

INSIDE

HOKKIDAYS SPORTS

A Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

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Hunter Hall earned All-America honors at the NCAA's outdoor meet after his 10th-place finish in the pole vault.

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2009-2010



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John Rupe

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Currently Lives:

Pulaski, Va.

Q: What year did you graduate?

A: 1974

Q: A Hokie is ...

A: Someone with a deep sense of pride in the values, beliefs, traditions and mission of the university.

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

A: I have been an avid fan since the late '60s and I kept thinking someday Virginia Tech could compete with anyone in any sport.

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

A: Beating Texas in the Sugar Bowl; beating Memphis State in the Cassell; Shane Graham's field goal to beat WVU and send us to the national title game and Jeff King's diving reception to beat Miami and seal our first ACC football championship.

Q: I'm a Hokie club member because ...

A: I want to assist in providing our athletes the resources for their education and the facilities to compete with our peer institutions.

Q: What motivates you to be so involved with the Pulaski County Hokie Club?

A: Coach Beamer has often said, "We're all in this thing together." I want our members to feel they are an important part of the program.

Q: What accomplishment by the Pulaski County Hokie Club makes you the proudest?

A: Football recruit night is a crowd favorite; the annual Pig Out picnic kicks off the football season; the Spring Fling and a great board of directors (Keith Boyd, Roger Dean, Larry Gilmore, Gary Hall, C.E. Hughes, Fred Tilley). We have been offering football bus trips since 1994, which include the following attractions: Broadway, Yankee Stadium, historic Boston, Atlantic City and Bourbon Street.

Q: Do you have any tailgating traditions? If so, tell us your best.

A: Arrive early with beach music and try to tailor the tailgate menu to the opponent.

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

A: Bruce Smith and Michael Vick during his Virginia Tech career.

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

A: Johnny Oates, Franklin Stubbs, Bimbo Coles, Dell Curry and Angela Tincher.



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Kelly Phillips

Sophomore, Women's Track & Field
Skelton Award winner



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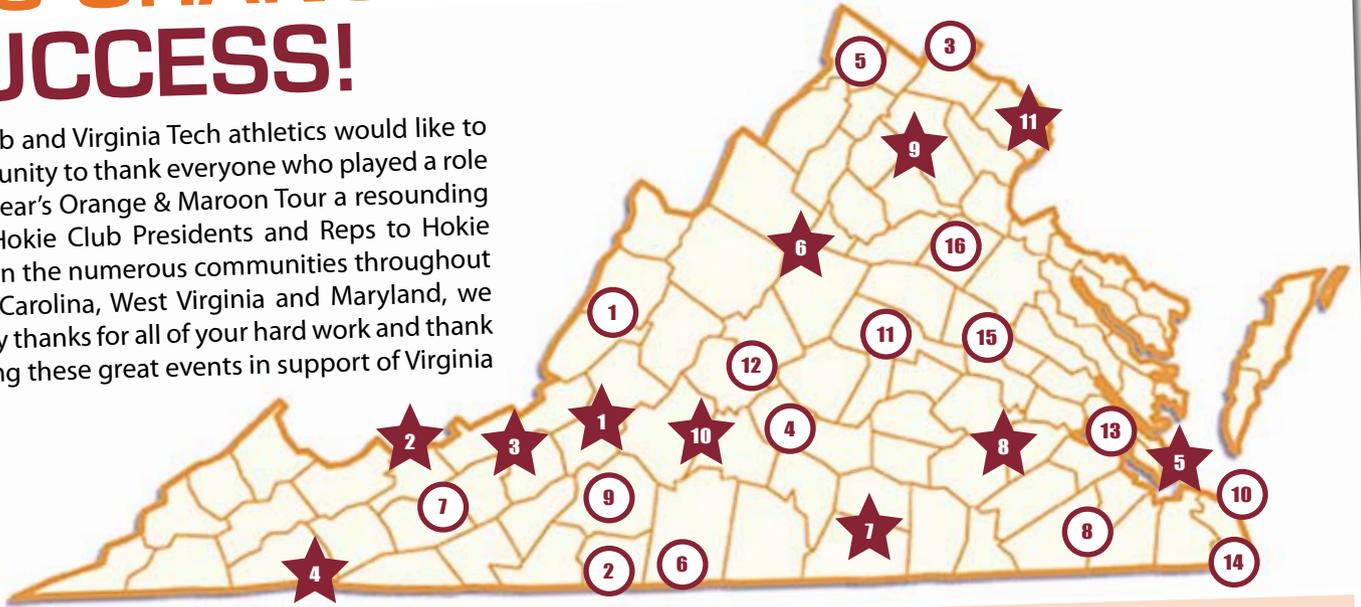
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- July 7 Away Game Order Form Deadline
- July 24-25 VTAF Summer Leadership Meetings



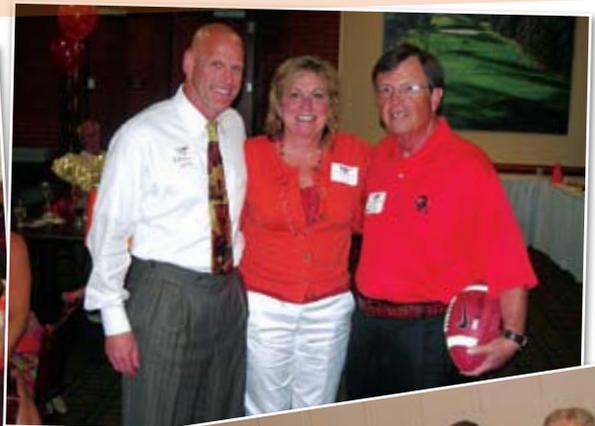
2009 ORANGE & MAROON TOUR A SUCCESS!

The Hokie Club and Virginia Tech athletics would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who played a role in making this year's Orange & Maroon Tour a resounding success. From Hokie Club Presidents and Reps to Hokie Club members in the numerous communities throughout Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia and Maryland, we would like to say thanks for all of your hard work and thank you for attending these great events in support of Virginia Tech athletics!



"The 2009 Orange and Maroon Tour was a big success! Thank you to all who helped plan the events and to those of you who sponsored and/or bid on auction items. Our coaches and our staff really enjoy being with you and sharing your passion for Virginia Tech athletics."

Lu Merritt, Director of Development for Intercollegiate Athletics





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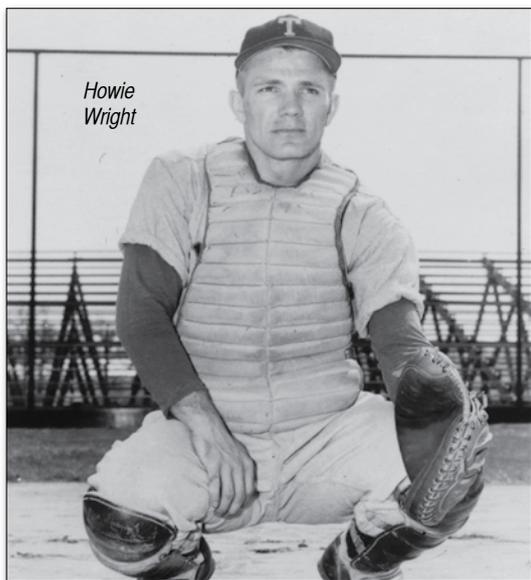
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News & Notes

By Jimmy Robertson



Hall of Famer passes away

Howard Irving Wright, better known among Hokie Nation as "Howie," passed away on June 5 at the age of 77 in Houston.

Wright was a three-sport standout at Tech in the early 1950s. He served as the co-captain of the undefeated 1954 football team and won the prestigious Williams Award, the top honor of that day which went to the member of the team who demonstrated leadership qualities and exerted moral influence upon his teammates. In baseball, he guided the Hokies to the Southern Conference championship and to their first ever NCAA Tournament appearance (1954), hitting .378, with five homers and 20 stolen bases that season. He also wrestled at Tech and ultimately lettered in all three sports.

He graduated in 1955 and then served two years in the Armed Forces, spending much of his time

in Germany. He returned and went to work for Texaco, where he worked for 36 years before retiring in 1991.

Wright was inducted into the Tech Hall of Fame in 1986.

A service was held in Klein, Texas, on June 8. Wright was buried during a ceremony on June 11 in his hometown of Dover, Del.

Tech AD receives top honor

Tech AD Jim Weaver was named the winner of the 2009 John L. Toner Award, which is presented annually by the National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF). The Toner Award goes each year to a director of athletics who has demonstrated superior administrative abilities and shown outstanding dedication to college athletics and particularly college football.

Weaver is completing his 12th year as Tech's director of athletics. During those 12 years, he has been a tireless leader on behalf of Tech athletics, earning praise for his emphasis on projects benefiting student-athletes, his commitment to the continued improvement of Tech's facilities and for presiding over Tech's move into the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Weaver will accept his award along with other major award winners at the NFF Annual Awards Dinner on December 8 at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York City.

Greenberg gets transfer

Tech men's basketball coach Seth Greenberg added another player to the roster this spring when he announced that Allan Chaney was transferring from the University of Florida to Tech. The Baltimore native played in 23 games as a freshman at Florida and will have three years of eligibility remaining once he sits out the 2009-10 season to meet NCAA requirements.

"He's a versatile forward with both perimeter

and post-up skills," Greenberg said. "Having come from the University of Florida, he truly understands what it takes to compete at the very highest level. We expect him to be an immediate contributor once he gains his eligibility."

Chaney averaged three points, 2.1 rebounds and 9.8 minutes per game at Florida. He missed nine games with a sprained foot. He played high school basketball at New London High School in New London, Conn., where he averaged 26 points and 15 rebounds per game as a senior.

Weaver qualifies for U.S. Open

Drew Weaver, a golfer who recently graduated from Tech, qualified for the U.S. Open Golf Championship held June 18-21 at the Black Course at Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale, N.Y. Weaver shot rounds of 69 and 70 at Woodmont Country Club, which served as the site for one of the 13 U.S. Open qualifying tournaments. He advanced out of a six-man playoff.

Following his senior season, Weaver made the PING All-America third team, as selected by the Golf Coaches Association of America. He has also been named to the 2009 PING All-East Region team. The High Point, N.C., native was a first-team All-Atlantic Coast Conference selection as a senior.

This is the second consecutive season that a Hokie has been named third-team All-America by the GCAA. In 2008, Jurrian van der Vaart earned the honor.

(For more on Drew Weaver, please read the golf spotlight on pg. 16-19.)

Upon further review ...

In the article on baseball pitcher Rhett Ballard in May issue, it was incorrectly reported that Ballard had previously spent time in prison. Although Ballard did get in some trouble, he never spent time in prison. Inside Hokie Sports offers its sincerest apologies to Rhett and his family for the misunderstanding. 

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Jimmy Robertson

In the athletics business, the month of June serves one of two purposes – it either provides time for camps or it allows for some vacation time for the staffs.

At Tech, though, this June has been the month for two rather important coaching moves.

And both came within a 24-hour span.

Arguably the biggest came when men's soccer head coach Oliver Weiss surprisingly announced his resignation on June 2 following seven seasons as the Hokies' head man. Weiss, who guided the Hokies to a 72-57-1 record and led the team to the NCAA's College Cup in 2007, cited his pursuit of other opportunities as the reason behind his departure.

Tech AD Jim Weaver quickly filled the spot nine days later, promoting Weiss' main assistant – and arguably the nicest guy in the athletics department – Mike Brizendine, who had been Weiss' top assistant for five years.

The decision makes sense on multiple fronts. First, there was little time for Weaver and his senior staff to embark on a national search for a soccer coach. Recruiting has already started for future years and most in the coaching profession are wedded to their current positions. Those factors alone limited the pool of candidates.

Plus, Brizendine's resume looks pretty good. He played at James Madison for four years and he dabbled in the professional ranks for a while before landing at Bridgewater College, a Division III school near Harrisonburg, Va. He

MOVES IN THE COACHING RANKS NOT THE NORM DURING THE SUMMER

worked his way into a head coaching position and his men's team went 23-13 over his final two seasons. As a head coach at a Division III school, he certainly knows how to work.

Finally, he recruited a lot of players that helped Weiss to that 72-57-1 record. He knows them and the expectations of the program at Tech.

"Briz has been a pivotal contributor in the development of the program and I'm happy to see that he will be rewarded with such a great opportunity," said James Gilson, one of the Hokies' returning players. "He has been very dedicated since I have been here and I am confident he will be successful."

"He possesses the skills we value in our head coaches," Weaver said in a statement announcing Brizendine's hire. "He has a great deal of experience in coaching, including three seasons as a collegiate head coach. Mike is respected as an outstanding recruiter and is proven to be an effective communicator."

Twenty-four hours after the Brizendine announcement, Tech men's basketball coach Seth Greenberg made an all-important hire, adding Bill Courtney to his staff to replace Stacey Palmore, who left to take an assistant's job at Georgia. Courtney had just gotten a job at VCU under new coach Shaka Smart, but had spent the previous three seasons at Virginia under Dave Leitao before losing his job after Leitao was dismissed following this past season.

This, too, figures to be a good hire. Greenberg opted for some Division I experience with this hire, as Courtney has coached

at the Division I level since 1995.

Courtney helped Jim Larranaga build George Mason into a big-time winner, recruiting most of the prominent players on Mason's 2006 Final Four team. Courtney, who coached a season at Providence before moving on to Virginia, possesses a ton of contacts in the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore areas from his days at George Mason, and that obviously appealed to Greenberg. Some of Tech's better players, including current standouts Jeff Allen and Malcolm Delaney and incoming transfer Allan Chaney, all hail from those areas.

"We are very fortunate to have Bill joining our staff," Greenberg said in a statement announcing Courtney's hiring. "He is a seasoned veteran who understands recruiting at the very highest level. He assisted Jim Larranaga in building George Mason into an elite program in the CAA [Colonial Athletic Association] and everyone that I have spoken with has the highest regard for his ability to coach, teach and mentor. He will help us to continue to build the Virginia Tech brand in college basketball."

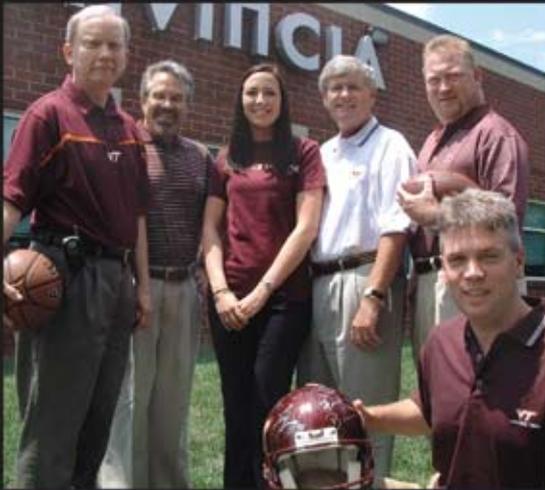
You rarely see these types of important hires made in June. It's usually a month for other tasks of less serious note in the athletics world.

Usually, that is. 

Looking ahead

The next issue of Inside Hokie Sports will be the football preview issue and it will be mailed around mid-August. No issue will be mailed during the month of July.

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Bill Roth



SELLING TECH'S PROGRAM AN EASY TASK FOR WILES

When Charley Wiles was finishing up his college football playing days as an offensive lineman at Murray State back in the late 1980s, he didn't really envision a career in coaching.

Marketing? That would be fun. It would tap into his creative side.

Business? That would definitely fit his personality.

Sales? The jovial, friendly Wiles would knock 'em dead in sales, plus he had a competitive nature that would make him ultra-successful.

Sales, he thought, would definitely be the ticket.

As for coaching, well, his brother Billy was the coach in the family. Billy coached every sport in town from recreation basketball to

football. Everyone knew Billy Wiles would be a terrific coach, which he is to this day in Florida.

Even when Charley became a graduate assistant coach at Virginia Tech, he did so to "continue my education," and not necessarily to get into the coaching business.

But now, 20 years later, Wiles is a key man in the success of Virginia Tech's football program as the Hokies' defensive line coach. His ability to recruit high-caliber players and develop outstanding linemen has made him one of the ACC's most valuable assistants.

Wiles' gregarious personality, his non-stop motor, his drive to succeed and his knack to teach and communicate with kids have made him a winner in the living room and on the football field. And he's the first to admit

coaching at Tech beats selling widgets.

"It's funny how things work out," Wiles said. "I was thrilled with just playing the game and that was always my goal – just to play. But the relationship with coaches (Frank Beamer and Bud Foster) at Murray got me going into coaching when I was done playing.

"Timing is everything. Coach Beamer got the job here in December of my senior year, and I called him at home from my dad's kitchen in Waverly, Tenn., and I asked him if I could be a graduate assistant, and he said, 'Yeah, you're in!' I graduated from Murray State and started as a GA at Tech the next year."

Wiles immediately caught the "coaching bug" and decided he'd like to coach at Tech. But for that to happen, he had to leave



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Blacksburg and get a full-time job, first at East Tennessee State and then at his alma mater, where he worked for a first-year head coach named Houston Nutt.

"That was the turning point in my coaching career," Wiles said. "When Houston Nutt came in, he was such a young, energetic guy. I saw and learned how to recruit."

Wiles spent three years with Nutt at Murray State, helping the Racers to an 11-0 regular season in 1995.

"Seeing him in the living room and seeing him at a home with a kid was amazing," Wiles said. "We recruited that first class at Murray. It was just a stack of VHS tapes and I had a list of kids we wanted to recruit. He and I hit the road and we pretty much recruited that class in the next year. Three years later, we won 11 games."

Football recruiting, Wiles learned, was just like sales – selling a program, selling a coach and selling a school. It was right up his alley.

"The key is being very flexible," he said. "Talk a bunch of different languages. Be down to earth and be real and genuine. Don't be intimidated going into certain areas or certain peoples' homes. Be Charley Wiles. Be yourself. You're going to run across a lot of different types of people."

With that in mind, Wiles left Murray State and came back to Tech in 1996. Since then, he's recruited many of Virginia Tech's out-of-state players like Stephan Virgil, Lorenzo Williams, Bruce Taylor, and this year, Jayron Hosley, a highly touted cornerback from Florida, who was a late catch for the Hokies.

"Coming in late, they (Hosley's family) had heard nothing from us and it was after Christmas when we really made contact," Wiles said. "The kid had 20 offers back in May of '08 (including Ohio State, Michigan, South Florida, Clemson and others).

"But the first time I met his mom and dad was in January after we won the Orange Bowl. We had some good things in our favor. We had Brandon (Flowers) and David (Clowney, both of whom had played at Atlantic High School in Delray Beach). Getting his mom and dad on board was huge. That's an example of getting in late and winning a recruiting battle."

The Hosley family felt that instant connection with Wiles, as many others do. He was able to close the deal and continue that pipeline from Atlantic High School.

"We've been able to build a heckuva product," Wiles said. "We are winning games and graduating players. Coach Beamer is a legend. I've been fortunate to be part of something special."

Since Wiles' return to Blacksburg in '96, the Hokies have been big winners. They beat Alabama in a bowl game and then played for the national championship in 1999.

"It's been great," Wiles said. "Our player pool continues to get better and the Commonwealth of Virginia continues to get better. Coach has always made Virginia the core of our recruiting."

That core includes a remarkable defensive tackle from Richmond named John Graves, who has blossomed since arriving in Blacksburg under Wiles. He also has recruited and coached Jason Worilds at Tech. The rising redshirt junior from New Jersey is one of the ACC's most dynamic defensive ends.

Wiles mentioned championships, and Tech has won the ACC in back-to-back years. Is that defensive front ready to make a run at a national championship? Does it have that dominating defensive tackle you see at some other schools who might also be in that mix this fall?

"I think we're definitely good enough," Wiles said. "I don't know if we have a top-five NFL

pick in there like (Glenn) Dorsey at LSU right now. But I think we have enough good players to get it done. It takes more than one."

Wiles said the coaching staff has worked very hard on building team chemistry, which was one of the keys to the Hokies' 2008 success.

"The 'team' concept is the most important thing," Wiles said. "Chemistry. We spent a lot of time on team building and making sure we don't have a bad kid in there or have an issue. We have to make sure our team fits together well and we are making sure our team chemistry is right because that's going to win for you in tight ball games. To be honest, that's the key."

Working under legendary coaches like Beamer and Foster, Wiles has learned from two of the best in the business. And he's added his own personality, his own stamp on Tech's program.

"I'm coaching because I only know one way to do it – full speed all the time," Wiles said. "I'm part of a great program and I want to pull my weight and do my part and please Coach. We want to have success as a group. Coach Beamer has always said, 'If you don't act special, you'll get treated special.' He said that to us as players and now as coaches. We aren't anything special and that's how we act here."

If Charley Wiles wasn't coaching at Tech, he'd be a successful businessman somewhere, rallying his co-workers and leading by example. He'd be some company's top seller.

Fortunately for Virginia Tech football, he is in Blacksburg, helping to keep the Hokies' defense among the best in the nation each and every year.

And he's having a blast doing it. 

(For more on Charley Wiles, check out Bill Roth's Kroger Roth Report on hokiesports.com)



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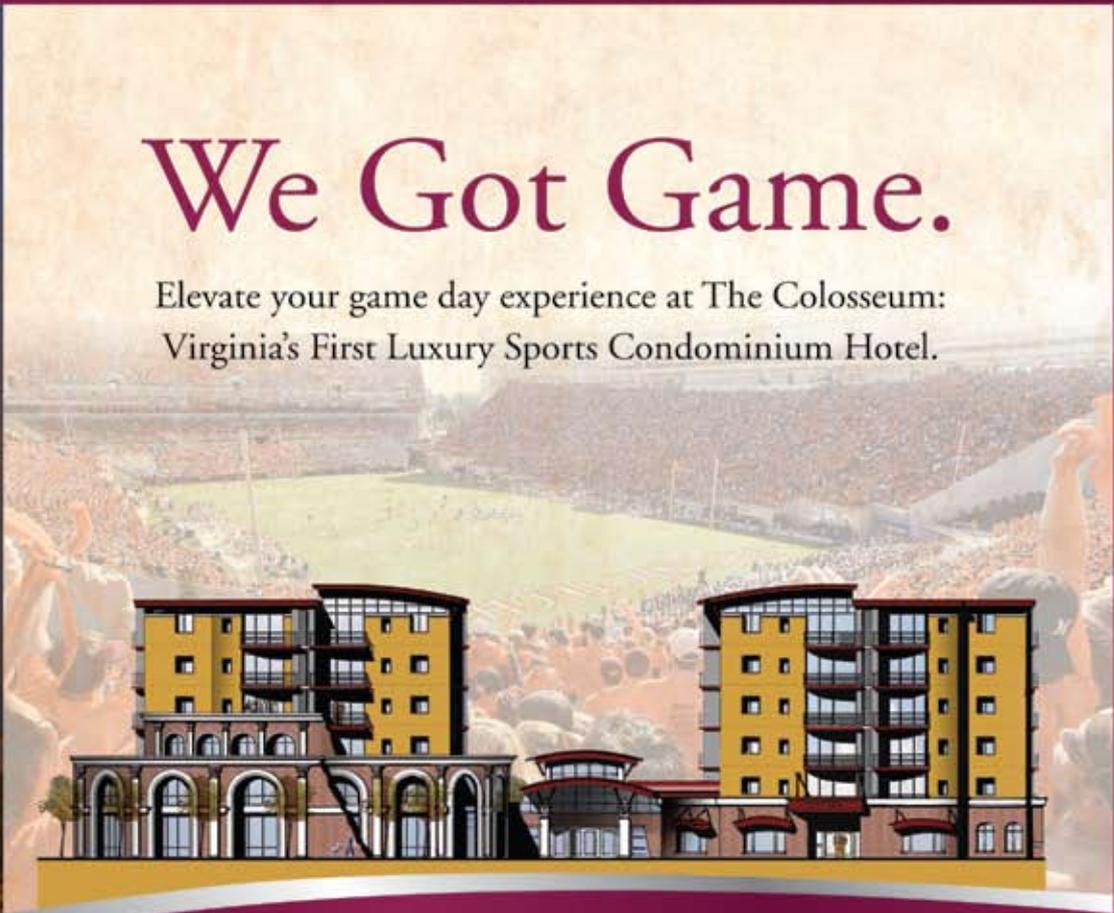
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COMPLIANCE OFFICE ADDRESSES ISSUES OF ATHLETES AND PROMOTIONS

By Jimmy Robertson

In early May, a story broke concerning Tech football players promoting certain events by having their photos appear on fliers, thus creating the potential for NCAA violations. The story created much angst among Hokie Nation, and Tim Parker decided to address the issue in this magazine's Compliance Corner.

For starters, Parker, Tech's assistant AD for compliance and resident veteran of NCAA rules' affairs, said this is a topic that he deals with on an annual basis.

"We all deal with this one," Parker said. "Every ACC school, every SEC school ... we all face this. It's so easy now to pull photos off the Internet. You just toss it up on the flier. It's really easy to use anyone else's image without them knowing about it. It's actually amazing to me that we don't have to deal with this more, honestly."

The gist of the story was this: the photos of quarterback Tyrod Taylor and free safety Kam Chancellor appeared on fliers promoting five different events in the Tidewater area last year. Taylor attended three of the events, while Chancellor went to one. Neither knew that their photos had been used on the fliers.

"That's really the key element," Parker said. "The names and images were used without their permission. We run into this type of situation a couple times a year, where a promoter will use an athlete's name or likeness to promote an event. If the event hasn't occurred, we send out cease-and-desist orders. If the event has already happened, we'll get in touch with the promoters and make them aware of the NCAA rule so this doesn't happen again. It's pretty run-of-the-mill stuff."

Also, tight end Greg Boone's photo was used to promote an event, and former Tech players Branden Ore and Purnell Sturdivant

saw their photos used as well. None of the players gave their permission for their photos to be used.

According to NCAA Bylaw 12.5.1.1, a student-athlete cannot promote any event unless it's a non-profit event, and even then, certain criteria must be met. Some of the criteria include:

- The name or picture of a student-athlete with remaining eligibility may not appear on an institution's printed promotional item (e.g., poster, calendar) that includes a reproduction of a product with which a commercial entity is associated if the commercial entity's officially registered regular trademark or logo also appears on the item;

- All moneys derived from the activity or project go directly to the member institution, member conference or the charitable, educational or nonprofit agency;

- The student-athlete's name, picture or appearance is not used to promote the commercial ventures of any nonprofit agency.

In addition, NCAA bylaw 12.5.2.1 speaks to non-permissible promotions. According to the rule, after one becomes a student-athlete, he or she is not eligible for participation in intercollegiate athletics if:

- He or she accepts any remuneration for or permits the use of his or her name or picture to advertise, recommend or promote directly the sale or use of a commercial product or service of any kind; or

- He or she receives remuneration for endorsing a commercial product or service through the individual's use of such product or service.

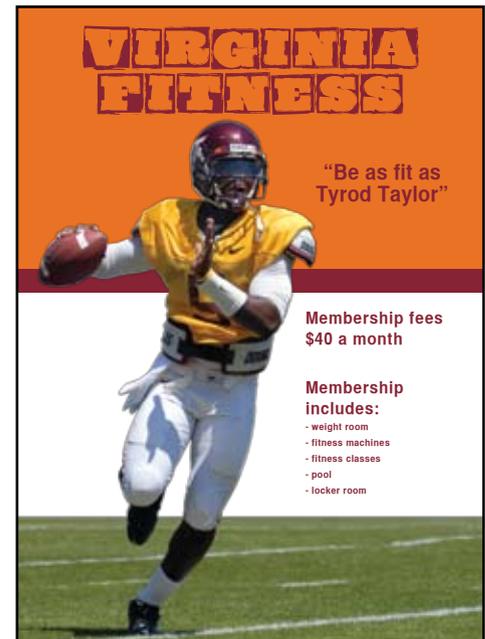
Parker met with Taylor, Chancellor and Boone. All three paid their own way to the events and received nothing in the form of compensation. Parker addressed the issue

with all three and explained the NCAA's rationale behind the rules.

The whole issue came to life when Taylor posted photos of one of the events on his Facebook page. One of the fliers served as the profile photo of Taylor's Facebook page.

"It wasn't a good decision (to put the fliers up)," Parker said. "But if I'm 20 and I see myself on a poster, I would think, 'Hey, that's pretty cool. I'm going to put that on my Facebook.' I can see why he would do that. Clearly he wasn't thinking about NCAA rules when he did it."

"But this was a harmless situation and our guys were not involved in the planning or on the front end of this promotion." 



This flier, promoting a fictional fitness center, is an example of an advertisement that violates NCAA regulations. Athletes often have their images or names used for profit without their knowledge.

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WEAVER PLAYS THROUGH HIS PAST

DESPITE SOME HORRIFYING INCIDENTS IN HIS PAST, DREW WEAVER BECAME A TERRIFIC GOLFER AND AN EVEN BETTER AMBASSADOR FOR HIS UNIVERSITY

By Jimmy Robertson



Days following Virginia Tech's graduation ceremony in which he proudly accepted his degree in marketing, Drew Weaver sat at his family's home in High Point, N.C., and found himself going a little stir crazy.

He had one of those utmost of rarities on his hands – free time.

After years of managing a schedule in which literally every minute of the day served a specific and important function, he had nothing to do – no classes, no studying, no research, no meetings, no mandatory golf practice, no training, no packing for events, no traveling and no worrying about fitting the puzzle pieces of his life together.

He sat at home, trying to relax and to breathe for the first time in quite some while. He had time, life's most cherished resource.

Yet he felt strange.

"It does feel different," Weaver said. "It's hard to believe everything has come to an end. I've got kind of this empty feeling now. I've had so much on my plate for so long that it just feels odd not having all these obligations."

Weaver played golf at Virginia Tech for four years and played it well. And, of course, he will continue to play golf. He has a summer filled with amateur events in hopes of making the U.S. Walker Cup team, a team of

amateur players selected by the United States Golf Association to compete in a match-play event against amateurs from Great Britain and Ireland during odd-numbered years. This year, the Walker Cup will be played on Sept. 12-13 at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pa.

But he just walked off the 18th green of his stellar Virginia Tech career. For all he accomplished during his four years, he deserves a round of applause from the orange-and-maroon patrons. For the ambassador he's been for the university, he deserves a standing ovation.

It's deserved because, somehow, he managed to get up and out of the rough of life.

He got his start in golf like most. Right around the age of 10, he wedged himself into his father's golf cart and watched in awe as John Weaver toiled around High Point Country Club making the game look easy (at least to Drew). Then Drew got his own set of golf clubs and started attempting shots of his own. He drew a particular fondness for plopping his ball in the sand and then blasting out toward the hole.

Those times with his father only served to tee up his interest in the sport. They were, in golf lexicon, the shotgun start to his golf career.

"My dad was my biggest influence," Weaver said. "He has played for most of his life and I'd go out with him and I'd try different shots. I kept enjoying it and then I gradually became passionate about it. I couldn't get enough of it. I'd play a ton of golf every year."

He became a regular at the course, practically bunking there each evening. Jim Brotherton, the director of golf at the club, knew the Weaver family well. He ultimately became Weaver's swing instructor and got him lined up in the right direction toward a promising career.

"I knew he had the desire," Brotherton said. "I always knew he'd make it up the ladder. The question was 'How far?' But he always loved golf and he followed the sport religiously. That's unique. You don't always see that desire in junior golfers."

But Weaver's career certainly hasn't been a smooth drive down the middle of the fairway.

For starters, at the age of 10, his mother, Cathy, was taking him to see the orthodontist when she suddenly fell ill. An artery spontaneously ripped apart, and only divine intervention kept her from heading to the big course in the sky.

In essence, she got a mulligan.
"Absolutely miraculous," Cathy said as to how she survived.

Drew was a little angry at his parents for not letting him know about his mother's health issues, and it took some time for them to get their 10-year-old son to understand that they didn't have a clue that anything would happen.

Still shaken, Drew got the scare of his life 10 days later. The parent of a friend took him and his best buddy to McDonald's near the family's home. He and his friend went to the bathroom, and while washing their hands, a man burst into the bathroom and attacked another man, slashing his throat.

"That was truly horrible," Cathy said. "Drew wouldn't even talk to us about it. Fortunately, he worked with a counselor and that helped, but it was seven or eight years before he could bring it up to us in a conversation."

"I was totally frightened at the time," Drew said. "I wouldn't go into a McDonald's for four or five years after that."

Two years after that incident, Drew's grandfather, a pharmacist, was shot in a robbery. Fortunately, his grandfather survived.

Then, three years after that, at the age of 15, Drew was practicing with a high school teammate at a public course not far from a rough section of town. Two assailants in ski masks approached them on the course and

claimed to have a gun. Drew, fearful for his life, gave him all the cash he had – a robust sum of \$22.

"I haven't played that course since," he said.

Talk about drawing a bad lie in life, he certainly had up to this point.

"He had been exposed to a lot of violence at a young age," Cathy said. "As a parent, you certainly don't want that for your kid. None of us do."

"When you've been through so many things like that, you get to a point where you don't feel the horror. Our concern was that he would become numb to it. When you get to a point where you don't feel anything, that's when it's really dangerous."

All these things had happened before he even had his driver's license. Whether on the golf course or at school or doing whatever, those things certainly gave him a perspective uncommon among his peers.

Yet nothing could have prepared him for what was to transpire several years later while a sophomore at Virginia Tech – April 16, 2007.

Drew Weaver's career at Tech has been marked by consistency. As a freshman in 2005-06, he earned the team's rookie of the year honor. His sophomore season, he quickly became one of the leaders on the team, along with senior Ryan Sypniewski.

But Weaver's life changed forever one cold April morning while walking to a biology class. Shots rang out at Norris Hall, and he and a few other students saw a rush of police officers heading toward Norris. A few of the police officers yelled toward Weaver and the others and told them to run, and a group of them, including Weaver, sprinted toward the Newman Library.

They holed up there for more than three hours. During that time, Weaver called his mom to inform her of the situation and to let her know that he was okay. Then came the news that a student had taken 32 lives before taking his own in the worst mass shooting in United States history.

Weaver certainly didn't need such an event to put things into perspective. He already knew life became more than just hitting a little white ball around a sea of green expanse.

"Definitely," he said. "Obviously what happened to me wasn't on the scale of what happened on April 16 and getting through it wasn't easy – not for any of us. But I had been through some similar things.

"That doesn't mean I was numb to what happened. It altered my way of thinking. All of that stuff has. In my case, you realize how trivial golf is. If I didn't play well, it's not that big of a deal. There are worse things in life."

Time stopped in Blacksburg for several days as the campus and the community



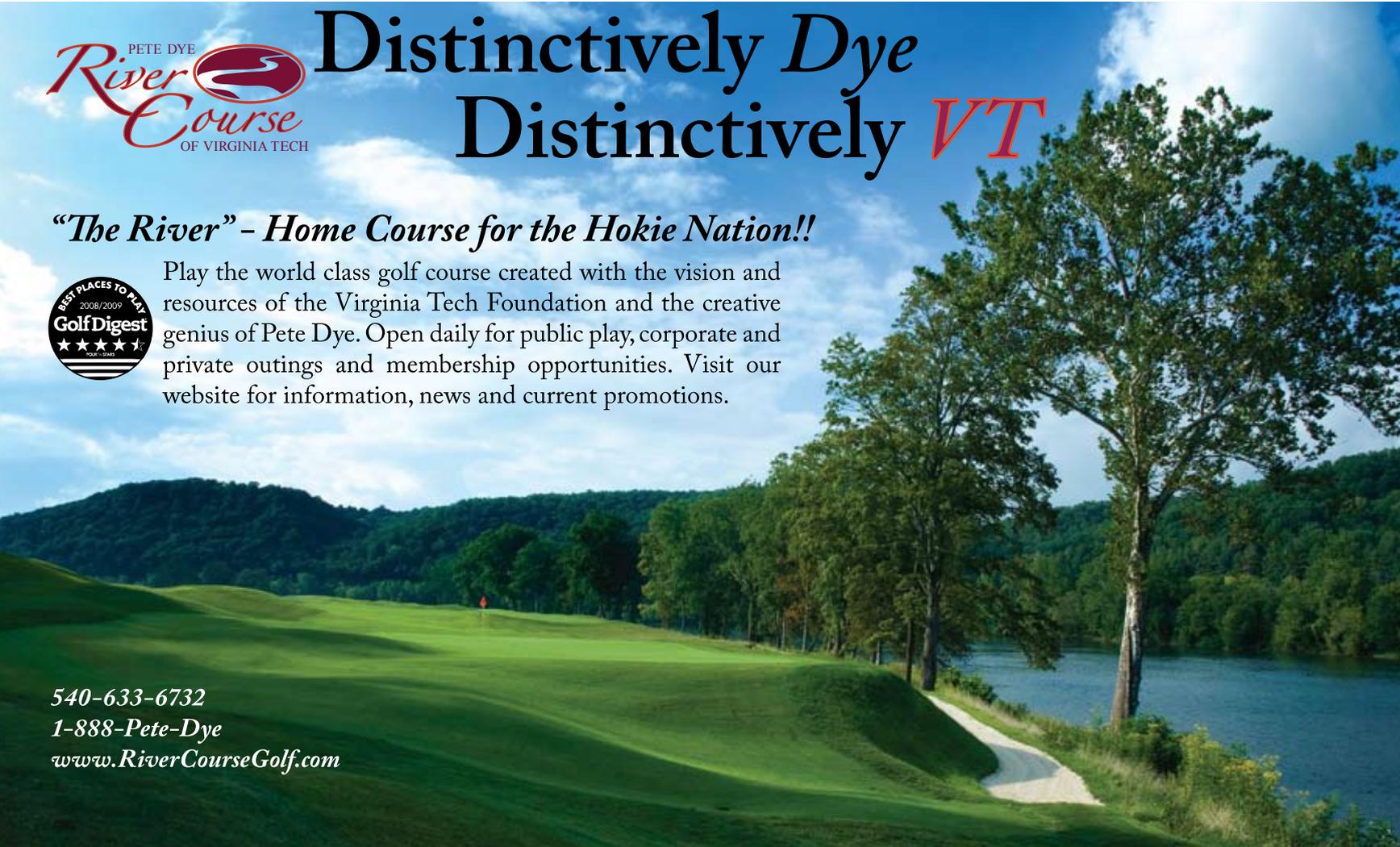
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“Obviously what happened to me wasn’t on the scale of what happened on April 16 and getting through it wasn’t easy – not for any of us. But I had been through some similar things. That doesn’t mean I was numb to what happened. It altered my way of thinking. All of that stuff has. In my case, you realize how trivial golf is. If I didn’t play well, it’s not that big of a deal. There are worse things in life.” – Drew Weaver

searched for some semblance of normalcy. Tech’s athletics teams gradually returned to competition, including the golf team.

Perhaps in a twist of fate, Tech’s golf team pulled off a stunning finish at the ACC Championship just a week following the shooting. Expectations were tepid for the golf team heading into the ACC Championship – after all, golf may be the league’s best and most competitive sport. But the Hokies, led by Sypniewski and Weaver, rallied on the final day to claim a share of the championship with Georgia Tech. Sypniewski finished in a tie for third, while Weaver finished 12th.

That championship, maybe more than any other in Tech’s recent history, spurred the healing process.

But Weaver himself took care of a larger part of that process just weeks after that event.

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews’ convoluted ranking system for amateurs resulted in Weaver receiving a surprise invitation to play in the British Amateur that June. He and his parents traveled across

the big pond fully expecting to take in some sights, while Weaver played a little golf.

Nothing was expected from Weaver. After all, he went into it ranked No. 181 in the world in the amateur rankings, and he had never played a links-style course – with sand dunes, thick rough, deep bunkers and water hazards. Royal Lytham and St. Anne’s figured to humble his game.

The tournament consisted of two rounds of stroke play, with the top 64 advancing to match play. Weaver, with his dad caddying for him, actually made it out of stroke play easily and the momentum started to build.

He won five matches in match play, advancing to the championship match against Tim Stewart of Australia. He dominated the 36-hole final, leading by six with six holes to play. Stewart, though, won hole No. 13 and climbed back in it.

But Weaver drained a 7-footer for par on No. 17 to halve the hole and win the championship in one of the biggest upsets in British Amateur history. The stunning win marked the first by an American in the

One week after the tragedy that occurred on April 16, Virginia Tech’s golf team rallied on the final day to claim a share of the ACC golf championship - the program’s first since joining the league.



British Amateur since Jay Sigel won the event in 1979.

“I knew Drew was a good player,” Brotherton said. “Now, winning the British Amateur ... that was a surprise. But I talked with him each night while he was over there and I could sense he was relaxed and confident. He had shot 64 here before he left, so I told him to just play like he was at home.”

After the victory, he wasn’t thinking about

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his exemptions to The Open Championship (British Open) that July or for the 2008 Masters, or the four-year exemption to the U.S. Amateur. Instead, he immediately dedicated it to the 32 who died and the many others injured on that tragic day.

But more importantly, his victory rallied Hokie Nation. At a time when the campus and community needed something positive to happen, he provided it. He spoke glowingly of Virginia Tech in the deluge of interviews that followed, including a couple on ABC during the week of The Open Championship. He rallied the orange-and-maroon base, and they will always respect him for it.

"It's [the shootings] always going to be with you," Weaver said shortly after his victory. "But this is not what we want to be remembered for. I wanted to do my part to portray a positive image for the university and I hope I helped."

.....
 Weaver failed to make the cut at The Open Championship that July and then again at the Masters the following spring. He didn't play up to his standards



Drew Weaver holds the trophy for winning the British Amateur in 2007.



Drew Weaver (left) and Johnson Wagner, a former Tech golfer himself, engaged in a conversation during the par-3 tournament before the start of the 2008 Masters. Weaver received an invitation to play at the Masters following his British Amateur victory.

during the spring of his junior year, perhaps wanting too much to uphold a university and community that adored him. He finished in 23rd place at the ACC Championships and 58th at the NCAA regional.

"I don't think I could ever have expected what comes out of doing something like that," Weaver said of his British Amateur victory. "There were a lot of positives and I wouldn't change a thing. But there were a lot of expectations, and as a 20-year-old trying to juggle everything, it was very difficult.

"You go out there thinking you've just got to play well. But you can't think that way. You've got to block it out or it will have negative consequences. I think I do that well now."

His senior season certainly reflected that. He recorded four top-five finishes, seven top-10 finishes and nine top-20 finishes in 11 tournaments. He finished second on two occasions, and earned All-ACC and All-America honors for his efforts. The only thing missing was a victory – something Weaver

never accomplished in his collegiate career. "That's frustrating," he said. "I was probably in legit contention to win in seven of those tournaments, so yeah, it's frustrating.

"But I had great improvement and that's what you want. I got better and better all four years. My work ethic is good and I have the desire and drive. I just need to finish and that's the hardest thing to do in golf. But if I continue to work hard, it'll happen."

The hard work appears to be paying off. He recently qualified for the U.S. Open, and if he makes the Walker Cup team, he'll turn professional after that event later this fall. The ultimate goal is making the PGA Tour.

That certainly matters little to Tech alums. No matter what he accomplishes from here on out, they'll remember him not so much for how he played, but for his approach to the most tragic of incidents.

Yet for Weaver, a PGA Tour card would be deserving. After all, he's already navigated the doglegs of life's course. A tour card – now that would only be the ultimate hole in one. 



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TRACK AND FIELD CAPS TECH'S ATHLETICS YEAR WITH SEVEN ALL-AMERICA PERFORMANCES

By Matt Kovatch

Because the track and field season lasts so long, it tends to sometimes get unfairly lost in the shuffle. But while most of Tech's campus was long gone for the summer, the Hokies' track and field squad was still hard at work in anticipation of its crowning moment, the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The collegiate season's final event took place June 10-13 in Fayetteville, Ark., and the Hokies had a wildly successful trip that was highlighted by Virginia Tech's biggest headline – track and field or otherwise – of the 2008-09 academic year.

Just in case you didn't look at the cover before opening this magazine, hammer thrower Marcel Lomnický reached the sport's pinnacle – as a freshman, no less – by winning the national championship in his event on June 12. It was just the fifth national title in school history, with the other four all coming from another thrower, Spyridon Jullien, in 2005 and 2006. There's more on Lomnický on page 26, but he wasn't the only one making waves in Arkansas.

Seven of the eight Hokies who made the trip to the meet earned All-America status, with only senior Natalie Sherbak falling short. That didn't stop the women's team from making a little history, though, as it went on to claim an outdoor program-best 12th-place finish. There's no telling how much higher that finish would have been had Sherbak fared better and had 2008 Olympian and 2009 ACC Performer of the Year Queen Harrison been available for the meet. Harrison did not qualify because of a hamstring injury suffered between the ACC Championships (where she won both hurdling events) and the NCAA East Regional.

In addition to Lomnický, pole vaulters Yavgeniy Olhovskiy and Hunter Hall helped the men's team to a 16th-place finish, its best showing since tying for 12th in 2006 thanks to Jullien's final national title of his career. That also could have been higher, but javelin thrower Matthias Treff did not compete after undergoing elbow surgery following the NCAA East Regional.

Texas A&M won the team championship on both the men's and women's sides.

Here's a look at how each of the Hokies who competed at the national meet fared. *Note: The top eight finishers in each event, no matter their nationality, are named All-Americans. But if, for example, two of those top eight are non-American athletes, the*

next two highest-placing American athletes will also be named All-Americans.

MARCEL LOMNICKÝ – Men's Hammer Throw

The freshman from Nitra, Slovakia, won the national title by a healthy margin, as his toss of 235 feet, 6 inches topped the second-place throw by more than three feet. He entered the meet having recorded the nation's third-best toss of the outdoor season, and he had won the event two weeks earlier at the NCAA East Regional with a throw of 232 feet, 5 inches. See page 26 for more on Inside Hokie Sports' athlete of the year.

HUNTER HALL – Men's Pole Vault

Just a sophomore, Hall became an All-American for the second time in four months after finishing seventh at the NCAA Indoor Championships in March. This time, he placed 10th with a vault of 17 feet, 2.75 inches to record an outdoor career best. The Fort Wayne, Ind., product qualified for the national meet by taking third at the NCAA East Regional.

YAVGENIY OLHOVSKIY – Men's Pole Vault

Olhovskiy, who was the runner-up in the pole vault at the NCAA Indoor Championships in March, concluded a fantastic junior season by tying for fourth with South Carolina's Marvin Reitze. The Petah-Tikya, Israel, native cleared 17 feet, 6.5 inches to cement his place among the nation's elite, as it was his fourth All-America showing in a row. Olhovskiy placed second at last year's outdoor championships and fifth at last year's indoor meet. His most recent accomplishment almost never happened because of a disappointing performance at the NCAA East Regional, where he tied for fifth and had to win a jump-off to advance to the national meet.

KRISTI CASTLIN – Women's 100-meter Hurdles

The junior from Douglasville, Ga., added to her impressive resume by turning in her best effort at an outdoor national meet during her three seasons. Castlin was the country's runner-up in the 100-meter hurdles on June 13, clocking in at a time of 13.15 seconds to collect the fifth All-America honor



Yavgeniy Olhovskiy collected All-America honors in the pole vault for the fourth time in his career at the NCAA Outdoor Championships, aiding in the men's team's 16th-place finish.

of her storied career. She ran the semifinals in 13.09 seconds a day earlier to punch her ticket to the finals. The performance came two weeks after she ran a season-best 12.89 seconds to claim the NCAA East Regional crown.

DOROTEA HABAZIN – Women's Hammer Throw

Habazin had a breakout season as a sophomore and it culminated with the first All-America performance of her career, a fourth-place finish in the hammer throw on June 12. Her throw of 214 feet, 11 inches was the latest in a string of accomplishments for the product of Zagreb, Croatia. She had previously won the event at both the NCAA East Regional and the ACC Championships, and she also set the new Virginia Tech record (216 feet, 6 inches) at the Georgia Tech Invite on May 15.



Kristi Castlin was the national runner-up in the 100-meter hurdles, helping the women's track and field squad to a 12th-place finish at the NCAA Outdoor Championships.

BRITTANY PRYOR
 – Women's Hammer Throw and Discus

Pryor was the only Hokie to compete in two events at the national championships, and she collected All-America honors in one of them to give her six career All-America nods. The most recent one came in the hammer throw, where she joined Habazin by placing 10th in the event with a toss of 188 feet, 10 inches. Pryor took third in the hammer throw at both the NCAA East Regional and at the ACC Championships. The redshirt senior from Niagara Falls, N.Y., also competed in the discus, an event that she won at both the NCAA East Regional and the ACC Championships. At the national meet, though, she fell just shy of the top 10, placing 11th with a heave of 155 feet, 6 inches.

NATALIE SHERBAK
 – Women's 10,000 Meters

Sherbak, a redshirt senior from Virginia Beach, began the 10,000-meter run on June 11, but was unable to finish, pulling out of the contest at the 7-kilometer mark. It was an anticlimactic end to an otherwise magnificent year, one that saw her win the event at the ACC Championships. She was an All-American in the mile at the NCAA Indoor Championships, as well as the

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3,000-meter champion at the ACC's indoor meet in February.

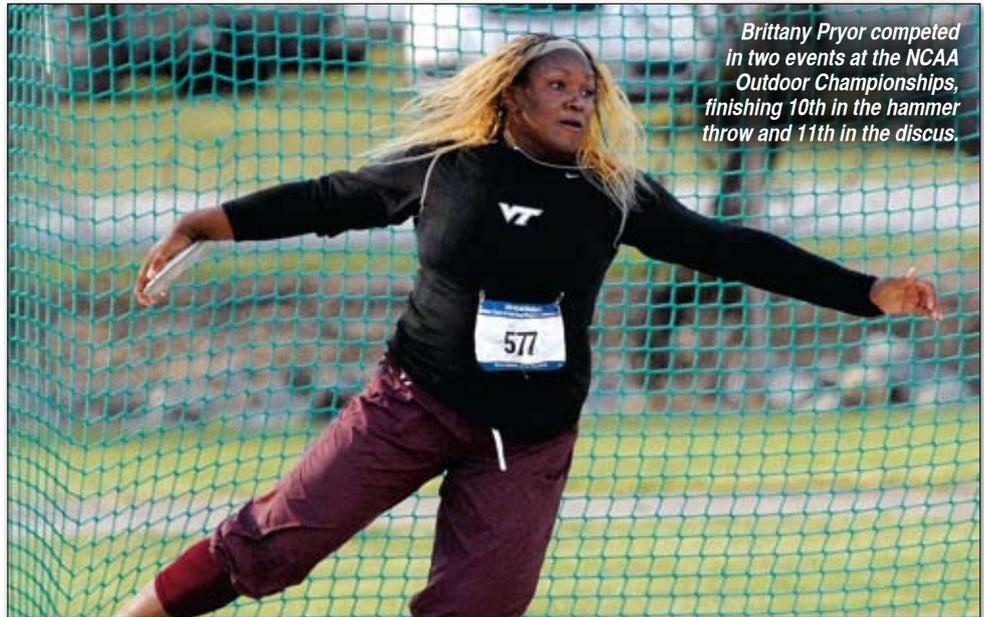
ASIA WASHINGTON

– Women's 400-meter Hurdles

Washington, a junior from Piscataway, N.J., took fourth place in the 400-meter hurdles to capture the second All-America accolade of her career. She achieved All-America status at the 2007 indoor national meet by running the 800-meter leg of the fourth-place distance medley relay squad. She punched her ticket to the 2009 outdoor championships with an at-large bid because she held the nation's fifth-fastest time of the season prior to the East Regional, where she only finished sixth. She made the most of her invitation, clocking in at 57.05 seconds to score five team points toward the Hokies' effort.

In other Tech sports news ...

Two Tech baseball players were chosen in the 2009 Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on June 10, with outfielder Steve Bumbry going to the Baltimore Orioles in the 12th round and pitcher Rhett Ballard going to the Colorado Rockies in the 26th round. Pitching recruit Joe Mantiply of Danville, Va., who signed a national letter-of-intent with the Hokies in the fall, was selected in the 48th round by the New York Mets ...



Brittany Pryor competed in two events at the NCAA Outdoor Championships, finishing 10th in the hammer throw and 11th in the discus.

Steve Domecus was named to the All-ACC baseball second team following the season, becoming the first Hokie baseball player to be named to an All-ACC team in Tech's five seasons in the league ... In addition to Jenna Rhodes' accolades outlined on page 45, softball players Charisse Mariconda and Jessica Everhart were each named to both the NFCA Mid-Atlantic All-Region Team and the VaSID All-State First Team ... Junior men's

tennis player Pedro Graber was named to the 2009 *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-American District III At-Large University Division Team ... The 2009 Virginia Tech wrestling signing class has been ranked fifth nationally by *W.I.N. Magazine*, just behind national powers Minnesota, Oklahoma State, Nebraska and Oklahoma. For head coach Kevin Dresser, it's his third top-10 class in as many years. 

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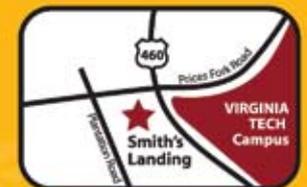
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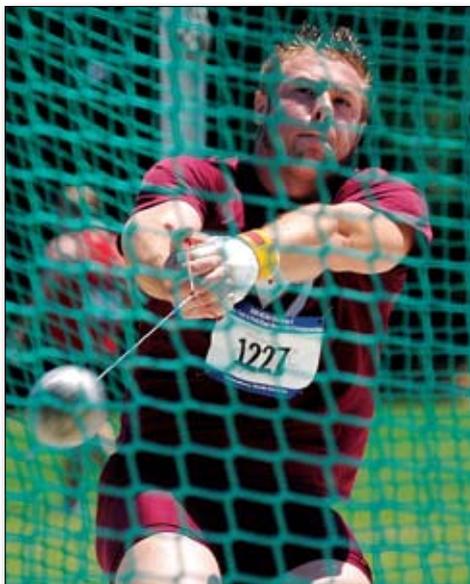


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TECH'S TOP 10 OF THE PAST YEAR

By Jimmy Robertson

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



1. MARCEL LOMNICKY WINS NATIONAL TITLE

Marcel Lomnicky has dominated since his arrival at Tech in January, and his season ended when he easily won the national championship in the hammer throw event at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in mid-June. He won with a throw of 235 feet, 6 inches and became Tech's second athlete to claim a national title (Spyridon Jullien, 2005 and 2006 in both the hammer throw and weight throw).

Lomnicky also won two ACC titles this season and an NCAA East Regional crown, and he earned All-America honors in the weight throw event at the NCAA's indoor championship meet.

2. TECH CLAIMS ORANGE BOWL VICTORY

The Hokies won a major bowl game for the first time since 1995 with a dominating per-

formance in a 20-7 win over the Cincinnati Bearcats in the Orange Bowl. Tech's defense intercepted four passes and Darren Evans rushed for more than 100 yards, as the Hokies finished with 10 wins for the fifth straight season.



3. DARREN EVANS' GAME VERSUS MARYLAND

A redshirt freshman, Evans put his name in the Tech record books last fall when he rushed for a school-record 253 yards on 32 carries and scored a touchdown in the Hokies' Thursday night victory over Maryland. Evans broke the former record of 243 yards set by Mike Imoh against North Carolina in 2004.



4. HOOPS RALLY AGAINST N.C. STATE

The Wolfpack give the Hokies fits on the hardwood and appeared to be doing so again in a game in February. But Tech rallied from an 18-point, second-half deficit to tie the game at 76, and then won the thriller in overtime thanks to A.D. Vassallo's four free throws in the final 16 seconds and his team-high 24 points. The game marked Tech's biggest comeback since joining the ACC.

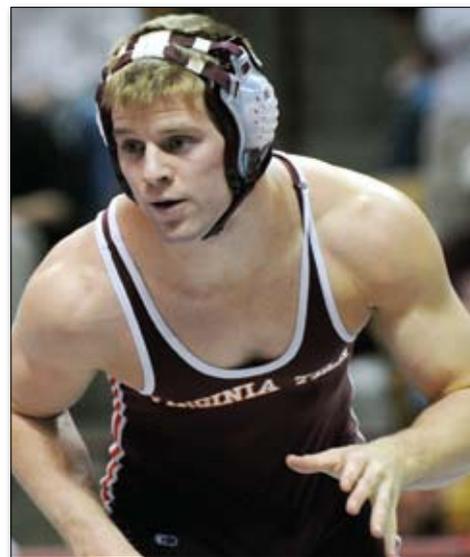
5. TASMIN FANNING FINISHES THIRD AT NCAAs

Fanning finished her cross country career in grand style, finishing in third place at the NCAA Cross Country Championships out in Terre Haute, Ind., in late November. Fanning ran the 6k course in a career-best time of 19:37.1 and finished just nine seconds behind the winner. Her finish was the highest for a Tech runner in the program's history – men or women.



6. WRESTLERS BEAT NO. 17 AND NO. 6 – ON THE ROAD

Tech wrestling coach Kevin Dresser has wasted little time in rebuilding the Hokies' wrestling program and the results this season prove that. In back-to-back matches in late January, the Hokies knocked off No. 17 Michigan 22-15 in Ann Arbor and then beat No. 6 Central Michigan 19-12 in Mount Pleasant, Mich. The wins marked Tech's first over ranked opponents in the program's history.



7. WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM'S AMAZING RUN

Perhaps no team at Tech played better at the end of its regular season and in the conference tournament than the Hokie women's soccer team. The women closed out the regular season with a 1-0 victory over No. 11 Duke on Nov. 2, and then in the ACC tournament, the Hokies downed No. 5 Florida State (4-2 in penalty kicks) and No. 12 UVa (2-1 in penalty kicks). The run ended with a 3-0 loss



to North Carolina in the tournament title game, but the Hokies still made the NCAA Championships for just the second time in school history.

8. RE ACES MATCH AGAINST ONE OF NATION'S BEST

Tech's Yoann Re recorded a bunch of big wins this season, but the native of Quebec, Canada's best came on Feb. 1. In a match against Ohio State's Justin Kronauge – the sixth-ranked player in the nation at the time – Re dominated en route to an easy 6-2, 6-4 victory at the Ohio State Varsity Center. Re beat five ranked players this season and made it as one of 64 singles players who competed in the NCAA Championships. He lost in the first round, but finished the year with a 20-12 mark.

9. LAX TEAM WINS FIRST ACC MATCH

The Tech women's lacrosse team has struggled since joining the ACC, but the Hokies fielded their best team in several years and notched their first ACC victory since joining the league when they downed BC 16-14 in an overtime thriller. Rachel Culp, the Hokies' superstar all year, scored the tying goal in regulation and the winning goal in overtime.



10. THOMAS NOTCHES 500TH CAREER WIN

Scot Thomas, the Hokies' head softball coach, reached a milestone this season when he recorded his 500th win as a head coach – all with the Hokies. Thomas got his 500th after the Hokies swept BC in a doubleheader in Blacksburg in April. He wrapped up his 13th season at Tech and is the only coach in the program's history.

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- COACH FRANK BEAMER

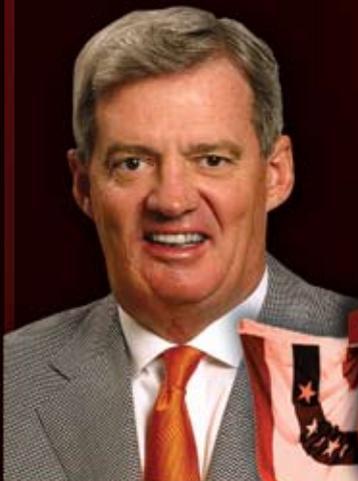
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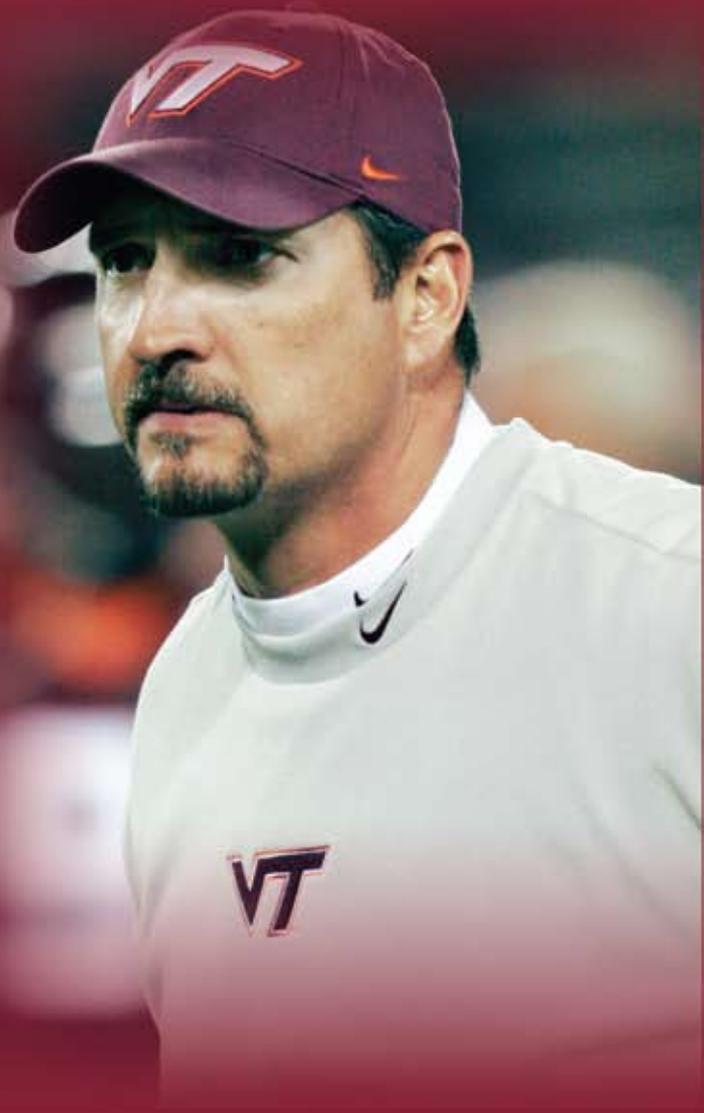


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OF THE ATHLETE YEAR MEN'S TRACK & FIELD

By Jimmy Robertson

MARCEL LOMNICKY

NITRA, SLOVAKIA FRESHMAN • THROWER

Marcel Lomnicky has recorded a career's worth of accomplishments in less than six months.

The freshman from Slovakia enrolled in January and practically toyed with the competition from day 1. He wrapped up his first semester at Tech by winning the national championship in the hammer throw at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships held June 10-13 in Fayetteville, Ark.

Lomnicky became the second Tech athlete to win a national championship. Coincidentally, Spyridon Jullien, a former thrower himself, won four national championships; claiming back-to-back national titles in both the weight throw and the hammer throw in 2005 and 2006.

As a result of his accomplishment, Lomnicky is *Inside Hokie Sports'* 2008-2009 athlete of the year. Lomnicky automatically received the magazine's nod by virtue of winning a national championship.

He becomes the first athlete of the year since the athletics department changed the format of its publication from a newspaper to a magazine. Athletes of the year were named during the newspaper's days and the list of winners included Angela Tinchler (twice), Jullien (twice), Kevin Jones, Bryant Matthews, Lee Suggs, André Davis, Corey Moore, Katie Ollendick, Jim Druckenmiller and Cornell Brown.

Lomnicky, though, may have been the most dominating of any of the past winners. He won two ACC championships, an NCAA East Regional championship and the national title during his first six months in Blacksburg.

At the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships,



the 5-foot-9, 220-pound Lomnicky won the hammer throw with a toss of 235 feet, 6 inches – the best throw of his career. He easily bested LSU's Walter Henning, who came in second with a toss of 232 feet.

"Marcel has been consistent all year long, and has been a great competitor," Tech Director of Track and Field Dave Cianelli said. "It is a special thing, winning a national title, because it doesn't happen all the time, and hopefully there are more in the future for him."

He excelled all spring in his specialty – the hammer throw. He captured the ACC title at the conference's outdoor meet with a winning toss of 232 feet, 1 inch, defeating the runner-up by nearly 45 feet.

He just missed the ACC record held by Jullien by less than two feet.

At the NCAA East Regional outdoor meet, Lomnicky won again, this time with a throw of 232 feet, 5 inches and bettering his ACC-winning toss by three inches. He scored 10 points for the Hokies and led them to a seventh-place team finish.

During the indoor season, Lomnicky surprised everyone by winning the ACC crown in the weight throw. He had never tried the event until arriving at Tech, but quickly picked up the technique.

He won the ACC title in the weight throw with a toss of 68 feet, 7 inches and then earned All-America honors at the NCAA Indoor Championships when he finished eighth with a toss of 68 feet, 10.5 inches, a mark that ranks fourth all time at Tech. The NCAA meet marked just his third indoor competition of the season.

MEN'S BASKETBALL ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Jimmy Robertson

#40 A.D. VASSALLO

**TOA BAJA, PUERTO RICO
SENIOR • FORWARD**

The men's basketball team lost several close games this past season, but the Hokies managed to get to the National Invitation Tournament and a lot of the credit goes to A.D. Vassallo.

Vassallo enjoyed a banner season, averaging 19.1 points per game and earning third-team All-ACC honors. He shot 45 percent from the floor, 37 percent from beyond the 3-point arc and 83.5 percent from the free-throw line. He led the team in scoring, field goals (232) and 3-pointers (83) and finished second on the team in rebounding (6.2 rpg). He also tied for or led the team in scoring 17 times.

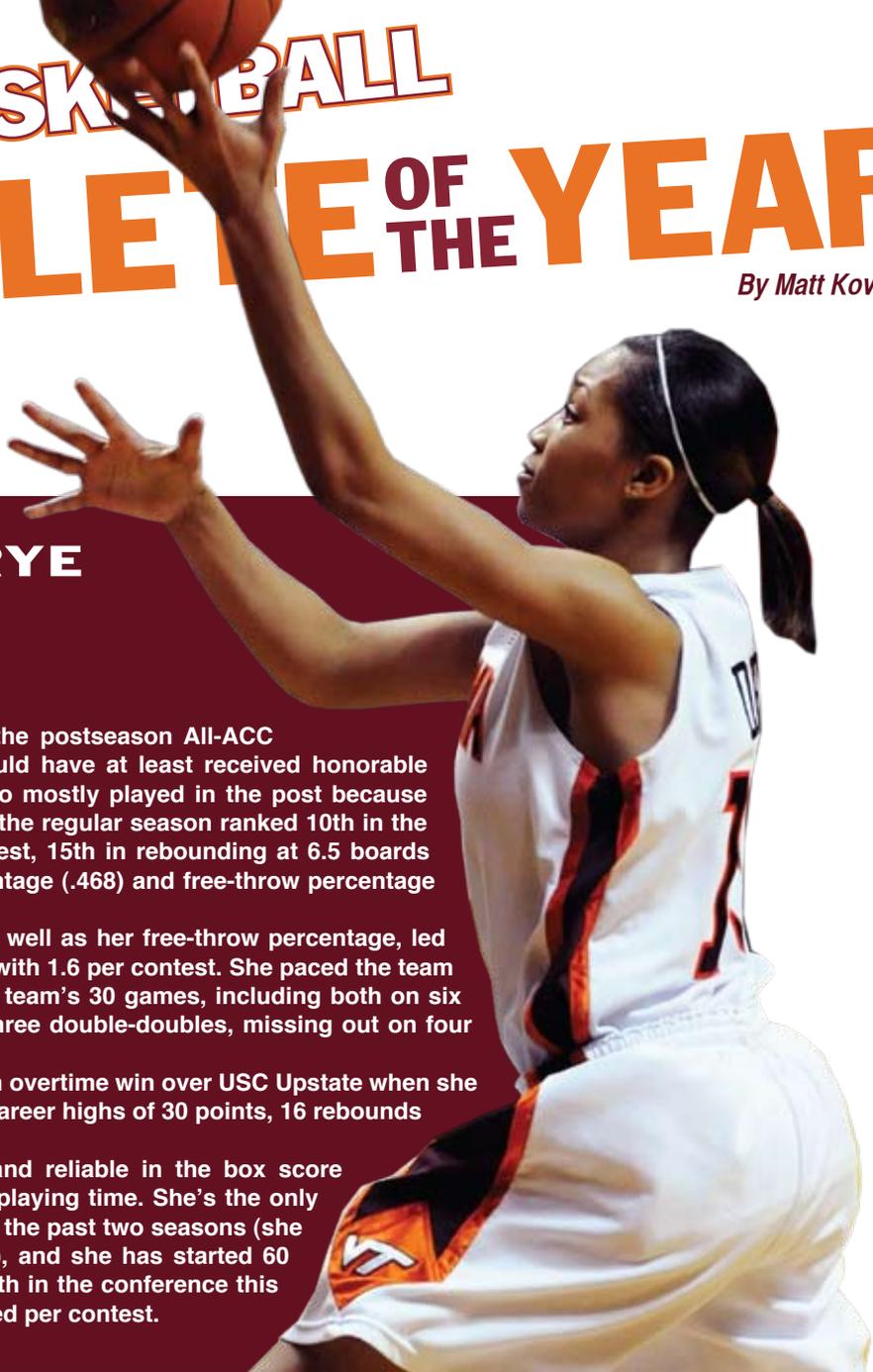
His best game of the season came in the NIT. He scored a career-high 33 points, hitting 10-of-19 from the floor and all 10 of his free-throw attempts in Tech's 116-108 double-overtime victory over Duquesne in the first round. The game marked his second 30-plus point game, and he also scored 20 or more points on 17 occasions.

This past season, Vassallo also set the Tech record for career 3-pointers with 267, breaking Wally Lancaster's old mark of 257 from 1986-89. He completed his Tech career fifth in scoring and placed his name among tremendous players such as Bimbo Coles, Dell Curry, Dale Solomon and Perry Young.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



#15 UTAHYA DRYE

DURHAM, N.C.
JUNIOR • FORWARD

Though Drye was not named to any of the postseason All-ACC teams, her statistics suggest that she should have at least received honorable mention status. A natural small forward who mostly played in the post because the Hokies lacked big bodies, Drye finished the regular season ranked 10th in the league in scoring with 14.1 points per contest, 15th in rebounding at 6.5 boards per game, and 13th in both field-goal percentage (.468) and free-throw percentage (.734).

Her scoring and rebounding averages, as well as her free-throw percentage, led the team, and she finished second in steals with 1.6 per contest. She paced the team in either scoring or rebounding in 20 of the team's 30 games, including both on six occasions, and she recorded a team-high three double-doubles, missing out on four others by just one rebound.

Her best performance came on Feb. 2 in an overtime win over USC Upstate when she nearly put together a triple-double, tallying career highs of 30 points, 16 rebounds and seven steals.

Drye has probably been so consistent and reliable in the box score because she's been so durable in terms of playing time. She's the only Hokie who has appeared in every game over the past two seasons (she also played in all 34 games as a freshman), and she has started 60 consecutive games. In fact, she ranked fourth in the conference this past season by averaging 34.6 minutes played per contest.

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MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



DEVIN CORNWALL

CULPEPER, VA. JUNIOR

The men's cross country team had its best season in recent memory in 2008, highlighting the fall with a third-place team finish at the ACC Championships – its best finish since joining the conference in 2004. The success was largely due to the performance of Cornwall, who along with senior Billy Berlin, became one of just three Hokies who have earned all-conference honors since 1999.

Cornwall, who finished third overall at that meet, was the top Hokie finisher at four of the five meets in which he competed this year. He finished fifth at the Virginia Tech Invitational on Sept. 19, but topped that three weeks later by placing first at the Highland Duel in Boone, N.C.

On Oct. 18 at the Chile Pepper Invitational in Fayetteville, Ark. – the longest and largest race of the year at 10 kilometers with 257 competitors – Cornwall finished 15th, a full 20 places better than the next best Hokie.

The only race in which Cornwall was not the best Tech finisher was the NCAA Southeast Regional held at Tanglewood Park in Clemmons, N.C. The junior took 26th individually – three places behind teammate Phil Padilla – but his performance helped the Hokies to a seventh-place team finish, which matched their finish from 2007.

Cornwall capped his season by getting named to the All-ACC academic team for the second time, joining teammates and first-time honorees Michael Hammond and Padilla.



WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



TASMIN FANNING CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA. SENIOR

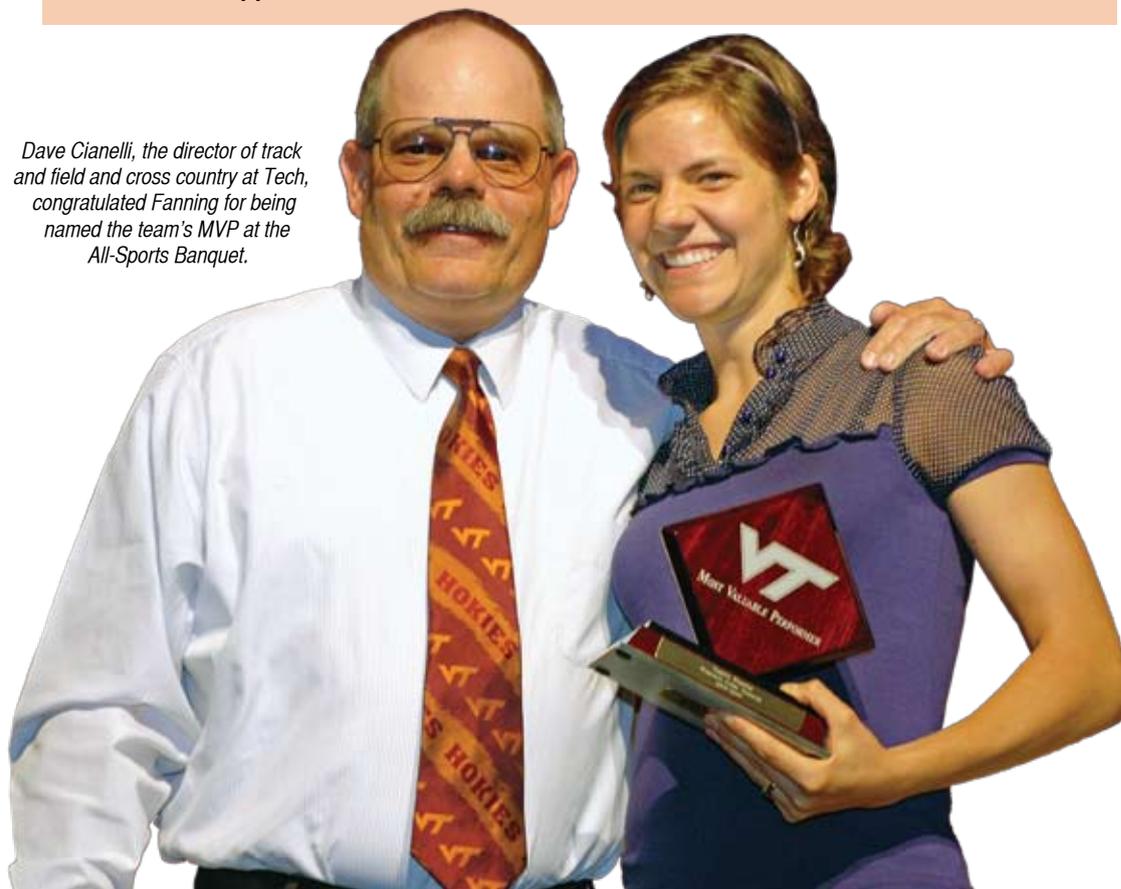
Fanning might have been named the overall athlete of the year had she not redshirted during both the indoor and outdoor track and field seasons, but her cross country season alone at least put her in the conversation.

On Nov. 24 at the NCAA Cross Country Championships, Fanning finished the six-kilometer race third in a career-best time of 19 minutes, 37.1 seconds to earn All-America honors for the second time. She finished 12th in 2007, but her third-place finish this past season left her a mere nine seconds shy of being the national champion. It was the highest finish at the NCAA Championships for a Hokie runner in school history. The previous best on the women's side was Fanning's 2007 performance, and the former best finish overall belonged to Steve Taylor, who placed ninth in the men's race 1987.

But the national championship race was just the last in an amazing three-meet stretch for Fanning. Just nine days prior, she captured first place at the NCAA Southeast Regional in Clemmons, S.C., crossing the finish line in 20:07.8 to become the first Hokie – male or female – to win an NCAA regional meet. It was her fourth consecutive all-region performance, and it came on the coattails of a second-place showing at the ACC Championships on Nov. 1. Fanning actually led the ACC race with 50 meters to go, but wound up losing by six-tenths of a second to reigning champion Susan Kuijken of Florida State. Had Fanning held on for the win, it would have been the first individual conference championship for a Hokie female since 1991.

Fanning also dominated the other three races in which she competed, winning both the Virginia Tech Invitational on Sept. 19 and the Highland Duel on Oct. 3 and finishing second at the Chile Pepper Invitational on Oct. 18.

Dave Cianelli, the director of track and field and cross country at Tech, congratulated Fanning for being named the team's MVP at the All-Sports Banquet.



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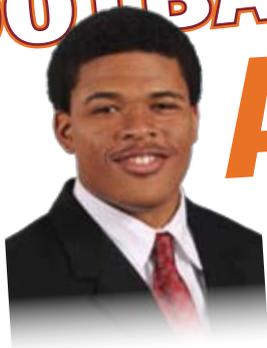
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By Jimmy Robertson



#32 DARREN EVANS

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. r-FRESHMAN TAILBACK

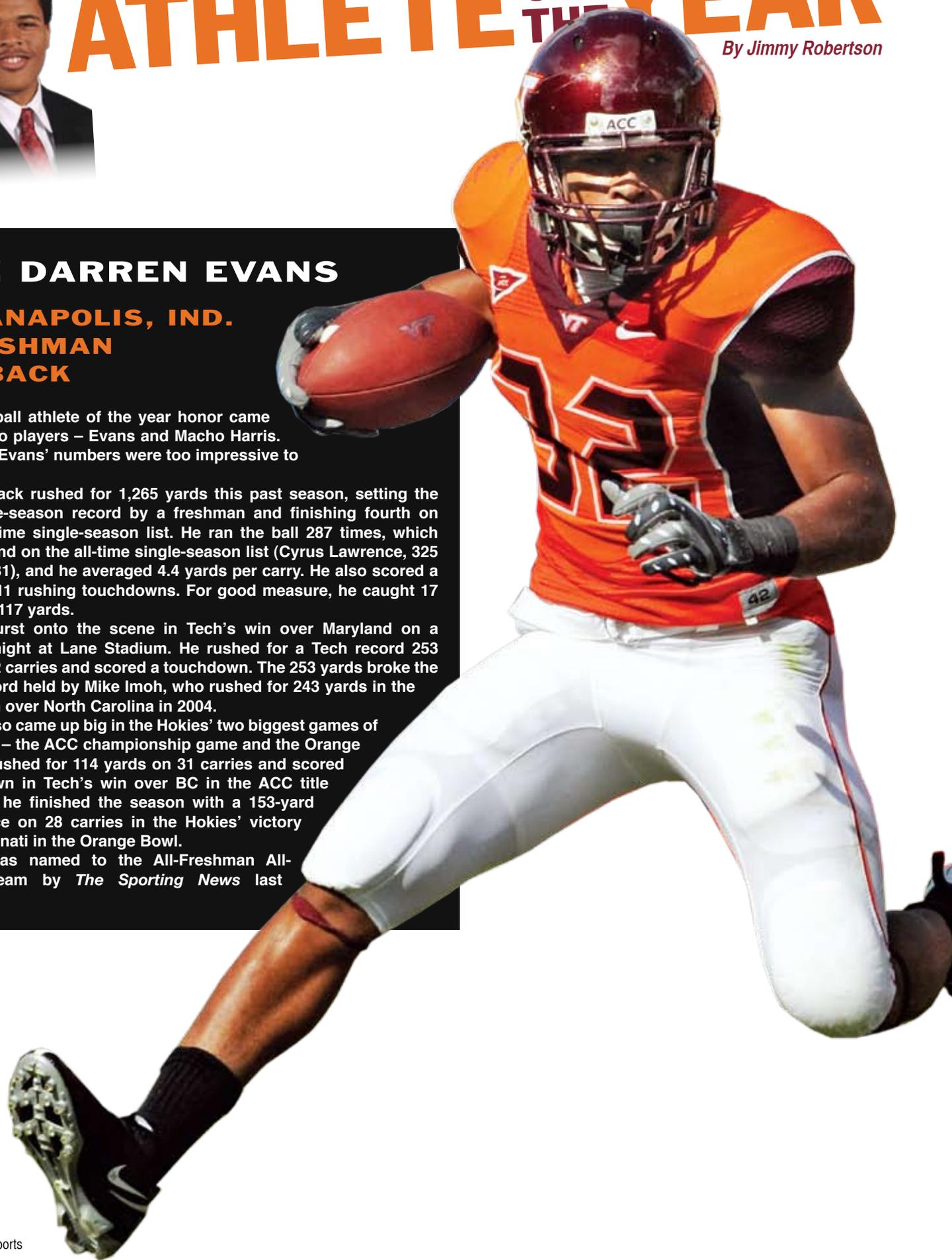
The football athlete of the year honor came down to two players – Evans and Macho Harris. In the end, Evans' numbers were too impressive to ignore.

The tailback rushed for 1,265 yards this past season, setting the Tech single-season record by a freshman and finishing fourth on Tech's all-time single-season list. He ran the ball 287 times, which ranks second on the all-time single-season list (Cyrus Lawrence, 325 carries, 1981), and he averaged 4.4 yards per carry. He also scored a team-high 11 rushing touchdowns. For good measure, he caught 17 passes for 117 yards.

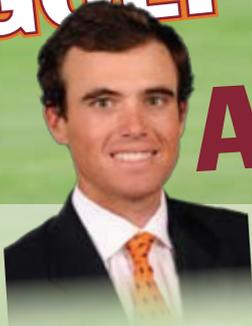
Evans burst onto the scene in Tech's win over Maryland on a Thursday night at Lane Stadium. He rushed for a Tech record 253 yards on 32 carries and scored a touchdown. The 253 yards broke the former record held by Mike Imoh, who rushed for 243 yards in the Hokies' win over North Carolina in 2004.

Evans also came up big in the Hokies' two biggest games of the season – the ACC championship game and the Orange Bowl. He rushed for 114 yards on 31 carries and scored a touchdown in Tech's win over BC in the ACC title game, and he finished the season with a 153-yard performance on 28 carries in the Hokies' victory over Cincinnati in the Orange Bowl.

Evans was named to the All-Freshman All-America team by *The Sporting News* last December.



GOLF



ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Jimmy Robertson

DREW WEAVER

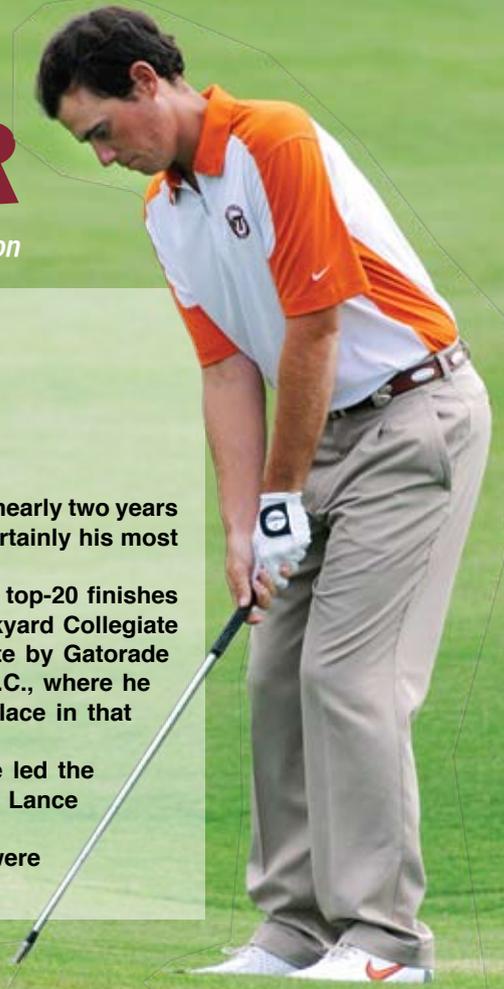
HIGH POINT, N.C.
SENIOR

Drew Weaver placed himself squarely on golf's map when he won the British Amateur nearly two years ago, and this season, he wrapped up his career with arguably his best season – and certainly his most consistent one.

This season, Weaver recorded four top-five finishes, seven top-10 finishes and nine top-20 finishes in 11 tournaments. He finished second on two occasions, the first coming at the Brickyard Collegiate Championship held in Macon, Ga., and the second coming at Pinehurst Intercollegiate by Gatorade held in Pinehurst, N.C. He came in fifth at the ACC Championships in Baden Lake, N.C., where he shot 6-under-par. He also shot 6-under at the Puerto Rico Classic to finish in 10th place in that tournament.

Weaver's career came to an end at the NCAA Austin Regional in Austin, Texas. He led the Hokies by shooting 8-over-par to finish in 12th place. He finished 12 strokes behind Lance Lopez of Texas, who claimed medalist honors.

For the season, he played 29 rounds, with a low round of 66, and 19 of those rounds were under par. His final round average of 71.5 led the team.



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LACROSSE

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Jimmy Robertson



#5 RACHEL CULP

**KENT, OHIO
SENIOR
ATTACK/MIDFIELD**

Culp wrapped up an outstanding career at Tech with a marvelous senior season in which she earned All-ACC honors, becoming just the third Tech lacrosse player to do so (Kady McBrearty, 2005-08, and Lindsay Pieper, 2004-2007). During the Hokies' three-game winning streak from March 28 to April 7, she averaged five goals per game and set a new career high with eight goals in a win over American. She also tied her career high with nine points in that contest.

In a win over Davidson, she finished with seven goals and two assists, and in the Hokies' win over Boston College – Tech's first ACC victory – she scored six goals. She scored the game-tying goal in the waning moments against BC and then added the game winner in overtime.

She scored a team-best 54 goals and added 16 assists for the season, leading the conference in points per game (4.27). Culp's goal in the Hokies' loss to Virginia in the ACC tournament quarterfinals marked the 119th of her career, the second-best total in school history.

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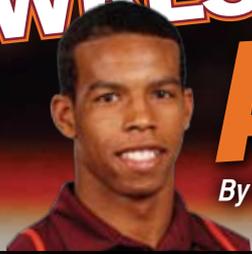
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WRESTLING

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



By Matt Kovatch

JARROD GARNETT

NEWARK, DEL.

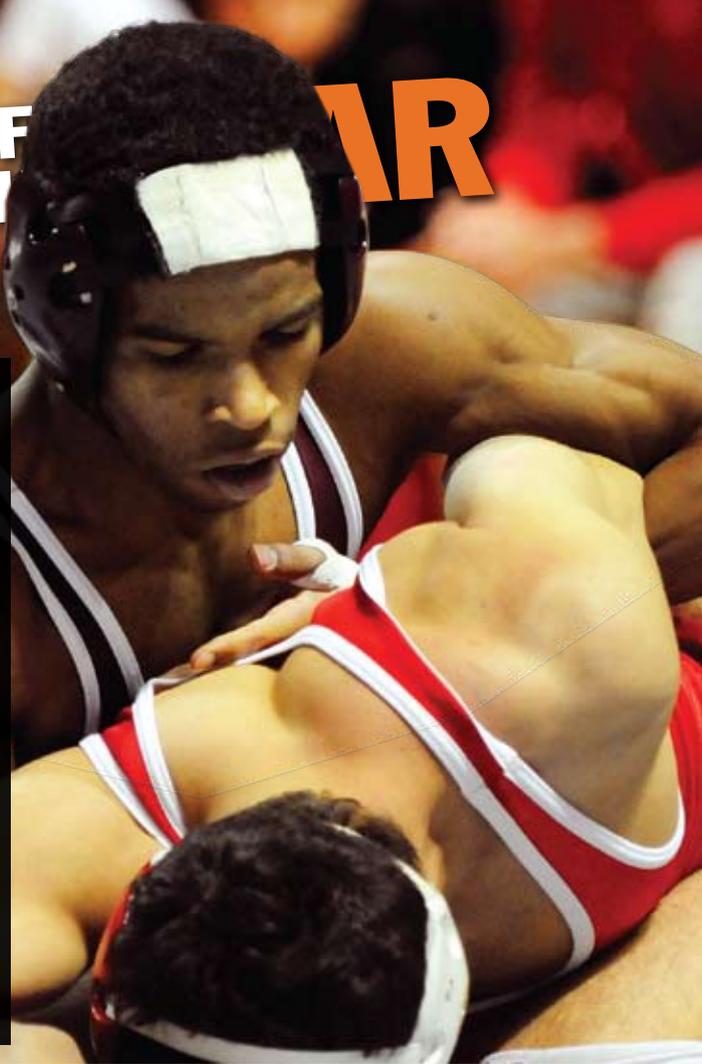
FRESHMAN • 125 POUNDS

Perhaps no team at Virginia Tech made a more surprising turnaround this past year than the wrestling team, which went from 7-9 in 2008 to 20-2 – and ACC regular-season champions – in 2009. A lot of the credit can be directed toward Garnett, who burst onto the scene as a rookie, winning ACC Freshman of the Year honors.

Garnett finished his first campaign as the nation's No. 12 wrestler in the 125-pound weight class in the final *InterMat/NWCA/NWMA* individual rankings. The Newark, Del., native posted a 38-8 overall dual meet record in addition to his unbeaten mark in ACC regular-season bouts.

After a second-place finish in his weight class at the ACC Championships, Garnett went just 2-2 at the NCAA Championships, but he won more than his fair share of big matches during the season. He opened his career by going 5-0 to win his bracket at the N.C. State Wolfpack Open, beating then-No.12 Nikko Triggas of Ohio State in the semifinals. He went on to beat three more top-15 opponents to begin his career 15-0.

All said, Garnett led the Hokies on the year with nine major decision victories and 10 falls, and he finished second on the squad with five technical falls. His 38 wins on the season ranks fourth on Tech's all-time single-season list, and his 17 dual meet wins ranks tied for fifth.



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MEN'S SOCCER

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



#6 JAMES GILSON

GREENWOOD LAKE, N.Y.
JUNIOR • DEFENDER/MIDFIELDER

The men's soccer team struggled through a 5-13-1 campaign in 2008, but it was by no fault of Gilson. Mostly a defensive-minded player throughout his first two seasons, Gilson was the team's biggest offensive threat as a junior. He led the squad with 16 points, Emmanuel Akogyeram for the team lead with six goals. In addition, Gilson started (18) and minutes played (1,574).

Gilson was especially valuable in ACC contests, as he tallied nine points – more than double the output of any other Hokie – on four goals and an assist. Among his season highlights were a two-goal performance against No. 10 and eventual national runner-up North Carolina, and a penalty kick game-winner in the 88th minute over George Washington.

Penalty kicks were an area of expertise for Gilson, as he was called on to shoot all four of the Hokies' bonus shots this year. He converted on three of them, which was more than five other teams in the ACC converted as a whole.

Gilson also got it done in the classroom, as he was named to both the All-ACC Academic Team and the *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-District III second team. He also earned NSCAA/adidas Scholar All-East Region honorable mention honors.

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WOMEN'S SOCCER

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



#10 EMILY JUKICH

CLIFTON, VA.
JUNIOR • FORWARD

The women's soccer team enjoyed what was arguably the best season in school history in 2008, advancing all the way to the ACC title game before earning an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament. Much of that success was thanks to Jukich, who was named second-team All-ACC, second-team All-Mid-Atlantic and first-team all-state after tallying a career-high 15 goals – a figure that tied for third best in the conference.

The 15 goals gave Jukich a total of 25 for her career, which already ranks atop Virginia Tech's all-time list. She amassed the second-highest single-season total in program history after ripping off 68 shots, a number that ranked seventh in the league.

Of the Hokies' 10 wins, the 5-foot-4 Jukich notched the game-winner in five of them, including the clincher in the 89th minute of a 1-0 victory over Maryland. Oddly enough, though, Jukich did not score in bunches, only scoring twice in a game on two occasions. Rather, she was remarkably consistent, putting together both a four-game scoring streak and a five-game scoring streak on separate occasions.

Jukich's efforts allowed her to become only the second Hokie to be named to the All-Mid-Atlantic Region second team (Ashley Stinson, 2004) and the second Hokie to be named to the All-ACC second team (Marika Gray, 2007). In addition, Jukich was tabbed an All-ACC Academic Team honoree, as well as a member of the *ESPN The Magazine* Academic All-District III second team. Her goal against No. 12 Virginia in the conference semifinals also earned her a spot on the ACC All-Tournament Team.



MEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



MIKEY MCDONALD

**ANNANDALE, VA.
JUNIOR • DIVER**

McDonald has been the foundation of the men's swimming and diving team for the past two years now, having been the only H₂Okie to score points at the NCAA Championships in either of the past two seasons. The diver heads into his senior year as a four-time honorable mention All-American after placing 14th in the 1-meter dive and tying for 15th in the 3-meter dive in 2009. That performance came one year after he finished 11th in the 1-meter dive and 15th in the platform dive. He also participated in the platform dive in 2009, but he placed 23rd.

McDonald earned his way into the NCAA Championships after an impressive performance at the NCAA Zone B qualifier in Knoxville, Tenn., placing fifth in both the 1- and 3-meter events, where he competed against an Olympian, two world championship competitors and two former NCAA champions.

Among the school records set this season by McDonald were his score of 397.90 points in the 1-meter dive at the ACC Championships on Feb. 20 and his score of 357.40 points in the platform dive at the same meet on Feb. 21. Both scores earned him third place, and thus, garnered him the third and fourth All-ACC nods of his career. McDonald just missed out on another all-conference accolade when he placed fourth at the ACC Championships in the 3-meter dive with a score of 403.90.

WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



SARA SMITH

MCGAHEYSVILLE, VA.

SENIOR • FREESTYLE/BUTTERFLY/INDIVIDUAL MEDLEY

Smith recently concluded a banner career with the H₂Ogies, leading the women's squad to a best-ever third-place finish at the ACC Championships in February. She did so by claiming two individual titles – one in the 50 freestyle and the other in the 100 freestyle – giving her five conference titles for her career, plus one as a member of the 200 medley relay in 2008.

Both titles were won after she set new conference (and school) records in each event's respective preliminary race, essentially making Smith the fastest female swimmer in ACC history. She touched the wall in the 50 free final in 22.14 seconds, one day after setting the new league best with a time of 21.96 seconds in the prelim. Her time of 48.39 seconds in the 100 free final came after setting the new standard in the prelim in 48.10 seconds.

Smith entered the NCAA Championships in mid-March having been an All-American in the 100 free in 2007 and a four-time honorable mention All-American over her career in both individual and relay events. She added to that total in her final collegiate meet with two more honorable mention nods, tying for 11th in the 50 free and placing 15th as a member of the 400 free relay team.

Smith finished her career as the school record holder in both the 50 and 100 free, as well as in four different relay events.

MEN'S TENNIS

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



YOANN RE

VERDUN, QUEBEC, CANADA JUNIOR

Re was the lone Virginia Tech men's tennis player to qualify for the 2009 NCAA Division I Men's Tennis Singles Championships, entering the tournament on May 20 as the 55th-ranked player in the nation by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association. Though he dropped a 6-3, 6-0 decision to Illinois' 39th-ranked Dennis Nevolo, it was just a small blip in what was otherwise a fantastic season.

Re concluded the year with a record of 20-12 in singles matches, including a 4-1 mark in ACC dual matches. Re played primarily at the No. 1 position, which he earned after a huge upset in early February when he stunned the nation's then-sixth-ranked player – No. 1 Ohio State's Justin Kronauge – 6-2, 6-4. But it didn't stop there. Re went on to win his first 11 matches, including another upset over the nation's new sixth-ranked player. This time, it was Virginia's Dominic Inglot, a three-time All-American who eventually wound up as one-half of the 2009 NCAA doubles champions. Re was honored as the ACC Player of the Week twice during his 11-match winning streak.

Re missed all of April with a broken collarbone suffered at Miami on March 29, but he still earned a spot on the All-ACC team and returned to action for the Hokies' opening-round contest of the NCAA Tournament against UNC Wilmington, winning his bout to help Tech to the second round.

Re also excelled in doubles, accumulating a 21-11 record throughout the season, including a 15-10 mark with fellow Canadian Sebastien Jacques.

WOMEN'S TENNIS ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



INGA BEERMANN

BAD SALZUFLEN, GERMANY SENIOR

Beermann recently concluded a stellar career for the women's tennis team, ending the season as the lone Hokie to record a point in Tech's 4-1 loss to Wake Forest at the ACC Championships on April 16. She knocked off 56th-ranked Sasha Kuilkova 4-6, 6-1, 6-0, and it was just the latest in a long line of victories that saw her end her career ranked fourth on Tech's all-time singles wins list.

The native of Germany finished her career with an 81-57 record, with nearly all of those decisions coming from the No. 1 position, from which she went 10-12 in dual match play in 2009. In addition to her dual match record, Beermann went 7-3 in tournament singles action to finish the year 17-15 overall. She peaked at No. 125 in the Intercollegiate Tennis Association rankings.

Beermann also made a splash throughout her career in doubles action and goes into the Tech record books tied for second all time with 75 wins. She teamed with Tech's top freshman, Martha Blakely, in 2008-09 and the duo went 21-14 overall, including a team-best 6-5 in ACC play.

For her efforts, Beermann was named the team's most valuable performer, as well as the team's strength and conditioning athlete of the year, at the Virginia Tech All-Sports Banquet in May.



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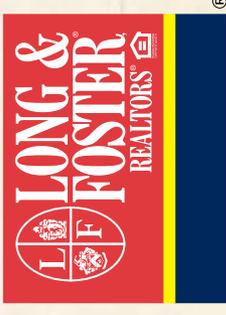
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WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Jimmy Robertson



DOROTEA HABAZIN

ZAGREB, CROATIA
SOPHOMORE • THROWER

Dorotea Habazin is not a household name among Virginia Tech fans, but she certainly should be. On a talented women's track and field team that finished the season nationally ranked in the top 20, she may have been the team's best performer.

She closed out her strong season by earning All-America honors with a fourth-place finish in the hammer throw at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Fayetteville, Ark., on June 12. Her throw of 214 feet, 11 inches enabled her to capture the honor.

Habazin also won two ACC titles and an NCAA East Regional title this season. She won the East Regional title in the hammer throw with a toss of 207 feet, 11 inches. Following that meet, she earned the Southeast Region Women's Field Athlete of the Year honor, as given by the United States Track and Field Coaches Association.

Her performance at the NCAA regional, which qualified her for the national meet, came on the heels of her performance at the ACC Outdoor Championships. At that meet, she won with a toss of 209 feet, 2 inches. She improved on her season-best toss by more than seven feet with that throw.

During the indoor season, Habazin just missed out on All-America honors in the weight throw event. At the NCAA Championships, she finished ninth, just one spot from All-America honors. She threw the weight 65 feet, 2 inches, and was the lone ACC thrower in the meet.

At the conference's indoor meet, she won the weight throw event with a toss of 64 feet, 2.5 inches. The victory marked her first indoor conference crown.



BASEBALL

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



#26 STEVE DOMECUS

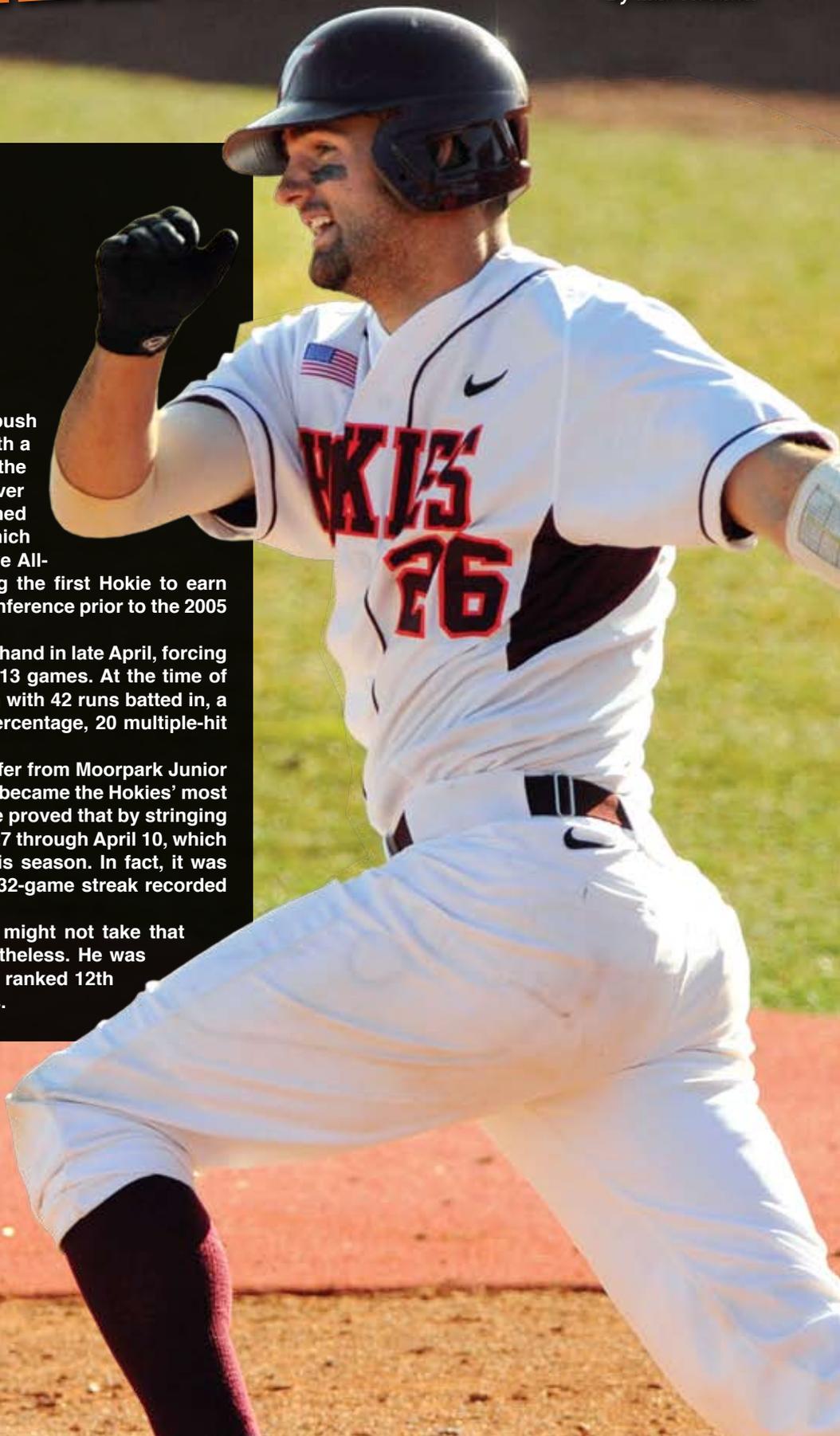
NOVATO, CALIF.
FR-JUNIOR
LEFT FIELD/CATCHER

Sophomore Austin Wates made a late push for the baseball team's player of the year with a sizzling final few weeks, but Domecus gets the nod after becoming the first Hokie to hit over .400 since 1997. The left fielder/catcher finished the regular season with a .406 average, which at the time, led the ACC. He was voted to the All-ACC second team for his efforts, becoming the first Hokie to earn postseason honors since Tech joined the conference prior to the 2005 season.

A broken bone was discovered in his right hand in late April, forcing him to miss nearly all of the season's final 13 games. At the time of the injury, however, he was leading the team with 42 runs batted in, a .593 slugging percentage, a .482 on-base percentage, 20 multiple-hit games and 13 multiple-RBI games.

Domecus arrived in Blacksburg as a transfer from Moorpark Junior College in Moorpark, Calif., and immediately became the Hokies' most consistent and reliable player at the plate. He proved that by stringing together a 24-game hitting streak from Feb. 27 through April 10, which ranked as the longest streak in the ACC this season. In fact, it was only eight games shy of the school record 32-game streak recorded by Tim Buheller in 1985.

Domecus also thrived in a category that might not take that much skill, but which was impressive nonetheless. He was hit by 16 pitches in 40 games played, which ranked 12th in the nation at the time on a per-game basis.



SOFTBALL

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch



15 JENNA RHODES

**BROADWAY, VA.
SENIOR
OUTFIELD/DP**

Rhodes turned in the best season by a Hokie softball player since, well, Angela Tincher in 2008. But in all seriousness, what the Hokies' leadoff hitter did in 2009 was arguably the best offensive season Virginia Tech softball has ever seen.

Rhodes batted .474 during her final year in Blacksburg, a number good enough to rank sixth nationally in batting average. She also finished second nationally in hits (91), second in stolen bases per game (0.88) and third in stolen bases (49).

Her batting average and stolen base figures set new single-season program records, aiding in her finishing her career as the Hokies' all-time leader in both categories (.384 batting average and 114 career stolen bases). The .474 batting average obliterated the old mark of .376 set by Michelle Meadows in 1997, while the .384 career average was 37 points higher than Meadows' old mark of .347. The 49 steals broke her own record of 41 set last season, while her 114 career steals was one more than her sister, Callie, swiped from 2003-07.

For her efforts, Rhodes was awarded with a slew of honors. She was named to the All-ACC first team after garnering second-team honors as a junior. She was then tabbed as a member of the National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Louisville Slugger Division I Mid-Atlantic Region Team for the second consecutive season. From there, the slap hitter went on to earn NFCA third-team All-America honors, as well as Player of the Year accolades by the Virginia Sports Information Directors. Finally, she was a second-team Academic All-America selection by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Rhodes went on to sign a contract with the Rockford Thunder of the National Pro Fastpitch League, the same league in which Tincher and former Tech catcher Kelsey Hoffman play for the Akron Racers.



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VOLLEYBALL

ATHLETE OF THE YEAR

By Matt Kovatch

#15 FELICIA WILLOUGHBY

PLEASANTON, CALIF.
SOPHOMORE
MIDDLE BLOCKER

An influx of freshmen helped the 2008 Virginia Tech volleyball squad to its best season since joining the ACC, but leading the way all along was the consistency of Willoughby. The 6-foot middle blocker's breakout season came during her own freshman year in 2007, but she showed no signs of slowing down as a sophomore, racking up team highs of 326 kills and 117 blocks.

As a result, she won nearly every honor imaginable, highlighted by an honorable mention All-America nod from the American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA). She became just the second Hokie in program history to earn that distinction, joining Katie Esbrook from 2006.

Willoughby also joined Esbrook as the only Hokies in history to garner AVCA All-East Region honors and All-ACC first-team accolades. She was also named to the Virginia Sports Information Directors all-state first team for good measure.

In addition to her impressive kill and block totals, Willoughby finished the year with a hitting percentage of .402, a mark that not only led the ACC by 11 points, but that also smashed the Tech single-season record of .357 set by Julie Neely way back in 1986. It was the ninth-best hitting percentage in the nation this season.

Among ACC matches only, the Pleasanton, Calif., native ranked sixth in the conference with 1.08 blocks per set and 10th in the conference with 3.04 kills per set. Her overall marks of 2.83 kills per set and 1.02 blocks per set led the team, as she accounted for just over 50 percent of Tech's total blocks and 22 percent of the Hokies' total kills.



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