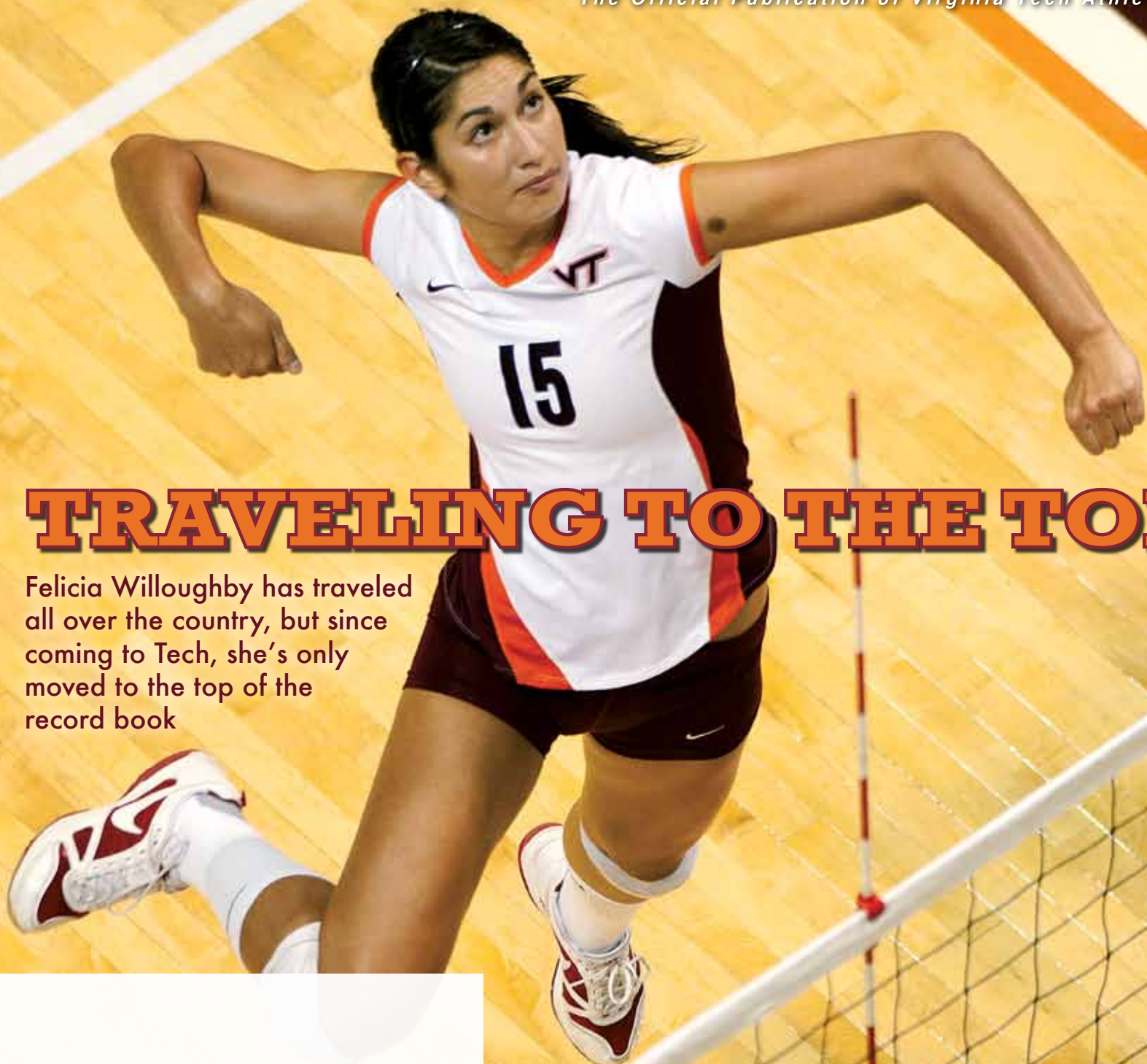


INSIDE

# HOKKIESPORTS

The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics



## TRAVELING TO THE TOP

Felicia Willoughby has traveled all over the country, but since coming to Tech, she's only moved to the top of the record book

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SEPTEMBER

**17** Women's Soccer vs JMU 5:30 p.m.  
*Post-Match Autograph Session*  
Men's Soccer vs Clemson 8:00 p.m.

**23** Women's Soccer vs Virginia 7:00 p.m.  
*VT/Coke Water Bottle Giveaway*

OCTOBER

**1** Volleyball vs Clemson 7:00 p.m.  
*VT Tote Bag Giveaway*

**2** Volleyball vs Georgia Tech 6:00 p.m.  
*VT Silly Bandz Giveaway*

**3** Women's Soccer vs Maryland 5:00 p.m.  
*Think Pink Hats Giveaway*

**8** Men's Soccer vs Maryland 7:00 p.m.  
*FREE Pre-match Jr./Lisa Palleschi Concert*

**15** Late Night with the Hokies 9:00 p.m.  
*Sneak peak of Men's and Women's Basketball*

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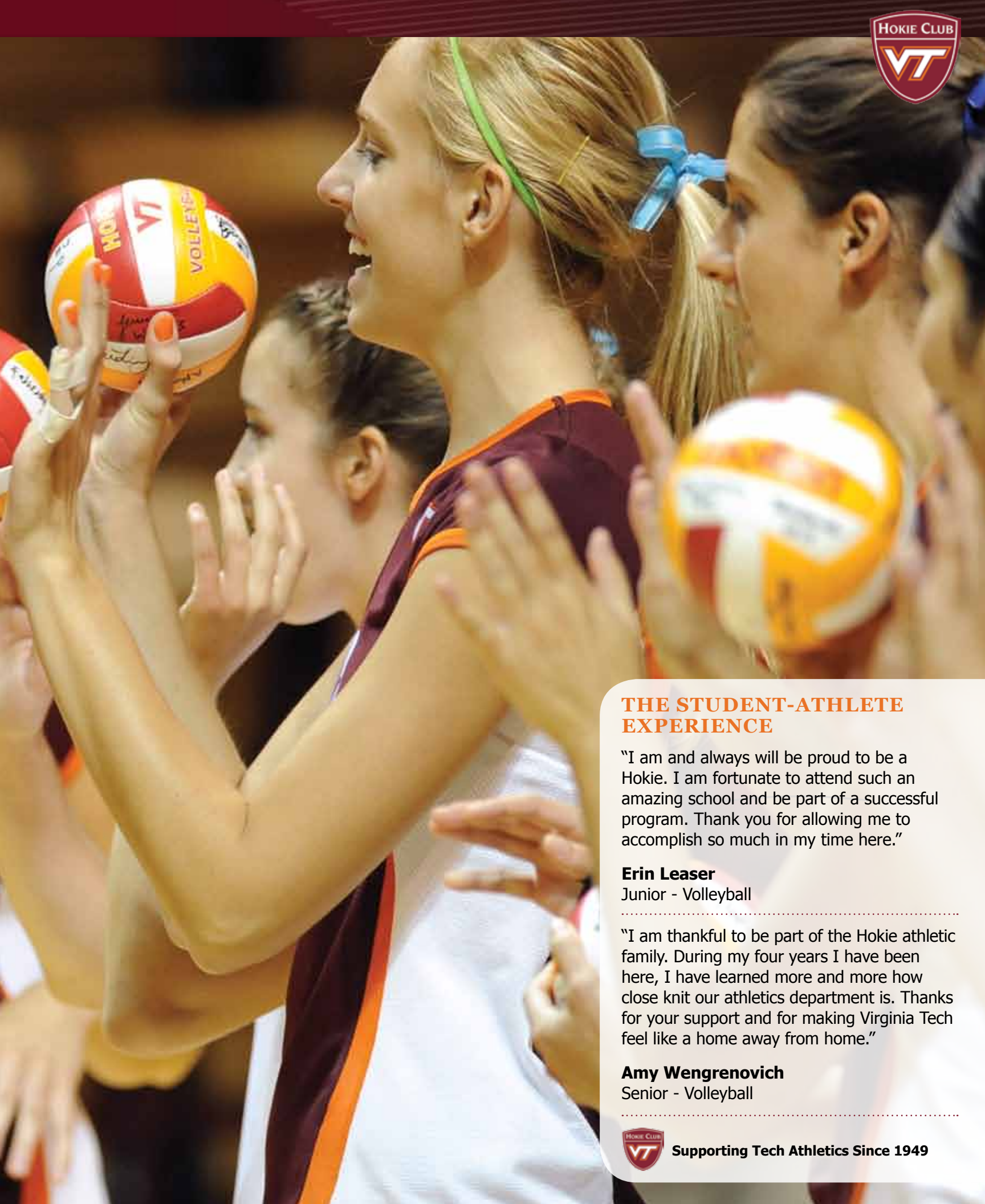


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## OFF TO A GREAT START

The Virginia Tech volleyball team started off its home season in style by winning its fifth consecutive Hilton Garden Hokie Invitational.



## THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

"I am and always will be proud to be a Hokie. I am fortunate to attend such an amazing school and be part of a successful program. Thank you for allowing me to accomplish so much in my time here."

**Erin Leaser**  
Junior - Volleyball

"I am thankful to be part of the Hokie athletic family. During my four years I have been here, I have learned more and more how close knit our athletics department is. Thanks for your support and for making Virginia Tech feel like a home away from home."

**Amy Wengrenovich**  
Senior - Volleyball



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## Donor Files

### Dennie P. Denison, III

**Current Hokie Club Level:**

Golden Hokie Champion

**Hokie Club Member Since:**

1990

**Currently Resides:**

Salem, Virginia

**Family members:**

Sherrie Denison (wife)  
Jennifer and Laurence Loesel (daughter/son-in-law)  
Muffin Denison (beagle)

**Q: What year did you graduate?**

**A:** Graduated in 1972. However, my diploma says 1973.

**Q: What was your motivation to be involved in the local Roanoke community by becoming involved with the Roanoke Valley Hokie Club?**

**A:** I began attending the club's pregame lunches years ago and found them to be informative. I wanted to volunteer my time to further the Hokie cause.

**Q: What was your role with the Roanoke Valley Hokie Club with the recent first Annual Roanoke Valley Hokie Club Football Kickoff Dinner?**

**A:** My role in the club is VP of Fundraising. Sherrie and I co-chair this role. I was responsible for overseeing the entire event (with the help of a GREAT committee) and making sure it was a success. We had 30 sponsors, vendors, a silent auction, two live auction items, a 50/50 raffle, Lu Merritt, Frank Beamer, Bimbo Coles and Keynote Speaker, CBS Sportscaster Lesley Visser. We had approximately 460 people in attendance and raised \$16,000. This exceeded my expectation for our first year!

**Q: Tell us about your experience in the recent "Biggest Hokie Fan Contest."**

**A:** This contest was established by *The Roanoke Times*. Contestants submitted 60-second videos of why they were the biggest Hokie Fan. My video included our VT house complete with VT heat pumps, Hokie stone and a "mancave" filled with orange and maroon. The video closed with me on the roof of my RV with the Hokie Bird at a tailgate and 80 screaming fans. I finished second and donated the \$500 prize to Feeding America food bank.

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

**A:** Game Day begins by loading family and friends in the RV five hours prior to game time and heading for Lot 3. We sometimes plan our menu based on the opponent and host about 30 people. We have a 15-foot flag pole that goes into place, and we roll out "grass" on the pavement.

**Q: Over the past decade, Virginia Tech athletics has undertaken tremendous facilities growth and renovations. Do you have a favorite project? Why?**

**A:** Our last donation was to the new basketball practice facility. I'm looking forward to seeing our name above one of the lockers.

**Interesting fact:**

**A:** For my 50th birthday, I became a "permanent" Hokie with a VT tattoo just below my belt line - enough said.



*From left to right - Jennifer & Laurence Loesel, Lesley Visser (middle),  
Dennie and Sherrie Denison.*



The following represents **annual fund donors (gifts from \$100 to \$10,000 annually)** who have either joined as new Hokie Club members or have upgraded their Hokie Club membership from January through August 2010. We want to celebrate these commitments of helping improve Virginia Tech athletics by recognizing them and by saying "Thank You!"

## New members

Jennifer	Adkins	Ellicott City, MD
Aaron	Aguinaldo	Annandale, VA
William	Ames	Virginia Beach, VA
Cynthia	Andrews	Knoxville, TN
Kathleen	Ansley	Savannah, GA
Chanda	Ashley	Charlottesville, VA
John	Ayers	Roanoke, VA
Laura	Baker	Fishersville, VA
Adam	Bartlett	Radford, VA
Mark	Bates	Leesburg, VA
John & Cynthia	Baute	Blacksburg, VA
Eric	Belcher	Pembroke, VA
Patrick	Blevins	Roanoke, VA
Thomas	Bortner	Woodbridge, VA
Travis	Brammer	Salem, VA
Geneva	Brown	Low Moor, VA
Matthew	Bychowski	Roanoke, VA
Michael	Caggiano	McLean, VA
Alen	Caldwell	Marion, NC
Jeffrey & Lindsay	Call	Blacksburg, VA
Alex	Colvin	Ashburn, VA
Fred	Cornett, Jr.	Annandale, VA
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Stuart	Evans	Lynchburg, VA
Patrick	Finn, Jr.	Charlotte, NC
Matthew	Fleet	Hartfield, VA
Lisa	Fletcher	Houston, TX
Marguerite	Gasiorowski	Williamsburg, VA
Peter	Genrich	Easton, MD
George	George, Jr.	Salem, VA
Bryan	Graham	Centreville, VA
Benjamin	Grogan	AP0, AE
Bradley	Hansher	Bath, VA
Dana	Hansson	Warrenton, VA
Leah	Hatcher	Roanoke, VA
Larry	Hedblom	Midlothian, VA
Ralph	Helms, Jr.	Roanoke, VA
Gregory	Hensley	Charlottesville, VA
Leslie	Hetrick	Herndon, VA
Robert & Susan	Hodous	Charlottesville, VA
Darrell	Hollandsworth	Floyd, VA
Lisa	Hopkins	Garner, NC
Danny	Humphreys	Gate City, VA
Hank	Huthinson	Tallahassee, FL
Walter	Ickes, Jr.	Georgetown, KY
Luke	Itnyre	Bristow, VA
Kevin	Jamerson	Norfolk, VA
Nicholas	Johnson	Charlotte, NC
Amanda	Jones	Danville, VA
Jeffrey	Jones	Newport News, VA
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Eugene	Joseph	Blacksburg, VA
Perry	Julie	Kill Devil Hills, NC
Stephen	Kearney	Crockett, VA
Jessica	Klacynski	College Park, MD
Kyle	Korte	Virginia Beach, VA
Kay	Lee	Mechanicsville, VA
David	Leonard	Fredericksburg, VA
Jennifer	Lienau	Frisco, TX
Bascom	Lilley	Bristol, TN
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William	Long, III	Fairfax Station, VA

Steve	Lonker	Vinton, VA
John	Lynch	Mullica Hill, NJ
Gregory	Mackey	Roanoke, VA
Eric	Major	Roanoke, VA
Sarah	Marshall	Richmond, VA
Thomas	Massie, Jr.	Washington, VA
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**- Lu Merritt**

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## NEWS &amp; NOTES

**Nike puts Hokies in black**

For the first time in more than 100 years, the Virginia Tech Hokies wore black when they suited up in the Nike Pro Combat System of Dress for the Boise State game at FedExField on Labor Day night.

The uniform colors marked a departure from the school's maroon and orange combination, but they were not without precedent. The black uniforms referenced the cadet gray-and-black colors worn by Virginia Tech's original football team, and the uniform color scheme draws inspiration from the school's large Corps of Cadets – integral to Virginia Tech's unique football culture. Tech wore the uniforms in honor of the Corps.

"We feel privileged to be one of the 10 teams selected, and Nike is very, very good to this program, athletics department and university," Tech head coach Frank Beamer said. "We're very proud of our partnership with Nike and we want to be a good partner.

"I like what these uniforms are trying to honor – Virginia Tech history and the Corps of Cadets. I'm proud of that. I like that they're in the spotlight with this.



"So whether you like the uniform or not is a matter of personal opinion, but I hope everybody respects what we're trying to honor here. And our players really like it, and they like being one of the programs selected to participate in this. Trust me, our relationship with Nike has been very good for Virginia Tech. We're more than happy to work with those good people."

Nike's designers also focused on the school's commitment to scientific inquiry. "Ut Prosim" (That I May Serve), the motto of the school and of the cadets, appeared inside the back yoke of the jersey, on the back of the helmet and on the inside cuff of the gloves. Jersey numbering, outlined in gray, is rendered in burnt orange with a Chicago maroon fade-in to form an all-over technology-inspired pattern – a nod to Virginia Tech's engineering identity.

Nine other teams wore or will wear Nike's Pro Combat System of Dress, including Boise State. The uniforms are 37 percent lighter than current designs, relieving players of extra weight in a game that demands top speed.

This will not be the only time a Tech team wears a special uniform. Two other of Tech's teams – the men's basketball team and the baseball team – will wear a special uniform at some point during the course of their respective seasons as well.

**Moore headlines Hall of Fame contingent**

Corey Moore, the most honored football player in Virginia Tech history, headlines a contingent of five athletes for induction to the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame.

The list of 2010 inductees also includes:

- Gene Bunn, a ball-hawking defensive

back of the 1970s who set a Tech career pass interception record that still stands today.


- Michelle Meadows, a record-setting softball player who excelled on the diamond and in the classroom during a stellar four-year career.

- Laurie Shiflet Hackbirth, the first female tennis player in Tech history to finish a season with regional and national rankings in singles.

- The late Duke Thorpe, a jumping-jack basketball forward of the mid-70s whose relentless play helped him etch his name into the Tech record book.

Moore, a two-time Big East defensive player of the year, ranks third all time at Tech in career sacks (35) and total tackles for a loss (58). Following his senior season, he won the Bronko Nagurski Trophy as college football's defensive player of the year and the Lombardi Award as the college football lineman of the year.

The five new honorees will be inducted at a Hall of Fame dinner on the Tech campus on Friday, Oct. 22, the evening before Tech's home football game against Duke University. Each of the living inductees and families of all of the inductees will be introduced to fans at halftime of the football game.

The new inductees will bring the total number enshrined to 152. The Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame was established in 1982 and is currently located near the Bowman Room on the fourth floor of the Jamerson Athletics Center. Hall of Fame plaques engraved with portraits of all the members are displayed there. Under Tech Hall of Fame guidelines, persons are not eligible for induction until they have been out of school for a period of 10 years. 

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## HOKIES AGAIN FIND THEMSELVES IN A FAMILIAR POSITION

This issue of *Inside Hokie Sports* marks the first following Labor Day, that time on the calendar when all youngsters bid adieu to summer vacations and return to bells ringing, lockers slamming and friends rushing into their various classrooms to absorb information as part of the path toward becoming a productive member of society.

In this space, the first class is sports history, that of the recent variety.

Most young kids in southwest Virginia probably wanted to beg off from the first day of school, feeling somewhat nauseated after watching the Hokies open the season with a wrenching 33-30 loss to then-No. 3 Boise State on Labor Day night. Unfortunately, the Hokies played a well-rounded game in this one, with mistakes on special teams, some missed tackles on defense and a botched center-quarterback exchange, the most basic element of football, all of which led to Boise State scores.

The most teeth-gnashing thing of all – most of these errors were unforced.

"It was an opportunity missed," Tech quarterback Tyrod Taylor said. "But I believe that we beat ourselves. It wasn't anything they did to beat us. I strongly believe that."

The loss to Boise State marked Tech's third straight season-opening loss. But to their credit, and that of AD Jim Weaver, the Hokies haven't been opening with the bologna sandwiches of college football in recent years. In truth, it's been more like top sirloin.

For a more in-depth perspective on Tech's history in season openers, let's dive into our textbook, the 2010 Virginia Tech Media

Guide, but instead of looking at the fluff in the opening chapters, turn to page 169. This page provides a list of Tech's year-by-year results for the past decade.

In 2004, the Hokies opened the season against Southern Cal at FedExField, the site of their most recent season-opening debacle. Tech lost that game 24-13 to a team that went on to win the national championship that season for the second straight year. But the Hokies fared well, too, rebounding to go 10-3 and win the ACC crown. They fell to Auburn 16-13 in the Sugar Bowl, but finished ranked 10th in The Associated Press poll.

In 2008, the Hokies opened against a very good East Carolina squad at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte. The Pirates blocked a punt late in the game and stunned the Hokies 27-22. Yet Tech responded again, going 10-4, winning the ACC crown and beating Cincinnati in the Orange Bowl. The Hokies finished ranked 15th in the AP poll.

Last year, Tech played No. 5 Alabama in the season opener at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta, and the Tide prevailed 34-24 in a hard-fought tussle. However, the Hokies got off the deck, won 10 games, including five straight to end the season. The final victory was a 37-14 dismantling of Tennessee in the Chick-fil-A Bowl. Tech finished 10th in the final AP poll.

The point of this lesson? Well, the Hokies find themselves in the exact same situation following the loss to Boise State. Tech finds itself facing adversity yet again.

But Hokie Nation can take solace in knowing that the Hokies know how to handle it.

### RESPONDING FOLLOWING SEASON-OPENING LOSSES

Year	Loss	Final Record	Final AP Ranking
2004	USC, 24-13	10-3	10th
2008	ECU, 27-22	10-4	15th
2009	Alabama, 34-24	10-3	10th
2010	Boise State, 33-30	??	??


They've clearly proven it. First of all, the formula consists of never panicking. Following the Boise State game, Beamer refused to yell and scream at his team, realizing 11 games remain. He and the staff never panic, and the players sense that.

Then the coaches and the players keep working and keep grinding. They take care of the little things, with the realization that the big things will come. The end result is that the team keeps improving – and winning. Consider this, Tech went 5-0 down the stretch last year, 5-1 in 2008 and 4-1 in 2004 (post Nov. 1).

"When you play a highly ranked team and if you should lose, you're not necessarily out of the big picture," Beamer said. "You're depending on someone else, but you're not necessarily out of it."

"The thing I'm proud of, for the last couple years, we played our best football at the end of the year. We continued to get better. We've got to get this football team better."

Can they duplicate their past successes? Obviously, there are no guarantees.

But it shouldn't come as any great surprise if they do. After all, history should have taught Tech fans that. 

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# HOKIES NOW VISIT A PLACE THAT HASN'T BEEN KIND TO THEM OF LATE



*In 2008, Macho Harris returned an interception for a touchdown against BC, but the Hokies lost 28-23 - their second straight defeat at BC.*

Three games into this 2010 college football season, we've learned a lot about this year's Virginia Tech Hokies. We've seen their strengths and areas of concern. We've seen examples of both their potential, which is immense, and their flaws, which might be more than we had hoped. Still, the country has seen there's an opportunity for greatness with this year's Tech team, but the margin for error is slim.

Tech has played Boise State, James Madison and East Carolina. But the real season begins in Chestnut Hill, Mass.

As big as the season opener was at FedExField in Washington, D.C., the game at Alumni Stadium against Boston College is, in some ways, bigger. It's a conference road game at a place where Tech hasn't played particularly well in recent years. And Frank Beamer's team will be facing a hungry team. You can count on that. According to offensive lineman Anthony Castonzo, BC "has had this date circled on our calendars since the schedule came out."

Why?

It was October 10 of last year when the

Hokies pounded BC 48-14 at Lane Stadium. The Hokies scored on their first four possessions, piled up 441 yards of total offense and recorded one of the most impressive defensive performances in Lane Stadium history. In one of the most unusual statistical lines ever, Tech held BC to just four total yards and zero first downs in the first half. The Hokies led 34-0 at the break.

Castonzo and his teammates remember. Just as the bitterness of Matt Ryan's dagger to the Hokie Nation's heart in 2007 inspired the Hokies in the 2009 game, this year's Boston



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College team – one that’s had an extra week to prepare – is psyched for a rematch on its home turf.

And it’s a turf that has not been friendly to the Hokies in recent years.

On their last visit to Chestnut Hill in 2008, the Hokies jumped out to a quick 10-0 lead and forced a total of five turnovers, but lost anyway 28-23. In 2006, Tech suffered through a tough 22-3 Thursday night loss. BC’s defense sacked quarterback Sean Glennon four times and Matt Ryan threw for two touchdowns to lead BC to the win.

In fact, the Hokies have not won at BC since their 2002 BIG EAST Conference opener when Lee Suggs and Kevin Jones combined to rush for 298 yards in a rugged 28-23 win at Alumni Stadium. That’s a long time ago, eh?

Tech defeated Boston College in both the 2006 and 2007 ACC Championship games, but the Eagles have actually won four of the past six regular-season games. No other team in recent years has had that kind of success against Beamer’s Hokies.

Tech had won five straight games at Alumni Stadium before the 2006 meltdown. You might remember that night when ESPN’s Kirk Herbstreit took exception to Brenden Hill’s “dancing” during a time out in the second half.

“I like playing there,” Beamer said. “The stands are vertical and the fans are there screaming at you. I like that.”

As for the singing and swaying during *Sweet Caroline*?

“I’ll never forget that song,” a chuckling Beamer said.

BC is 15-5 in home ACC games, will start 12 players who have already earned their degrees, and has a slew of veterans like Castonzo, who will be making his 44th career start against the Hokies.

Tech has played three games, but will have to play its most physical and sharpest game of this season if it hopes to win in Boston for the first time since 2002.

### Success on the road

Virginia Tech has compiled an impressive record of 19-5 in ACC road games since joining the conference in 2004. Each year, Beamer is asked how his team can be so successful away from home and his answer usually goes back to the game week routine. It’s basically the same for both a home or road game.

For home games, the Hokies have a brief walk-through on Fridays at Lane Stadium and then bus to dinner at the Farmhouse Restaurant in Christiansburg before heading to the Hotel Roanoke. At the hotel, the players have various team meetings in conference rooms before going to their respective rooms to catch a movie. In the morning, there’s a team breakfast at the hotel, more meetings and then a bus ride to Lane Stadium. For

road games, the itinerary is identical except there’s a flight or a bus ride involved after dinner at the Farmhouse.

Thus the logistics of a road game are nearly identical to a home game. But clearly, playing the game on the road is different from Lane Stadium once the ball is in the air. So there’s got to be more, right?

“I think one of the reasons you come to Virginia Tech is to play in big games, and big road games,” Beamer said. “When the crowd gets really going, and they’re yelling at you, that’s a sign of respect.”

His kids buy into that theory. Always have.

I recall a conversation I had with Beamer before the Hokies’ 2005 game at West Virginia. The game marked Tech’s first visit to Morgantown since Tech had left the BIG EAST and the Hokies would certainly face not only a great WVU team, but also a very hostile road crowd (and hostile is being kind). What was Beamer’s take on the atmosphere there and Mountaineer fans?

“I think the louder they yell, the better we’ll play,” Beamer said in his pregame interview. And he was right.

It was crazy and loud that day at WVU, and there was no love lost for the Hokies.

But the louder it got, the better the Hokies played. Tech jumped out to a 24-14 lead at halftime and won going away 34-17 in Morgantown.


Keep in mind this was a WVU team with Pat White and Steve Slaton that finished 11-1. Its lone loss that season was to the Hokies in Morgantown.

Being on the road didn’t affect Tech that day – or in most instances – because Beamer has created a culture where the negative turns into the positive. The insults, chants and derogatory comments directed at his team are interpreted as a positive by his players. It’s an interesting way of getting players ready to play away from home.

Tech will play its first of four ACC road games this year at BC. The others are at N.C. State, at North Carolina and at Miami. Now, you know that all four of those games will be tough to win, and each stadium has its own unique environment.

What will be interesting to watch the next two weeks is how Tech will play in front of those hostile crowds. BC is 15-5 at home since ACC expansion. N.C. State is 14-7 at Carter-Finley during the same period. Will the 2010 Hokies have the mindset of previous editions? Will they thrive when the home fans go nuts?

“The louder they cheer, they better we’ll play,” is one of Beamer’s memorable lines about how some of his previous teams would perform in front of hostile crowds.

We’ll have a sense if this year’s unit fits into the mold over the next two weeks. 

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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:** *What exactly is a secondary violation? I know they aren't as serious as major violations, but what would be some examples of secondary violations?*

- Jeremy in Martinsville, Virginia

**TP:** "According to NCAA legislation, secondary violations are those that: 1) are inadvertent, 2) are isolated, and, 3) result in a minimal competitive or recruiting advantage. That's why the punishment for breaking these rules is not as severe as with major violations.

"Let me give you an example – and this occurred at a school from another conference within the past year. Basketball teams aren't allowed to have more than four players working out together with coaches prior to the official start of their official 'playing and practice season' But, because a second group of players was stretching on the court while a first group's instructional session was going on, a violation occurred. As a self-imposed penalty, that school will give up one week of 'skill instruction' in August (players are allowed two hours in a week).

"In this case, there wasn't an intent to break the rules. Intercollegiate athletics programs the size of Virginia Tech are expected to self-report between 10 and 25 secondary violations annually (this

indicates that the monitoring systems are active and functioning). The NCAA enforcement staff provides a listing of 'prescribed penalties' for many types of secondary violations. These are based on case precedent, and create a degree of consistency nationwide when dealing with these transgressions. For those violations that do not have prescribed penalties, there is a searchable database of case precedent that helps us self-impose a reasonable response consisting of one or more actions. These responses almost always include an educational component and corrective action(s), and usually carry some sort of punitive sanction(s)."


**Q:** *Why is it that Jeremiah Masoli is eligible to play this year? Shouldn't he have to sit out a year like most players? Doesn't sound like a fair rule to me.*

- Bill in Danville, Virginia

**TP:** "You're referring to the former Oregon quarterback who transferred to Ole Miss. The NCAA originally ruled Masoli ineligible to play this season, but Masoli and Ole Miss appealed that ruling, and the NCAA granted it, thus allowing Masoli to play.

"Masoli had graduated from Oregon already, and there is a NCAA rule that al-

lows a student-athlete to transfer without penalty to a different school if that school offers a graduate program that was not offered at his previous school. The NCAA originally ruled that Masoli was violating the intent of this bylaw after he had been dismissed from the Oregon program, but ultimately reconsidered.

"The reason behind this rule can be traced to a strong desire on the part of the NCAA membership to provide (rather than deny) competitive opportunities to student-athletes who transfer to another school for reasons connected directly to academic pursuits. Also coming into play here is the fact that a student-athlete who has already received his/her baccalaureate degree will nearly always get the 'benefit of the doubt' when it comes to the application of NCAA regulations. That degree, after all, is the primary objective of attending college in the first place, right?" 

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A crowd of 86,587 fans came to FedExField to watch Boise State take on the Hokies in the Allstate Kickoff in the Capital.

## HOKIE HEARTBREAK

TECH RALLIED FROM 17 POINTS DOWN, BUT CAN'T FIND CLOSURE IN A SEASON-OPENING LOSS TO BOISE STATE

This was one season opener that won't be soon forgotten.

Unfortunately, the Hokies would like to forget it.

Tech opened the 2010 football season against Boise State on Labor Day night in front of more than 86,000 mostly maroon and orange-clad fans at FedExField.

But in a bizarre game that featured a litany of special teams mistakes, and yet a tremendous comeback by the Hokies, Tech started off its third straight season with a defeat, as Boise State's Kellen Moore threw a touchdown pass with 1:09 remaining that left the Hokies on the excruciating end of a 33-30 loss to the Broncos.

The loss marked another missed opportunity to claim a victory over a top-five opponent – Boise State came into this one ranked No. 3. It also left Tech's players angry and frustrated and questioning whether they can duplicate another late-season march, as they've done the past two years.

"It's right back to work," Tech cornerback Rashad Carmichael said, optimistically. "It's a long season – a real long season."

Despite trailing 17-0 after the first quarter – the first time a Tech team has done that since a 1992 loss to Miami – the Hokies appeared to get the game under control midway through the second half. Tyrod Taylor found Jarrett Boykin for a 28-yard scoring strike with 2:40 left in the third quarter that gave the Hokies

a 27-26 lead after the two-point conversion attempt failed. Then, a Chris Hazley field goal with 7:38 left in the game increased the bulge to 30-26.

Tech's defense held on Boise State's ensuing possession and the offense took over at its own 7-yard line with 5:14 left. The Hokies got two first downs, and with 2:06 remaining, Boise State called its final timeout.

Tech appeared on its way to handing head coach Frank Beamer his second victory over a top-five team.

But on third-and-8 from the 33, a Taylor incompletion stopped the clock, and Tech punted, giving Boise State one last opportunity. The Broncos swiftly drove 56 yards in just 38 seconds, scoring when Moore hit Austin Pettis for a 13-yard touchdown with 1:09 to go.

"It happened too quick," Carmichael said.

Tech did not get a first down on its final drive. On fourth-and-11, Taylor tried to hit Boykin on the sideline, but Boykin couldn't come down with the catch, thus giving the ball back to Boise State. The Broncos ran out the clock to preserve the win.

"I firmly believe we're going to be a good football team," Beamer said afterward. "We weren't a great football team tonight. We made too many critical mistakes, but I firmly believe we're going to be a good football team."

Particularly galling for Beamer were the unforced errors. A botched snap between Taylor and center Beau Warren led to Boise State's first score – a 44-yard field goal from Kyle Brotzman.

Then two special teams mistakes led to Bronco touchdowns. A blocked punt by Boise State's Pettis led to a score, and a running-into-the-kicker penalty by Tech's D.J. Coles gave Boise State a first down. Coles compounded things by running down the field and getting a personal foul penalty, and that mess all led to another touchdown, one that gave Boise State a 17-0 lead.

Adding to the special teams woes, the Hokies' kickoff specialist, Justin Myer, kicked a ball out of bounds, and Hazley missed a short field goal in the second quarter.

"The blocked kick, you could have blocked that kick," Beamer joked to the reporter who asked about Tech's special teams. "That was a new guy communicating with a new guy. We turned their best punt blocker [Austin Pettis] loose. We've got to get that corrected.

"Then we're kicking with the wind and we kick the ball out of bounds [Myer's kick-off]. There were just some things there that weren't Virginia Tech."

Taylor paced the Hokies offensively, completing 15-of-22 for 186 yards and two touchdowns. He also rushed for 73 yards on 16 carries.




The Hokies, though, finished with just 128 yards rushing. Ryan Williams rushed for 44 yards on 21 carries, though he scored two touchdowns on 1-yard runs and caught a touchdown pass.

"We've got to look at the film and figure out what was going on," Williams said of the rushing attack. "All I know was there were a lot of times when I got the ball and there were defenders in my face. I don't know who let who by or what type of scheme they ran, but there were people in my face."

**“Disappointed. We’ve got work to do. It’s a tough deal. The kids fought awfully hard to come back. We just didn’t finish it off.”**  
– Head Coach Frank Beamer

"Talent-wise, I felt like we had the upper hand. But they were more disciplined and prepared better than us. When you stop our running game – and we're a running offense – it's hard to get in the groove of things."

Boykin led all receivers with 102 yards on six catches. Moore completed 23-of-38 for 215 yards and three scores for Boise State. Doug Martin and D.J. Harper rushed for 83 and 80 yards, respectively.

"Disappointed," Beamer said, echoing the mood of Hokie Nation. "We've got work to do. It's a tough deal. The kids fought awfully hard to come back. We just didn't finish it off." 



Tyrod Taylor threw for 186 yards and rushed for 73 to pace Tech's offense in the Hokies' 33-30 loss to Boise State.

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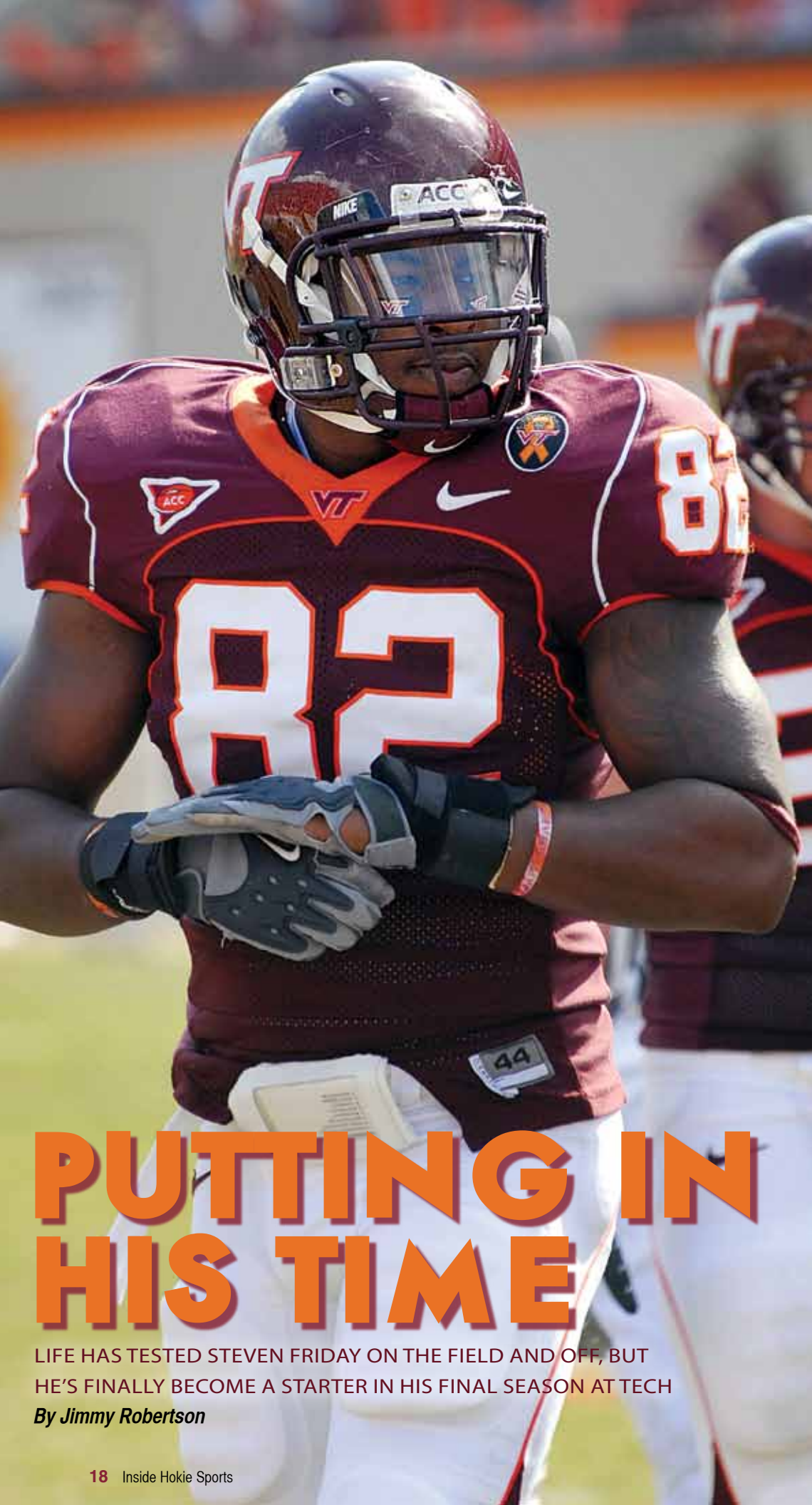
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# PUTTING IN HIS TIME

LIFE HAS TESTED STEVEN FRIDAY ON THE FIELD AND OFF, BUT HE'S FINALLY BECOME A STARTER IN HIS FINAL SEASON AT TECH

By Jimmy Robertson

If you take a glance at Steven Friday on the street or perhaps see him at a local restaurant, you won't find any gray hair on display.

His hearing is just fine, thank you. And judging from the haste in which he pursues quarterbacks on the football field, he has no need for a cane or walker.

But to his teammates, Steven Friday is old. Talk to them, and you'd think Friday was drawing Social Security checks and flashing his AARP card for discounts.

Five days into August, Friday turned 24 years old, easily making him the senior citizen on the 2010 Tech football squad.

"It's only a number," Friday said, laughing. "I don't consider myself that old. I feel like I'm only 18."

Friday blew past that age six years ago, and despite his relative youth – after all, 24 barely classifies as an adult, much less as old – this young man has a lifetime's worth of experiences crammed into those 24 years. We're not talking the scrape on the knee from a bike wreck, or getting grounded by his mother for breaking curfew, or incurring the wrath of Lester Karlin for forgetting to return his game day warm-ups.

We're talking real life stuff.

And he has the scars to prove it.

January 7, 2005. It's a date that means nothing to most, and yet, everything to Friday. The incident happened five years ago, but to him, it seems like five minutes ago.

It occurred on a chilly evening outside a friend's home in Hampton, Virginia. Friday and a few friends were hanging around outside the front stoop, just relaxing. Life appeared to be good for Friday, a standout defensive end at nearby Phoebus High School who had received a football scholarship offer from Virginia Tech and planned on signing with the school that February.

Friday remembers the night. He remembers seeing the person walk down the sidewalk. He remembers seeing the gun. He remembers hearing the subsequent cracks.

"He probably emptied the whole clip," Friday said. "It was crazy."

In a scene unfortunately reminiscent of something out of *Boyz in the Hood*, a young man – whom Friday didn't know – had a beef with Friday's friend and decided to take action. Three of those shots found the legs of Friday's friend.

One other found Friday.

"I didn't know I'd been shot at first,

to be honest," Friday said. "I felt my chest and it felt like sweat. I looked down and realized it was blood. My friend was lying there hurt. I was trying to be the calm one. Someone called the ambulance and it came, and they took me in first."

The bullet grazed Friday just underneath his left shoulder. The doctors and nurses stitched up the wound. A couple of inches to the left would have snuffed Friday's life.

Instead, he spent 24 hours in the hospital and was released. His friend turned out to be fine, too.

They both had knocked on death's door, but fortunately, no one answered.

The worst pain came from watching the reaction of his mother, who hustled quickly to the hospital after receiving the call that leaves every parent shuddering.

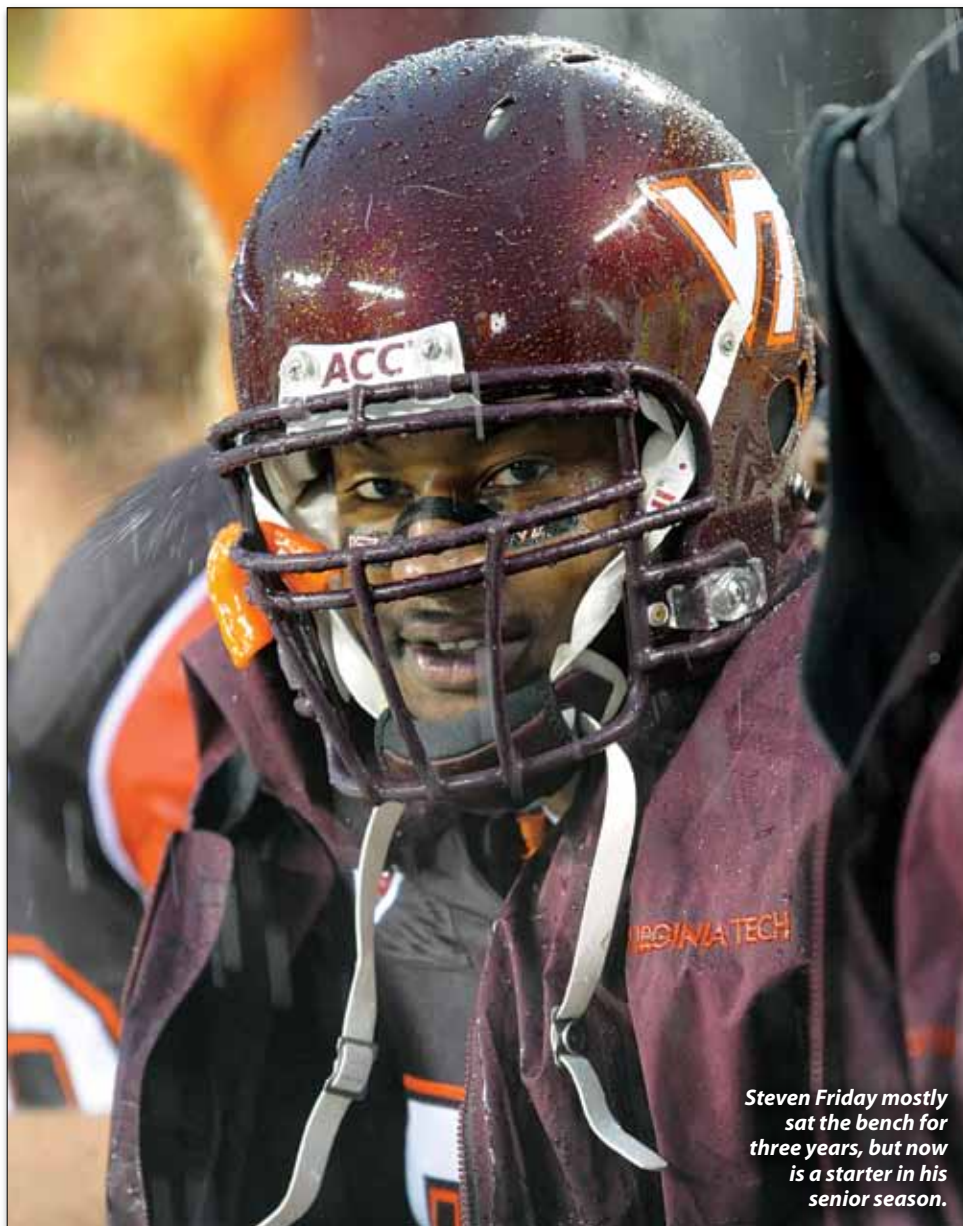
"I can only imagine," Friday said. "I never want to put my mom through that again. Just getting that phone call, I know she was devastated. I made a promise never to put myself in that situation again either."

"I was more grateful than anything," Cynthia Friday said. "To see his eyes, to touch him, to hold him ... once I did that, I was fine. I was blessed he was okay. I thank God that I still have him."

Cynthia Friday shares a deep, close

“I didn't know I'd been shot at first, to be honest," Friday said. "I felt my chest and it felt like sweat. I looked down and realized it was blood. My friend was lying there hurt. I was trying to be the calm one. Someone called the ambulance and it came, and they took me in first.”

– Steven Friday



Steven Friday mostly sat the bench for three years, but now is a starter in his senior season.

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relationship with her only son, and the thought of losing him consumed her with fear. The bond was natural, as Steven and his older sister lived with Cynthia once she and Delmont Friday divorced when Steven was in middle school.

Steven and his father, a Navy veteran, get along well. His dad got him involved with football around the age of 10. He also got him involved in basketball and baseball.

But Steven is a self-proclaimed mama's boy.

"I'm closer to my mom," he said. "Me and my mom have been through so much together. She's been there for me from the jump. She never stressed the football thing. She was more about getting an education and graduating from Tech. That's probably why we can relate to each other better."

She never wanted her son to head down any other path except for the one that led to a college education – and a future. She wanted her son to put up statistics, not become another statistic.

The scar reminds him that he nearly became that. It serves as a constant reminder of the preciousness of life. As expected, the incident altered his life.

He picked his friends more carefully. He stayed at home more often. He realigned

his priorities more in line with what his mother wanted. He started thinking about his future more because he nearly didn't get to have one.

Interestingly, the bullet that nearly snared his life also may have saved it.

"Being in high school, you've got people jumping on your bandwagon because they see you doing your thing on the football field," Friday said. "I was young then. Everyone who smiled to my face, I thought they were truly my friend. It's all a learning experience. Everyone who smiles to your face doesn't have your best interests at heart.

"It [the shooting] was like an awakening point with me. I wasn't all good at the time either. I was chilling with a bad crowd. I never got in trouble. I got caught up in trouble, just surrounding myself with bad people. That night was an awakening point. I realized life was real. You don't get another life. I don't regret it at all. It could have been worse."

Friday hasn't strayed that close to death since then. But that event didn't mark the end of difficult times.

His entrance to Virginia Tech was delayed. He took the SAT a couple of times, but he attained his score after the NCAA's

deadline. So that meant staying at home in the fall and enrolling at Tech for the spring semester.

His mom, though, refused to allow him to sit around in Hampton. Instead, she agreed to let him go to Atlanta to be with his older sister. That got him away from home, and he also took an online class and got a job, delivering flowers for a local flower shop.

"He needed a break. He needed to see new surroundings," Cynthia Friday said. "My daughter and I talked about it, and she said, 'Why not let him come with me?' She knew a trainer and they put him on a weight program. He wanted to go, too. They got to spend some time together. It was a pleasant experience."

Friday balanced work, working out and a class. He then enrolled at Tech for the spring semester. That was in January of 2006.

Since then, his bio reads a little sparse. He participated in spring practice in 2006 but redshirted the following fall. Buried behind all-conference players at his position, Friday entered the 2010 season having played just 24 games in his career, 12 of those coming last year. He had 19 career tackles, or about as many as Cody Grimm seemingly made in a single game.

# MARTIN TRAVEL

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For three years, he sat, collecting dust on Tech's sideline. Part of that was because he came in weighing slightly more than a student manager (197 pounds). Part of it was because guys like Chris Ellis, Jason Worlds, Orion Martin and Nekos Brown made plays.

Tech's coaches tried moving him to a different position to get him on the field. They moved him to whip linebacker a couple of years ago – a move that seemingly lasted about as long as David Wilson's current 40 time (4.29 seconds). Friday was about as lost as a Cavalier in Blacksburg.

"I came in thinking, 'Yeah, I'm going to be 'The Man' because I was all this in high school,'" Friday said. "But come to find out, everyone at this level was good in high school. So it has taught me patience and to work hard.

"Everyone in front of me deserved to be in front of me. All those guys were pretty good, from Chris Ellis to Orion [Martin] to Jason Worlds and Nekos [Brown]. They are all great players. Everything happens for a reason."

He got the occasional rep and made the occasional tackle. But for the most part, he stood on the sideline and watched as the clock ticked away on each individual game – and on his career.

He often lay awake at night wondering what to do. Of course, he often found himself calling the person whom he most loved and respected.

His mother.

"I told him to stay still. Sometimes, you've just got to stay still," Cynthia Friday said. "Sometimes you have to sit and

wait. He had put so much into Virginia Tech. This was his dream. I wanted him to follow through with it and get his degree. It would be a great accomplishment just to get the degree."

"I remember nights thinking about it and calling my mom and asking her what I should do," Friday said. "The first thing she said was that I needed to get a degree. She didn't stress football. She was all about getting that degree and then worrying about football. She wanted me to give both of them my all, and if it was meant to work out, then it would work out. So I decided to stay."

**“I told him to stay still. Sometimes, you’ve just got to stay still. Sometimes you have to sit and wait. He had put so much into Virginia Tech. This was his dream. I wanted him to follow through with it and get his degree. It would be a great accomplishment just to get the degree.”**

– Cynthia Friday

Last May, Friday proudly put on his cap and gown and graduated with a degree in residential property management. That fulfilled one of his goals, but more importantly, took care of his mother's desperate wish that he graduate and also ensured him of a future.

"It was the day I had prayed for,"

Cynthia Friday said.

His is a heart-warming story, dodging a bullet that could have buried him and overcoming the stigma associated with getting his SAT score late. He's now working on a second degree in psychology.

"I always had doubters, even in middle school," he said. "Teachers would joke and say, 'You ain't going to be nothin'.' But I like proving people wrong."

All that remains is proving doubters wrong about his football abilities. He certainly took the steps to do that.

Once a gawky 197-pounder, he now weighs a strapping 250 pounds. He now bench presses 200 pounds more than his body weight. These days, he earns honors in the strength and conditioning program.


He always possessed the speed and quickness to be a terrific defensive end. Brown's graduating and Worlds' early departure to the NFL have left an opening for Friday.

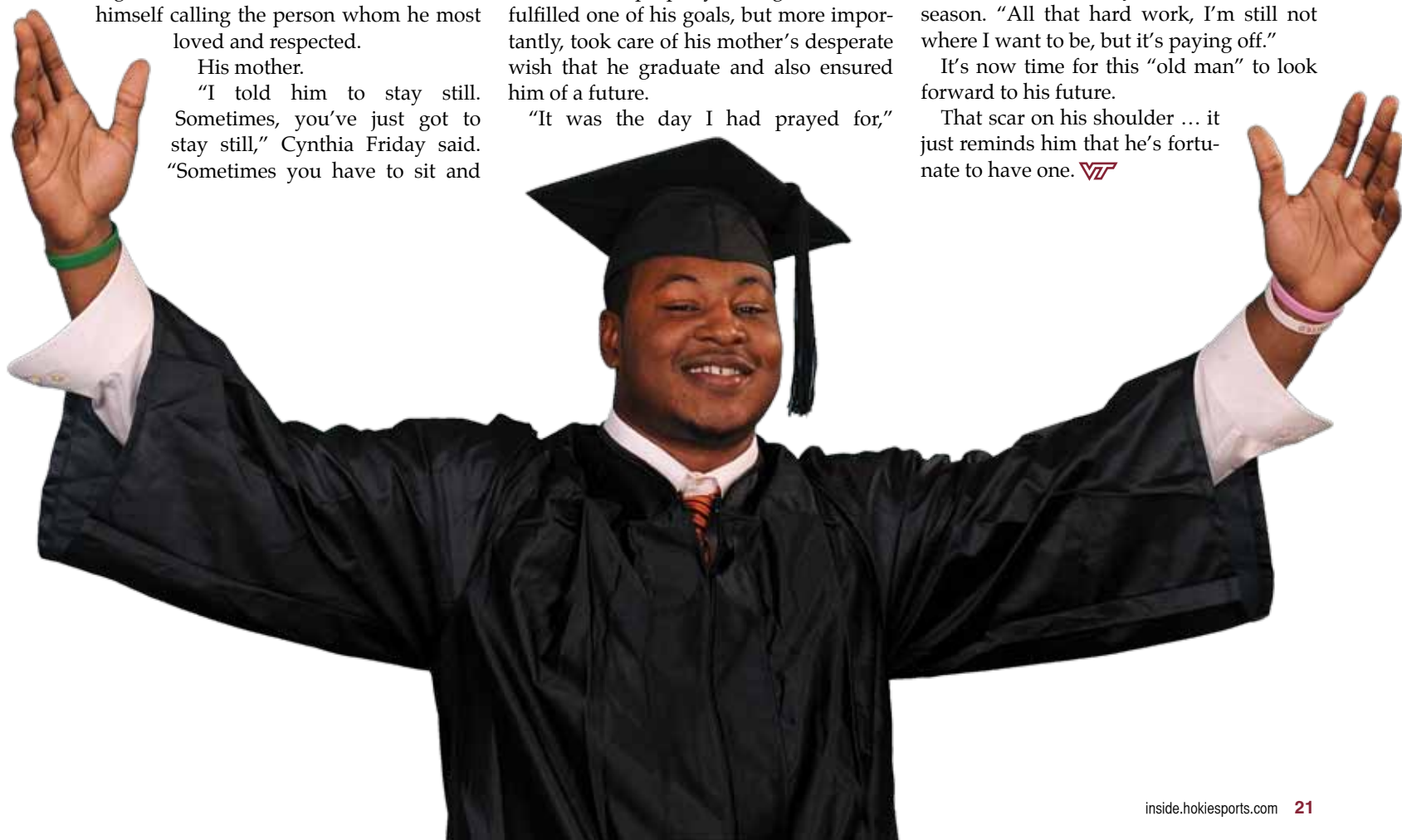
Now, after four and a half years at Tech, he's a starter, and the only things between him and a great season are opposing offensive tackles.

"Steven played an important role for us last year and he's playing an even more important role for us this year," defensive line coach Charley Wiles said. "I expect him to be a playmaker. We need that from him, and I know he can do that."

"I'm excited," Friday said about the 2010 season. "All that hard work, I'm still not where I want to be, but it's paying off."

It's now time for this "old man" to look forward to his future.

That scar on his shoulder ... it just reminds him that he's fortunate to have one. 





1



2



3



4

## LOCKER ROOM FACILITY IS STUNNING

THE HOKIES' \$18 MILLION, 41,900-SQUARE FOOT LOCKER ROOM FACILITY SHOULD RANK AMONG THE BEST IN THE NATION.

1. The second floor of the locker room facility features a 2,900-square foot balcony off of the lounge area that looks out over the practice field. The grills on the balcony allow for team cookouts while also providing an area for recruits to gather on game days.

2. One of the hallways features a replica of the bowl ring from each of the Hokies' bowl appearances. The Hokies have made 23 bowl appearances.


3. The locker room itself is 14,800 square feet and reportedly has the biggest lockers in the country. The lockers, which are 42 inches wide and made of wood, include a ventilation system to keep equipment dry as well as individual safes for players to store valuables. They also have electrical outlets for cell phone chargers, hair dryers, etc.

4. At the entrances to each small hallway of lockers are words that define the Virginia Tech football program. These words include family, loyalty, trust, consistency, dependable, etc.

5. The locker room includes showers, a cold tub, a hot tub, a steam room and a sauna that will be used extensively to help players recover from injuries and everyday aches and pains. The coaches also have their own locker room, which will be adjacent to the large room with the hot and cold tubs and the steam room and sauna.

6. What else defines Virginia Tech football? Hard work. That's why there will be a time clock in the locker room. It serves as a reminder to the players as to what it takes to be successful.

7. The sports medicine staff will do taping on new taping tables located in an area adjacent to the locker room.

8. Finally, the second floor, which is 12,900 square feet, includes a players' lounge and a study lounge. The lounge area has multiple 65-inch high definition televisions, pool tables and an area for players to sit and rehydrate after practice. The study lounge will feature 12 study stations with a computer at each station. 



## FOOTBALL

## EXTRA

## EVANS TAKES TIME FOR CHILDREN AT VICCC

Darren Evans certainly enjoyed a busy summer, though it did not entail vacations, beaches or anything else resembling relaxation.

It consisted, more or less, of working a part-time job and working out in preparation for the 2010 season.

Yet Evans took some time out of his demanding schedule to give back to a group of people whom he loves – kids.

Earlier this summer, Evans visited the Valley Interfaith Child Care Center in Blacksburg to read to the children as part of Herma's Readers, a charity Frank Beamer founded in honor of his mother. Formed in 2004, the VICCC is a wonderful organization that provides high-quality, affordable childcare to the children of low-income working families in the New River Valley.

The center runs primarily through the contributions of those within the community, and it helps prepare young children for kindergarten. In all, about 115 children have been impacted.

Evans, a redshirt junior at Tech, and his wife, Taneesha, send their 3-year-old son James to the center. Taneesha works, while Evans goes to classes and attends practices.

"I have a son, so it comes natural to me to be in front of those little guys like that," Evans said "I don't get nervous because they look up to you. When I was asked to do it, it was an easy 'Yes' because I can relate to it so much, just by having James around."

Evans' visit represented another example of his giving of his time to young children, and the latest example of a student-athlete giving back to the community. Before his latest visit




to VICCC, he had spoken to kids at an elementary school in Salem.

"I do enjoy it," Evans said. "I have experience with it, and it's always cool to see how they react. Then at the end, you ask them if they have any questions and the questions are all about football. It's like they never even heard the book. But it's fun.

"It's a different side of the fans. You have the older people who want the autographs and stuff like that, but those kids, they don't care about autographs. They just want to be around you."

Evans' time spent with the children also provides him with the opportunity to do something he loves – act like a kid.

"It's fun to be around kids," he said. "You can act goofy and silly and not have to worry about what people think. Kids always like funny stuff. That's me, I like to be goofy and wrestle around with them."

He represents one of the best examples to children as well. In addition to being a father and a talented football player, he's a solid student. He plans on graduating in December with a degree in sociology. 

## 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.



To find out more about the scholarship and eligibility please visit <http://lunchpaildefense.com>.



## FOOTBALL

## EXTRA

## TECH GROUP DELIVERS AND RECEIVES WITH VISIT TO ROANOKE RESCUE MISSION

Without question, football team chaplain Johnny Shelton has made an impact on Virginia Tech football since joining the program full time in 2007.

Now, numerous players want to have that same type of impact in other people's lives.

Before preseason practices kicked off, a Shelton-led group of more than 20 players visited the Roanoke Rescue Mission in nearby Roanoke, Virginia. The Roanoke Rescue Mission is a Christ-centered organization that helps people in southwest Virginia. It provides meals – more than 350,000 of them last year – clothing, shelter (separate men's and women's areas), recovery classes, learning classes, counseling and health care, and each person staying overnight in the shelter goes to a chapel service. It receives no government funding and operates through donations from individuals and corporations.

On Aug. 3, the Tech players made the trip to the shelter with Shelton, and each player sat at a different table for the evening dinner to meet with the individuals, to share their stories and to listen.

"Our goal was to sit and talk with them and share with them a message of hope," Shelton said.

More than 300 people were there on this particular evening. Usually, the rescue mission averages 340 people per night. The numbers have gone up the past couple of years because of the economic downturn, which has resulted in people losing their jobs and homes.

If nothing else, the Tech players provided them with a brief escape from their current situations.

"Going in, I was expecting to see people who were sad and depressed," David Wilson said. "But once you get to talk to them and know them, they were happy. I don't know if it was because they were happy to see us, or if they just were determined not to give up because a lot of them were talking about how the shelter was helping them, giving them food and shelter and class, and keeping them on the right track. They were happy to have a place to go."

Wilson, for all of his 19 years of age, is a veteran of working with and helping those less fortunate. A devout member of both his hometown church and of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, he has



Several members of the football team had dinner at the Roanoke Rescue Mission. Kory Gough (bottom) listened to the stories of those sitting at his table, as he and his teammates delivered a message of hope.

been to Louisiana to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina, and he's also been to South Carolina with FCA and a local church on a mission trip there to repair and rebuild homes.


Wilson, Collin Carroll, Martin Scales and Shelton all spoke at a chapel service following the meal at the shelter. Carroll relayed the story of Abraham, who, along with wife Sarah, waited 100 years before being blessed with their first child, Isaac, only to have God ask Abraham to give Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham nearly did it, but an angel of God stepped in at the last minute and provided a ram for the sacrifice.

"My hope was to encourage them to trust that, even when the situation seems tough or seems bad, God is drawing us closer to him," Carroll said. "And He's challenging us to make us stronger."

"It seems like the guys [at the shelter] were appreciative of us coming and bring-

ing hope to their lives by presenting the gospel. Hopefully, we did that. All we can do is plant little seeds. God does the watering, and it'll be cool to see what fruit God bears among that homeless shelter."

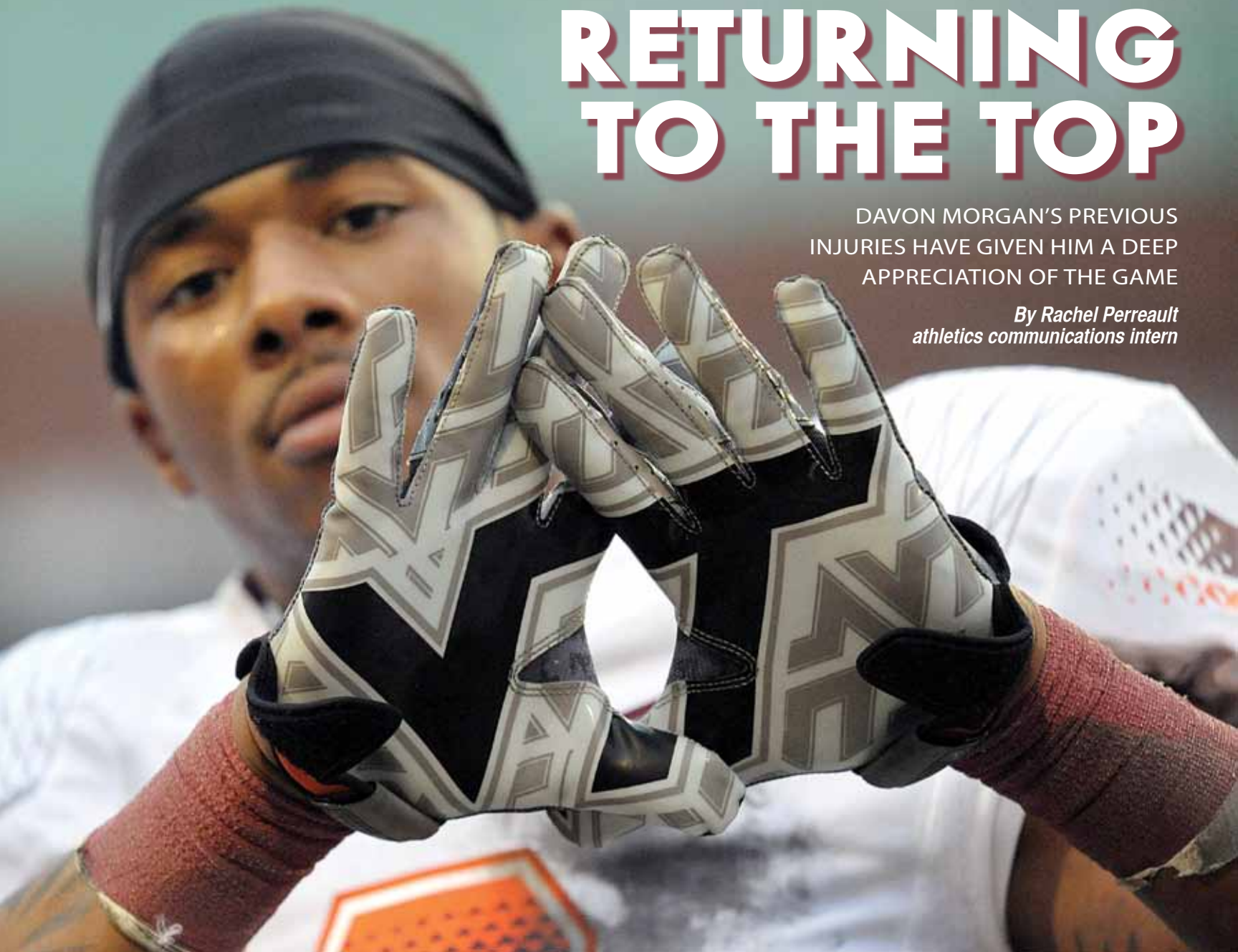
The visit not only helped those at the Roanoke Rescue Mission, but also benefited the players. They got to see another side of life – one that made them appreciative of what they have.

"I think the homeless people impacted us much more than we impacted them," Carroll said. "We saw how much we take for granted that we've been given, whether it's the opportunity to play football here or all the resources we're given. It's such a huge blessing and we take it for granted. Being around the homeless people really put things in perspective. We're so blessed and so fortunate. I think it made us more thankful for the blessings we've been given." 

# RETURNING TO THE TOP

DAVON MORGAN'S PREVIOUS INJURIES HAVE GIVEN HIM A DEEP APPRECIATION OF THE GAME

*By Rachel Perreault  
athletics communications intern*



Watching senior leader Davon Morgan practice and play, there is never a dull or down moment. A student of the game, Morgan learns from his coaches and teammates while keeping the energy level high as often as possible. Many of those around Morgan on a daily basis are quick to note his positive spirit. It hasn't been his experiences that have caused him to be this way. Rather it is his attitude and mindset that have allowed him to overcome and achieve all that he has. This same positive attitude is what has prepared him for the shoes he will fill as an experienced senior on a young squad after reclaiming a starting role that was his just two seasons ago.

Morgan came to Blacksburg from Varina High School in Richmond, Virginia, and earned a starting spot on the highly ac-

claimed Bud Foster defense by the start of his second season. In high school, Morgan excelled on both sides of the ball as a free safety and quarterback. Despite only being able to play in four games as a senior, Morgan was touted as one of the top players in not only the state, but also the country, coming out of high school. He finished his junior season with nine interceptions, 30 tackles and a fumble return for a score on defense.

He saw limited time on the field as a senior after breaking his leg early in the year. As deflating as it was, the injury wasn't something that slowed him down as he prepared for the next level. With help from his high school coach, Morgan took the mishap as a lesson and used it to power himself through the situation and fuel himself for

the next challenge ahead.

When Morgan arrived at Tech, he hung a picture in his locker. The picture came from Kevin Hollins, his former position coach at Varina. He put it up as an inspiration and a constant reminder. He knew he had to go out and compete – he couldn't play scared of getting hurt again. He had to attack every challenge head on. A self-proclaimed motivational and positive person, the picture wasn't necessarily something he needed to be reminded of.

But it didn't hurt.

"The picture was of me falling, breaking my ankle," Morgan said of the gift from his coach. "He made the picture and the words on the picture were 'Anything can happen, at any given time. It doesn't matter who you play, when you play, where you play;

it's how you play. Just remember to go out every day and live life like it's your last and play every down like it's your last because it could all change in one play.' Every day, I looked at it and it just made me hungry. It made me want it. It made me want to come out here [the practice field] and get better, because if I took it for granted, this [his injury] is what could happen."

The 6-foot, 198-pound converted rover earned the No. 2 spot at free safety as a true freshman, while also playing a starring role on special teams. Morgan finished his first collegiate season with 11 tackles, having played in all 14 games before making the position change during spring ball.

"We had a couple guys banged up," recalled rovers coach Jim Cavanaugh. "We moved him over to rover so we could get another good player on the field. We didn't want him playing behind somebody else when he could have been a starter at rover."

Cavanaugh was impressed with Morgan's play coming out of high school, as he was the one who recruited him. He remembers that, upon arrival, Morgan was a good athlete with good ball skills. A mobile, talented tackler, he arrived ready to learn and improve for the opportunity to compete.

Morgan continued to impress his coaches through spring ball and preseason, winning the starting job at rover entering his sophomore year. Things were going well for the second-year player. He was adapting well to his starting role with the help of experienced upperclassmen Macho Harris and Brandon Flowers. He said the players pushed him to get better, while also teaching him everything they could along the way.

**“ Every day, I looked at it and it just made me hungry. It made me want it. It made me want to come out here [the practice field] and get better, because if I took it [football] for granted, this [the injury] is what could happen. ”**

**— Davon Morgan**

Morgan followed the teachings of his peers and made an immediate impact as a starter. He tallied a then-personal best seven tackles against Georgia Tech in the third game of the season and neared that mark with six tackles and a key fumble recovery

in the very next game against another ACC foe, North Carolina.

Unfortunately, the words on the inspirational picture in his locker became, once again, a little more real.

The following week Tech traveled to Nebraska, and Morgan, who was still regularly seeing time on special teams, suffered a torn ACL on a kickoff return. He went down and was forced to miss the remaining nine games of his sophomore season. Nearly two years after breaking his ankle, Morgan was back to square one.

"Coming down to the fifth game, when I got hurt, I realized everything happens for a reason," Morgan recalled. "It kind of put me on pause for a minute. I wasn't sure how things were going to go, with the injury and everything. I didn't think about that too much, didn't let it get the best of me. I kept working, I came to treatment every day and I came to practice every day, just to get my mental reps. Even though I couldn't practice every day, I was actually out there watching and learning. I was just trying to get my mental part of the game right so that when I did get the opportunity to get back [on the field], everything would be second nature."

From day one, Morgan's family stressed



*Davon Morgan started the final four games of last season and finished the year with 47 tackles, including 2.5 for a loss.*

the importance of school and graduating to have another route to travel. His family was also a large part of his recovery. They played a big role in keeping him motivated and focused with their support.

Morgan also drew inspiration from every single teammate simply due to the fact that they could go out and compete on the field and, at that time, he could not. Though it was hard to watch, he kept his head up with the goal of not only returning to the field, but also the starting lineup, in the front of his mind.

His preparation and commitment to the game paid off come springtime. Morgan remembers that he wasn't supposed to be back in time for spring practices, but his positive attitude and love for football wouldn't let him take any more time off. He said he told himself, "if I've got the strength to get up and walk around and run, then I've got the strength to play," and with the approval of the medical staff, he jumped back onto the playing field.

Morgan admitted that one of the hardest things to overcome while being sidelined was the mental games that an injury can play, being unable to get out on the field and perform in a familiar, comfortable way. Though he experienced trouble getting

the usual angles and tackles he was used to when he did return, he stayed focused, always reminding himself what a blessing it was to be able to play football and earn a scholarship. He quickly forced himself to trust his surgically repaired knee in time for his junior year, knowing this was the only way he could get back to where he needed and wanted to be.


Entering his third year, Morgan returned ready to play after "dinging" up his knee in the spring, but the offseason play was just what he needed to boost his confidence. His time away opened doors for other players to rise up, and because of that, Morgan had some work to do to regain his starting role.

Dorian Porch became Morgan's replacement after he was injured, and he remained in the No. 1 spot to start the 2009 season. Though Morgan and Porch were splitting time through most of the year, he never put his head down or let anything delay his progress.

Morgan continued to improve throughout his junior season, so much so that when the Hokies embarked on a five-game winning streak at the end of the season, Coach Cavanaugh made the decision to start Morgan in the second game of the streak, giving him his first defensive start of the

season at Maryland. Morgan's productive play continued through the end of the season, much like his presence at the top of the depth chart, and he ended the year with his first career bowl game start in the Chick-fil-A Bowl against Tennessee. He finished the 2009 season with 47 tackles.

As one of five returning senior starters on this year's squad, Morgan will be looked upon as a leader by the young players at his position and by the team as a whole. He knows what he has to do to remain in the position he is in and never misses an opportunity to learn something new. By spending most of his time with his teammates, watching film and studying offenses or techniques from other players, he makes every effort to improve his game and make himself better.

An aspiring coach, Morgan prepares himself like a student for the game he would one day like to teach. Having had great teachers and teammates before him as a young player on the team, he does his best to return the favor to his teammates. Morgan hits the field every practice and game with his current coaches' thinking and teachings in mind to maintain their trust and confidence in him as he sets an example for those around him with his actions, words and attitude in his final season. 

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**GAME NIGHT**

**FITZPATRICK UNVEILS 'GAME NIGHT'**

Eric Fitzpatrick, a Roanoke artist and 1975 graduate of Tech, unveiled his second football-themed drawing of a Hokie game, debuting "Game Night" at the Roanoke Valley Hokie Club's first annual football kickoff dinner held at the Hotel Roanoke on July 29. "Game Night," a Fitzpatrick drawing

that captures the details, lighting and colors from a Tech night football game, joins "Game Day," a drawing he did last summer to capture the details of a day football game. Fitzpatrick had "Game Day" professionally photographed and made into a print and then sold it through the Alumni Association.

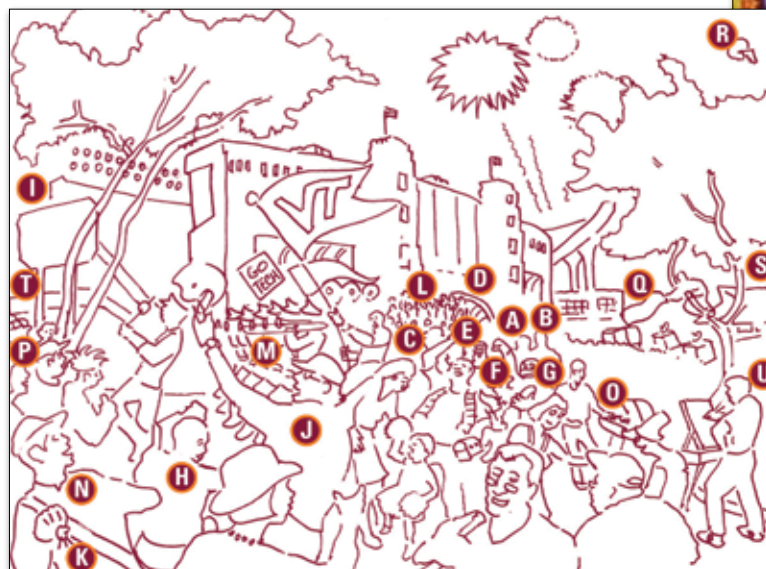
He is doing the same with "Game Night."

Both pieces, shown on this page along with the key of what each displays, can be purchased through the Alumni Association at [www.alumni.ot.edu/merchandise/index.html](http://www.alumni.ot.edu/merchandise/index.html).

To learn more about Fitzpatrick and his work, visit his Web site at [www.fitzpatrick-art.com](http://www.fitzpatrick-art.com).

**Find these Hokie Highlights in "GAME NIGHT":**

- A - Coach Frank Beamer (with trophy)**
- B - Bud Foster (with Lunch pail Defense)**
- C - Mike Burnop & Bill Roth (Broadcasting)**
- D - Old Tech Logos**
- E - Gobbler (60's Mascot)**
- F - Fighting Gobbler (70's Mascot)**
- G - Hokie Bird**
- H - TV Night!**
- I - Home of the Hokies!**
- J - Jimmy Buffett Fan - "What if the Hokie Pokey is really what it's all About?"**



- K - "Key Play!"**
- L - Hokie Cheerleaders**
- M - Highy Tighties**
- N - Marching Virginians**
- O - Chilling & Grilling**
- P - Hokie Man**
- Q - We are the Champions!**
- R - Full Moon with Stealth Flyover**
- S - Indoor Practice Field**
- T - "Touchdown Terrace"**
- U - Artist Eric Fitzpatrick (Class of 1975)**

**Jersey numbers depicted:**

- 56 - Corey Moore**
- 34 - Ryan Williams**
- 58 - Cornell Brown**
- 51 - Jack Prater**
- 88 - André Davis**
- 1 - "Macho" Harris**
- 45 - Cyrus Lawrence**
- 17 - Shayne Graham**
- 73 - Jim Pyne**
- 4 - Eddie Royal**



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**Find these Hokie Highlights in "GAME DAY":**

- A - Frank Beamer
- B - Bud Foster
- C - Hokie Bird
- D - Highty Tights
- E - Marching Virginians
- F - Flyover by B-2 Stealth
- G - Tech 30...UVA 0
- H - Lunch Pail Defense
- I - The Skipper (cannon firing)
- J - ACC Championship Banner
- K - Old Tech Logos



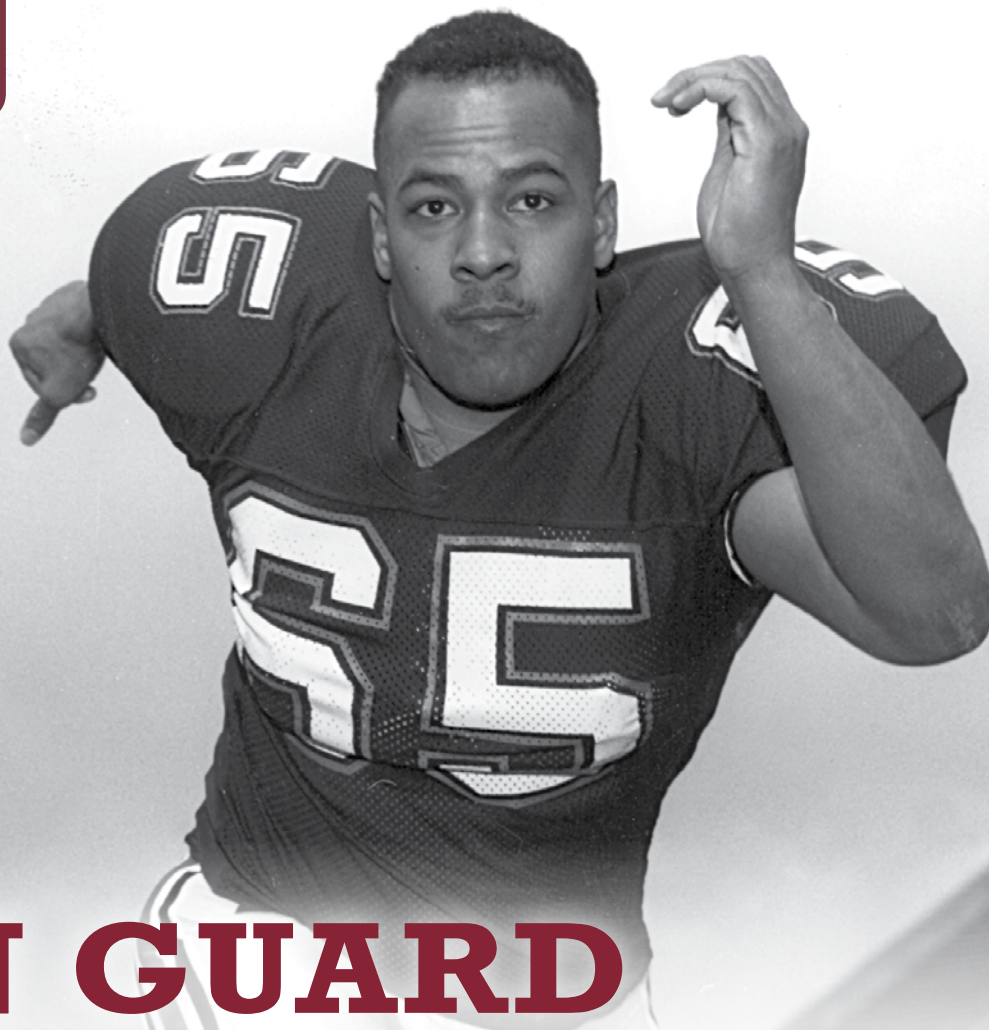
- L - Turkey leg Tailgate
- M - Jimmy Buffett Fan
- N - Programs For Sale!
- O - Overnight Tailgaters
- P - Artist Eric Fitzpatrick  
(Class of 1975)

**Jersey numbers depicted:**

- 3 - Bryan Randall
- 10 - Frank Loria
- 22 - Lee Suggs
- 15 - Don Strock
- 84 - Carroll Dale
- 78 - Bruce Smith
- 7 - Michael Vick
- 5 - Tyrod Taylor
- 25 - Frank Beamer



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# ON GUARD

**FORMER TECH PLAYER  
TODD MEADE PROTECTS  
VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN  
AS A MEMBER OF THE U.S.  
SECRET SERVICE**

As a former offensive lineman at Virginia Tech in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Todd Meade knows quite a bit about protection. Back then, he worked with several others in protecting a valuable commodity in Will Furrer, the Hokies' starting signal caller for several years.

These days, he help protects someone a little more famous than Mr. Furrer.

Meade works as a special agent for the United States Secret Service, one of the most – if not *the* most – elite law enforcement organizations in the world. He has been assigned to Vice President Joe Biden's detail and essentially works as a team with many others to provide protection for the country's No. 2 leader.

"I don't take this job lightly," Meade said. "I feel blessed to be in this position. It's a great opportunity, and I have fun doing it."

During his playing days at Tech, he never envisioned himself in a career in law enforcement. Of course, he was a little busy helping head coach Frank Beamer rebuild the foundation of Tech's football program, which had suffered some cracks after being placed on probation by the NCAA for some violations that had occurred under former coach Bill Dooley.

Meade was a member of Beamer's first recruiting class, joining guys like Eugene Chung and James Hargrove. A small-town guy from Big Stone Gap, Virginia, (population: 4,800) in deep southwest Virginia, he picked the Hokies over Kentucky and East Tennessee State, citing the family atmosphere surrounding the school and the community.

"I visited all three schools," Meade said. "When I took my official visit [January of 1987], it just felt like home. I felt comfortable with the place."

Meade redshirted his first year while recovering from a shoulder injury. He lettered his final three years – and the Hokies enjoyed two winning seasons in that span.

Like most of his teammates, his most memorable moment – in addition to the

time he spent with his friends – came during the 1990 season. In the season finale against UVa, the Hokies broke out the all-maroon uniforms and spray-painted their cleats black. Then they hammered the Cavaliers 38-13 at Lane Stadium to finish the season with a 6-5 mark. A then-record crowd of 54,157 people attended, and the game marked Tech's first appearance on ESPN.

Meade never played in a bowl game in his career, but the UVa game would have probably ranked higher than any bowl game.

"They had been ranked No. 1 earlier in the year, and I think they were 17th coming in," Meade said. "They had guys like Shawn Moore [quarterback] and Herman Moore [receiver]. We had the maroon-on-maroon and the black shoes. Everyone was just so excited. That's definitely my most memorable moment."

Meade graduated from Tech in 1992 with a degree in exercise physiology. He wanted to get into physical therapy, but his grades in such a demanding degree program weren't quite good enough.

He worked for a while at Chemical



Waste Management in Hopewell, Virginia, and then worked for five years as a bank teller at Dominion Credit Union. The position wasn't quite what he wanted. He ended up connecting with John Rehme, a former teammate who was working as a state trooper, and that connection changed his life.

"I had an interest [in becoming a state trooper], so he brought me an application," Meade said. "It took me nine months to go through the process, but I was hired in 1998 and I worked for five years in Petersburg.

"Then while working as a state trooper, I met some of the special agents [with the Secret Service] in that area and I was very interested in what they did because they're a part of a top-notch law enforcement organization. So I decided to apply."

After 21 weeks of training, multiple interviews, the passing of a polygraph test and the fulfillment of various other requirements, Meade landed a job as a special agent working out of the Richmond field office. During his first four years, he worked as part of an investigative unit that handled financial crimes such as counterfeiting and credit card fraud.

Then, in 2009, he moved from the investigative phase to the protection phase of the Secret Service and was transferred to

the Vice President's detail. He'll be in his current role for three more years.

After that, he's not sure the direction he plans to take.

"I may get into training, maybe at the training facility," he said. "Long term, I'd like to get into coaching. I do miss football. My son is 15 and he's a pretty good player, and I enjoy watching him practice and play. I did a little coaching when I was a state trooper, too. So yes, I miss it."


Meade and his wife, Samantha, have been married for 18 years and have two children – Allan and 17-year-old Brittany – and they all live in Maryland. However, because of his duties as a special agent, he misses a lot of family time because he travels all over the world with the vice president.

"This job is challenging at times," Meade said. "You miss birthdays and school events and sporting events. But my wife and family are very understanding and supportive of what I do. That makes it a lot easier for me."

Despite his schedule, he manages to keep up with the Hokies, and he brought his son down for the spring game in 2008 and 2009. His job reminds him of his playing days as a Hokie when he and a group of teammates worked together

toward a common goal.

"There's a camaraderie among agents that reminds me of athletics," he said. "You're on a mission. It's like being on a team. Other people's lives are in your hands and you have to look out for them."

Only when he played, his protection helped win a game. Now, it's a little more important than that. 



Todd Meade (left), with his wife Samantha and children Allan (top) and Brittany (top right)

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## TAPP NOW WORKING ON THE EAST COAST

At this point last season, Darryl Tapp worked for the Seattle Seahawks, made wedding plans in his spare time and looked forward to his fourth season playing for an organization with one of the most rabid fan bases in the NFL.

One year later, he got married, he still works in the NFL and he still plays for an organization with one of the most rabid fan bases in the NFL.

But the zip code on his mailing address has changed.

Tapp, a former Tech defensive end who twice earned first-team All-ACC recognition while in Blacksburg, was traded to the Philadelphia Eagles in mid-March, just a day after signing a one-year deal with the Seahawks. Seattle received defensive end Chris Clemons and a fourth-round pick in the deal.

The move left Tapp stunned.

"Well, first, after the season was over, a bunch of us were in the treatment room getting some treatment and a teammate tells me that Coach [Jim] Mora got fired," Tapp said. "And Tim Ruskell, our general manager, had resigned, so we didn't have a coach or a GM.

"Then they hired Pete Carroll as the coach. We [Carroll and Tapp] had a meeting and everything was great. He told me to come back in the best shape of my life and be ready. So I go to Florida, get married [at Disney World, no less] and come back to Seattle. I sign my tender [a one-year deal], and two hours after I do that, Coach Carroll calls me and tells me that they've traded me. He tells me that they got a deal they couldn't pass up."

Tapp immediately flew to Philadelphia for a physical and a press conference, and then he flew back to Seattle, where he picked up his wife – the former Tiffany Robinson, a former softball player at Syracuse – and a few things and headed back to Philadelphia.

The Eagles' brass certainly made it worth Tapp's while to come to the City of Brotherly Love. They added two years to his contract and gave him a \$3 million signing bonus. If he sticks for the next three years and meets the incentives, he nets close to \$15 million.

But Tapp's never been about the money. He's been about playing and winning, and he joins a team with a legitimate shot at making the playoffs. Plus, he joins a team

with former Hokie Michael Vick.

"Everything's good," Tapp said. "This is a great organization and I know a lot of the guys here, like Mike. I played against Ernie Sims and Broderick Bunkley when they were at Florida State, so I know those guys, and I played with Jason Avant [former Michigan receiver] at the Senior Bowl. So I'm not a total outsider."

Philadelphia coach Andy Reid told Tapp shortly after trading for him that he wanted to use Tapp as a left defensive end. Reid told him that he expected Tapp to be a three-down defensive end – something Clemons was not.

That should result in an increase in numbers for Tapp, who saw his numbers decline last season. In 2008, he started 11 games and finished with 5.5 sacks. But a year ago, he started five games toward the end of the season and recorded just 2.5 sacks.

"It's all a business, and I knew that," said Tapp, who noted that he had a career-high 18 quarterback hits last season.

"Money talks. My third year, they drafted Lawrence Jackson [from Southern California] with their first-round pick [in 2008], so they had to put him on the field. We had Patrick Kerney [a Pro Bowler in 2007] on the other side. But by the end of the season, I was playing more than both of them.

"Then last year, they traded for Cory Redding to play defensive end. But by the end of the season, he was playing more at tackle and I was at end. It's a business, but you're always a play away. You need to step up when called upon."

Tapp's best year statistically came

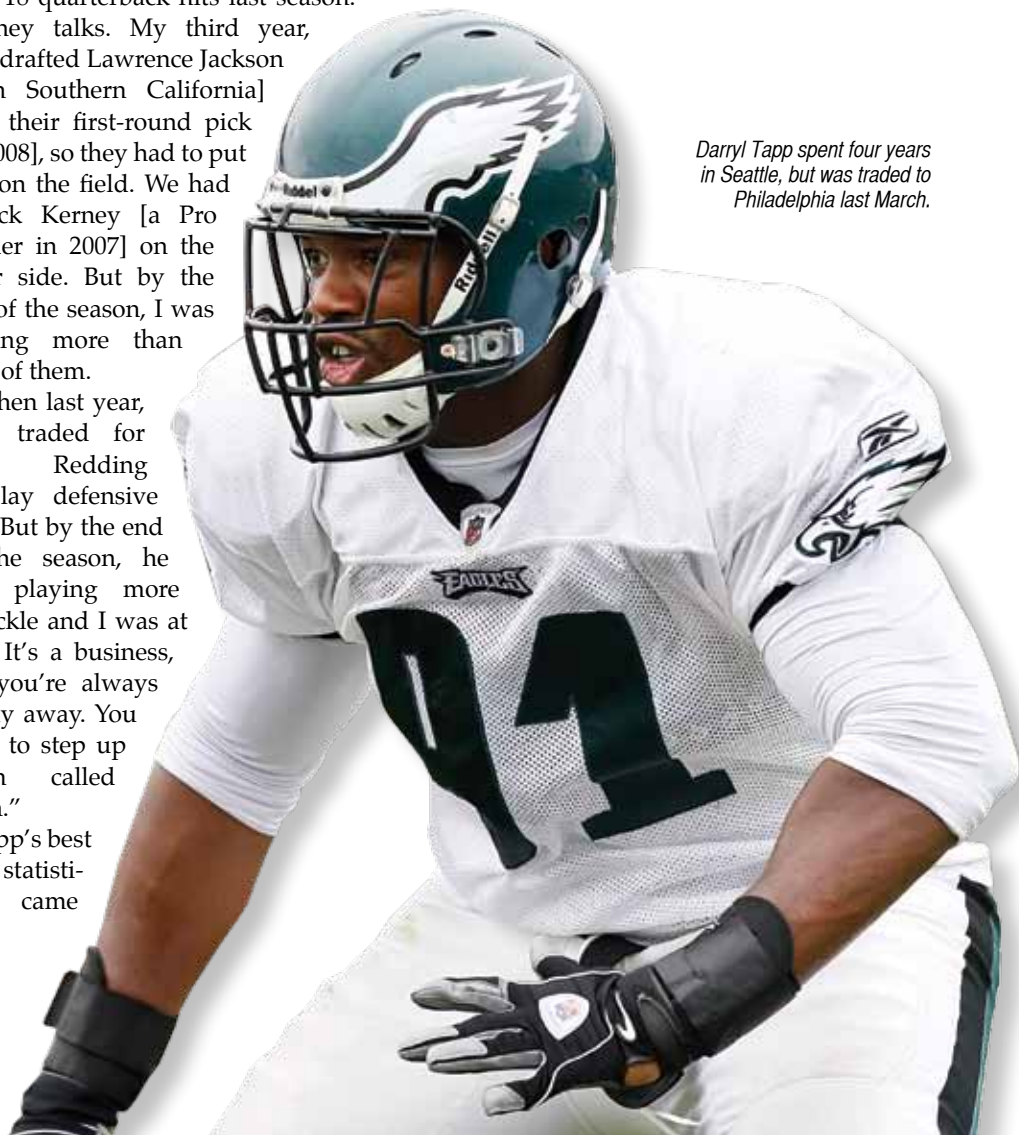
in 2007 when he started all 16 games and recorded seven sacks. He wants to get to those numbers again – and beyond.

"I'll do whatever the Eagles want me to do," he said. "They wanted me to play left end, but they've been playing me at a lot of different positions – some d-tackle, some stand-up linebacker. That's fine with me. That makes me more valuable."

In typical Tapp fashion, he expressed no ill will toward the Seahawks. On the contrary, he expressed gratitude for that organization and the help it provided him as he embarked on his NFL journey.

"I would have loved to have stayed there," he said. "They gave me an opportunity and I'm appreciative of that.

"But things happen, and I'm with a great organization. I'm excited to be here because this defense [Philadelphia's] was one of the ones I enjoyed watching. They get after the quarterback and I'm excited to be a part of it."



*Darryl Tapp spent four years in Seattle, but was traded to Philadelphia last March.*

Here is a list of former Tech players in the NFL (as of Sept. 5):



## BALTIMORE RAVENS

### JUSTIN HARPER

Harper, a seventh-round pick of the Ravens in 2008, was signed to Baltimore's practice squad. He has spent the better part of two years on the Ravens' practice squad, but toward the end of the season, the Ravens moved him onto the active roster and he played in two games. He did not catch a pass.



## BUFFALO BILLS

### 93 CHRIS ELLIS

Ellis, whom the Bills took in the third round of the 2008 NFL Draft, played in just three games last season, his second in the NFL. He recorded five tackles, including two solo stops, in those three games. The Bills hired a new coach in Chan Gailey this past offseason and the coaching staff moved Ellis to outside linebacker in their 3-4 scheme. He'll probably be a back-up.

### 71 ED WANG

The Bills took Wang in the fifth round of April's NFL Draft. He underwent surgery for a thumb injury in early August and was slated

to miss 4-8 weeks of action. Once he returns, he'll be a back-up at left tackle.



## CAROLINA PANTHERS

### 50 JAMES ANDERSON

Entering his fifth season, Anderson, a former third-round pick of the Carolina Panthers in 2006, enjoyed a banner fourth season with Carolina, registering a career-high 65 tackles, including 46 solo stops, and a sack. He played in all 16 games a year ago, starting seven of those.

### 47 JEFF KING

King, like Anderson, is entering his fifth season with the Panthers. A year ago, he caught 25 passes for 200 yards, averaging eight yards per catch. He also caught three for touchdowns, which marks a career high. He started 15 of the 16 games last season and has started every game but two for the past three years. He goes into this season as the starter.



## CLEVELAND BROWNS

### 27 NICK SORENSEN

Sorensen scared everyone when he took a shot to the head in a preseason game and needed to be carried off the field on a stretcher. He suffered just a concussion – no

paralysis or anything else more severe – but may miss a portion of the early part of the season.

Sorensen, who got married this past February to girlfriend Danielle Berry, enters his 10th season in the NFL and his fourth with the Browns. He backs up at both safety spots, but his importance lies in his special teams abilities. He finished with 16 total tackles a year ago, including 13 solo stops. He played in all 16 games and will be in that same role this season.



## DENVER BRONCOS

### 19 EDDIE ROYAL

After a record-setting rookie season, Royal's numbers dipped considerably after a coaching change in Denver. The former Tech receiver caught just 37 passes for 345 yards and no touchdowns after catching 91 for 980 yards and five touchdowns as a rookie. He did create some excitement when he returned two kicks – a kickoff and a punt – for touchdowns against San Diego on Oct. 19. He became the first player in Broncos' history and the 11th player in NFL history to return a kickoff and a punt for a touchdown in the same game.

Royal has been moved to the slot, and hopefully, this will bring him closer to his rookie season's numbers.

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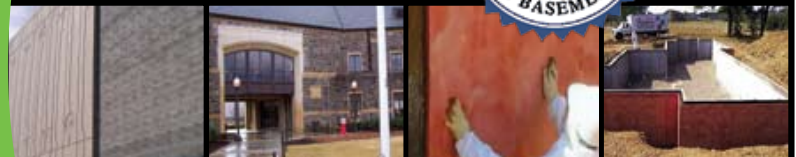


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## HOUSTON TEXANS

### 11 ANDRÉ DAVIS

Davis saw spot duty for the Texans a year ago, playing in 14 games and starting one, but he will not be playing this season. The Texans placed Davis on injured reserve on Sept. 3 because of an injured hip and tailbone. NFL rules prevent players on injured reserve from playing in the season in which they are placed on injured reserve.

Davis caught just six passes for 59 yards last season. He returned 33 kickoffs for 782 yards, with a long of 63.

### 76 DUANE BROWN

Brown started every game at left tackle for the Texans and has started every game in his two-year career since being drafted in the first round in 2008. He'll be in the starting role at left tackle again this season.

### 52 XAVIER ADIBI

Like Brown, Adibi is entering his third season with Houston. A reserve linebacker, he played in all 16 games a year ago, recording 11 tackles, including nine solo stops. He saw most of his action on special teams and will be in that same role again this season.



## KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

### 24 BRANDON FLOWERS

Flowers played most of last season with an injured shoulder, but still started 15 games for the Chiefs and finished with 65 tackles, including 58 solo ones. He also intercepted a team-leading five passes and forced two fumbles from his cornerback spot.

Entering his third season, Flowers will again be a starter at corner for the Chiefs. He's started 28 of the 29 games he's played the past two seasons.



## MIAMI DOLPHINS

### 64 JAKE GROVE

Grove spent last season in Miami, signing a \$30-million deal after spending his first five years in Oakland. The former Tech center started the first 10 games, but suffered an ankle injury that ultimately forced him to miss the final four games.

He battled a leg injury in training camp in July and then injured his shoulder in a preseason. He'll be a back-up to Joe Berger heading into this season.



## NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

### 31 PIERSON PRIOLEAU

Prioleau, the longest-tenured former Hokie in the NFL, is entering his 12th season in

the NFL and his second with the Saints after helping them win the Super Bowl a year ago.

He started one game, but mostly played as a back-up and on special teams, and he recorded 29 tackles (26 solo) on the season. He'll be in that same role this season.



## PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

### 7 MICHAEL VICK

Vick is entering the second year of a two-year deal with the Eagles after missing two years while serving time for an off-the-field issue. A year ago, as the back-up to Donovan McNabb, he played in 12 games as part of the Eagles' special formations, starting one and completing 6-of-13 for 86 yards and a touchdown. He also rushed 24 times for 95 yards and scored two touchdowns.

This season, he'll be the back-up to Kevin Kolb, as the Eagles traded McNabb to Washington in the offseason.

### 91 DARRYL TAPP

It turned out to be an adventurous offseason for one of Hokie Nation's favorite players, as Tapp found himself traded to Philadelphia in March after four seasons in Seattle. The former second-round pick then signed a two-year extension with the Eagles on top of the one-year remaining on his Seattle deal.

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Last season, Tapp recorded 49 tackles (40 solo) and 2.5 sacks in 16 games. He started five games after starting 11 games the previous season.



## PITTSBURGH STEELERS

### 97 JASON WORILDS

The Steelers selected Worilds in the second round of April's NFL Draft and promptly decided to convert him into an outside linebacker in their 3-4 defensive scheme. He goes into this season as a back-up to two of the best outside linebackers in the NFL in James Harrison and LaMarr Woodley. He also figures to help immensely on the Steelers' special teams, which struggled last year.



## SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

### 84 JOSH MORGAN

Morgan, a 2008 sixth-round pick of the 49ers, had a breakthrough season for the 49ers a year ago, earning his way into a starting position at one of the receiver spots and catching 52 passes for 527 yards and three touchdowns. He also returned 13 kickoffs for 367 yards, with a long of 76.

Morgan started 15 of 16 games, and he goes into this season fighting for a starting role again.



## SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

### 31 KAM CHANCELLOR

The Seahawks selected Chancellor in the fifth round of the NFL Draft and signed him to a four-year deal worth slightly more than \$2 million. He'll be a back-up at both safety spots behind veteran Lawyer Milloy and rookie Earl Thomas. He'll also play some on special teams.



## TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

### 35 CODY GRIMM

The Buccaneers selected Grimm, an All-American last year for the Hokies at whip linebacker, in the seventh round of the NFL

Draft and signed him to a four-year deal. Grimm will be a back-up at both safety spots, but his primary duties will be participating on special teams.

### BRENT BOWDEN

The Buccaneers also selected Bowden, Tech's All-ACC punter. Bowden went in the sixth round in April's draft, and though he was cut on Sept. 6, he ended up signing with the Buccaneers practice squad. He'll probably remain there the rest of the season.



## TENNESSEE TITANS

### 22 VINCENT FULLER

Fuller continues to enjoy a nice career with the Titans. He recorded 34 tackles (27 solo) and a sack a year ago, and he also intercepted three passes, including two that he returned for touchdowns. He played in 13 games, missing three games with a broken arm, and he started one of those.

Fuller is beginning his sixth season in Tennessee. He'll probably be a back-up at both safety spots this season.




## WASHINGTON REDSKINS

### 23 DEANGELO HALL

Hall started 12 games for the Redskins a year ago and played in 13. He finished the season with 58 tackles (46 solo) and a team-leading four interceptions. He's in the second year of a six-year, \$54 million deal with the Redskins, and he'll be one of the starting cornerbacks for the Redskins this season.

### 63 WILL MONTGOMERY

Montgomery, a former Tech center, played in every game for the Redskins last season, starting three of those, and he decided to re-sign with the Redskins after the season, inking a one-year, \$1.176 million contract. He goes into his fifth season in the NFL and third with Washington as the back-up at both guard spots. 



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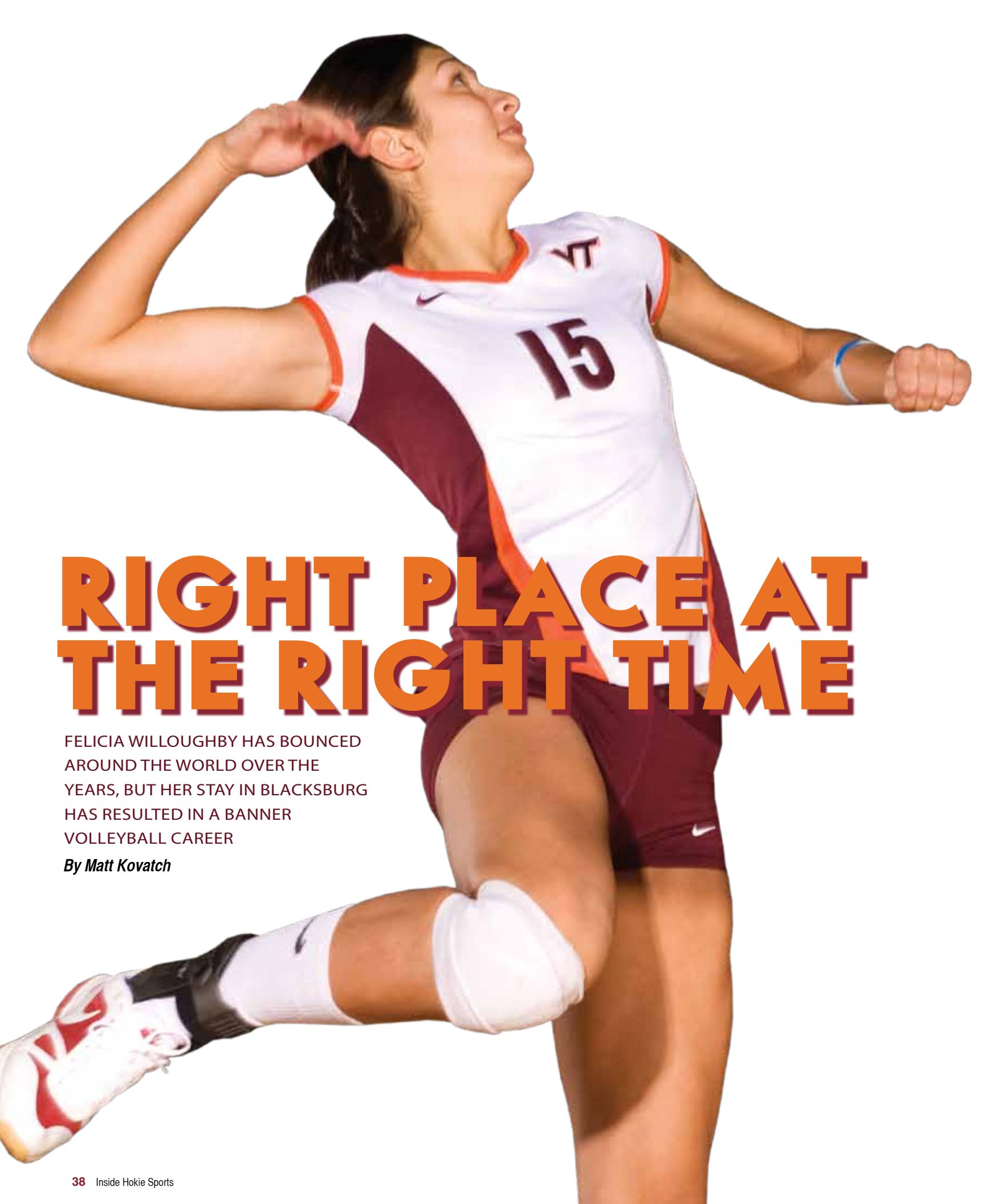
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# RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

FELICIA WILLOUGHBY HAS BOUNCED AROUND THE WORLD OVER THE YEARS, BUT HER STAY IN BLACKSBURG HAS RESULTED IN A BANNER VOLLEYBALL CAREER

*By Matt Kovatch*

**T**hink of yourself as an up-and-coming volleyball star, one who had spent eight years living in the frigid temperatures of Alaska before landing in sun-splashed California for your high school days. Knocking on your door are universities – many in the volleyball hotbed of your home state – offering you a chance to continue your career at their school. Would you spurn those chances to move across the country and play for a team in the windy mountains of southwest Virginia?

Luckily for Virginia Tech fans, that's exactly what Felicia Willoughby did. Now the Hokies' star senior middle blocker, Willoughby has enjoyed three-plus award-winning and record-breaking seasons for the orange and maroon since arriving in Blacksburg as a promising freshman in 2007.

"I kind of wanted to go somewhere far away from home," Willoughby said of her decision. "Virginia Tech looked really nice in the brochure and the campus looked really pretty, so I thought I'd just check it out and look at it. I visited here and I loved it."

It was just the latest in a series of moves for the roving 6-footer, who wasn't as attached to California as you might think. Willoughby was actually born in Seoul, South Korea, to her Korean mother, Chin Chu, and her father, Doug, who met on a military base while Doug was stationed there in the late 1980s. Three months after Felicia was born, Doug's military duties took him and his new family to the massive naval base in Norfolk, Virginia. The Tidewater area is definitely Virginia Tech recruiting territory, so was Willoughby destined to be a Hokie from the start?

"I don't remember Virginia too well," she laughed.

That's because when Felicia was 2, the Willoughbys briefly moved to New Mexico, where her brother, Lance, was born, before trekking up to Alaska for much of Felicia's childhood. It was a childhood that, surprisingly, didn't involve volleyball – or many other games for that matter.

"I actually didn't play any sports, other than tee ball, when I lived in Alaska," Willoughby said. "It was only when I moved to California [that I played sports]."

That move came in the middle of her seventh-grade year, right in the dead of the Alaskan winter.

"It might have been 60 degrees in California and we were walking around in shorts and t-shirts," she remembered. "Everyone thought we were crazy, but we thought it was really warm."

What was crazy was the fact that Willoughby still didn't touch a volleyball upon her arrival in Pleasanton, a suburb of the San Francisco Bay area, instead drawing toward softball and basketball. While most girls begin playing volleyball in middle school, Willoughby didn't take it up until the ninth grade, and she did so on a whim.

"Once I got to high school, I thought, 'Volleyball looks pretty fun. I might as well just try it out,'" she said. "I ended up loving it."

Her coaches ended up loving it, too, placing her on the varsity team from the

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*Felicia Willoughby started every game last season and led the Hokies with 139 blocks. She also finished second on the team with 332 kills.*



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start. Admittedly awkward at first but a self-described fast learner, Willoughby was just two short years away from being named to the all-league first team and committing, after her initial visit, to Virginia Tech.

"I actually committed to Tech at the end of my sophomore year, so I was pretty young," Willoughby said. "I came back for summer camps and stuff. I visited Tech a lot before I actually got here for my freshman year."

In fact, Willoughby committed to the Hokies a full year before current head coach Chris Riley, now in his fifth season, was even hired to replace the departing Greg Smith in the summer of 2006. One of Riley's first tasks as Tech's head coach was to make sure his new middle blocker wasn't changing her mind.

"As soon as people heard that Greg was leaving, they started asking if Felicia was going to stay committed to us," Riley said. "So we went to watch her play at club nationals and sat at her court for every match because we wanted to get to know her better and watch her play."

"She played on a very, very good club team with four or five other Pac-10 kids, so she wasn't always the best one on the floor on a day-in, day-out basis. But I saw her potential as far as what she could be. She was exactly the kind of kid who we would have recruited right away and someone who we would have tried to get to come here."

Willoughby stuck by her decision, and she's certainly made the most of it. She wasted little time making her mark as a rookie, setting a Tech single-season record for blocks and getting named the

Freshman of the Year by both the Atlantic Coast Conference and the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) East Region. Over her next two seasons, Willoughby became the first Hokie to earn back-to-back AVCA All-East Region honors and three consecutive All-ACC accolades after being named to the first team as both a sophomore and a junior. She also earned honorable mention AVCA All-America honors during both years, becoming the first Tech player to do that as well. And she's done it all with complete humility.

**“ I kind of wanted to go somewhere far away from home. Virginia Tech looked really nice in the brochure and the campus looked really pretty, so I thought I'd just check it out and look at it. I visited here and I loved it. ”**  
– Felicia Willoughby

"I don't think it's really affected her to be honest with you," Riley said of all of Willoughby's adulation from volleyball pundits. "She's a pretty level-headed kid, and she is very much on board with the team concept. As great as Felicia is, it's not a big change for her – I don't think it matters one way or the other. The accolades are all great, but it's really a team game and she understands that. Without [setter] Erin [Leaser] and without our serve receive, she's not going to get the amount of balls that she gets. She understands that it takes everybody to win."


"I don't really think about breaking

all these records because we have so many other good players on the team," Willoughby echoed. "If they didn't do well, I wouldn't do well. Having people who support me both on and off the court helps a lot."

At press time, Willoughby was fewer than 40 blocks away from the Virginia Tech all-time record of 494 held by Jennifer Schmidt (1992-95). Though there is still much left to accomplish as a Hokie – "We have to make the NCAA Tournament this year," she declared – Willoughby is already looking forward to her next move.

"I eventually want to be an event planner or a wedding planner, but I want to play volleyball overseas in Europe for a couple of years," Willoughby said. "I was actually in Brazil this past summer playing some volleyball. I'll play for whoever takes me. There are a bunch of leagues, so I'll go anywhere. I love traveling, so I think I could adjust pretty well."

"It's definitely something that Felicia can absolutely do," Riley added. "She's a good player and she adapts very well to just about any situation. She can defend and she can pass a little bit, so she'll fit into the professional game fairly well. I think she could have a good career. For her, I think it's something that she could do for a couple years, and then she'll use her degree [in psychology]. She'll get what she needs out of it and then use her education to continue her life and do what she's doing."

Wherever Willoughby ends up going, one thing's for sure. She might not be there for long. After all, there are far too many other places to see. 

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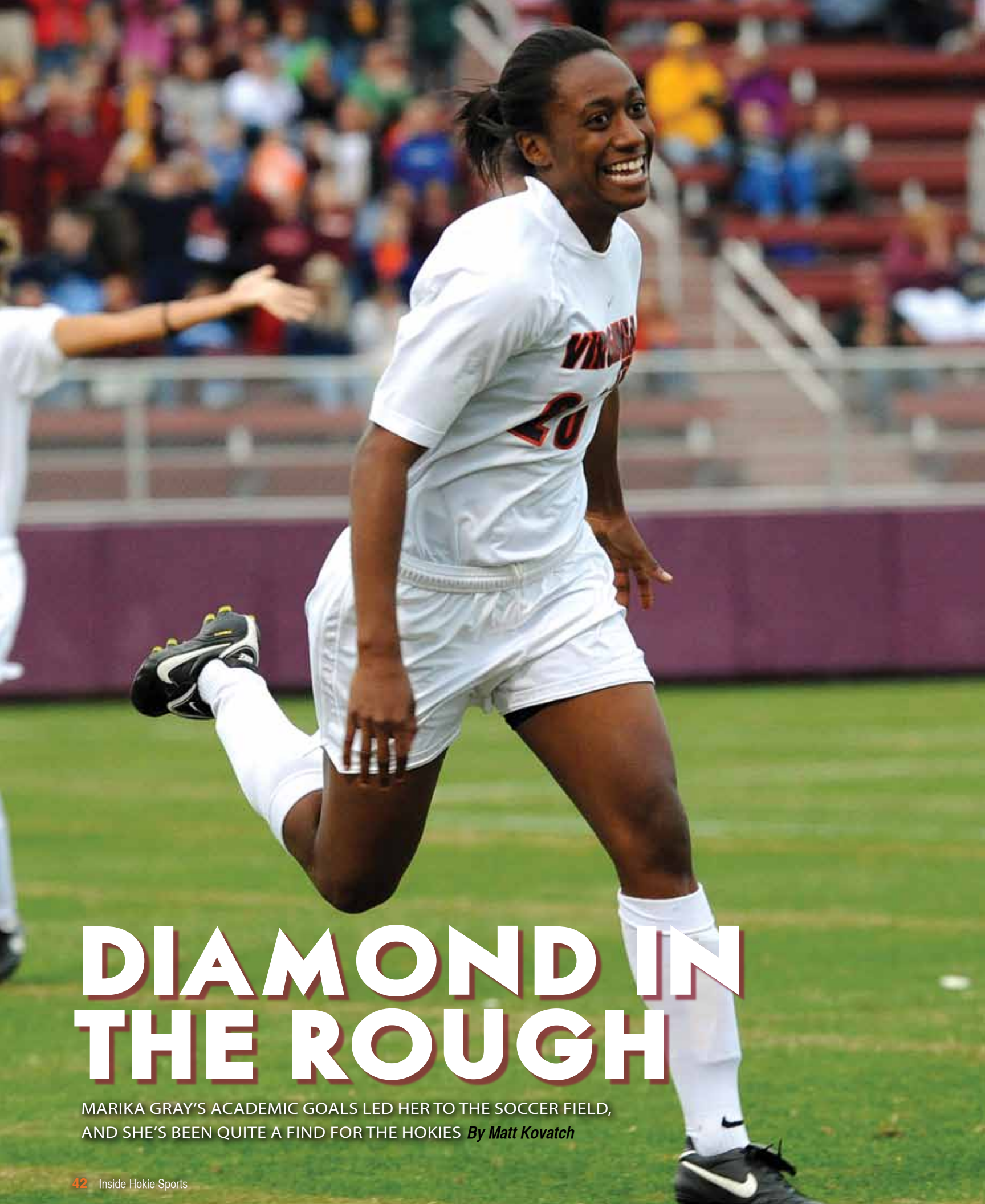


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# DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH

MARIKA GRAY'S ACADEMIC GOALS LED HER TO THE SOCCER FIELD, AND SHE'S BEEN QUITE A FIND FOR THE HOKIES *By Matt Kovatch*

**A**s a high school student, all Marika Gray wanted to do was to go to college and become a surgeon. Now a senior biology major, the Alexandria, Virginia, native is still on the path toward doing so, but a funny thing happened along the way.

She became one of the all-time greatest players in Virginia Tech women's soccer history.

Entering her final campaign, which began in late August, the 5-foot-7 forward's name was already all over the record books. At season's start, Gray held the school record for career game-winning goals with nine and was tied for first in multi-goal games with five. She ranked fifth all time in points (54), third in goals (22), sixth in assists (10) and third in shots (153). She will undoubtedly climb the rankings in each of those categories as the 2010 schedule plays out, but it was never anything she planned on doing. In fact, she didn't even want to play soccer beyond high school.

"I loved the game but I didn't think I wanted to waste all of my time playing soccer," Gray said of her plans while a student at Hayfield Secondary School. "I was definitely not like some people who know from seventh or eighth grade that they want to play college soccer. I just wanted to go to college, go to class and then call it a day. I thought I might play on a club team, but varsity sports were definitely not something I was looking into until late in the game."

Don't think of Gray as nonchalant, however. It's not as if she isn't a forward thinker. She had her college search underway long before playing soccer entered the picture – "I had planned to do biology even before I graduated high school," Gray said – partly because her elder sister of three years, Valencia, had already gone through the process.

All the while, she continued to play soccer in dominating fashion for both her high school and club teams. It was evident, through both her numbers (school records in goals scored) and awards (three-time all-region and all-district honoree), that she had the talent to continue her career. It wasn't long before Virginia Tech head coach Kelly Cagle found out about the speedy attacker.

"People who were supportive of our program just kept saying, 'Look, I don't know if this kid wants to play at the next level, but she's certainly deserving and capable of doing so,'" Cagle remembered. "It kind of went from there."

The line of communication was open on Gray's end as well.



*At first, Marika Gray had no plans to play soccer in college, but she's ended up becoming one of the best Tech players in school history.*

"The trainer from my club team actually knew Coach Cagle, and he asked me if I would think about Virginia Tech," Gray said, recalling how much fun her friends were having at the time talking about the schools recruiting them. "I did some research and decided it [playing in college] might be something I would love to do. He got in contact with her and that started the recruiting process."

Cagle and her staff started to attend some of Gray's club team games and liked what they saw. Because Gray hadn't exactly been promoting herself to play at the next level, she wasn't playing on as high profile of a team as most elite prospects do.

"She wasn't as heavily recruited as I thought she should have been," Cagle said back in 2007 at the time of Gray's collegiate debut. "She was good enough for us to take notice, but her club team wasn't very good and the entire team filtered through her, which on some days, allowed other teams to focus on shutting her down. Thankfully, it kept her a little bit hidden."

Cagle was convinced on Gray, but would she be able to convince the future surgeon to fit some soccer in during her spare time? After all, Gray's dad was always wearing a Virginia Tech hat on the sidelines. Might there be a connection?

"We're definitely not in the business of begging anybody to come here, so I don't

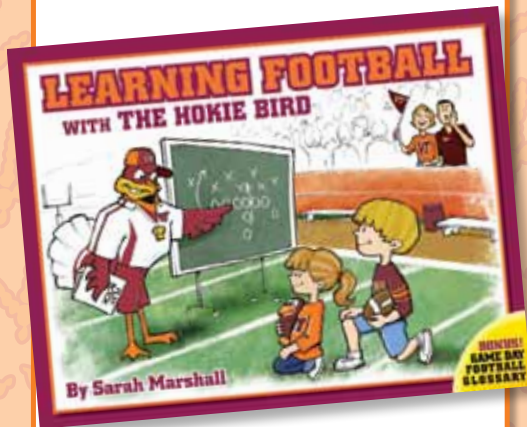
know if 'convincing' would be the right word," Cagle explained. "But she came to our camp after we were able to see her play, and I just remember sitting underneath a tree with her talking about her future and the future of our program. We talked about how she could grow as a player just like our program could grow."

Luckily for the Hokies, Gray's father wore that hat because Valencia had chosen Virginia Tech herself during her college search. Marika was on all of the family trips to visit Blacksburg, so she was sold on the school before cleats and shin guards were ever mentioned.

"At first, I didn't know if I wanted to go to the same school as my sister," Gray said. "I wanted to try to spread out the wings and do my own thing. But I found that I wanted to go to Virginia Tech just as much as my family did. For school, it was actually very good, especially with my major. I fell in love with Tech just like my sister did."

Gray arrived in 2007 and immediately made an impact, becoming the first Hokie in five years to lead the team in both goals (eight) and assists (six). She also earned second-team All-ACC honors and was named to the Soccer Buzz Freshman All-America third team. She was off to a similarly hot start as a sophomore, registering four goals and two assists throughout the

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first eight games. Unfortunately, a serious knee injury cut her season short on Sept. 21, 2008.

"It was pretty hard to deal with," Gray admitted. "I never actually had soccer taken away from me before. I had a couple of sprained ankles here and there, but nothing

ago while still in high school – has her eyes turned toward her academic future. Instead of applying to medical schools now in hopes of beginning next fall, she plans on taking a year off first – but not without good reason.

"I'm planning on trying to find work while taking an MCAT [Medical College

“ I loved the game but I didn't think I wanted to waste all of my time playing soccer. I was definitely not like some people who know from seventh or eighth grade that they want to play college soccer. I just wanted to go to college, go to class and then call it a day. I thought I might play on a club team, but varsity sports were definitely not something I was looking into until late in the game. ”

– Marika Gray

ing where my season was officially done.”

However, the knee injury turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Gray in more ways than one. First of all, being unable to compete renewed her fervor for the sport.

"From Marika's mouth, she's stated that the injury really got her passion back for the game because of the time that she had to take off," Cagle said. "She was out and that makes you appreciate what you have a little bit more. I think that opportunity was not a passerby for her. She really took the chance to take a step back and it allowed her to enjoy her junior year."

"When you lose something, you really realize how good you had it," Gray echoed. "It made me realize that my body is not unbreakable."

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, Gray's knee injury helped her to formulate a better opinion on what she wants to do after her soccer days are over. She's long wanted to be a surgeon – she just didn't know what kind. After going through the process as a patient, however, she hopes one day to work as an orthopedic surgeon.


"I want to specialize in knees and shoulders so I can work with athletes," Gray said. "After my knee surgery, that definitely had a big effect on exactly what I wanted to do. Having gone through the experience myself, I can always help my patients by giving them tips on how to do things and how everything will go.

"They say that when you go to medical school, there are so many other options that you come across that you've never even thought of. You think you want to do one thing, but then you find that you love something else. For now, though, the injury definitely helped me with pointing me in the right direction."

Gray returned to the soccer field in 2009 and led the Hokies to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament, a feat that they hope to match this season. While there are still many things left to accomplish on the pitch in 2010, Gray – just like she did years

Admission Test] course," Gray said. "Of course, with the time I devote to soccer, I wouldn't be able to take the course and get the full advantage of it, especially since they are pretty expensive. So I'm going to take a year off, prepare for the MCATs, and apply for med schools then. I don't want to shell out the money for a class that I could barely go to and not get the full advantage of it."

Much like Gray has excelled on the field, Cagle is convinced her star forward will have no problem doing the same off the field.

"Her family has really been supportive of her academic growth, and I think she's driven to continue to grow even after her college days are over," Cagle said. "She's always been driven by the sciences and the classroom. I think the opportunity here at Virginia Tech has also supported her goals academically – it's been a good balance for her. It's nice to be able to have somebody who has academic goals but who also has the ability to flourish athletically as well." 



Teammates celebrated with Marika Gray last season after she notched one of her school-record nine game-winning goals.

SEPT. 13, 1986

## TECH PASSES TEST AT CLEMSON

## CLEMSON WIN ONE OF BEST EVER FOR HOKIES

By Chris Colston

*(Reprinted from Vol. 4, No.3 edition of the Hokie Huddler)*

Lawrence White wouldn't say it was the biggest win for the Hokies since he's been here. But he did call it a "dream come true."

"I don't know. Last year's win at Virginia was pretty sweet, too," he said, straightening his silk paisley tie in the postgame locker room. Then he allowed himself a smile. "But it's really nice to come down here and finally beat this team."

"We were big underdogs, and everyone was watching it on TV. We had been beating Virginia pretty regularly, but Clemson was a different story."

"If we had lost this game, everyone would have said we were the same old mediocre 6-5 Hokies. But we knew this game could make or break our season. We didn't come down here just to play Clemson tough. We came down here to win."



Victor Jones (34) blocks the punt of Clemson punter (and former MLB player) Bill Spiers in the end zone and Mitch Dove (23) recovered to account for Tech's first score in a stunning 20-14 victory over the Tigers.

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- crafty; cunning

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So Tech seems to have gotten the “can’t win the big game” monkey off its back, at least temporarily. The West Virginia game will be the next big test, but the Hokies think, with their newfound passing game, they can beat anyone.


“Erik Chapman is the difference in this year’s team,” White said. “He kept us [the defense] off the field when we needed a blow.”

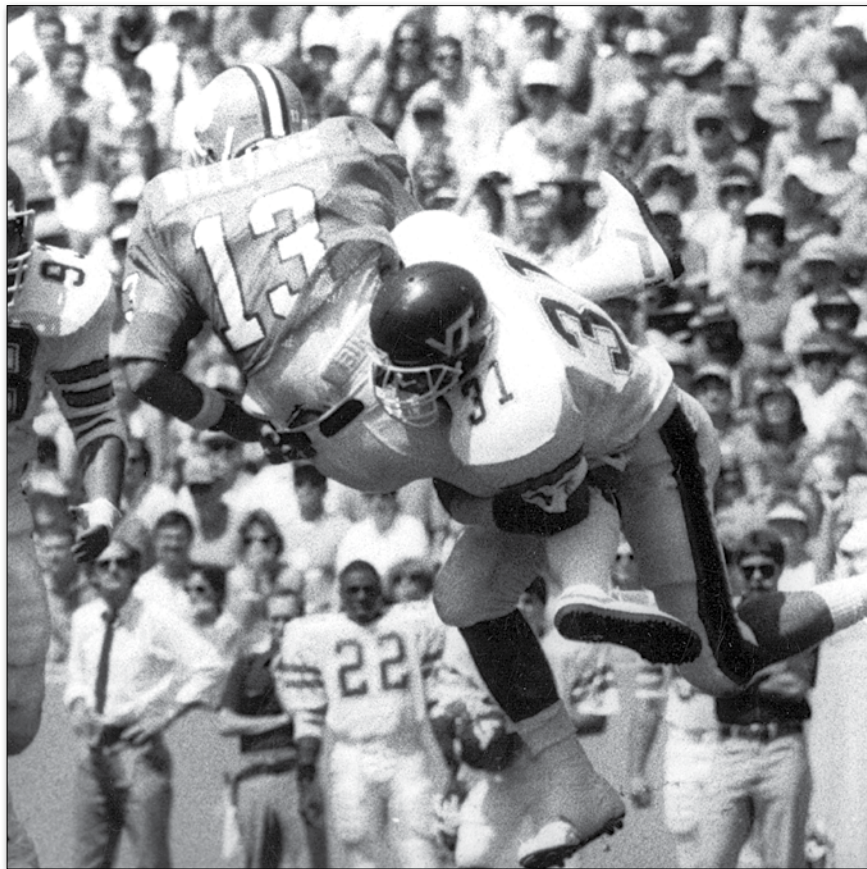
Chapman also gives the Hokies an offense that can score from anywhere on the field. He’s got a deep threat in Donald Wayne Snell, a sure-handed medium-ranged target in Steve Johnson, and now, a reliable third receiver in junior wingback David Everett.

Tech is still committing too many penalties – they’ve been whistled 20 times this season for 157 yards – and the defense has allowed an average of 200 yards rushing in two games. The Hokies should improve in both of those areas as the season wears on, but one area – turnovers – will be mighty difficult to improve upon.

Chapman has thrown but one interception in two games, and that one was a Hail Mary heave at the end of the Cincinnati game. Meanwhile, the Hokies have lost one fumble all year, and that was a controversial one by Johnson, also against the Bearcats.

“When you play Clemson, there are two things you can’t do,” said Bill Dooley during the midweek press conference. “You can’t give them something easy and you can’t turn the ball over.”

Tech did neither, and came away with a win. 



Curtis Taliaferro sacked Clemson quarterback Rodney Williams in the win. The Hokies became the first team from Virginia to beat Clemson at Death Valley.



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