.

### FORMER SUN BOWL STANDOUT PASSES

Oren Hopkins, who played on the Hokies' 1947 Sun Bowl team – the first Tech team ever to play in a bowl game – passed away in Easton, Md., on May 8 at the age of 86. He had been dealing with health issues related to his kidneys.

Hopkins, a Norfolk, Va., native, fought in World War II under General George Patton as part of Patton's Third Army and participated in the famous "Battle of the Bulge" in Europe. After the war, he attended Virginia Tech and graduated in 1950 with a degree in industrial engineering. An end, he played football and won the 1949 Williams Award, then the top honor handed out by the Virginia Tech athletics department.

He worked for several companies and then founded his own company in 1985. After retirement, he and his wife, Marian, traveled the world, going to places like Antarctica, Egypt, China, the Galapagos Islands, the Middle East and Africa.

Hopkins remained close to Tech. He served on the Board of Directors for the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and was a member of the Ut Prosim Society and the College of Engineering's Committee of 100. He also came back to Tech in April of 2009 for a Sun Bowl team reunion, and at the time, was one of just 19 members remaining from that team. 

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## AFTER TWO YEARS OF WAITING, JOURNELL READY FOR HIS CHANCE AS TECH'S KICKER

Cody Journell could think of many ways to build up leg strength over the course of this summer.

But hiking over a mountain in the dead of night on a major highway didn't really come to mind.

Part of his summer vacation consisted of a late-night excursion from near the Pandapas Pond entrance on Route 460 over Brush Mountain and back to Blacksburg. This unscheduled jaunt came about after his ill-running car stubbornly shut down on his way home to Ripplemead in nearby Giles County late one night. As cars sprinted by, he hoofed it in pitch-dark conditions over Brush Mountain and nearly got to Blacksburg before a friendly police officer delivered him to his girlfriend's apartment at roughly 3:30 in the morning.

"I could hear animals in the woods next to the road," Journell said. "It was a little scary."

He survived this adventure, but, like most Tech fans, he's hoping that things won't be as scary this fall when he fulfills a childhood dream and suits up for the Hokies on Sept. 3 against Appalachian State. Journell, who won the starting placekicking job, will be seeing his first game action since the fall of 2008 when he suited up for the Giles High Spartans.

"I can't wait for the season to start," Journell said. "I've been working with my dad and kicking whenever I get the chance, but July 8, when we start second summer session, that's when I'll be over here. I'm itching for it."

Journell will be kicking for a team that many rank among the preseason top 10 in the country. Phil Steele put the Hokies at No. 5, while

*Athlon* rated them No. 7. Though most rate them that high because of a perceived soft schedule, the Hokies do return 14 starters from a year ago, and Logan Thomas looks like the real deal replacing Tyrod Taylor at quarterback.

Arguably the biggest question marks may be at kicker and punter, where the Hokies have been so good for so long. Chris Hazley and Brian Saunders both earned All-ACC nods last season, and head coach Frank Beamer spent a lot of his spring looking at replacements.

Enter Journell, who won the job to replace Hazley with a consistent spring. Hazley missed one field goal last year, and, two years ago, Matt Waldron missed three. In the past 28 games, they combined to miss only four field goals.

The point is they were money – and they left pretty big kicking shoes for Journell to fill.

"There is a little more pressure," Journell said. "Those two guys were fifth-year seniors and were first-team All-ACC guys. Being a redshirt-sophomore and being in the starting spot is difficult mentally, but they're good guys and they've worked with me a lot. That's helped me more than anything."

Journell enjoyed a solid spring, seeing extensive work in a competition against Justin Myer, Tyler Weiss, Conor Goulding and others. He nailed three field goals in one scrimmage, and he only missed once in the scrimmages, though it was a short one.

But in the spring game, in front of all those fans in game-like conditions, he only got one opportunity, connecting on a chip

shot 26-yarder.

"Don't worry," Hazley told him. "I only got an extra point in the spring game last year."


Journell isn't leaving anything to chance this summer. He kicks three days a week, working on accuracy. On weekends when he meets with his kicking coach, Doug Blevins, he only kicks twice a week. Blevins is considered a guru, having worked with the likes of former Tech kicker Shayne Graham and Adam Vinatieri, both currently in the NFL, among others.

Journell knows there is an expectation to live up to the accomplishments of previous Tech kickers. Tech fans expect him to do well, and folks in Giles County especially want him to do well. A majority of them work at Tech and love the Hokies.

"You hear a lot more talk than you would if you were from somewhere else," Journell admitted. "When I go home, everyone is a Tech fan. A lot of them work over here, too. They want to know everything that is going on."

"There's a lot more pressure. But it's also a privilege. If you know you can do it, it excites you more than anything."

Journell's challenge arrives in a little more than two months. At that time, a lifetime of waiting will be over.

"I feel like I've been waiting forever, not just these past two years but since we had season tickets when I was little, I wanted to be on that field playing," he said. "I'm ready for that opportunity to come about." 

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## WILSON STRIVES TO BE GREAT - ON THE TRACK AND ON THE FIELD



While walking through the University Bookstore last week to pick up books for summer school, Virginia Tech running back David Wilson glanced toward the magazine rack.

There was Oprah on one cover ... President Obama on another ... Katy Perry on a third ...

And then "Whoa, that's me," Wilson exclaimed after a double take. "I've never been on the front of a magazine."

Until now.

Wilson, who is actually featured on the cover of several college football previews, will be front-page news this fall as the Hokies' featured running back following the early departures of Ryan Williams and Darren Evans.

While he's poised for a tremendous season on the football field, it was an eventful spring in track for Wilson, who excels in the triple jump. He recently jumped a personal-best 53 feet, 1.75 inches to finish sixth at the NCAA Championships, becoming the third Tech football player (Dennis Scott and Kenny Lewis) to earn All-America honors in track and field. Weeks earlier, he had jumped 51 feet to win the competition at the elite Penn Relays. That's pretty impressive for a guy who spends most of his time working on football.

I had the chance to visit with David recently to talk about his sensational spring and look ahead to this coming football season.

**BR:** The story about you at the bookstore is pretty funny. You're up there on the covers with Oprah, eh?

**DW:** Yeah, [James] Hopper dropped me off to run in and grab my books and I was like 'Whoa, that's me!' I've never been on a cover before.

**BR:** It's a big honor, but a big responsibility, too, no?

**DW:** For sure. I'd hate to be one of those guys



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who doesn't reach his potential. I have a big responsibility to our team and our fans and my family.

**BR:** We're going to talk football in a bit, but you've had a remarkable spring in the triple jump, including winning the event at the Penn Relays in Philadelphia. Tell us about that.

**DW:** Well, I had never been there before, so I didn't know what to expect. And it was cold, and I hadn't really jumped in weather that cold before, so that was different. We got there and I heard the crowd cheering, and I asked one of my teammates, 'Is this a football game?' I had never heard the crowd roar at a track event like the Penn Relays.

**BR:** So then you win the event, competing against these other major college guys who practice the triple jump all year. That must be odd for them.

**DW:** Yeah, I hear them whispering, 'That dude's a football player. That's the football guy.' It's kinda funny.

**BR:** Yeah, so are you better in track or football?

**DW:** Football.

**BR:** You excel in both sports, but that means more practice time, more hours away from friends and such. Why do you like track so much?

**DW:** It's the competition. I love the competition. Getting ready to compete against the best brings out the best in me, and I thrive on that. I just love seeing what the other guy has done, and then seeing if I can out-jump him.

**BR:** Well, a lot of eyes are going to be on you this fall. Darren is gone. Ryan is

gone. It's your turn.

**DW:** I've been looking forward to this a lot. I've been waiting for this moment and this pressure. I do better under pressure, always have. Just perform better when the pressure's on.

**BR:** Tell me how you think you've improved as a running back since you first came to Tech.

**DW:** Well, in high school, you don't have to pay attention to small details and still be successful. You're a lot stronger and faster than everyone else out there on the field and so you just go out and play. In college, it's not that way, so I had to adjust.

**BR:** What do you mean by 'pay attention to small details?' Give us some examples.

**DW:** You have to read your blockers more. You have to read the defenders on each play and their body language. You always have to be thinking 'What's my next step?'

I've slowed down the process, too. When I first got here, I was going fast all the time. But then you look on tape and learn the key is to set up your blocker and then go. It doesn't do any good to get there before my blocker. So I've learned to understand when to slow down and make the right read.

**BR:** What's your height and weight right now?

**DW:** I'm 5-11.5 and 205.

**BR:** Is that where you want to be?

**DW:** It's a little heavy for the triple jump, to be honest, but good for football.

**BR:** Let's talk about this fall. What are fair goals for this 2011 team?

**DW:** Well, we have a lot of new people –

new quarterback, new running back and new coaches. I do want to get back to the Orange Bowl and win it this time. That would be sweet.


**BR:** There was a different feel in the spring. So many new faces on the field and on the sidelines. Did you sense that?

**DW:** I think this team will be a little different. In the past, I don't want to say we were cocky or overconfident, but we had Ryan and we had Tyrod [Taylor] and we had all these great players and there was this build up, and then we go out and lose our first game. This year, we don't know what to expect in a lot of ways. We are confident because we have a lot of talent and a lot of guys coming back. But I think the focus is on working hard for all of us.

Having watched Wilson for a couple of years, we've seen his talent and his capabilities. Observing him engage with his teammates on both of his teams, track and football, has been very interesting as well. Initially, he stands out because of his professional wardrobe and his infectious smile. But he's off-the-charts humble and polite, which makes him a popular guy in the locker room and on the practice fields.

When I first talked with Wilson a few years ago when he was still in high school, he told the story on his conversation with then-University of Florida head coach Urban Meyer. During the recruiting process, Meyer suggested if Wilson signed with the Gators, then could be the next Percy Harvin.

Wilson responded that he didn't want to be the next anyone. He wanted to be the first David Wilson.

So far, he's done exactly that. 

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## KEEPING UP WITH COMPLIANCE

The compliance corner answers questions concerning the governance of intercollegiate athletics and its impact on our athletics department. Have a question? Please send it to [inside@hokiesports.com](mailto:inside@hokiesports.com) and we'll answer it in upcoming issues.

Now, here are a couple of questions that we've received from Tech alums and fans over the past few months, with responses from Tim Parker, senior assistant AD for compliance:

**Q:** Last fall, Iowa reported secondary violations when a couple of basketball recruits got to meet Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore at a game. Why is that a violation?

- Lisa in Blacksburg.

**TP:** "Kutcher is a native of Iowa and a one-time student at the university. Since Iowa determined that a violation occurred, he must have met the NCAA definition of a 'representative of the institution's athletics interest' (commonly known as a booster). There are several 'triggers' that can cause an individual to earn this designation: anyone who has donated to an athletics program, season ticket holders, alums, etc. NCAA rules restrict interaction between prospects and boosters during the recruiting process, largely because of the potential dangers presented by unscrupulous boosters. For the NCAA, it's all about minimizing outside influences in the recruiting process and keeping it limited to – as much as possible – coaches only."

**Q:** I read recently that Manny Atkins is planning to transfer from Virginia Tech and go to another school. Where can he transfer to and play immediately, or does he have to sit out a year no matter where he winds up? Thanks!

- Ashley in Durham, N.C.

**TP:** "Manny has decided to transfer to Georgia State, a Division I school in Atlanta. He will have to sit out a year before competing. During this time he will be eligible to practice and receive an athletics scholarship. (There would be additional restrictions on him – substantial enough to be 'deal-breakers' – if he had transferred to another ACC school.) If he had transferred to an NCAA Division II or Division III school or an NAIA school, he would likely have been able to play right away."

**Q:** Does the NCAA allow schools to help student-athletes whose families have lost everything in the recent floods and tornadoes?

- Scotty in Blacksburg.

**TP:** "Yes, this is what we in the compliance profession refer to as the 'Katrina waiver.' In 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf coast, and the NCAA allowed schools like Tulane and New Orleans to provide extra benefits to student-athletes. Obviously, under normal circumstances, the student-athletes wouldn't receive those extra benefits."

"To give you a more recent example, a devastating tornado hit Tuscaloosa, Ala., on April 27, and the next day, the


NCAA told the SEC that it would loosen the rules for the Alabama Crimson Tide's athletics department to be able to help the school's student-athletes.

"Many of these young men and women had no shelter, clothing or food. The NCAA is allowing Alabama to buy clothing and food and also to purchase plane and train tickets to get home for the summer."

"The NCAA gets its share of criticism. But in these cases, the NCAA gets it."

**Q:** I saw where Hawaii is planning on going on a foreign tour to China and Japan in August. I thought the NCAA outlawed these types of trips. Can you explain? Thanks.

- Jeremy in Christiansburg.

**TP:** "There was a proposal put forward by the NCAA membership to eliminate these tours, but it was defeated in January." 

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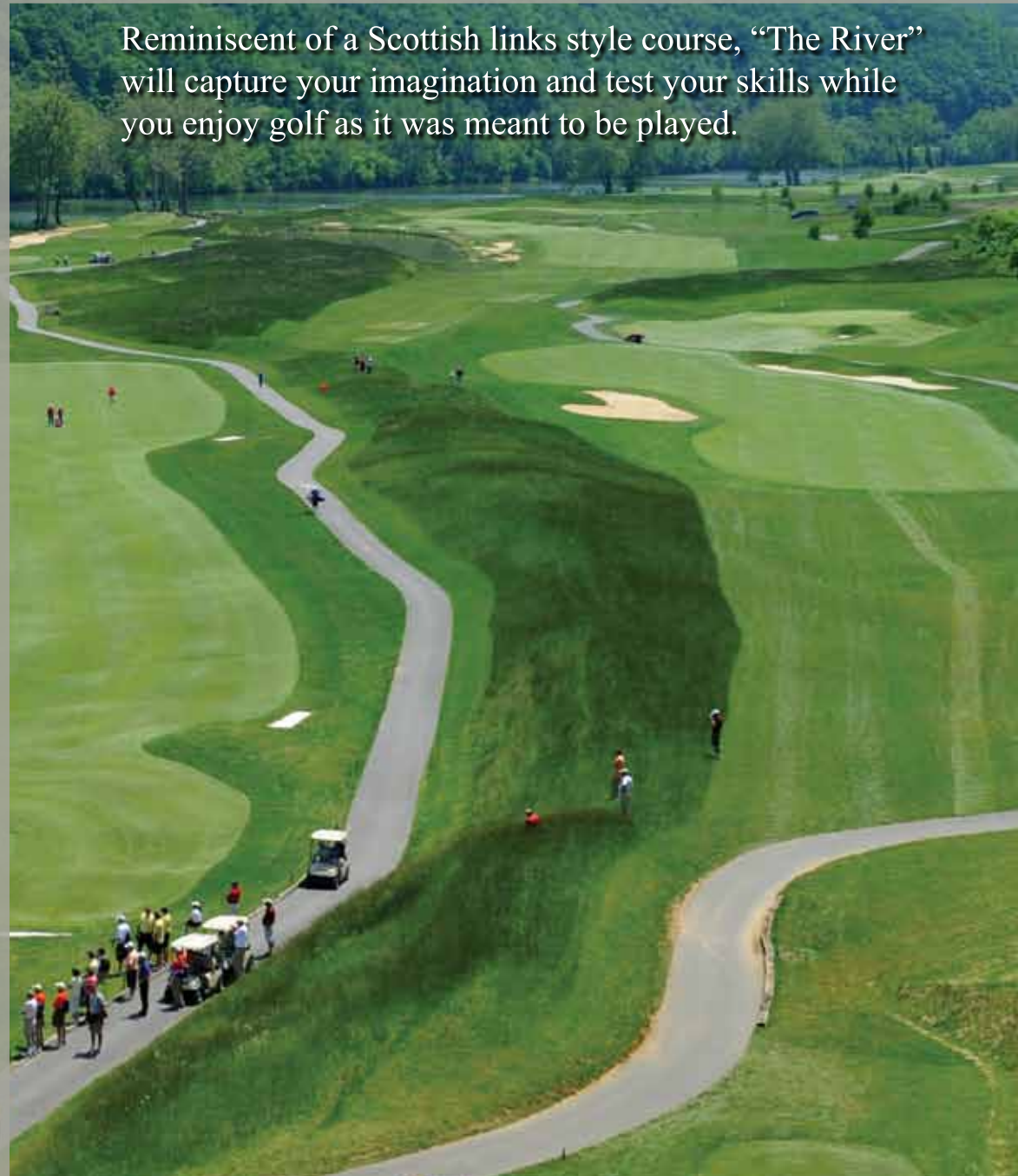


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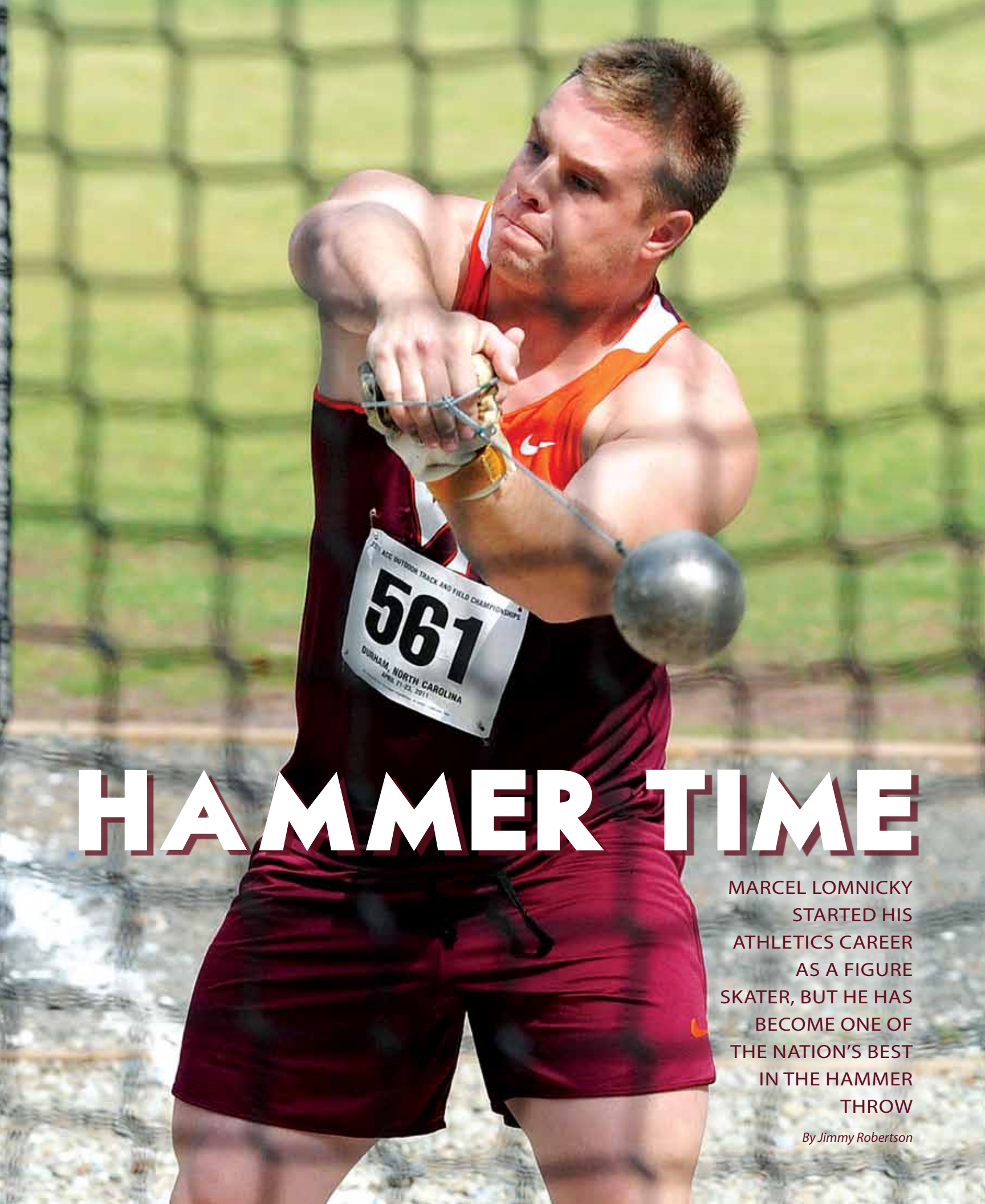
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# HAMMER TIME

MARCEL LOMNICKY  
STARTED HIS  
ATHLETICS CAREER  
AS A FIGURE  
SKATER, BUT HE HAS  
BECOME ONE OF  
THE NATION'S BEST  
IN THE HAMMER  
THROW

*By Jimmy Robertson*



**These days,** many parents are the most delusional creatures on earth. They gaze at their children with fondness, refusing to see the flaws, or denying that those flaws will morph into something worse.

But Viera Lomnicka certainly isn't like most moms.

Roughly 10 years ago, Viera, a mother of two, looked at her oldest child and saw a tubby-looking boy whose hindquarters were starting to make permanent imprints on her couch. Not wanting him to become another statistic related to childhood obesity, she forced her son to enroll in the sport of figure skating.

Yes, it's true. Marcel Lomnický, Tech's All-American in a sport that features burly men, primal screaming and a 16-pound metal ball, actually began his journey in athletics learning delicate toe loops, axels and lutzes.

"I didn't decide for myself to do figure skating," Lomnický said with a smile. "My mom decided for me.

"The truth is I was very fat as a kid. She wanted me to start moving and do something, so she picked that sport."

Lomnický certainly has moved – into elite territory, that is. Thanks now to a

regimen that consists of weekly weight lifting and plyometrics, he has turned himself from a portly kid into a muscular 220-pound athlete who is among the nation's best at the hammer throw.

The Slovakia native just missed his second national championship in the event after teammate Alexander Ziegler edged him at the NCAA Championships in Des Moines, Iowa, in early June. Yet that shouldn't diminish a career that includes a national championship, three ACC titles and five All-America nods.

These are exceptional results for a once-pudgy kid who first took up figure skating. Though in fairness, a lot of young boys in Slovakia learn to skate early on. It's a prerequisite for those who want to play ice hockey, the passion of choice among the 5 million people in this Central European country.

Lomnický tried figure skating as a kid. He tried ice hockey. He tried other sports.

"I tried all the balls," he said, referring to baseball, basketball and the like.

The hammer throw actually came about as somewhat of a last resort. He got involved in track and field as a teenager in his hometown of Nitra, an old city in southwest Slovakia. That sport offers nu-

merous opportunities, with its diverse array of running options (track) and physical alternatives (field), and Lomnický tested them all.

"In track and field, there are a lot of events, and I tried them all except the pole vault," he said. "I was too scared – and too heavy. But all the sprints and jumps, I've tried them all.

"I tried all the events and nothing was working out for me as good as hammer throwing. I think I was used to the motion from all the figure skating, just all the turns. The technique for the hammer throw was very easy for me to pick up. It was no problem at all. That's how I started. I was around 16 years old."

It led to him tossing his figure skates into his closet and tossing that 16-pound ball toward greatness. He became the Slovakia junior record holder, and he won the bronze medal at the World Junior Championships held in Beijing in 2006. In 2007, he finished third at the European U23 Championships.

Most of what he accomplished came through work ethic and talent and not necessarily through coaching. After graduating from high school in 2006, he continued to compete for a year, but he wanted to

“ I didn't decide for myself to do figure skating. My mom decided for me. The truth is I was very fat as a kid. She wanted me to start moving and do something, so she picked that sport. ” – Marcel Lomnický



get even better. To do that, he realized he needed better coaching.

"I didn't have a coach back home, and I was training by myself," Lomnický said. "I didn't want to go to the United States, but I started looking at coaches all over the world. Then I started looking at universities here."

Enter Greg Jack, Tech's acclaimed throws coach. Jack, who is wired into the track and field scene in Europe, managed to bring Lomnický over for a visit to Blacksburg. Lomnický also took a visit to Clemson, where his sister, Nikola, was at the time.

In the end, Lomnický decided to come to Tech. The process, however, was arduous. A thrower, he needed to find some way to hurdle the SAT.

Lomnický took German in high school and lacked the English needed to pass the test. After taking a class in his hometown and after multiple attempts at the SAT, he finally received the necessary score and made his way to his new home, enrolling at Tech in January of 2009.

Contrary to most international student-athletes, the transition was a breeze. Start with the food, for example.

"I really like the barbecue and all the

meats. I like the burgers. I'm not complaining," he laughed.

And as for the weather and the mountains?

"Slovakia isn't that different from here," he said. "The climate is similar – we have winter, summer, spring and fall. The people here are different. I think the people here are friendlier and more open-minded. But Slovakia is a beautiful place. We have a lot of mountains. Nature is big there. It's not very different, so the transition wasn't very hard.

"The biggest transition was the language. I didn't speak English all that well, and I had to go straight to all those classes and listen to those professors. It was rough. My first semester, I had the easiest classes I could get, but it was still hard for me. Other than that, everything is pretty similar. I actually like it more here."

It took him only a few weeks to make an impact on Tech's track and field program. In need of points from his throwers, Jack decided to have Lomnický compete in the weight throw – an event different than the hammer throw – at the ACC indoor meet at Rector Field House. Despite a lack of familiarity with the event, Lomnický won the ACC crown with a toss of nearly 69

feet. He then finished eighth at the NCAA Championships, earning All-America honors.

During the outdoor season, he dominated at his specialty, winning all five hammer throw competitions in which he competed, including the ACC title. Then, six months after his arrival in Blacksburg, he won the national championship, besting the field by tossing the hammer 235 feet, 6 inches.

"I wasn't surprised I won, but it was much closer than I thought," Lomnický said. "There were three or four guys who could have won and I won, so I was happy about it."

A year ago, he had hoped to capture back-to-back NCAA crowns, but he broke his rib throwing not long after he won his second straight ACC title, and while he competed in pain, he wasn't nearly as effective. He finished in a tie for third and earned All-America honors at the NCAA meet, but he lost out on the coveted honors of being the top thrower in the family. Sister Nikola, a little more than a year younger than Marcel, transferred to Georgia after a year at Clemson, and she won the women's national title for the Bulldogs last summer.

"We have a great relationship," Lomnický said. "We Skype every day or

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talk on the phone. We talk about everything. It's good because when I have bad days and I'm on the phone with her, she cheers me up. When she has bad days, I can do that for her."

Lomnicky concluded his outdoor career at Tech with the NCAA Championships, and he departs with the school record in the hammer throw (75.84 meters, or 248 feet, 10 inches), the 2009 national title and the three ACC titles. But he plans on returning to Blacksburg next fall for his final season of indoor eligibility. It gives him the opportunity to work with Jack and continue his education, but it may not possess the same pizzazz for him because he hates the weight throw, track and field's indoor throwing event.

"It's my duty," he said. "I have to throw it. Everybody knows I'm not a fan of weight throw, but I have to throw for points for the team. Coach knows I'm not into it. I'm not really good at it. I guess that's why I don't like it."


In the immediate future, he'll be competing in the hammer throw at the World Championships held in South Korea in late August. Then he'll come back to Tech.

But his eyes remain focused on the event that takes place a year from now – the 2012 Olympics in London. He predicts he needs a toss of 78 meters to qualify. To put the mark into perspective, Slovenia's Primož Kozmus won the gold medal in the Beijing Olympics with a toss of 82.02 meters. All of the medalists threw at least 81 meters.

Lomnicky has never thrown the hammer that far. Yet he remains optimistic.

"I need to improve my technique and get stronger," he said. "I'm still weak compared to the elite throwers, but I feel confident."

At the least, he's come a long way from the chunky kid who used to sit around his mom's house. And he's come a long way from the kid who slid around awkwardly on skates.

Now, thanks to his mom, he's on the right path. Hopefully one made of more gold. 

## FINER POINTS ABOUT THE HAMMER THROW

*(From Marcel Lomnicky)*

### THE BASICS

"The ball is 16 pounds and is attached to a wire that is attached to a handle. You spin the ball over your head and then turn four times. The faster you go, usually the farther the ball will go. Everyone gets three attempts. Then the top nine get another three attempts."

### FLEXIBILITY HELPS

"You've got to be fast and have a lot of flexibility. A body builder would be strong enough to be a thrower, but not flexible enough. With the shot put, it's all about how big and strong you are, but you wouldn't have a chance as a hammer thrower."

### WORKOUTS CONSIST OF LIFTING AND THROWING

"I take one or two days off a week. I usually lift three times a week and throw four times a week when I don't have a meet. I'll throw twice a week during weeks when I do have a meet."

### AGE HELPS

"All the great ones [throwers] are in their 30's. Throwing the hammer requires more time. There's a lot of throwing and practicing that you have to do. The top eight at the World Championships will be over 30, so I'm still young. I've got a lot of time to put in."

### THE LEGS ARE THE KEY

"It's all about the legs. That's where you get your distance. I don't do the bench press because I don't want a huge chest. I want to be as loose as I can be in the upper body. I do squats for pure strength and then do a lot of box jumps, standing jumps, short sprints and clean and snatch [lifting the bar from the floor to over one's head]."



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# TECH'S TOP 10

## OF THE PAST YEAR

Here are the top 10 moments of this past school year as compiled by the magazine staff, with help from several in the athletics communications office:

### 1. HOKIES STUN NO. 1 DUKE

February 26 might be the greatest day in Tech basketball history. For starters, ESPN's *College GameDay* made its first visit to Blacksburg for a hoops game. Then that night, in a packed Cassell Coliseum and with millions watching on ESPN, the Hokies triumphed over No. 1 Duke by a score of 64-60.

Tech trailed by six with 7:44 remaining, but a Jeff Allen 3-pointer sparked a game-ending 17-7 run. Terrell Bell's 3-pointer tied the game at 55 with 4:40 left, and a huge Malcolm Delaney 3-pointer gave the Hokies a five-point lead with 2:01 to go. Duke got no closer than three points the remainder of the game.

Allen led Tech with 18 points and 15 rebounds. The victory marked Tech's third over a No. 1 team under Seth Greenberg.

### 2. ZIEGLER AND HABAZIN WIN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Alexander Ziegler and Dorotea Habazin continued Tech's track and field dominance in the throwing events, as both won national titles in the hammer throw at the NCAA Track and Field Outdoor Championships.

Ziegler beat teammate Marcel Lomnicky on his final attempt. He threw a career-best 72.69 meters (238 feet, 6 inches) to edge Lomnicky, whose best throw was 72.35 meters (237 feet, 4 inches).

Habazin tossed the hammer 68.15 meters (223 feet, 7 inches) on her third throw and made it stand. She claimed the title after finishing second in 2010.

The two become the fourth and fifth athletes at Tech to win national championships, joining Lomnicky, who won the hammer throw title in 2009, Queen Harrison, who won three national titles in 2010, and Spyridon Juillien, a four-time national champion (twice each in the hammer throw and the weight throw).

### 3. TAYLOR LEADS TECH TO ACC TITLE OVER FSU

Tyrod Taylor enjoyed a magnificent career, but the ACC player of the year saved the best performance of his career for the ACC championship game. The senior from Hampton, Va., threw for 263 yards and three touch-

downs, and he also rushed for a score, as Tech scored on its first four possessions of the second half en route to a 44-33 win over Florida State on a chilly night in Charlotte.

The victory marked Tech's 11th straight and sent the Hokies to the Orange Bowl for the fourth time (third as an ACC member). The Hokies won their fourth ACC title since joining the league.

### 4. WILLIAMS RUNS WILD AT MIAMI

Tech tailback Ryan Williams missed a big chunk of the season because of a hamstring injury, but his big game at Miami enabled the Hokies not only to beat the 'Canes, but also claim the Coastal Division crown in the process.

Williams rushed for 142 yards on 14 carries and scored two touchdowns in the 31-17 win. His 84-yard touchdown run was the longest touchdown run by a Tech player in an ACC game and the fifth-longest TD run in school history.

### 5. WOMEN'S SOCCER BEATS NO. 7 AND NO. 4 IN BACK-TO-BACK MATCHES

In a seven-day span in early October, the Hokies' quietly successful women's soccer program notched victories over the then No. 7 and No. 4 teams in the country.

On Oct. 3, the Hokies got an unlikely goal from Ashley Manning and five saves from Dayle Colpitts to stun Maryland by a score of 1-0, handing the Terps their first loss of the season.

Seven days later, the Hokies shocked BC by a count of 2-1 in Chestnut Hill, Mass. Manning again was the hero, scoring a goal with less than 18 minutes left in the match to lift Tech to the upset.

Interestingly, Manning scored just three goals all season.

### 6. VOLLEYBALL SQUAD WINS AN NCAA MATCH

The Virginia Tech volleyball team put together a terrific season, winning 19 matches overall, including 10 in the ACC. For their efforts, the Hokies earned the program's first NCAA Tournament berth.

Tech not only made the tournament, but also won a match. The Hokies downed Delaware, which won 26 matches this past season, by scores of 25-17, 25-23, and 25-18. Senior Felicia Willoughby had a night to remember, smashing 11 kills in just 14 attempts for a career-high and team season-best .786 hitting percentage, while adding five blocks, two digs and an assist.

### 7. GRABER LIFTS MEN'S TENNIS TEAM IN NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Virginia Tech men's tennis team trailed after losing the doubles point in its first-round match against Vanderbilt at the NCAA Championships, but the Hokies rallied by winning four of the five completed singles matches to seal the victory.

Tech led 3-2 before Pedro Graber, a redshirt senior from Santiago, Chile, finished things off. After losing the first set 7-5, Graber took the next two sets 6-3 and 6-4 to clinch the win for Tech.

With the victory, the Hokies advanced to the second round of the NCAA Championships for the fourth straight time.

### 8. MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD TEAM CLAIMS ACC INDOOR CROWN

Behind three individual titles, the Tech men's track and field team won its first ACC championship by claiming the league's indoor crown at Rector Field House in late February. Tech scored 140 points, outdistancing Florida State, which had won eight straight ACC indoor titles.

Alexander Ziegler (weight throw), Stephan Munz (pole vault) and Michael Hammond (mile run) won the individual titles for the Hokies.


### 9. WRESTLERS BEAT NO. 2 AND NO. 4 AT NATIONAL DUALS

The Tech wrestling team had the two biggest wins in program history just a day apart, knocking off then-No. 2 Oklahoma State and then-No. 4 Wisconsin at the National Duals held in Cedar Falls, Iowa, in early January.

David Marone, a heavyweight, recorded a 10-4 decision over Blake Rosholt in the final match to lift Tech to an 18-16 win over the Cowboys. Against Wisconsin, Matt Epperly played a pivotal role. He scored a technical fall over Shawn Perry, winning 19-4. That turned out to be the difference, as the Hokies edged the Badgers 20-19.

### 10. GALE SAVES LACROSSE TEAM IN WIN OVER NO. 16 BC

After a dismal season a year ago, the Virginia Tech lacrosse team bounced back under the guidance of new coach Megan Burkner. The turnaround started when the Hokies held on to beat then-No. 16 BC by a score of 12-11.

Sophomore Alex Gale played well in the cage for the Hokies, recording a season-high 12 saves. BC cut a 12-9 deficit to 12-11 in the final two minutes, but Tech held on for the win. Ryan Rotanz, Jessica Nonn and Allie Emala scored three goals each for the Hokies. 

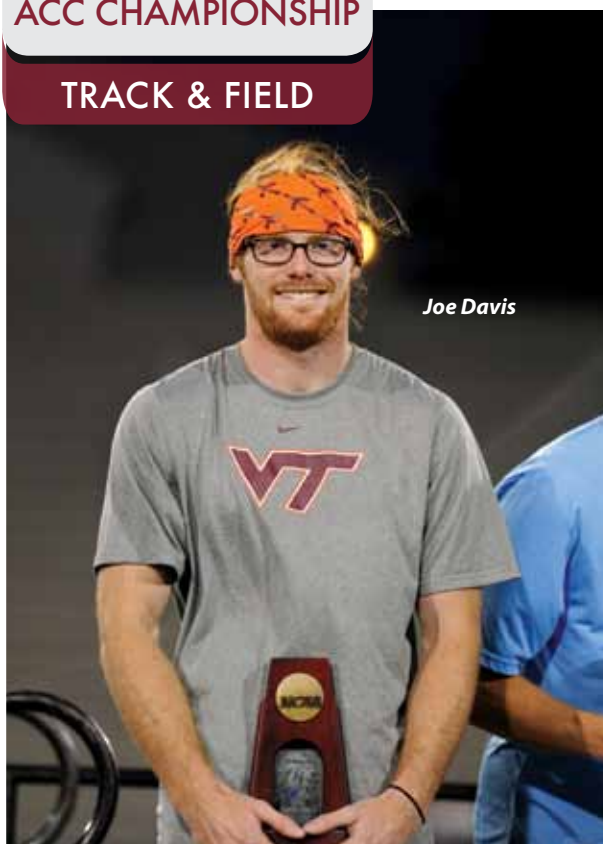






## ACC CHAMPIONSHIP

## TRACK &amp; FIELD



Joe Davis



Ronnie Black



Denis Mahmic

## ZIEGLER & HABAZIN CLAIM NATIONAL TITLES AT NCAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

### OTHERS ACQUIRE HONORS

Alexander Ziegler and Dorotea Habazin became the fourth and fifth student-athletes at Virginia Tech to win national championships after both won their individual hammer throw events at the NCAA Championships held in Des Moines, Iowa, on June 8-11.

Their accomplishments give Tech 10 national championships – all in track and field and five in the hammer throw.

Behind Ziegler and 10 All-Americans among the Hokie men's contingent, the Tech men's squad finished in fifth place with 36 points – the program's highest finish ever. Texas A&M won the national title with 55 points, one point ahead of Florida State.

Habazin and Samira Burkhardt, who finished fifth in the shot put with a new school record of 56 feet, 1 inch (17.09 meters), earned All-America honors for the women's team and accounted for the team's scoring. The Tech women finished tied for 20th with 14 points. Texas A&M also won the women's national title.

"It was a fantastic national meet for Virginia Tech," said Dave Cianelli, Tech's Director of

Track and Field. "This performance shows we continue to be one of the elite programs in the nation. I must congratulate each of our coaches and staff as they prepared our athletes so well for this meet."

Ziegler won in thrilling fashion. He was in second place behind teammate Marcel Lomnicky heading into his sixth and final attempt, and he trailed Lomnicky by almost a foot before throwing a career-best 72.69 meters (238 feet, 6 inches). Lomnicky's best throw was 72.35 meters (237 feet, 4 inches), thus enabling Ziegler to capture his first national title.

Habazin tossed the hammer 68.15 meters (223 feet, 7 inches) on her third throw and made it stand, just missing her own school record by 6 inches. She beat Southern Illinois' Jeneva McCall by 16 inches and Georgia's Nikola Lomnicka – Marcel's sister and the 2010 national champion – by nearly 11 feet.

The Hokies nearly saw another of their own crowned as a national champion, as Matthias Treff finished second in the javelin. He set a school and an ACC record on his second throw, which went 245 feet, 5 inches. That broke the school record of 242 feet, 9 inches set by Jacobus Smit in 2005 and the ACC record of 243 feet, 6 inches set by Virginia's Brian Kollar in 2001.

Treff's final throw of 255 feet, 6 inches, pushed him into second place behind Illinois State's Tim Glover, who won the gold with a toss of 263 feet, 6 inches.

The remaining seven All-America performances included:

- **Joe Davis** earned his first All-America nod, as he finished eighth in the pole vault, setting a personal best with a vault of 17 feet, 2.5 inches.


- **Ronnie Black** was an All-American in the high jump, finishing tied for seventh. He made it past the first three heights, but faltered at 7 feet, 1.5 inches (2.17 meters). Still, he became the first Tech All-American in the high jump.

- **Hasheem Halim and David Wilson** became the first Tech All-Americans in the triple jump since 1987. Halim came in fourth place with a new personal-best jump of 53 feet, 3.75 inches (16.25 meters) on his fifth attempt. Wilson finished sixth, jumping a personal-best 53 feet, 1.75 inches on his third attempt.

Wilson became the third Tech football player to earn All-America honors in track and field. Dennis Scott was fifth in the 60-yard dash at the 1978 indoor championships and Kenny Lewis was third in the 60-yard hurdles at the 1980 NCAA indoor meet.

- **Hunter Hall** was a second-team All-American with the same vault as Davis. Hall, though, finished in 11th after clearing that height on his second attempt, leading to second-team honors.

- **Michael Hammond** was a second-team All-American after finishing 14th in the 1,500 with a time of 3:49.45.

- **Denis Mahmic** finished 14th in the hammer throw and earned second-team honors. 





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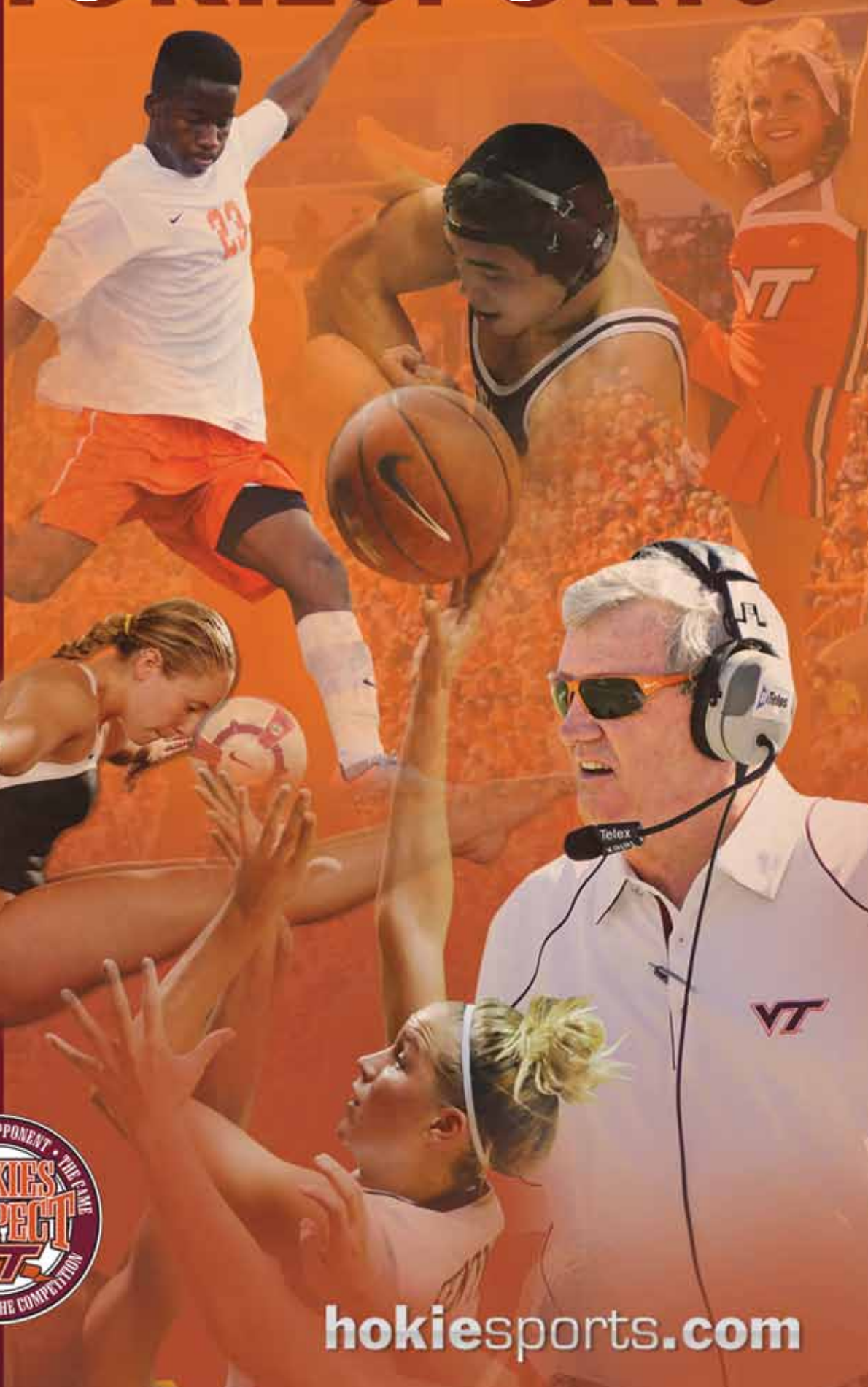
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# CO-ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD



WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD

## DOROTEA HABAZIN

Senior • Throws • Zagreb, Croatia

After coming up just short in her attempt to win a national championship last year, Dorotea Habazin made sure to take advantage of her final opportunity.

Habazin concluded her incredible career by claiming her first national championship and becoming the fifth Tech student-athlete to win a national championship – all in track and field (Alexander Ziegler, Queen Harrison, Marcel Lomnicky and Spyridon Jullien). She also gave Tech its 10th national championship, five in the hammer throw.

As a result of that, and her exploits during the indoor season, Inside Hokie Sports named Habazin and Ziegler, who won the men's hammer throw event, as its 2010-11 athletes of the year. According to magazine criteria, national champions are automatically athletes of the year.

Habazin and Ziegler became the 14th and 15th student-athletes to receive this recognition dating back to when the publication started naming athletes of the year. They join a list of winners that includes Queen Harrison, Lomnicky, Angela Tincer (twice), Jullien (twice), Kevin Jones, Bryant Matthews, Lee Suggs, André Davis, Corey Moore, Katie Ollendick, Jim Druckenmiller

and Cornell Brown.

Habazin tossed the hammer 68.15 meters (223 feet, 7 inches) on her third throw and made it stand, just missing her own school record by 6 inches. She beat Southern Illinois' Jeneva McCall by 16 inches and Nikola Lomnicka – Marcel's sister and the 2010 national champion – by nearly 11 feet.

The gold medal capped a great senior season for Habazin. In April, she won the ACC crown in the hammer with her record toss of 68.36 meters (224 feet, 3 inches), which was more than 42 feet beyond the second-place finisher. She broke the ACC mark of 220 feet, 6 inches by nearly four feet.

She also won a silver medal in the weight throw at the ACC's indoor meet with a toss of 19.72 meters (64 feet, 8.5 inches). She finished 17th at the NCAA indoor championships in early March.

She will leave Tech as arguably the best women's field athlete in school history. She is a three-time All-American and won four ACC titles – three in the hammer throw.





## ALEXANDER ZIEGLER

Sophomore • Throws • Dischingen, Germany

### MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

entire track and field outdoor season.

But at the sport's signature event – the NCAA Championships – Ziegler stepped out of the shadow and into the spotlight all by himself.

Ziegler pulled off the upset at the NCAA Championships when he beat teammate Marcel Lomnicky in the hammer throw on his final attempt. He won his first national championship and joined the list of elite Tech track and field athletes to win a national championship.

Ziegler was in second place behind Lomnicky heading into his sixth and final attempt. He trailed Lomnicky by almost a foot, but he threw a career-best 72.69 meters (238 feet, 6 inches).

Lomnicky then came up for the final throw of the meet, needing to exceed that mark and surpass his best throw of the competition, which was 72.35 meters (237 feet, 4 inches). But Lomnicky only threw the hammer 71.29 meters (233 feet, 10 inches), enabling Ziegler to take the gold.

Ziegler also excelled during the indoor season, winning the ACC title in the weight throw for the second straight year, throwing it 21.45 meters (70 feet, 4.5 inches). He then finished second at the NCAA Championships in the weight throw with a toss of 21.27 meters (69 feet, 9.5 inches).

Though not as well known among Hokie faithful, Ziegler has easily established himself as one of the great throwers in Tech history.





# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## TYROD TAYLOR

Senior • Quarterback  
Hampton, Va.

Tyrod Taylor capped a glorious career by leading the Virginia Tech football team to an 11-game winning streak, an ACC championship and another appearance in the Orange Bowl.

Taylor threw for 2,742 yards and a Tech single-season record 24 touchdowns this past season, with only five interceptions.

He also rushed for 659 yards and five scores as well.

His best game came in the ACC title game against Florida State. He completed

18 of 28 for 263 yards, with three touchdowns, and he also scored on a 5-yard run in the fourth quarter of the Hokies' 44-33 win.

Following the season, Taylor was named the ACC player of the year and was the recipient of the Dudley Award, given annually to the top player in the state of Virginia. He started all 14 games for the Hokies and guided them to the Orange Bowl – the Hokies' fourth appearance in the game and their third in the past four years.

Taylor departs as Tech's all-time leader in career total offense, career passing yards, career rushing yards by a quarterback and career rushing touchdowns by a quarterback. Perhaps more importantly, he leaves as Tech's all-time winningest quarterback. He went 34-8 as a starter.

### FOOTBALL







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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## MALCOLM DELANEY

Senior • Point guard  
Baltimore, Md.



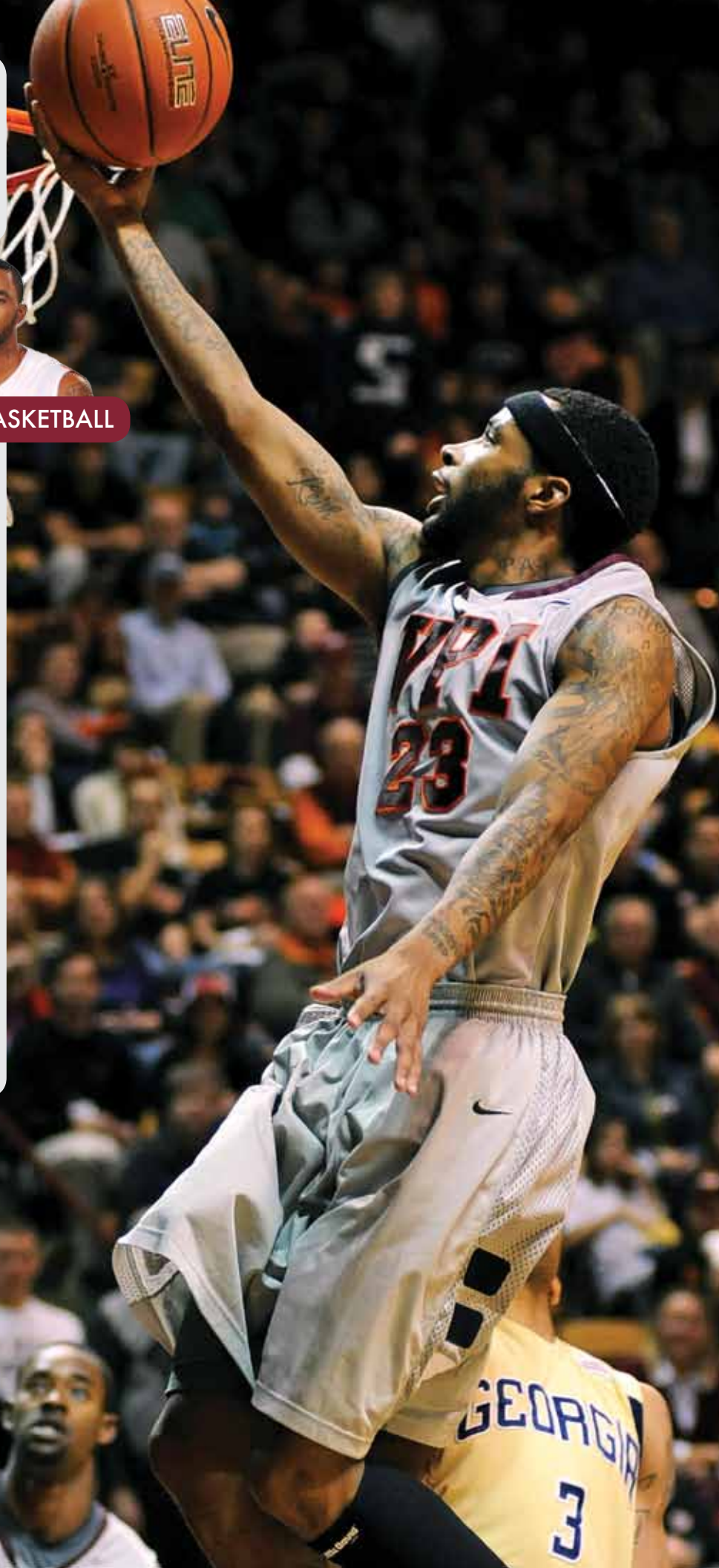
### MEN'S BASKETBALL

Delaney put the icing on the cake of a glorious career with a senior season that saw him earn first-team All-ACC honors for the second straight year. He averaged 18.7 points, 4.0 assists and 3.5 rebounds per game, while shooting 42 percent from the floor, 41 percent from beyond the 3-point arc and 85 percent from the free-throw line. He led the ACC in minutes played at 38.2 per game. He finished second in the league in scoring, fourth in assists, sixth in 3-point percentage, fourth in 3-pointers made per game and ninth in field-goal percentage.

He scored 30 points or more in three games this season. His best effort came in the Hokies' home win over Georgia Tech when he scored 33 points, grabbed six rebounds and dished out five assists. He scored 30 points in his career finale – a loss to Wichita State in the NIT.

Delaney departs Tech having earned All-ACC honors three straight years and having been named an honorable mention All-American by The Associated Press the past two seasons. He ranks third behind Bimbo Coles and Dell Curry on Tech's all-time scoring list with 2,255 points and second behind Coles on Tech's all-time assists list with 543.

Delaney does leave with the school record for free throws made (721), attempted (853) and percentage (84.5 percent) in a career.





# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## SHANEL HARRISON

Junior • Forward • Washington, D.C.

The women's basketball athlete of the year really started her case for the honor down the stretch of the 2009-10 season, as Shanel Harrison averaged 12.4 points and 5.7 rebounds over the final seven games of her sophomore year.

The junior did not slow down in 2010-11, scoring in double figures in her first five games and in 22 games total. She notched her second career 20-plus point game with 25 points in a double-overtime victory at William & Mary on Dec. 18.

In two subsequent games, the Washington, D.C. native upped her career high by a point, dropping 26 at Charlotte on Jan. 2 and then setting a new mark with 27 points at Boston

College on Feb. 3.

Harrison led the Hokies with 12.2 points a game and 5.5 rebounds a contest and picked up an ACC player of the week honor (Dec. 20), and she was named to a pair of all-tournament teams – the Caribbean Challenge and the Hilton Garden Hokie Classic.

She also improved her range this year, knocking down 26 3-point baskets as opposed to just eight in her first two seasons.

With a solid senior campaign, she has positioned herself to become the 23rd member of the 1,000-point club and could climb into the school's top 10 all time in rebounds.



WOMEN'S  
BASKEBALL



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## CHRIS WALIZER Junior • Hershey, Pa.



### MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Chris Walizer anchored a young men's cross country team last fall and was Tech's top finisher in two races.

Walizer qualified for the NCAA Southeast Regional held at E.P. "Tom" Sawyer State Park in Louisville, Ky., and finished in 58th place in the 10,000-meter run, completing the course in 32:12.2. He was the Hokies' top finisher in that race.

He also competed in the Charlotte Invite and came in 27th place overall, running the 8K course in 18:52.8, and he came in 44th place at the ACC Championships held in Boston on Oct. 30. He was Tech's top finisher in that one, completing the 8K course in 25:07.0 and leading the Hokies to a seventh-place finish.

Walizer's other race came at the Appalachian State Invite on Oct. 15 in Boone, N.C. He came in 62nd in that race, running the course in 26:24.2.

For his efforts, he was named the team MVP at the annual All-Sports Banquet.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



**SAMMY DOW**  
Junior • Midlothian, Va.

## WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Sammy Dow was the most consistent runner on the Tech women's cross country squad and finished as the Hokies' top runner in two races this past fall.

Dow began the season with a fine performance in the Alumni Invite on Tech's campus, finishing second in a time of 16:47.94. In that race, she ran unattached.

She finished fifth overall with a time of 17:23.4 at the Charlotte Invite held Oct. 1. She claimed 10th place in the Appalachian State Invite on Oct. 15 with a time of 17:56.4, and she was 32nd at the ACC Championships on Oct. 30, completing the 6K course in a time of 21:23.8. Her performances in Charlotte and at the ACC Championships were the best by a Tech runner.

For her efforts, she was named the team MVP at the annual All-Sports Banquet.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## ANDREW RASH

R-sophomore • Outfield  
Anderson, S.C.



BASEBALL

When a player does something not seen in Blacksburg in 15 seasons – in a year in which offensive power numbers were supposed to take a dive – he deserves the baseball athlete of the year honor

Andrew Rash, who was also selected to the 2011 All-ACC first team – becoming only the second Hokie ever to earn the honor (Austin Wates, 2010) – led the team in batting (.335), home runs (18), RBI (53), total bases (135), slugging percentage (.707) and on-base percentage (.416) and was tied for the team lead in hit by pitches (10). He was second on the team in runs scored (49) and tied for second in doubles (17).

Among the conference players at the conclusion of the regular season, Rash led all ACC players in home runs (by seven), total bases (by 12) and slugging percentage (by .102). He was also tied for fourth in RBI, tied for seventh in doubles, tied for 11th in runs and was 13th in batting.

Among the nation's players at the end of the regular season, the Anderson, S.C. native finished sixth in home runs, 30th in total bases and was 14th in slugging percentage.

In regards to Tech, Kevin Barker hit 20 home runs and slugged .792 in 1996. Rash became the first player since Barker to hit more than 14 home runs in a single season and finish the year with a slugging percentage over .700.

Of note, Rash was not a "homer" home run hitter, as eight of his 18 were hit away from English Field.

He also hit nine during conference play, which led the league. He had three two-home run games, again two of which were on the road – at Florida Atlantic on March 8 and at Maryland on April 23.



# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## COURTNEY LIDDLE

Sophomore • First Base • Haymarket, Va.



SOFTBALL

An unknown at the start of the season, the first base position on the softball team could be locked up for another two years thanks to the tremendous play of Courtney Liddle on the bag and at the plate.

A catcher during her freshman campaign, Liddle started 37 of her 47 games at first base and earned a number of honors for her efforts, including an ACC player of the week nod, a second-team Academic All-District selection, a first-team All-ACC honor and a spot on the first-team Mid-Atlantic all-region squad.

She increased her average by more than 100 points over her first year, bat-

ting .370 for the season, while hitting .476 during ACC contests. Liddle led the team in on-base percentage (.497) and tied for the team lead with 12 doubles and 31 walks.

Liddle also finished tied for second with 45 RBI and tied for third with six home runs, all this while missing 10 games during the heart of the season. She returned to hit .413 for the month of April, which included extending her career-long hitting streak to 10 games.

On the defensive side, she committed just five errors during the season and led the team with a .985 fielding percentage.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## CLARKE BENTLEY

Senior • Midfielder  
Marietta, Ga.



### MEN'S SOCCER

The Virginia Tech men's soccer program featured a group of young players, so head coach Mike Brizendine relied on the senior leadership of midfielder Clarke Bentley to get the Hokies through the rigors of ACC play.

Bentley, a native of Marietta, Ga., certainly delivered. He started in all 19 games for the Hokies this season while serving as a team captain. He led the team in goals (6), points (15) and shots (32) and tied for the team lead in shots on goal (15).

Bentley finished the year a perfect 3-for-3 in penalty kicks, including a game-tying goal in an eventual 2-1 victory over N.C. State, and his goal against Clemson helped secure a tie. He also helped secure a win over Radford late in the season, scoring two goals in a 4-1 victory.

Bentley, who was one of just two players to play in every match for the Hokies (senior Koen Oost being the other), earned second-team All-ACC honors for his efforts this past fall.





# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## JENNIFER HARVEY

Senior • Midfielder  
Roanoke, Va.



WOMEN'S  
SOCCER

The Virginia Tech women's soccer team made its third-straight trip to the NCAA Tournament, and again, Jennifer Harvey stood tall as the team's leader.

Harvey started all 21 games for the Hokies, continuing an impressive string of career starts since she arrived on campus. She started 83 of the 86 games she played, which is tied for the most games ever played by a Tech women's soccer player.

Harvey led the team in scoring with six goals this past season, and she finished third on the team in points with 15. Two of her six goals came via penalty kicks, giving her eight penalty kick goals in her career.

Her best game of the season came in Tech's 4-1 win over Villanova in early September. She scored two goals in helping the Hokies overcome a 1-0 deficit. She also tallied goals in the Hokies' victories over American and Clemson, both 3-0 Tech wins. She scored goals in the Hokies' loss to Long Beach State and Texas A&M in the Aggieland Invitational Tournament in late August.

Harvey also got things done off the field. She was a first-team ESPN Academic All-American and graduated with a chemistry degree. She plans on going to medical school next fall.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## LOGAN SHINHOLSER

Diving • Sophomore • Burtonsville, Md.

Logan Shinholser became arguably the most decorated diver in Virginia Tech history following an outstanding sophomore campaign that saw him win the ACC title and eventually earn All-America honors at the NCAA Championships in the platform event.

Shinholser won 13 titles this season, claiming victory in the 1-meter event on four occasions, the 3-meter event on six occasions and three times winning the platform event. He became Tech's first ACC diving champion and the school's first ever conference champion in the platform event, scoring a school-record 449.15 points at the ACC meet in late February. He also became the first Tech

diver to claim a conference title in any event since 1965.

Shinholser won gold medals in the platform event and the 3-meter event at the NCAA Zone A Championships held in Annapolis, Md., in mid-March. He accumulated 792.50 points in the platform event and 790.05 in the 3-meter competition. He finished second in the 1-meter event behind teammate Ryan Hawkins at the same meet.

At the NCAA meet held in Minneapolis in late March, Shinholser finished eighth in the platform event to claim All-America honors. With that performance, he became the first Tech diver to earn All-America honors.

## MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## ERIKA HAJNAL

Junior • Freestyle, IM • Budapest, Hungary

Erika Hajnal continues to be an impressive performer for the Hokies, and though she came up a tad short of earning All-America honors again, as she did as a sophomore, she still was the only Tech female swimmer to qualify for the NCAA Championships. More impressively, Hajnal qualified in three events.

Hajnal, competing at the NCAA Championships for the third straight time, just missed All-America honors when she came in 17th place in the 1650 freestyle event – the top 16 earn All-America honors. Hajnal swam the event in a time of 16:08.38 and missed the All-America status

by less than a second. She also competed in the 500 freestyle and the 400 IM at the meet.

Hajnal was a point-gathering machine at the ACC Championships for the Tech women, helping them to a fifth-place finish. Hajnal herself accumulated 44 points, finishing in the top six in the 400 IM (third), the 1650 freestyle (fourth) and the 500 freestyle (sixth). Her third-place finish in the 400 IM enabled her to earn All-ACC honors. For good measure, she swam a leg on the 800 freestyle relay team, which finished fourth.

### WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## LUKA SOMEN

Junior • Karlovac, Croatia

### MEN'S TENNIS

The Virginia Tech men's tennis team quietly just keeps making the NCAA Championships each year, and that's in large part because of players like Luka Somen.

Playing at the No. 1 position, Somen went 17-8, and he went 20-14 overall on the season. His 20 victories ranked second on the team behind Will Beck's 25, but Beck played in the No. 4 or 5 spot in Tech's lineup. Somen usually saw an opponent's best player every time out.

Somen defeated two top-40 players this season. In a Feb. 11 match against Virginia, he beat then No. 27 Michael Shabaz 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 to score Tech's lone point in a 6-1 loss to the Cavaliers. Two days later, he beat then-No. 36 Maros Horny of Maryland 6-2, 1-6, 6-3 to lift Tech to a 5-2 win over the Terrapins. He earned ACC player of the week honors that week for his efforts.

Somen's other quality singles victories included Christian Blocker of Miami 7-6, 3-6, 1-0 (1); Akash Muppidi of BC 1-6, 6-1, 6-2; and then-No. 62 Damian Hume of Boise State 6-3, 7-5.

Somen also teamed with Corrado Degl'Incerti Tocci to win 11 doubles matches. The duo went 10-6 out of Tech's No. 2 spot.

Somen was ranked No. 59 in singles by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association following the ACC Championships. He earned All-ACC honors for his efforts for the second consecutive season, and he advanced to the second round of the NCAA Singles Championships.



## Bud Foster's Lunch Pail Defense Foundation



The purpose of The Lunch Pail Defense Foundation, a recently formed non-profit corporation headquartered in Blacksburg, VA, is to annually fund a need-based academic college scholarship to an eligible student from the New River Valley. In short, the eligible student will personify the focus and fortitude embodied in the spirit of "The Lunch Pail" by demonstrating hard work, good character and determination to succeed in all areas of life.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## YASMIN HAMZA

Senior • Cairo, Egypt



### WOMEN'S TENNIS

Yasmin Hamza has been a consistent player for the Tech women's tennis team throughout her career, and this past season was no different. Playing mostly at the No. 1 spot, she recorded 21 wins, which was second on the team, and for the second straight season, she received the team MVP award at the All-Sports Banquet. Also, she received the ITA / Arthur Ashe Leadership and Sportsmanship Award for the Atlantic Region and is in the mix for the national honor.

Hamza went 21-17 in her final campaign at Tech. That mark included an 11-10 record while playing at No. 1 and facing the ACC's best. Her top victory came April 3 in Chapel Hill, N.C., when she upset 15th-ranked Zoe De Bruycker of the No. 3 Tar Heels 7-5, 6-4 to provide the Hokies with their lone point in a 6-1 loss.

Her other big victories included a 6-3, 2-6, 7-5 win over Martina Pavelec of Wake Forest; a 6-1, 6-4 win over FSU's Francesca Segarelli; and a 6-4, 6-2 win over Julie Huschke of Maryland.

Hamza was ranked the No. 94 player in the nation according to the Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings following the ACC Championships. She also teamed with Holly Johnson in doubles to finish ranked 50th nationally, as the duo won 17 doubles matches.

Hamza earned a spot on the 2011 All-ACC women's tennis team for her play this past season – the only Hokie to do so.





# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## MARSHALL BAILEY

Senior • Fincastle, Va.

The Virginia Tech golf team qualified for the NCAA regionals for the fifth straight season, and senior Marshall Bailey led the way for the Hokies, as the team finished in eighth place or better in every tournament this spring.

Bailey recorded six top-20 finishes in 10 events this season, including two top-five finishes – the best on the team in both categories. His best finish came in Puerto Rico earlier this spring when he shot 69 in the first and third rounds at the Puerto Rico Classic. His 7-under-par score enabled him to finish fourth out of 75 golfers.

Bailey shot 69 in individual rounds on four occasions this season, including the two times in Puerto Rico. He also shot a 69 in a round at the Marshall Invitational last fall and one in a round at the Furman Intercollegiate earlier this spring.

Bailey's other top-five finish came back in the fall at the Brickyard Collegiate Golf Championship. He came in fifth out of 84 golfers, shooting 4-under-par for the tournament.

Bailey led the Hokies with a stroke average of 72.52 this season. He also paved the way for Tech in final-round average, shooting an average of 71.55.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## ALLIE EMALA

Senior • Attack  
Baltimore, Md.

LACROSSE

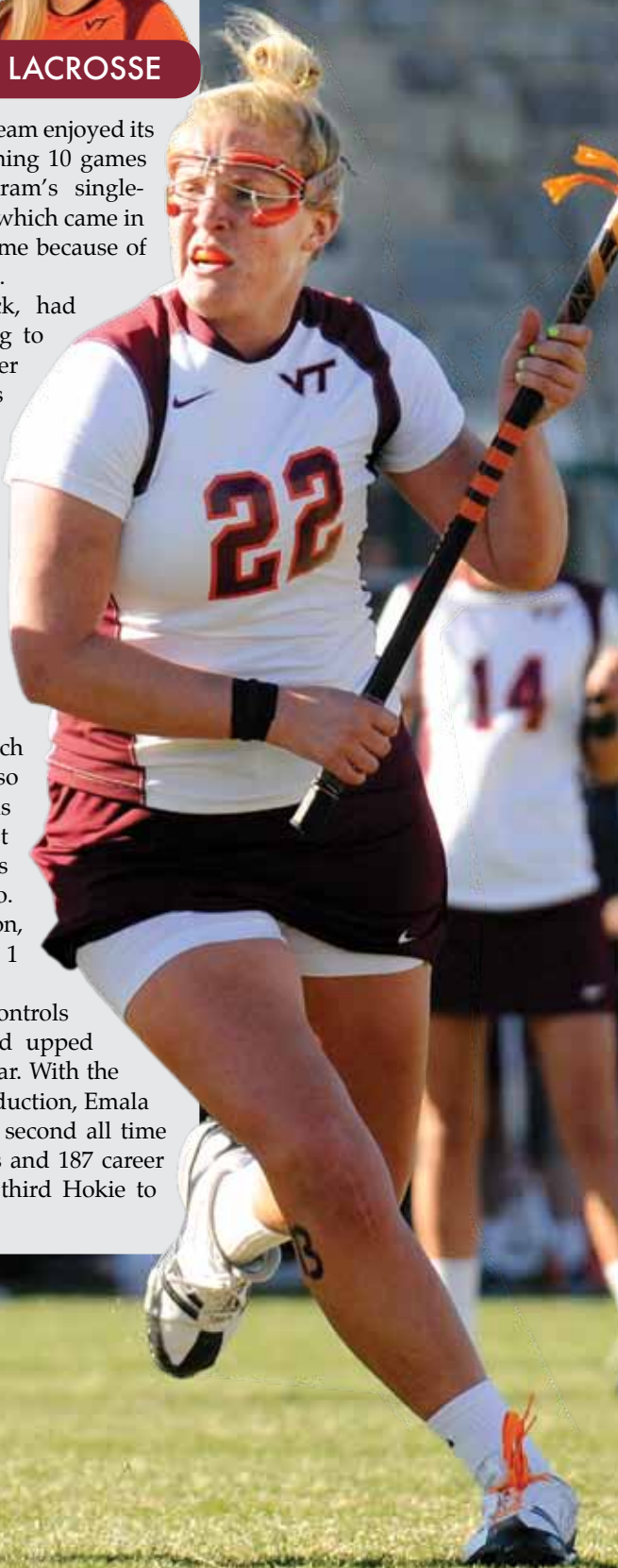


The Virginia Tech lacrosse team enjoyed its best season in 12 years, winning 10 games and just missing the program's single-season record of 11 victories, which came in 1999. A lot of that success came because of the play of senior Allie Emala.

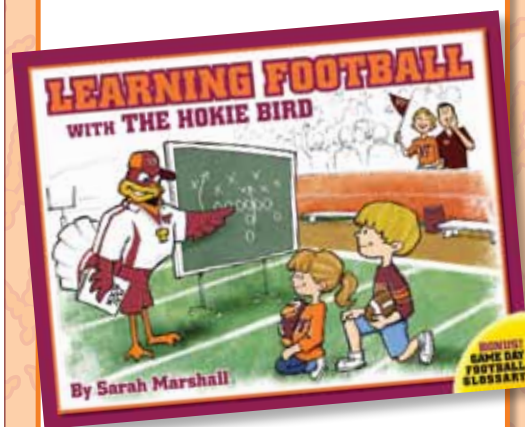
Emala, who played attack, had her best season since coming to Blacksburg. She posted career bests in goals (43), points (59) and draw controls (60). The two-year captain led the team in scoring in nine games this past season and closed her career by scoring in the final 23 games in which she played.

Emala, who was a third team All-American by SynapseSports.com, scored all three of Tech's goals in its ACC Championship match loss to BC on April 21. She also scored a season-best five goals in the season opener against High Point and three goals in matches against then-No. 16 BC in the regular season, then-No. 11 Virginia and No. 1 Maryland.

Emala set a new draw controls record at Tech last year and upped her career total to 248 this year. With the help of her senior season production, Emala has also propelled herself to second all time at Tech with 138 career goals and 187 career points. She became just the third Hokie to earn All-ACC team honors.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## CARA BAARENDSE

Sophomore • Middle blocker • Mason, Ohio

VOLLEYBALL

The Virginia Tech volleyball team enjoyed arguably the best season in school history, winning 10 matches in the ACC and securing an NCAA Tournament berth for the first time since the program was established. The Hokies won a tournament match before falling in the second round to three-time defending national champion Penn State.

A deep and talented roster, led by middle blocker Cara Baarendse, played a large role in the program's success. Baarendse hit .376 on the season, which ranked second in the ACC and 24th nationally. Her hitting percentage was the second-best ever at Tech for a season.

Baarendse also finished eighth in

the ACC in kills with 385, an average of 3.24 per game, and she was tied for second on Tech's team with 14 service aces. She earned four all-tournament nods this past season, including being named the MVP of the Hilton Garden Hokie Invitational and the Western Kentucky Tournament. She hit .491 with 31 kills at Tech's home tournament, which was enough to earn a spot on CVU.com's national Top Performers list for the week.

Baarendse, along with teammate Felicia Willoughby, was named All-ACC and an honorable mention All-American by the American Volleyball Coaches Association.



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# ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

## JESSE DONG

Junior • 157-pounder  
Westerville, Ohio



### WRESTLING

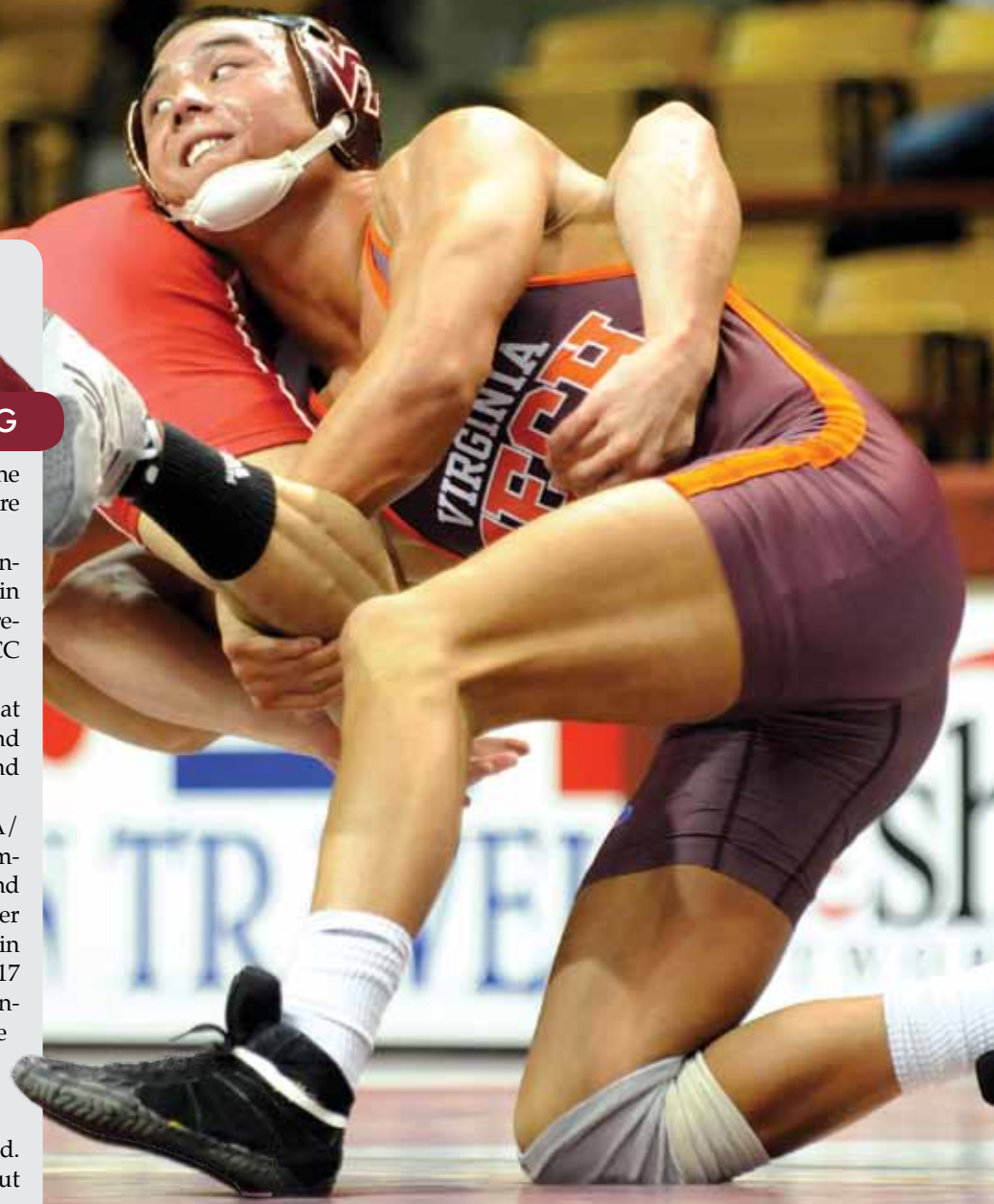
Tech wrestling coach Kevin Dresser went into the 2010-11 season fully planning on redshirting Jesse Dong, the 157-pounder who won the ACC title as a sophomore and won two matches at the NCAA Championships.

But in January, Dresser had a change of heart and inserted Dong into the lineup. The junior went on to win 20 of his 23 matches on the season, including a 15-1 record in dual matches, and he claimed yet another ACC title and advanced to the NCAA Championships.

At the ACC Championships, he earned the top seed at 157 pounds and beat No. 2 seed Kyle John of Maryland by a score of 6-3 in the finals. He also beat the No. 4 and No. 6 seeds in his weight class.

His best performance may have come at the NWCA/Cliff Keen National Duals in early January. In the championship match, the Hokies took on No. 1 Cornell and fell 25-10, but Dong defeated 10th-ranked D.J. Meagher at 157 pounds by a score of 5-2. He won four matches in that tournament, helping the Hokies defeat then-No. 17 Central Michigan, then-No. 2 Oklahoma State and then-No. 4 Wisconsin. He received the ACC wrestler of the week award for his efforts.

At the NCAA Championships, Dong defeated Matt Cathell of Kent State in the first round, but lost to No. 12 seed Paul Young of Indiana in the second round. In the consolation round, he beat John again, 7-5, but lost to Mark Lewandowski of Buffalo to end his season.



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## TECH BASEBALL SQUAD LOOKS AHEAD TO 2012

Even though the 2011 baseball season ended before the Memorial Day weekend, there is still much to look forward to from the boys of summer before they return to the diamond in an attempt to make it back to the NCAA Baseball Championships.

What follows are five things to watch and some insight from head coach Pete Hughes into what Hokie baseball fans should be keeping an eye on this summer and through the fall.

### 1. THE 2011 MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL DRAFT

The draft, held June 6-8, is over, and Tech had three players – graduating senior Tim Smalling and underclassmen Andrew Rash and Ronnie Shaban – chosen, marking the third straight draft that at least two Tech players were selected.

“To shed some light on what we are doing as a program, the draft is a good indicator – a good program develops players,” Hughes said. “In our first two draft-eligible recruiting classes, we have had 11 guys selected and that is staggering compared to prior years.”

### 2. THE SUMMER LEAGUES

With their Hokie careers on hiatus for the summer, Tech underclassmen branch out to the various leagues held throughout the country. Three will see action in the prestigious Cape Cod League – Joe Mantiply, Devin Burke (a transfer from Duke who sat out this past spring) and Rash with the Harwich Mariners – while most others will be playing in the New England, Coastal Plain and Valley leagues.

“To us, summer ball is critical in the development of our players,” Hughes said. “Guys need 90-100 games to get better and this gives them that, especially those guys who didn’t see as much playing time with us this spring. Also, they hit with wooden bats, which requires a disciplined swing.”

Don’t forget to follow former Tech players, who are now professionals, a list that is almost a dozen strong and includes Major Leaguer Joe Saunders with Arizona. There will be a release on [hokiesports.com](http://hokiesports.com) with links to the players’ summer Web sites.



### 3. OMAHA, NEB.

This year’s College World Series will start June 18 and will run through the end of the month. The ACC is always well-represented in the event, with at least two teams making it four of the past five seasons.

Of special note, for the second straight year, TD Ameritrade will be sponsoring a College Home Run Derby, which will be held on Saturday, July 2, and televised by CBS the following day at 2 p.m. Hokie slugger Rash is one of the eight who will participate in the event.

“Anytime the ACC, specifically Virginia Tech, can be represented in Omaha, which is the pinnacle of what we are striving for, it is great,” Hughes said. “And this is a well-deserved honor for Andrew. He was the top slugger in the league, and this gives him and our program some publicity.”

### 4. FALL BASEBALL

Once all the i’s are dotted and all the t’s are crossed, the Hokies will unveil their latest crop of incoming players, which Hughes hopes will be available mid-August.


“This recruiting class stretches from up-state New York to South Florida and from Wisconsin to California, which is a model of what we are trying to do,” Hughes said. “It is

the most athletic class that I’ve signed here, and there are two or three freshmen who could be everyday players in our lineup, along with a couple of junior college players. This will be a big recruiting class – 14 to 16 guys – which will make up for the loss of the last two years, the guys we lost early and those to normal graduation this year.”

Also on the docket this fall will be the possibility of an alumni game. Details are still being ironed out. Lastly, in October, the 2012 schedule will be released.

### 5. STADIUM ENHANCEMENTS

Once the final day of fall ball is complete, there is a plan in place for a number of stadium enhancements, which includes expanding the dugouts, padding the outfield wall, adding a new batter’s eye and resurfacing the field.

“Anytime there is an investment in your stadium, it shows that there is great administrative support,” Hughes said. “Improving our facilities helps in our recruiting process because it improves the situation for our kids. From a developmental standpoint, the installation of turf will help us out tremendously because it means that we can get on the field in January and February, which are two critical months for a team.” 



# METRO BASEBALL CHAMPIONS

TECH IN NCAAS AFTER FIRST EVER LEAGUE TITLE

By Chris Colston

(Reprinted from Vol. 11, No. 32 edition of the Hokie Huddler, May 27, 1994)

Unbelievable!

There have been years when Virginia Tech baseball had better teams, gaudier records and more All-Metro Conference players under head coach Chuck Hartman. In fact, this year's Tech squad entered the 1994 Metro tournament as a sixth seed, its lowest ranking ever.

But for one reason or another, none of the teams could ever capture a league tournament title – a span of 15 seasons. Not the 1982 club that featured Franklin Stubbs, Jim Stewart and Brian Rupe and went 50-9, or the 1985 team with Billy Plante and Bean Stringfellow that was 50-16-1, to name two.

No, this wasn't Hartman's most talented squad. But it used confidence, good pitching, slick fielding and timely hitting to become the 1994 Metro Conference Baseball Champions.

And it was no fluke. The Hokies beat the Nos. 1, 2,



May 27, 1994

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3 and 4 seeds in Louisville en route to the title.

The win gave Tech (32-24) an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament, its first post-season trip since 1979.

"It's scary how well we played," Hartman said. "The kids came out with the attitude that they could win this thing, then they went out and did it."

Sophomore left-handed pitcher Brian Fitzgerald was Tech's star. He notched two wins and was named the tourney's Most Valuable Player. Fitzgerald (9-2) pitched eight full innings in the 5-3 championship win over Tulane on Sunday afternoon (May 22), allowing eight hits and two earned runs. He pitched a two-hit shutout against South Florida in Tech's opening game of the tournament.

"I knew I had to come out and keep battling," Fitzgerald said. "I'm not a strikeout pitcher, so I wanted to throw strikes and get groundouts and pop-outs."

Designated hitter Josh Herman was the only other Hokie to be named to the all-tournament team.

In any successful run, there has to be an element of luck, and the Hokies received a dose in Sunday's title game against the Green Wave. Leading 5-3 in the eighth inning, Tulane's first batter lined a hit. Their

next batter crushed a ball down the third-base line, but Tech's Bo Durkac snared it and turned a double play.

"If he doesn't do that, they have men on second and third with nobody out," Hartman said. "That was the key play of the tournament for us."

Nobody expected much for this team, particularly when it started the season with a glum 12-17 mark.

"Ever since mid-April, when they got rid of that fear of losing, the kids have played with a lot of confidence," Hartman said. "When you have confidence, it makes a heckuva difference."

James Madison drilled Tech 12-4 on April 7, but then the Hokies won 10 in a row and 15 of 18.

"That's quite a turnaround," Hartman said. "We weren't smooth and confident like we were in the tournament. We weren't the same team."

The title gives Hartman the first trip to the NCAAs during his Tech career.

"You just never know," Hartman said. "As long as you keep trying, good things will happen. I guess you just have to have enough patience."

And maybe a little luck. Hartman's usual maroon undershirt was not dry from a washing for Tech's Metro opener, so he

donned a white T-shirt to wear under his game jersey for the first time in some 20 years. The Hokies won that game, an upset over No. 3 seed South Florida.

"I wore it until we lost," he said. "Then I went back to my maroon shirt for the championship game." **VT**



Bo Durkac was the only Hokie named to the All-Metro Conference first team.





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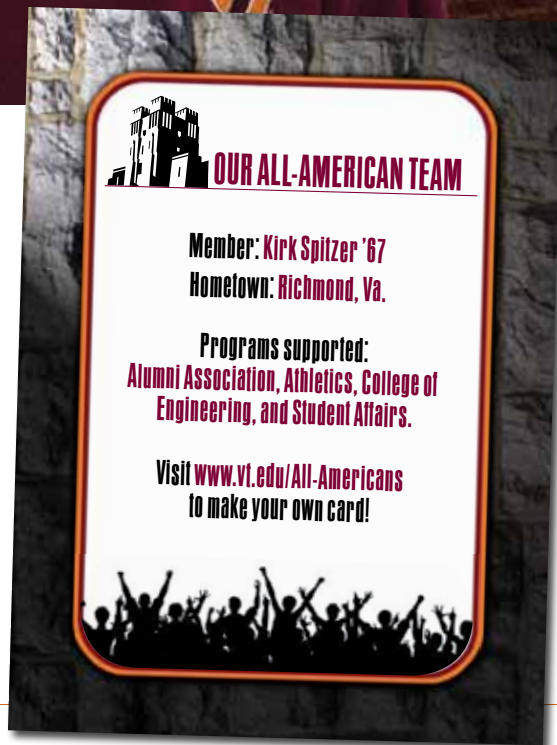


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