

# INSIDE HOKIESPORTS

Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics

## ON THE ATTACK

Jennifer Wiker is using her summer experiences with the U.S. National A2 Team to become a better player and hopefully lead the Hokies back to the NCAAs

### WHAT'S INSIDE:

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**Published by the Virginia Tech Athletics Department**

Inside Hokie Sports (ISSN 8750-9148, periodical postage paid at Blacksburg Va. 24060 and additional mailing offices) covers Virginia Tech athletics and is published 11 times annually - monthly from August through June. The publisher is the Virginia Tech Athletics Department, 460-E Jamerson Athletic Center, Blacksburg, Va. 24061-0502.

**SUBSCRIPTION PRICES:** \$37.95 for one year (11 issues) and \$69.95 for two years. You can get an online subscription for \$25 and both the online and the print version for \$50. Mail all subscription inquiries, renewals, address changes, written inquiries and complaints to Inside Hokie Sports, 460-E Jamerson Athletic Center, Blacksburg, Va. 24061-0502 or call (540) 231-3908.

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**ATTN POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Inside Hokie Sports, P.O. Box 11101, Blacksburg, Va. 24061-1101.

Printed by Southern Printing Co., Inc., of Blacksburg, Virginia

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## STARTING IN STYLE

Virginia Tech has started the 2012-13 athletics season, and pregame fireworks at Lane Stadium signified the beginning of the Hokies' football campaign.



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**HOKIE CLUB LEVEL:**  
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**HOKIE CLUB MEMBER SINCE:**  
1986

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**WHAT YEAR DID YOU GRADUATE?**  
1969

**FAMILY:** WIFE - PAT WISEMAN  
ANDERSON (VT B.S. 1970; M.S. 1975)



## Q&A

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

**A:** Virginia Tech has been a big part of my family's life. My uncle, Clair Sykes, is a member of the class of 1948, my late uncle, C. G. Mays, is a member of the Class of '57 and his wife, my aunt, Carol Sykes Mays, is a member of the Class of 1958. A niece and several cousins also have degrees from Tech, and my Uncle Clair's grandson, Spencer, is currently a sophomore. My wife, Pat, has served on the Cooperative Extension board and the Human Resources Alumni Board, and we are both active members of the Alumni Association as well as the Hokie Club.

**Q: What made you want to be a member of the Richmond Hokie Club, as well as being willing to serve as a Hokie Club Rep and chairing the club's annual football kickoff event?**

**A:** Being a member of the Richmond Hokie Club and becoming a rep has been a terrific way for me to give back to Virginia Tech in a way I could never do on my own. It has provided me the opportunity to work with other reps and use my planning skills to help organize the kickoff dinner, which annually draws a crowd of approximately 1,000

Hokies. Events like the dinner enable the Richmond Hokie Club to donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund.

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

**A:** We have a condo in Blacksburg, so we usually come down two or three days before a game. A must for every trip to the campus is a visit to the memorial in front of Burruss Hall and the Pylon memorial. We want to always remember those 32 terrific people who are memorialized on the Drill Field, as well as honor the brave Hokies who have given their life for our country. Days before the game are also used to catch up with friends who are in town or work at the university. Early mornings are spent making a required trek to Carol Lee's Donuts on North Main Street.

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

**A:** We have been very fortunate to see many great Virginia Tech teams play in Lane Stadium. My college years (1965-69) saw

some terrific teams and two trips to the Liberty Bowl. Back in those days, Tech was known for a stifling defense, just like Coach [Bud] Foster's present-day defenses. The 1999 season has to be special because it put the Hokies on the national stage, where they remain today. However, the one game that stands out in my memory is the 1995 Sugar Bowl when the Hokies beat Texas. I remember sitting in the Superdome that night with a euphoric feeling that I had experienced only one time before and that was when I was sitting in Madison Square Garden cheering on the Hokies as they beat Notre Dame for the 1973 NIT championship.

**Q: Why is your connection to Virginia Tech so important to you?**

**A:** Virginia Tech has defined my life in so many ways. Without Tech, I would have never met my wonderful wife, Pat. Without Tech, I would not have made so many of the lifelong friends who are so important to me. Without Tech, I would have not received the world-class education that has been so important to my career. Ask any Hokie and they will tell you of an indescribable feeling that wells up inside of them when they step back on campus. It is a genuine feeling of happiness, camaraderie and belonging.



The following represents **Annual Fund donors (gifts from \$100 to \$10,000 annually)** who have either joined as new Hokie Club members or have upgraded their Hokie Club memberships from January through mid-August of 2012. We want to celebrate these commitments of helping improve Virginia Tech athletics by recognizing them and by saying "Thank You!"

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We are pleased to welcome these new Hokie Club members and commend our current members who have upgraded their Hokie Club memberships! Our successes are tied directly to our annual membership, and we thank you for your support!

**LU MERRITT** | Senior Director of Development for Intercollegiate athletics

## Five true freshmen play in season opener

Five true freshmen played in the Hokies' season-opening victory over Georgia Tech. That list included tailback J.C. Coleman, walk-on punter A.J. Hughes, defensive backs Donovan Riley and Desmond Frye and linebacker Deon Clarke.

Coleman, a 5-foot-8, 192-pounder, was expected to play after enrolling in school last January and going through spring practice. He serves as the backup tailback to starter Michael Holmes and rushed for 25 yards on four carries against the Yellow Jackets.

The rest of the group played on special teams. Hughes, a 6-1, 190-pounder from Terre Haute, Ind., won the punting job and averaged 36.2 yards per punt in his debut. Frye,

Riley and Clarke all saw action on the kickoff team.

A year ago, the Hokies played seven true freshmen. Here's a look at who has played as a true freshman back to 2001:

**2011** - Ryan Malleck, Luther Maddy, Corey Marshall, Caleb Farris, Boye Aromire, Kyshoen Jarrett, Michael Branthover

**2010** - Derrick Hopkins, Kyle Fuller  
**2009** - David Wilson, Jayron Hosley, D.J. Coles

**2008** - Jarrett Boykin, Dyrell Roberts, Justin Myer, Eddie Whitley, Jake Johnson, Xavier Boyce

**2007** - Davon Morgan, Tyrod Taylor, Chris Drager

**2006** - Nekos Brown, Kam Chancellor, Jason Worilds, Sergio Render, Stephan Virgil

**2005** - Macho Harris

**2004** - Eddie Royal, Justin Harper, Josh Morgan, Sean Glennon, Brett Warren, D.J. Parker, Jared Develli

**2003** - David Clowney, Ryan Hash, Thomas McClelland

**2002** - Darryl Tapp, Mike Imoh, Jonathan Lewis, Jimmy Williams, Cary Wade, Jimmy Martin, Danny McGrath, Reggie Butler, John Candelas

**2001** - Bryan Randall, DeAngelo Hall, Kevin Jones, Jim Miller, Jeff Werner

(NOTE: some of these players redshirted later on in their careers. Also, Drager, Worilds and Boyce all played as true freshmen, but received medical hardship waivers after getting injured that year.)

## Tech adds Richmond to football schedule

Weeks after adding in-state foe Liberty to the football schedule, Tech AD Jim Weaver added another in-state school when he announced a one-game series with the Richmond Spiders.

Richmond will come to Blacksburg for a game at Lane Stadium during the 2021 season. The two schools have not met since 1986.

The Hokies, who will play Liberty at Lane Stadium during the 2016 season, may see another in-state foe added to the schedule. Weaver has been in talks with Old Dominion about a possible 2-for-1 series starting in 2017.

The addition of the in-state schools follows along with Weaver's philosophy of scheduling commonwealth schools so that the money benefits those in the state. Two years ago, Tech played James Madison, and in 2014, the Hokies will take on William & Mary at Lane Stadium. 

## Coles to miss remainder of 2012 season

Tech wide receiver D.J. Coles will miss the remainder of the 2012 season after re-injuring his knee in the first quarter of the Hokies' 20-17 overtime victory over Georgia Tech in the season opener.

Coles, who underwent surgery on the posterior cruciate ligament in his right knee last January, missed most of preseason practice while rehabbing, but eventually made it back in time to play against the Yellow Jackets. However, the 6-4, 226-pounder from Maidens, Va., took a hit on the knee during the game, and Tech's sports

medicine staff expected him to miss a significant amount of time going forward while recovering from that. An MRI was planned as the magazine went to press.

Coles will be eligible to receive a medical hardship waiver from the NCAA at the conclusion of the season since he had not participated in 30 percent of the Hokies' games this season. Since he has not redshirted in his career, and provided he gets the waiver, he would be able to return to the team as a fifth-year senior. Dyrell Roberts followed this path a year ago

after breaking his arm in the third game last season. He received the waiver, which enabled him to come back for this season.

Coles, who caught 36 passes for 480 yards and three touchdowns a year ago, has played in 37 games in his career.

On another personnel note, backup rover Boye Aromire has taken a leave of absence from the squad and is not at Tech. The 6-0, 197-pound sophomore from Washington, D.C., played as a true freshman a year ago and was expected to be Kyshoen Jarrett's backup this season.



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editor's desk | by Jimmy Robertson

# Tyler tackling anything in his way toward being a great one

For the average Tech fan, sitting in the overcast that was Labor Day evening, it would be hard to imagine that tackling machine Jack Tyler, the anchor of the Hokies' defense and the crux of its lunch-pail mentality, nearly wound up striving for gridiron glory in Buffalo.

For the Bulls, that is. Not the Bills.

As Tyler made tackle after tackle in the Hokies' season opener against Georgia Tech, practically a one-man Raid against the Yellow Jackets' offensive nest, he removed any doubts that he was too short and too slow and simply not good enough to play big-boy football. With 65,000-plus orange-clad fans watching and millions more witnessing over the ESPN cameras, Tyler amassed 17 tackles according to the Virginia Tech stats crew.

The sharp eye of defensive coordinator Bud Foster, grading the film the day after the game, credited the redshirt junior with 15 solo stops and nine assists – 24 in all in a performance that probably made Rick Razzano smile. For the younger generation, Razzano is a former Tech linebacker from the mid-1970s who never recorded fewer than 140 tackles in a season.

The next day, the ACC named Tyler the conference's linebacker of the week – his first such honor.

"I'm obviously very excited," Tyler said. "One of my goals coming in was to be the very best I could be. Fortunately, I had a good game, and they thought I was good enough to be nominated for it. It's very exciting for me and all my family back home."

Home is Oakton, Va., a suburb of Washington, D.C., and the place that college recruiters ignored during Tyler's career at Oakton High School. Tyler only made tackle after tackle during his four years on the varsity squad at Oakton. As a senior, he posted 147 of those things, was named the Group AAA defensive player of the year in Virginia and earned a spot on the prestigious All-Met team by The Washington Post.

Yet college coaches showed no interest. As stated earlier, they felt he was too short or too slow. Some noticed he ran with a slight limp, the result of a minor back injury (he underwent surgery for it later while at Tech.). But he kept making tackles and plays.

On signing day in 2009, no one took a chance. Only one Division I program had offered him a scholarship – the Buffalo University Bulls out of the MAC.

"That came on signing day," Tyler said. "They called and offered, so you know the guy they wanted didn't sign and they just called me up."

"Basically, my recruiting was sitting around just waiting to see if I would get an offer – ever."

But Foster and Torrian Gray, Tech's experienced recruiters who split the Northern Virginia area, knew all about Tyler. While they, too, questioned his physical attributes, they liked his instincts and feel for the game. They invited him to a one-day camp in June after his junior year to get more of an evaluation. Tyler almost didn't go because he also played lacrosse and Oakton was playing for the state championship that day.

But Gray convinced him to come. So Tyler and his dad came for the morning session, and Tech's coaches liked what they saw, telling Tyler that they wanted him as a preferred walk-on. The Tylers left in time to get back for the lacrosse match, and Tyler knew by the time he arrived what he wanted to do.

"My dad told me you could be a big fish in a little pond, or a little fish in a big pond," Tyler said. "If you're a small fish in a big pond, you've got room to grow. So that's exactly what I did. I wanted to come here and see if I could make a name for myself."

He's doing that, for sure. He actually started doing that last year, filling in when Bruce Taylor went down for the year with an injury. He expected to be in a reserve role this season, but Tariq Edwards' injury provided Tyler with another opportunity.

It's hard to see Tyler going back into a reserve role any time soon.

It's hard to see anyone doubting him again after his season-opening performance.

"Hopefully, I've showed everyone that I'm capable, even though I'm not as physically gifted as some people, I guess," Tyler said. "Hopefully, I've shown that I can play at a high level and that I'm pretty good."

Judging from what they've seen the past two years, Tech fans shouldn't need any more convincing.

Instead, they should be thankful Jack Tyler is in Blacksburg – and not Buffalo. 

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# Steger in the middle of changes both in college football and at Tech

This past summer, the BCS Presidential Oversight Committee met in Washington, D.C., and approved massive and dramatic changes to the process of how college football will crown a national champion. As we know now, starting in 2014, there will be four-team playoff at the conclusion of each season. Virginia Tech president Charles Steger was the chair of the committee that also included USC president Max Nikias, Nebraska chancellor Harvey Pearlman, Texas president Bill Powers, Florida president Bernie Machen, and Notre Dame's Rev. John Jenkins, among others. Simply put, the biggest, most powerful men in college football were all in one room to make some major changes.

I had the chance to visit with Dr. Steger in his office a few weeks ago to discuss a variety of issues, including the future of the ACC, finances at Virginia Tech and the experience of chairing the committee that changed how college football will crown its champion.

**ROTH:** What was your professional and personal experience in chairing this committee?

**STEGER:** "Well, it was an interesting experience because there were many people at the outset who felt that getting this group together, while we may result in a conclusion, it was going to take multiple days. But we did a lot of preparatory work, a lot of phone calls, and the commissioners ... I have to say the commissioners deserve tremendous credit in putting together a



Tech president Dr. Charles Steger believes that the new college football playoff is best for college football and that every school in the ACC is committed to the conference.

proposal that was viable for the presidents to look at. Now, you have a group of individuals all of whom reflect complex constituencies. Each one, each president, represents a conference, their alumni, the alumni of the conference, traditions like the Rose Bowl and things like that. So there's a complicated agenda, and getting them all on the same page took us several hours."

**ROTH:** How do you get a group like that to a consensus?

**STEGER:** "I think everybody felt that not making a decision that day was a very undesirable outcome. I think everybody also shared the same objective that we wanted to do what was

best for college football, what was best for one's respective conference. And of course, each person had to look out for the best interests of his own institution. So we had to find a compromise point, and we ultimately did. But there was a lot of discussion. I think any question that the presidents were a 'rubber stamp,' or there was no institutional control, is quite false. These are very strong individuals, and I have to say that many of the presidents could have chaired the committee just as I did. It's just I ended up with the short straw."

**ROTH:** Why is four the right number?

**STEGER:** "Four was not too far, but just far

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enough. When you go beyond that, you get a whole set of logistical issues. We thought this provided a balance of access and participation by the bowls, and it was a manageable configuration of games that we could run. Everybody came in there with the understanding that they were going to have to compromise something. And as a result, we all concluded that, as a first step, certainly this was a good idea. I think it's been pretty well received."

**ROTH:** There's been a lot of speculation about the long-term sustainability and viability of the Atlantic Coast Conference. How committed to the ACC is Virginia Tech? And secondly, in your opinion, do the other schools, do the other presidents, share that commitment?

**STEGER:** "First of all, there should be no question about Virginia Tech's commitment to the ACC. We are stalwart members, and we share a lot of values with the other schools, as well as the wonderful geographic footprint for our program because of the travel, particularly for the Olympic sports. People often forget that you have football and basketball, but we also have 19 other sports that participate in this league, and it's very important that we have the capacity for all of those students to participate. So we're committed. We think it's a great conference up and down the entire East Coast. It's a tremendous media market. And before the meeting in Washington, where we made the (BCS) decision, I had private conversations with every president in the ACC. There is no exception. Everyone is committed to staying. I know there has been speculation about Clemson and Florida State, but I can tell you that Jim Barker, who is the president of Clemson, and I go back decades. He probably doesn't want to admit this (laughing), but the same with Florida

State. While there are people talking about it, I don't think there's any likelihood of any of those schools leaving the ACC."

**ROTH:** Athletics are such a big part of campus life at Virginia Tech for a growing student body. How is the university able to keep its fees so low, particularly when it comes to athletics, when compared to its ACC sister institutions and some schools in the state?

**STEGER:** "We are very fortunate. We are one of a small number, I think it's 15 or 16 institutions in the country, that are in the black with their athletics programs. If you compare our student athletics fee, which is \$268 per year, with the \$1,400 or \$1,800 per year of other schools in Virginia, it's really quite remarkable. We do that through a series of things. One, we have a very well managed enterprise. We have successful programs, and our financial people have been very skilled in placing bonds in the market to finance facilities at the right time. All of that coming together enables us to keep the overall cost of education down for our students. We are very proud of that."

**ROTH:** While facilities in athletics continue to grow, when one walks across this campus, we see cranes in the air all over the place. Why is this happening now?

**STEGER:** "Over time, Virginia Tech has grown in terms of the undergraduate and graduate population. We added about 2,500 undergraduate students a few years ago. We have tremendous demand for students who want to come here, and we also added about 2,000 graduate students who help with programs and help support the dramatic expansion of our research programs. Our research expenditures last year exceeded

\$450 million. They were about \$168 million just seven or eight years ago. So we found ourselves with our programs growing faster than the facilities and laboratories that were available.

"Secondly, we need to modernize them to be in tune with the new instructional technologies, and most importantly, we want to provide for our students in terms of recreational facilities the best we can. We're still not far enough ahead on that, even though we've built several million square feet of space. We still have a ways to go.

"Now, how is that financed? The state provides, through bond issues, funding for projects, but over half of everything that's constructed on campus is funded by other sources. Principally that comes from research overhead dollars, and it comes from private donations. And, of course, there is no state money that goes to any athletics facility. We raise all of those dollars, and our alumni have been very generous in making that possible."

**ROTH:** Back to football now. What is the game day experience like for you at Lane Stadium?

**STEGER:** "Well, it's always exhilarating, I have to say. On football weekends, I'll start out by speaking to some number of groups at breakfasts or board meetings. Sometimes, I walk through the tailgate parties, which are quite incredible enterprises (laughing). But more importantly, when you go there and see 66,000 people at the stadium, this kind of collective experience is exhilarating and inspiring. While everyone comes to see the game, it brings this community of people together. They have something that they share. It builds a sense of community, which undergirds the Hokie Nation. And when 'Enter Sandman' is played, you can't help but be excited – and I enjoy it." 



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## Keeping up *with* Compliance

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

**Q: I know that the athletics departments pays for student-athletes' books, but I was wondering how this worked. Does the student-athlete get a check, and can he or she buy a cheaper book online and then pocket the difference? Seems like a good way for the student-athlete to pocket some extra dough. Just wondering. Brent in Princeton, W.Va.**

**TP:** "That might be good in theory, but student-athletes are never supposed to handle funds used to purchase textbooks. Instead, textbooks are picked up by Virginia Tech student-athletes at the on-campus bookstore and charged directly to the athletics department. In some situations, student-athletes may also buy textbooks using their own money, and then get reimbursed.

"Any school that gave cash 'up front' to student-athletes to be used for the purchase of books could be deemed guilty of a major infraction – and be penalized severely. Student-athletes who are found to be profiting from textbook purchases would be rendered ineligible until they repay the benefit they received."

**Q: I'm sure you've heard about the new stuff coming out of Chapel Hill in regards**

**to the academic scandal there. My question is - can the NCAA investigate this again after they've already investigated it? It seems the NCAA didn't do its job the first time and now it gets another bite at the apple. Thanks, Rachel in Blacksburg.**

**TP:** "Yes, the NCAA can investigate further, if need be. The NCAA has a four-year statute of limitations in which it investigates possible violations back four years from the notice of inquiry provided to the institution.

"However, the NCAA can also waive that statute in cases where the allegations involve violations affecting the eligibility of a current student-athlete or where the allegations indicate a pattern of willful violations on the part of the institution or the individual involved, which began before, but continued into, the four-year period. An example of this is the Miami case, which involves a former booster. There have been reports that indicate the NCAA may investigate as far back as 2002."

**Q: Which NCAA rules are violated the most? Thanks, Kelly in Blacksburg.**

**TP:** "I don't know what the numbers are as far as the entire NCAA Division I membership, but the ACC does provide numbers of violations

categorized by NCAA Bylaw. That listing consistently shows Bylaw 13 (Recruiting) as the most violated bylaw. Many of these relate to impermissible phone calls, often two to a prospect in a week by a coaching staff. Others could be inadvertent off-campus encounters with prospects or parents that occur at impermissible times/dates, or messages sent from a smartphone as a text rather than an e-mail. Following Bylaw 13 in the rankings are: Bylaw 16 (Student-Athlete Benefits), Bylaw 17 (Playing Seasons and Countable Activities) and Bylaw 15 (Financial Aid).

"Being in this business for more than 20 years now, I believe that nearly all college coaches want to do things by the book, but you have to know the rules, and the NCAA Manual is long (434 pages) and complex. The challenge for most compliance offices, including ours, is continuing to stay informed on changes and continuing to educate our coaches and student-athletes about those changes. Every year, there are new trends, new issues and new points of emphasis. So we want to maintain strong relationships with our coaches and student-athletes in hopes that they'll ask prior to doing something they are unsure of, rather than relying on what they've heard that coaches or student-athletes at other schools may be doing." 

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# WORKING OVERTIME *in the* OPENER

Virginia Tech gets big plays from unlikely sources and uses a Cody Journell field goal to beat Georgia Tech in overtime

by **Jimmy Robertson**

If Tech fans needed any more evidence of the zaniness that was the first overtime game ever at Lane Stadium, then consider this – the key plays in the game were made by:

- A.) a former walk-on receiver (Corey Fuller),
- B.) a high school track-star-turned-receiver from the Bahamas (Demetri Knowles), and
- C.) a kicker whose career was in doubt less than six months ago (Cody Journell).

Largely because of these three guys, Tech fans arrived home in the wee hours of the Tuesday morning following Labor Day in a gleeful state, as Journell's overtime chip shot of a field goal lifted the Hokies past Georgia Tech in a 20-17 season-opening thriller.

The game left Virginia Tech head coach Frank Beamer exasperated and harried at times, but, like Tech fans, joyful in the end. His team won for the fifth time in its past six meetings with the Yellow Jackets in a series that usually determines the team that takes the ACC's Coastal Division crown.

In fact, the winner of the Virginia Tech-Georgia Tech game has played in that season's ACC championship game for the past seven years.

"Well, I think you've got an advantage," Beamer said. "I don't think there's any question about that. You've got a big advantage. But there's a lot of football to be played.

"The challenge for us is to look at this football team [the Hokies] and how we got tighter and how we could be really good in all areas and then

keep developing that. That's what you've got to really look at."

If the Hokies find themselves in the same position at the end of this season, it may well be because of the three above-mentioned players.

Fuller, the 6-foot-3, 196-pounder who, to this point, has been best known as the brother of former Virginia Tech defensive back Vinnie Fuller and current defensive back Kyle Fuller, made arguably the two biggest plays of the game.

His first came in the fourth quarter when he alertly pounced on a Marcus Davis fumble that preserved a Hokie drive. A few moments later, quarterback Logan Thomas threw a 42-yard touchdown pass to Knowles, who was only in the game because of a shoulder injury to Davis. Knowles' grab gave the Hokies a 14-10 lead with 7:46 remaining.

Georgia Tech answered, scoring with 44 seconds left on a touchdown pass by quarterback Tevin Washington. But Fuller came up big again.

With the Hokies facing a fourth-and-4 and only 13 seconds on the clock, Thomas found Fuller for a 23-yard gain. That set up a 41-yard field goal by Journell to tie the game and send it into overtime.

"I knew I had it in me," Fuller said. "I had to step up. D.J. [Coles] went down [with a knee injury], and Marcus [Davis] went down [shoulder injury]. I just had to step up and make plays, and I knew I could make those big plays. So I just went out there and let loose."

In overtime, the Hokies' defense – tremendous all night – put the offense in a perfect spot. Kyle

Fuller intercepted a Washington pass on third-and-goal, and that ultimately set up Journell's easy 17-yard field goal to win the game.

It marked the first game-winning field goal for the Ripplemead, Va., native, who once kicked a game-tying field goal for Giles High School in a game against Blacksburg High – a contest Beamer saw. It also marked a nice comeback for a young man who was involved in an off-field incident that led to a suspension for spring practice and much of summer workouts.

"Any time you have a chance to tie a game up with [six] seconds left and then kick a field goal in overtime, it's always special," Journell said.

"He's a good kicker," Beamer said. "The flight of the ball is the same all of the time, and the ball is near the middle of the goal posts. It's not always way off left or right. We've had a lot of good kickers here, and he's a good kicker."

The Hokies finished with 326 yards of total offense, led by Thomas' 230 yards passing and two touchdowns. In contrast, Georgia Tech's vaunted option attack finished with 288, including 192 on the ground – the fewest the Hokies have allowed to Georgia Tech since head coach Paul Johnson took over in Atlanta. The Yellow Jackets averaged just 3.5 yards per carry.

"I told my football team how proud I was, and to come back and win that football game after the way it looked at times ... it just says so much about the players believing and making plays when they had to," Beamer said. "I really like the potential of this football team." 

# Roth and Burnop honored, surprised at halftime of Georgia Tech game

Commemorative print to be used as a way of raising money for an endowment in the names of their two loved ones who passed away this summer

by Jimmy Robertson

Bill Roth and Mike Burnop are best known to Virginia Tech fans for using their voices to call the Hokies' football games over the airwaves for the past 25 years.

Yet, for maybe the first time in their lives, they found themselves speechless after what transpired at halftime of the Hokies' season-opening football game with Georgia Tech.

The Tech athletics department honored the duo's silver anniversary of calling football games by presenting them with a specially made print by noted local artist George Wills. Then, the department shocked the tandem by saying that they were giving away the commemorative print to anyone who makes a contribution of at least \$25 to a Virginia Tech Athletic Fund endowment, which funds student-athlete scholarships. The ultimate goal is to get enough contributions to establish an endowment in the name of Ellen Burnop and Lynda Roth.

For those who don't know, Ellen Burnop, Mike's wife and business partner at New River Office Supply, passed away this past May after a long battle with lung cancer, leaving behind Mike and their three children. Almost a month later, Lynda Roth, Bill's sister, passed away from the same illness. They were practically the same age, too, with Lynda Roth, a composer and performer in Laguna Beach, Calif., being older by a few months.

"Lynda and Ellen were both so vibrant, active and healthy," Roth said. "They were passionate about their lives, families and friends, and it was heartbreaking to see them go through this together. They shared notes on doctors and treatments and strategies, and like all of us, they shared a lot of tears, too. They both fought so doggone hard, too. They are the two most courageous women I've ever met."

Burnop shared similar thoughts.

"Obviously, I'm touched that the athletics department would do all this," Burnop said.

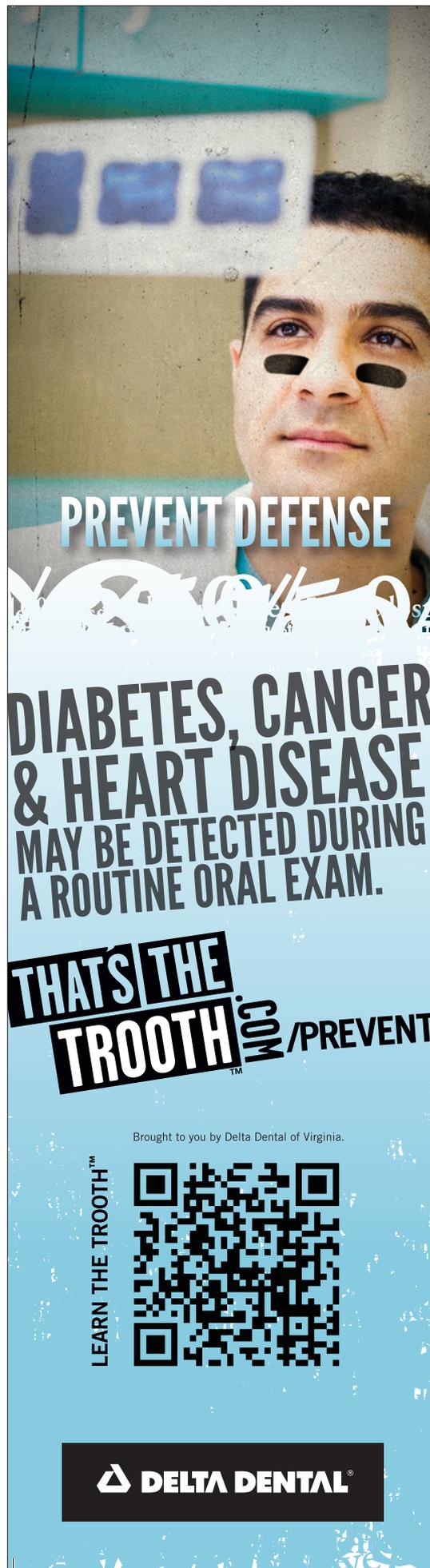
"I thought George Wills really captured the essence of mine and Bill's 25 years of broadcasting, and then to see it used to put together the endowment in Ellen's and Lynda's names is just an incredibly generous gesture by the athletics department. Ellen and I always considered the athletics department and this university our second family, and this is just the perfect way to honor two people who had such zest for life and who were always willing to help others.

"I want to thank, in advance, those who will be contributing to this for your generous support. I know Ellen and Lynda would look forward to seeing a deserving student continue his or her education at such a great university."

Roth and Burnop became a broadcasting tandem in 1988. Burnop actually began broadcasting five years earlier with former Tech play-by-play voice Jeff Charles, and Roth later took over for Charles when Charles left to take a job at East Carolina. The Roth and Burnop run started with the 1988 season opener at Clemson, and they haven't missed a football game since.

In addition to commissioning the print, the athletics department also is conducting a contest entitled "Bill and Mike's 25th Season Countdown Presented by The Legends of Blacksburg." The contest started Aug. 13, with Roth and Burnop releasing two of their top-25 favorite football moments on the athletics department's website, hokiesports.com. Each week, they will release two until Oct. 23 when they start releasing one a week. The top moment will be released the Tuesday before the Tech-UVa game.

After that, fans can register and vote to pick their own top moment, with the grand prizewinner of a drawing getting a free dinner with the duo at the Virginia Tech athletics sponsor recognition dinner next spring, along with an assortment of other prizes. 



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# Five inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame

by Jimmy Robertson

On Sept. 7, the Virginia Tech athletics department inducted five new members into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame at a banquet on the Tech campus. Here's a closer look at each new inductee:

## SHARON MCCLOSKEY (1984-current)

Sharon McCloskey built her career in athletics administration from the ground up – literally.



As an undergraduate at Virginia Tech in the late 1970s, she worked on the athletics department's grounds crew. In fact, she actually helped re-sod the turf at Lane Stadium during Bill Dooley's first year, and she even helped with the

construction of the expansion of the east side of the stadium.

"I loved that part of the job," McCloskey said. "It was hard work, but I enjoyed it."

That work ethic has served her well in a career spanning nearly three decades. It started in 1984 when, while working at a local bank, she received a call from Don Perry, who used to work in Tech's athletics administration. He told her about two job openings within the athletics department – one in football and one in track and field. She interviewed for the opening as the football office receptionist with Dooley and Bill "Moose" Matthews, an associate AD for Dooley, who himself doubled as the football coach and AD.

Dooley was skeptical about hiring McCloskey, but Matthews convinced him otherwise. That began what has turned into a Hall of Fame career.

She became the recruiting secretary six months after being hired. When Dave Braine took over as the AD in 1988, he named McCloskey senior woman administrator – a position she still holds.

"At that time, it was PWA – primary woman administrator – and they said, 'They're going to make you PWA,'" she said. "I was like, 'That's great. What's that?' Then the NCAA changed the title because it was meant to be for a female, and many schools were putting men in that position. So from there, I went from assistant AD to associate AD to senior associate AD, just a progression over time."

In addition to naming her senior woman administrator, Braine also named McCloskey recruiting coordinator. Thus, she became the first

woman in college athletics to hold the position of recruiting coordinator, and she worked with a young head football coach named Frank Beamer.

McCloskey became a pioneer for women in college athletics, but not just because she was named recruiting coordinator. She actually put forth new ideas to improve official visits – things like keeping recruits on campus and making academics more of a focal point. Those ideas helped Beamer turn around Tech's program.

"I don't know about all that," McCloskey said when asked if she thought she was a pioneer. "I think I had some innovative ideas because I was recruiting secretary and I had seen what was being done."

McCloskey's career also included a brief stint as Tech's interim AD. When Braine left to take the Georgia Tech AD job, he left a vacancy that McCloskey filled until current AD Jim Weaver was hired. Weaver kept her on his staff, and she currently ranks as the No. 2 person in charge of Tech athletics.

These days, as the SWA and senior associate AD, she serves as the main liaison between the athletics department and the university admissions office. She oversees housing for athletics, and she plays a key role in making sure the department meets Title IX requirements. She also oversees the football, men's and women's basketball, women's soccer, and lacrosse programs in addition to strength and conditioning, sports medicine and the equipment room.

"I'm happy with where I'm at," she said. "I'm comfortable in my role. I feel like I do a good job with Title IX, and our department is in good shape there. We were not at one time, so Jim wanted me to go to some seminars, and I got a good education there. I feel I'm a good administrator to my coaches, and I think it helps that I've never coached. I leave the coaching to them."

"I never thought I'd work anywhere 29 years, but I like it here. I love this program and this university. Being a graduate, I love it as much as the alumni. I'm a part of Hokie Nation. I'm just fortunate enough to work here."

## DAVE BRAINE (1988-97)

In 1988, the Virginia Tech athletics department was in shambles. The football program was on probation, the budget situation looked bleak and morale among the employees resided in the dumpster.

Dave Braine, named the AD that year and tasked with turning things around, vividly remembers his first day on the job on Jan. 2 of that year. No one in the department stopped by to say hello. No one welcomed him. No one gave him a set of keys. And a visit to the equipment room for some workout clothes resulted in longtime equipment manager Lester Karlin giving him one long sock and one short sock – and one of those had a hole in it.

"I didn't know whether to laugh because he certainly wasn't trying to impress the new AD or cry because that's how bad things were," Braine said. "That was my first day on the job – no one there to greet you and a pair of socks, one long and one short."

Braine and his staff, though, put the pieces to the department back together over a 10-year span, and under his leadership, rebuilt the foundation that has propelled the Hokies to their current successes.

He placed an emphasis on people, treating student-athletes right and making them feel special, while also developing personal relationships with departmental employees. When he wanted to talk to an



employee, he often walked to that person's office instead of using the phone. On his trips to visit with Lu Merritt, who oversees the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund and whose office used to be in Cassell Coliseum, Braine often walked through

the Hall of Fame and gazed at the plaques on his way there.

"I probably walked through the Hall of Fame hallway 300 times a year," Braine said. "Looking at all those plaques, you have to wonder if, one day, you might be up there. So it was an exciting day when I got that letter. This is a dream come true."

Braine accomplished a lot in his 10 years at Tech, but is probably best known for two. First, in 1992, he was the pivotal person in getting the Tech football program into the BIG EAST Football Conference. Tech's membership into that conference turned out to be a steppingstone to national prominence and full membership into the BIG EAST. Even today, Beamer credits that move with propelling the program to unprecedented heights.

"It was the salvation of the program then," Braine said.

Braine's other major accomplishment came

after the 1992 football season when he decided to keep Beamer aboard as the head coach despite a 2-8-1 season. He did not hire Beamer – Dutch Baughman did – but Braine, a former football player and former assistant coach, respected Beamer and his knowledge of the game.

On Sunday mornings in the fall, Braine often bought donuts from Carol Lee and gave them to the football coaches before they met to watch film. He got to know them, and on occasion, he watched film with them. He realized they knew a lot about coaching and decided to give them another opportunity after the 1992 season.

“That turned out to be the best decision we ever made,” Braine said. “It wasn’t a difficult decision. I realized that whole year that he [Beamer] was very good and very knowledgeable. He never got angry with me for coming. Today, there is no way an AD would do that, but back then, you could.”

Braine’s other accomplishments certainly deserve mentioning. Tech’s graduation rate improved to more than 70 percent during his time, and he came up with the comprehensive action plan to combat off-the-field troubles of student-athletes – a policy still being used today. He also got the school into the Atlantic 10 for sports other than football, and he added three women’s sports during his time (soccer, lacrosse and softball) to help the department meet Title IX requirements.

“When I left here, I was proud of what we had done, and I really thought whoever succeeded me would have a hard job,” Braine said. “What Jim Weaver [Tech’s current AD] has done is unbelievable. Me leaving and him coming was probably good for everyone.

“It was hard for 10 years here. It took a lot of work to get it where it was, and sometimes you get beat down and need a new challenge. It was a new challenge for me to go to Georgia Tech and a new challenge for Jim to come here, and I think it worked out well for both parties, but it especially worked out well for Virginia Tech.”

Braine left in 1997 to become the AD at Georgia Tech, where he worked for nine years before retiring. He and his wife, Carole, moved back to Blacksburg after his retirement.

“The last day we were here, we bought a lot 300 yards down the road from where we lived because we were coming back here,” he said. “We wanted to come back here – nine of our 11 grandkids live in Virginia – and we’ve never regretted one minute of it. We like the small town. We’re Blacksburg people. It’s what we love.”

### ANDRÉ DAVIS (1998-2001)

For those who ever doubted as to the type of fine young man André Davis is, consider this. When Keith Ricks, a sprinter who just concluded his Tech career this past June, broke Davis’ school record in

the 100- and 200-meter dash earlier this spring, he received a message from Davis, who took the time to look up Ricks on Twitter.

“I was happy for him,” Davis said. “I know records are made to be broken, and I’m grateful just to have those records as long as I did.”

That’s André Davis. He’s always been a Hall of Famer off the field. Now, he’s a Hall of Famer for what he did on it.

Davis arrived with little fanfare out of Niskayuna, N.Y., after his cousin, Rich Bowen, delivered a highlight tape to Tech’s coaching staff, and then receivers coach Terry Strock shrewdly followed up on it. Davis went on to become a record-setting receiver. In 1999 – as Tech



made its run to the national championship game – he set a school record with 962 receiving yards and tied a school record with nine touchdown receptions. He also averaged a school-record 27.5 yards per catch. All three of those records still stand, and for his career, he ranks fourth in receiving yardage (1,986 yards) and tied for eighth in receptions (103).

“One of the great things about my life is how God has presented me with opportunities and helped me succeed,” Davis said. “I really want to make sure to give God all the glory.

“I look back now and see how God gave me the opportunities – how I had a cousin who happened to play at Tech and took a tape to the coaches and how I got to play with all the great players in that era. You can’t say that was a coincidence. It’s amazing how God just put everything in order, and I try to share that with other people now.”

Davis readily admits he played with arguably the best quarterback in college football history in Michael Vick. The two of them nearly propelled Tech to the national championship, as Vick accounted for 322 yards of total offense in that game against Florida State, and Davis caught seven passes for 108 yards and a touchdown. That was his 10th touchdown reception of the season, which would be a Tech record today, but bowl stats did not count toward records back then.

Davis was nearly as good in track. He won the 100- and 200-meter dashes on three occasions at the Atlantic 10’s outdoor meet, and he also anchored the 4x100 relay team that won all three years. During the indoor season, he won the 55-meter dash and the 200 on two occasions at the A-10’s indoor meet.

But Davis took more pride in what he accomplished in the classroom. He earned a spot on the BIG EAST’S All-Academic football team on

four occasions and earned first-team Academic All-America honors in 2000. As a senior, he was the recipient of the NCAA Top VIII Award for athletics, academic achievement, character and leadership and was chosen to speak on behalf of the group at its awards banquet in New York.

Davis also earned an \$18,000 post-graduate scholarship from the National Football Foundation and won the Socrates Award presented annually to the college athlete who best exemplifies excellence in athletics and academics.

“The awards I got in academics are just as important, if not more important, than the ones I got in athletics,” Davis said. “It is possible to do well in school and in sports. I’d rather brag about that stuff [his academic accomplishments] than the stuff I did on the football field.”

Davis spent nine seasons in the NFL before retiring last year, and he decided to put his degree in residential property management to use. He, his wife and two children have settled in Myrtle Beach, S.C., where he stays as busy as ever.

Davis and a couple of partners run a real estate development company called Carolina Holdings Group, and he has a hand in a technology company as well. He shadows his financial advisor and remains involved with the Houston Texans as a community ambassador. He’ll be heading back to Houston for five games this season as part of a group of ambassadors who represent the team at games and in the community. For good measure, he serves as the contractor for the house he’s building in Myrtle Beach.

But he plans on making treks to Blacksburg for the spring game an annual tradition, looking forward to reminiscing about the old days.

“Me and Corey Moore and Larry Austin and Willie Pile go back and forth on Twitter,” he said. “We’ll remember plays, and then someone will post a random photo. It just brings back such great memories – some things I’ll never forget.”

### DR. AMY WETZEL DOOLAN (1996-2001)

Dr. Amy Wetzel Doolan hasn’t dribbled a basketball in competition in more than a decade, but rarely does she go out in the town of Blacksburg and not get recognized by admiring fans.



Such was the impact she and her teammates had on the community following the Hokies’ 1998-99 dream season.

Wetzel’s numbers alone make her worthy of her Hall of Fame induction, as the plucky guard ranks in the top six in just about every offensive category at Tech, and she helped guide the Hokies

to three NCAA Tournament appearances in her four years. But the 1998-99 season is one Tech fans still remember, and the shooting guard from the small town of Ashland, Pa., played a huge role in that team's success.

A sophomore at the time, Wetzel was part of a group of players known as "The Working Class" – a group of gym rats who worked hard and played fundamentally sound basketball in head coach Bonnie Henrickson's system. The Hokies started that 1998-99 season by winning their first 18 games, and they went on to advance to the NCAA Tournament, where they played in front of two sellout crowds at Cassell Coliseum. Playing in front of a raucous crowd and behind Wetzel's 18 points, Tech destroyed Auburn in the second round to advance to its first Sweet 16 appearance in school history.

The run ended with a loss to No. 2 Tennessee, and the Hokies finished a program-best 28-3.

"In hindsight, I wish we hadn't been intimidated by Tennessee because I think we could have won," Wetzel said. "But that was a great year and a great ride. Without Bonnie and her staff, I don't think we would have been as successful and had so many in the Hall of Fame [Wetzel joins Tere Williams and Lisa Witherspoon off that team in the Hall]. They made us who we were, and I owe a great deal to her and her staff for making me into the player I was."

As a junior, Wetzel received the Atlantic 10's Defensive Player of the Year honor, starting all 31 games on a squad that finished 20-11 and advanced to the second round of the WNIT. Her senior season, Tech's first season in the BIG EAST, Wetzel's running 10-footer off the glass with 3.7 seconds remaining gave the Hokies a win over 17th-ranked Virginia during a senior campaign that produced 22 wins and a third trip to the NCAA Tournament.

The Hokies went 92-33 during Wetzel's career, a winning percentage of 74 percent.

"I think we were so good because she [Henrickson] was that good of a coach," Wetzel said. "You could never outwork Bonnie. You could never put more effort or time into something, and I think that's why we were good during that time. We didn't have the most athletic group. We were all blue-collar workers who worked hard, and she brought the most out of each and everyone of her players."

Wetzel finished her Tech career fifth in scoring (1,444 points), first in games played (129) and free throws made (489), second in steals (235) and third in assists (399). She currently ranks sixth in career scoring, while still holding the same spot in the other four categories.

"When you play, you lose sight of the impact you make," Wetzel said. "Looking back and reading

my bio [for the Hall of Fame], I was like, 'Wow, did I really do that?' It's nice to reflect back, and it [getting into the Hall of Fame] is a very nice honor."

Wetzel's accomplishments off the court may be more impressive than those on it. She got her undergraduate and master's degrees from Tech, and then she was part of the first graduating class from the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2007. She and former football player Billy Hardee were the first two student-athletes to attend VCOM and graduate from the school. She later completed her residency in family medicine and pursued a fellowship in sports medicine.

Dr. Doolan is currently a board certified family physician and is practicing primary care/sports medicine at Academic Primary Care Associates in Blacksburg, where she lives with her husband, Keith, and two children. She also teaches at VCOM and serves as one of Tech's team physicians, currently as the head team physician for women's basketball. Keith Doolan is an athletic trainer with the Hokies' football team.

In spite of numerous opportunities for her and the acute need for doctors nationwide, she never really considered leaving Blacksburg.

"We love Blacksburg," she said. "It's a home away from home, and I've always felt that way. I think it's a great place to raise children, and still feel that way in spite of all that has happened over

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the past several years. Keith loves what he does and is very good at what he does. We've made a lot of friends, and we just didn't want to leave the area."

#### MIKE SERGENT (1988-92)

Mike Sergent had many memorable moments during his Tech career back in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but one transformed the Nokesville, Va., native from a very good thrower to an elite thrower.

During his senior season in 1992, he competed at the prestigious Penn Relays, but went in, according to his memory, as a "30 or 34 seed" in the hammer throw. He ended up finishing second and setting a personal record – a performance that turned out to be just the start of great things for him.



"I felt like I should have been seeded higher, and I ended up second, so that was exciting for me," Sergent said. "I went into that event thinking that I was going to prove something to some people. After that, I felt differently about myself."

It showed. Then Sergent went on to have two of the greatest performances by a track and field

thrower at Tech during that time period – two performances that ultimately helped lift him into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame.

First, Sergent won both the hammer throw and the discus events at the Metro Conference outdoor meet that season, and then, he earned All-America honors in the hammer throw when he finished seventh at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. He became the second thrower to earn All-America honors at Tech, joining Paul Sulik, who accomplished that feat in 1981.

Sergent set school records in the hammer, the discus and the weight throw during his career. In 1990, he set the weight throw mark with a toss of 63 feet, 1.75 inches – a record that lasted for a decade. His hammer throw mark of 210 feet, 1 inch, lasted for seven years, and his throw of 175 feet, 5 inches in the discus in 1992 lasted for eight years.

Sergent, and Sulik before him, were the first great throwers at Tech and laid the foundation for what has become an outstanding Tech tradition. Four Tech throwers – Spyridon Jullien, Marcel Lomnický, Alexander Ziegler and Dorotea Habazin – have won national championships in the past seven years.

Those four figure to be in the mix for Hall of Fame honors in the future. But there can only be one "first" – and Sergent is the first Tech thrower to be inducted.

"I've joked with Greg Jack [Tech's throws coach] about that," Sergent said. "I'm honored to be the first thrower in the Hall of Fame, and it's very special to me. But I'm glad I got in now because I know what's coming down the pike."

These days, Sergent serves as the throws coach for the track and field program at the University of South Carolina – a position he's held since 1997 after serving for five years as the throws coach at Tech (two years as a graduate assistant and three years as a full-time assistant). He and the Gamecocks team come to Blacksburg for meets frequently during the indoor season, and he admits he keeps close tabs on his alma mater's program.

"It's all so different now, with Tech being in the ACC and having the resources to compete on a national level," Sergent said. "It makes me feel good to see where the program has moved to today. Even though I'm not there on a daily basis, I can appreciate where it's come from, and I feel like I'm a part of the foundation."

Then he added, with a laugh, "Paul and I may be the dust and crushed rocks of the foundation, but at least we were a part of it."

Joking aside, they were a very important part of the process. Greatness, after all, has to start somewhere, Sergent certainly staked his claim as one of Tech's best. 

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FOOTBALL

# BAND OF BROTHERS

Kyle Fuller

by Jimmy Robertson



Corey Fuller

## FOOTBALL AT TECH IS PART OF A FAMILY TRADITION FOR COREY AND KYLE FULLER

Most people in southwest Virginia grow up as Virginia Tech fans and most remember their first experiences at Lane Stadium.

They remember the crispness of the autumn air, and the sea of orange and maroon mixed in with the gold and red hues of the leaves on the trees. They remember the smoke from various tailgates and food vendors lazily floating in the air. They remember the scent of hot dogs and hamburgers cooking slowly on grills.

They remember kids wearing their jerseys and catching the football and dodging tacklers on many of this campus' grassy areas, pretending this day is their day to score the winning touchdown. They remember walking through the iron gates into a football fortress and sitting shoulder to shoulder with folks, who, on that particular day, are family members. They remember the clamor, the

undeniable din, that occurs when the Hokies storm out of the tunnel, onto the field, and for the most part, onto victory.

But such experiences aren't exclusive to residents of the commonwealth's western flank. Just ask a couple of city kids from Baltimore whose brother happened to be a member of the football squad several years ago, a privilege that afforded them sweet seats around the 40-yard line or so directly behind the Hokies' bench. They weren't even teenagers yet, but to them, this was the picture of heaven.

"We loved it," said Kyle Fuller, a current starting cornerback on Tech's squad and the brother of former defensive back Vinnie Fuller. "We used to get the turkey legs that they sell and eat those in the stands. We'd go into the locker room after the game. Vinnie would come over

and grab us and pull us over the wall. It was a kid's dream, definitely."

Corey Fuller, another brother and a backup wide receiver on the Hokies' team, echoed similar thoughts.

"I remember the first game we came to, and I asked him [Vinnie] what it was like to play in front of that many people. I was amazed at how many people were watching them play football," Corey said. "He'd always come and grab us over the rail, and we'd go back in the locker room and hang out with the team. That was just the coolest thing ever. We loved to tailgate and throw the football around. I loved it."

Their eyes sparkle at the memory, so vivid so many years later. Now, Corey and Kyle Fuller play on the same piece of turf that served as the home of many of their older brother's exploits. Vinnie Fuller – eight years older than Corey and nearly 10 years older than Kyle – played defensive back for the Hokies from 2001-04, earning honorable mention All-ACC honors his senior season and helping the Hokies to their first ACC championship. He went on to play seven seasons in the NFL, most of those with the Tennessee Titans.

Partly because of him and because of the fun they had as kids at Lane Stadium, both Corey, a redshirt senior, and Kyle, a junior, wound up at Virginia Tech. Of course, that's what brothers do. Once one comes to Tech, the others usually follow suit. In the past 12 years alone, 14 brother combinations found their way to Blacksburg. The sons of Vincent and Nina Dorsey-Fuller were no different.

Yet these two Fuller men took alternate routes. Fortunately, gridiron glory has waited for both.

Growing up in Baltimore, Corey Fuller never dreamed that his college experience would resemble the Wizard of Oz. He never anticipated going down the Yellow Brick Road.

Corey played quarterback for Woodlawn High's football team, loved basketball and was an All-American on the track and field team. He resembled his father in that regard, as Vincent Fuller ran track at Morgan State.

Blessed with ability and wanting to get his education paid for, Fuller accepted a track scholarship to Kansas, where he planned on training in the triple jump. The Kansas coach had connections, and like any young man, Corey's dreams took on Olympian proportions.

"One of the Kansas coaches had called me, and I had gone down there for a visit," Corey said. "He was training other Olympians in my event, so I thought it would be a good chance to go down there and train with people who had been to the Olympics



Vinnie Fuller was the first in the Fuller family to come to Tech and later spent seven seasons in the NFL, mostly with the Tennessee Titans.

and learn some things from them. That was the main thing that sent me there."

He went to Kansas on a partial scholarship, one that paid 80 percent of his freight – a rather healthy chunk for an Olympic sport athlete. He actually performed well out there, placing in the top three of the triple jump in six of the eight 2009 indoor meets.

But the Yellow Brick Road had some potholes. He missed home. He missed his family. He missed playing football. The head football coach at the time, the portly Mark Mangino, was agreeable to letting Fuller come out for football, but the track coaches refused.

By then, Kyle – the younger of the two by 18 months – had committed to Virginia Tech. The shrewd recruiting of Tech receivers coach Kevin Sherman led to the Hokies being the first to offer a scholarship to Kyle, and he decided to follow in Vinnie's footsteps instead of following Corey's to Kansas.

Kyle then planted a seed, putting thoughts into Corey's head about joining him in Blacksburg. The idea ultimately sprouted. Their father contacted

Sherman about the possibility of Corey coming to Blacksburg and joining the program. Head coach

Frank Beamer gave his blessing,

"I knew it would be good for him," Kyle said. "I thought he'd be more comfortable. I didn't think he was comfortable being so far away in Kansas. I knew being here and being around me that he'd feel more comfortable.

"I know when he first got here, I used to make sure he was alright. He didn't have a place to stay when he first got here, so I'd make sure he was good. I know he got used to it, and it shows now."

Prior to the 2010 season, Corey made his way to Blacksburg and walked on to the Tech football team.

He wasn't in Kansas anymore.

Players on Tech's current roster often joke that the Fuller brothers don't talk to each other. They say the two never hang out together – all revelations that are based more in fantasy than fact. The two room together, and while they certainly have their own set of friends, they do the things that brothers do.

But brotherly love doesn't exactly extend to

the football field, even when you go head to head against someone who shares your DNA. They definitely try to get the best of each other, Kyle as the all-conference cornerback versus Corey, the improving wide receiver.

“When we go out, we both put our best foot forward,” Corey said. “I don’t want to lose to him, and he doesn’t want to lose to me. It’s competitive, but we joke about it later. And we teach each other. I’ll ask him questions, and he’ll ask me questions. It’s a competitive, but fun, experience.”

“It’s pretty cool,” Kyle said. “We’re always competing, but it’s always fun. He’s always messing with me, and I’m always messing with him. It’s a lot of fun. We’re used to it because we always competed against each other growing up. He’s trying to make me better, and I’m trying to make him better.”

On the football field, Kyle is the better of the two. Football just comes naturally to him, as it did to Vinnie back during his playing days. He and Vinnie share the bond of being defensive backs, they know defensive coordinator Bud Foster’s schemes and they speak each other’s language. Thanks to help from Vinnie, Kyle has become one of the ACC’s best defensive backs and was arguably the Hokies’ MVP on defense last season. Playing three different positions – cornerback, whip and nickel cornerback – he had 65 tackles, including a team-high 14.5 for a loss, and 4.5 sacks. He added two interceptions.

“Vinnie helped me a lot,” Kyle said. “In high school, you’re a lot better than everybody, but he started making sure I did the little things right – stuff I’d have to be better at when I went to the next level. He’d critique little things that I needed to fix. He’s definitely been a lot of help, particularly when I got here because he had played in this defense.”

## KYLE AND COREY FULLER, HEAD TO HEAD

**IT’S FRIDAY NIGHT IN THE OFFSEASON, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**

**Kyle:** I’d probably be chilling with a couple of my teammates. Maybe go to the movies or go bowling or chilling at one of the guys’ cribs. Maybe watching TV. We may go out occasionally, but not too often.

**Corey:** If I’m not on the road at home, I’m likely at a teammate’s house playing video games or hanging out.

**FACEBOOK OR TWITTER?**

**Kyle:** Twitter now. I don’t tweet much, though. Every now and then.

**Corey:** Twitter. I don’t tweet that much, and I’ve been getting harassed about that lately.

**WHAT ARE YOU READING THESE DAYS?**

**Kyle:** I’m not a reader. I hope one day to get into reading. I can’t get myself to read my textbooks, so I know I won’t be reading any regular books. But when I’m older and have some spare time, maybe I’ll get into reading.

**Corey:** I’m not much of a reader. But I started talking to the team chaplain [Johnny Shelton], and I’ve been reading the Bible every day. That’s one thing I’ve really started reading.

**FAVORITE PLAYER?**

**Kyle:** It was my brother [Vinnie]. I like Darrelle Revis, Charles Woodson ... I

used to like Cortland Finnegan when he was with the Titans.

**Corey:** In basketball, I’d say Reggie Miller. In football, Randy Moss.

**FAVORITE ATTRIBUTE IN A PERSON?**

**Kyle:** Someone who can make me laugh. I like someone who has a sense of humor.

**Corey:** Someone with personality. I like people who are outgoing and can keep a conversation going.

**I’D LOVE TO TRADE PLACES FOR A DAY WITH ... ?**

**Kyle:** Coach Beamer. He does some fun stuff, at least it sounds like it. He’s always golfing, and he gets to play with the pros. It seems like he has the life.

**Corey:** Rob Dyrdek. He’s a professional skateboarder. He has a TV show. I watch it every day. He just has so much fun, not a care in the world, and I’d love to spend a day with him.

**WHO’S THE BEST FOOTBALL PLAYER IN YOUR HOUSE?**

**Kyle:** Me ... it’s hard not to say myself.

**Corey:** I’d say it’s a tie between Kyle and my younger brother. But as for the best athlete, I’d say myself.

**IN 10 YEARS, WHAT WILL YOU BE DOING?**

**Kyle:** Playing football.

**Corey:** I have no idea.

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football spotlight | fuller brothers

Corey hopes the work he put in during the offseason leads to more playing time. He's worked his way into the rotation at receiver heading into the season, and continues to get better, as evidenced by his five-catch, 82-yard performance against Georgia Tech in the season opener. But while Kyle, a finance major, harbors thoughts of playing in the NFL, Corey, in contrast, plans on following a more traditional path.

"I always wanted to be a sports commentator, but I changed my major to sociology," Corey said. "I want to go back home and work with younger kids and be a role model to them."

"I worked with the YMCA in Shawsville [Va., a town near Blacksburg] this summer, and it was so much fun. A lot of the kids were from broken families or didn't have as much as everyone else, and just seeing them smile was amazing. I just love working with kids."

In the short term, though, there is football to be played by the Fuller brothers. It's to be played in Blacksburg, at Virginia Tech. That's become a way of life for the Fuller family, a way that will continue when a fourth Fuller son enrolls next fall.

They will all feel the air and see the autumn leaves and smell the food on the grills before heading into Lane Stadium to watch their favorite team play. It's become their family tradition, one they enjoy and fortunately for Tech fans, one that will continue into the foreseeable future. 



Tech head coach Frank Beamer said that NFL scouts are noticing ever-improving receiver Corey Fuller (top), while Kyle Fuller (left) has already established himself as one of the best defensive backs in the ACC.



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# NUMBERS GAME

{ A few stories behind the jersey numbers }  
{ of certain Tech football players // // // // // }

by Jimmy Robertson

Have you ever wondered why some players choose a particular jersey number? Why, for instance, does J.R. Collins have the number of a running back, or why Marcus Davis has the number of a quarterback?

In some instances, players simply take the number handed to them by equipment manager Lester Karlin when they arrive on campus and never change, even though upperclassmen get the first choice in picking any vacant numbers. For others, their jersey numbers have a special meaning.

**ANTONE EXUM** | “I was going for 7 when I first got here, but Marcus [Davis] had that number. I remember that I went to the equipment room one day to get fitted for my pads, and Lester was in the back. I saw his sheet, and I knew that Macho [Harris] was graduating. So I thought I could get 1, and I asked Lester, and he told me he’d have to talk to Coach [Jim] Cavanaugh. I was eventually able to get it.”

#1

**LOGAN THOMAS** | “In my 10th grade year, I wanted a single-digit number and it [No. 3] was the only one available, so I took No. 3 when I got here. There’s no story, really.”

#3

**MARCUS DAVIS** | “I wanted No. 11. That was the number I wore in high school, but Dyrell [Roberts] had it. Then, when I first came here, I was 4, but I didn’t feel like I was a good fit for that number. I wore it for a year and then I changed to 7. Plus, I knew I was going to have a shot at quarterback, and I thought 7 was a good number for that. It had some excitement to it, and I’ve kept it since.”

#7

**DETRICK BONNER** | “All my life, I had a low number, even when I played Little League, so I did not want a high number at all. The No. 8 was the only option. I didn’t want 5 because Tyrod [Taylor] had it and I just left that on offense and took 8. It seemed like most of the 5’s have been on offense. I was 5 in high school, and I wanted something different.”

#8

**RANDALL DUNN** | “I changed my number because I felt like 13 was a bad number, with everything I had gone through. It was the number that was given to me when I got here. But I picked 9 because I wanted to change things up. It

#9

was time to start over and go in a different direction.”

**DYRELL ROBERTS** | “I wanted No. 1, but Macho [Harris] decided to come back for his senior season. I was a big fan of Percy Harvin when he was at Florida, and that was his number. So I took 11. I thought about trying to get 7 because that was my number in high school, but I decided that 11 was for me, and I didn’t want to change.”

#11

**KYLE FULLER** | “I actually had No. 49 when I came into camp. When I found out I wasn’t redshirting, I didn’t really want it, so I went to Lester, and the best number they had was 17. It was 17 or 49, so I had to go with 17, and I actually like it now. I fell in love with it, and thought it looked good on me, and I’m going to continue to try to make it look good on me.”

#17

**D.J. COLES** | “I actually wanted No. 10, but it was retired [Frank Loria, who was an All-American in 1967 and later died in the plane crash that killed most of Marshall University’s team], so I went with 18. I learned that 10 was retired on my official visit here. I always like No. 10. In high school, I was No. 7, but for some reason, 10 stood out to me. There’s no reason behind it. I wanted to wear it in college, but it’s retired, so I moved on to 18. I don’t know why, really.”

#18

**MICHAEL HOLMES** | “I have a little brother, and when we first started playing football, he had No. 1 and I had 2. When we got to high school, he had 21 and I had 20. So it’s kind of a little brother thing with me. We had those numbers just to be together, and I’m just carrying it on.”

#20

**TARIQ EDWARDS** – “I always wore 13 in high school and my brother wore 11, so 11 plus 13 is 24, and then me and my girlfriend got together on the 24th of March. Also, my favorite basketball player, Kobe Bryant, is No. 24. So it was the perfect number for me.”

#24

**KYSHOEN JARRETT** – “In high school, I was a tailback and I wore No. 34. In middle school, we went undefeated, and then I wore the number in high school, so it meant a lot to me. Also, I liked Ricky Williams [former NFL tailback] growing up. He had the dreads and he was an elusive back, so I used to have the dreads, and I tried to be like him. I like the way he played. The funny thing is that Ryan Williams [former Tech tailback] left early [for the NFL], and I was able to get No. 34 because of that. If he had stayed, I’d probably be No. 23.”

#34

**J.R. COLLINS** | “They didn’t have many numbers to choose from. They had three, and I chose No. 42 because my mom was 42 years old at the time, and I look up to my mom a lot. That’s the story behind my number. I wore No. 11 in high school, but Dyrell [Roberts] had that number, and he wasn’t going to switch.”

#42

**JERON GOUVEIA-WINSLOW** | “Just growing up, Troy Polamalu [safety with the Pittsburgh Steelers] has always been my favorite player. He’s a safety, and I came in as a safety. My freshman year, there was only 30 and 43 available, so, of course, I wanted 43. My freshman year, my hair was the longest it had ever been. It was down to my neck – I was growing it out just to be like him [Polamalu]. I had the ‘43 look’ going. It was cool at the time. But that’s why I chose 43, and I’ve kept it since.”

#43

**BRUCE TAYLOR** | “There are absolutely no stories behind my number. I went in, and Lester gave me No. 51, and I’ve been 51 ever since. I thought about changing. I wanted 24 because that was my high school number. Once I found out we could switch numbers the next year, Tariq had come in and taken No. 24. I didn’t know what 24 would look

#51

like at linebacker, but then I saw it on Tariq and it looked sweet. I wish I had gotten it. I thought about trying to get him to switch, but he’s made a name with 24 and I’ve made a name with 51, so we’re going to let it ride.”

**NICK BECTON** | “Lester gave me 54, and I think it’s because I was going to play on the defensive line at first. Then the coaches moved me to the offensive line, and I decided to keep it. It’s not a bad number. The lower [the number], the better.”

#54

**JACK TYLER** | “When I came to get my locker the first day I was here, it [No. 58] was the only number under 100 that was available in the entire locker room, so I kind of got stuck with it. I was 5 throughout high school, but I knew I wasn’t going to get that – Tyrod [Taylor] had it. It [No. 58] was the only number left, and now, it’s my number.”

#58

**DAVID WANG** | “I was 68 in high school, but [former guard] Jaymes Brooks had that. The other number I wanted was 67, but Michael Via had that. So I looked at other number choices, and I picked 76. I liked the number. I’ve worn it before one time, and the locker was close to my brother when I was a freshman. I could have changed, but I like having my number. It’s consistency that I like.”

#76

**DERRICK HOPKINS** | “The first of the year, Lester said, ‘You’ve got 98.’ So I took 98 and kept it. I’m not really a jersey and number guy. I just put a jersey on and go with it.”

#98

**JAMES GAYLE** | “Honestly, when I first got here, they gave it [No. 99] to me. I was a little mad. In high school, that’s not a number you really want. But it kind of grew on me, so now, I like it. I could have gotten a single-digit number this year, but I decided to stick with 99. I feel like it’s my image now. I was thinking about getting No. 9, but I decided to stick with 99.” 

#99



David Wang



Jeron Gouveia-Winslow



Kyshoen Jarrett



Dyrell Roberts

## Superstar NFL agent offers insight to 2012 football squad

by Jimmy Robertson

Classes didn't start at Virginia Tech until Aug. 27. But members of the football team got an education on an array of topics weeks before the university's official start date of classes.

In an effort to be proactive, Tech head coach Frank Beamer and his staff brought in speakers, some from on campus and some from off, to discuss topics like academics, parking, social media, and alcohol and drugs. But the most noticeable of the group was NFL super agent Joel Segal, who came to Blacksburg to impart his knowledge on the subject of agents.

Most Tech fans know about Segal, who has negotiated contracts for some of the biggest names in the NFL, including Randy Moss, Reggie Bush, Terrell Suggs, Percy Harvin and Chris Johnson. He also represents former Tech players Michael Vick, DeAngelo Hall, Josh Morgan and David Wilson. In the past, he represented former Tech players Cornell Brown, Antonio Freeman and Keion Carpenter. Thus, his connection with Tech gave him instant credibility among the 2012 crop of Hokies.

Segal delivered several messages to the Hokies during a 10-minute speech. But his most poignant message went to Tech's juniors, and in reality, it was a simple one to those thinking about leaving school early and declaring for the NFL Draft.

Stop thinking about it and play football.

"When a player is going into his junior season and is a good player, he needs to focus on the season ahead," Segal said. "There is nothing a player can gain by spending time with agents and thinking about what they are going to do after the season. Performing well during the season is the vehicle you want to use to succeed."

Segal used Wilson, who set the school's single-season rushing record last season, as an example. He had never met Wilson until last December after the regular season because Wilson wanted to focus on the season and getting better. In December, Segal met with Wilson and Wilson's parents.

"He [Wilson] told me, 'These are my people, these are my family, the people you're going to have to get by first,'" Segal said. "He wanted me to go through his parents, and I would advise that to anyone."

Segal also delivered strong words in regards

to agents who try to cheat. Some agents approach student-athletes with benefits, such as cash or cars or free dinners, in an attempt to get that student-athlete to sign with him or her. The NCAA has strong rules against such shenanigans, which could result in a student-athlete losing eligibility or worse.

"If they're willing to cheat now, then they're going to cheat you when you sign with them in some way," Segal told the team. "Please don't let them embarrass you guys or your team or this university. It's not worth it."

Segal warned the players about getting in trouble off the field. He has seen players get in trouble for drinking and driving and for possession of marijuana. He told the team that the end result for such vices isn't worth it.

"One drink is too much in a car," he told the team. "And weed is just stupid. It's terrible. You can get caught even if you're not smoking. I've had a guy who got into a car and his friend had weed in the car, and then my guy gets in trouble because he didn't know."

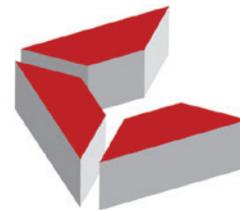
"So be careful. Positives [positive drug tests] are going to get you in trouble. Forget football, just in real life. These days, all the records go everywhere. It'll be hard to get a job when you're older, so be careful on that."

In addition, he warned the players about others starting fights with them, and he told them to be careful about what they tweet on Twitter. He and Reggie Bush came up with a rule – Bush has to count to 10 before he presses the button to tweet something.

After the speech, Segal met with some of the players individually to answer various questions, and he was happy to do that. He considers Beamer and John Ballein, the associate AD for football operations, good friends, along with current whip linebackers coach Cornell Brown.

"I've represented players as far back as Tyrone Drakeford and Antonio Freeman," Segal said. "I've got a long history of representing some great guys from Virginia Tech. They turn out great, great people here."

"I look at the players from here that I've represented when they're playing football and they've not only become good players, but they've also become successful family men, successful businessmen ... and I think that says a lot for the program." 



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# After a tumultuous 2011, former VT receiver Josh Morgan returns home and is ready to turn some heads

Photo courtesy of the Washington Redskins



by Jimmy Robertson

Josh Morgan's 2011 season in San Francisco had more twists and turns than Lombard Street. It was more torturous than a night at Alcatraz.

Morgan, the former Tech receiver who departed Blacksburg after the 2007 season, suffered a broken right leg during the San Francisco 49ers' 48-3 win over Tampa Bay last October. The injury came on a pass play in which Morgan was tackled awkwardly, and it led to widespread speculation as to why head coach Jim Harbaugh was throwing the ball with five minutes left in a game in which his team led by 38 points at the time.

The injury, which came during the team's fifth game, required eight screws and a plate, and sidelined Morgan for the remainder of the season. He missed the rest of the 49ers' 13-3 regular season and their run to the NFC championship game.

"It was real hard," Morgan said. "That's really the first time I've been seriously injured. When I got hurt at Tech, I was still able to play with the injury. But it was devastating to watch the team [the 49ers] have some success and not be a part of it. It was hard physically and mentally, but I think it made me stronger as a person."

Morgan's pending free agency also complicated things last season. In the final year of a four-year contract with the 49ers, he wanted to make a statement with his play on the field and set himself up for a huge payday in free agency. After all, he caught 44 passes for 698 yards in 2010 and

52 passes in 527 yards in 2009 despite the 49ers' plodding offense, and he appeared to be coming into his own as a receiver. Instead, he went into free agency having caught just 15 passes for 220 yards and a touchdown because of the injury.

Fortunately, teams were still interested. Morgan estimated that his agent fielded calls from 15 teams inquiring about him. The Washington Redskins jumped in with a two-year deal worth \$12 million – \$7.5 million guaranteed. A native of Washington, D.C., Morgan jumped at the opportunity to return home.

"I was set to come back home," Morgan said. "San Francisco was about the farthest away I could be coming out of Tech. The first day of free agency, the Redskins came out strong, and this was the move that made the most sense to me.

"All the coaches tell you that it's your decision, and you have to do what's best for your family, so why not go home and play in front of family and friends who have watched you grow up to be the man you are today?"

Morgan made a name for himself at H.D. Woodson High in Washington before coming to Tech. He grew up four blocks from the old RFK Stadium, the Redskins' former home. For the first time, he'll be playing in front of family and friends. He never played in Washington while with the 49ers, and he missed out on playing against Southern Cal at FedExField in 2004 while at Tech because of an injury.

"Everyone's ecstatic," Morgan said. "It's been non-stop phone calls and texts. On the flight out from San Francisco, I cut my phone off, and when we landed, I probably had 400 texts.

"So it's exciting. It's like a dream come true. I never thought I'd have this opportunity."

Morgan said he was close to 100 percent and expects to be that way once the season starts. He was limited some during training camp while getting the leg stronger, but he said he spent a lot of time learning head coach Mike Shanahan's offense and expects to be ready to go.

"It's really the same type of West Coast offense that we ran in San Francisco," Morgan said. "I've had to learn some of the different terminology, but the concepts are the same."

In addition to playing in front of his friends and family, he can't wait to play with rookie quarterback Robert Griffin III. For the many Tech fans who double as Washington Redskins fans, Morgan gave a scouting report of what to expect from the rookie quarterback and said to expect big things this season.

"He's a taller, faster version of Marcus Vick," Morgan said. "He's got the arm strength of Michael Vick, and he's got the intelligence of Logan Thomas and Sean Glennon.

"I'm really excited about the season. I can't wait. I haven't been this excited since my freshman year at Tech. I can't wait to get out there and put on a show."

HERE IS A LOOK AT ALL FORMER TECH PLAYERS PLAYING IN THE NFL AS OF OPENING DAY (SEPT. 5):



{ ARIZONA CARDINALS }

**87 Jeff King** - The former Tech tight end caught 27 passes for 271 yards and three touchdowns in his first season with Arizona after signing a three-year, \$6 million deal with the Cardinals last summer. The former fifth-round pick in the 2006 NFL Draft spent the first five years of his career with the Carolina Panthers. He has caught 139 passes in his career, with 12 going for touchdowns.

**34 Ryan Williams** - A second-round pick in the NFL Draft a year ago, Williams missed his rookie season after suffering a torn patella tendon in his right knee during a preseason game against Green Bay. The former Tech tailback, though, enters this season at 100 percent and should get plenty of carries as a backup to starter Beanie Wells.



{ BALTIMORE RAVENS }

**2 Tyrod Taylor** - The former Tech quarterback enters his second season with the Ravens after playing in three games as a rookie a year ago. He completed one pass for 18 yards and rushed once for two yards. The former sixth-round pick serves as the backup to starter Joe Flacco.



{ CAROLINA PANTHERS }

**50 James Anderson** - Entering his seventh season, Anderson continues to be a stalwart at linebacker for the Panthers. The former third-round pick in the 2006 NFL Draft is living up to the five-year, \$22 million deal he signed last summer, having started every game during the 2011 season and finishing with a career-high 145 tackles (98 solo) and two interceptions.



{ DALLAS COWBOYS }

**81 Danny Coale** - Coale suffered a tough summer, battling through various injuries after

**hokies in the pros | 2012 edition**

being drafted in the fifth round by the Cowboys. He broke his foot, and once he got over that, he suffered a quad injury. The Cowboys cut Coale, but then signed him to their practice squad after he cleared waivers. He could be signed off the practice squad at any point this season if the Cowboys need him.



{ GREEN BAY PACKERS }

**11 Jarrett Boykin** - In a bit of a surprise, Boykin survived the final round of cuts and earned a spot on Green Bay's roster. The former Tech receiver signed with Jacksonville as a free agent last spring, but the Jaguars released him, and Boykin signed with Green Bay. He made the squad and will be the Packers' sixth receiver. He led all Packers with 13 catches for 166 yards this preseason.

**68 Jaymes Brooks** - Brooks, a former Tech offensive guard, signed with Green Bay as a free agent following the NFL Draft last spring. He never practiced during the team's training camp because of a hamstring injury, and the Packers ended up putting him on the reserve/physically unable to perform list.

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{ HOUSTON TEXANS }

**17 Shayne Graham** - Graham, a former Tech kicker, continues to find employment in the NFL, and his latest stop is in Houston, where he replaces Neil Rackers, who set a Texans record with 137 points last season. Graham has been in 13 camps since his rookie year of 2000, and Houston is his eighth NFL team (Buffalo, Carolina, Cincinnati, New York Giants, New England, Miami and Baltimore).

**76 Duane Brown** - Brown is coming off the best season of his career, and the former Tech left tackle received a massive pay increase as a result, signing a six-year deal worth \$53.4 million (\$22.08 million guaranteed). Last season, the 2008 first-round pick did not allow a sack on his way to earning second-team Associated Press All-Pro honors. Brown has started every game he's played in during his NFL career.

**20 Rashad Carmichael** - Carmichael's rookie season last year went down in flames after he suffered a shoulder injury during training camp. He spent the entire season on injured reserve, but now he is healthy and hoping to make an impact at cornerback for the Texans.



{ KANSAS CITY CHIEFS }

**24 Brandon Flowers** - The former Tech defensive back again returns as a starting cornerback for the Chiefs following a season in which he recorded 59 tackles (47 solo) and four interceptions - one which he returned for a touchdown. Flowers, a second-round selection in

the 2008 draft, has started every game in which he has played except for one. Last September, he signed a five-year, \$50 million extension, with \$22 million guaranteed.



{ NEW YORK GIANTS }

**22 David Wilson** - Wilson, who set the Tech single-season rushing record a year ago, begins life in the NFL after forgoing his final season of collegiate eligibility and entering the NFL Draft. The first-round pick of the Giants signed a four-year deal worth \$6.68 million, with a \$3.3 million signing bonus, and he will be splitting carries with Ahmad Bradshaw this season.

**28 Jayron Hosley** - Like Wilson, the former Tech defensive back decided to forgo his final season of collegiate eligibility and enter the NFL Draft. The third-round pick of the Giants signed a four-year deal worth \$2.637 million, with a \$15,000 signing bonus. He'll be a backup at both cornerback positions this season.



{ OAKLAND RAIDERS }

**73 Ed Wang** - Wang, a former Tech offensive tackle, signed with Oakland after being released by the Buffalo Bills, who drafted him in the fifth round of the 2010 NFL Draft. Unfortunately, Wang, who has played in six NFL games in his career, suffered an injured shoulder during the preseason, and the Raiders put him on injured reserve, which means he'll miss the 2012 campaign.



{ PHILADELPHIA EAGLES }

**7 Michael Vick** - Entering his 10th NFL season, Vick enjoyed one of his best seasons as a pro last year when he threw for a career-high 3,303 yards. He also threw 18 touchdown passes, but had a career-high 14 interceptions. He rushed for 589 yards and one touchdown as well. Last fall, he signed a six-year, \$100 million contract with the Eagles - \$40 million of that was guaranteed - and will be the starter for the foreseeable future.

**55 Darryl Tapp** - Tapp started in two games and played in 12, his fewest since joining the NFL as a second-round pick by the Seattle Seahawks in the 2006 NFL Draft. The former Tech defensive end recorded 27 tackles (19 solo) and 2.5 sacks as a backup last season. He has one more year left on the three-year deal (worth \$15 million) he signed in 2010.



{ PITTSBURGH STEELERS }

**93 Jason Worilds** - Worilds, entering his third season with the Steelers, started seven of the 12 games he played a year ago and recorded 38 tackles (27 solo) and three sacks. He also forced a fumble. He got those starts in place of an injured LaMarr Woodley, but he figures to be Woodley's backup again this season.



{ SAN DIEGO CHARGERS }

**11 Eddie Royal** - Royal changed addresses in the offseason after spending the first four years of his career with the Denver Broncos. He signed a three-year, \$13.5 million deal this past

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summer with the Chargers. The former Tech receiver caught just 19 passes for 155 yards and a touchdown in 12 games a year ago (eight starts) and will be looking to improve on those numbers with the Chargers.



{ SEATTLE SEAHAWKS }

**31 Kam Chancellor** - No former Hokie player enjoyed a better NFL season than Chancellor, who made the Pro Bowl team as an alternate and then got to play in the game when San Francisco's Dashon Goldson pulled out with an injury. He became the ninth former Tech player to play in a Pro Bowl.

Chancellor, a fifth-round pick by Seattle in the 2010 draft, started 15 games last season and finished with 97 tackles (75 solo) and four interceptions. He also had a sack and two forced fumbles. He'll be the starter at strong safety for Seattle this season.



{ TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS }

**35 Cody Grimm** - One of Hokie Nation's

all-time favorite players, Grimm enters his third season with Tampa Bay after suffering through an injury-plagued second year. The former Tech whip linebacker started the first three games for the Buccaneers, but then broke his left fibula - an injury that cost him the remainder of the season. He finished with 11 tackles (10 solo), and heading into this season, appears to be a backup at strong safety behind rookie Mark Barron.



{ TENNESSEE TITANS }

**36 Darren Evans** - Evans, a former Tech tailback, spent a portion of his rookie season last year on the Indianapolis Colts practice squad and found himself on the active roster in October, playing in two games. In August, the Colts waived Evans, and the Tennessee Titans signed him to their practice squad less than a week before the season opener.



{ WASHINGTON REDSKINS }

**15 Josh Morgan** - Morgan spent his first

four seasons in the NFL with San Francisco, but he signed a two-year, \$12 million deal with Washington after last season. The former Tech receiver started five games for the 49ers last season, but suffered a broken leg that cost him the rest of the campaign. He caught 15 passes for 220 yards and a touchdown, and he goes into this season as a backup at both receiver spots.

**23 DeAngelo Hall** - Hall is entering his 10th season in the NFL and his fifth with the Redskins. A year ago, the former Tech cornerback started all 16 games and had 90 tackles (65 solo), 16 pass breakups and three interceptions, and he also forced a fumble. The former first-round pick by Atlanta in the 2004 draft has three more years left on the six-year, \$55 million deal (\$23 million guaranteed) he signed with Washington in 2009.

**63 Will Montgomery** - Montgomery continues to hang around in the NFL, and he won't be leaving any time soon after signing a four-year, \$12 million extension with Washington back in February. He started all 16 games for the Redskins at center a year ago and will be the starting center again this season - his seventh in the NFL (five with Washington, one with New York Jets and one with Carolina). 



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Steve Sanders (below) and guys like Antonio Freeman and Maurice DeShazo played on the 1993 Independence Bowl team that started the Hokies' current bowl streak.



## Bowl victory and finance degree made former Tech receiver Steve Sanders' career a big success

by **Jimmy Robertson**

Like nearly every college football player, former Tech wide receiver Steve Sanders wanted to play in the NFL. In fact, he planned for it, majoring in finance at Tech because he wanted to be able to manage his own money.

But like so many college football players, his NFL plans did not work out, forcing him to rely on his degree. Fortunately, that has propelled him to a successful career, one that today sees him working for GE Healthcare and living in Charlotte, N.C.

He serves as a perfect example for today's Tech football players, and his message to them would be simple.

"I'd tell them to think about what they're going to do if things don't go the way they want," Sanders said. "You need to be prepared for life beyond football. You need to make decisions for yourself and by yourself. As a student-athlete, take advantage of the opportunity and get a good degree while a great school is paying for it."

Athletically, Tech wasn't exactly great when Sanders arrived on campus out of Green Run High School in Virginia Beach, Va., in 1990, though the Hokies were coming off a 6-4-1 season after two losing campaigns in head coach Frank Beamer's first two years. But he decided to commit anyway, trusting in Beamer and his staff. While Sanders considered other schools such as UVa, Clemson, Duke, Wake Forest and Tennessee, he committed to Tech after his official visit, cancelling visits to UVa and Clemson against his mom's desires.

"My mom wasn't too happy when I called Tom O'Brien [former UVa assistant coach] and cancelled my visit," Sanders said. "She didn't have anything against Tech. She just wanted me to explore all my options and make an informed decision.

"But I loved the atmosphere at Tech, and there was an opportunity to play quite a bit. I

didn't know much about Tech, but I learned a lot on my visit, and I liked it."

Sanders played as a true freshman, though to say "played" might be a stretch. He did not catch a pass and spent much of his time on the sidelines hampered by injuries that season, while the Hokies went on to a 6-5 season, culminating in a 38-13 blasting of rival UVa in Blacksburg.

His sophomore season, he caught 17 passes for 219 yards, as the Hokies finished with a losing record (5-6) for the third time in Beamer's first five seasons. Things went worse the next season, as the Hokies finished an infamous 2-8-1, and Sanders caught just 14 passes for 189 yards.

"Those were trying times," Sanders said. "We had great players and great talent, but things weren't working out. We'd always finished around 5-6, 6-5, and then we had that 2-8-1 season. I never thought about leaving, though. All

that we had been through just made my last year that much better.”

As most Tech fans know, Beamer and his staff turned the program around in 1993. Behind the throwing of quarterback Maurice DeShazo, the running of Duane Thomas and a defense led by guys like Cornell Brown, J.C. Price and Torrian Gray, the Hokies went 9-3, beating UVa in Charlottesville to end the regular season and then knocking off Indiana in the Independence Bowl.

Sanders aided the cause that season, starting every game and catching 29 passes for 552 yards and four touchdowns. He would have led the team in receptions and yards except for some guy named Antonio Freeman, who went on to have a great NFL career.

“I think we had great leadership on that team, and what had happened the previous year really brought us together,” Sanders said. “Guys worked so hard, and they were focused. People stayed that summer and went to summer school and worked out. We didn’t want to be mediocre, and I know I didn’t want my last year to end the way the ’92 season ended.”

Sanders’ best game that season came at West Virginia when he caught four passes for 106 yards, including a 46-yard touchdown from DeShazo in a bitter 14-13 defeat. He had another touchdown reception in that game, but it got called back be-

cause of a questionable holding penalty – arguably the biggest play in the game.

Yet he wrapped up his career in fine fashion, catching two passes and escorting Antonio Banks into the end zone after Tech blocked a half-ending, field-goal attempt by Indiana. The play changed the game, as the Hokies went on to a big win – one that began a streak of 19 straight bowl appearances.

“When I’m at games, I think about that,” Sanders said. “I think about where we were and where we are now. It’s good to be a part of it. Every time I hear ESPN talk about it, I think to myself, ‘I was there for that.’ That’s a pretty good feeling.”

Following that season, Sanders signed with the Chicago Bears as a free agent and spent a lot of time in their training camp. He made it to the last round of cuts before the Bears let him go. He expected to land a spot on the Bears’ practice squad, but the Bears picked up another receiver, leaving Sanders unemployed.

“That’s when I went back to Tech to finish up work on my degree,” Sanders said. “I wish I had redshirted because I had so many injuries that first year, but Coach Beamer and Tech were gracious enough to pay for my schooling that last year since I hadn’t redshirted.

“I’m glad I went back and finished. It was good to be just a student. I had a lot more time since I

wasn’t playing, and I was able to meet a lot more people. I really enjoyed that year.”

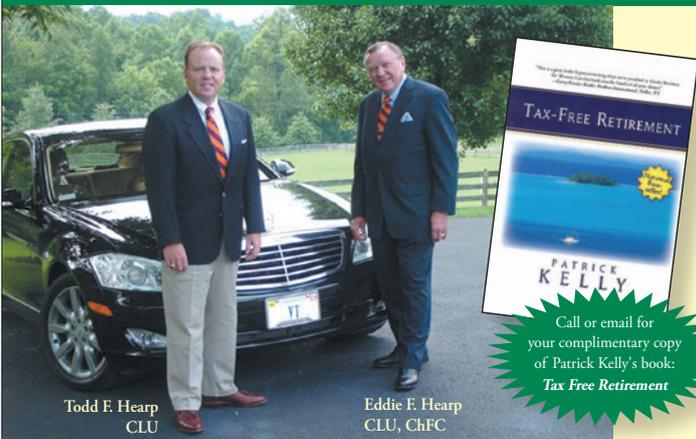
Sanders graduated with his finance degree in the spring of 1995. He landed a job in Northern Virginia, working for a government contractor. He spent 11 years in Northern Virginia before moving to Charlotte in January of 2006. He got involved in pharmaceutical sales, and then, the past four years, has worked in medical equipment sales for GE Healthcare.

Sanders, who is married (to a Tech graduate) and has a 7-year-old daughter and a 9-month-old son, often makes it back to Blacksburg, especially in the fall, as he has season tickets. He stopped by practice following a day of business in Roanoke and said hello, and he also came to the lettermen’s reunion before the Maroon-White game last spring.

“I keep in touch with a few of the guys,” he said. “I don’t do Facebook, so I’m a little out of the loop. But Antonio Freeman and I text quite a bit, and I keep in touch with a few others. I really enjoyed the lettermen’s reunion. That gave me a chance to catch up with a lot of people.”

Things have worked out nicely for Sanders, thanks to a wise decision years ago to focus on the future while in the present. For sure, it’s a philosophy that should be heeded by all of Tech’s football players, present and future. 

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**DEEP**



## Jennifer Wiker is doing everything possible to make sure her final season as a Tech volleyball player ends on a positive note

by **Marc Mullen**

It has been labeled the most-watched event ever in U.S. TV history, according to Nielson Company, a corporate conglomerate that measures such things, and why not? The 2012 London Olympics provided everything that intense sports fans and even marginal fans could ask for in a two-week span, with just too many storylines to mention even one.

However, for most of the events held during an Olympic season, this is the only time that true fans of non-mainstream sports – or even athletes in that sport – can watch the ultimate competition at the highest level imaginable before it fades away for the next four years.

This is definitely true for volleyball, the sport in which Virginia Tech's Jennifer Wiker (pronounced Wick-er) excels. She tasted a bit of that USA Volleyball experience earlier this year and came away from it wanting more.

"I loved watching the Olympics, especially after this experience. I saw people that helped out with our event on TV with the Olympic team, which was pretty cool," she said. "All the girls that they talked about at the tryout ... they would say, 'This girl does this. Why don't you try that?' And then I actually got to see them do it.

"When you're in middle school, you watch the high school girls. When you're in high school, you watch a college game, and you see things they do and try them. Now, I'm in college, so to see the Olympic team, it's the next step to watch and to learn from those players. So I loved watching it. I wish they showed volleyball a lot more often. I think it helps players get better and helps our sport get recognized."

Wiker's experience began in March, as she and a few other Tech players travelled to Colorado Springs, Colo., to try out for the national squad. USA Volleyball selected 48 players who did not make the squad but still had

collegiate eligibility remaining, to participate in the U.S. Women's National A2 Team Program in June in Columbus, Ohio.

"We were out there for about 10 days, and it was eat, sleep and volleyball. That's literally all we did," Wiker said of her Colorado experience. "We had two-a-days. We would wake up. Eat breakfast. Go to practice. Eat lunch. Take a nap. Go to the second practice. Eat dinner and then go to bed.

"We had about three or four days of training, so we started out with drills and position work, and we were evaluated. They were always taking stats. Then after two days, they split us into the four teams, making even teams. We started practicing with just our team, so we could learn to work together. We had two days of team practices and then the competitions."

Wiker played on the USA White team and helped the squad to the gold medal in the playoffs, as they defeated the USA Gold squad 3-0 in the finals. She had six kills in the final match and tallied 16 kills in the tournament.

But it wasn't winning the title that she will remember the most about the experience. It was what she learned, and maybe more importantly, how it made her feel.

"It was definitely harder there because I always felt pressure to do well," she said. "I knew every

single touch I did was being recorded. Here, we do stats, but not when we are in drills. It just made me more aware of the importance of every single touch.

"It also made me feel like a younger player. It brought me back to what it was like to start all over again. I was starting with a new team, with girls that were more advanced than me. So to learn from them and to kind of start over again, that was kind of a cool feeling as a fifth-year senior ... just to kind of go back to that."

When she was looking to start with her last "new" team – her college team – Wiker, a native of Charlotte, N.C., visited many of the ACC schools because of the central location of many of the colleges in the conference. She believes that Betsy Horowitz, who played for Tech from 2006-09 and was a classmate (South Mecklenburg High) and club teammate (Carolina Juniors) of hers back in Charlotte, helped her get noticed by the Tech coaching staff.

"I liked how close it was to my house," Wiker said about Virginia Tech. "I liked the academics. The business school is really good here, and the coaches here just seemed very involved with the players. They were very outgoing and reached out to me. They seemed excited to have me here on campus.

"Other coaches did the visit and showed a little bit of interest, but not as much as this school. I felt like I was really wanted here, and they had a good plan. They told me about the redshirt thing, and it sounded like a good idea for me, so it just seemed like an overall good fit."

The "redshirt thing" was having her sit out her first year of college because the coaching staff saw a tall girl with a lot of potential, but a player who was not ready for the physical grind of a college season. In high school, she had gotten by on her height, and the staff figured she had the chance to get to the next level, but just needed time to get into the shape necessary to compete in the ACC.

"I was not really college ready, let's say, in terms of conditioning or body composition," Wiker said. "In the first semester, I lost 17 pounds of fat and gained 10 pounds of muscle. I had never been in a weight room before, so it was just to get me ready.

"They [Tech's coaches] knew I wouldn't really be ready to play my freshman year, so it would have been a waste of eligibility, and I think it's the best thing they've ever done. I'm so happy that they did because I've come so far that if I would have ended [her career] last season and I wouldn't have had this season, I would have been so disappointed. I think this will be my best season yet."

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Wiker cannot be missed on a volleyball court, as she reaches a height of 6-foot-3, the tallest player on the team. Her dad, Bob, stands at 6-8, while her mom, Barb, was 6-2. She's also probably the only player on the court wearing a pink armband, even though it isn't a "Dig Pink" game.

"My mom passed away when I was 7," Wiker said. "She had breast cancer. It was the rare kind, IBC (inflammatory breast cancer, which accounts for 1 to 5 percent of all breast cancers diagnosed), so they didn't know what it was.

"So it was like a year and a half before they finally correctly diagnosed her, and it was kind of a little late. But that's why I wear a pink armband. People probably have no idea why I wear this pink armband on my left arm, but that's for her."

She said it was hard on her dad trying to raise two daughters – Wiker has an older sister, Susan, who is three years older and got her into the sport – but he had a tremendous support system of family in the area.

"We have a lot of family in Charlotte, so my mom's aunt was very supportive and helped out with the 'mom' role a little bit," Wiker said. "But my dad was very motivated to push us because he realized we were his only family left, and so, he's always been very strict with us in school. I give

him all the credit for where I've gotten to today because I've never been able to slack off.

"I think I missed 10 days of school total ever because he never let me miss school, and he's just been a great supporter and just put everything he had into me and my sister. I think he's going to have a hard time when I am done because he's got no one left to watch."

Seeing how family rallies around one another and supports each other may explain why Wiker has enjoyed her time at Tech and is really appreciative of everything that the school offers for student-athletes. She identified the Student-Athlete Academic Support Services department, a group of people who help student-athletes balance the demands of academics and athletics, as one of those things.

Reflecting on what she thinks has been the reason for the team's success since her arrival in 2008 – the team has won 77 games since she stepped on campus, the most in a four-year period since 1992-95 – she pointed to Habitudes, a curriculum designed by Dr. Tim Elmore, who founded Growing Leaders, a non-profit organization created to develop emerging leaders. His curriculum focuses on teaching leadership habits and attitudes through the power of an image, a conversation or an experience.

Tech's Office of Student Life started this voluntary 10-week curriculum with the Hokies' teams last year. Many student-athletes say that this course gets them to thinking and helps them to become better leaders. In return, their teams become closer.

"I feel like that has gotten us to open up and talk as a team," Wiker said. "We're more understanding of each other, and it's brought our team closer together outside the court, so I feel like, once we step on the court, we have such a good relationship that we're just able to play better together.

"There's no difference between the freshmen and the seniors. You can't tell the difference – besides who has more ice bags on themselves. I think we are more understanding of who should be leaders and when to be leaders. It has made our program stronger as a family rather than just as a bunch of volleyball players. I think we've been able to get ourselves out there more to have better seasons, more winning, and we are able to bring in stronger players."

With her final season already underway, getting a chance to play in the NCAA Tournament – the ultimate competition at the highest level for a collegiate – is all she could ask for to end her college career. 



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Tyler Horan went home this summer and excelled on the baseball diamond.

## Horan enjoys storybook summer in the Cape Cod League

by Marc Mullen

There can't be too many young men with aspirations of playing professional baseball, who would find joy in learning that, after finishing their third year of college, they'd be spending the upcoming summer living at home with mom and dad.

However, most young men don't have the luxury of living just a 20-minute drive from playing in the most prestigious summer baseball league in America – the Cape Cod League.

With home-cooked meals and the bonus of sleeping under a roof he's called home for more than 20 years, Virginia Tech redshirt junior Tyler Horan turned in one tremendous summer performance.

"That was a great experience. I'm pretty fortunate to have the best summer league in my backyard, where I got to live at home," Horan said. "Being able to play in front of hometown fans ... everyone kind of considered me a hometown favorite because, if you look at a roster, you'll see I'm a local guy. So they were rooting for me regardless of where we played.

"And being able to live at home, sleeping in my own bed, coming home to home-cooked meals from my mom, and having them come to all my

games, my friends, my grandparents, everybody ... I just got to see everybody. It was the first time I've gotten to live at home in four years, so that was great."

Horan's magical summer saw him finish second in the TD Ameritrade College Home Run Derby in Omaha, Neb., in early July; be named a CCL All-Star; be honored with the John Claffey Award, signifying the top New England prospect in the league; tie the CCL's wood bat record for home runs in a single season; be named all-league; and lead the Wareham Gatemen to the CCL championship.

The league, which has been around since 1963, had seen just one man hit more than 16 home runs in a season before Horan this year (22 by Cory Sullivan in 1983 with an aluminum bat). He joined Tim Teufel (aluminum bat in 1979) and Dave Stanton (wood bat in 1988) as the only men with 16.

The Middleboro, Mass., native sent two more out during the CCL playoffs, and he capped his season in his final at-bat by blasting his 18th home run of the summer and the 33rd of the year – adding in the 15 he hit for Tech in the spring.

"Omaha, that's what we strive for as a team,

and being able to get a sneak peak at it was really cool," Horan said. "The fans out there, they live for baseball, and there were over 20,000 people there, so that was the biggest crowd I had ever gotten to play in front of. Afterwards, they had an autograph signing, and I couldn't tell you how many times I signed my name.

"And tying the home run record, that had been around a long time and being able to put myself in that class was cool. And then you have to chalk it up to a storybook ending, getting to live at home, seeing your family all the time, and being able to win the Cape league title and get that ring. You're always playing to win, so to be able to do that was awesome."

Not bad for a man who, five summers prior, was a rising junior at Boston College High and didn't even play summer baseball, as he was concentrating on trying to pursue football after high school.

Many other Hokies had successful summers and have been garnering post-summer accolades from various baseball publications. For a complete list, go to the following site, <http://www.hokiesports.com/baseball/recaps/20120830aaa.html>. 

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**VERSATILITY**  
*is her* **GAME**

## Amanda Gerhard played every sport in high school, and she has used her versatility to play just about every position for the Tech women's soccer team

by **Marc Mullen**

**S**he has succeeded in everything she's attempted and everywhere she's gone – the epitome of a typical natural athlete. Since she was 5 years old and took up soccer for the first time – the path she ultimately chose for the next level – Virginia Tech redshirt senior Amanda Gerhard has been earning awards, breaking records and helping her teams to the top.

Gerhard will go down as one of the best female student-athletes ever to come out of a tiny school located about an hour's drive north of Philadelphia, Pa., a borough called Catasauqua. She earned 14 varsity letters while playing for the Rough Riders and graduated near the top of her class before bringing her talents to Blacksburg.

"I started soccer when I was about 5 years old," Gerhard said. "I also played softball when I was younger, and then softball and soccer kind of collided because their seasons were at the same time, so I had to choose and chose soccer, obviously.

"I also played basketball, starting when I was about 7, and I really liked playing it a lot. I just liked running up and down the court. I ran track in high school just for three years, and field hockey, I picked up my freshman year of high school."

Not familiar with the sport of field hockey, but knowing that her mother, Holly, played it in high school, Gerhard went for it. Not surprisingly, she earned three varsity letters, three league honorable mention honors, and she helped the team to the league title as a junior.

"I didn't really want to have anything to do with the sport," she said. "But when I decided to start playing field hockey, I fell in love with it. I actually miss it so much to this day, but I'm very happy with my decision to play soccer in college."

Many small-school athletes play multiple sports and go from fall to winter to spring without stopping. Gerhard was no exception, as she earned four varsity letters in basketball and all-league honors as a senior on the court.

However, her busiest time was in the spring when she played both soccer and ran track. But being a two-sport athlete during the spring didn't slow her down one bit.

"The school decided that I could do soccer as my primary [sport], so I would do soccer practices and soccer games, and that was my



**Amanda Gerhard was a goal-scoring machine in high school, but has proved invaluable to the Hokies as a defender.**

primary sport," she said. "Then, whenever we had track meets, I would leave practice early to go to the meet. I ran the 100, 200 and 4x100 and sometimes the 400. I actually qualified for states in both the 100 and 200 my junior year, and that was an awesome experience."

Gerhard pulled in an additional three letters while running on the track team, but the soccer pitch is where she ultimately made her mark, not only for the school and in the league, but also in the district and state. She was a prolific scorer and led her teams to a pair of league titles, a district

title and a state championship game appearance during her junior year when she scored a District XI-record 51 goals, which was also the 12th-most ever in the state of Pennsylvania.

Gerhard capped her career with a 39-goal performance in her senior year that lifted her career total to 152 goals, which was a girls' district record, and at the time, the sixth-most ever scored in the state.

"To be honest, I didn't even really know what I was at going into my senior year," she said. "It was a milestone to get 50 career goals, and then it

was a milestone to get 100 career goals. My junior year, I had scored over 50 goals in one season, so I thought 'Oh, that's cool.'

"Then, going into my senior season, everybody was talking about breaking the [district] record. And people were saying, 'Oh, she's not going to do it,' and I really didn't even care. I just wanted to win. So honestly, I was not that aware of the record beforehand until I had gone into the season.

"And you know, after breaking it, it was awesome. I was really excited and proud of myself for doing that, but when it comes down to it, it really doesn't mean that much because I play outside right back now and I'm not a big scorer in college. So it was a great high school feat."

Gerhard chose Tech, another milestone accomplishment for the young lady from Catasauqua. She has been the only female athlete from her high school to play four years of a varsity sport at an ACC school going back to her birth in 1990. Only three male athletes from her high school have done this in that same time span, one in soccer.

Interestingly, the sport of girls' soccer was relatively new to her high school – with the girls program not starting until 1997, when Gerhard was already 7.

"I wanted to play somewhere where I would

be surrounded by the best, so I decided to play soccer in college," she said. "I looked at schools at home, like Villanova and Penn State, and I started getting some interest from Virginia Tech and thought 'That's awesome.'

"I just wanted to be somewhere where there was big football and big basketball, and experience something totally different. All the girls on the team are like, 'Yeah, I graduated in a class of 1,600' and I'm like, 114, just so small. I just wanted to do something totally different."

The road hasn't been an easy one for Gerhard since arriving in Blacksburg, as she broke her right foot her freshman year just 15 minutes into a preseason scrimmage and had to sit out her first season. Also, Gerhard has not been the goal-scoring machine in the ACC as she was in high school, which would bother some players. Not her, though, as she has flourished in other roles.

"I would play anywhere on the field," she said. "I've played on the back line. I've played in the middle. I've man-marked players. I've played up top and out wide. So yeah, I've played a bunch of different positions. I don't care. I just want to be on the field.

"It was definitely tough at first. I think it's a hard transition coming from high school, where everyone's a superstar, to coming here. And I mean, it's very difficult to be a superstar in the

ACC. You're going against some of the best players in the country and the best teams.

"I had different expectations for myself coming in – I thought I was going to score some goals – and then I kind of found myself in more of a defensive role. Even when I was in the midfield, I found myself being a tackler and chasing players down and not so much going to the goal. It's definitely different to say the least. I actually like playing defense better, if I'm honest. I really like being on the back line and stopping girls from scoring."

Her natural athletic talent certainly has been on display by switching positions at the highest of levels and helping her team succeed – four straight NCAA appearances and, just recently, a team ranking of 11th in that nation, the highest ever ranking for the Hokies by the NSCAA.

Her athletic genes come naturally. Her father, Chris, was a state wrestling champion and played football at a Division II school, while her uncle, Matt, may have pulled off the greatest accomplishment the school has ever seen, becoming (at the time) just the fourth state wrestler since 1938 to win four individual state titles.

Those two older Gerhards have already been inducted into the school's Hall of Fame. One has to think Amanda's name will certainly be called soon. 

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