

INSIDE
HOKIESPORTS

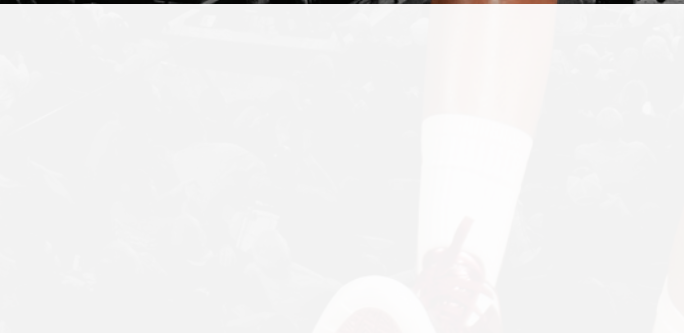
The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics

**2012-13
BASKETBALL
PREVIEW**

Aerial Wilson and the Tech women's team look to improve in head coach Dennis Wolff's second year, while Erick Green and the Tech men's team have high expectations under new coach James Johnson

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Women's soccer player Dayle Colpitts and men's soccer player Jed Prater have come from different countries to impact their respective Tech soccer programs



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CELEBRATING GOOD TIMES

Life is good on and off the field for the Tech women's soccer team, as Kelsey Loupee (9) and Katie DeTuro (11) celebrated after DeTuro's goal helped the 16th-ranked Hokies upset ACC-leading Maryland 1-0 at Thompson Field.





THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

"Your tremendous support has made my years here an experience of a lifetime. Thank you."

KELLY CONHEENEY
Senior | Women's Soccer

"I feel so blessed to be a part of the Hokie Nation. I'm so grateful for all the support I have received!"

DREW RANAHAN
r-Sophomore | Men's Soccer





THE DONOR FILE

BRIAN CRUTCHFIELD

HOKIE CLUB LEVEL:
GOLDEN HOKIE CHAMPION

HOKIE CLUB MEMBER SINCE:
2000

CURRENTLY RESIDES:
CHARLOTTE, N.C.

WHAT YEAR DID YOU GRADUATE?
BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN 1999 AND
MBA IN 2006



Q&A

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

A: My uncle, Marvin Crutchfield, was a tireless supporter of Virginia Tech athletics, and he convinced me to join the Hokie Club immediately following graduation. He set the standard for me as far as giving back to the university, and we are proud to now have an endowed scholarship in his memory thanks to the hard work and generosity of many individuals.

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

A: My two uncles and grandfather started bringing me to football games when I was about 5 years old. I enjoyed every minute of the drive up from Southside Virginia, the tailgates, and especially the games. I have been hooked ever since.

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

A: I have been tailgating with the Southside Hokie Club as long as I can remember, and we typically set up about four hours before kickoff and enjoy a broad tailgate menu, including Hamid LaPuasa's signature fried rice. A few cocktails are consumed and usually finished off with a good luck swig of Franklin County's finest.

Q: You are involved with the Charlotte Hokie Club as a Hokie Rep. How and why did you get involved and has it been a good experience for you?

A: I relocated to Charlotte for work in 2008 at a time when the Hokie Club was looking for reps in the area. It was a great opportunity to meet other Hokies in the Charlotte area while also building support for our athletics programs. It has been a lot of fun organizing events that bring a lot of Charlotte Hokies together.

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

A: I was in school the year Big Al's Sports

Bar opened, and that was my hangout. I still try to drop by there on game weekends to catch up with some old friends.

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

A: The 1999 season was my last semester at Tech, and it was a blast to watch the excitement of that season grow while being a student. The Thursday night Clemson game and the Boston College game to finish the perfect season stand out, but the trip to New Orleans for the national championship game is something I will never forget.

Q: My all-time favorite Virginia Tech football player is Waverly Jackson and my favorite memory of him is ...

A: I played high school football with Waverly, and he always represented Southside Virginia well with his effort and work ethic.



HOKIE CLUB FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As we move into fall and start thinking about year end and our benefits deadline, the Hokie Club staff fields many related questions. To better serve our membership, we've compiled some of these questions, and we present them to you here for your benefit. If you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact the Hokie Club office, as we are more than happy to assist you.

Where does my annual donation go and does it make a difference?

Your annual donation to the Hokie Club is very important and makes a tremendous difference in the lives of our Virginia Tech student-athletes. Approximately 88 percent of our current Hokie Club membership gives to one of the seven Annual Giving Levels, which accounted for \$11.2 million for the fiscal year 2011-12. With approximately 20 percent of the annual scholarship bill being paid by the VTAF Endowment, your contributions to the Athletic Annual Fund is necessary to pay the remainder of the scholarship bill for over 500 student-athletes. As you can see, the growth and sustainability of the Athletic Annual Fund on a yearly basis is absolutely vital to the success of our student-athletes.

Why should I upgrade my membership level?

Benefits for all Hokie Club members are based on the Hokie Club point priority system. Upgrading your membership level not only increases the support we are able to provide for over 500 student-athletes through scholarship support, capital projects and programmatic needs, but it also improves your Hokie Club rank within the point priority system. This increase will allow you to strengthen and enhance the benefits that are offered to you as a member.

Should I renew my membership on my anniversary month rather than waiting until year end?

Yes, if you are Hokie Club member, we ask that you please renew your membership on your anniversary month. As you approach the end of your 12-month annual membership, you will receive reminder letters from our

ANNUAL GIVING LEVELS

The Hokie Club has seven annual giving levels. Membership for annual giving levels is for 12 months. All annual giving levels must be renewed to remain ACTIVE and to obtain benefits.

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- Golden Hokie • \$2,000-4,999**
- Platinum Hokie • \$5,000-9,999**
- Diamond Hokie • \$10,000 & up**

office, and we encourage you not to allow your membership to become "inactive." We would also encourage you not to wait until year end to renew your membership as you will miss out on several benefits during this time, such as the Inside Hokie Sports magazine, which is provided monthly to all active Hokie Club members.

For the recent graduate, or the current student, how do I get involved in the Hokie Club?

If you are a recent graduate or perhaps a current student and are curious about the Hokie Club and how you can support Virginia Tech athletics, the simple solution is to join the Hokie Club. For a minimum contribution of \$100, you can actively support the Hokies while receiving benefits that were once readily available while on campus. With an opportunity to purchase season tickets for football and for men's and women's basketball, joining the Hokie Club is the easiest way to continue to support the Hokies.

Is Hokie Club parking assigned yearly? How is it determined?

Parking privileges for football and basketball season ticket holders are some of the most highly desired benefits of Hokie Club membership. Parking privileges for both sports are assigned each year and all assignments are based on Hokie Club member's point priority rank.

What is "Hokie Matic?" Can I alter or add it

before the benefits deadline?

The easiest way to make your Hokie Club donation is by using "Hokie Matic," the Hokie Club's monthly electronic transfer program. Using either your checking or savings account, you can have your Hokie Club donation deducted monthly to avoid having to pay a lump sum once a year. This option is very popular, especially with our younger members, and is a great option to consider.

November 30 is the last day to set up or upgrade your membership using either Hokie Matic or Employee Payroll Deduction to qualify for privileges to be awarded before the benefits deadline. To make any changes to an existing Hokie Matic, please submit a new form indicating the updated information. To stop a Hokie Matic, please send written notice to the Hokie Club Office.

What is the Hokie Rep program, and what role does a Hokie Rep play in the annual fund?

Established in 1986, the Hokie Rep program's goal is to provide outside assistance through volunteer efforts to meet the Hokie Club's three-part fundraising mission of raising money for scholarships, capital projects and programmatic needs of the athletics department. With over 450 Hokie Reps in communities throughout Virginia and in surrounding states, the Hokie Rep program has allowed the Hokie Club to spread its mission and expand its reach to Hokies who have a desire to financially support Virginia Tech athletics.

Tech highlighted for athletics and academics

The National Collegiate Scouting Association (NCSA) rated Virginia Tech 20th among NCAA Division I universities and 41st overall in its annual NCSA collegiate power rankings.

The Collegiate Power Rankings from NCSA Athletic Recruiting are calculated for each Division I, II and III college and university by averaging student-athlete graduation rates, academic rankings provided by U.S. News & World Report, and the strength of athletics departments as determined by the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup. Fewer than six percent of colleges and universities earned a spot in NCSA Athletic Recruiting's Top 100 for 2012, and Tech is in this elite class.

Tech finished a program-best

35th in the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup race last year. The Hokies received a majority of points from their men's track and field team, which finished fifth at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships thanks largely to Alexander Ziegler winning the national championship in the hammer throw. The same team finished eighth at the NCAA's indoor meet, with Marcel Lomnický winning the national title in the weight throw.

The Hokies' golf, softball, women's soccer and men's tennis teams also accumulated points because of those sports' NCAA Championship appearances. The Tech men's and women's swimming and diving teams and the wrestling teams accumulated

points this winter because of strong individual performances at the NCAA competitions in those respective sports. Both the men's and women's swimming and diving teams finished a program-best 18th, while the wrestling team came in 11th. Also, the football team received points for its strong play last fall.

The Hokies finished 81st in NCAA graduation rates (among schools at all levels – Division I, II and III), and they claimed 71st in the U.S. News and World Report ranking. Tech's scores averaged out to 62, which came out to 20th among Division I schools and 41st overall.

Only Duke (No. 1), BC (19th), Wake Forest (34th) and North Carolina (35th) finished ahead of Tech among ACC schools.

Tech football leads nation in graduates

The Virginia Tech football program continues to get things done off the field, as the program leads all Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) schools with 15 players who have graduated already.

Of those 15, 13 are seniors. That group includes Nick Becton, Marcus Davis, Randall Dunn, George George, Jeron Gouveia-Winslow, Antoine Hopkins, Eric Martin, Winston Painter, Joey Phillips, Dyrell Roberts, Bruce Taylor, Alonzo Tweedy and Michael Via.

Additionally, two juniors have graduated. Antone Exum and David Wang both graduated in three years with degrees in finance and management, respectively.

In nine of the past 11 years, Tech has graduated at least 70 percent of its football class.

Here is a list of schools with the most graduates on their rosters:

1. Virginia Tech – 15
2. Pittsburgh – 12
3. Florida State – 11
UCF – 11
4. TCU – 10
Illinois – 10
Northwestern – 10
South Carolina – 10 

Abbott sees action, becomes eighth true freshman to play

Tech kicker Brooks Abbott became the eighth true freshman to play this season when he took over the kickoff duties for the Bowling Green game on Sept. 22. Abbott, a walk-on from Jacksonville, Fla., joins tailback J.C. Coleman, receiver Josh Stanford, linebacker Deon Clarke, walk-on punter A.J. Hughes and defensive backs Donovan

Riley, Donaldven Manning and Desmond Frye.

Abbott replaced sophomore Michael Branthover in the lineup. He kicked off seven times against Bowling Green, sending two of those into the end zone for touchbacks.

"Branthover has been doing fine, but I think Abbott gets the ball higher and he's more accurate with placing the ball

where we want it time after time," Tech head coach Frank Beamer said. "Branthover hasn't done badly. It wasn't that. It was just that Abbott has some hang time, and that's why we went with him."

More true freshmen have played this season than in any season since 2002 when Beamer and his staff played nine true freshmen.



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editor's desk | by Jimmy Robertson

Johnson excited about first season in charge of Tech basketball program

New Tech men's basketball coach James Johnson makes sure he wins the opening tip on every day. He gets up at dark, gets to work before dawn leaks over the eastern horizon, and like the great defensive player he was at Ferrum back in the day, he refuses to let a minute get past him.

He wants his team to prepare with that same dogged determination, so on Sept. 15, when the NCAA allowed basketball programs to start practicing as a team for two hours a week, he scheduled his team's practice at 6 a.m. He did so not because of class schedules or study hall. On the contrary, it was simply time to go to work.

"It's something I wanted to do," Johnson said. "I wanted to set a tone and set an attitude."

Johnson began putting a stamp – *his* stamp – on the Tech program when he took over as the Hokies' head man last April following Jim Weaver's firing of Seth Greenberg. It marked his first head coaching job after a longtime career as an assistant, including a five-year stint under Greenberg in Blacksburg.

Johnson set his roster after meeting individually with the players. He hired a staff, a group with a nice blend of experience and youth. He recruited – every single day. He befriended people in the athletics department, and he courted proper university officials. He leaned heavily on those whom he trusted, those who would put the interests of the program first.

According to insiders in the Tech athletics department, to those in the college basketball business, to casual fans, Johnson has handled the

transition well up to this point, with only days left before basketball season begins in earnest [mid-October].

"It's been pretty smooth," Johnson said of his transition. "The players have been pretty good, and everyone around campus has been great to work with. Sharon [Spradlin, the administrative assistant to men's basketball], who's been around and knows a lot, has been a great help, and everyone over in the administrative offices has been a great help. The players have been buying into what we're trying to do. So, overall, it's been real smooth."

Jeff Jones knows exactly how Johnson feels these days. The former UVa point guard, now the head coach at American University, found himself in the same boat more than 20 years ago. He got his first head coaching job at an ACC school – his alma mater – after then head coach Terry Holland retired in 1990.

Johnson talked with Jones not long after being named Tech's head coach, and Jones' message was simple – trust yourself to make the right decisions.

"He's going to get a whole lot of opinions, people telling him 'you have to do this' or 'you have to do that,'" Jones said. "It doesn't hurt to listen. But whatever decision he makes, he needs to feel good about it. Trust your instincts. He's worked hard to get ready for this opportunity, and he needs to make sure he's comfortable with what he's doing."

"There are a lot of ways and approaches to be successful in college basketball these days. The coaches who have confidence in what they're


doing and can communicate and sell their beliefs to the players, those are the ones who are the most successful. So trust yourself and be confident in what you're doing."

Johnson also reached out to others in the profession. He talked to Missouri head coach Frank Haith, another man who spent years as an assistant before getting his first head coaching job at an ACC school (the University of Miami in 2004). Also, Johnson talked to one of his former bosses, Jim Larranaga, who took over for Haith at Miami. Johnson worked on Larranaga's staff at George Mason and considers Larranaga a mentor of sorts as well as a good friend.

They, too, delivered helpful advice. "They're just telling me that I can't do everything in one day," Johnson said. "They've told me to take my time, work hard and enjoy it. I also call and ask about certain situations and how to handle those situations. For the most part, they've been telling me to take care of the guys in the program now and recruit, but you can't do everything in one day."

Johnson wants to play fast on offense and extend his defense, but doesn't have the depth to do it this season. He needs to get his players in place first.

He'll work hard and enjoy putting this program together – his way. He expects his players to do the same.

The season is about to tip off, and these are exciting times. No one is more excited than Tech's new head coach. 

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After a busy summer, Green answers questions about his game and the Hokies' chances in 2012-13

As he walked off the Philips Arena court in Atlanta this past March, Virginia Tech guard Erick Green looked up at the scoreboard and saw an all-too-familiar picture in lights. It was another close loss for the Hokies: Duke 60, Virginia Tech 56. That second-round ACC Tournament game marked the 11th time during an agonizing season that the Hokies had lost a game by four points or less, or in overtime. Eleven times during a 16-17 season Tech was close, but fell short.

Of course, since then, much has changed for Virginia Tech basketball. James Johnson has taken over as head coach, and several key players have left the program. In many ways, it's a new day. But one constant remains. Green, from Winchester, Va., returns for his senior season at Tech, after earning second-team All-ACC honors as a junior.

In preparation for his final year at Tech, Green attended the invitation-only CP3 Elite Guard Camp in Winston-Salem, N.C., a camp run by former Wake Forest and current Los Angeles Clippers star Chris Paul. Green joined other top collegiate guards, such as Ohio State's Aaron Craft, Louisville's Peyton Siva, among many others. I had the chance to visit with Erick to talk about his experience in Winston-Salem and to look ahead at this year's Tech basketball team.

BR: Let's start with this elite camp. It's a great honor just to get invited to this, so congratulations on that. What did you learn from the NBA guys



Erick Green is excited about Tech's prospects for the 2012-13 season under new head coach James Johnson.

who were there and the other top college players?

EG: "How to come off ball screens, how to pick-n-roll, how to use a flat screen, how to work on my one-on-one moves and score."

BR: I know you talk with Zabe [Zabian Dowdell] a lot. What does he tell you in that regard?

EG: "We're good friends. He tells me to stay focused and not worry about the next level. That people are going to try to talk with me about it all the time, and I should work on the stuff like the pick-and-roll and next-level style of play. And

show people that I can lead a team that not a lot of people think much of, and prove them wrong. Zabe led them to the NCAA Tournament. He says I can do the same thing."

BR: What will the strength of this team be?

EG: "Getting out and running, and being very quick. The way Coach J.J. wants us to play on defense is going to be a shocker to some people. We're going to do some new things."

BR: Like what?

EG: "We're going to trap, get after it, press."

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Honestly, this is the best conditioned I've been in my three years here. We've been running and running and have these new tests, like the '22 test,' that are really hard."

BR: Tell me about the "22."

EG: "You have to run up and back, baseline to baseline, two times in 22 seconds. And you have to do it 22 times. You have to make all of them. They are the worst. Those are the days you don't want to come in. It's so hard. It's mental. You have to convince yourself you can do it."

BR: Baseline to baseline, twice in 22 seconds, 22 times?

EG: "We started off at 10 and then worked up to 12. Now we're up to 22 times. You get a two-minute break after 10, like a TV timeout, and then you run the next 10."

BR: Hardest drill you've ever done?

EG: "Yes, yes, yes, yes. It's very hard. We've had a couple guys puke in the middle of it, but you've got to keep going."

BR: If this team is going to press and trap, with just seven or eight guys, then you better be in great shape.

EG: "We are. Honestly, we've been running every day. Our conditioning with Coach [David] Jackson has been great this preseason. He's been getting us in shape on the treadmill, getting us in shape on the court, working on our footwork ... things like that."

BR: J.J. has really pushed you hard this preseason. What's he telling you guys about how he wants you to play?

EG: "He wants us to run. Run. And run. He

lets us all play. Unless you show him you can't do something, he'll let you do what you want as long as it's in the system. So if you can shoot a 3 from deep, go ahead and shoot it. His biggest rule is that, if you don't play defense, you will not play."

BR: I believe that. People will see that. How has J.J. changed from being an assistant to now being the head coach?

EG: "Honestly, he's stayed the same. He's still funny. He still jokes around with us. He has a personality, and he understands what we're going through every day. I think the only thing is that he's more vocal. He's always intense and upbeat. He's hyped. So he really hasn't changed other than now he's the head man."

BR: From a player's perspective, how hard is it to go through a coaching change?

EG: "It's really hard because you have questions. Is he going to change the system up? Is he my type of guy? What is his personality? How does he coach? How does he approach things? For me personally, I wanted someone I could trust going into my senior year and hopefully move on to a career next year, I trust J.J."

BR: A lot of players go through that. Coaching is hard, and there's more change now than ever for kids all over the country. Every school you visited out of high school, each school that recruited you, has had a head coaching change, right?

EG: "Yeah, George Mason, JMU, N.C. State, St. John's and here. It happens."

BR: As you look back on it, why do you think so many games were close last year? Tech lost nine games in the final seconds and 11 in the final minute or overtime. Why?

EG: "Not having enough experience. Making simple mistakes like missing free throws and turning the ball over. Guys got into foul trouble. The easy, simple things that are fixable, we lacked last year."

BR: Your mom coached you in rec league basketball, and your dad in AAU ball. You've had a basketball family. It's been your life, hasn't it?

EG: "Yeah, and my sisters play, too. It's been tremendous."

BR: One of your very first teams, when you were 10 years old, featured a current Tech football player, David Wang. What was that like?

EG: "Oh, the Ashburn Red Storm. Yeah, David was our center. He was a big kid as a 10-year-old. He was big and wide, but he could run! We made it all the way to the tournament in New Orleans that year."

BR: What are the odds that two 10-year-olds from the Ashburn Red Storm would be starting varsity athletes at Tech 11 years later?

EG: "I know, right? It's a funny story. The Wangs would bring these awesome hot peas from China to our games. They were so good. And they'd bring Scooby Doo snacks, too (laughing). That's a great family."

BR: David and his brother [Ed] have had great careers here at Tech in football, and you've done incredibly well, too, in hoops. Let's wrap this up: what else do our fans need to know about this year's Hokies?

EG: "It's a new year. New faces. New style of play. Something new we haven't had in a while, and it's going to be exciting."



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The compliance corner answers questions concerning the governance of intercollegiate athletics and its impact on our athletics department. Have a question? Please send it to inside@hokiesports.com and we'll answer it in upcoming issues. Now, here are a couple of questions that we've received from Tech alums and fans over the past few months, with responses from Tim Parker, Associate AD for Compliance:

Q: I'm sure you saw what happened with the Tulane football player who fractured his spine during a game against Tulsa. Now, the athletics department and university there are raising money on his behalf to help with medical expenses. Does the NCAA allow this? Thanks. Eric in Blacksburg.

TP: "We actually dealt with a similar situation several years ago when women's basketball player Rayna DuBose contracted meningococcal meningitis and doctors had to amputate her hands and feet. In her case, we set up a fund through the Monogram Club because it was the easiest avenue to raise money under state guidelines.

"The NCAA does allow member-schools to do this under Bylaw 16.4.1-(e). This bylaw states: 'Special individual expenses resulting from a permanent disability that precludes further athletics participation (are permissible) ... An institution or outside agency, or both, may raise money through donations, benefits or like activities to assist the student-athlete ... All funds secured shall be controlled by the institution, and the money shall be used exclusively to meet these expenses.'

"The NCAA requires each student-athlete to have health insurance, but the NCAA's Catastrophic Insurance Program covers student-athletes, student coaches, student managers, student trainers and student cheerleaders who are catastrophically injured while participating in a covered event. The policy provides benefits in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance."

Q: It seems that the NCAA is granting more transfer waivers than normal. The

quarterback at UVa (Phillip Sims), for example, transferred from Alabama and got to play immediately instead of sitting out the year. Are you guys noticing this, and why is the NCAA doing this? Kevin in Blacksburg.

TP: "The NCAA is granting more transfer waivers quite simply because more student-athletes than ever before are transferring, particularly in high-profile sports such as football and men's basketball. And they are doing so for a variety of reasons (e.g. coaching changes, unhappy with playing time, homesick, family issues, etc.).

"Usually, a student-athlete transferring from one Division I school to another must sit out a season of competition to meet the NCAA's residency requirements, but student-athletes can request a waiver of that requirement. The NCAA looks at each case individually before making a decision. Most waiver requests are because of an illness to a family member or a financial hardship.


"During the five years from April 2007 to April of this year, the NCAA received 631 transfer waiver requests on behalf of undergraduate student-athletes in all sports. Of that number, 307 were granted - 19 with conditions - and 324 were denied. Those numbers are from the NCAA office.

"As for Sims, I'm not familiar with his situation - I don't even know if that ever became public knowledge - and wouldn't be comfortable commenting on it even if I were."

Q: How long does it take the NCAA to review a transcript in question? The freshman guard at N.C. State (Rodney Purvis) just got cleared in late September.

Doesn't seem fair to the kid. Thanks, Amber from Christiansburg.

TP: "The short answer is - it depends. In this case, the young man was part of the first graduating class at a new academy, and after the NCAA ruled him ineligible, N.C. State submitted an initial-eligibility waiver on the young man's behalf. While NCAA staff and committee members evaluated that school's course offerings, course descriptions and syllabi, the school continued to provide more information. The initial ruling then came down that the young man could practice and attend classes with athletics financial aid, but not compete. After that ruling, N.C. State submitted another appeal, this one to the core-course subcommittee, and fortunately for the young man, a five-person, core-course subcommittee and one NCAA staff liaison ruled in his favor, thus making him eligible for competition.

"High schools, academies, boarding schools, etc., have a great deal of discretion in determining the courses at their school that are 'core courses' for NCAA eligibility purposes. However, there is a minimum academic threshold below which courses may not fall. Any course nearing this threshold is evaluated by a panel of NCAA consultants - academic professionals hired specifically to perform detailed reviews. Whenever there is a question, the process of investigating, gathering the required information, and working through the appeals procedures can take a great deal of time. Usually, these rulings get made before a university begins classes to give the student-athlete an opportunity to look at other options, but it isn't always possible." 

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Notre Dame to bring more prestige and competition for Tech and the rest of the ACC in Olympic sports

by **Jimmy Robertson**

On Sept. 13, the Atlantic Coast Conference and the University of Notre Dame sent tremors throughout the college athletics landscape by announcing that Notre Dame was moving to the ACC for all sports except for football.

In a much-publicized move, the Fighting Irish retained their football independence, and they get access to the ACC's non-BCS bowls, but they must play five football games annually against ACC schools. In return, the ACC figures to get a significant boost in television revenue from its deal with ESPN, while having its football champion retain its BCS spot.

Everyone knows how this move affects the Virginia Tech football program, but what about the Hokies' Olympic sports? Tech and Notre Dame share a lot of the same Olympic sports, though there are differences. Tech offers wrestling, which Notre Dame doesn't, while the Fighting Irish offer fencing, hockey, rowing and men's lacrosse.

For a closer look, some of Tech's Olympic sport head coaches gave their insight on the impact of the Fighting Irish's move to the ACC for their respective sports:

DIRECTOR OF TRACK AND FIELD AND CROSS COUNTRY DAVE CIANELLI

Q: How does Notre Dame joining the ACC affect things from a track and field and cross country perspective?

DC: "I think it's great for the league, just for the name recognition of Notre Dame nationally – and not just in football, but also in Olympic sports. They've traditionally been a strong track and field and cross country program in the Big East. So I expect they're going to add a lot to the league. It's going to make things tougher competitively, but I think that's good. I think it's good to have top quality teams coming in, and they're certainly one of those. Pittsburgh and Syracuse, too. The league was already good, and it's only getting better. I'm looking forward to it."

Q: You mentioned things getting tougher. Doesn't this move make things tougher for you guys as coaches, just having to deal with more tough teams?

DC: "Yes, but I still like it. I like being able to recruit to a great conference. I think it helps in

terms of motivating our kids to want to reach a high level because they realize how difficult it is to compete for and win a conference championship. It's really tough, and it means a lot when you win it. We've been fortunate enough to win a couple [of team championships], and it means that much more because you realize it takes more than just showing up. You're not going to win because you have the talent. You have to be prepared to come out on top. So I like the move. I think it's a good thing – and down the road, I'm hoping that football decides to join, too."

MEN'S GOLF HEAD COACH JAY HARDWICK

Q: How does Notre Dame joining the ACC affect things from a golf perspective?

JH: "I'm excited about it. I've been hoping we'd have more teams for golf [Pittsburgh and Syracuse do not have men's golf programs], and Notre Dame is certainly a quality program. They fit in academically with all the schools in the ACC. Now they give us 12 teams for men's golf. Everything makes sense about the move from our standpoint."

Q: You and your program have fond memories of Notre Dame from the Big East days, don't you?

JH: "Yes, we do. One of our biggest wins was when we won the Big East at their course [Warren Golf Course in South Bend, Ind.], and trailed by nine shots with three holes to play. We came back and won, and Brendon [de Jonge] won the individual title. That was our third straight Big East title. We had won at their course the previous year, and Johnson Wagner won the individual title then."

"So we've got good memories of going to Notre Dame, and we've got a lot of respect for their program. They've got an excellent facility for golf, and they've hosted regionals and conference championships. We've got a lot in common with them. I think they're going to be a great addition for our conference."

SWIMMING AND DIVING HEAD COACH NED SKINNER

Q: What are your thoughts on Notre Dame joining the ACC?

NS: "I think it's outstanding. In the ACC,

Maryland recently dropped all swimming and diving and Clemson threw out men's and women's swimming and men's diving, so all that remained was women's diving. So selfishly, I thought about Notre Dame having strong swimming and diving on both the men's and women's sides, and it will help bolster our conference, as does the addition of Pittsburgh, which has strong swimming and diving as well [Syracuse does not have swimming and diving].

"Frankly, I was disappointed that Notre Dame wasn't a full conference member for football. But I listened to what [ACC Commissioner] John Swofford said and understand how it's still an incredible move for the ACC and for Notre Dame. So all in all, I think it's a great addition."

Q: But doesn't this move make the ACC just that much stronger in your sport?

NS: "I want it. I think Virginia Tech swimming and diving is thrilled to be in the ACC. It's the perfect conference for us, and we're in the upper tier as a program. Notre Dame adds strength to our conference, as does Pittsburgh. I was very disappointed for our sport to lose those two schools in Maryland and Clemson. So I feel like this gets us back to whole. I wish Maryland and Clemson would reinstate the programs, but at this point, I think we still will be hosting a very substantial conference championship, and to me, that's what it's all about – the longevity of our sport in the ACC and to send people on to the NCAA Championships."

BASEBALL HEAD COACH PETE HUGHES

Q: What are your thoughts on Notre Dame joining the ACC?

PH: "Any time our football program is strengthened, it helps us, especially at the Olympic sports level. Any time you can add a university with a high academic profile, I think that helps our conference and our university. I think it's a great partnership for both the ACC and for Notre Dame. I think that Notre Dame gets a lot out of this thing, too, and I think it will be exciting. Again, like I said, any time the profile of our football and basketball programs improves, it helps all of us, and I think that's what Notre Dame's membership does."

Q: How much do you know about the baseball program at Notre Dame?

PH: “I’m familiar with Notre Dame through my Big East days at Boston College. It’s always enjoyable to compete against Notre Dame, and even more so now with one of my best friends in the profession – he was a former assistant of mine at Boston College and now the head coach at Notre Dame in Mik Aoki. So that will be fun to get back on the playing field and competing against Mik and going back to South Bend.”

MEN’S SOCCER HEAD COACH MIKE BRIZENDINE

Q: Your thoughts on Notre Dame joining the ACC?

MB: “Love it. From the Olympic sport perspective, you can’t beat it. You’re adding a school with the same academic goals as all our ACC institutions, and they’re competitive in both men’s and women’s soccer. I can’t imagine they’re not competitive in everything. They’re just another piece of the puzzle that solidifies that the ACC, when it comes to men’s soccer, is one of the best conferences in the country. You’re bringing in a top-20 program into our league and that only helps us.”

Q: Doesn’t adding a tough team like the Fighting Irish make it more difficult to make the NCAA’s in men’s soccer?

MB: “From an RPI perspective, it’s great for you. You want to play those teams. If you get a win, it helps you tremendously. If you lose, it doesn’t hurt. We lost at North Carolina a couple of weeks ago, and our RPI went up 20 spots. So when you add that kind of team, it can only help you. Plus, we want to test our guys. That’s another game I don’t have to schedule to get another good team.”

“But as far as the NCAA’s, the reality is we’re getting closer to the day when we can get seven or eight teams in from our conference. The top eight teams go to the ACC tournament, and I think that puts you in a good spot to make the NCAA’s.”

VOLLEYBALL HEAD COACH CHRIS RILEY

Q: What sort of impact will the Fighting Irish have in the ACC in volleyball?

CR: “They’re good. They’ll come in and be competitive with everybody. They’re not as good as Florida State, but they’ll have their opportunities to win. They are in the top four in the Big East. They’ll be good. They should be able to get in on just about every kid recruiting wise.”

Q: “How much will adding Notre Dame help the ACC secure more NCAA bids?”

CR: “Notre Dame will help. We’ve been a four-bid league consistently over the last four years, so I think we could go to five. I don’t know if we could get to six, but we’ve been at five before. Notre Dame being in will help with RPI, but they also make it more competitive for those top five spots.”

SOFTBALL COACH SCOT THOMAS

Q: Your thoughts on Notre Dame joining the ACC?

ST: “I like the move. I guess I’m like most fans in that I’d like to see them, as an institution, completely buy in to the ACC. I’m not crazy about the partial football piece, but if long term, we’re able to draw them in as a full member, then I like that. As far as the Olympic sports go, they’re solid in a lot of sports, and softball is one of them. Any time you can bring in something of quality to our Olympic sports, that’s a positive, no matter how you get it. Certainly, the Notre Dame name is not a bad thing to be associated with. It’s just

like being associated with the ACC name, and we’re certainly proud of that.”

Q: How much do you know about the softball program at Notre Dame?


ST: “They’ve got a solid program. They add to the league. They’re a perennial top-25 program. They’re similar to us in a lot of ways. They’ve made a higher commitment to softball than when we were in the Big East with them. They’ve got a new facility. They’ve tried to step up their game. Deanna Gumpf [Notre Dame head coach] is an interesting piece of the equation because her dad is Larry Mays, and he’s like the Boo Williams of softball [Williams is a well known AAU basketball coach in the Tidewater area]. She’s from Southern California, and she’ll be able to draw kids because it’s Notre Dame. A lot of the top kids are from California.”

MEN’S TENNIS HEAD COACH JIM THOMPSON

Q: What sort of impact will Notre Dame have in men’s tennis?

JT: “They’ve historically been a top-20 program. They’re always up there in the national rankings, and they usually make the NCAA Championships. We used to play them in Blacksburg every other year, and we had that rivalry with them in the Big East, so we know them pretty well.”

Q: Doesn’t this move make the ACC just that much tougher in your sport, though?

JT: “If you look at who we play, we’re not exactly trying to pad our won-loss record. Our philosophy is to play the best teams we can play. Sure, Notre Dame is another tough opponent and another obstacle in our way of winning an ACC championship. But I think their coming into the league is going to help our recruiting and everything else. We want to play the best. That’s how you get better. I think it’s a win-win for us.” 


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READY *to* LEAD

After spending 19 years as an assistant coach, James Johnson moves into a head coaching position, as Tech AD Jim Weaver hired him to run the men's basketball program at Virginia Tech.

New men's basketball coach James Johnson takes over a Tech basketball squad that is long on experience, but short on depth

by Jimmy Robertson

Strong winds blew through Blacksburg several months ago, and no, we're not referring to anything remotely resembling the derecho.

Instead, the winds of change blasted through the Virginia Tech men's basketball program, as Tech AD Jim Weaver relieved head coach Seth Greenberg of his duties in late April, and a week later, hired James Johnson as the new head coach. Johnson, who had been a Greenberg assistant for five years, had left Tech just weeks earlier for an assistant's gig at Clemson.

Johnson, a popular hire among those in the Tech athletics department, steps into the head role for the first time after a long career as an assistant coach. The Powhatan, Va., native, who played at Ferrum College, cut his teeth as an assistant at basketball outposts such as his alma mater, Longwood, Old Dominion, Elon, College of Charleston, Penn State and George Mason. He worked with former George Mason and current Miami coach Jim Larranaga at George Mason and former Penn State and current Navy coach Ed DeChellis at Penn State.

Despite his lack of head coaching experience, Johnson possesses a familiarity with the Tech program, and that certainly worked in his favor toward getting the Tech job. Now, he takes over a squad that is long on experience and short on

depth. But that certainly doesn't dampen his enthusiasm.

"I'm excited about the upcoming season, and about the opportunity I have," Johnson said. "I'm excited to represent this university as the head coach and to lead these young men. I'm looking forward to watching the growth of this team under a new direction. We have a new philosophy and new things that we're trying to do and new players in different roles. So I'm excited."

Despite the lack of depth – Tech has just nine scholarship players on the roster – the Hokies' experience should make for a smoother transition for Johnson. Tech returns six players who played at least 24 games a year ago, and the Hokies return 81 starts from last season. Granted, the Hokies lost Dorian Finney-Smith, who transferred to Florida, and his 30 starts, 6.3 points and seven rebounds per game. But they should be able to make up for that loss.

Tech's best chance for success probably hinges on the continued stellar play of guard Erick Green. The senior from Winchester, Va., earned second-team All-ACC honors a year ago after averaging 15.6 points, 3.3 rebounds and 2.8 assists per game. He's one of the ACC's top three returning scorers.

Green possesses the versatility to play both guard positions. He led the Hokies with 88 assists,

but Tech may be better off with Green at the shooting guard spot, paired with Marquis Rankin, who played in 24 games last season as a freshman, starting six of them. Rankin plays good defense and pushes the ball up the court quickly, and Johnson wants to see the Hokies get more easy baskets.

Also, Robert Brown figures into the mix in the backcourt. Brown, a 6-foot-5 sophomore from Florida, played in all 33 games last season and showed his potential with a strong, 16-point performance against Duke in the ACC tournament. Brown possesses the versatility to play either shooting guard or small forward.

Senior Joey Racer, a walk-on last year who was invited back for another season and placed on scholarship, returns, and he, along with walk-ons Will Johnston, a sophomore, and Marcus Patrick, a freshman, round out the backcourt.

"With having Erick Green, I feel real, real comfortable there," Johnson said about his backcourt. "We've got to keep him healthy, keep him out of foul trouble and not wear him down."

"Robert Brown, in his last game out, had 16 points and eight rebounds in 22 minutes against one of the better defensive teams in the league in Duke. Then Marquis Rankin played a lot last year as a freshman. He's a good on-ball defender, and he's fast. He knows how to push the ball in

transition and play the way we want to play. But we're not very deep there."

At small forward, Johnson has some flexibility at his disposal. Jarell Eddie, a 6-7 junior from Charlotte, started 32 games a year ago, but most of those starts came at the power forward spot – not his natural position. He averaged 9.1 points per game and shot 44.3 percent from beyond the 3-point arc.

Johnson plans on keeping Eddie at the small forward spot this season. Eddie feels more comfortable at that position, and Johnson wants to take advantage of Eddie's shooting ability.

"He looks a lot more confident and comfortable," Johnson said. "He's more of a wing player. That's what he was recruited to play. Out of necessity last year because of our youth, he had to play down low. We flip-flopped him between the perimeter and the post. But this year, he looks comfortable and confident playing at the small forward spot. Even there, he's got things he has to learn and work on to be effective at that position.

"We may look to play Robert Brown down [at small forward] and play three guards. We may play Marquis some with Erick and Robert. But right now, that is Jarell Eddie's spot. We could play Robert as a swing guard, if we need to go that route."

Johnson doesn't have nearly as much flexibility when it comes to post players. Cadarian Raines returns after filling in nicely when Victor Davila went down with a groin injury. Raines started the final eight games of last season and averaged better than 10 points per game in that span. The 6-9 redshirt junior is the Hokies' biggest player and best post player. He needs to have a big year.

Johnson hopes someone steps forward at the other post position. C.J. Barksdale, a 6-8 sophomore, returns after playing in 32 games a year ago. He only averaged 2.7 points and 2.7 rebounds a game, but he showed flashes, particularly in an eight-point performance against Georgia Tech. Also, freshman Marshall Wood, a 6-8 forward from Rustburg, Va., comes in with the reputation of being a shooter and will be battling Barksdale for playing time at the power forward spot. He averaged 24.1 points and 12 rebounds per game his senior season at Rustburg High.

Another option is Joey van Zegeren, who, at 6-10, ranks as the tallest Hokie. He played in three games a year ago as a freshman before a head injury sidelined him. He needs to play more physically in the post, but he shows some skills, particularly as a face-up shooter out to 15 feet.

Walk-on Christian Beyer, a 6-7 sophomore from New Bern, N.C., rounds out the post contingent for Tech.

"With Cadarian and what he showed last year after Victor Davila got hurt, we feel very comfortable with him," Johnson said. "He's healthy, and he's looking good right now. We expect him to step it up in rebounding.

"C.J. Barksdale and Marshall Wood are going to be battling for that 4 position. Then, we have big Joey, who has shown a lot of improvement and gives us a shot blocker inside. He gives us some size in there to go with Raines."

The lack of depth will impact Johnson's coaching philosophy, at least for this first season. He would like to extend his defense and trap more, but hates to run the risk of getting guys into foul trouble or wearing them out toward the end of the season. He still wants the Hokies to get out more in transition and get easier baskets. He also plans on placing a lot of emphasis on man-to-man defense because that was his strongest attribute as a player.


Tech certainly needs to score more, shoot better and play better defense. In conference games, the Hokies failed to average 60 points per game and shot less than 40 percent from the floor. In contrast, their opponents shot nearly 45 percent.

Hence, the reasons why Tech lost five games by two points or less and finished with a 16-17 record.

"It was something different, really, every game," Johnson said of the close losses. "Whether it be free throws or a rebound here or a rebound there, or whether it was a missed shot ... we were up one with 40 seconds to go down at Duke and we turned the ball over. It was a lot of different things.

"I think execution and starting out at the beginning of the game making plays are very important. Even though it comes down to the last couple of possessions, it's really not about that. It has something to do with the game as a whole. If you're up six and you have the ball and you have a chance to extend the lead to eight or nine, you've got to do that, as opposed to letting them get the momentum and come back."

The Hokies weren't far off a year ago. A little better execution, one more stop or one more rebound, and they would have been in the postseason discussion. With most of the squad returning for this season, they could be in the hunt yet again.

The likable Johnson could be in worse situations. For sure, he's grateful to be in this one. 




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Porschia Hadley was Tech's best post player a year ago, and head coach Dennis Wolff is expecting big things from her this season.

ROUND 2

Virginia Tech women's basketball coach Dennis Wolff enters his second season as the head coach at Tech and will have more weapons at his disposal

by **Marc Mullen**

Season 1 of women's basketball at Virginia Tech under head coach Dennis Wolff began rather promising. After the first week of ACC play, Tech held a respectable 6-9 overall record, but was unblemished in the conference after picking up two road wins to start the league slate.

However, a team that entered preseason featuring just nine scholarship players and three walk-ons had suffered a few bumps in the road – a midseason transfer and an injury cost Tech two low-post players – and a depleted lineup eventually caught up to the Hokies, as they dropped 14 of their final 15 games.

Season 2 begins with the Hokies fielding a 14-player roster, one that includes nine returners, one junior-college transfer and four freshmen. Wolff will have some depth at his disposal, which

will help to keep players fresher and less drained as the season takes its toll.

“Overall, I expect to see improvement in every area from where we were last year,” Wolff said. “I thought that we established a pretty good idea of how we wanted to play. I thought the girls played pretty hard. Now, with us having increased depth and more people to turn to, I hope that we can be more efficient, particularly on offense.”

Wolff will lean on the experience of his upperclassmen. That group includes two seniors and two juniors, each of whom played in all 30 games last year and started a combined 113 games.

Guards Aerial Wilson and Alyssa Fenyn, both seniors, and junior guard Monet Tellier each logged more than 1,000 minutes, with their per-

game averages of 35.6, 35.4 and 34.1 ranking second, third and fifth, respectively, among all ACC players last year. Junior forward Porschia Hadley saw more than 25 minutes per game.

Tellier finished 10th in the ACC in scoring a year ago at 13.7 points per game, while Wilson was 20th at 12.1 per game. Fenyn finished third on the team in scoring at 7.8. The trio was also 1-2-3 on the team in assists and steals, with Fenyn eking out an 88-87 edge on Wilson in assists (Tellier 73) and edging Tellier in steals 49-46 (Wilson 41).

Fenyn and Hadley are the top rebounders on the squad, with Fenyn grabbing 140, including 52 off the offensive glass, and Hadley with a total of 117 to go with her team-high 15 blocks.

“All the girls who are returning spent a lot

of time in the gym this summer. They worked hard, and I think, from top to bottom, they've improved," Wolff said. "They set a pretty good example for all the new kids. So I would be surprised if Aerial, Monet, Alyssa and Porschia don't have the best years that they've had, and I think Nia [Evans] is healthy, where she wasn't healthy last year. So I'm very happy with the way they approached last spring, the summer and the preseason."

The newcomers include three international forwards, a necessity for the Hokies, in 6-foot-1 junior-college transfer Uju Ugoka from Lagos, Nigeria, and Canadians Alex Kiss-Rusk, a 6-4 freshman from Montreal, Quebec, and Tajjah Campbell, a 6-3 freshman from Ajax, Ontario. Technically, the foreign player count jumps to four when Australian Hanna Young, a 6-1 freshman, joins the team in January.

"In terms of our recruiting, our No. 1 priority will remain trying to get kids from the state of Virginia," Wolff said. "I think that, because of how late we were hired and everything that went into it, we've had to stay fluid with the recruiting situation throughout the year, and we tried to get the best kids that we could get given where we were at and where those kids were at in their recruiting situations."

"So I'm happy about everyone that we took. I am disappointed that Hanna still has to work on her eligibility situation, but I think that Uju will impact

us immediately. She has already with how hard she plays, and she's got experience at the college level. I think she's going to be someone that will give us a different scoring option than we had in the post last year.

"I think Tajjah and Alex are talented kids with a lot of potential who are going to be needing to learn the pace that you have to play at in college."

Rounding out Wolff's first recruiting class are guards Lauren Evans, a 6-0 freshman from Phoenix, Ariz., and Alexis Lloyd, a 5-9 freshman from Chicago, Ill.

"We gravely needed some perimeter depth," Wolff said. "I think that Lauren and Alexis along with Kelsey [Conyers], who has improved, will give us three other people there, so we can rest the starters. It makes us look a little bit different."

What may also make the Hokies look a little bit different is their uniform. Last season, Tech toured all over the country, with stops in Washington, D.C., California, Iowa, Pennsylvania, Florida, South Carolina and Massachusetts. The Hokies played just six home games among their first 17 contests.


In a stark contrast, this season will see the team in Blacksburg 10 times in its first 12 games and leaving the state just once for a game at Michigan State. The Hokies will also welcome a number of highly attractive teams to Cassell Coliseum.

"What we tried to do is this, when I got the job,

there were a lot of areas here that people wanted to see some things changed," Wolff said. "They wanted to see better home games, so we will play Penn State here, we'll play Wisconsin here and we'll play Old Dominion here. And I think if we are going to try and recruit the type of kids we want to recruit, you have to have a challenging schedule from beginning to end.

"If you play a good, tough nonconference schedule, it prepares you for the conference schedule. Obviously, this conference schedule thing is a bear, and it's only going to get harder. So it's a tough schedule overall, and I think we also have a bunch of home games, which we didn't have last year and that is nice.

"We're also starting a series with Michigan State, where they'll come back next year. We want to play some in-state schools, so we are playing Richmond, Hampton and Old Dominion. So I think in terms of the schedule, we've improved it."

In all, the Hokies will play 18 home games this year, their most ever in a single season, and that even includes the years when Tech served as the hosts for postseason tournaments. The schedule will give Tech fans many opportunities to witness first-hand the rebuilding job Wolff and his staff have put forth in trying to restore the program to the days when the Hokies made postseason tournaments. 

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2012-13 MEN'S BASKETBALL PROFILES



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in 31 of the team's 33 games, making 30 starts ... Led or tied for the team lead in scoring on 18 occasions ... Averaged a team-best 15.6 points per game, while shooting 43.8 percent from the floor and 37.5 percent from beyond the 3-point arc ... Connected on 82.8 percent of his free-throw attempts ... Averaged 3.3 rebounds and 2.8 assists per game ... Led the team in assists (88) and steals (41).

ANALYZING GREEN'S GAME: Green earned second-team All-ACC honors a year ago after finishing fifth in the ACC in free-throw percentage, seventh in scoring, seventh in steals, eighth in field-goal percentage and tied for eighth in assists. He's a very good passer, but last year, became more of a scorer. His shooting has continued to improve each year, and Tech's staff hopes he becomes even better from beyond the 3-point arc. He'll be relied upon to be the Hokies' leader this season.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "He's a scoring point guard and is one of the best in the league right now. He has to have a good year for us to be competitive and do the things we want to do."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in six games a year ago, starting one of those – on Senior Day ... Scored two points last season, hitting 1-of-8 from the floor, and he went 0-of-3 from beyond the 3-point arc ... Had four rebounds ... Played a total of 17 minutes.

ANALYZING RACER'S GAME: Racer, who played last year as a walk-on, had a year of eligibility remaining and was invited back to the program by Johnson to give the Hokies an extra guard and another body for practice. He received a scholarship from Johnson because of his willingness to do anything for the betterment of the program. Though he's not very big, he's quick and is a good ball handler. But he helps the program best by making the other perimeter

players work hard in practice each day.
COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Joey's a team guy, and he knows his role. He knows what we're doing and how we like to do certain things around here. At some point, he might be a guy who could help us in the backcourt at the guard position."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in all 33 games last season, starting nine of those ... Averaged 5.9 points and 3.9 rebounds per game ... Shot 51.6 percent from the floor and 51.8 percent from the free-throw line ... Led the team with 25 blocked shots ... Also added 23 steals ... Scored in double figures in four of the final eight games of the season after Victor Davila went down with a groin injury.

ANALYZING RAINES' GAME: Raines finally showed toward the end of last season what he could do on the basketball floor after two injury-plagued seasons. He averaged 10.1 points and 4.6 rebounds per game in the final eight games, shooting 54 percent from the floor. He possesses size and strength and showed an ability to be effective in the post. His size enabled him to be a presence on the defensive end as well. He still needs to polish his offensive skills, and he needs to improve his free-throw shooting. Getting solid play from him is critical this season for Tech.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "He's a big part of what we want to do this year. He came on last year, and we expect him to carry that momentum from last year on into this year, which he has been doing. He's got to be a post scorer and rebounder for us."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Started 32 of 33 games a year ago ... Averaged 9.1 points and 4.8 rebounds per game ... Also averaged 1.4 assists per game

... Shot 42.5 percent from the floor and 86.8 percent from the free-throw line ... Connected on a team-best 44.3 percent of his 3-point attempts, which would have led the ACC, but he didn't have enough attempts to qualify.

ANALYZING EDDIE'S GAME: Eddie got stuck playing out of position a year ago, as Seth Greenberg used him a lot at power forward because of a lack of depth inside. Also, because of Green's emergence and Dorenzo Hudson's skill, Eddie didn't get a ton of shot attempts, but he can really shoot the ball. He needs to rebound better and be a little tougher on the defensive end, but his value to this team is as a shooter and scorer, and the staff wants to take advantage of that.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "He's playing his natural position now, the position where he's the most comfortable. We're asking him to score the basketball for us. He's one of the best shooters on the team, and we're asking him to make shots for us, and he also has to rebound for us. We've got to rebound the ball by committee this year, and he's one of the guys who has to help us rebound."

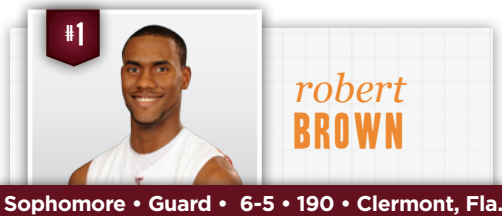


INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in 24 games a year ago, starting six of them ... Did not play in the first seven games because of a knee injury ... Averaged 2.5 points, 1.1 rebounds and 1.1 assists per game ... Shot 33.8 percent from the floor, including 39.1 percent from beyond the 3-point arc ... Connected on 61.5 percent of his free-throw attempts ... Scored a season-best eight points in the Hokies' overtime win over Georgia Tech on Feb. 18.

ANALYZING RANKIN'S GAME: Rankin averaged nearly 14 minutes of playing time per game a year ago, as he adjusted to college basketball. At times, he played tentatively, maybe because of his injured knee, and at other times, he played fast, which made the Hokies, as a team, play fast. He's quick as a defender and quick with the ball in his hands. He pushes the ball, which the staff wants because they want this team to run more and get easier baskets. Rankin's also a better shooter than his percentages indicate.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "He's got to be our

junkyard dog. He's our best on-ball defender. He's got to push the ball in transition. He's improved his shot a lot. He's worked extremely hard on that. He can make open shots when he has them, but we need for him to push the tempo. We're counting on him to do that."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in all 33 games, starting four of them ... Averaged 6.8 points and 2.1 rebounds per game ... Also averaged 1.9 assists per game ... Shot 36.2 percent from the floor, including 31.9 percent from beyond the 3-point arc ... Connected on 62.2 percent of his free-throw attempts ... Blocked 11 shots and had 25 steals ... Scored in double figures on eight occasions.

ANALYZING BROWN'S GAME: Brown was up and down as a freshman, but the young man has undeniable talent. He scored 16 points against No. 6 Duke in the ACC tournament to give folks a glimpse of what he could become. He's long and quick, with the ability to get to the basket or hit jumpers. He also could become a great defender with a little more effort and focus. He suffered a broken foot during the summer, but should be ready when practice starts. He's the top candidate on this team for a breakout season.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Robert is a guy who has to put up baskets for us. He has to help with the scoring load. He's capable of getting hot from 3-point range, and he's capable of putting the ball on the floor and creating his own shot."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Started one game and played in 32, missing a game because of an ankle injury ... Averaged 2.7 points and 2.7 rebounds per game ... Shot 41.7 percent from the floor and 75 percent from the free-throw line ... Blocked eight shots and had eight steals.

ANALYZING BARKSDALE'S GAME: Barksdale averaged around 10 minutes per game a year ago in getting acclimated to college basketball. He was a little undersized in the post, but he is now stronger and needs to play there because of Tech's lack of depth. He has some offensive skills, and he plays hard. He just needs to be a little more consistent. Tech's staff hopes he develops into a force inside to compliment Cadarian Raines.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "C.J. is a guy who has to play with a lot of confidence. He's a different player right now. He's playing with a lot of confidence. He's got to rebound the ball for us and post defend. He gives us an ACC body at the four position [power forward]. He's 6-foot-8, 230 pounds, so he gives us that ACC body."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in just three games last season ... Received a medical hardship waiver after last season because of a head injury ... Averaged 12 points and 10 rebounds per game for the Canarias Basketball Academy in the Canary Islands his final year there.

ANALYZING VAN ZEGEREN'S GAME: Getting the hardship waiver might have been the best thing to happen to van Zegeren, who needed time to get bigger and stronger. He is the perfect sleeper type of prospect. He's tall, with a long wingspan, and he loves to block shots. Offensively, he attacks the glass, and he shows some potential as a face-up shooter. He needs to play with a more physical nature on both ends of the court. He could be a perfect contributor off the bench for this team, provided he develops a little more.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Joey gives us a defensive presence. He's a shot blocker for us. He's got to run the floor and play hard. He's got to rebound and block shots for us. I'm looking for him to get to the offensive glass. He could help us."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Averaged 13.7 points per game as a freshman at UNC Wilmington last season before transferring to Tech, where he'll sit out this season and have three seasons left to play ... Started in 29 of 31 games at UNCW ... Scored in double figures in 20 games and scored 20 or more points six times ... Shot 37.9 percent from the floor, including 33.1 percent from beyond the 3-point arc.

ANALYZING SMITH'S GAME: It's unfortunate that Smith must sit out the season because he could help the Hokies. He's a big-time scorer from the guard spot. He wasn't much of a distributor for the Seahawks, averaging just 1.6 assists per game, and he'll need to work on his defense to play for Johnson, who prides himself as a defensive coach. But in a year, Smith should be ready to be a major contributor for the Hokies.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "This year is going to be big for him to learn our system and the way we want to do things, and also to use this year to get better. He needs to get stronger and work on his ball skills, and I want him to push the guys in practice. But he can shoot the basketball and score. He'll be an excellent guy for us to have to defend in practice."



INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in four games a year ago and scored three points – on a 3-pointer in Tech's win over Eastern Michigan ... Made one of his three shot attempts – all 3-pointers ... Played a total of eight minutes.

ANALYZING JOHNSTON'S GAME: Johnston is a walk-on who joined Tech's roster last year. He's a solid shooter, especially from beyond the 3-point arc, and a decent ball handler. He needs to rebound better from the guard spot, but that figures to come with more work. Like with Joey Racer, Tech's staff may need to rely on him to

play some minutes in the backcourt in the event of injury or foul trouble.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Will is a 3-point shooter. He's a guy who can get hot and make shots. We've got to continue to work with Will on putting the ball on the floor and guarding his position. But he can make shots. He could come in and make shots against zones. He might be the guy who has to help us in the backcourt."




#22
christian BEYER
Sophomore • Forward • 6-7 • 200 • New Bern, N.C.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Is an invited walk-on who joined the program ... Did not play for the Hokies last season ... Averaged 17 points and 10 rebounds as a senior at New Bern High School.

ANALYZING BEYER'S GAME: Beyer is a solid walk-on with the skills to give the Hokies some minutes in the post. He possesses good range as a shooter and works hard on the defensive end. He's another one who figures to make the Hokies a better team by making others work hard in practice.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Christian's an athletic

guy who can make shots. He's probably a 4. He'll be competing up front with C.J. and Marshall [Wood]."



#33
marshall WOOD
Freshman • Forward • 6-8 • 210 • Rustburg, Va.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Averaged 24.1 points and 12 rebounds per game as a senior at Rustburg High School ... Scored 579 points as a senior and 1,402 points for his career, breaking the school record in both categories ... Made 42 3-pointers as a senior ... Averaged 19.5 points and 10.5 rebounds per game as a junior.

ANALYZING WOOD'S GAME: Wood fits the mold of most of Tech's players – he's long and quick and can get up off the floor, though he needs to put on weight and get stronger. Wood's best attribute may be his shooting ability, as he possesses deep range. He resembles Jarell Eddie in that sense, though he may be a tad taller. Wood will compete for time at power forward, so he'll need to get used to how physical things are at the college level.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Marshall is a guy who is


a long athletic forward, and we're expecting him to develop into one of the best 3-point shooters on the team. We're expecting him to make shots and stretch the defense for us and open the defense for driving and post-ups for Cadarian [Raines]. He, too, has to rebound the ball for us. We expect him to see extensive playing time."



#5
marcus PATRICK
Freshman • Guard • 5-9 • 165 • Rustburg, Va.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Is an invited walk-on to the program ... Averaged 10.5 points per game his senior season as a teammate of Marshall Wood's at Rustburg High School.

ANALYZING PATRICK'S GAME: Patrick received an invitation to walk on because of the Hokies' lack depth on the perimeter. He lacks size, but he's quick, and he doesn't back down. He's going to make Erick Green and Marquis Rankin work hard in practice every single day.

COACH JOHNSON'S TAKE: "Marcus is an energetic guy, and we're excited to have him on the team. He brings a lot of energy and excitement and fun to the game." 



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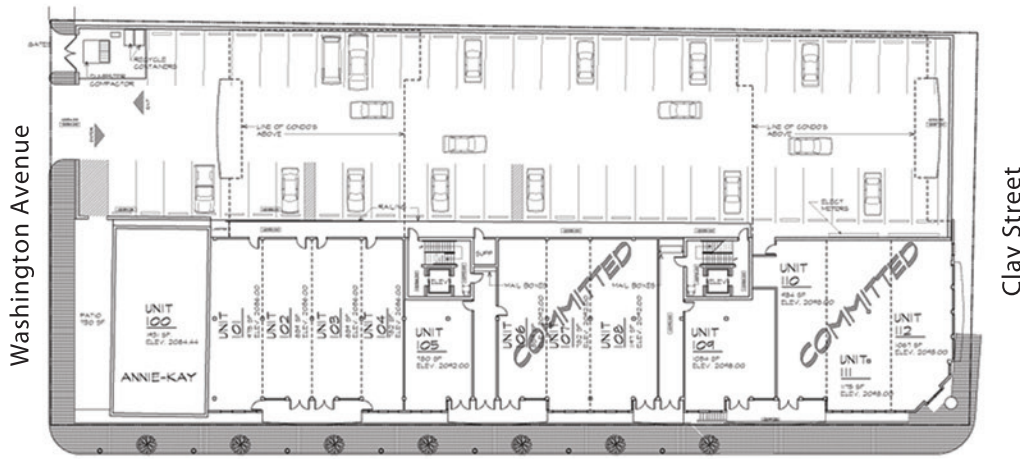
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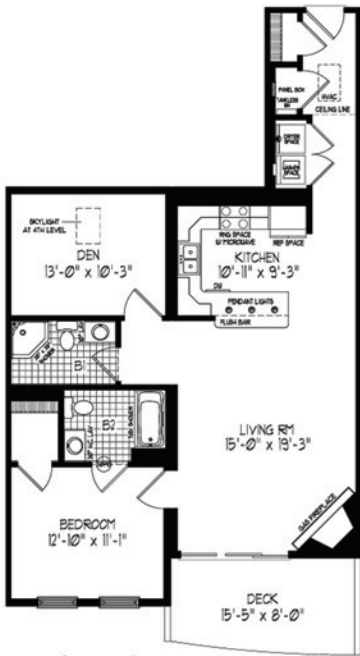
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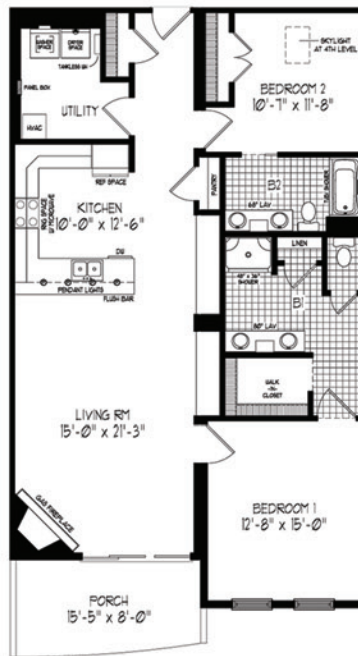




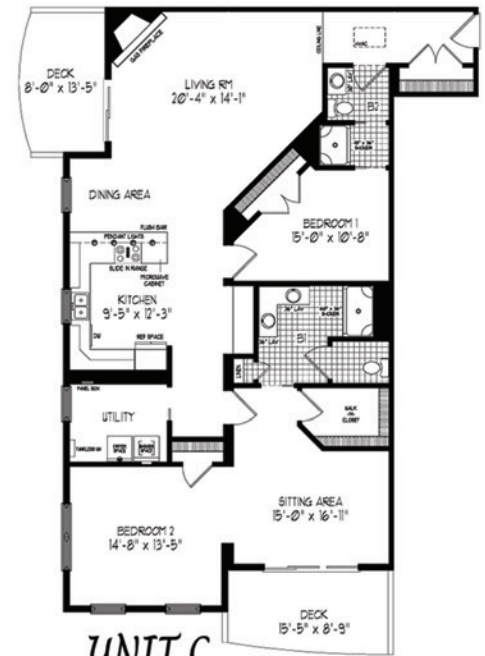
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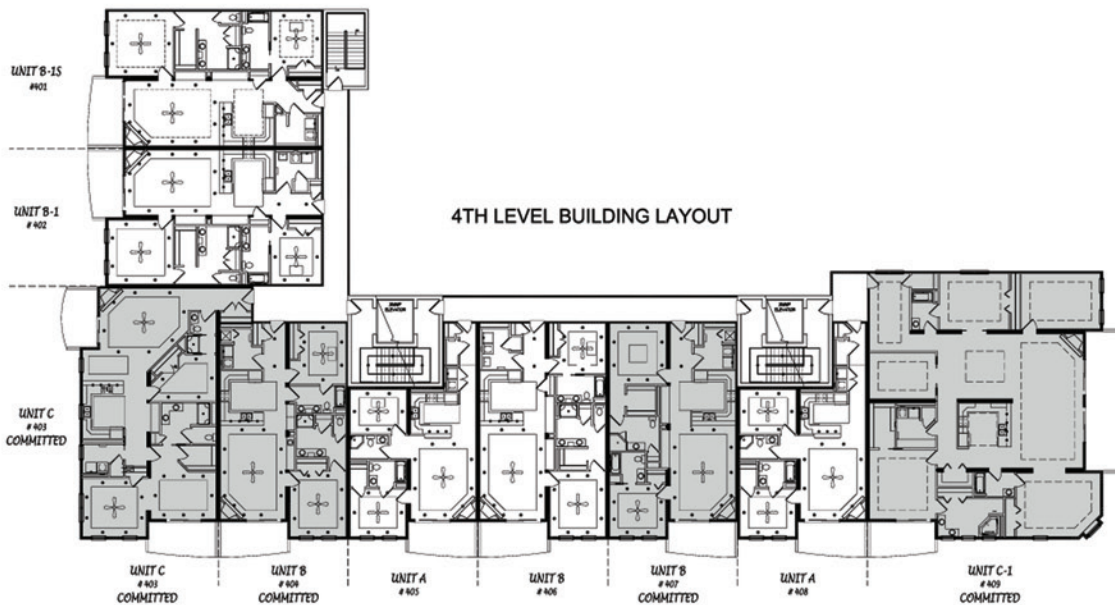
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2012-13 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL PROFILES

#2



kerry
SARVER

Senior • Guard • 5-5 • Leesburg, Va.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: In her first season as a walk-on, saw action in 11 games, playing a total of 23 minutes, including a season-high five at Wake Forest ... Missed all 10 of her shot attempts, five from behind the 3-point arc and was also 0-for-1 at the free-throw line ... Did pull down three rebounds and registered two assists.

ANALYZING SARVER'S GAME: As she did last year, Sarver will provide much needed help in practice and with leadership as one of nine returners on the squad.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Kerry has been fabulous for the team chemistry. She works hard in practice, and you couldn't ask for anything more. She adds a lot of stuff behind the scenes that people can appreciate."

#12



rachel
NICHOLS

Senior • Guard • 5-10 • Richmond, Va.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: In her first season as a walk-on, played in 10 games and a total of 17 minutes ... Was 1-for-3 in shooting, scoring her first collegiate basket against N.C. Central, and missed her only 3-point shot ... Also pulled down three rebounds, one offensive.

ANALYZING NICHOLS' GAME: Nichols will also provide Hokies with depth needed in practice, and as one of nine returners on the squad, will add leadership.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Rachel Nichols has also been great for our team. Just like Kerry [Sarver], she works hard in practice and does a lot of things behind the scenes that make us better."

#22



porschia
HADLEY

r-Junior • Forward/Center • 6-3 • Montezuma, Ga.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Another Hokie who enjoyed a breakout season with increased minutes, starting in 26 of 30 games played last year ... Averaged 5.6 points per game, as she hit a team-best 37.6 percent of her shots and 67.5 percent of her free-throw attempts ... Grabbed 117 rebounds and blocked a team-high 15 shots, while adding 21 steals and 10 assists.

ANALYZING HADLEY'S GAME: As the only low post presence who played significant minutes a year ago for the Hokies, Hadley will be looked upon to provide necessary leadership in the frontcourt with the new additions of three post players.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Porschia Hadley has gotten herself into better condition. I think we now have a better feel, as a coaching staff, for what her skills are and the things she can and cannot do, and we should see continued improvement from her."

#3



aerial
WILSON

Senior • Guard • 5-8 • Cocoa, Fla.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Had a breakout season as the starting point guard, starting in 29 of 30 games played and leading the team in minutes played at 35.6 per game ... Was second on the team in points (362, 12.1 ppg), shooting percentage (34.1) shots made (139), 3-point shots made (35), free throws made (49) and assists (87) ... Also added 72 rebounds and 41 steals, which was third on the team.

ANALYZING WILSON'S GAME: Wilson was one of three players, all guards, who averaged more than 34 minutes per game last year. With added depth in the Hokies' backcourt, her overall numbers might see a small dip, but her shooting percentages (just 57.6 from the free-throw line) and turnovers (91) are numbers that should improve dramatically.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "I think Aerial Wilson needs to continue to make the transition from scoring guard to point guard. She made big strides last year, and we need her to continue to grow into that role."

#13



alyssa
FENYN

Senior • Guard • 6-0 • Newark, N.Y.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Was the only Hokie to start all 30 games last year and was second on the team in minutes played (35.4 mpg) ... Averaged 7.8 points per game on 34 percent shooting from the floor and 28.8 percent from behind the 3-point arc ... Converted 62.5 percent of her free throws ... Leads returners from last year with 52 offensive rebounds and 140 total, 88 assists and 49 steals ... Also had seven blocks.

ANALYZING FENYN'S GAME: All of Fenyn's shooting numbers were down last year, but again, with added minutes [more than seven per game from her sophomore campaign] come fatigued shots. She did post season bests in most other categories, including fewer turnovers, as her role on the team slightly shifted last year due to the lack of depth on the roster.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Alyssa Fenyn, I thought at the end of the year, played her best basketball. She has an improved sense on how we want her to play."

#14



uju
UGOKA

Junior • Forward • 6-1 • Lagos, Nigeria

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Averaged 17 points, nine rebounds and almost two steals per game for Gulf Coast State, a junior college in Florida, last year while being named a finalist for the National JUCO Player of the Year award.

ANALYZING UGOKA'S GAME: With her experience and her maturity, Ugoka should start right away in the frontcourt for the Hokies. She's proven her scoring and rebounding abilities in the past, but only playing time will determine if that will translate into the ACC game.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Uju will be a frontline ACC player from the first minute she steps on the court. Her natural aggressiveness and her ability to play with the energy that we didn't see here last year from our inside players has helped raise our level already."



#20
**nia
EVANS**

Junior • Forward • 6-0 • Decatur, Ga.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Limited to just 14 games, with two starts ... Averaged 3.6 points and 2.1 rebounds in her 215 minutes played ... Shot 41.7 percent from the floor and 64.7 percent from the free-throw line ... Managed 11 blocks and 10 steals to go with five assists.

ANALYZING EVANS' GAME: Plagued by injury through the middle part of the season – she missed the first 13 games in the ACC – Evans never really got on track to play with any consistency. A healthy Evans scored 12 points and added four rebounds in the ACC Tournament game in the final game of the year, and she will bolster the Hokies' frontcourt.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "To me, I think last year with Nia Evans was a wash because of recurring injury situations. She's in very good shape and has played extremely hard in the preseason."



#31
**monet
TELLIER**

Junior • Guard • 5-11 • Charlotte, N.C.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in 30 games while making 28 starts and averaged more than 34 minutes per game ... Led the team in scoring at 13.7 points per game, while shooting 33 percent from the floor, 28.9 percent from behind the 3-point arc and 69 percent from the free-throw line ... Led the team in field goals made (141), 3-pointers made (43) and free throws made (87) ... Added 135 rebounds, 73 assists, 46 steals and 12 blocks to her totals.

ANALYZING TELLIER'S GAME: Without doubt, she is the Hokies' best all-around player on the court, but she needs two things. First, she needs a break – and the Hokies' improved depth should provide her with that. Second, she needs help in the scoring department, which sometimes leads her to poor shot selection and turnovers [a team-high 117].

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Monet Tellier has worked

on her ball handling. She loves basketball and is extremely competitive. If we can get her a little more rest, then she can stay focused without having ups and downs. She should have her best year."



#23
**larryqua
HALL**

Sophomore • Guard • 5-10 • Marietta, Ga.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Made two starts and played in 26 games, averaging 15 minutes per game ... Despite playing 10 minutes less or more compared to her teammates, she still managed 77 rebounds, including 44 offensive (third among returners) and 32 steals, fourth on the team ... Averaged 2.7 points per game ... Shot 32.5 percent from the floor, 23.8 percent behind the 3-point arc and 50 percent from the free-throw line ... Had 11 assists and five blocks.

ANALYZING HALL'S GAME: Hall is raw talent who showed improvement as the season wore on. Her speed and quickness on the court are assets for her role coming off the bench, but sometimes she needs to slow down to make better decisions.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "She has worked hard for us. We'll probably have her assume a very similar role as last year in regards to energy and being a defensive presence off the bench."



#33
**kelsey
CONYERS**

Sophomore • Guard • 5-9 • Chesterfield, Va.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS: Played in 29 games and made two starts, averaging 11 minutes per game as a walk-on ... Made seven of her 37 shots from the floor, including three 3-point baskets and four free throws for 21 points ... Added 32 rebounds, 12 assists, 14 steals and one block to her totals.

ANALYZING CONYER'S GAME: As a walk-on last year, Conyers was thrust into the Hokies' rotation to provide needed depth at the guard position. With a season under her belt, Conyers should

make more strides in being able to play at the Division I level in the ACC.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Kelsey Conyers was a tremendous surprise last year as an invited walk-on and has improved her shot, has changed her game a little bit and will continue to contribute to the team."



#10
**lauren
EVANS**

Freshman • Guard • 6-0 • Phoenix, Ariz.

NOTES ON EVANS: She was listed as a four-star recruit by ESPN HoopGurlz and was ranked the No. 40 guard in the country. Evans was a four-year varsity letterwinner at Hamilton High School and was named the player of the year in 2012, while earning defensive player of the year honors in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Lauren Evans is an extremely competitive kid who can play either guard spot and will give us depth that we did not have last year."



#21
**alex
KISS-RUSK**

Freshman • Forward • 6-4 • Montreal, Quebec, Canada

NOTES ON KISS-RUSK: She was listed as a three-star recruit by ESPN HoopGurlz while earning three letters at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass. Kiss-Rusk played for the U17 Canadian National Team at the FIBA World Championships in France, and later, she was selected for the Canada Senior Women's Basketball team that competed at the 2011 Pan-Am Games.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Alex Kiss-Rusk has good offensive skills. I think she needs to get a sense of the physicality and the pace of the game in the ACC, but I think she has a lot of potential and size that we didn't have last year."

#24



tajah
CAMPBELL

Freshman • Forward • 6-3 • Ajax, Ontario, Canada

NOTES ON CAMPBELL: ESPN HoopGurlz listed Campbell as a three-star recruit while playing for Pickering High School. She led the team to three association championships and was named a defensive and league all-star. She competed for the Canadian National Team during the 2011 Pan-Am Games and won a national title with the U17 Team Ontario squad.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Tajah Campbell is a terrific athlete. She's long. She can run. She needs to work to get a little bit better sense of what you need to do at this level offensively, but I think she's ready to rebound and play defense immediately."

#32



alexis
LOYD

Freshman • Guard • 5-9 • Chicago, Ill.

NOTES ON LLOYD: She was a four star, top-100 recruit by ESPN HoopGurlz and was ranked No. 81 overall and the No. 31 guard. Lloyd was a three-year letterwinner at Whitney Young High School and helped the team to a No. 3 ranking in the country last season. The Dolphins posted an undefeated season and won the 4A state title, while Lloyd earned all-state honorable mention honors.

COACH WOLFF'S TAKE: "Alexis Lloyd comes from a great high school program. She wasn't able to be here during the summer, so she's kind of a bit behind the curve, but she has come on strong in the preseason. She has the ability to make outside shots, she's fearless and she will add a dimension on the perimeter we didn't have last year."



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overcoming
OBSTACLES

Jeron Gouveia-Winslow has overcome hurdles on and off the field and is trying to make the most of his final season at Tech

by **Jimmy Robertson**

The ball came straight toward him, an inflated piece of stitched swine skin wobbling end over end. Here he was, all of 5 or 6 years old at the time standing on a piece of earth with a bunch of other youngsters barely above toddler age, and the ball seemed destined for him.

He raised his small hands, and the ball caromed off his mitts. It landed behind him, hopping merrily toward the end zone. He quickly scooped it up, and with his coaches imploring him to “run,” he took off.

And he never stopped, reaching nirvana – the end zone – in his first game ever and the first time he ever touched a football.

“It was pretty cool,” said Jeron Gouveia-Winslow, who has played football ever since and currently splits time with Ronny Vandyke at whip linebacker for the Hokies. “Wow, it doesn’t seem that long ago.”

Those were the good ol’ days, the days when Gouveia-Winslow seemed to do no wrong on the

football fields of Northern Virginia, and later on, on his middle school and high school fields. He was a magnet for football success, skipping two levels in his Pee Wee League because he was just too good to compete against kids his age and then later becoming one of the best players in the state of Virginia while at Stone Bridge High School.

Each year at Stone Bridge, the team came up with a slogan for the season, and after coming up short in the playoffs a few times, Gouveia-Winslow and the rest of his classmates came up with the slogan, “One time.” They wanted to win the state title just one time.

It happened, as he closed out his prep career by intercepting two passes in the Group AAA championship game and leading Stone Bridge to its first state championship. The Virginia High School Coaches Association named him its defensive player of the year for his efforts.

But things haven’t been exactly easy for Gouveia-Winslow since those days. He had to

rebuild a relationship with his natural father not long after he arrived at Tech and then he struggled on the field as a starter two years ago. A foot injury wrecked last year when things appeared to be turning in his favor, and then after starting the first four games this season, he was moved into a platoon role with Vandyke, a redshirt freshman who serves as the heir to the whip position.

So he finds himself in this season, his final one, launching himself into a full-scale assault toward helping the team accomplish its goal of an ACC championship and toward his goal of becoming the player he wants to be. The games continue to click off the schedule, and the clock on his collegiate career continues to wind down.

As it does, he finds himself hoping for this – “One time,” just one time.

Gouveia-Winslow certainly possesses the genes to be an outstanding football player. Washington Redskins fans and Northern Virginia

GETTING TO KNOW JERON GOUVEIA-WINSLOW

It’s Friday night in the offseason, what are you doing?

JGW: “I’m probably trying to take a trip to my dad’s or take a trip for the weekend. In the spring, I get in travel mode or lake mode, either Smith Mountain Lake or Lake Norman. I always try to meet up with friends there. That’s pretty much it.”

What are you reading these days?

JGW: “I don’t read books or novels too much. I do like reading up on random things, like health and fitness and science and technology. I go on Yahoo tablet and there are different things on there, and I stay up on the world through that. But I don’t read a lot of novels. I’m more into

watching movies. I could watch movies all day.”

Facebook or Twitter?

JGW: “I lack social media. I use Facebook to keep in touch with some family and friends, but I don’t get on it often. I like seeing pictures of my nephews and nieces. I’m on Twitter all the time, reading up on things. I don’t tweet too often. If I had to pick one, I’d say Facebook only because I like seeing pictures of my family.”

Favorite player?

JGW: “Troy Polamalu [safety for the Pittsburgh Steelers]. I love watching him play. There are a lot of other guys I love

watching, but he’s a safety and I was a safety growing up. I always wanted to be like him.”

I’d love to trade places for a day with ...?

JGW: “Rob Dyrdek [a professional skateboarder with a reality TV show on MTV]. He does whatever he wants. He’s famous. He’s got a lot of money. He’s got his own show. He lives it up. I’d definitely enjoy doing what he does.”

In 10 years, what will you be doing?

JGW: “I’ll probably be a dad. I’ll be enjoying what I’m doing. I see myself as a person who loves life. I’ll be a father and have a family, and whatever I’ll be doing, I’ll be loving it.”

residents probably recognize at least a portion of his last name, though the hyphenation and the “Winslow” part might perplex some.

He is the son of Kurt Gouveia, the former Redskins linebacker who played in the NFL for 13 seasons, including two different stints for Washington (nine years total). Gouveia won two Super Bowl rings with the Redskins (1987 and 1991), becoming sort of a football idol in the nation’s football-crazed capitol.

But in the latter throes of his playing career, Gouveia and his wife, Loree, split up and ultimately divorced, and he left behind their four children, all under the age of 9, including then 5-year-old Jeron. The messy divorce created a lot of heartache and some hostilities.

Four years later, Loree and her oldest child’s (Landon) baseball coach, a man named Tommy Winslow, developed a relationship and eventually got married. He had four children from a previous relationship, but he treated all of Loree’s children as his own. They were one big happy family – literally. At one time, seven children lived in their home.

“Tommy’s oldest daughter had gone off to college,” Jeron said. “The rest of us were there, and it was a little crazy. Then it seemed like, every two years, someone was going off.”

Jeron eventually took his stepfather’s name. Obviously, he never forgot about his natural father, but he harbored some bitterness over the situation. He and his natural father rarely spoke for years.

That certainly didn’t affect him on the field. He helped Stone Bridge High to the state title game in 2005, when it lost to Hampton High 15-8. Two years later, he helped the Bulldogs make it back to the state championship game, as they defeated Phoebus in the semifinals, snapping Phoebus’ 20-game winning streak. In the title game, behind Gouveia-Winslow’s seven tackles and two interceptions, Stone Bridge easily rolled to a 38-0 win over previously unbeaten Potomac.

“It’s pretty remarkable,” he said. “We had a talented team. We’ve always had a good program. Getting to the regional semis and the regional championship game were expected, but getting the state championship, we had fallen short of that. Our senior year, we always had a phrase or slogan or something for the season, and ours was ‘One Time.’ Let’s win the state one time. Let’s do it. It was cool because they’ve been there again. They’ve made it to the semifinals, but they haven’t won it, so it makes it special that we have been the only ones to do it.”

Gouveia-Winslow provided his head

coach, Mickey Thompson, with his first state championship. In doing so, he paid back Thompson for his help in getting Gouveia-Winslow noticed by college recruiters. Thompson graduated from UVa, but had no problems selling Gouveia-Winslow to Tech assistant Torrian Gray.

“He [Thompson] kept telling him [Gray], ‘You all need help in your secondary, and this guy can help,’” Gouveia-Winslow said. “One day, he called me out of class, and I walked down to the football office. He told me, ‘You got it [a scholarship offer].’ It was exciting. He gave me a hug, and then I got on the phone with Coach Gray and accepted. I always wanted to come here [Tech].”

He hadn’t talked with his father much, and he wanted to re-establish that relationship somehow. But things on the football front were looking great, and he set off for Tech looking to continue his gridiron success.

Gouveia-Winslow vividly remembers the day. He remembers where he was. Even remembers the class he was planning to attend.

On a summer day during his freshman year, he received a call from his older brother, Landon.

The call ultimately changed his life.

“He said he was heading down to dad’s and wanted to know if I wanted to go with him,” Gouveia-Winslow said. “I remember it well. I was on the Drill Field. He called me. I was walking to class. It was summer time, and I was in Summer II [second summer session]. He was going down [to North Carolina, where his father lives] for the Fourth of July weekend, and so were my cousins on my dad’s side. I had always stayed close with my biological cousins because they had grown up in the same town with us.

“My brother took me down there, and it was nice to have my cousins and family there. I was able to be with my dad and be with everyone else at the same time. That made it easier on me.”

The call changed his life because it reignited things between Gouveia-Winslow and his father. Landon, who had maintained his own relationship with his father, essentially hot-wired that connection.

Father and son started talking again. The conversations didn’t go well at first, but the two of them usually reverted to the subject of football to keep the tone civil. Eventually, they patched the large potholes in their relationship, and today, Gouveia-Winslow and his father talk two or three times a week.



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“I talk to him twice a week about the game or the upcoming game,” Gouveia-Winslow said. “We keep in touch. He’s always calling me and checking on me. We do talk a lot of football. I remember when we first started getting back in touch. We talked a lot of football because it was something we had in common.”

While things continue on the upswing in regards to his relationship with his father, unfortunately, they haven’t always gone in the same direction on the field. He redshirted his first year at Tech and then was switched to a different position as a redshirt freshman, seeing action in eight games as a whip linebacker. His sophomore year, he started, but he – like the Hokies – got off to a tough start. Tech lost to Boise State in the opener that season and followed it up with a loss to JMU. Gouveia-Winslow struggled in both games.

“JMU was, like, my worst game ever,” he said. “We were 0-2, and I felt I was a huge part of why we were 0-2. I felt for our seniors. I didn’t know how we would react. In the locker room, tensions were high, and it was tough for the team as a whole.

“But we came back together and got close, and had a remarkable end to the season. As difficult as it was in the beginning, it seemed

to put us on track to win out and have a good season.”

His sophomore year ended on a great note, as he intercepted a pass and returned it for a touchdown in the Hokies’ ACC championship game win over Florida State, and then he posted two tackles and forced a fumble in the Orange Bowl against Stanford.

That carried over into his junior season, when he recorded 21 tackles and forced a fumble in the first four games. But against Miami, after he snuffed out a fake field-goal attempt by the Hurricanes, he suffered a Lisfranc sprain in his left foot. The injury was the final horn on his season.

“That was tough just because it was midway through, and I had been playing pretty well,” he said. “Then I got hurt, and that was a bummer for the season for me. It took a lot for me to get back.”

Gouveia-Winslow spent the better part of the next six months rehabbing. He worked sparingly in spring practice, but used the summer to get bigger and stronger in the strength and conditioning program while gaining more and more confidence in his foot.

He won the starting job at whip for the Georgia Tech game and played well against the


Yellow Jackets, recording 14 tackles (9 solo) in the Hokies’ 20-17 overtime win.

“I had the game of my life in the Georgia Tech game, which meant a lot to me, just battling back from last year,” he said. “Just the injury and all the doubts ... it meant a lot to me to play well.”

Losing the starting job to Vandyke for the Cincinnati game was an obvious disappointment, but he refuses to let it ruin his season. He hopes his final season ends as one of affirmation; both in his playing abilities and the belief that good things come to those who both wait and work hard. Off the field, he has maintained a great relationship with his family and has reconnected with his father, who now coaches for the Sacramento Mountain Lions in the UFL.

Gouveia-Winslow has followed in his father’s footsteps in being a football player. The Tech graduate, with a degree in human development, might do the same as a coach.

“Coaching is something I feel I’d be great at. Coaching is what I see myself doing,” he said. “I want to stay involved with football. It’s what I know – and love.”

Hopefully, down the road, life will treat this young man well, like it did when he played on fields near his hometown in Northern Virginia and dominated the competition. For sure, he deserves it. 



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Former Tech defensive back Paul Davis (1) tied for the team lead in interceptions both in 1979 (4 interceptions) and 1980 (2).



FAMILY, FARMING AND FOOTBALL HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE LOVES OF FORMER TECH DB PAUL DAVIS, WHO EXCELLED UNDER BILL DOOLEY IN THE LATE 1970S

by JIMMY ROBERTSON

Most folks retire from a profession and then start to take it easy.

Paul Davis retired, hopped on a tractor and went to work.

The former Tech defensive back retired after working 28 years as an agriculture extension agent, but he works just as hard these days, helping his father farm 250 acres of the family's 1,200-acre place in New Kent County, Va., a relatively small county between Richmond and Williamsburg. They grow corn, soybeans, wheat, barley and pumpkins.

"My wife and I built a home here on the Pamunkey River," Davis said. "I wake up and get to work with my dad, who is 85, and my mom is in good health, too. My wife just retired last year after being a P.E. teacher for a long time. It's been a lot of fun. I'm fortunate. I've lived several dreams."

Davis' father, Boogie, played baseball at Tech in the 1950s, and Davis himself eventually wound up in Blacksburg. Despite being a terrific athlete at New Kent High, he stood

only 5-foot-9 and weighed around 160 pounds, so he received little attention from colleges and decided to join the Army. He spent two years in the Army and married not long after his service ended. He then went to Ferrum Junior College, where he played for the legendary Hank Norton for two years. In his final year there, he intercepted 11 passes, and despite his small stature, he received a scholarship offer from then Tech head coach Bill Dooley.

"At Ferrum, you had to buy everything," Davis said. "You had to buy your cleats and shirts and all that stuff, and when we traveled, we went everywhere by bus. We never stopped to eat. We'd leave for a trip and stop in the morning at a rest area for donuts. Then for lunch, we'd stop at another rest area, and he'd [Norton] pull out the bread and cheese and bologna for us.

"At Tech, everything was handed to you. If you didn't play hard, you didn't know how good you had it."

Davis quickly made a name for

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himself after enrolling at Tech in 1979. He won a starting cornerback's job, and he also helped out with punt returns, teaming with John Ludlow to handle those duties. They got the job when Dooley made anyone who had returned punts in high school go down to the end of the field to catch punts one day in practice. Anyone who dropped a punt was eliminated from the competition for the job.

"It was a way to get out of hitting and running for an hour," Davis said. "We caught a bunch of punts, and John and I didn't drop a punt. Then Dooley told us the job was ours. If I had known that, I would have dropped the first punt. Our first game was a night game against Louisville, and I hadn't played a night game in years. I was as nervous as you could be."

He survived that game and many others in the punt return role, but he took his two hardest hits as a punt returner, including one against Florida State when he didn't see a would-be tackler in front of him. The tackler nailed him just as he caught the ball.

"I couldn't have fumbled," he said. "The ball was buried in my chest."

Davis, though, has fond memories of playing the Seminoles. On Sept. 29, 1979, he intercepted three passes against Florida State in a game played at Lane Stadium, tying a school record in

the process – one that he still shares to this day with numerous others. The Hokies lost the game 17-10 and went on to finish with a 5-6 mark in Dooley's second season.

However, Davis and his teammates turned things around in 1980. Led by a suffocating defense, the Hokies went 8-3 during the regular season and secured a bid to the Peach Bowl – the program's first bowl bid in 12 years.

The bowl game, though, wasn't exactly the greatest of experiences for Davis – and not just because Tech fell 20-10 to a Jim Kelly-led Miami Hurricane squad.

"I had the intestinal flu the night before the game," Davis said. "I didn't get out of bed until we loaded the bus right before the game. I was a team captain, and it was my last game and it was on national TV. I couldn't miss that game. I had just an okay game, but by halftime, I felt fine. It was just one of those 24-hour bugs."

Davis, who had always planned to go into agriculture and be a farmer, graduated in 1981 with a degree in integrated pest management. He spent three years as an agriculture extension agent in Fluvanna County, Va., before returning to Tech to get a master's degree in weed science. Once he got his master's degree, he took a position as a Chesapeake Bay cleanup coordinator, helping educate other extension

agents in efforts to clean up the waters that feed into the Chesapeake.

After two years, Davis landed back in New Kent as the extension agent there, educating farmers in the region on the latest in agricultural practices and raising his two daughters, including one who graduated from Tech in 2005 and one who graduated from Bridgewater in 2010. He worked in New Kent for more than 20 years before recently retiring, but he still remains involved in the profession, working as a research consultant for fertilizer companies and other agriculture-related businesses.

Despite all he has going on, he still makes time to come back to Blacksburg for a couple of games each year.

"This is our busiest time of the year," Davis said. "But I still make it up two or three times. I like to check in on Lester [Karlin, Tech's longtime equipment manager] and Billy Hite [senior advisor to Coach Frank Beamer]. They're the only two left from when I was there."

Davis saw some of his old teammates at the letterman's reunion this past spring, and he plans on coming back next spring for that. Of course, he's probably written that date in pencil.

Given his love for agriculture, any work on the farm that needs to be done next spring certainly takes top priority. 

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WORLD TRAVELER

by Marc Mullen

Tech goalkeeper Dayle Colpitts has traveled around the world playing soccer and wants to play in the Olympics for her home country of Canada, but her first task is helping the Hokies march toward another NCAA berth

She's not into fashion, and she certainly doesn't have the height to be a supermodel – although she is still holding out for a few more inches on her 5-foot-7 inch frame. However, a fashion choice that Dayle Colpitts made at the age of 10 years old has taken her all around the world and closer to her dream of playing in the Olympic Games.

Colpitts, a junior goalkeeper on the Virginia Tech women's soccer team and a native Canadian, recently returned from Japan, where she competed for Team Canada in the 2012 FIFA U-20 World Cup, and her path to the Land of the Rising Sun started with a choice she made more than 10 years ago.

"I started playing soccer when I was young, probably 7 or 8, and I just always knew, since I was 8 years old, that I wanted to go to the Olympics, but I didn't know in what sport," she said. "Soccer challenged me more than any other sport that I played. I am so competitive, and I don't like doing anything that's easy and so soccer and goalkeeper were really hard for me.

"I had great coaches when I was young, and they pushed me more than coaches did in other sports and that's kind of where I found out that soccer was my passion. And the international game of soccer is huge. That was a big part of it for me in choosing soccer."

But the fashion choice?

"That's funny, actually," she said, as to how she became a goalie. "I was 10, and I was playing on

this team who had horrible ugly uniforms. I didn't want to wear the team jerseys, but I did like the keeper's jersey. So I put on the keeper jersey and kind of never looked back.

"It was just the color – it was bright neon orange, which is kind of funny now, because I'm at a school with maroon and orange. I just remember I didn't want to wear that orange jersey, and now, obviously, I want to wear that orange jersey."

Tech fans have certainly enjoyed the effort Colpitts has put forth for the Hokies wearing their jersey. Midway through the 2012 season, she has started every game she's played for the team, has been rewriting the school's record book and is poised, possibly by the end of this year, to be Tech's leader in goalkeeper wins and shutouts.

It was this past February, though, when Colpitts traded in her Hokie jersey for a Team Canada one. She traveled to Panama to compete with the team in the 2012 U-20 World Cup qualifiers, which was certainly not her first international competition with the team, as she had also gone to the qualifiers in Guatemala in 2010. That effort came up short, but this time, the Canadians finished second to advance to the World Cup, which started last August.

Despite a 1-2 record and not advancing to the knockout stage in Japan, Colpitts has nothing but positive memories of her experience.

"First and foremost, it was just an honor to compete for Canada," she said. "It's what I've

wanted since I can remember – to play for Team Canada and to represent our country. So I was just soaking it all in.

"You just feel like an elite athlete when you're at an international competition. You couldn't ask for anything better. You're playing the sport you love with and against the best players in the world. It was really amazing, and I can only hope that I have the opportunity again with the full senior national team. So that's kind of what I am aiming for."

Ironically, her journey with Team Canada coincided with the start to the 2012 Tech women's soccer season. She was in the Hokies' preseason camp, but left Blacksburg on August 8 for Japan and missed the first five games of the season – all wins, which included four shutouts.

Colpitts knew everything would be fine and kept tabs on her teammates while overseas, despite the 13-hour time difference. She was in touch every day via Skype, tweet or text, and she followed the games and scores on the web.

"I was really confident that Caroline [Kelly] was going to get the job done for us," Colpitts said of her replacement. "She had come into preseason prepared and ready to play, and I had no doubts that either her or Kimmy [Anderson] would be able to step in and do a great job for us.

"We were winning, and I couldn't be happier."

And she was grateful for how the coaches were so understanding and considerate of her opportunity.

"The coaching staff was so supportive," she



women's soccer spotlight | *dayle colpitts*

said. "They know me, and they knew that's always been my goal to play the international game. They were just really excited that I had the opportunity, and I couldn't have asked for a more supportive coaching staff."

"I was in contact with them while I was there, and they were following me, too. They were wishing us luck, and it was a good situation. It was hard because I am so committed to our team here. It was hard to be away because this is where all my energy goes. It was tough to miss games, but my teammates and my coaches were just so supportive because they know that's a goal of mine for the future."

Getting to Tech, though, was just as random for the girl born and raised in Fredericton, New Brunswick – which is right beside Maine, about two hours from the border – as was her soccer position.

Colpitts, who is bilingual and speaks both English and French, said it all started when she was playing at a national training center one weekend in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

"I did want to play D-I [Division I]. That was huge for me, and I was really lucky," she said. "Kelly Cagle, who was the women's coach when I was a freshman, was up there watching our training weekend. I visited Tech the summer going into my senior year of high school – so I

was pretty late in the recruiting process – but I came here and didn't want to look anywhere else. I pretty much made up my mind right then and there."

Family is huge for Colpitts, literally and figuratively. The oldest of four kids, she loves the outdoors – especially hiking and camping – and the family tries to schedule activities like that whenever she comes home.

She credits her parents, Mark and Kim, for getting her active when she was a kid, as she was always around the gym with her parents, who both played volleyball at the University of New Brunswick, and played in adult rec leagues.

She is, though, the black sheep of the family, as her three younger siblings have all followed in their parents' footsteps, maybe due to their stature.

"My brother and two sisters are all volleyball players, too, and they are all taller than me," Colpitts said. "My dad is 6-3, and my mom is 5-8. So I am the shortest one in my family, and I am very bitter about that, but I am still holding out for a couple of more inches."

"But my youngest sister, Lauryn, who is 12 and in seventh grade now, is taller than me. Alyson [who is 15] is about 6-foot, and Ryan [who is 17] is 6-4. Isn't that unreal? And I am 5-7."

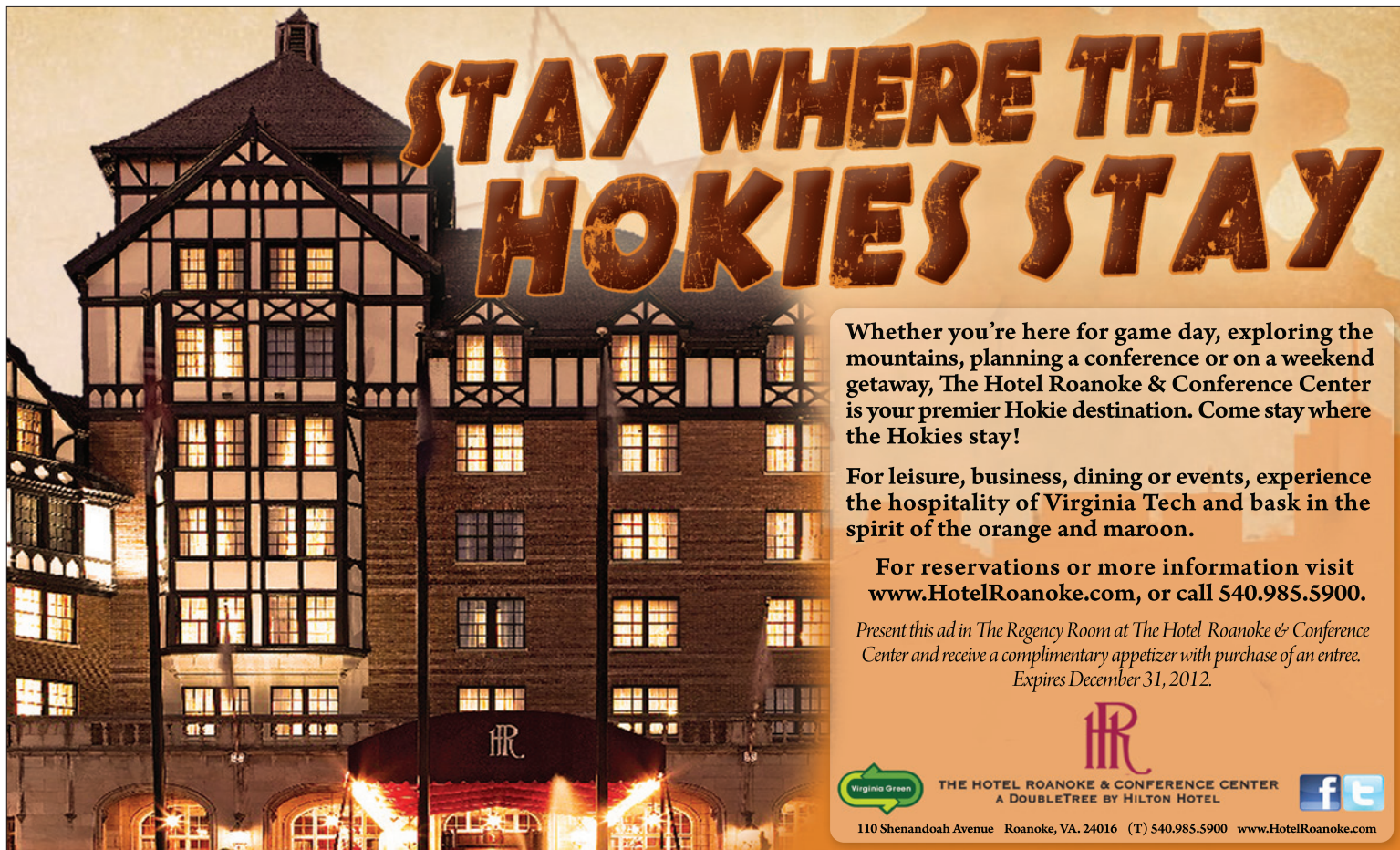
"They are all amazing athletes. I love being home to play around with them in the gym. When they were younger, they played soccer, but they kind of grew away from it – that's how I'll say that. I'm the only one who found the deep passion for soccer, but it's really good because we're all doing what we love."

Colpitts' passion for soccer came from a youth coach. Howard Myatt, her youth coach, brought out the best in her.

"He just pushed me so hard, and I am so competitive and I just wanted to be better. I wanted to do what he was asking me to do," she said. "Every day, it was a new challenge, and goalkeeper is such a complex position, technically and mentally, and I just really connected with it."

The love of soccer has seen Colpitts train in camps with the Canadian senior national team, with the likes of Karina LeBlanc and Erin McLeod, the Olympic goalkeepers for Canada in London. That same love has also taken her to many destinations, which includes France, Norway, Mexico, Cyprus and Switzerland to name a few, and that has certainly filled her passport.

She still has the rest of this season and next year to lead the Hokies in Blacksburg before turning her attention to another international destination – Rio de Janeiro, the site of the 2016 Summer Olympics – and making her dream a reality.



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GETTING TO KNOW DAYLE

Did you watch any of the Olympics this summer?

"Of course, I watched it. It was such an exciting time for soccer in Canada and everywhere. We won the bronze medal at the Olympics, and that's better than they've ever done, and I was really proud of them. I feel like we are on a rise right now. We are just starting to be considered a threat as one of the top teams in the world, and that's pretty unreal."

What is a key trait to being a great goalkeeper?

"Communication is a one of the most important roles on the field, just organizing your team and organizing your backs. It's also important for the center backs because they have to organize who is in front of them. Our communication is very important as far as positioning.

That's why I am very excited about this year because I feel that, myself and the backline, are all really on the same page and know what to expect from each other."

Have you had any unusual injuries?


"I broke my right ankle when I was young on a kiddie slide in my backyard. I was 14, and I missed nationals one year because of that. I was making a waterslide for my brother and sisters, and that kind of backfired and I went down, slipped and broke it. I was babysitting at the time."

What is your plan after soccer is over?

"I'm majoring in biology. It was the only thing I really liked in high school, so I thought I might as well do it in college, and I love it now. I'd love to go to med school some day. I love school. I'm such

a geek sometimes, but I love science. I've thought about med school, but first and foremost, soccer is what I am focused on right now and for the next few years."

Why have you been able to be so successful here?

"I think because I love Tech. I love being a part of Hokie Nation. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else. I have amazing teammates around me and they're my best friends. I just love playing with them and for them, and there is just no better feeling than leaving it all on the field and getting an important result with this group of girls. It's a real honor to be a student-athlete here, just with the history of the athletic programs and the support we get from the staff and from alumni. It just makes it easy to want to perform well and do well for the team." 

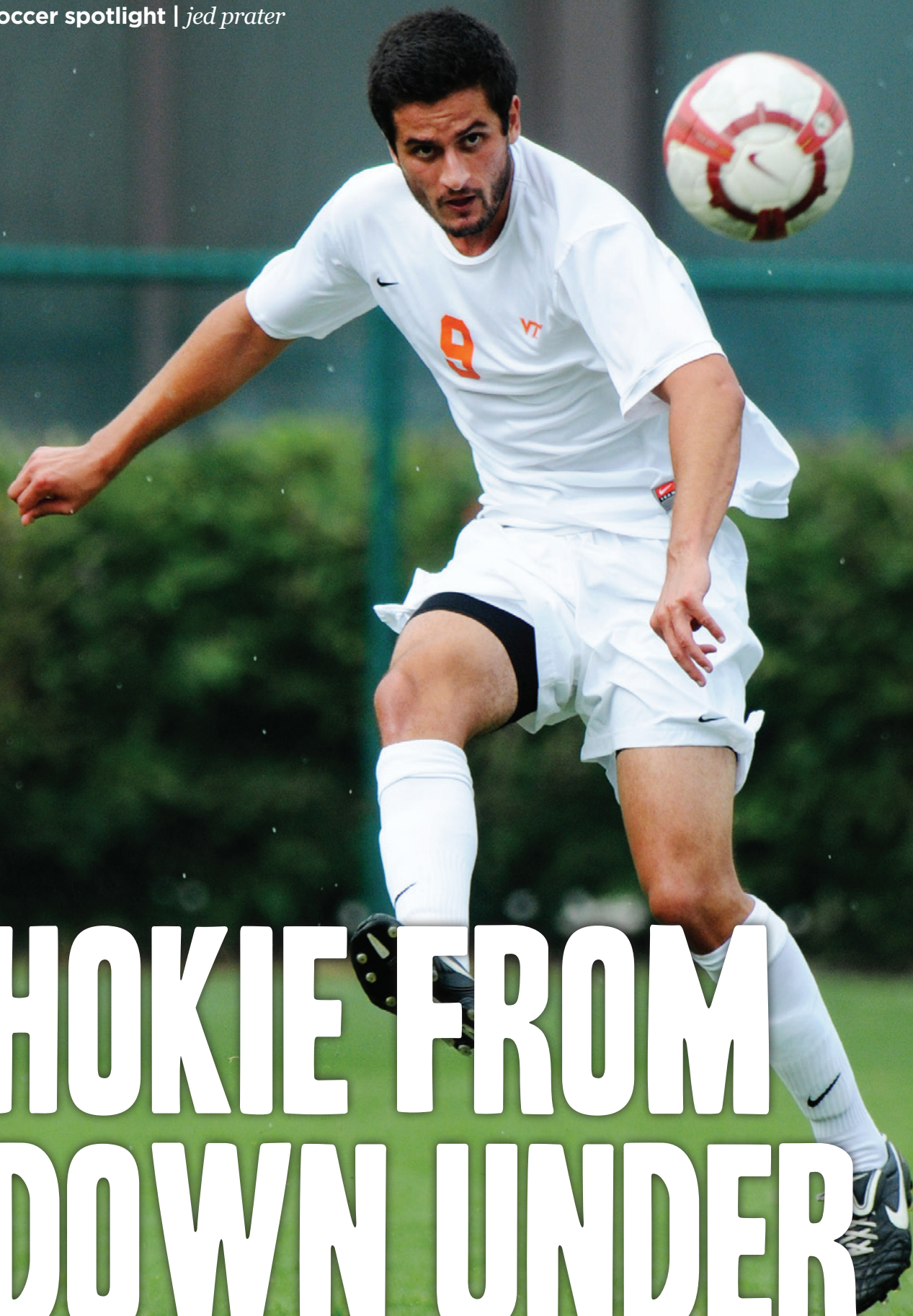
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HOKIE FROM DOWN UNDER

Jed Prater may be from a spot halfway around the world, but he is loving his experiences in the U.S., while also being a leader on the Tech men's soccer team

by Marc Mullen

It's almost 10,000 miles, as the crow flies, from Somersby, Australia, to Blacksburg, Va., which for all intents and purposes, is halfway around the world. The hometown of Virginia Tech men's soccer player Jed Prater sits just off the coast, about a 20-minute drive to the Pacific Ocean and less than an hour north of Sydney, the state capital of New South Wales and the most populous city in Australia.

That may seem like paradise to many, but for Prater, he found himself in a rut. He wanted something new. So at 20 years old, after last sitting in a classroom more than two years before and after never setting foot on American soil prior, he chose to attend Virginia Tech in search of a new challenge.

"I had never come to the United States before, so I never visited the campus," he said. "I got a few references from guys who had played in the States before and the word around was that this was the best choice.

"I had been out of school for two years and sort of living by myself, so it wasn't like I was coming straight out of the parents' bedroom to over here. I was just excited for something new. I know I felt like I was standing still a little bit over there, and I was just wanting to experience something new and it's been a lifetime experience."

At 16, Prater had gone to England, once, for a couple of weeks for a soccer tournament. But he had never really traveled outside the islands of the South Pacific – places like Fiji and New Zealand, where his family went for

family vacations.

He was determined to make a fresh start. He had been playing on a semi-pro club team called Manly United, which practiced three nights a week and played its games on the weekends. The 12-team South Wales Premier League that runs from March through October is the highest state-level men's league and is one step lower than the A-League – or professional league.

So he was still in shape to play, but how did a 20-year-old in Australia get noticed in Blacksburg?

"When I started to look at coming over here to play, I knew a few people who had come over here and done the whole student-athlete thing," Prater said. "There's this agency back in Australia that can get in contact with colleges over here. So I gave them my information and made a video, and they sent it out to different colleges.

"I started getting some offers and emails, and Virginia Tech just sort of stood out. It seemed like a really good program in the ACC, and the coaches were really interested. I'm really happy I chose this place."

Since his arrival, Prater has made the most of his experiences, either playing practical jokes on his teammates or clearing up common misconceptions of Australia, or helping the men's soccer team on field. He has taken advantage of his time in the States.

When most of your new friends only know about your country through popular culture, you can have lots of fun. But getting over the

fallacies can be tiresome.

"First things first, we don't call shrimp 'shrimp.' So the saying 'Shrimp on the barbie,' it's not real. We call them 'prawn,'" Prater said. "We also don't drink Foster's [a brand of beer]. But as far as the beach and the sun and outdoor activities, it's pretty much what everyone thinks.

"I've never seen a shark in my life, so watching 'Shark Week' over here with you guys is pretty entertaining. I know people find it hard to tell the differences between us and the English. We like to consider ourselves pretty far away from the British.

"But it's pretty easy to get away with far-fetched stories. I had a couple of friends come over and visit me for Christmas, and I managed to convince them that, for a couple of months of the year, you could actually walk over to New Zealand, that the tides part and you can walk there. So you can get away with lots of stuff. I also convinced some people that we used to ride kangaroos to school and wrestle sharks and crocodiles, which is not how it is. But we do have a lot of snakes and spiders and Steve Irwin [the late Australian wildlife expert nicknamed "The Crocodile Hunter"] is pretty out there. It's not like that in everyday life, but it's pretty wild."

On the soccer field, Prater has excelled for the Hokies, so much so that, as a sophomore, he was named a team captain, a title he retained for the 2012 season as well. The junior midfielder was also named the team's

Most Valuable Player last year after logging the second-most minutes among all field players.

"At the start of my sophomore year, Fio [David Fiorello] was the only captain, so a few weeks into the season, the coach [Mike Brizendine] said that he wanted me to be a captain as well," Prater said. "I didn't really expect it, but it was a huge honor. I've been a captain a lot growing up through the years, so I felt like I could take that on, and I just like leading the boys. Being older than a lot of the boys, it's sort of good to try and take them under my wing and bring them up. And yeah, I just want to pay it back to the coaching staff for putting that into me, and hopefully I can, and I do like the responsibility."

"Being named MVP [last year], it was a shock. I felt like, personally, it was one of the best seasons I'd ever had, consistency wise, but, I mean, the whole team plays into that. If they're not playing well, then I'm not going to look good. They picked me out. It could have been a number of other players who deserved that award as well."

Working hard on the field and in the classroom hasn't stopped the psychology major from enjoying all that an experience like this can offer. He enjoys traveling to the many destinations that soccer has taken him, places like Maryland, Boston College and North Carolina, but he has also taken time to enjoy places outside of team travel.

"Oh yeah, since I've been here, I've been to Miami and Vegas, so it's great to be able to get out of Virginia and see different parts of the United States," he said. "I'd like to do a little bit more traveling before my time's up, maybe hit the West Coast. But there are so many things to see. I've been thankful enough to get around."

"I went to Miami for spring break two years ago with a few of the boys on the team, and that was a blast. We went down there for a week, and being from the beach, I missed it a lot. The weather was great, and I recommend it to anyone. I want to go back there at some point, for sure."

It hasn't been all joy and happy times since Prater left his homeland to further his education. Tragedy struck this past summer with the unexpected death of his father. Rod Prater was a furniture maker, and with his wife, Odete, ran the business. Jed worked with his dad prior to coming to Tech.

"My dad made big giant tables, and he did that for 15 years," he said. "They ran a shop and have a website. He did all the pieces himself and built it up from scratch. He had a couple of apprentices and tradesmen, and that's what I did out of school. I worked with him and got a feel for it. It is interesting and rewarding, just building amazing dining tables out of a tree, a dead tree."

Prater said he was unsure of when he'd be


back from his father's funeral, so before he left, he and his girlfriend, Katie Wade, a psychology major from Big Stone Gap, Va., made a promise.

"I met her in January, and we just kind of hit it off," Prater said. "I had to go back home for a couple of months, so we exchanged some promise rings. I wasn't sure when I'd be coming back, but things are looking really good, and hopefully, there's a long future with her."

He's already starting a future with Wade, as the pair recently adopted a puppy named Jackson, a black Labrador, Chow-Chow mix. He has also invited Wade to his home for Christmas this year.

"Flights, it's like 24 hours of straight traveling, which I know scares a lot of people off," he said. "But I managed to convince Katie to come over for Christmas. It will be her first summer Christmas in so many years. I know she's excited, and my mom is really happy to meet her."

"I am going to Australia for Christmas, and I couldn't be more excited!" Wade said. "I've never been out of the country, so the 14-hour flight from LA [Los Angeles] to Australia will be interesting."

Prater certainly has experience with that, traveling to a foreign country for the first time. Hopefully, the Hokie from Virginia has been working on her far-fetched stories as well. 



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Zach McGinnis, Greg Mahon, Logan Shinholser, Ryan Hawkins, Sabrina Benson, Kaylea Arnett, Kelli Stockton, Heather Savage, and Logan Kline

TALENT POOL DEEP FOR TECH SWIMMING AND DIVING PROGRAMS

Both the men's and women's teams return a lot of key contributors off squads that finished 18th at the NCAA meet last spring

by **Marc Mullen**

Entering the previous two seasons, there had been a bit of excitement surrounding the Virginia Tech men's and women's swimming and diving programs. Back in 2010, the newly opened Christiansburg Aquatic Center brought the Hokies' a home facility second to none in the ACC, and then last year, the anticipation of holding the ACC championships at the CAC was sheer delight.

So what puts a smile on the face of head coach Ned Skinner, the 2012 ACC Coach of the Year, when looking ahead to the 2012-13 swimming and diving season? The answer is simple – his roster.

"I'd say all the tools are in the toolbox, and it's time to do something with it," Skinner said. "We return the lion's share of our 18th-place team on the women's side and our 18th-place team on the men's side [at the NCAA Championships]. We return nine total NCAA participants. We return the lion's share of our ACC team on the women's side and the men's side. So I feel like this is a year for us to rewrite history."

"We are really excited about what we can accomplish as a team this year. We've set very high goals, and I think with the conference meet being at the new pool in Greensboro, which is right in the back yard of the ACC offices, that is really going to be an exciting venue close by for us. We'd love to see nothing more than this sequence of events over the few years to culminate with a breakthrough for the Hokies."

The men's team, which finished a school-best second at last year's ACC championships, returns four ACC champions, and all four actually took home All-America honors at the national meet as well.

None of those is more decorated than senior diver Logan Shinholser, who came *this close* to taking home all three diving discipline titles at the ACC meet, which has never been done before. He won two of those events and earned All-America honors in all three at the NAAs.

The man who beat him on the platform at the ACC meet was teammate Ryan Hawkins, a junior who added an All-America honor in the platform event. He and Shinholser will be a one-two punch in the diving events all year for the Hokies.

"Logan Shinholser made a true run at an Olympic berth," Skinner said. "He was right there in the hunt in the final and represented himself and the school well at Olympic Trials, but just fell short of making the team."

"We're talking about one of the top divers in the country, and coming off three All-America performances, I would argue the most decorated swimmer or diver, male or female, in our



program's history. And he's an incredible leader. He's what Virginia Tech athletics is all about.

"Ryan Hawkins upended him last year at ACCs on the platform to keep Logan from a clean sweep, and he, too, had a great summer. So these young men are world-class student-athletes."

Tech isn't just a one-trick pony, as all of its swimming events are stacked with quality swimmers, particularly the butterfly events. Senior Greg Mahon leads the squad as the reigning ACC champion in the 100 butterfly, and he earned honorable mention All-America honors in that event as well. He finished third in the 200 butterfly and 200 individual medley at the league meet.

Mahon's teammates were on his heels in the 200 butterfly, as junior Nick Tremols was fourth (and sixth in the 200 IM) and senior Karl Botha was seventh (third in the 100 butterfly).

"Interestingly, butterfly on the men's side has kind of become our signature event," Skinner said. "For example, at the ACCs this past year, we had four men in the championship final in the 200 butterfly and then we had three men in the championship final in the 100 butterfly. The year before that (2011), we had five men in the championship final in the 200 butterfly. We call them the 'Snake Pit,' which is a cool little moniker we've put on them, so they take a lot of pride in the fly. Really, the strokes have become very strong for us."

Senior Zach McGinnis, an honorable mention All-American and ACC champion in the 100 backstroke, leads the backstrokers, while junior Nathan Hoisington came just short of his first individual title with a second-place finish in the 100 breaststroke.

"We have a very strong backstroke crew led by

Zach McGinnis, the defending ACC champion in the 100 back," Skinner said. "Our breaststroke crew is very strong. So we take a lot of pride in the stroke components."

"With the freestyle, and being such an important sequence of events because the majority of events are freestyle events, the addition of Joe Bonk, a freshman who's coming in as one of the top recruits in the country, was a huge get for the Hokies. He's coming off a monstrous summer. So we're really excited about what we can do to bolster our freestyle as well."

On the women's side, leadership is also very abundant in the senior class, with All-Americans Heather Savage and Logan Kline returning. Savage won the 100 butterfly at the ACC meet and finished ninth in the 200 butterfly and 10th in the 100 back, while also being honored as the ACC's Scholar Athlete for the 2011-12 season.

"Heather Savage was the scholar-athlete of the year for ACC swimming, and that's incredible if you really think about that," Skinner said. "Of all the programs out there, for her to be deemed the strongest in the classroom and in the pool is something she and we are very proud of. For 5-foot-2 and a half, she is an absolute swimming, racing machine. She is the most tenacious competitor that I've ever coached. I think she still has more room for improvement. She looks great thus far, and we're so proud of what Heather has meant to this program."

Much like on the men's side, the divers on the women's side are strong and maybe deeper. Kline was second in both the 3-meter and platform events at the ACC meet and finished fourth in 1-meter. Sophomore Kaylea Arnett, a two-time All-American, won the 1-meter event and was third in platform and fifth in 3-meter, while

classmate Kelli Stockton, an honorable mention All-American, finished fifth in the platform.

“Kaylea Arnett is a diving prodigy,” Skinner said. “It’s just always been in her blood. She’s just been successful her whole life in diving. So she is well traveled internationally through the junior national diving circuit. She’s a gritty competitor and has just such a diving mind. She just knows how to get her body right to hit the water. She just has the natural ability to close the dive and still get into the water the right way.”

“Kelli Stockton has blossomed as one of the top tower platform divers in the country, and she is someone that we’d want to keep an eye on as somebody right there in the final at the NCAA Championships vying for a title.”

“Ron [Piemonte, Tech’s diving coach] has just done an outstanding job with our diving program. It’s one of the top three diving programs in the country, and he should be commended for not only developing them as divers, but also into a really fine group of young people.”

Two other returning Hokies to watch for this season will be junior Katarina Filova and sophomore Sabrina Benson. Filova actually didn’t even swim for Tech last year. Instead, she took the year off to train for her home country of Slovakia in preparation for the 2012 Olympics. She qualified and competed in both the 100 and 200 freestyle

events in London.

Benson is the women’s backstroke specialist, earning points in the 100 and 200 events at the ACC meet, while also scoring in the 100 butterfly.

“Katarina Filova returns to the Hokies after taking a year off and realizing her Olympic dream by swimming for Slovakia in the Olympic Games,” Skinner said. “We have two more years of eligibility with her, so it’s great to have Katarina back, and she looks great and is in a really good place.”

“And then, we return Sabrina Benson, who made NAAs as a freshman. She is looking strong, and we bring in a very talented freshman class. We feel like the women’s program can be strong.”

Skinner pointed to a pair of freshmen, both from the state, whom he is hoping will have an immediate impact on his team – Kayla Iverson from Richmond and Gabrielle Bishop, a Suffolk native.

“Kayla Iverson is so gifted and just so natural in the water, and we are really excited about her,” he said. “We worked very hard to get her to come to Virginia Tech. She looks outstanding, and she already put up times as a senior in high school that would make the finals at the ACC meet.”


“Then, out of the Tidewater area is Gabrielle Bishop. She was a state champion and is another swimmer who just has the gift of swimming. It’s like any sport. There are the people who are just

natural at it. And in our sport, it’s very obvious. She’s strong, she’s powerful and flexible, and I think those two freshmen are ones to keep an eye on.”

Adding talent, though, is only part of the equation. Once those prospects get here, they need to train to be competitive at the Division I level, and Tech’s new Olympic Sports Athletic Performance Center will be a huge advantage for the program, according to Skinner.

“The new weight room has really changed things,” he said. “Swimming and diving’s need for the weight room was very high, and you just got to get stronger and bigger and faster. And Terry Mitchell [director of strength and conditioning for olympic sports] has just done a great job of getting us into that weight room and getting our kids to buy into it. I think all this gets the coaches pumped up to see the kids working hard and doing some great things. It makes you want to be a better coach.”

The Hokies open the season on Oct. 20 with the Virginia Tech Swimming Challenge held at the CAC. Gardner-Webb, VMI and Liberty also will be competing in the event.

For the complete schedule, please check: <http://www.hokiesports.com/swimming/schedule.html>. For a complete roster, please check: <http://www.hokiesports.com/swimming/players/>. 

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