

inside

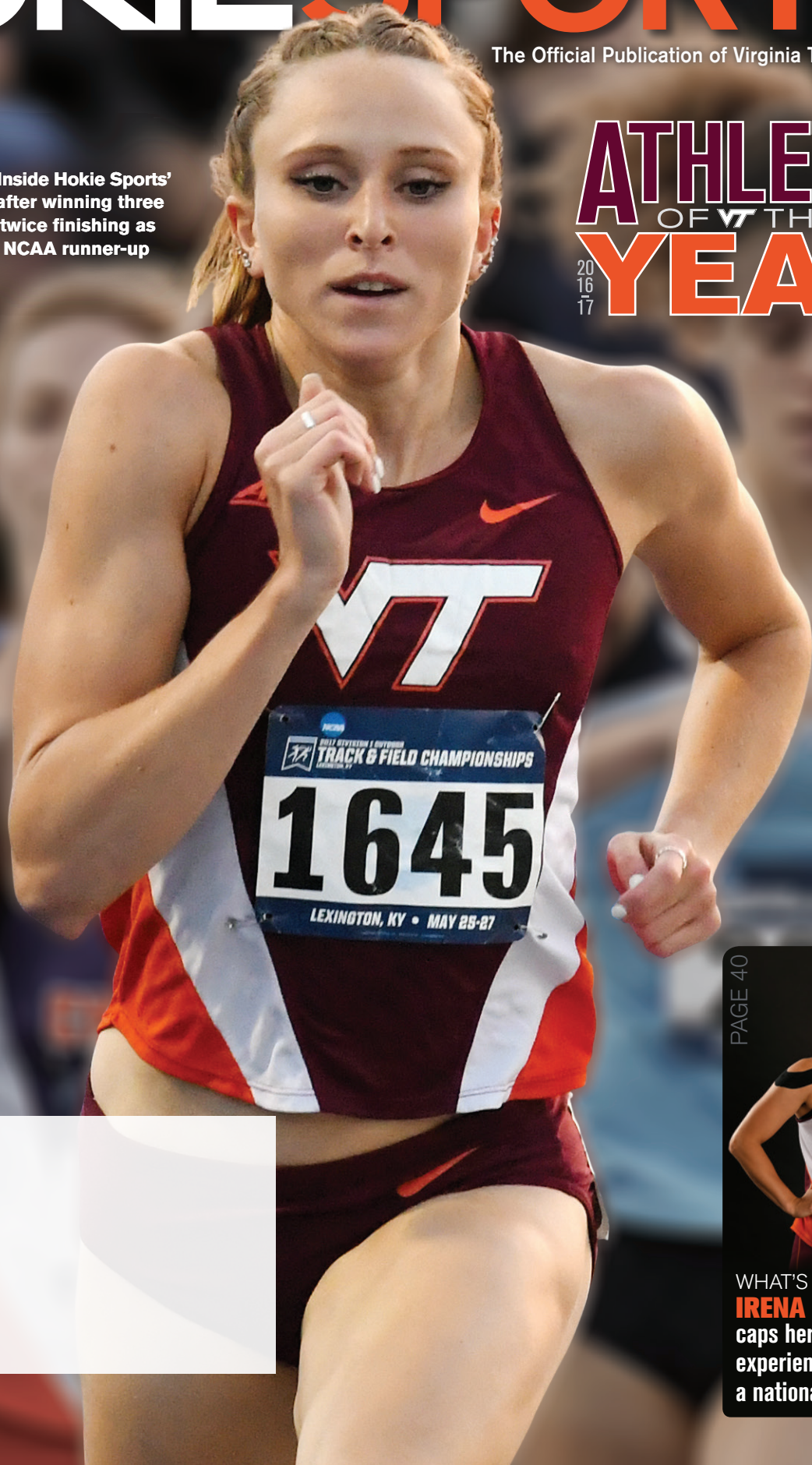
Vol. 9 No. 6, June 2017

HOKIE SPORTS

The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics

Hanna Green is Inside Hokie Sports' Athlete of the Year after winning three ACC gold medals and twice finishing as an NCAA runner-up

ATHLETE
OF **VT** THE
YEAR
20
16
17



PAGE 40

WHAT'S INSIDE:
IRENA SEDIVA
caps her Virginia Tech
experience by winning
a national title

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John Malone
VT Alum, BSEE - 1983



"Our hotel-condo is something our entire family can enjoy for decades to come."

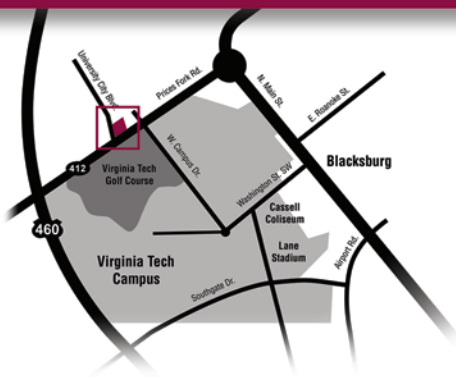
The Place Owner
Marty Johnson



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

The Place Owner
Ernita Thomas
VT Alum, BS in Accounting - 1991

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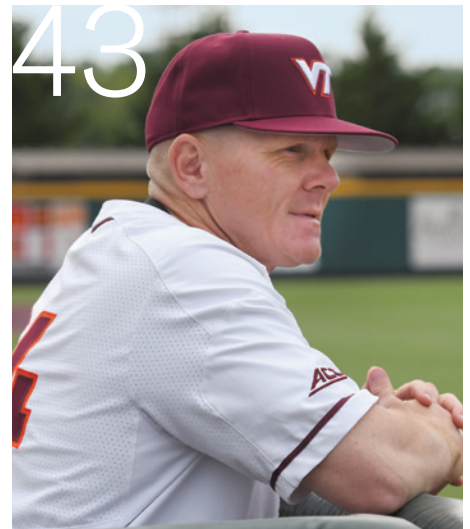
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HOKIES' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2016-17

VIRGINIA TECH'S success on the field, on the courts, on the mats and on the track has been well documented over the years, but the school's student-athletes also are getting it done in the classroom. These two pages have been dedicated to the Hokies' great work academically in 2016-17, much of which can be attributed to their hard work, to the dedication of the coaching staffs and the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services office and to the contributions of donors, who give the athletics department the resources needed to help these student-athletes be successful in all phases. (*Disclaimer: most academic honors for spring sports have not been announced yet.*)

SKELTON AWARD FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

(A \$5,000 scholarship given to a chosen Virginia Tech junior, senior or fifth-year male and female student-athlete who has participated in intercollegiate athletics for at least two seasons at Tech and holds an overall grade-point average of 3.40 or better.)

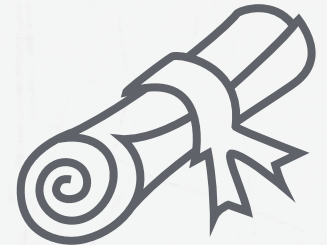
Eric Gallo, football
Elizabeth Bose, women's golf



ACC SCHOLAR-ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

(The ACC Scholar-Athlete of the Year awards were established in September of 2007 to be awarded annually to the top junior or senior student-athletes in his/her sports. Candidates for the awards must have maintained a 3.0 grade-point average for their careers, as well as a 3.0 grade-point average for the past two semesters.)

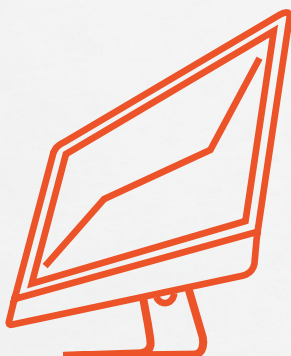
Torben Laidig, men's indoor track and field
Hanna Green, women's indoor track and field
Jared Haught, wrestling



WEAVER-JAMES-CORRIGAN AWARD

(A \$5,000 postgraduate scholarship from the ACC to those who intend to pursue a graduate degree following completion of their undergraduate requirements.)

- **Caroline Buscaglia** (women's swimming and diving)—graduated with degrees in political science and psychology and plans to work at the state or federal government level for a year before attending law school.
- **Marie Johnston** (women's soccer) – graduated with a degree in human nutrition, foods and exercise and will be attending the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine this fall on her way toward becoming a doctor of osteopathic medicine.
- **Lindsey Owens** (volleyball) – graduated with a degree in biological sciences and is applying to veterinary schools, with the goal of working with exotic animals.



CAPITAL ONE ACADEMIC ALL-DISTRICT III SELECTIONS

(An award that recognizes the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances athletically and in the classroom.)

Murielle Tiernan, women's soccer
Elizabeth Bose, women's golf



ALL-ACC ACADEMIC TEAMS

(A student-athlete must have earned a 3.0 grade-point average for the previous semester and maintained a 3.0 cumulative grade-point average during his/her academic career to be eligible for selection. The spring sports teams haven't been announced yet.)

Basketball

Men

Justin Robinson (communications)

Women

Vanessa Panousis (human development)
Samantha Hill (human nutrition, foods and exercise)
Regan Magarity (communications)

Cross country

Men

Andrew Gaiser (mechanical engineering)
Daniel Jaskowak (human nutrition, foods and exercise)
Vincent Ciattei (engineering science and math)
Brent Musselman (human nutrition, foods and exercise)
Diego Zarate (criminology)
Jack Joyce (economics)

Women

Katie Kennedy (public relations)
Abigail Motley (international studies)

Football

Chuck Clark (human development)
Tremaine Edmunds (communications)
Brandon Facyson (biology)
Eric Gallo (finance)
Sam Rogers (human nutrition, foods and exercise)

Soccer

Women

Murielle Tiernan (residential environments and design)
Candace Cephers (biology)

Swimming and diving

Men

Brandon Fiala (finance)
Ian Ho (mechanical engineering)
Ben Schiesl (business)
Mauro Castro-Silva (marketing)

Women

Caroline Buscaglia (political science)
Maggie Gruber (business information technology)
Jessica Hespeler (human nutrition, foods and exercise)
Ashlynn Peters (business)

Indoor track and field

Men

Kevin Cianfarini (computer science)
Vincent Ciattei (engineering science and math)
Daniel Jaskowak (human nutrition, foods and exercise)
Torben Laidig (biochemistry and biology)
Mackenzie Muldoon (human nutrition, foods and exercise)
Drew Piazza (civil engineering)
James Steck (creative writing and literature)
Peter Seufer (economics)
Diego Zarate (criminology)

Women

Courtney Blanden (business information technology)
Hanna Green (interior design)

Volleyball

Lindsey Owens (biological sciences)
Rhegan Mitchell (human nutrition, foods and exercise)

Wrestling

Jared Haught (mechanical engineering)
Solomon Chishko (packaging systems design)
Zach Epperly (real estate)
Zack Zavatsky (packaging systems design)



NCAA PUBLIC RECOGNITION AWARDS

(An award that goes annually to the sports programs with an Academic Progress Rate in the top 10 percent nationally of that particular sport.)

Men's golf

Women's tennis

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

- 285 of 532 student-athletes maintain a cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 or better
- 174 student-athletes made the Dean's List (3.40 or better) following the spring semester
- 38 student-athletes earned a 4.0 GPA this semester
- 5 student athletes maintain a cumulative GPA of 4.0
- The cumulative GPA of Tech's student-athletes is 3.03
- 16 Tech teams maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or better





The Donor File

Jim Youngblood

HOKIE CLUB LEVEL: Orange & Maroon Benefactor

CURRENTLY RESIDES: Forest, Virginia

GRADUATION YEAR: 1977

FAMILY: Melinda (wife)



Q&A

Q. A Hokie is ...

A: H~appy, O~ptimistic, K~ind, I~nnovative, and E~nergized.

Q. The Hokie Nation is real because ...

A: even during a raging hurricane, Lane Stadium will be packed with boisterous, passionate fans.

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

A: The night Virginia Tech completed a perfect 11-0 season over Boston College in 1999, with 60,000-plus Hokies rocking Lane Stadium with a rousing rendition of "We Are The Champions!" What an awesome, unforgettable experience!

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

A: When I moved to Lynchburg in the mid-1980s, some guy named Dodd "Hollywood" Harvey invited me to a spring gathering.

Q. What caused you to become a fan of Virginia Tech?

A: Watching Glen Combs in 1967 and Don Strock in 1972 sold me on Virginia Tech sports.

Q. Describe your perfect day at Virginia Tech.

A: An October Thursday night game, brilliant autumn foliage, tailgating and fellowship, and sharing a thrilling evening in Lane with friends and thousands of Hokies.

Q. What motivates you to give back to help Virginia Tech athletics?

A: Growing up in rural Carroll County, I was very fortunate that Virginia Tech gave me a chance to pursue my dream career of investing in forest resources, and I will be forever grateful.


Q. I'm a Hokie Club member because ...

A: I hope to fulfill the mission of *Ut Prosim* ("That I May Serve") and do my best enabling youth to discover their dreams, too.

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

A: Michael Vick. His exceptional talent created huge excitement. Only one thing was slightly faster, and for a moment, generated more electricity around Lane than Michael Vick — that lightning bolt zapping Lee Corso's car.

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

A: 1973 NIT captain Allan Bristow, with Bobby Stevens, Charlie Thomas, Craig Lieder, Ed Frazier, Calvin Wade, Dave Sensabaugh, etc. Four wins by five points — what a tournament and what a team! 



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Beamer on College Football Hall of Fame ballot

The National Football Foundation (NFF) and College Hall of Fame announced June 1 that longtime Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer is among six FBS coaches on the 2018 ballot for induction into the College Football Hall of Fame.

The announcement of the 2018 class will be made Jan. 8, 2018, in Atlanta. The city is serving as the host for the College Football Playoff National Championship, which will be played later that same day at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. The 2018 class officially will be inducted during the 61st NFF Annual Awards Dinner on Dec. 4, 2018, at the New York Hilton Midtown.

Prior to his retirement in 2015, Beamer was the winningest active coach in FBS history at the time of his retirement, having tallied an impressive career record of 238-121-2 at Virginia Tech. Under Beamer, Virginia Tech football enjoyed unprecedented success, with 23 consecutive bowl appearances, a mark that the Hokies extended to 24 straight under head coach Justin Fuente in 2016.

Beamer guided his alma mater to four Atlantic Coast Conference championships, five ACC Coastal Division crowns, three BIG EAST Conference titles, six BCS appearances, two “major” bowl victories and a trip to the national championship game in 2000. Including his tenure at Murray State from 1981-86, he finished his illustrious career with 280 head coaching victories.

A three-time BIG EAST Coach of the Year (1995, 1996, 1999), Beamer earned ACC Coach of the Year honors in 2004 and 2005. He was the consensus national Coach of the Year in 1999.

Beamer continues to serve Virginia Tech as an ambassador for athletics and the spokesperson for the Drive for 25 campaign that seeks to increase membership into the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund (aka the “Hokie Club”) to 25,000 members.

Hokies to play Iowa in the men’s basketball ACC-Big Ten Challenge

The ACC, Big Ten and ESPN announced the matchups for the 2017 ACC-Big Ten Challenge played in November, and Virginia Tech will face Iowa at Virginia Tech Carilion Court. The Hokies played Iowa in the 2012 Challenge, a game in which Iowa won 95-79. Last year, Tech knocked off Michigan 73-70 in Ann Arbor, Michigan, recording its fourth win in the Challenge.

The Hokies finished the 2016-17 season with a 22-11 overall record and a 10-8 record in ACC play, and they earned their first NCAA Tournament berth since 2007.


ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPNU will combine to televise all 14 games of the ACC-Big Ten Challenge, matching top college basketball programs playing for conference supremacy and the Commissioner’s Cup. All games also will be available to stream via the ESPN app.

Football program announces incoming transfers

The Virginia Tech football program is adding two transfers, as the program announced the additions of receivers James Clark and Damon Hazelton to the team.

Clark, a 5-foot-10, 186-pounder who graduated this past May from Ohio State, is eligible to play this upcoming season. At Ohio State, he played in 28 career games, including all 13 this past season when he caught six passes for 47 yards. Also a track standout, the New Smyrna Beach, Florida native participated in the recently concluded NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships as a part of the Buckeyes’ 4x100-meter relay team. During the indoor season, he came in ninth in the 60-meter dash at the Big Ten Championships, running the event in a time of 6.87 seconds.

Hazelton comes to Tech from Ball State and must sit out the upcoming season. He’ll have three years of eligibility remaining beginning in 2018.

The 6-2, 207-pound Baltimore native started seven games as a freshman for Ball State and caught 51 passes for 505 yards and a team-high four touchdowns. His best game came against Toledo when he caught 12 passes for 102 yards. 



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EDITORS DESK by Jimmy Robertson

Green quietly becomes standard-bearer of Tech women's distance running

Most student-athletes accumulate enough awards throughout their careers to put on a shelf in their future homes.

A shelf, though, won't do for Hanna Green. Fortunately for her, she graduated with a degree in interior design, so she possesses the necessary skills to draft plans for a rather large room in her future home to hold all of her plaques, trophies and certificates.

Many have heard of Green, but few actually know this unassuming, hard-working Virginia Tech track and field athlete from Pennsylvania. Tech fans understandably immerse themselves in football and basketball and other higher profile sports, and yet by doing so, miss out on the accomplishments of those such as Green, a young woman who just completed a phenomenal career.

"She's definitely the best distance runner in our history," Tech distance coach Ben Thomas agreed.

Thomas, who just finished his 16th season as Tech's distance coach, certainly has the necessary perspective to make such a deduction. He coached Green for the past four seasons and watched as she went from unheralded recruit to standard-bearer of Tech distance running.

Green, named Inside Hokie Sports' Athlete of the Year in this issue, ran her last collegiate race at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships during the second week of June and finished second in the 800-meter run. She accomplished nearly everything that an athlete can accomplish in a career, with the exception of winning an elusive national title. She finished as a runner-up on three occasions.

"I'm pretty happy," Green said shortly after

the race. "The NCAA title is something I've always wanted, but I really can't complain about how it's [her career] gone. I'm just happy to have had the chance to be here and run at the NCAA Championships."

Despite the disappointment, Green was still a first-team All-American for the fifth time in her career. She earned six All-America honors in all—the second-most in program history behind Olympic bronze medalist Kristi Castlin. She earned an All-America honor in each of her four years.

Somewhat surprising, Green arrived at Tech with little fanfare. She never won a state championship at Greater Latrobe High. Her times were somewhat ordinary, as she recorded a top 800 time of 2 minutes, 16 seconds. She lacked experience in longer distances, though she did run cross country.

Yet her blue-collar mentality fit in perfectly within the Virginia Tech Athletics Department's culture. Some athletes love their sports. Others love to win. The truly great ones love both and welcome the effort that it takes to transcend their respective sports.

Corey Moore, Queen Harrison, Angela Tincher, Devin Carter, Erick Green, Tommy Curtin, Jazmine Reeves—they all fit in this exclusive category. It's time to add Green's name to that list.

"She wasn't afraid to do the work," Thomas said. "A lot of 800 runners ... they're afraid to do some of the longer-distance work, do some of the cross country stuff, afraid to do the 1,500, and she's been willing to follow the plan and do the work. She made it her strength."

Green holds or share five school records and

departs with six ACC gold medals, including two that she won at the ACC's outdoor meet when she doubled up and ran both the 800 and the 1,500. Tech needed all her points, as the Hokies claimed the team title by just six points.

She has a lot to be proud of—but her proudest day came that evening in Atlanta when Tech clinched its first ACC women's track crown in nine years.

"That's something that meant the most to me since being at Tech—winning an ACC championship as a team," she said. "I was willing to do whatever it took to help us get there."


Her incredible career now has come to an end. Those privileged to watch those long, loping strides of hers now must wait to see where a career in professional running takes her.

It's a career that she always wanted—and never expected.

"I honestly didn't expect to make the national championships," she said. "Just running like a 2:04 [in the 800] my freshman year was a huge shock. Being able to do that coming out of high school with a really slow 800 time has really been an awesome experience."

"I really don't have any complaints other than it would have been nice to have a national championship, but I'm still pretty happy with it."

She should be. She brought unprecedented attention to Tech's track and field program, and she won a boatload of honors while doing so.

Actually, she won a houseful of them. And when she hangs up her sneakers for good, she should have fun designing that room to display all of them. 





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Year Two in Review

I used to take a fairly simplistic approach toward reviewing a season. What worked? What didn't? What needs to change? What should stay the same? All valid questions, but the older I get, the more I find myself adding to that list of questions. What did I learn? Did I grow personally? Did I get better? That last one I stole from a certain basketball coach who, I stand fairly certain, asks similar questions of himself and those around him.

My greatest blessing is to be around people who challenge me and help me learn. Justin Fuente and Buzz Williams, two unique leaders, each provide me with that opportunity. Sometimes directly, sometimes forcing me to interpret, but they both provide consistent wisdom and direction.

I find it difficult to summarize all the experiences of the past year, so I want to illustrate the over-arching theme in a couple of stories that stuck with me and resonated for the duration of the past 365 days.

At this time last year, I had only passing interaction with Fuente. He found himself experiencing the blender effect that I experienced a year earlier. From what I knew, I felt fairly certain of his understanding in our desire to expand our efforts and access, but until you experience a person in an adverse situation, you find it hard to say with certainty of their reactions.

I went into the season with a touch of that uncertainty. However, I got all the

answers I needed following the Hokies' loss to Tennessee. It had been a trying week. Bristol Motor Speedway officials pulled off a phenomenal job with the event, but it came with strain. We experienced technical and logistical challenges. For Fuente and his staff, the challenges went immensely beyond that, not the least of which was the national spotlight shining down on a developing team.

Thus, there seemed to be an added layer of fatigue beyond the normal after the game. Fuente speaks with the media from the podium first, and then joins Mike Burnop on the radio side before going with me to film television segments. While walking with him to the radio location, I felt he was a man about to burst from internal frustration. However, he remained stoic during the first two phases of his media obligations.

But I was apprehensive, as Fuente and I rode in a golf cart to the other end of the field where our camera crew waited. It started raining, both actual precipitation and confetti from the Tennessee celebration. I found out quickly that I shouldn't have been worried.

When we arrived at our camera position, our longtime producer, Tim Wright, said, "I'm sorry about this rain, Coach."

Fuente politely responded, "I don't see how that is your fault."

"Well, I'm sorry about the game also," Wright added.

A wry smile appeared on Fuente's face and

then he said something that stuck with me all throughout the season.

"I think that's even less your fault," he said.

The exchange was brief, but told me everything I needed to know about what to expect going forward—grace. We knocked out that interview and then experienced just about every emotion in the weeks to follow.

We pushed through a wind tunnel to film the interview at the Carrier Dome and shivered in short sleeves on the field at Lane Stadium a few weeks later. Then there were two of my coolest sports experiences—being close by Fuente at Kenan Stadium in Chapel Hill, North Carolina while he celebrated with members of Hokie Nation and doing the same at Notre Dame Stadium.

There is a freeing feeling when you know what to expect from somebody, and after Bristol, I never worried again about our postgame interviews. That remained true through frustration in Orlando, Florida and elation in Charlotte, North Carolina. I learned a lot about consistency from Fuente during his first season and remain grateful for it.

As for Williams, he has been pushing me from the moment I met him during the interview process for my current role. Entry into his basketball family isn't easily gained, and going into year No. 2, I desperately wanted to continue working toward it.

I wrote previously about the trip that Burnop and I made to Anaheim, California

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for the superficial purpose of calling one of the games the Hokies played in the Wooden Legacy Tournament. Of course, we really just wanted to show Williams that we, too, believed in being all in when it came to the family.

When we met the team at the hotel, and Williams saw Burnop and me for the first time, he joked to the players, “Guys, those are our radio guys. They show up when their schedule allows.” He laughed and playfully slapped my shoulder on his way out to practice, expressing his happiness at seeing us. I truly love being around the members of the basketball family. I thought I had been emotionally invested in a team in past seasons, but I learned of another level to that in my second season at Tech.

During my first season, I started to attend more practices to gain more insight for my interviews with Williams. At times, I didn’t notice the evolution of this in myself. At some point during my first season, I started to participate in the pregame prayer walk across the floor, playful birthday traditions and family barbecues. That expanded this year, and at one point, I even sought Corey Williams’ advice on the engagement ring I wanted to purchase.

In year No. 2, I took many steps toward truly understanding what it meant to be a part of something that I view to be important. The wins and losses obviously affect things, but the maturation of the process began to become evident to me. Quite frankly, it was awesome.

One moment stood out to me above all the others. And yes, Seth Allen’s late-game heroics, London Perrantes’ shot attempt resting on the flange of the basket, and the goose bumps I routinely get late in games all resonated. However, a two-second exchange after the Hokies’ elimination from the NCAA Tournament by Wisconsin lingers most prominently.



Virginia Tech men’s basketball coach Buzz Williams and radio voice Jon Laaser discussed a game that wasn’t as important as their impact on the “Buzz’s Bunch” kids who were in attendance that day.


There is always sadness when any season ends. The knowledge that this exact group of people won’t remain the same hangs in the air for a while. I pondered the departures of the seniors while riding the bus back to the hotel, but the sadness dissipated when we arrived.

Williams waited in the doorway, giving a two-armed hug to every person who got off the bus, including me. It said everything without saying a single word. He appreciated the journey—and my very small role in it. That makes the summer months feel even longer because I can’t wait to get back to the work. The gesture took me all the way back to Thanksgiving, and for some reason, validated the decision to make that trip across the country and every event in between. I realized that I had learned a lot about commitment. I thank Williams and his family for that.

So a summary of year No. 2: I am a year smoke free and continue to work on shaking soda as well. I took the leap and will be married next May. I feel firmly entrenched in Blacksburg and comfortable in my surroundings. Most importantly, I gear up for year No. 3, knowing that I get to work with two programs led by men whom I consider mentors.

My fiancée, Renée, recently looked at me while we were driving back into Blacksburg from a road trip and said, “You know, our lives are pretty cool.” She was right. Year No. 2 for me only drove that point home. Thanks to all who played a part in it.

Now back into the lab to see how we can get better for year No. 3. I hope you are ready for the ride and enjoy the results.

Have a great summer, Hokies! 



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Keeping up with Compliance

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

Q: I saw where Michigan held part of its spring practice in Rome. I'm guessing that's legal, right? I'd like to see Coach Fuente and the Hokies try something like that. That would be a huge selling point for recruiting. Cheers, Bubba in New Castle.

TP: "Well, neither Coach Fuente and the Hokies, nor any other Power 5 school will be doing this any time soon. The autonomy conferences passed legislation at the NCAA Convention in January that prohibits off-campus practice during a vacation period outside of the championship season. The amended legislation, viewed by many as a rebuke of Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh and his unconventional recruiting tactics, was defeated 58-20, and was actually part of a package of amendments designed to provide more time off for Division I athletes, many of whom want their school vacations to be actual vacations. This rule also goes into effect Aug. 1."

Q: It's time for your obligatory North Carolina question. You get that one in every issue. It even has its own Wikipedia page. Looks like they're doubling down,


according to recent reports. What say you? Thanks, Marc in Christiansburg.

TP: "For those unfamiliar with the case, the North Carolina Athletics Department is facing accusations of five serious violations, including lack of institutional control over athletics and offering impermissible benefits by giving athletes special access to the 'bogus classes.' North Carolina's 90-day deadline to respond to the latest notice of allegations passed in mid-March, but according to reports, the school and the NCAA Committee on Infractions were in consultations."

"Then reports came out in late May that officials at North Carolina were countering the allegations by challenging the NCAA's jurisdiction in the case and by disputing the number of athletes who enrolled in those classes. North Carolina officials believe that NCAA bylaws cover athletics matters — not how academics are managed. They cited independent study controversies at Auburn and Michigan that drew little or no action from the NCAA as the foundation of their argument."

"SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey, the Infractions Committee chairman, wants to have the infractions hearing in August. Given the nature of the case, the many amended notices, and the changing levels of responsiveness from pivotal witnesses, it remains difficult to say when the case will actually come to a conclusion."

Q: Just how big is the NCAA rules manual? I've read that it's nearly 500 pages, but can't seem to find a copy online to verify this. That seems like a lot of rules to follow. Thanks for all you do! Pam in Christiansburg.

TP: "Good question. The NCAA Division I Manual for the 2016-17 year consists of 414 pages. That includes everything—table of contents, index, rules, etc. That's actually smaller than in previous years. I can remember the manual being as many as 450 pages, but the organization's recent reforms have given more autonomy to the conferences/schools, and between that and some deregulation efforts earlier in the decade, the manual is slightly more streamlined than before." 



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SEDIVA WINS NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP AGAIN

Irena Sediva won her second gold medal at the NCAA Championships, and Hanna Green claimed a silver to lift the Tech women's track and field program to its second-best finish ever at the NCAA's outdoor meet
by Jimmy Robertson

Intermittent showers, gusty winds and chilly temperatures did not make for ideal track and field conditions, but seniors competing in their final collegiate meet usually refuse to let the elements dictate their results.

Irena Sediva and Hanna Green shrugged off the weather and the competition, capturing gold and silver medals, respectively, to highlight the Virginia Tech men's and women's track and field performances at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships held June 6-10 in Eugene, Oregon.

Behind Sediva, Green and a point from Emma Thor, the Virginia Tech women's team finished 11th with 19 points—the program's second-best outdoor finish and its best outdoor finish since 2010.

"I'm very happy with how the women's program has come back and established itself at a much higher level," said Dave Cianelli, Tech's director of track and field and cross country. "This is something we've worked for the last two or three years. It's not like this was an overnight process. The coaches and I sat down a couple years ago and put together a plan to get our women's program up to the point where we could compete for an ACC title and be in the top 10 at the national championships.

"Now, we want to maintain that, but yes, this is very gratifying that the women have reached this level. It's been a while since we've been at this level nationally, and it had been nine years since we had won a conference championship."

On the men's side, runners Neil Gourley and Drew Piazza and thrower Marek Barta combined to score nine points. The Hokies finished in 32nd place.

Overall, the programs combined to send a school-record 21 athletes to the NCAA Championships. Eighteen of those competed, with 12 of them earning All-America honors, including six who earned first-team All-America recognition by finishing in the top eight of their respective events.

Sediva's performance in the women's javelin throw headlined the group. The senior from Pribram, Czech Republic won her second national championship—she claimed the title in 2015—after rallying despite trailing for nearly the entire competition. On her fifth throw (out of six), she launched the javelin 58.76 meters (192 feet, 9 inches) to pull ahead of Florida's Marija Vucenovic, who also made her best throw on her fifth attempt, though hers only went 58.58 meters (192 feet, 2 inches). Vucenovic then couldn't get past Sediva on her final attempt, throwing it just 55.80 meters (183 feet, 1 inch) and thus enabling Sediva to win the crown.

Following the win, Sediva and a couple of teammates grabbed a Virginia Tech flag and took a victory lap around the track.

"It makes me happy, but it makes me happy mostly because of the people behind the scenes," Sediva said. "That's definitely the feeling. I was just thinking that this [the victory lap] should be the way to say thank you for all the time, money and patience and everything that those people invested in me.

"It means a lot. It's like redemption for me. Last year, it was painful not being able to be here [because of an Achilles injury]. I think I couldn't imagine leaving this school without winning it."

Despite dealing with shoulder issues this spring, Sediva managed the pain and a limited

practice schedule, and she won the Tech track and field program's 16th individual national championship. She became just the second woman in Tech's track and field history to win at least two national titles, joining Queen Harrison, who won three during her senior season in 2010.

The national title also marked the 13th for Greg Jack, Tech's associate head coach and throws coach.

"Absolutely," Jack said when asked if he had confidence that Sediva could pull ahead late in the competition. "The last time she won the national championship, she won it on her last throw. This is not new territory at all for her. She's one of the best competitors we've ever had in Virginia Tech track and field."

The same could be said of Green, the Hokies' specialist in the 800-meter run. The senior from Latrobe, Pennsylvania, stayed with a small cluster of runners at the front of the pack for the entire race. Oregon's Raevyn Rogers started pulling away in the final 200 meters, but Green passed BYU's Shea Hollingsworth in the final turn and then held off Oregon's Brooke Feldmeier, coming in second with a time of 2 minutes, 1.32 seconds—just missing her school record by 15-hundredths of a second.

Rogers won the gold medal with a time of 2:00.02. Green finished as a runner-up to Rogers on three occasions during her career.

"I'm pretty happy," Green said. "The NCAA title is something I've always wanted, but I really can't complain about how it's [her career] gone. I'm just happy to have had the chance to be here and run at the NCAA Championships."

"You know, Hanna Green was never a state champion in high school," Tech distance coach

Ben Thomas said. “She was a 2:16 half-miler. To come from that and be a three-time NCAA runner-up ... that’s pretty amazing. That just doesn’t happen. But she just never beats herself, and that started early on. She’s just a rare talent mentally and physically, and we’re going to miss her.”

Thor, a freshman from Knivsta, Sweden, scored the other point for the women’s team. She earned first-team All-America honors after finishing eighth in the hammer throw in her first NCAA Championships. She led after flight No. 1 with a throw of 64.19 meters (210 feet, 7 inches) and qualified for the finals. That throw turned out to be the best of the six, and she wound up eighth.

On the men’s side, Gourley came in fifth in the 1,500 with a time of 3:44.39. He trailed early in the race, and despite dodging a runner who fell, rallied on the final lap. He earned first-team All-America honors during the outdoor season for the first time in his career.

Piazza encountered a similar situation in the men’s 800. The senior from Danvers, Massachusetts held the lead early in the race and was in position toward the end to challenge for a title, but a runner fell in front of him and another runner grabbed him to keep from falling. As a result, Piazza came in sixth with a time of 1:47.58.

“We purposely went to the front to try and avoid trouble,” Thomas said. “A guy ran up on his [Piazza’s] inside and another guy ran on his outside, and then he had his jersey pulled. He just didn’t get a clean run. It would have been nice to see a cleaner race, but he still got sixth—his second straight All-America performance.”

Barta accounted for the other two points, finishing seventh in the men’s discus with a top throw of 58.99 meters (193 feet, 6 inches). Barta — who had two chances to improve on that mark, but faulted on both attempts — earned first-team All-America honors for the second straight season. A year ago, he was third in the event at this same meet.

Those earning second-team All-America honors on the women’s side included Pavla Kuklova, who came in ninth in the hammer throw with a personal-best toss of 63.45 meters (208 feet, 2 inches), and Sarah Edwards, who finished 10th in the women’s 3,000-meter steeplechase with a time of 10:12.45.


On the men’s side, those earning second-team All-America honors included distance runners Vincent Ciattei (ninth, 1,500), Patrick Joseph (12th, 800) and Peter Seufer (ninth, 5,000), along with pole vaulter Brad Johnson, who finished tied for 16th.

The NCAA Championships concluded an outstanding season for both Tech track and field programs. The men won both the ACC’s indoor and outdoor titles, and the women took home the outdoor crown and captured a top-15 finish at the NCAA outdoor meet in what arguably turned out to be the best season of Cianelli’s 16-year tenure in Blacksburg.

“Each year has its own challenges and rewards,” Cianelli said. “But the thing that

Virginia Tech’s Neil Gourley (bottom) and Emma Thor (top) earned first-team All-America honors at the NCAA Championships after finishing in the top eight of their respective events.

stood out about this year was that we were able to not just maintain the men at a high level and keep them progressing, but also to really get the women and execute the women’s plan and see it come together.

“All of that, and just watching how our kids battled and performed, was really satisfying. Certainly, this year ranks right up there as the most satisfying I’ve had as a coach.” 



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TECH'S TOP 10 OF 2016-17

Here are the top-10 moments of the 2016-17 academic year as compiled by the magazine staff, with help from several in the strategic communications office by Jimmy Robertson

Belk Bowl rally one for the ages

The Hokies trailed Arkansas 24-0 at halftime of the Belk Bowl on Dec. 29 of last year, but put on a stunning display in the second half, scoring 35 unanswered points to win their 10th game and their third straight bowl game. Jerod Evans accounted for 330 yards and four second-half touchdowns (two rushing), and Tech's defense forced four second-half turnovers in a rally that was believed to be the largest in school history. The Hokies finished the season ranked No. 16 in both major polls.

Sediva wins another national title

Tech track and field standout Irena Sediva won her second national championship when she claimed the crown in the women's javelin throw at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. Sediva, who also won the event in 2015, trailed for much of the competition, but took the lead on her fifth of six throws with a toss of 58.76 meters (192 feet, 9 inches). She held on to win the program's 16th individual national title and became the second woman in Tech track and field history to win at least two national titles, joining Queen Harrison, who won three in 2010.

Track and field program's ACC outdoor double

The Tech men's and women's track and field teams both trailed heading into the final events of the ACC Outdoor Track and Field Championships held in Atlanta, but both teams amassed enough points in the 4x400-

meter relay to win the team titles. The Tech men edged rival UVA by a single point, while the Tech women slipped past Florida State by six points. Hanna Green's two gold medals led the women's team, which also got gold medals from Irena Sediva and Sarah Edwards. Neil Gourley, Drew Piazza and Peter Seuffer won gold for the men. For the first time, both teams won the same ACC meet.

Allen's layup carries Tech to double OT win over then-No. 12 UVA

Seth Allen scored on a layup with 3 seconds left in the second overtime to carry the Virginia Tech men's basketball team to an 80-78 win over rival UVA at Virginia Tech Carillon Court. The Hokies rallied past the then-No. 12 Cavaliers, who led by 14 at halftime, behind Allen, who scored 20 points. Justin Bibbs added 16 for Tech, which beat UVA at Cassell Coliseum for the second straight season.

Loscalzo, McGinley carry Hokies lacrosse to ACC upset

Behind Kristine Loscalzo and Tristan McGinley, the Virginia Tech women's lacrosse team knocked off then-No. 17 and NCAA runner-up Boston College 18-12 on Feb. 18 at the Tech Indoor Practice Facility. Loscalzo and McGinley scored four goals each, as Tech registered its first ACC win in four years and snapped a 27-game ACC losing streak. The game served as a harbinger of things to come, as first-year head coach John Sung guided the team to 11 victories—tying for the most in program history.

White's goal lifts men's soccer to Elite Eight

Forrest White's only goal of the season came at a perfect time, as he scored in overtime to lift the Virginia Tech men's soccer team to a 2-1 road upset of Indiana that carried the Hokies into the Elite Eight of the NCAA tournament. The goal set off a wild celebration among the Hokies, who were playing in the postseason for the first time in nine years. They also made it to the Elite Eight for the first time since the 2007 team advanced to the College Cup, and they finished the season with a 13-5-4 record.

Tech wrestlers roll to ACC team title

The ACC Wrestling Championship figured to be a dual meet between NC State and the Hokies, but that never materialized, as Virginia Tech won six individual weight classes and dominated en route to its third ACC tournament title since joining the league. The Hokies scored 93 points, and their 29-point margin of victory was the most by an ACC team in a decade. Joey Dance, Solomon Chishko, Zach Epperly,

Zack Zavatsky, Jared Haught and Ty Walz all won individual crowns and helped hand interim coach Tony Robie his first team title. Robie later guided the program to a sixth-place finish at the NCAA Championships and received the head job on a permanent basis.

Fiala's farewell at ACC Championships


Competing at his final ACC Swimming and Diving Championships, longtime standout Brandon Fiala made it a memorable event, as he won two gold medals and a silver medal. He won the silver in the 200-yard individual medley on the first day and added a gold in the 100 breaststroke on the second day. On the final day, he secured a gold medal in the 200 breaststroke, while setting a school and ACC record in the process. He departed Tech with five gold medals—the most in program history.

Tech men's hoops stuns then-No. 5 Duke

The Virginia Tech men's basketball team closed out 2016 in grand fashion, upsetting then-No. 5 Duke 89-75 on New Year's

Eve at Virginia Tech Carilion Court. Justin Bibbs scored 18 points for the Hokies, who opened a 16-point halftime lead and never trailed. Ahmed Hill added 17 points for Tech, and both Seth Allen and Justin Robinson chipped in 14. The Hokies snapped a nine-game losing streak to the Blue Devils, and the following week, they found themselves ranked nationally for the first time in more than six years.

Hokies take two of three from then-No. 1 Florida State in baseball

The Virginia Tech baseball team struggled for much of the season, but a bright spot came when the Hokies took two of three games from then-No. 1 and eventual ACC tournament champion Florida State, including a 17-0 victory in the series finale on March 19. Nick Anderson pitched eight strong innings, and the Hokies got a homer and three RBI each from Sam Fragale and JD Mundy. The baseball team is the lone Tech team to record a win over a No. 1-ranked team in the past three years. 





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Each year, the performances of Virginia Tech student-athletes exceed what those before them accomplished, and the 2016-17 academic year certainly was no exception.

No sport, though, saw more outstanding—and record-breaking—performances than Tech's track and field programs, which combined to win three ACC team titles. And in the opinion of magazine staff members and many others, no one performed at a higher level than Hanna Green.

Largely because of the three gold medals that she combined to win at the ACC Championships this winter and spring and the two All-America honors that she earned, Green has been tabbed as Inside Hokie Sports' 2016-17 Athlete of the Year.

Green became the ninth Tech track and field athlete to be named the magazine's Athlete of the Year since the publication started doing this in 1995. The complete list of winners include Cornell Brown (football), Jim Druckenmiller (football), Katie Ollendick (women's track and field), Corey Moore (football), André Davis (football), Lee Suggs (football), Bryant Matthews (men's basketball), Kevin Jones (football), Queen Harrison (women's track and field), Dorotea Habazin (women's track and field), Marcel Lomnický (men's track and field), Spyridon Jullien (men's track and field), Angela Tincher (softball), Alexander Ziegler (men's track and field), Erick Green (men's basketball), Devin Carter (wrestling), Irena Sediva (women's track and field) and Tommy Curtin (men's track and field).

Green, a four-year standout, beat out strong crop of athletes for this recognition, including Brandon Fiala (men's swimming), Ty Walz (wrestling), Jared Haught (wrestling), Isaiah Ford (football) and Jerod Evans (football). Her accomplishments on the track surpassed the accomplishments of those and many others.


Green concluded her collegiate career at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships by winning a silver medal in the 800-meter run—the third runner-up finish at an NCAA meet in her career. She earned first-team All-America honors in the process for the fifth time.

That performance capped a tremendous outdoor season for Green. At the ACC Championships, she became the first Tech athlete, male or female, to win both the 800 and the 1,500 at the same league meet. Those two gold medals helped the Tech women's program win its first ACC team title since 2008.

During the indoor season, Green won the gold medal in the 800 at the ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships held in South Bend, Indiana, in late February. She followed that by finishing second in the same event at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in College Station, Texas, to earn first-team All-America honors.

Green didn't just win this season—she also set school records. In fact, she set top school marks for the 600 (1:27.39) and the 800 (2:02.13) during the indoor season, along with being a member of the 4x400-meter relay team that set a school record (3:37.42). In addition, she set the outdoor school record in the 1,500 (4:12.31), which was her converted mile time from her performance at the Penn Relays.

Green won six ACC gold medals during her career, and she holds or shares five school records. She earned an All-America honor each year of her career and finished with a total of six—the second-most in program history behind Kristi Castlin.

She's arguably the most accomplished distance runner in Tech history. What can't be argued, though, is that she will be missed. 

INSIDE
HOKIESPORTS
ATHLETE
OF  **THE**
YEAR

20
16
17



HANNA
GREEN | SR.
LATROBE, PENNSYLVANIA
WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

TOM STOFFEL | R-JR.
DAYTON, OHIO

**BASEBALL
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR**
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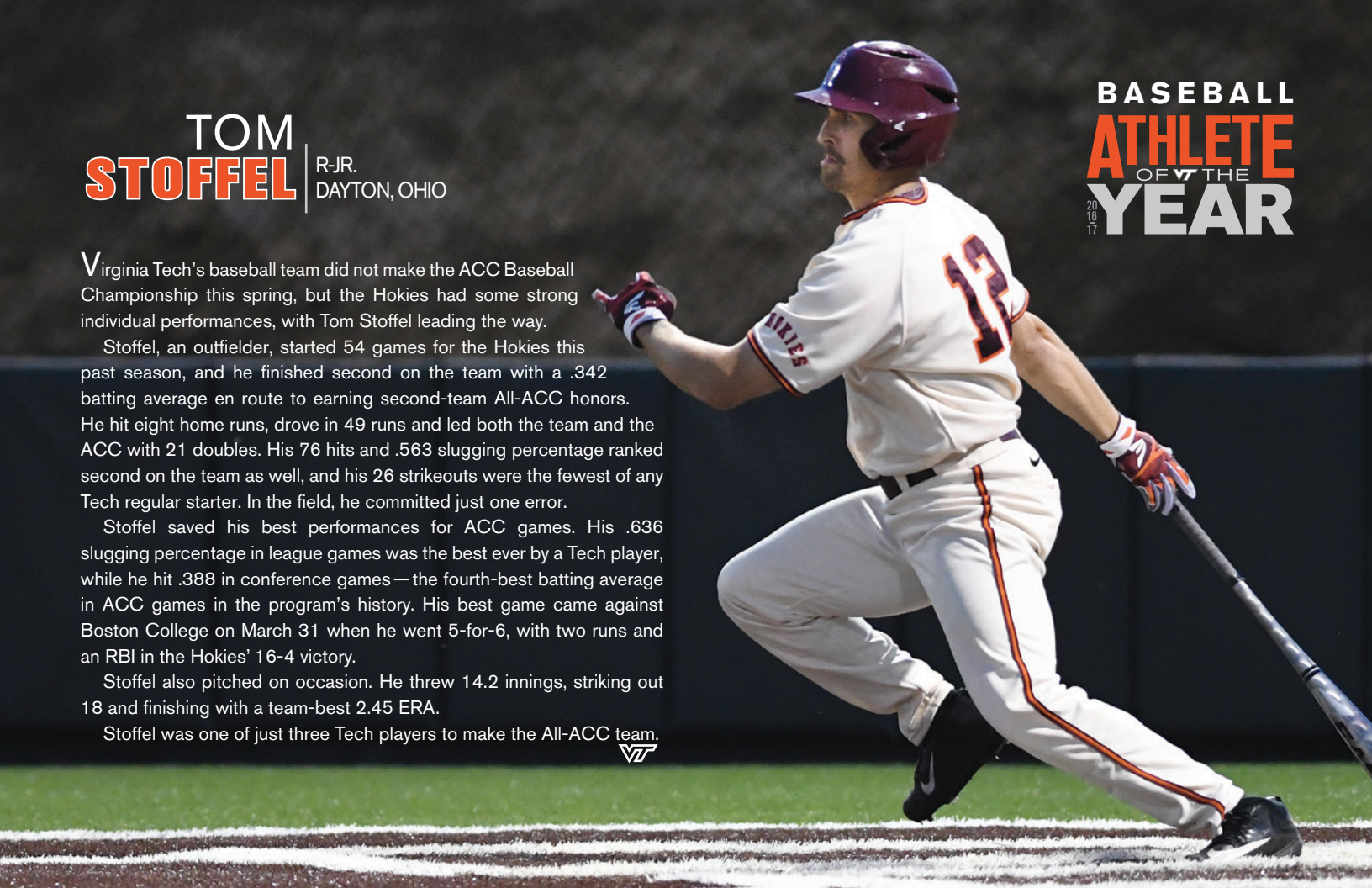
Virginia Tech's baseball team did not make the ACC Baseball Championship this spring, but the Hokies had some strong individual performances, with Tom Stoffel leading the way.

Stoffel, an outfielder, started 54 games for the Hokies this past season, and he finished second on the team with a .342 batting average en route to earning second-team All-ACC honors. He hit eight home runs, drove in 49 runs and led both the team and the ACC with 21 doubles. His 76 hits and .563 slugging percentage ranked second on the team as well, and his 26 strikeouts were the fewest of any Tech regular starter. In the field, he committed just one error.

Stoffel saved his best performances for ACC games. His .636 slugging percentage in league games was the best ever by a Tech player, while he hit .388 in conference games—the fourth-best batting average in ACC games in the program's history. His best game came against Boston College on March 31 when he went 5-for-6, with two runs and an RBI in the Hokies' 16-4 victory.

Stoffel also pitched on occasion. He threw 14.2 innings, striking out 18 and finishing with a team-best 2.45 ERA.

Stoffel was one of just three Tech players to make the All-ACC team.



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Injuries wreaked havoc on the Virginia Tech softball team, as many of the Hokies' prominent players missed significant time because of various ailments. Breanna Davenport, however, battled through hers and enjoyed the best season of her career.

Davenport earned second-team All-ACC honors—the lone Hokie to be named to the all-conference team—after a spring in which she hit a career-best .333. The outfielder started 52 games, with most of those coming as a designated player, and led the Hokies in at-bats (159) and hits (53), and she shared the team lead in runs with 29. Her eight home runs, 29 RBI and .547 slugging percentage ranked second on the team.

Davenport was even better in conference play. She led the Hokies with a .408 batting average in ACC games, with four home runs, four doubles, 17 runs, and 11 RBI. Her five-hit game against Louisville in the first game of a doubleheader on April 14 tied for the most in an ACC game this season and was only the third five-hit game in program history.

Following the season, Davenport earned second-team All-Mid-Atlantic Region honors by the National Fastpitch Coaches Association. NFCA member coaches from each respective region vote on the teams and place an emphasis on a player's performances against opponents ranked in the top 75 of the RPI. Davenport hit .369 in 22 games against teams in the top 75 of the RPI, with a .662 slugging percentage and a .423 on-base percentage. She hit five home runs and drove in 12 in those games.

Davenport figures to be the future leader of a Tech squad that lost just three seniors from this year's team. 



BREANNA DAVENPORT

JR.
STATESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

SOFTBALL
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
2016
17

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**MEN'S
BASKETBALL
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR**
20
16
17


Zach LeDay and Seth Allen enjoyed nearly identical seasons. Both played important leadership roles, both came off the bench and both averaged in double figures in scoring. In fact, both received the ACC Sixth Man of the Year Award—LeDay by the Atlantic Coast Sports Media Association and Allen by a blue-ribbon panel comprised of coaches and selected members of the media.

But LeDay's consistency led to him being named the magazine's men's basketball athlete of the year. He averaged a team-best 16.5 points per game, scoring in double figures in all but two of the Hokies' games this past season. He shared for the team lead in rebounding at 7.3 per game and led the squad with six double-doubles.

LeDay shot 53.8 percent from the floor, which ranked second on the team and third in the ACC. He shot 55.7 percent in conference games, which ranked second in the ACC.

Interestingly, LeDay shot a team-best 77.2 percent from the free-throw line (minimum 40 attempts). In fact, he made more free throws (166) than any other Tech player even attempted.

He also performed well on the other end of the court. He provided the team with strong interior defense, and he led the Hokies in blocked shots with 33, though he is not necessarily known as a shot blocker.

For the second straight year, LeDay earned honorable mention All-ACC honors and second-team All-State honors by VaSID (Virginia Sports Information Directors). 

**ZACH
LEDAY** | R-SR.
DALLAS, TEXAS

CHANETTE
HICKS SO.
NORFOLK, VIRGINIA




WOMEN'S
BASKETBALL
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
2016-17

Kenny Brooks' first season at Virginia Tech was a success, as the Hokies went 20-14 and advanced to the quarterfinals of the WNIT. Chanette Hicks served as a main catalyst for a lot of that success.

Hicks led the Hokies in scoring and assists, averaging 16.1 points and 5.2 assists per game. She ranked third in the ACC in assists this past season and eighth in the league in scoring. Her 1.8 assist-to-turnover ratio ranked seventh in the league. Her 13 assists in the Hokies' overtime win at Auburn tied a Tech single-game record.

Hicks' best scoring games came when she scored 29 points in a home win over Wake Forest on Jan. 16 and a loss at Georgia Tech on Feb. 5. She scored in double figures in 30 of 34 games, and shot a respectable 45.1 percent from the floor and 63.9 percent from the free-throw line this season. She even chipped in 3.7 rebounds per game.

Hicks, though, had just as big of an impact on defense. She set the Tech single-season mark for steals with 123, and she led the ACC in both steals and steals per game (3.6). Those numbers ranked second and fifth, respectively, among NCAA Division I programs.

Following the season, Hicks earned first-team All-State honors by the Virginia Sports Information Directors Association (VaSID). With two more seasons remaining, she could become the career leader in several categories at Tech. 

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The Virginia Tech women's cross country team went into this past fall with several upperclassmen who were expected to be the leaders, but injuries hampered their ability to be consistent. Seizing an opportunity, Katie Kennedy ultimately emerged as the Hokies' top runner and enjoyed the best season of her career.

Kennedy never finished worse than 23rd in any of the six races that she competed in over the course of the fall. She came in second in the first two meets of the season — the Hokie Invite and the Virginia Tech Alumni Invite — that arguably served as a precursor of things to come. Against strong competition at the Greater Louisville Classic and the Penn State National, she finished 10th and 23rd, respectively.

However, her top performance came at the ACC Championships held in Cary, North Carolina. She ran the 6K course in a career-best time of 20 minutes, 22.3 seconds, finishing 11th to earn All-ACC honors for the first time in her career. Behind her performance, the Hokies wound up third in the team race — the top finish at the ACC meet in program history.

Kennedy closed the season by coming in 21st with a time of 21:05.1 at the NCAA Southeast Regional held at hilly Panorama Farms outside of Charlottesville. In addition, she earned All-Southeast Region honors for the first time.

Kennedy returns for her senior season this fall and will be expected to be the leader of a young, talented squad yet again. 

WOMEN'S
CROSS
COUNTRY
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
20
16
17

KATIE
KENNEDY JR.
SPRINGFIELD, VIRGINIA




MEN'S
CROSS
COUNTRY
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR

2016
17

Much like the women's team, the Tech men's cross country team entered this past fall with a group of upperclassmen expected to be leaders during the season, but planned redshirt seasons and injuries created opportunities for others—and Daniel Jaskowak took advantage.

Jaskowak finished in the top 25 of all six races in which he competed this past fall, and he set personal bests in three different distances—the 6K, 8K and 10K. He came in second at the season-opening Hokie Invite, running his home 6K course in a time of 18 minutes, 52.70 seconds. Two weeks later, he came in fourth at the Virginia Tech Alumni Invite with a time of 24:53.10.

Jaskowak earned All-ACC honors for the first time in his career when he finished 17th at the ACC Championships, running the 8K course at Wake Med Park in Cary, North Carolina in a career-best time of 23:43.8. At the NCAA Southeast Regional held at Panorama Farms outside of Charlottesville, he recorded another career best, this time for a 10K course. He finished 25th in that race with a time of 30:09.4, and he earned All-Southeast Region honors for the first time as well.

Jaskowak has one more year of eligibility left and figures to be the leader of what should be a strong Tech men's cross country team this fall. 



**DANIEL
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2016
17

FOOTBALL
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR

WOODY
BARON SR.
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE


Virginia Tech's offense received a lot of attention during the football season, as the Hokies set numerous school records during a fall in which Tech won the ACC's Coastal Division and the Belk Bowl. But when Tech's defense played well, the Hokies usually won, and Woody Baron, without question, anchored that defense.

Tech's lone first-team All-ACC player enjoyed the best season of his career, starting all 14 games and recording 56 tackles to finish sixth on the team. However, he led all of the Hokies' defensive linemen in that category, and he tied for team bests overall in tackles for a loss and fumble recoveries, registering 18.5 and two, respectively. In fact, he and Tremaine Edmunds registered the most tackles for a loss by a Tech defensive player since the Hokies joined the ACC and the most by a Tech defensive player since 2002. Baron's 18.5 were the most by a Tech defensive tackle since J.C. Price tallied 23 in 1995.

Baron's 18.5 tackles for a loss also ranked tied for sixth in the ACC with Edmunds. His two fumble recoveries were tied for fourth in the league.

Baron's 5.5 sacks ranked second on the team this past season. He recorded 2.5 of those in the Hokies'

37-16 win over Miami—a game in which he also finished with 4.5 tackles for a loss, tying for the most tackles for a loss in a single game at the school in the past 30 seasons (Barry Booker at UVA in 2007).

Baron started the final 22 games of his career and was one of seven Hokies to start every game this past season. He closed his career with four tackles and a sack in the Hokies' 35-24 Belk Bowl win over Arkansas. 





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Aug 2-5	Amish Acres Festival / Napanee, IN	525	Sep 18	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee, NC	40
Aug 3-5	"Jonah" / Lancaster, PA	495	Sep 18-23	Agawa Canyon Train / Sault Ste Marie	975
Aug 7-26	San Francisco, CA & Pacific Northwest	2,695	Sep 18-29	Nova Scotia & New England in the Fall	1,850
Aug 12	"Song of the Mountains" / Marion, VA	60	Sep 21-25	Long Island, NY / Hamptons	795
Aug 12-13	Tangier Island / Monticello	275	Sep 22-23	Tygart Flyer / Am. Mtn. Theatre / Elkins, WV	325
Aug 13-19	Niagara Falls / Montreal & Quebec	1,150	Sep 23-29	New England in the Fall	1,125
Aug 13-17	Elvis / Tupelo & Memphis	695	Sep 29-Oct 1	Neptune Festival / Virginia Beach, VA	495
Aug 14-25	The Great Lakes	1,950	Oct 1-4	Atlantic City / Resorts Casino & Hotel	350
Aug 15-19	Wisconsin / Racine & Milwaukee	775	Oct 2-8	New England in the Fall	1,125
Aug 19	D-Day Memorial / VA Dare Lunch Cruise	100	Oct 3-18	Hawaiian Island / Four Island Tour	4,595
Aug 22-26	Two Stadiums / St. Louis / Kansas City	850	Oct 3&4	Cass Railroad / Cass, WV	90
Aug 26	"Not Just Another Love Story" / NarroWay	85	Oct 6-7	"Jonah" / Lancaster, PA	325
Aug 26-27	Great Smoky Mtn Railroad / Cherokee, NC	350	Oct 7	Brushy Mtn Apple Festival / Wilkesboro, NC	45
Aug 28	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee, NC	40	Oct 7-23	Great Southwest & Cali. / Motorcoach	2,625
Sep 2	North Carolina Zoo / Asheboro, NC	55	Oct 8-12	Niagara Falls / Toronto / Canada	775
Sep 3-4	FEDEX Field / Virginia Tech vs. WVU	150	Oct 11	Shatley Sp. Inn / Fresco Paintings / Lunch	60
Sep 2-8	New England's Vermont & New Hamp.	1,295	Oct 14	Billy Graham Library / Stowe Botanical Gardens	60
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Sep 10-16	Niagara Falls / Montreal & Quebec	1,150	Oct 22-28	Branson, MO / Music Show Capital	1,150
Sep 14-16	"Jonah" / Lancaster, PA	495	Oct 23-26	Dover Downs - DE / Foxwood Casino - CT	495
Sep 14-17	Myrtle Beach, SC	495	Oct 28-29	New River Amtrak Fall Excursion	425
Sep 15-17	Washington, D.C. / Our Nation's Capital	395	Oct 30	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee, NC	40




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Mark Lawrence Jr. transferred to Virginia Tech from Auburn after his freshman season, and the young man immediately made an impact, working his way into Tech's lineup and performing as consistently as any of the Hokies this past season.

Lawrence led the team in scoring average at 71.5, and he also led the squad in final-round average at 71.6. He played 32 rounds, and he recorded a team-best six top-20 finishes, including a team-best three top-five finishes. He shot just two rounds above 75 this past season, and he registered eight rounds in the 60s.

His best outing occurred in early March when he shot 3-under-par and came in fourth out of 84 golfers at the General Hackler Championship held in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. He came in fifth at both the Marshall Invitational and the Furman Intercollegiate.

Lawrence was one of just two Hokies to qualify for an NCAA Regional this past season. He finished tied for 12th, and given his performances and his experience, he should be the leader of a young Tech squad for the next two years. 



**MEN'S
GOLF
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR**
2016
17

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LAWRENCE JR.** SO.
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WOMEN'S
GOLF
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
20
16
17

The Virginia Tech women's golf team concluded its second competitive season as a program, and the Hokies continue to get better, largely because of the play of young standouts such as Elizabeth Bose.

Though only a true sophomore this past season, Bose anchored Tech's lineup, and she recorded both the best scoring average on the team at 75.1 and the best final round average at 74.7. She registered three top-20 finishes, including a top-five finish in which she came in third at the Starmount Classic held this past October. Her 11 events and 33 rounds tied for the best on the team.

Bose's consistency stood out. Of her 33 rounds, she shot worse than 79 on just three occasions. However, she shot better than 75 in 15 rounds, paced by a season-best 70 in the season-opening Mercedes-Benz Collegiate Championship. Her 72 in the final round of the ACC Championship enabled her to come in a team-best 21st place in the race for medalist honors.

Tech returns the majority of its lineup next fall. Bose figures to lead the way yet again. 

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MARCELO ACUNA JR.


SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

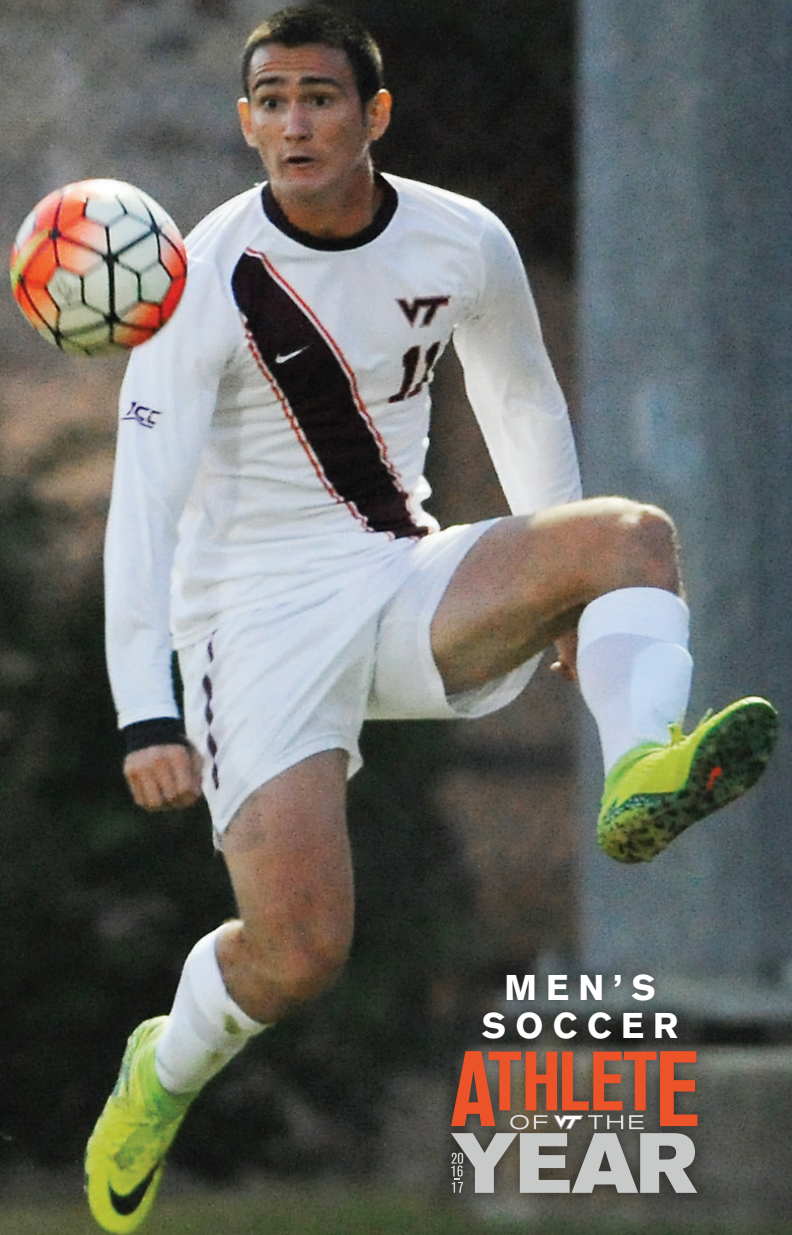
The Virginia Tech men's soccer team bounced back from a subpar 2015 in a big way, receiving an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament and advancing to the Elite Eight, both for the first time since 2007. For sure, Marcelo Acuna played a huge role in that turnaround.

Acuna earned third-team All-America honors after starting 22 games for the Hokies this past fall and leading the team in goals (11), points (25) and game-winning goals (five). Providing a much-needed scoring punch, he helped the Hokies notch a 13-5-4 overall record in 2016—an eight-game improvement from the previous season.

A second-team All-ACC choice, Acuna led the ACC in shots (94) and shots per game (4.27), ranking fifth nationally in the latter category. He finished the season third in the ACC in goals and fourth in goals per game (0.50). He wound up tied for 13th nationally in game-winning goals and 19th nationally in total goals.

Acuna scored at least two goals in three games—a string that included a hat trick in Tech's win over VMI. However, his most important goals came against Charlotte in the second round of the NCAA Championship, as he scored two goals in the Hokies' 3-2 road upset over the 49ers.

Acuna became just the second All-American in school history, joining Patrick Nyarko on the list—he earned first-team honors in 2007. Acuna also received first-team All-State honors from the Virginia Sports Information Directors (VaSID). 



**MEN'S
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
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The unbelievable career of Murielle Tiernan has come to an end, as the longtime stalwart graduated with nearly every Virginia Tech women's soccer scoring record.

Tiernan closed her career by earning first-team All-ACC honors for the third straight year, and she also earned National Soccer Coaches Association of America All-Southeast Region honors. The forward played in all 19 of the team's games and led the team with 10 goals and 20 points. She also finished with a team-best five game-winning goals.

Tiernan ranked tied for fifth in the ACC in goals scored and tied for eighth in points. She also ranked in the top 10 among ACC schools in goals per game (.53), shots (62) and shots per game (3.26).

Tiernan scored two goals in the Hokies' 2-1 win at William & Mary, and she had two in Tech's 3-2 double-overtime win over Boston College. She scored goals in eight of the Hokies' 19 games this past season—and Tech went 5-2-1 in those games.

One of just two All-Americans in program history—Jazmine Reeves being the other—Tiernan departs with four school career records, including goals (49), game-winning goals (23), multiple-goal games (nine) and shots (251). 

WOMEN'S
SOCCER
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
2016-17



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**MEN'S
SWIMMING
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR**
2016
17

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Brandon Fiala came into this past season as arguably the best men's swimmer in school history – and he only solidified that assessment during his final campaign in Blacksburg.

Fiala wrapped up his career at Virginia Tech by winning ACC titles in both the 100- and 200-yard breaststroke and earning All-America honors in

both. At the ACC Championships, he won a silver medal in the 200 individual medley on the second day. He also captured gold in the 100 breaststroke on the third day. On the final day, he won the 200 breaststroke in 1:52.39 seconds, breaking the ACC, the ACC Championships and the program record. Primarily behind his performances, the men's team finished fourth at the ACC meet.

At the NCAA Championships, Fiala earned honorable mention All-America honors in the 200 IM and then closed his career by earning All-America recognition in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke, placing sixth and fourth, respectively.

Again, primarily behind Fiala, the Tech men's team recorded a top-25 finish at the NCAA meet for the fifth time in the past six seasons. He departs Blacksburg with five All-America honors to his credit. 

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WOMEN'S
SWIMMING
ATHLETE
OF THE
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20
16
17

Perhaps no freshman within the realm of Virginia Tech athletics burst onto the scene in the way that Reka Gyorgy managed to do so. After all, within three months of her enrolling for the spring semester, she managed to become a school record holder, an ACC champion and an All-American.


Gyorgy played a large role in helping the Tech women's swimming and diving program finish fifth at the ACC Championships—the program's 13th consecutive top-five finish. She won the gold medal in the 400-yard individual medley, setting a

school record in the event with a time of 4:04.97. She became Tech's first champion since 2013 and just the third freshman in program history to win an ACC title.

At the same meet, she came in fourth in the 200 IM. While doing that, she broke her own school record in that event, swimming it in a time of 1:57.22.

She continued that success at the NCAA Championships, where she earned All-America honors in the 400 IM. She came in eighth with a time of 4:07.37 and became the first Tech

swimmer to earn All-America honors in the event in seven years. She added more All-America recognition to her resume when she swam as part of the 800 freestyle relay team that also consisted of Jessica Hespeler, Fiona Donnelly and Klaudia Nazieblo. That quartet came in 16th, setting a school record with a time of 7:03.10 and earning honorable mention All-America honors.

Gyorgy's return bodes well for a young Tech women's swimming and diving squad that developed a lot this past season and will be looking to continue that development starting next fall. 

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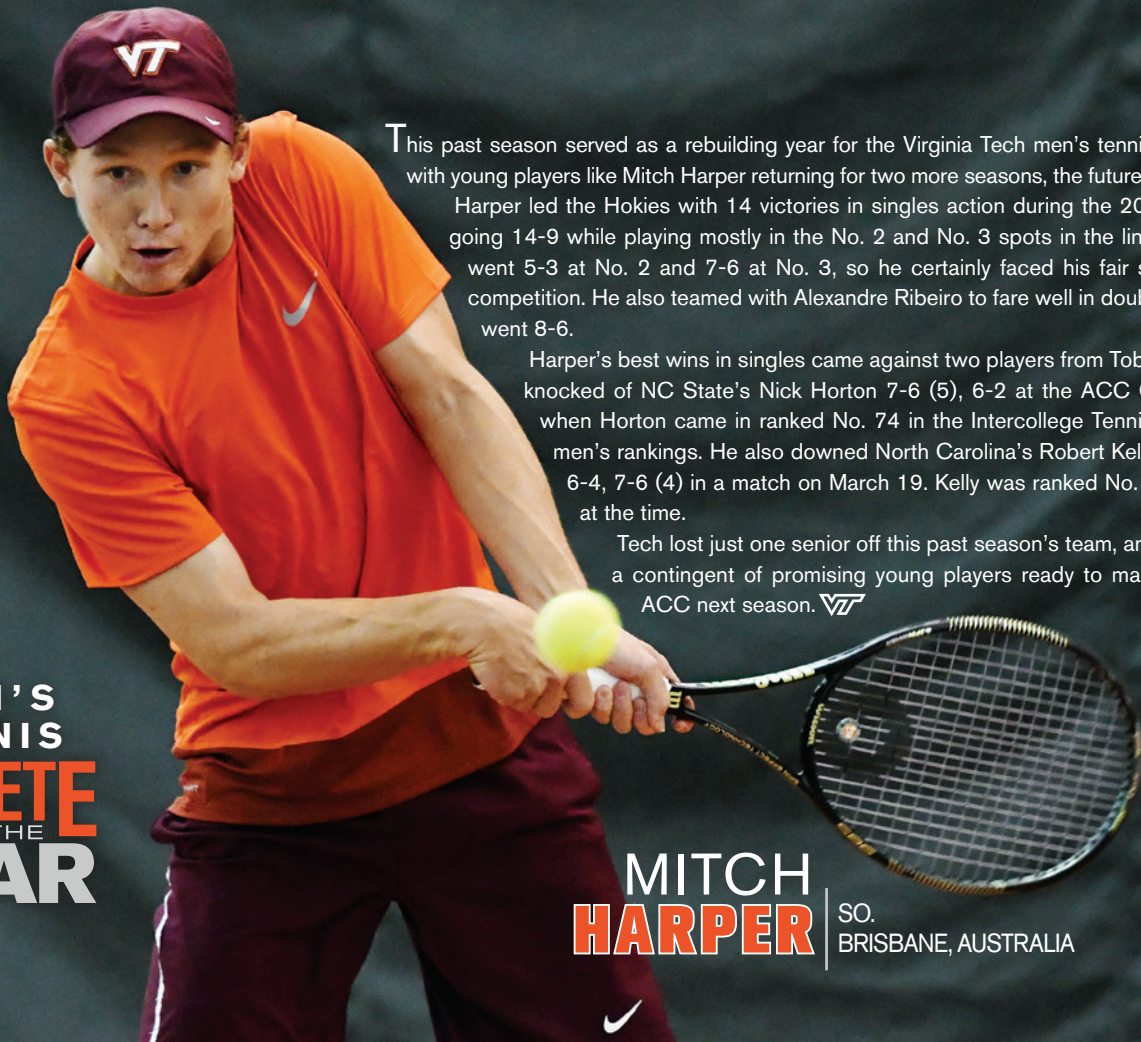
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**MEN'S
TENNIS
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This past season served as a rebuilding year for the Virginia Tech men's tennis program, and with young players like Mitch Harper returning for two more seasons, the future appears bright. Harper led the Hokies with 14 victories in singles action during the 2016-17 season, going 14-9 while playing mostly in the No. 2 and No. 3 spots in the lineup. In fact, he went 5-3 at No. 2 and 7-6 at No. 3, so he certainly faced his fair share of quality competition. He also teamed with Alexandre Ribeiro to fare well in doubles, as the duo went 8-6.

Harper's best wins in singles came against two players from Tobacco Road. He knocked off NC State's Nick Horton 7-6 (5), 6-2 at the ACC Championships when Horton came in ranked No. 74 in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's men's rankings. He also downed North Carolina's Robert Kelly by a score of 6-4, 7-6 (4) in a match on March 19. Kelly was ranked No. 123 by the ITA at the time.

Tech lost just one senior off this past season's team, and Harper leads a contingent of promising young players ready to make noise in the ACC next season. 

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The Virginia Tech women's tennis program will be losing a longtime standout, as Francesca Fusinato departs following a solid career, including a 2016-17 season in which she played all of the Hokies' matches out of the No. 1 spot in the lineup.

Fusinato more than held her own facing the ACC's best. She went 16-8 this past season, including an 8-5 singles record in ACC play, and earned third-team All-ACC honors. With that recognition, she closed her career by earning All-ACC honors all four years.

The Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) named Fusinato its Senior Player of the Year for the Atlantic Region, making her the first senior in Tech women's tennis history to win that honor. Fusinato played well against the very best both in non-conference and league action, toppling seven ranked opponents, including three ranked inside the top 50.

Fusinato's best singles win came against Virginia's Cassie Mercer, who was ranked No. 48 nationally at the time. She knocked off Mercer 6-3, 6-7 (2-7), 6-2, and she ultimately finished the season ranked No. 107 in the ITA women's rankings.

Tech returns most of its lineup from this past season, as Fusinato was one of just two seniors on the roster. Her absence, though, certainly will be felt. 



WOMEN'S
TENNIS
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
2016
17

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LACROSSE
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
2016
17

Tech head women's lacrosse coach John Sung orchestrated an incredible turnaround of the Hokies' program this past season, as Tech matched the school record for victories and broke school records for goals and points in a season. Kristine Loscalzo was one of the leaders whom Sung relied on to get the program headed in the right direction.

Loscalzo, a team captain, started all 19 games for the Hokies and led the team with 52 goals, including a team-best six game-winning goals. She also tied for the team best in total points with 57, sharing that category with fellow captain Tristan McGinley.

Loscalzo scored at least two goals in 14 of the Hokies' 19 games, and she scored at least four goals in eight games. Her top performance came in Tech's 19-5 win at Campbell on March 24 when she scored a career-high six goals. She had five goals in the Hokies' season-ending 20-13 loss to Syracuse in the first round of the ACC Championship held April 27.

Loscalzo departs with 91 career goals and 100 points. Her 52 goals rank fifth on Tech's single-season list, while her 57 points are tied for ninth. Also, her six goals against Campbell tied for sixth on the single-game list.

One of four seniors on the team, her leadership and production will be missed. 




Drew Piazza transferred to Virginia Tech from New Hampshire and only had one year of eligibility remaining—but he certainly ran his way into Virginia Tech track and field history. Fitting in seamlessly within Tech's program, Piazza became an All-American, an ACC gold medalist and a school record holder during his only season in Blacksburg.

Piazza earned a silver medal in his specialty, the 800-meter run, at the ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships, finishing second to teammate Patrick Joseph. At the NCAA Championships just two weeks later, Piazza nearly won the national title in the 800, claiming another silver medal when UTEP's Emmanuel Korir barely beat him at the finish line. Still, Piazza earned first-team All-America honors,

and he concluded the indoor season holding or sharing two school records—the 600 (1:17.26) and the 4x400-meter relay (3:11.11).

During the outdoor season, Piazza performed even better. He won the gold medal in the 800 at the ACC Outdoor Track and Field Championships, and he followed that by finishing sixth in the event at the NCAA Championships. Piazza holds or shares three of Tech's outdoor records—the 800 (1:46.02), the 4x400 relay (3:06.40) and the 4x800 (7:13.75).

Piazza took advantage of his opportunity, making his mark at Tech. His presence certainly will be missed. 

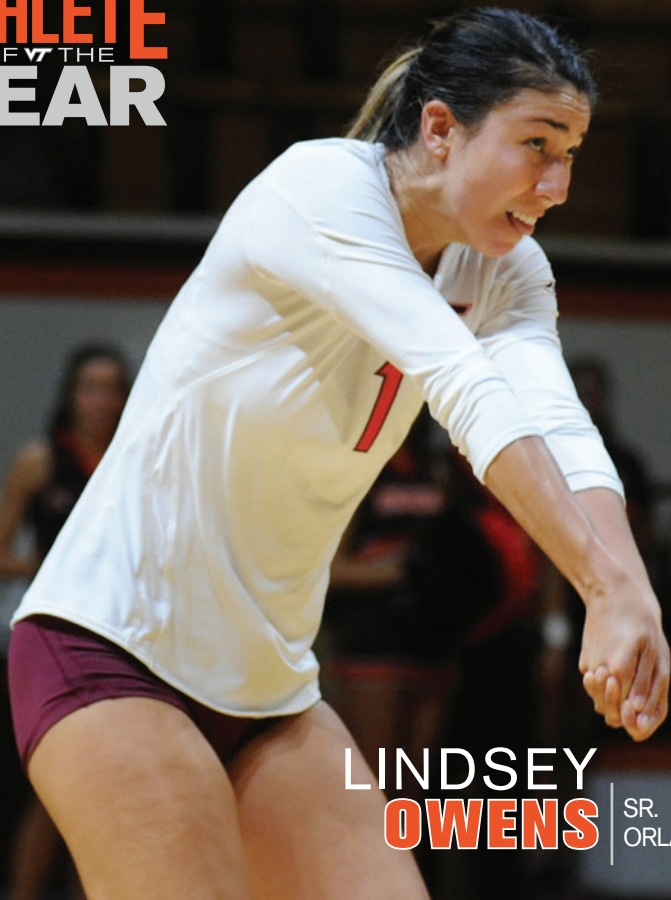


**MEN'S
TRACK
& FIELD
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR**
2016
17

**DREW
PIAZZA**

SR.
DANVERS, MASSACHUSETTS

VOLLEYBALL
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR
2016
17




LINDSEY OWENS | SR.
ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Already a standout performer, Lindsey Owens closed her volleyball career in fine fashion, earning All-ACC recognition for the fourth straight time and becoming one of just four players in program history to accomplish that (Felicia Willoughby, Cara Baarendse and Lisa Pikalek).

Owens started all 31 matches this season and led the Hokies in both kills (403) and kills per set (3.50), ranking sixth in the ACC in the latter category. She also led the team in points (443) and points per set (3.85), and she ranked 10th in the ACC in points per set. In addition, she was second on the team total digs (372) and digs per set (3.23), and her 41 blocks ranked third on the team.

Owens finished 2016 with 15 double-doubles, four 20-plus kill performances and set a career high with a .643 hitting percentage in a 3-0 win over UMBC on Aug. 27. Owens is also the only ACC student-athlete to collect at least 400 kills and 200 digs in each of the past three seasons.

Owens will leave Blacksburg ranked fourth in the program record book with 1,514 kills; fifth at 3.28 kills per set; sixth with 1,309 digs and 11th with 115 service aces. After tallying her 1,000th career dig on Sept. 2 against Temple, she became only the sixth Hokie with 1,000 kills and 1,000 digs in a career. Needless to say, her production will be missed. 

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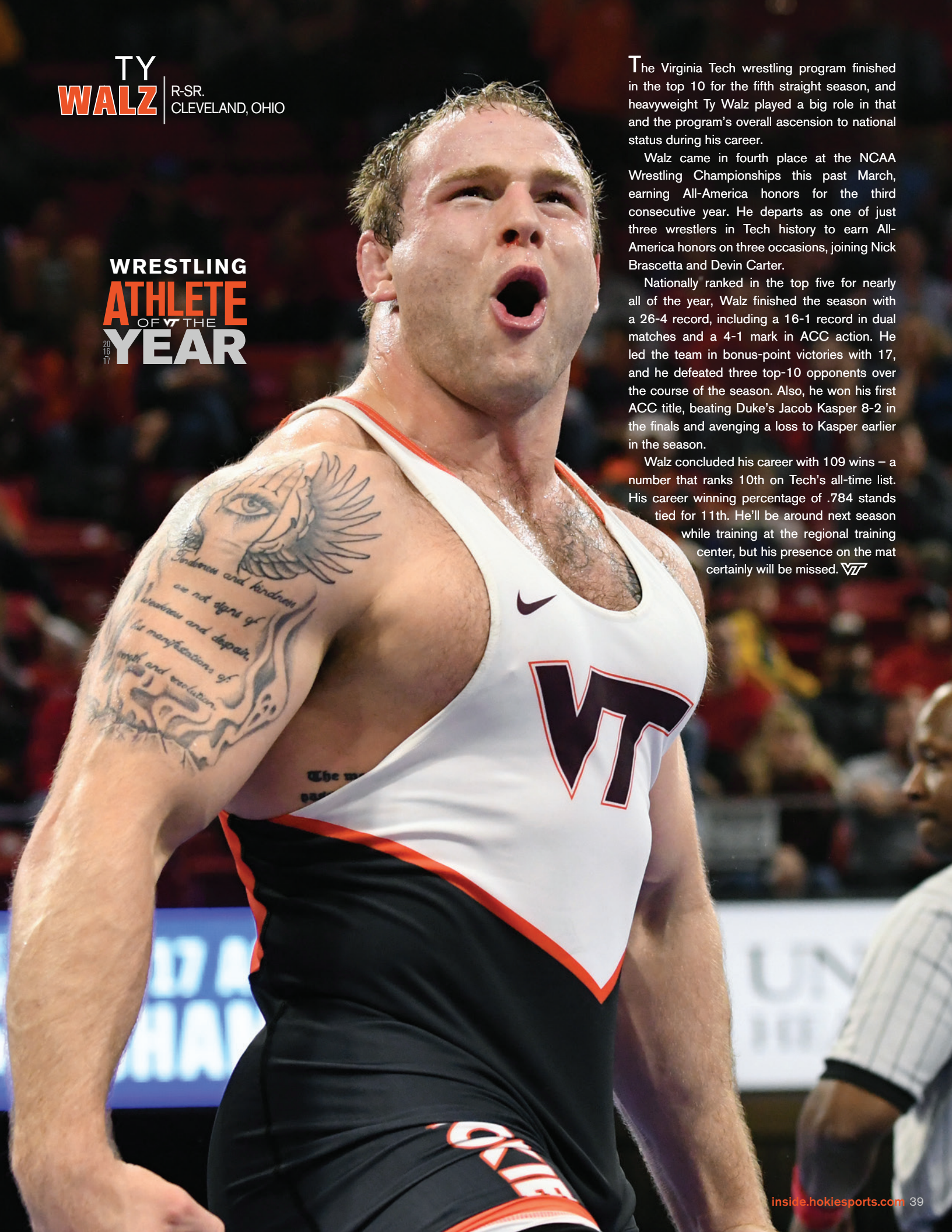
   

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TY
WALZ | R-SR.
CLEVELAND, OHIO

WRESTLING
ATHLETE
OF THE
YEAR


2016
17



The Virginia Tech wrestling program finished in the top 10 for the fifth straight season, and heavyweight Ty Walz played a big role in that and the program's overall ascension to national status during his career.

Walz came in fourth place at the NCAA Wrestling Championships this past March, earning All-America honors for the third consecutive year. He departs as one of just three wrestlers in Tech history to earn All-America honors on three occasions, joining Nick Brascetta and Devin Carter.

Nationally ranked in the top five for nearly all of the year, Walz finished the season with a 26-4 record, including a 16-1 record in dual matches and a 4-1 mark in ACC action. He led the team in bonus-point victories with 17, and he defeated three top-10 opponents over the course of the season. Also, he won his first ACC title, beating Duke's Jacob Kasper 8-2 in the finals and avenging a loss to Kasper earlier in the season.

Walz concluded his career with 109 wins – a number that ranks 10th on Tech's all-time list. His career winning percentage of .784 stands tied for 11th. He'll be around next season while training at the regional training center, but his presence on the mat certainly will be missed. 

JOURNEY WITH THE JAVELIN

Irena Sediva

loved volleyball as a kid in her native Czech Republic, but a switch to throwing the javelin resulted in her getting a college education from Virginia Tech and loving the Hokie experience — while also winning two national championships

by Jimmy Robertson

Virginia Tech’s “Enter Sandman” experience seems to leave a lasting impression on everyone, even those who know nothing about the sport of football—even those who come from foreign places.

After all, who could really forget such a scene? As the opening riff starts, thousands of people start yelling and jumping up and down, reaching a crescendo to welcome the football team onto its home field.

Irena Sediva knew nothing of such things. She knew nothing about football, or Tech’s famous pregame ritual. But when the women’s track and field standout ventured from Europe to Blacksburg for her college education, she quickly received the details on Tech’s legendary Saturday afternoon fall tradition.

Her teammates invited her to go to a game, and Sediva, with her engaging personality and overall love of people, was down.

And quickly hooked.

“I’m not that big of a fan of the game, but I love the experience,” she said. “I like the fans going crazy for football, and all the action going on around it.”

“I love getting to know new cultures, and going to a football game is probably the biggest piece of American culture that you can get. I know less than you guys do, but I’m not lost when I watch it.”

So over the past few years, she performed her fair share of jumping, blending in perfectly with Tech’s diverse student population. Yet truthfully, Tech fans should have jumped over *her* exploits.

Sediva, a native of the Czech Republic, concluded her collegiate career by winning the national championship in the javelin throw at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships held in Eugene, Oregon, in early June. That performance came two years after she won the school’s first national championship in the javelin throw, and with her latest accomplishment, she became just the second Tech female to win at least two national championships, joining Queen Harrison, who won three in 2010.

During her career, Sediva dominated her event like no other at Tech or in the ACC. She holds the school record, the ACC record and the ACC Championships meet record. At Tech, she owns the school mark by more than 10 meters.

Yet remembering Sediva for simply how far she tosses a track implement does her a disservice. Those around her speak highly of her not just because of her athletics abilities, but also because ... well, she’s just so darn likeable.

“She’s upbeat and likes to joke around and cause trouble—all that good stuff,” said Tech throws coach Greg Jack, whose athletes have won 13 of the 16 individual national crowns claimed by the Hokies’ track and field programs. “She’s a handful sometimes, but sometimes, you look the other way when that stuff goes on for a girl of her level.”

Tech’s coaches and current team members almost did not get to experience both her charming disposition and athletics greatness. She played a lot of sports as a child in Příbram, her hometown and a small city roughly 40 miles from Prague, the nation’s capital. The list included judo and soccer, and her mom actually wanted her to pursue chess.

“I tried for a year. It wasn’t my thing,” she said, with a smile. “It was painful, sitting by a table and just thinking.”

She channeled her energies into volleyball, which became her passion. A persuasive uncle got her into distance running, but she contemplated giving up running to focus on volleyball. Her track and field coach at the time ultimately convinced her to stick with that sport, and because of her athleticism, saw potential in her for throwing the javelin—which led to a total reversal of fortunes.

“He started coming to my hometown and started throwing the javelin with me at least once a week,” Sediva said. “Thanks to that, I won Czech nationals, and I decided to quit volleyball and continue with the javelin.”

Sediva drew inspiration from Barbora Spotakova, a Czech native and two-time Olympic gold medalist who set the world record—and still holds it—roughly around the time in which Sediva started her journey with the javelin. Spotakova’s coach once saw Sediva throw and invited her to come practice with them.

That led to Sediva moving to Prague to practice with Spotakova, with every day affording her an opportunity to get better at her craft.

“She was a big role model for me, and thanks to her, I was able to see



“

I'm not that big of a fan of the game, but I love the experience. I like the fans going crazy for football, and all the action going on around it. I love getting to know new cultures, and going to a football game is probably the biggest piece of American culture that you can get.

**Irena Sediva on her
“Enter Sandman” experience**

”

somebody who was successful,” Sediva said. “She was a nice person, and that helped a lot.”

The journey went well until the U-23 European Championships held in Finland four years ago. After training with the national team in South Africa and the Canary Islands—and enjoying the adventures—she felt ready for the U-23 meet, but wound up struggling.

As she and her coach walked out of the stadium, tears in her eyes, she bumped into Jack, who obviously wanted to continue Tech’s success in the throwing events. He stood there waiting, looking past her struggles and instead seeing her form and loving her potential. He offered her an intriguing option—the potential of coming to school in the United States and competing.

“Not at all,” Jack said when asked if the poor performance deterred him. “You could see that she had the talent. Sometimes, you just need a new location and a new outlook.”

Viewing Jack’s presence as a sign, Sediva decided to take him up on his offer, enrolling for classes in the spring of 2014.

“I kind of had always wanted to come to the U.S., but I never had the courage, and I had a really good team back home, so it was hard to leave it,” she said. “But after this competition, I thought, ‘Well, this is a sign. This is the time to leave.’”

The decision meant leaving her beloved home. It also meant leaving her parents and her brother and sister, both of whom are significantly older. Her sister, 12 years her elder, served as a second mother to her. It also meant leaving her nieces.

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JOURNEY WITH THE JAVELIN

Continued from page 41

“That’s the part I miss the most,” she admitted.

Her transition to Blacksburg got off to a rocky start, as she and Marek Barta, a men’s discus thrower, arrived a couple of weeks before classes started that January—a time of year when Blacksburg lacks the buzz stemming from the students. That bothered her the most. Sure, there were language barriers and food situations to work through, but she liked interaction with people.

“The language part ... I didn’t have a problem, but I think people were afraid to talk to me because they didn’t understand me and didn’t want to make me feel bad for not understanding me,” she said. “So it was hard to get to know new people. It broke at a certain point, and I started to be happy in Blacksburg.”

She’s been happy ever since, aside from an Achilles injury last year that cost her an opportunity to win an ACC title and compete for another national championship. This past season, she battled a shoulder injury, but still managed to set an ACC Championships record with a throw of 58.68 meters (192 feet, 6 inches) en route to winning a gold medal.

The Hokies needed every one of her 10 points, too, as they won the women’s team title for the first time in nine years. After the Hokies clinched the title following the final event, they celebrated—none more than Sediva.

“It was much better than winning nationals as an individual,” she said. “It was amazing. We were cheering, and that was the best part.”

“I threw the first day, and for the rest of the time, we were counting points and staying at the track and screaming. At the end, we couldn’t talk. Our vocals were done. It was fun—and painful because we couldn’t participate again [after the first day]. We had to watch. We weren’t able to do anything, but it was great.”

She celebrated just as much as after winning the national championship in Eugene. She took the lead on her fifth of six throws, with a toss of

58.76 meters (192 feet, 9 inches), and held on despite the bum shoulder, annoying wind and chilly temperatures. Afterward, she, Pavla Kuklova and Eva Vivod took a victory lap around Hayward Field.

“It’s pretty amazing,” Jack said. “You look at her, and she’s the smallest competitor in the women’s javelin [at the NCAA meet]. There’s no question. But she’s super athletic. She understands her event better than anyone I’ve coached. She’s a student of the javelin. She understands what’s going on at any given time. She has a good connection and feel for her body, and she can really make that javelin sing.”

Sediva returned home to the Czech Republic following the NCAA Championships – and the end of her college experience brought forth a tinge of sadness. She plans on finishing her remaining coursework toward her degree in international studies online this summer, while also participating during the European season and then the 2017 World University Games in Taiwan in late August.

Then in the fall, she starts graduate school at a university in the Czech Republic to pursue a master’s degree in international relations, with the goal of some day working for a non-profit organization or a non-governmental organization (NGO) that helps people in under-developed countries.


So with that said, she probably won’t be returning to the Virginia Tech campus any time soon.

“To stay here forever, I never thought so,” Sediva said. “I love my home. I was always certain that I wanted to go back there. I never regretted being here, but I always knew my next stage would be there.”

Not that she regrets coming to Virginia Tech. Rest assured, it holds a special place in her heart – one that is immovable.

“Definitely,” she agreed. “It was a process. It helped me grow very much. It made a huge impact on me as a person.”

For sure, as she received a great education, participated in a great track and field program, won two national championships—and of course, learned about American football and the “Enter Sandman” experience.

That makes her a Hokie through and through, and no matter where she goes throughout the world, she’ll always be able to call Blacksburg a home. 



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Szeffc ready to return to the ACC – and to **REBUILD** Tech's baseball program

John Szeffc turned the fortunes of Maryland's baseball program, and with a renovated facility on the horizon, he looks forward to doing the same in Blacksburg
by Jimmy Robertson

A proven winner, a history of building winning traditions in difficult places, and Mid-Atlantic recruiting connections all led to Whit Babcock tabbing John Szeffc as the new head coach of the Virginia Tech baseball program.

Babcock, Tech's director of athletics and a recent member of the NCAA baseball selection committee, made his decision public in a June 9 release, and Szeffc—pronounced “sheff”—met with media members and donors at a news conference held June 15.

Szeffc comes to Tech after spending the past five seasons as the head coach at Maryland, where he led the Terrapins to three NCAA appearances and a 180-122 overall record. In his second season in College Park, he led Maryland to its first NCAA appearance in 43 years.

“I'm thrilled, humbled and honored to begin this new challenge at Virginia Tech,” Szeffc said in a statement. “As an opposing coach, I always enjoyed our visits to Virginia Tech and appreciated the beauty of the campus and the Blacksburg community. Our family is beyond excited to call Blacksburg our new home. I appreciate the trust and confidence that Dr. [Tim] Sands [university president], Whit, John [Ballein, a senior associate AD] and everyone at Virginia Tech is placing in me.

“The opportunity to return to the ACC and have our team play in an amazing baseball facility simply added to the appeal of coaching the Hokies. I understand and embrace the expectations that come with this leadership position. I can't wait to meet the team and get to work.”

Szeffc, who signed a seven-year contract that starts by paying him \$400,000 in the first year, brings extensive baseball experience to Blacksburg, both as a head coach and an assistant. The Drexel University graduate worked for four seasons as an assistant at his alma mater and one season at Sacred Heart before landing the head job at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1995.

He served as the head coach at Marist for seven seasons, racking up 212 wins and leading the program to four NCAA regional appearances. Following the 2002 season, he made the rare move of jumping back into the assistant ranks, taking a job as an assistant coach at Louisiana (formerly known as Louisiana-Lafayette).

“In 2000, we were in Louisiana-Lafayette's regional,” Szeffc said. “That was my second regional at Marist [of four]. I got to know those guys [the Louisiana-Lafayette coaches] pretty well, particularly Wade Simoneaux, who was the first

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Szefc *Continued from page 43*

assistant at the time. I stayed in touch with him, and two years later, Wade left Lafayette to be the head coach at Louisiana Tech. He called and asked me if I was interested in his old job, which was the first assistant there.

“My wife [Barbara] and I didn’t have any kids at the time, and I felt like we had gotten Marist to be as successful as we probably could at the time. So we hopped in the car and went to Louisiana.”

Szefc spent the next 10 years working as an assistant, including six seasons at Louisiana, two at Kansas and two at Kansas State. In the early summer of 2012, he applied and interviewed for the head coaching position at Maryland. Officials at the school named him the head coach on July 18.

“It [his years as an assistant] gave me a lot of experience,” Szefc said. “It helped me to work for three different programs in baseball places. When I came to an ACC program at the time that ultimately became a Big Ten program ... the experiences in recruiting and the relationships that I had built with coaches and other people along the way helped me, as I went back to being a head coach.

“I went a little different route [in coaching] than what some other people go. As I look back at it, the 10 years really helped prepare me, and Maryland really helped me, I think, for building this program.”

Szefc inherits a rebuilding job, as the Hokies struggled during previous coach Patrick Mason’s four-year tenure. They made the ACC tournament just once in that span and never recorded a winning season. This past spring, Tech went 23-32, with a 9-21 mark in ACC play.

Making matters more difficult, Tech plays in arguably the toughest league in the nation. Florida State and Louisville advanced to the College World Series, while five other ACC schools received NCAA regional bids this past season.

Of course, Szefc knows all this from having coached in the ACC with Maryland before the Terrapins joined the Big Ten, and he turned around the fortunes of the Terrapins’ program. This past season, Maryland went 38-23 and received an NCAA bid.

“Last week, there was a story in The Diamondback [Maryland’s student newspaper],” Szefc said. “I didn’t even read the story. I just read the headline. The headline said, ‘The baseball program just went 38-23 and went to a regional and won a game. Should we be happy with that?’


“It was great. I loved it. It was tremendous because as a coach, when you’re trying to build something, that’s what you want. You want expectations. I think a five-year span of time is a fair amount of time to see a story like that created. It was great. That was just as much satisfaction as any paycheck you’ll get as a coach, in my opinion. It showed me where the bar had been set and where the expectations had been set.”

An added bonus in aiding Szefc’s efforts at Tech will be a renovated baseball facility. Babcock committed around \$18 million to renovate English Field at Union Park, providing new fan amenities, a new press box and game operations area, and most importantly to Szefc, a new clubhouse that figures to be a draw in recruiting.

Therein lies the key to future success — bringing in talent. Szefc has proven himself in that area, as 25 of his players have been drafted over the past five years. Like every coach, he seeks talent, but he also looks for Dustin Pedroia types — guys who love the game and love to work like the Boston Red Sox All-Star.

“I just think those players have success,” Szefc said. “Just trying to instill that into those players at the college level ... there are just no frills in Dustin Pedroia’s life or game. I don’t even know him. I haven’t spoken to him. Just the way he is on the field, that’s the kind of guy that college coaches are trying to develop in their baseball programs.”

Tech lost five seniors off this past year’s team, and underclassmen pitchers Packy Naughton and Aaron McGarity were drafted by Major League teams in mid-June — and figure to leave Tech. But guys like Tom Stoffel, Sam Fragale, Jack Owens and pitchers Connor Coward and Nick Anderson return. They form a solid nucleus for Szefc’s debut season.

Szefc’s immediate tasks are to round out his staff and then add talent to that nucleus. Winning may not come immediately in Blacksburg, but if Szefc’s track record is any indication, the wait may not be very long. 

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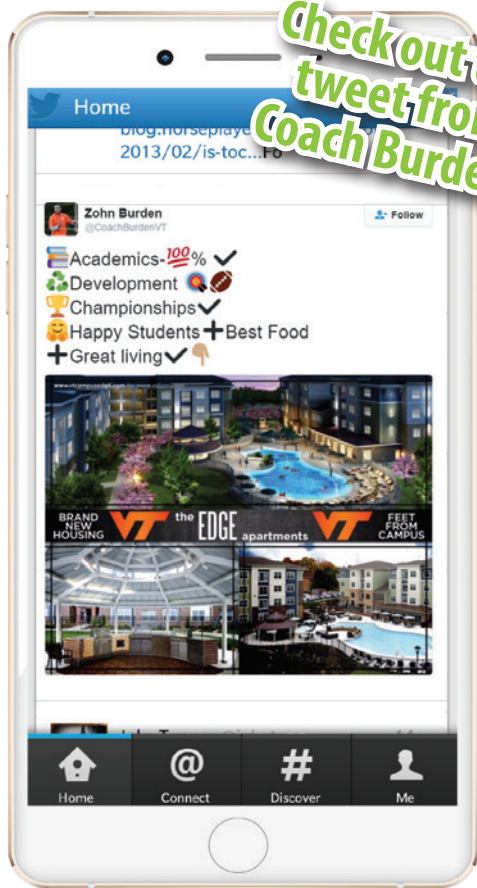
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