

inside

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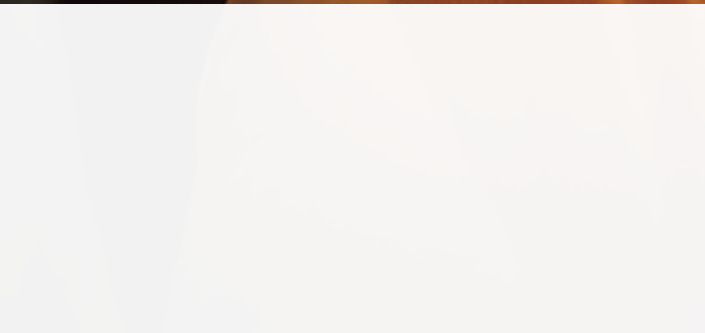
The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics

BUZZ WILLIAMS ERA SET TO TIP OFF

The Hokies opened practice in preparation for the 2014-15 season with a new coach, seven new players and a new outlook on their future

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Kelsey Conyers is the lone senior on a Tech women's team that will be replacing two of its top players from last season



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HAPPY HOKIE INVITATIONAL

The Virginia Tech volleyball team dominated the competition at the Hokie Invitational on Sept. 19-20, winning all three matches by a score of 3-0. Tech knocked off UNC Wilmington 25-11, 27-25 and 25-14 that Friday and then beat Radford (25-22, 25-18, 25-21) and Marshall (25-17, 25-21, 25-23). Lindsey Owens was the tournament MVP, while Ashley Battle and Kathryn Caine made the all-tournament team. The Hokies have only conference foes left on their slate from here through the end of the season.

THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

"I am truly blessed and thankful for the Hokie Club and what they do in order to raise money for the athletic facilities. They have helped me develop into the best athlete and student that I am capable of being here at Virginia Tech."

LaTasha Samson-Akpan
Senior | Volleyball

"The support and spirit behind the Hokie Club helps fuel the athletics department, but more importantly, the student-athletes. Thank you very much for all you do to keep the Virginia Tech sports tradition alive!"

Kathryn Caine
Senior | Volleyball

The Donor File

Kristin Goff Sutphin

HOKIE CLUB LEVEL: Golden Hokie Champion

CURRENTLY RESIDES: Floyd, Virginia

WHAT YEAR DID YOU GRADUATE? ISE (industrial and systems engineering), Class of 2007; PMBA (professional master's of business administration), Class of 2012

FAMILY: Mitch (husband)



Q&A

Q: A Hokie is ...

A: A Fan in the Fall who Follows Football, a Gobbler who Gambles to Garner Greatness, a Steward of Sportsmanship in their Stadium Seat, a Bird who Becomes a Beast with the Ball, a Fellow of a Flock who strives to Finish First, a Lineman who Loves to Level in Lane, a Youngster who Yells when effort Yields Yardage, a Hero who's Helpful and Humble at Heart.

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

A: In September of 2009, I traveled to Nebraska for the first time to watch the Hokies take on the Huskers. It was a wonderful experience. The fans were a joy to be around and made every effort to make us feel welcome. A delightful trip combined with a Hokie win made this trip very memorable.

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

A: My father has been a Hokie Club member for 15 years, so I am a second-generation Hokie Club member.

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

A: Virginia Tech is a cultural staple in Southwest Virginia. Most of my immediate family members and friends are loyal Virginia Tech fans. The passion Virginia Tech fans have is unmatched throughout the region, and the excitement influenced me at an early age. I attended several women's basketball games as a child and football games as a young adult, and the spirit that filled Cassell Coliseum and Lane Stadium during those events made me feel like a part of the Hokie Nation.

Q: Describe your perfect day at Virginia Tech.

A: My perfect day would include a fall breeze, leaves displaying the perfect shades of maroon and orange, with

sounds of laughter and chants "Let's Go ... Hokies" filling the air. Surrounded by the best friends and family one can have, I sit in my tailgate chair, fill my belly with food and sip on a cold beverage. I follow the flock through the gates and scurry to my seat on the 45. I holler and clap with a purpose, jumping until my legs ache! I smile and hold my head high as we all exit Lane with a win.

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

A: Over the past 12 years, our tailgates have become Floyd community gatherings. On average, more than 50 people attend, including families, local business owners, public school teachers and administrators, neighbors, colleagues, church members and local law enforcement. I usually spend about six hours preparing fruit, vegetables, and homemade goodies before each home game. It is well worth the joy and fellowship it encourages.

LETTER FROM LU

Dear Hokie Club members:

Thank you for supporting Virginia Tech Athletics with your Annual Fund gifts.

This is an exciting fall at the university, as classes continue and many of our athletics teams are competing. New university president, Dr. Timothy Sands, will be officially inaugurated this month and new Athletics Director Whit Babcock continues his torrid pace of reaching out to Hokies everywhere, both in person and on Twitter. Lane Stadium is electric on game days, and our women's soccer team is building a magical season. I hope that, if you have not been to campus this fall, you will make plans to join us for one of the three remaining home football contests. Tickets are still available for the Miami, Boston College and Virginia games.

As you may already know, your Annual Fund gift helps to pay the scholarship bill. This year, the cost to educate, feed and house more than 500 student-athletes is budgeted to be \$12.2 million. Last year, the Hokie Club raised \$9 million in Annual Fund gifts. Earnings from our \$53 million athletics endowment contributed another \$2.2 million. We were able to meet the challenge in 2013-14, but the projected increases for the coming academic year are daunting. In the 2004-05 academic year, the athletics scholarship bill was \$5 million, so you can see the steady rise over the past 10 years.

In conversations with my colleagues in the ACC, I've learned that three schools have recently implemented, or are implementing, increases in their Annual Fund giving levels. Another has asked their donors to "step up to the next level" in an attempt to keep up with the rising costs. All of the schools in the conference have increased their Annual Fund levels during the past 10 years except us. Virginia Tech has not increased its levels in more than 20 years. It is an option that we will study this winter, as we search for ways to meet the rapidly rising costs of higher education. We know that the much-discussed "cost of attendance" for student-athletes is coming in the near future, and that is projected to add another \$1 million in new fees.

I am excited about our two new Annual Fund positions, and Scott Hughes is already on board and generating new members and new Annual Fund revenue. But you can help by referring friends and family, recent grads and older grads. Earn additional priority points that will enhance your priority position when your referral joins the Hokie Club.

On behalf of the entire Hokie Club team, we thank you for your support of our student-athletes. We look forward to seeing you in Blacksburg this fall.

Lu Merritt

Senior Director of Development for Intercollegiate Athletics



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Six selected for Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame

Six former Virginia Tech student-athletes from five different sports make up the 2014 class selected for induction into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame.

The list includes:

- Brendon de Jonge, an All-American golfer for the Hokies in the early 2000’s who is currently enjoying success on the PGA Tour;
- Ashlee Dobbe, one of the top performers on the field and in the classroom for the Tech softball program;
- Jake Grove, a unanimous All-American in football and the 2003 winner of the Rimington Trophy, presented to the nation’s top collegiate center;
- Ieva Kublina, whose stellar career helped the women’s basketball program to four consecutive postseason appearances and ended with 95 consecutive starts;
- Lee Suggs, one of the most productive tailbacks in Tech football history who overcame injuries to re-write the school record book for touchdowns; and
- Dawn Will Cliffe, the first honoree from the Tech women’s lacrosse program who earned All-America recognition twice and is still the sport’s top scorer.

The six new honorees will be inducted during a Hall of Fame dinner on the Tech campus on Friday, Oct. 31, the evening before Tech’s home football game against Boston College. The inductees will be introduced to fans at halftime of the football game. The new inductees will bring the total number enshrined to 175.

Beyer nominated by Tech as Rhodes candidate

Virginia Tech men’s basketball player Christian Beyer was named by the university as a candidate for the Rhodes Scholarship, the oldest and most prestigious scholarship in the world. Only 32 Americans get selected each year, and chosen recipients will spend two years studying at Oxford University in Oxford, England.

Beyer, a senior from New Bern, North Carolina, is looking to become just the third Tech student to receive a Rhodes Scholarship (William W. Lewis, 1963, and Mark Embree, 1996).

Beyer and three other university students went through the on-campus interview process in early September. That process determines if the university wants to sponsor candidates for the scholarship.

Grove an ACC Legend

Former Tech center Jake Grove has been named to the ACC’s 2014 Class of Legends. The group will be honored at the ACC football title game in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Dec. 6.

Grove won the 2003 Rimington Trophy, which goes annually to the nation’s best center. He earned unanimous All-America honors his senior season, and he was a first-team All-American as selected by The Associated Press, the Football Writers

University and athletics part of landmark effort

Virginia Tech and the athletics department are participating in a \$30 million national effort sponsored by the NCAA and the U.S. Department of Defense to combat concussions among college athletes and active service military personnel.

This will be the most comprehensive study of concussions ever done. Roughly 25,000 male and female student-athletes will be a part of the program over a three-year period, and Tech will focus on athletes participating in sports such as football, women’s soccer, men’s soccer and lacrosse.

Tech, under the direction of Stefan Duma, the


Beyer has applied for district level interviews. Around 100 students are applying for the 16 spots in District 6, which includes North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia (since Beyer is from North Carolina, he has to apply in this district). If chosen, he will go through multiple interviews to see if he is one of the two out of each district chosen for the Rhodes Scholarship. He expects to find out if he will be chosen to go through the interview process in late October. Those selected for the Rhodes Scholarship usually find out in late November.

Beyer is studying human nutrition, foods and exercise, and plans on attending medical school once he graduates. He wants to become an orthopaedic surgeon.

Association of America, the American Football Coaches Association, the Walter Camp Foundation and The Sporting News. Virginia Tech retired his jersey No. 64 in 2006.

Grove played seven seasons in the NFL, including five seasons in Oakland and two in Miami, and he started 56 of the 66 games in which he played. He currently lives in his hometown of Forest, Virginia, where he helps coach his old high school team.

head of the Department of Biomedical Engineering and Mechanics at the university, has been studying the effects of concussions since 2003 and has received national recognition for its efforts. A team of people that includes Dr. Gunnar Brolinson, one of the Hokies’ team physicians, and Mike Goforth, Tech’s associate AD for sports medicine, have been collecting and studying data on player hits and working on ways to improve player safety.

For more information on this project, please check out this link: <http://www.hokiesports.com/pr/recaps/20140930aaa.html>. 

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editor's desk | by Jimmy Robertson

Williams honest with his approach to Tech challenge

More than 20 years ago – 22, to be exact – Jack Nicholson yelled one of the greatest American film quotes of all time from the movie “A Few Good Men”:

“You can’t handle the truth!”

This quote came to mind recently when interviewing Tech men’s basketball coach Buzz Williams and a couple of players about the upcoming 2014-15 season. When asked how Williams was going to go about rebuilding the Tech basketball program after three straight last-place finishes in the ACC, he responded immediately.

“The same way you eat an elephant,” he said. “Bite by bite.”

That statement certainly offers some insight into Williams’ approach to the Virginia Tech job. Rome didn’t get built in a day. It wouldn’t get rebuilt in a day either.

The truth, though, is Williams’ task resembles eating an elephant. Everyone knows that the Hokies finished in last place in the ACC standings last season – and in 2013 and in 2012. Tech has been to two NCAA Tournament appearances since Dell Curry swished jumpers here.

But Williams doesn’t care about that – and that’s a good thing. History never gets changed. The present does. The future can – in this case, bite by bite.

“It’s a daily thing, but before it’s a daily thing, it’s an hourly thing,” he said. “You have to be accountable for what you’re doing in every way.

You can’t underestimate the importance of each facet of what you’re doing. It’s easy to get caught up in the big things, but when you’re trying to change something, everything matters.”

For him, it starts with an undeniable passion for what he does and an unmatched work ethic. It also starts by being honest about every situation, first with yourself, then with your players. Williams is optimistic, but also realistic.

He readily knows the Hokies need to get better, but he also makes it a point to say that he needs to get better, too. He holds his players accountable, but he also holds himself accountable.

He tells his players what they need to hear every day, not what they want to hear. Players may not like that, but they respect that.

“My initial impression of Coach Buzz was that he’s sincere,” Tech guard Adam Smith said. “He doesn’t beat around the bush. He’s going to tell you like it is, whether you like it or not. I think that’s important for the team and the program and for young men our age. We need to hear the truth, and Coach Buzz is going to give you that.”

Williams takes that same honest approach out on the recruiting trail. He approaches recruiting a little differently than most. He tells recruits not to make a basketball decision.

“It’s a life decision,” he said.

High school coaches in Virginia and up and down the East Coast have been receptive to Williams’ message. They respect it. But that comes as no surprise to Williams.

“When you tell the truth, people do receive you the right way,” he said. “We’ve been truthful about where we are and where we want to go. We’ve been truthful and honest with everybody, and I think that’s the way you build trust.”

Williams is like a politician, except he tells the truth. He shakes the hands of high school and AAU coaches. He hands out business cards and invites them to Tech for practices and games. That’s how he builds the foundation of a program.

He knows no other way, but he knows this way works. He got his start in basketball by doing this. As a student assistant at Oklahoma City University, he used to write letters once a week to every head coach he ever met. He once borrowed \$1,200 and bought a suit and a plane ticket to go to the Final Four in Charlotte. He handed out resumés to everyone he came in contact with in the lobby of the hotel where the coaches stayed.

He heard about a job at the University of Texas-Arlington, and he told the head coach he wanted the job. After he flew back home, he drove to Arlington, parked in the coach’s driveway and waited for him to come home just to tell him – again – how much he wanted the job. He got it. It paid \$400 a month, and he lived in a dorm room.

Now, 20 years later, he’s approaching the Virginia Tech job with the same intensity, passion, and most importantly, honesty.

Can people handle the truth? Well, Buzz Williams is certainly going to give it to you. He knows no other way.

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Williams building Tech program on togetherness and toughness

Officially, the “Buzz Williams Era” in Virginia Tech basketball begins Friday, Nov. 14 when the Hokies tip off the 2014-15 season against visiting Maryland-Eastern Shore inside Cassell Coliseum.

But in reality, the blueprints and the foundation for the future of Tech basketball were designed in March when Williams shocked many basketball pundits by bolting Marquette University for Blacksburg. Since then, Williams and his non-stop motor have spent 18-hour days recruiting, re-organizing, and re-energizing anything that involves, revolves or bounces when it comes to Virginia Tech basketball.

From staffing to graphics to workouts to philosophical player “Tech Talks” to individual and collective responsibilities, Williams has begun wiping clean the malaise that comes with three consecutive last-place finishes in the ACC. Forget everything you ever knew about Tech basketball. Things have certainly changed.

Of course, that doesn’t mean you should expect instant on-court success. In fact, Tech likely will be picked last in the 15-team ACC at the upcoming preseason media event in Charlotte. But that won’t deter Williams or his players.

“The kids have been great,” Williams said. “Their leadership and their togetherness and willingness to accept what we’re trying to do have been great. One month into school, this team’s togetherness has been as good as any team I’ve been around.”

Tech has seven new players on its roster for this upcoming season, six of whom will be eligible to play this season. What stands out? Williams likes their toughness and camaraderie.

“We had 15 individual workouts in September,

and I really liked what I saw,” Williams said. “We’ll have our boot camp, which is where our team will be formed. It’s a real team-building opportunity.”

Williams also said that he’s impressed with the physical condition of his team – “They’re in great shape,” he said. “Best I’ve seen in eight years as a head coach.” – which is important because the Hokies aren’t big, and they’re not going to be the ACC’s most talented team. They’ll have to find other ways to win.

It’s the unknown that makes this team intriguing. Who will emerge as leaders and who will be the key players? Judging by the “before-and-after” pictures of the players from March until today, you can see a big difference physically in the guys. Will that transform into on-court productivity?

Nobody knows exactly what to expect, including the opposition. That will make this season really fun to watch.

What we do know is this: from his Marquette days, it’s clear Williams values defense, toughness and togetherness. To win in the ACC, a team needs all of those traits, plus really good players. Williams is improving the talent-base through recruiting, and to be honest, the Hokies have some nice-looking young players on this year’s team.

But this is a team that will win because of its togetherness and mental toughness. That’s the foundation of this program that Williams has been building since the day he walked into the Hahn Hurst Practice Center last March.

The season officially begins Nov. 14, and while you might not know who all those guys are in the white jerseys just yet, you’re going to like what you see.

Ford impressive on and off the field

One of the most impressive freshmen in Virginia Tech’s football program has been wide receiver Isaiah Ford from Jacksonville, Florida. A first-team Class 3A all-state selection as a wide receiver last year at Trinity Christian Academy, Ford led Tech in receiving after five games. He became just the second true freshman receiver to start a season opener at Tech. His road to Blacksburg was a curious one, and I had the chance to visit him one-on-one recently. Here is the interview:

BR: I think it’s time Virginia Tech fans get to know more about you because you’ve jumped right into this thing full speed. How are you enjoying Tech so far?

IF: It’s been a lot of fun, a lot of work, but a lot of fun, too.

BR: Let’s go back to February. Think about this for a second: if Charlie Strong doesn’t leave Louisville to become the head coach at Texas, would you be playing at Louisville right now?

IF: (laughs) Yeah, probably. When Coach Strong left, he called. He talked with my mom. He said they didn’t have receiver scholarship spots open at Texas and so I wasn’t going there, and Coach [Bobby] Petrino and I talked, but Coach [Charley] Wiles did a great job for Tech, along with Coach [Aaron] Moorehead. I liked Tech all along, too, so it worked out great.

BR: As I recall, you only took two official visits last spring, right?

IF: Yes, Virginia Tech and Louisville.

BR: Who were your other finalists?

IF: Florida, Florida State, South Carolina, Ohio State and North Carolina.



Isaiah Ford has an ability to make big plays, like this terrific catch against East Carolina, and because of that, he has worked his way into the starting lineup as a true freshman.

BR: You told me that Florida coach Will Muschamp made a late push for you. How hard is it for an in-state receiver who’s living just 75 miles from Gainesville to turn down the Gators?

IF: (laughs again). There are a lot of Gator fans there. He [Muschamp] called on signing day, and we talked. But the thing I liked most about Tech was the family atmosphere. It’s the coaches and the other players here. It’s really a big family, and I liked that a lot.

BR: We’re glad you feel that way. When I think of in-state receivers who are all-state high school kids from Florida, I picture guys like Peter Warrick or Anquan Boldin or Andre Johnson. Guys like that. Really competitive. Really athletic. What is it about the top high school receivers in Florida that make them so competitive and successful?

IF: You have to have the mindset to want the ball, to compete to get the ball. You have to prove yourself on every play. High school football in Florida is very competitive, especially at the receiver position.

BR: The first day of preseason camp, when Tech was just in helmets and shorts, you approached it with the ferocity of the BCS Championship Game. You had a fire and passion that very first day. What was that all about for you?

IF: I felt like, although I had a good high school career, this was starting over. I had to prove myself all over again. That was the past and this was the start of something new, and

I had to earn everything. I wanted to play. I wanted to start and prove that I belong. The coaches told me that I could play right away, but I wanted to prove to them that I could earn that opportunity.

BR: What is your favorite NFL team?

IF: Denver Broncos

BR: And your favorite receiver?

IF: Sammy Watkins [a former Clemson receiver now with the Buffalo Bills].

BR: What’s the most played song on your phone?

IF: Hmm. Let me look [checks phone for accuracy]. Dreams and Nightmares by Meek Mill

BR: Not surprisingly, that song doesn’t make my top 10, but I’ll check it out.

IF: (laughs).

BR: Hokie fans have been to Jacksonville a bunch for Gator Bowls and the ACC Championship Game. What’s the best part of your hometown?

IF: Oh man, just being with family. And friends. It’s home. Mom’s home cookin’.

BR: And what’s your mom’s favorite dish?

IF: Oh wow, it’s got to be her fried pork chops, baked beans and mac-n-cheese. It’s REALLY good!

Sometimes a player comes out of nowhere to be a real contributor just a few games into his college career. That’s certainly the case for Ford, who is as likeable as he is talented. He’ll be a treat to watch over the next few years at Tech.

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Keeping up *with* Compliance

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

Q: I read on ESPN that Bruce Pearl was calling recruits at 3 in the morning on the first day that coaches can call recruits. Isn't there some type of rule that prohibits that? Calling recruits at that time of morning is just ridiculous. Thanks, Chris in Christiansburg.

TP: "Actually, there is no rule against doing that. Coaches can start calling as soon as the clock strikes 12:01 a.m. on that particular day, if they feel that it will yield an advantage. There is often a perception that a coach needs to be the first or do the most in recruiting, so they start calling recruits as soon as it is permissible.

"That said, I do think this is something that will be looked at closely in the future. The NCAA membership regularly attempts to minimize – to the degree possible – the intrusion of the recruiting process into the lives of prospects and their families. Obviously, having coaches call at 3 a.m. doesn't accomplish that. Plus, it remains open for debate as to how many prospects are going to make a decision just because you are the first coach to call.

"One simple solution would be to prohibit calling

between midnight and 7 a.m. NCAA rules already prohibit countable athletically related activities from midnight to 5 a.m. (practices, lifting weights, conditioning, film, etc.). Extending that to recruiting calls seems to be a practical move to make."


Q: Did you see where Jameis Winston took out an insurance policy to protect himself in the event his stock drops because of an injury or illness, and Florida State is paying the premiums? How is this allowed by the NCAA? It seems to me that the player should have to pay the premiums, not the school. Thanks, Jean Ann in Ripplemead, Virginia

TP: "First of all, let me explain what Jameis Winston did. He procured a multi-million dollar disability insurance policy based on the projection that he would be a top-10 pick in the 2015 NFL Draft. The annual premium on this type of policy runs around \$15,000 per million dollars of coverage and, historically, student-athletes pay for this by taking out a loan. (This is, in fact, the only circumstance under which NCAA regulations permit a student-athlete to borrow against future

professional earnings.)

"However, in Winston's case, Florida State is paying the premium by using money from its share of the Student Assistance Fund (SAF), a fund created by the NCAA to provide benefits to student-athletes who need financial assistance. The NCAA sends the money to the conferences, and then the conferences distribute the money among conference members. The conference must follow some very basic, broad NCAA guidelines for using this money, but for the most part, each conference is free to set its own restrictions.

"Often, this money is used for medical/dental expenses or emergencies. For example, a school could access the SAF to pay for a student-athlete's root canal and tooth extraction, or fly a student-athlete home to attend the funeral of a relative and pay for all expenses.

"Florida State paying for Winston's premiums out of the SAF is clearly within the spirit of the fund's intent. His participation in college athletics has generated the need for insurance to protect his future earnings. As a direct benefit to him, Florida State has made the decision to use the SAF to pay the premiums." 

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14 Inside Hokie Sports

KATHRYN CAINE

Volleyball | McLean, Virginia

by **Jimmy Robertson**

Kathryn Caine, a senior middle blocker/right-side hitter for the Tech women's volleyball team, is accomplished on the court and in the classroom. She earned All-ACC honors on the court and was named to the ACC's All-Academic Team for volleyball. She will graduate next spring with degrees in marketing and international studies and may pursue graduate school or work overseas in the marketing office of an international company down the road.

Q: What led to you pursuing majors in marketing and international relations?

KC: “My oldest brother works in the sports marketing industry, but he majored in international marketing because he went to the University of New Mexico and that was a business degree there. He inspired me to do that, but I love, in a nerdy way, advertising. I think commercials on TV are fascinating. I’m in an advertising class right now and all we do is watch commercials. Our projects are based on picking a brand and trying to re-imagine their advertising campaigns. I think it’s so cool to be creative in a way to get consumers to buy a product. I think that’s fun. So I love the creative part of marketing.

“As for international studies, I go to summer school every summer, and I was going to run out of classes to take for my marketing degree. There is an international business portion to our international studies major. You have to take government classes and history classes, and you have to take a foreign language on top of that. I took Spanish all throughout high school and loved it. So it all flowed together. I’m majoring in marketing, but had the international business option of international studies. You have to take the same core business classes, but it’s a marketing focus and an international business focus, and they’re two separate majors. So all of my interests were combined.”

Q: What is it specifically that you like about television advertising?

KC: “When I watch commercials, there are so many different ways to approach a consumer. I think it’s cool that you can pick any type of theme or direction you want to go and pinpoint who you want to feel like they need to use that product. You can be so creative with it because there are so many ways you can go about it depending on what



you’re marketing. There aren’t any boundaries to it, and that kind of appeals to me.”

Q: What are your future plans after you graduate?


KC: “What I really want to do is go to graduate school, but I don’t know. There are different options for that, too. A lot of people want me to keep my mind open about playing volleyball professionally overseas, but I’m not sure if I want to do that, or there is another option that ties in grad school, too. I have a friend from my high school who played at Penn State and then she went to the Durham University [in Durham, England] to get her master’s, and she played volleyball there. She said it was the best years of her life.

“I know I would miss volleyball, and if you have the opportunity to play overseas, why wouldn’t you take it? If you want to go to grad school, and you also want to travel, then I feel the grad school-playing part could kill two birds with one

stone. It would be a shame not to take it because when would you be able to do that again?

“I’m in the process of being recruited by schools in England, but I want to keep my options open. I think what I would do is play overseas with the grad school option because that seems like the most fun and best option for me, but there is also the option of going to regular grad school here in America and not playing volleyball or going into the real world. But it’s not exactly planned out.”

Q: What would your dream job be?

KC: “Ever since I was little, I’ve wanted to work at an advertising firm, creating ads and being on the marketing team to come up with storyboards to make an ad. That would be the dream job, but I could see a way to incorporate my international relations side. So for example, I could work for Coca-Cola, but work at an office not necessarily in America. Most people click through advertisements, but I’m all about them. I love them.” 

CHRIS MOON

Wrestling | Fauquier, Virginia

by **Jimmy Robertson**

Over the past four years, Chris Moon has grappled with the difficulties of managing his time as a member of the Tech wrestling squad and as a student pursuing a degree in electrical engineering. He has done so quite well, with two NCAA bids and three All-ACC Academic Team selections. Moon graduated this past May with his degree, and once his career ends after this upcoming season, he plans on pursuing jobs with companies that focus on power systems.

Q: What led to you deciding to pursue an electrical engineering major?

CM: “I really wanted something that I knew I could get a job in, and my dad [who is a civil engineer] kind of talked to me about electrical engineering. Once I started doing it, it really interested me. I found that I was interested by it. I took an interest in the power systems side of it – things like transmission lines and the analysis of power. The classes are a lot of work, but it is interesting material to me.”

Q: Why didn’t you follow in your dad’s footsteps and become a civil engineer?

CM: “I thought I wanted to be an engineer, but I didn’t know what I wanted to be [which type of engineer]. As I was looking into it, there was such a need for electrical engineers, and I looked at some of the stuff they did, and it interested me. Civil engineering, I’m not as intrigued by that. It’s not as specific. I don’t know. For some reason, it didn’t interest me as much as electrical.”

Q: Talk a little bit about the internship you worked the first part of this summer and what you learned from it.

CM: “This past summer, I did an internship in Philadelphia for a company called Dougherty Electric. They are an electrical contractor in Philadelphia. It was awesome. I learned a lot. We worked on a 25-foot tall building and came up with the plan to wire it. We used a program called AutoCAD and programmed the way the wires would run through the building and where the lights would be. We coordinated all the trades.

“It was cool. It was a good experience. I didn’t need it for any credit or anything. I was just doing it for the experience and making a



little money. Really, the experience was more valuable. It worked out well.”


Q: How were you able to manage taking classes in such a difficult major while also wrestling, which is a demanding sport and requires year-round training?

CM: “It’s been difficult at times. It’s all about time management. As long as you manage your time, I mean, I found time to do other things besides academics and wrestling. As long as you manage your time, you can balance what’s important to you. You can figure out a way to get it done, as long as you want to – as long as you want it bad enough.”

Q: You graduated this past May with your degree. Are you working on a master’s or a second undergraduate degree?

CM: “No. I’m in two graduate classes, and I’m taking two online electives. My two graduate classes are Engineering Economics and Semiconductor Manufacturing and Processing. I’m not necessarily pursuing a master’s. I’m just trying to get some credits. One day, I would like to go back and get my master’s, but for now, I’d like to get out in the work force.”

Q: What are your future plans?

CM: “I’m not quite sure. I’m looking to work in Washington, D.C., or in that area. There are a lot of engineering jobs up that way, and I’m going to start the job search here pretty soon. I know the field I want to go into is power systems, but I’m not sure which company or where I’m going to be working. I feel like I’ve met a lot of people, so hopefully with those connections, I’ll be able to get something.” 

After missing the second half of last season with a leg injury, Adam Smith is healthy and could be one of the top scorers for the Hokies this season.

FUTURE OF TECH BASKETBALL UNDER CONSTRUCTION

New men's basketball coach Buzz Williams is looking to use this season to build the foundation and framework of what he hopes becomes a successful program

by Jimmy Robertson

Behind the Hahn Hurst Basketball Practice Center, just down a small hill, a construction project of rather large proportions continues, as the Tech athletics department is overseeing the building a new indoor football practice facility.

Inside the Hahn Hurst Basketball Practice Center, perhaps a bigger construction project is ongoing.

Buzz Williams is the foreman on the latter project, as he was hired in late March to replace James Johnson and oversee the rebuilding of the Virginia Tech men's basketball program. He's practically been on the job 24-7 ever since.

In fact, Williams got his family moved to Blacksburg and then he took off, basically

scouring the United States looking for talent. He's barely been in town long enough to get to know his players, but they've gotten at least a feel for Williams' coaching style.

Just ask returning guard Adam Smith. When asked if Williams yelled a lot in offseason workouts or was he more the laid back type, or did he take control of workouts or let his assistants handle things, Smith paused for several seconds before giving a reply.

"All of that," Smith said with a smile.

Williams, who came to Tech after a successful stint at Marquette, has been slowly building a foundation for the program. The task has been, and certainly will be, challenging, as the Hokies

opened practice in early October in preparation for the 2014-15 season having come off three straight last-place finishes in the ACC standings. The program has been to one NCAA Tournament in the past 18 seasons.

That said, Williams remains undaunted in regards to the challenges he faces. He likes the tools in Tech's toolbox. He just needs a little time to finish the foundation and build the framework for success.

"Absolutely," he said when asked if Tech had the resources to become a respected program once again. "I wouldn't have taken the job if I didn't believe in Dr. [Timothy] Sands [Tech's president] or Whit [Babcock, Tech's AD]. When

you're talking about the best league in the world, other than the NBA, you need all the resources to give yourself a chance. With those two guys, and the commitment of the institution, all those things are in place."

Tech's 2014-15 squad will certainly look nothing like the 2013-14 team that won just nine games and went 2-16 in the ACC. Seniors Jarell Eddie and Cadarian Raines departed, but so, too, did promising freshmen Ben Emelogu and Trevor Thompson, both of whom transferred to other schools. Marshall Wood and Maurice Kirby also transferred, and C.J. Barksdale decided to give up basketball because of injuries.

The attrition has left the Hokies with just six returning players who possess any game experience. Three of them – Smith, point guard Devin Wilson and center Joey van Zegeren – started for parts, if not all, of last season, though Smith missed more than half the year with a lower leg injury. Will Johnston, a guard, also played extended minutes, along with walk-on Christian Beyer. That group forms the core of this year's team.

"Those guys have been great," Williams said. "But whether you're a freshman or Joey or Adam, they're hearing it [his coaching] at the same time as Ahmed Hill or Justin Bibbs [two freshmen] are. There are no upperclassmen. We're all going through it at the same time. Any time you teach something or set a standard, regardless of how old you are, it's new to you, and it's new to us. So it's a process."

In Wilson, Williams gets arguably Tech's most proven player. He made both All-ACC Rookie Teams a year ago after averaging 9.2 points, 4.8 assists and 3.2 rebounds per game. He set Tech freshman records for minutes played (1,081), assists (148) and free throws attempted (185).

But Williams hadn't necessarily committed to Wilson as his point guard, at least not before the Hokies began full team practices.

"He has some point guard skills," Williams said. "Is he a full-time, run-your-team guy? I think we'll be able to figure that out. I'm not saying Devin isn't important, but we need someone else who can initiate offense. Some teams play with more than one guy who can initiate offense, and I want to be one of those guys. I like to have multiple guys who can initiate offense. I think we have some guys who can do that. I don't think we're to the point where we've figured that out yet."

Smith could be one of those guys. In his 14 games a year ago, he averaged 11 points per game, the most of any returning player. He mostly played the off-guard position, but swung over to the point guard spot on occasion when Wilson left the game for a breather.

At the least, Smith is a key player for the Hokies



Joey van Zegeren started just four games his first two seasons, but last year, was a steadying influence in the post, starting 24 games and leading the team with 53 blocked shots.

because of his scoring ability. He scored 27 points against then-No. 1 Michigan State and 19 against West Virginia. The Hokies went 1-13 in their final 14 games when Smith went out of the lineup for good with a leg injury.

"I love how hard he plays," Williams said. "He wants to be pushed. He's not going to back up a step. He's got some 'little man syndrome' in him, and I like that. He can really shoot it, but we've also got to have space for him to get good shots off, and we've got to make sure he can guard the 6-4 Adam Smith on the other end, too."

"All that's not to say Adam isn't important to us. He is very important to us. But all the guys who will be in uniform this season are important to us. We need to be healthy, and the injuries did impact their club last year."

Van Zegeren made arguably the most improvement last season. He averaged 6.4 points and 5.0 rebounds per game, and the 6-foot-10

center led the team with 53 blocked shots.

Van Zegeren represents Tech's only proven size inside, though Beyer (6-7, 220) could help. Williams brought in two post players in junior college transfer Shane Henry (6-8, 190) and freshman Satchel Pierce (7-0, 255), and walk-on Greg Donlon (6-8, 230) returns, but relying on newcomers and walk-ons for depth in a league such as the ACC is a risky proposition. The lack of size and experience in the post may force Williams to play smaller lineups.

"We'll have to continue to figure that out. Do you want to speed the game up? Is that the right play? Do you want to shorten the game? Is that the right play?" Williams said. "I don't think we've gotten to that point yet. We have to figure out defensively what we want to do. Do we want to speed up the opponent? Can we try to turn it into a grind? I don't know. I don't know what our depth would allow, or our size."

The rest of the roster features freshmen and two transfers in Seth Allen (Maryland) and Zach LeDay (South Florida) who must sit out this season while meeting NCAA eligibility requirements. In addition to Pierce, the other freshmen include Justin Bibbs, a 6-5, 220-pound guard from Dayton, Ohio; Jalen Hudson, a 6-5, 195-pound guard from Richmond; Ahmed Hill, a 6-5, 195 pound guard from Augusta, Georgia; and Malik Müller, a redshirt freshman from Ehingen, Germany, who played on Germany's junior national team this past July.

Müller, Bibbs and Hudson signed with Tech under Johnson's watch, while Pierce and Hill signed with Williams at Marquette, but decided to follow Williams to Tech. Henry signed after Williams arrived in Blacksburg.

"Of course, they can play, but they're just really good dudes," Smith said of the newcomers. "We all get along great. They came in and gelled with the rest of the team. We're a family. We became a family really quick. Believe it or not, that's not always easy, but they came in and bought in to what was going on. They're all good dudes and came from good homes. You can see it."

Williams also likes this group of newcomers. In addition to being high-quality, good-character guys, he likes what they bring to the floor.

From the day he was hired, Williams has said

he wants versatile players – guys with the ability to play multiple positions on both ends of the court. This group certainly gives Tech size on the perimeter, as Bibbs, Hill and Hudson are all 6-5 or taller. Plus, Wilson and Johnston both check in at 6-4. Can these guys play multiple positions?

"I think we have some of that," Williams said. "I think that's just the way the game has evolved. What position is LeBron [James of the Cleveland Cavaliers]? What position is Kobe [Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers]? When you talk about the elite guys, I don't know what position they are.

"You want as many guys on your team that are hard to guard as you can get. Hard-to-guard guys are guys that can do multiple things. When you can do multiple things, you have some versatility in what you do. You can attack whatever is the opponent's weakness. You can be more productive."

Williams talks in generalities when it comes to the type of style he wants to play. He wants players who can pass, dribble and shoot, and he wants to take good shots. He wants to cause turnovers and make more free throws than the opponent attempts.

Every coach wants that, the perfect roster to play the style that the head coach wants. It's "fairly tale land," as he called it.

"We're not at that place. We have some

reality in who we are," he said. "But that doesn't change how hard we can play, or that we can be fundamentally sound. I think that the best coaches, no matter the sport, figure out what is best for that particular roster to give that team their best chance of success.

"I have to figure out what is best. I can be hardheaded and say, 'This is how I want to play,' but if it's not best for your guys, then I'm doing a disservice to those families and this institution because I'm not giving all of us our best chance for success."

For the first time in a long time, Virginia Tech fans are excited about the approaching of a basketball season, and it's because Babcock has hired a proven winner in Williams. This is a man who took Marquette to five NCAA Tournaments. This is a man who went to the Sweet Sixteen three times. This is a man who went to the Elite Eight once. Those credentials are a testament to his coaching chops.

"It's almost a new culture from last year," Smith said. "Change is also exciting. You can feel it. It's in the atmosphere."

Williams' goals are modest – work hard and get better each day. For sure, he has this crew punching a clock.

This construction project has begun. Hopefully the deadline for completion is soon. 

MEET THE NEWCOMERS



**O Shane Henry | 6-8, 190, Jr., F
Decatur, Georgia**

- Played at Georgia Perimeter College, a junior college in Atlanta the past two seasons
- Averaged 13.2 points, 12.5 rebounds and 4.7 blocks per game last season
- Played in high school at Newton High in Covington, Georgia



**4 Seth Allen | 6-1, 195, r-Jr., G
Woodbridge, Virginia**

- Transferred to Tech from Maryland and will sit out this season
- Averaged 13.4 points and 3.0 assists per game last season
- Averaged 7.8 points per game as a freshman



**10 Justin Bibbs | 6-5, 220, Fr., G
Dayton, Ohio**

- Played his final two years of high school basketball at Montverde Academy in Florida
- Helped lead Montverde to back-to-back national championships
- Averaged 15.7 points, 3.8 rebounds and 2.6 assists per game as a sophomore at Chaminade-Julienne [Ohio] High School



**13 Ahmed Hill | 6-5, 195, Fr., G
Augusta, Georgia**

- Scored 3,024 points in his career
- The Georgia Sports Writers Association's Class A Player of the Year as a senior
- Rated the No. 63 prospect in the nation by Rivals last season



**21 Satchel Pierce | 7-0, 255, Fr., F
Barberton, Ohio**

- Spent two years at The Kiski School in Saltsburg, Pennsylvania
- Helped Kiski to two state runner-up finishes
- Originally attended St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in Akron, Ohio – the alma mater of NBA great LeBron James



**23 Jalen Hudson | 6-5, 195, Fr., G
Richmond, Virginia**

- Played his senior year at St. Vincent-St. Mary in Akron, Ohio
- Averaged 17.5 points per game his senior season
- A first-team member of the Division II All-Ohio team as a senior



**32 Zach LeDay | 6-7, 235, r-Jr., F
Dallas, Texas**

- Transferred to Tech from South Florida and will sit out this season
- Averaged 4.1 points and 2.5 rebounds per game while at South Florida
- Played in 32 games as a sophomore, including 16 starts

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AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Early in her freshman year, Kelsey Conyers' life took a new direction after receiving an email she thought was a prank. Now, she's the lone senior on the Tech women's basketball team and provides some insight on the 2014-15 season

by **Marc Mullen**

She had been lacing up her high tops for more than a decade, playing a sport she had loved since first grade – basketball. But on March 7, 2011, Cosby High School senior guard Kelsey Conyers thought she had played the final competitive basketball game of her career after her team lost to Stonewall Jackson High School in the Group AAA quarterfinals of the Virginia state playoffs.

The Chesterfield, Virginia, native considered playing at the next level, but she wanted to stay close to home, which limited her options. She also ruled out any schools that didn't offer the educational program that interested her. So the decision to attend Virginia Tech came easy, as she already had been accepted into the human nutrition, foods and exercise program.

About six weeks into her freshman year at Tech, her life was turned upside down when she received an email that she perceived as a joke.

"About a month and half into my freshman year, I get an email from one of the former assistant coaches, Billi Godsey, and I thought it was a joke from my friends," Conyers said. "I was like 'OK, who sent the email?' But she [Godsey] actually gave me her number, and I ended up calling her that day and I tried out [for the Tech women's basketball team] two days later."

Conyers was a two-time all-district point guard for the Titans and helped them to three district and three regional titles. Tech's coaches found

her while out on the recruiting trail, but only by chance.

The Hokies' coaching staff had been looking at one of Conyers' former high school teammates. The coaches talked to Cosby head coach Rachel Mead, and Mead brought up Conyers' name.

"She was telling them about how I was their starting point guard for the past four years and that the team will be going through a transitional phase that season," Conyers said. "Then she said 'Actually, she's a freshman at Tech.' Then the Tech coaching staff, whoever was talking to her, was like 'Really? Because we need walk-on players.' So that's when she [Godsey] emailed me.

"I had already established a great group of friends right away, but I still loved basketball, and the opportunity kind of just fell in my lap. So when that happened, I talked to my Bible study leader and my parents. Then I made a list of pros and cons, and I actually still have it. I just compared the pros and cons, and the pros outweighed the time I was going to have to sacrifice elsewhere, and I don't regret it at all."

Conyers likes to work out and was still in playing shape, but admitted the problem was that she hadn't picked up a basketball since her final game back in high school. So she got in the gym and practiced for two days before heading to the tryout and eventually earning a spot on the team.


She said it was tough early on because she

was a walk-on that had missed all of the summer and preseason workouts – which not only helps players perform better on the court, but also helps them become closer teammates. She is glad, though, that she stuck with it. In her three years, Conyers has played in 53 games and has made a pair of starts. Her hard work and dedication to the program paid off last spring when she was called into Tech head coach Dennis Wolff's office.

"We usually have meetings, but our meetings are pretty brief, especially out of season when there isn't any basketball going on," she said. "He usually asks me things like, 'How's life?' How's school?"

"So he was telling me about what I needed to work on for the summer and then told me that I was going to be on a full-ride scholarship [this] year. I was just really excited and called my parents, and they were really happy for me. I'm just truly grateful to have one year on full ride, especially since I wasn't expecting it."

Next year, Conyers hopes to be back in school as part of a one-year program that will get her ready to take a national exam to become a registered dietician. Long-term, she'd like to work with kids and educating those with Type-2 diabetes.

For now, she will be focusing on the 2014-15 Tech women's basketball season, and this time, she certainly expects to play her final competitive basketball game next March. 

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season preview | women's basketball

Q&A WITH KELSEY CONYERS

Last season, the Hokies finished the season just under .500 with a 14-16 overall record, which included 10 wins in Cassell Coliseum – both team highs since head coach Dennis Wolff has taken over the program.

However, the team still struggled in ACC play, posting a 4-12 mark, and the Hokies enter Wolff's fourth year on the Tech sideline without two of their top three scorers from a year ago – Uju Ugoka (18.4 ppg) and Monet Tellier (10.1 ppg).

The Hokies return six players from last season's team, and they will welcome seven newcomers, of which five are freshmen. Of the other two, forward Dominique Powell is a junior-college transfer, and sophomore Sidney Cook will have to sit out this season after transferring from Seton Hall.

Tech's lone senior, Kelsey Conyers, shared her thoughts on several questions surrounding the 2014-15 women's basketball season.



How will the losses of Ugoka and Tellier impact the team this season?

KC: "They were both such offensive threats – they averaged something like 30 points a game combined. So in terms of us as a team, we relied on them a lot for scoring, and losing them could potentially hurt us, but it also could help us. Instead of relying on just those two, we can play together more as a team, and the points will be more evenly spread out, so it will be tougher to defend us. And when it comes to scouting us ... it could be beneficial to have a more balanced scoring attack."

Which newcomers will make big impacts this season?

KC: "I think [freshman] Regan Magarity, who is from Sweden, will be one to watch this season. She's had a really good summer and preseason. She'll probably play the 4 [power forward] and really knows the game. Her fundamentals are great – she can box out, rebound, and she can finish at the basket real well. Dominique has a really good jump shot, so hopefully she'll be able to score for us, too. And [freshman] Rachel Camp, she's a guard. She's really improved over the past few weeks and is getting caught up to the speed of college play."

What returning players made significant improvements since last year?

KC: "I think both of our bigs – Tara [Nahodil] and Taijah [Campbell] – had a really good summer. It's funny because, when we would play 3-on-3, they would guard each other and it would turn into almost a 1-on-1 battle between the two of them. So they both have been in the gym a lot and have improved. And both Sammy [Hill] and Hannah Young look good. Sammy actually changed her shot totally, so she's been shooting really well, and I think Hannah is going to be one of our big scorers this year."

What can Hokie fans expect from this year's team?

KC: "We are really tall this year. I'm 5-foot-9, and I'm the second-shortest player on the team. All of our wings are 5-11 to 6-1, so I think, because of height and wing span, we might be playing a little bit more zone than we have in the past. And we have a little bit more speed and athleticism, overall, so I think we are just quicker, and I would hope, with that, we'd be able to get more transition points."

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SEASONS / GREAT MOMENTS

at Lane Stadium

by Jimmy Robertson

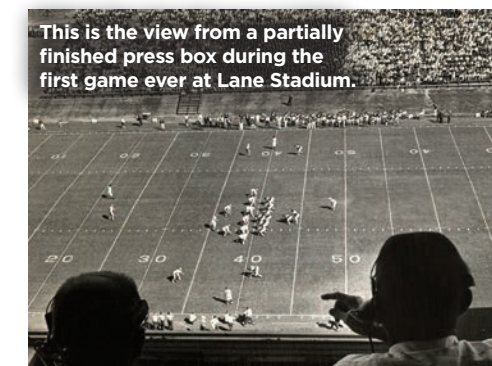


As nearly everyone knows by now, this 2014 football season marks the 50th season of Lane Stadium's history. The Hokies' home certainly has been the place for some of the greatest moments in Virginia Tech athletics history, and this issue gives you a glimpse of 50 great ones. This

is, by no means, an all-encompassing list, nor does this list attempt to rank the moments in terms of greatness – they're all great!

The list of moments starts with the first decade – the 1960s and with the first varsity game, which happened on Oct. 2, 1965.

1960s



This is the view from a partially finished press box during the first game ever at Lane Stadium.

• **First game vs. William & Mary (Oct. 2, 1965)** – The construction of Lane Stadium wasn't quite complete, but finished enough to allow Virginia Tech and William & Mary to play a game. The Gobblers christened the stadium with a 9-7 win over the Tribe, getting a touchdown run from quarterback Bobby Owens in the waning moments to pull out the victory.

• **First televised game at Lane (Oct. 29, 1966)** – The first televised game at Lane Stadium occurred in 1966, with Tech beating Florida State 23-21. A goal-line stand preserved the win for the Gobblers, who had a player named Frank Beamer

on the roster. A young Keith Jackson, who became one of the most famous broadcasters of all time, handled the play-by-play duties for ABC, which broadcast the game.

• **George Constantinides' game vs. Richmond (Oct. 21, 1967)** – Constantinides scored 26 total points in Tech's 45-14 win over Richmond on Homecoming. He still holds the record for most points by an individual at Lane Stadium.

• **Frank Loria's punt return vs. Miami (Nov. 4, 1967)** – Tech lost to Miami 14-7, and the Hokies' lone touchdown came on a 95-yard punt return by Frank Loria. The play still stands as the longest punt return in Tech's modern-day history. Loria became Tech's first consensus All-American, later had his No. 10 jersey retired and eventually was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

1970s

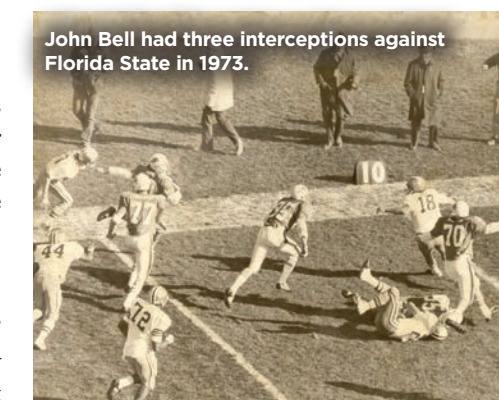
• **Don Strock's performance vs. Houston (Oct. 7, 1972)** – Strock completed 34 of 53 passes for 527 yards in Tech's 27-27 tie against Houston. His completions, attempts and yardage were school records at the time, and his completions and yardage are still school records.

• **Win over Oklahoma State on Homecoming (Oct. 14, 1972)** – The Gobblers notched one of the program's biggest victories at the time, stunning No. 19 Oklahoma State when Dave Strock hit an 18-yard field goal with 12 seconds left to lift VPI to the upset. The Gobblers forced a fumble late in the game and got to the 1, setting up Strock's game-winning attempt.

Don Strock, the younger brother of Dave, threw for 355 yards and two touchdowns in the win.

• **John Bell's three interceptions vs. FSU (Nov. 10, 1973)** – John Bell intercepted three passes in Tech's 36-13 win over Florida State. The next season, he intercepted three passes against

West Virginia, becoming the first and only player in Tech history to intercept three passes in a single game on two occasions.



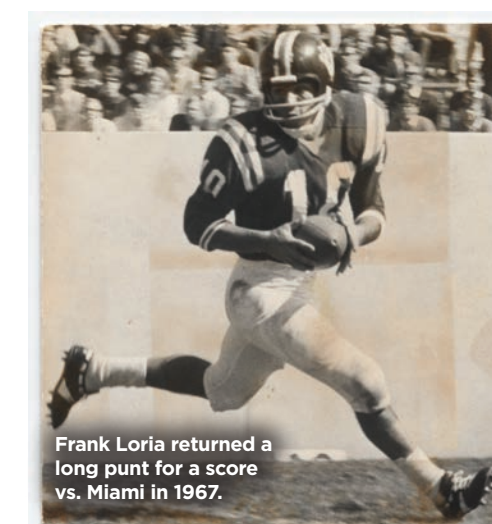
John Bell had three interceptions against Florida State in 1973.

• **Rick Razzano's 21 solo tackles vs. Richmond (Sept. 27, 1975)** – Tech jumped out to a 21-0 lead and knocked off Richmond 21-9. The story of the game was Rick Razzano, who led the defense with 21 solo tackles. The 21 stops still stand as a school record.

• **Wayne Latimer's field goal vs. FSU (Oct. 11, 1975)** – Tech scored 10 fourth-quarter points and beat Florida State 13-10. Roscoe Coles tied the game with a 36-yard touchdown run, and then Wayne Latimer's 61-yard field goal accounted for the final margin. The field goal still stands as a school record.

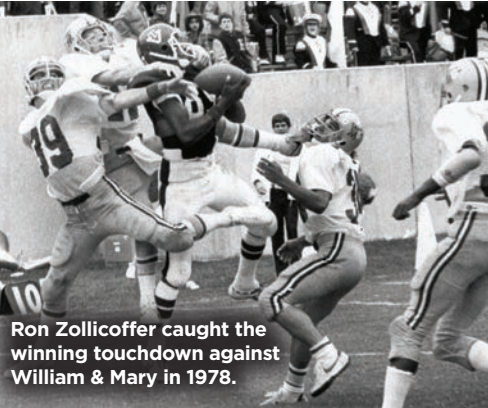
• **Roscoe Coles' 214 yards rushing vs. Tulsa (Nov. 6, 1976)** – Tech lost 35-31 to Tulsa, which scored 14 unanswered points in the fourth quarter. But Roscoe Coles did his part, rushing for a then-school- and Lane Stadium-record 214 yards. Coles is the first Tech player to rush for more than 200 yards in a game. He also became the school's career rushing leader in this game at the time.

• **Ron Zollicoffer's catch vs. William & Mary (Sept. 30, 1978)** – Head coach Bill Dooley's first season wasn't filled with many bright moments, but Ron Zollicoffer's touchdown catch on the last play of the game lifted Tech to a 22-19



Frank Loria returned a long punt for a score vs. Miami in 1967.

win over William & Mary. Tribe fans contend that Zollicoffer lost the ball as he hit the ground and the play should not have counted, but Zollicoffer today says he caught it and that the ground caused the fumble.



• **Kenny Lewis’ 223 yards rushing vs. VMI (Nov. 18, 1978)** – Tech ended the season with a 28-2 victory over VMI, thanks largely to Kenny Lewis’ 223 yards rushing. Lewis broke Coles’ school record of 214 yards set in 1976 and held the record for the next 16 years. He also tied the record for carries in a game at that time with 34.



• **Steve Casey’s touchdown pass to Sidney Snell (Nov. 17, 1979)** – Tech beat VMI 27-20 in the season finale, and Steve Casey connected with Sidney Snell for the biggest play in the game. Casey’s 91-yard touchdown pass to Snell in the first quarter is still the longest pass play in school history. Snell, who also caught a 60-yard touchdown pass from Casey, set a then-Lane Stadium record with 171 yards receiving.

1980s

• **Cyrus Lawrence’s 42 carries vs. Memphis (Oct. 3, 1981)** – Cyrus Lawrence still ranks as the school’s all-time leading rusher, and he also holds the school record for carries in a game. His 42 totes for 179 yards against Memphis helped Tech to a 17-13 win over the Tigers.



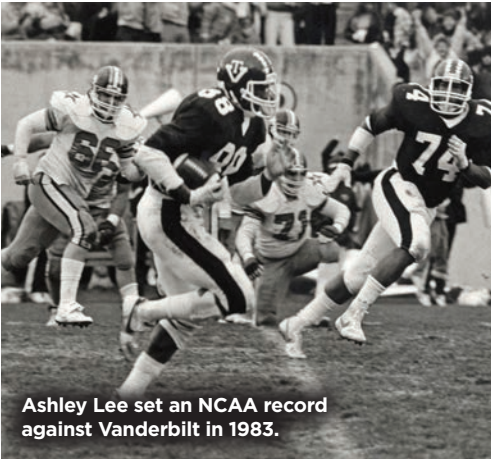
• **First night game at Lane (Nov. 25, 1982)** – The first night game at Lane Stadium occurred in the 1982 season finale against UVa. WTBS broadcast the game, and the Hokies beat the Cavaliers 21-14 behind strong running from Otis Copeland (124 yards) and the nation’s No. 1 rush defense, which held UVa to 10 yards rushing.

• **Bruce Smith’s four sacks vs. Duke (Oct. 8, 1983)** – Bruce Smith became the first Tech player to record four sacks in a game when he had four against Duke quarterback Ben Bennett in Tech’s 27-14 win. He also had four the following year in a win over William & Mary and is Tech’s all-time leader with 46 career sacks.

• **Ashley Lee’s interceptions vs. Vanderbilt (Nov. 12, 1983)** – Ashley Lee intercepted two passes in the second half and returned both of them for touchdowns in Tech’s 21-10 win over Vanderbilt. His returns of 94 and 88 yards still stand as an NCAA record for interception return yardage in a single game.

• **Eddie Hunter’s kickoff return vs. South Carolina (Oct. 11, 1986)** – Tech jumped out

to a 24-10 halftime lead, with one of the big plays coming from tailback Eddie Hunter, who returned a kickoff 99 yards for a touchdown on the final play of the first quarter. Tech and South Carolina played to a 27-27 tie. Hunter’s return still ranks tied for second among the longest in school history.



• **First win under Frank Beamer vs. Navy (Oct. 3, 1987)** – Jon Jeffries rushed for 128 yards and a touchdown, as the Hokies handed head coach Frank Beamer his first victory as

Tech’s head coach by beating Navy 31-11. He is now the school’s all-time leader in coaching victories.



• **Mickey Thomas’ six field goals vs. Vanderbilt (Nov. 4, 1989)** – Tech ventured into the red zone numerous times versus the Commodores, but couldn’t put the ball in the end zone. Mickey Thomas provided all the scoring in the Hokies’ 18-0 win by kicking six field goals – none of which were longer than 41 yards. His six field goals are still a single-game school record.

1990s

• **Nick Cullen’s career day vs. Southern Miss (Oct. 27, 1990)** – Tech knocked off quarterback Brett Favre and Southern Miss 20-16, and receiver Nick Cullen played a large role. His 13 receptions (for 170 yards) tied the school record and are still the most by a player at Lane Stadium.

• **“Black Shoes Game” vs. UVa (Nov. 24, 1990)** – Fired up at playing then-No. 17 Virginia on national television (ESPN), Tech’s players used spray paint to paint their cleats black before the game and then went on to a 38-13 win, snapping a three-game losing streak to the Cavaliers. Vaughn Hebron rushed for 142 yards and a score in the victory, and Will Furrer

threw three touchdown passes.

• **Antonio Freeman’s big game vs. Temple (Oct. 16, 1993)** – Antonio Freeman caught nine touchdown passes in 1993 and three of them came in Tech’s 55-7 Homecoming win over Temple. He caught eight passes for 194 yards, including touchdown receptions of 10, 63 and 52 yards from quarterback Maurice DeShazo.

• **100th win at Lane (Sept. 22, 1994)** – Duane Thomas rushed for 94 yards and Ken Oxendine added 61 yards and a touchdown, as Tech routed West Virginia 34-6 in a Thursday night game. The defense sacked WVU quarterbacks eight times – three by Cornell Brown – and picked off two passes to aid the cause. The win marked the program’s 100th at Lane Stadium.

• **Loren Johnson preserves win over Miami (Sept. 23, 1995)** – The Hokies were 0-2 and playing No. 17 Miami, a school they had never beaten, in the third game of the season. But Tech controlled the ball behind Duane Thomas’ 165 yards rushing and then held on when freshman cornerback Loren Johnson tipped away a pass in the waning moments to preserve the win. Tech went on to win its remaining games, including the Sugar Bowl over Texas.

• **Torrian Gray running down UVa’s Tiki Barber (Nov. 29, 1996)** – The Hokies were looking to secure an Orange Bowl berth and needed a win over then-No. 20 UVa. On the Cavaliers’ first play of the game, tailback Tiki Barber burst free and down the sideline, but Torrian Gray ran him down at the Tech 10 after an 80-yard gain. The Hokies’ defense held the Cavaliers to a field goal and later went on to a 26-9 win.

• **Jamel Smith’s interception return vs. Rutgers (Nov. 21, 1998)** – The Hokies cruised to a 47-7 win over Rutgers, and backer Jamel Smith put his name in the record books with a 98-yard interception return for a touchdown. It still ranks as the longest interception return in Lane Stadium history.

• **Michael Vick flip vs. JMU (Sept. 4, 1999)** – Michael Vick’s career got off to a good start with three rushing touchdowns on four carries against James Madison in a 47-0 victory. On his final one, a 7-yard run, he flipped over a JMU defender into the end zone for the score in one of many memorable plays by Vick in his career.

• **Corey Moore’s performance vs. Clemson (Sept. 23, 1999)** – In one of the greatest games

ever by a Tech defender at Lane Stadium, Corey Moore recorded five solo tackles, two sacks and forced a fumble in the Hokies’ 31-11 win over Clemson. He picked up the fumble that he forced and returned it 32 yards for a touchdown to account for the Hokies’ final score.



• **ESPN Gameday visits Blacksburg for the first time (Oct. 16, 1999)** – ESPN Gameday rolled into Blacksburg for the first time, and a record number of fans attended the college football pregame show. Behind Shyrone Stith’s 140 yards rushing, the Hokies rolled then-No. 16 Syracuse 62-0 in what was the largest shutout loss by a ranked team in the history of The Associated Press poll.





• **Tech win over BC caps undefeated season (Nov. 26, 1999)** – Behind Michael Vick’s three touchdown passes and André Davis’ 172 yards receiving, the Hokies clinched a perfect regular season with a 38-14 win over BC. Tech secured a spot in its first national title game in the process.

2000s

• **Georgia Tech lightning game (Aug. 27, 2000)** – The Hokies were set to open the season against Georgia Tech, and expectations were high, but the game was never played as severe thunderstorms rocked the area and left the field at Lane Stadium unplayable. The night became best known for the lightning bolt that struck the rental car driven by ESPN’s Lee Corso.

• **André Davis’ performance vs. WVU (Oct. 12, 2000)** – André Davis had a quarter to remember in Tech’s 48-20 win over the

Mountaineers. In a span of a little more than six minutes in the third quarter, Davis scored on a 30-yard run, caught a 64-yard touchdown pass from Michael Vick and returned a punt 76 yards for a touchdown. Davis, who had 127 yards receiving on six catches, finished with 273 all-purpose yards.



André Davis scored three different ways against West Virginia in 2001.

• **Eric Green’s blocked punt vs. Miami (Dec. 1, 2001)** – Tech trailed Miami 20-3 at halftime and 26-10 with a little more than 11 minutes remaining, but the Hokies cut the lead to 26-24 with six minutes to go after Eric Green blocked a punt, and Brandon Manning returned it for a touchdown. Some say Lane Stadium has never been louder than after that play. The Hokies went for two points after Manning’s touchdown, but couldn’t convert and lost the game 26-24.



Eric Green’s blocked punt against Miami in 2001 nearly led Tech to an upset of the ‘Canes.

• **Tech downs Saban, LSU (Sept. 1, 2002)** – LSU and head coach Nick Saban had won the SEC and the Sugar Bowl following the 2001 season, but the Hokies throttled the Tigers 26-8 at Lane Stadium. Lee Suggs rushed for 91 yards and two touchdowns and Tech’s defense recorded four sacks and an interception in the win.

• **Lee Suggs sets NCAA TD record vs. WVU (Nov. 20, 2002)** – Tech fell to the Mountaineers 21-18 on this night, but tailback Lee Suggs set an NCAA record by rushing for a touchdown in his 24th consecutive game, breaking a 32-year-old NCAA mark. He extended his streak to 27 games before it was snapped. Suggs finished with 71 yards rushing against the Mountaineers.

• **Hurricane Isabel strikes vs. Texas A&M (Sept. 18, 2003)** – Hurricane Isabel battered parts of Virginia and North Carolina, but the rain and wind didn’t stop the Hokies from beating Texas A&M 35-19 in a Thursday night game. Kevin Jones rushed for 188 yards on 30 carries, and he scored three touchdowns to lead the way.

• **DeAngelo Hall’s two punt returns for touchdowns vs. Syracuse (Oct. 11, 2003)** – Tech blasted Syracuse 51-7, and DeAngelo Hall led the way. The Tech cornerback returned two punts

for touchdowns – both in the first quarter. His 58-yard return gave Tech a 14-0 lead, and less than two minutes later, his 60-yarder gave the Hokies a 21-point bulge. Those two started the rout.



DeAngelo Hall returned a fumble for a touchdown in the Hokies’ 2003 upset of Miami.

• **DeAngelo Hall’s fumble return vs. Miami (Nov. 1, 2003)** – Tech has struggled over the years against top-five opponents, but the Hokies hammered No. 2 Miami 31-7 on this date. DeAngelo Hall’s strip of Miami receiver Roscoe Parrish and subsequent 28-yard fumble return for a touchdown got the scoring started and led the way. Eric Green added a 51-yard interception return for a score as well.



Vinnie Fuller returned a blocked field goal for a touchdown in Tech’s win over WVU in 2004.

• **Vinnie Fuller returns blocked field goal for a touchdown vs. WVU (Oct. 2, 2004)** – Defensive back Vinnie Fuller provided the Hokies with their only touchdown in a 19-13 win over then-No. 6 West Virginia. His 74-yard return of Jim Davis’ blocked field goal gave the Hokies a 13-0 lead at halftime, and the Hokies held on for an upset of the Mountaineers.

• **Branden Ore’s big night vs. Clemson (Oct. 26, 2006)** – Running back Branden Ore rushed for 203 yards and two touchdowns to lift Tech to a 24-7 victory over then-No. 10 Clemson. The game was one of nine in which Ore rushed for more than 100 yards, but his only one of more than 200 yards.

• **Season opener vs. ECU (Sept. 1, 2007)** – In a touching pregame ceremony, university officials honored those who were killed and injured in the April 16 shootings the previous spring. The Hokies then went out and beat the Pirates 17-7, thanks to a Macho Harris interception return for a score and a Sean Glennon touchdown pass.

• **Tyrod Taylor’s third-down play vs. FSU (Nov. 10, 2007)** – The Hokies and Seminoles were tied at 6 at the end of the first quarter. On the first play of the second quarter, Tech faced a third-and-31 from its own 34. But quarterback Tyrod Taylor got Tech out of the jam by rushing for 38 yards and a first down. Tech scored on the drive and never looked back in a 40-21 win.

• **Darren Evans’ record night vs. Maryland (Nov. 6, 2008)** – Tailback Darren Evans set a



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Lane Stadium was packed for the 2007 season opener, as the school remembered those lost and injured in the April 16 shootings.

school record when he rushed for 253 yards in the Hokies' 23-13 win over Maryland on Nov. 6. He carried the ball 32 times and scored a touchdown in the game. His performance broke Mike Imoh's school record of 243 yards at North Carolina in 2004.

• **Macho Harris' interception return for a touchdown vs. Duke (Nov. 22, 2008)** – Tech found itself in a dogfight with the Blue Devils, but Macho Harris made the big play in the game. The Hokies led just 7-3 late in the game before Harris picked off a Zack Asack pass and returned it 23

yards for a touchdown to give Tech a 14-3 win over the Blue Devils.

• **Tyrod Taylor pass to Danny Coale vs. Nebraska (Sept. 19, 2009)** – Tech trailed Nebraska in the waning moments of the game, but quarterback Tyrod Taylor found receiver Danny Coale for an 81-yard gain to the Nebraska 3-yard line. Then with 21 seconds left, Taylor found Dyrell Roberts in the end zone to give Tech a near miraculous 16-15 win.

• **Big plays vs. NC State (Nov. 21, 2009)** – Tailback Ryan Williams ran for 120 yards and scored four touchdowns in a 38-10 Tech rout of the Wolfpack. Williams' final touchdown was a 19-yard run in which he dragged Wolfpack safety Earl Wolff the final 12 yards into the end zone. Also, Cody Grimm tied an NCAA record with three forced fumbles in the game.

2010s

• **David Wilson kickoff return lifts Tech past Georgia Tech (Nov. 4, 2010)** – Virginia Tech and Georgia Tech were engaged in a good ACC battle, and the Yellow Jackets tied the game at 21 with 2:34 remaining on a touchdown run by

Orwin Smith. On the ensuing kickoff, though, David Wilson returned it 90 yards for what would be the winning touchdown, giving the Hokies a 28-21 win.




Danny Coale made this terrific catch against Nebraska in 2009.



Logan Thomas accounted for all five of Tech's touchdowns in a 2011 win over Miami.

• **Logan Thomas' performance vs. Miami (Oct. 8, 2011)** – Quarterback Logan Thomas completed 23 of 25 passes for 310 yards and three touchdowns, but it was his 19-yard rushing touchdown with 56 seconds left that gave the Hokies a 38-35 win over Miami. Thomas accounted for 348 yards and five touchdowns in what may have been his best performance in a Tech uniform.

• **J.C. Coleman TD run vs. Duke (Oct. 13, 2012)** – Tailback J.C. Coleman's 86-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter capped a 41-20 win in which the Hokies rallied from a 20-0 deficit. It was the longest run from scrimmage by a Tech player in a game at Lane Stadium, and the Hokies' win was their 200th win at the stadium. 



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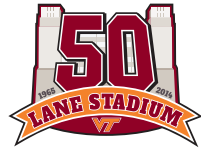
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HANLY WENT FROM WALK-ON TO STARTER AT TECH AND LATER WORKED SEVERAL YEARS AS AN ASSISTANT COACH

This is the third in a series of features spotlighting former Virginia Tech players who played in the very first game at Lane Stadium in October of 1965. Les Hanly, one of seven seniors on the team, transferred to Tech as a walk-on, later earned a scholarship and ultimately became a starter for Coach Jerry Claiborne.

by Jimmy Robertson

Diving into the history of Lane Stadium leads to some rather interesting stories. One never knows what may actually surface.

The latest centers on a former Tech player who once coached with Steve Spurrier and who once drank a couple of beers with Bear Bryant.

Yes, that Bear Bryant – arguably the greatest college football coach of all time.

“There aren’t many people who can say that,” Les Hanly said, chuckling.

Hanly was one of seven seniors on the 1965 Virginia Tech football team that played the first varsity game ever at Lane Stadium, as Inside Hokie Sports continues its celebration of the 50th season of the venue by spotlighting various players who played in that game.

Hanly wasn’t necessarily a superstar player, at least not in the ilk of guys like quarterback Bobby Owens and running back Tommy Francisco. But he was a hard-nosed, blue-collar Southern boy, the type who thrived under a taskmaster like then-head coach Jerry Claiborne – and the type who have really formed the foundation of Tech football over the course of the years.

Hanly came to Tech from Waycross, Georgia, but only after a year at West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas, just south of Amarillo. He became homesick while in West Texas and decided to leave, transferring to Tech and following in the footsteps of his good friend and high school teammate,

Darrell Page, who lettered at Tech from 1962-64.

“I just didn’t like living out there,” Hanly said of Texas. “I graduated from high school when I was 17. I just went out there to get away from home, and I was homesick. I just hadn’t grown up yet. I realized after I had left what I had given up. I went up to Tech with Darrell Page for practice that second year, and I was just a walk-on. He talked me into coming up there, and we ended up rooming together the whole time we were up there.”

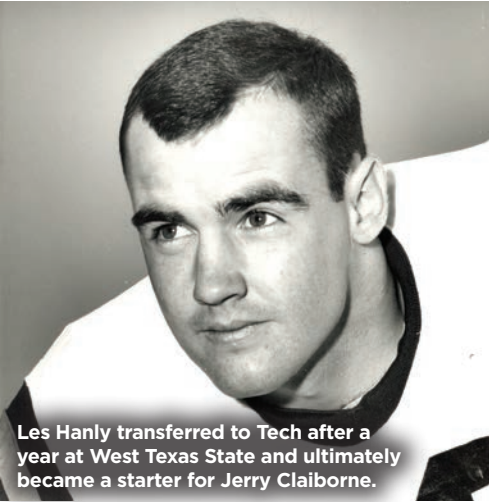
Hanly obviously endeared himself to Claiborne, who had taken over for Frank Moseley in 1961 (Moseley stayed in the AD role) and wanted to put his stamp on the program. Claiborne’s first team went 4-5, and many of the upperclassmen quit the team. They either were unable or unwilling to deal with Claiborne’s intense coaching style.

According to Hanly, the 1962 team featured just two seniors – a direct result of the rest of the group deciding to hang it up. Hanly, though, quickly earned a starting spot – and a scholarship.

“I was lying in bed in the dorm waiting for practice one day, and one of the assistant coaches called me and told me to come over,” he said. “They gave me a scholarship. The next quarter, I didn’t have to pay [tuition] any more.”

Hanly came to Tech as an end, a successful one. He and Page teamed to lead their high school in Georgia to the state championship as seniors.

But Hanly knew he wouldn’t be playing that



Les Hanly transferred to Tech after a year at West Texas State and ultimately became a starter for Jerry Claiborne.

position for the Gobblers. Not long after he arrived at Tech, he found himself being moved to a different position.

“I had hands like tennis rackets,” he joked. “The ball would bounce right off of them. I knew they [Tech’s coaches] were going to move me somewhere else, and I remember thinking, ‘Anywhere, but center. I don’t want to stick my hands between my legs before I get hit.’ But that’s where I ended up.”

Hanly played both ways as a sophomore, as many did in those days. His final two years, he played mostly center.

Like most, Hanly vividly remembers Oct. 2, 1965. The Gobblers took on William & Mary in the first varsity game at the stadium and won 9-7. He remembers the excitement surrounding the game. He remembers the stands on the east side not quite being finished. And like many others, he remembers the Gobblers beating Virginia on the inaugural Governor’s Day just a few weeks later. The Cavaliers hadn’t been to Blacksburg for a game in 27 years. The two teams mostly played in Roanoke during that span.

“Coach Claiborne told us after we beat Virginia that the AD [Moseley] came up to him and hollered and grabbed him,” Hanly said. “Some alumni gave him the money to finish the other half of the stadium because we beat Virginia.”

Tech finished with a 7-3 record in 1965, and Hanly graduated in 1966 with a degree in distributive education. He planned all along on getting into coaching, and he worked for Claiborne the following season as a graduate assistant.

Hanly also worked as a graduate assistant at Florida State, and his connections there helped him land his first college coaching gig at Rice University. Bill Peterson, the former head coach at Florida State from 1960-70, took the head job at Rice, but left after a year to become the head coach of the NFL’s Houston Oilers. So Al Conover, an assistant at Florida State from 1963-67, ended up getting the Rice job after Peterson left. Conover needed an offensive line coach, so he hired Hanly.

Hanly spent four seasons at Rice, and while he wasn’t a part of many wins during that time

(Conover ultimately resigned), he at least left with a wonderful memory – the one with Bear Bryant.

“I actually met Bear at Virginia Tech,” Hanly said. “He came up to visit Claiborne, who had been his assistant at Alabama. Then when I was coaching at Rice University, I signed a kid, and Bear came in and tried to steal him. The guy that I signed, his dad was a good friend of mine. I signed him at Rice when we were in the Southwest Conference with Texas and Arkansas and all them, and the Bear came in and tried to get him.

“The father owned this country western ballroom, and he introduced me to Bear, and Bear said, ‘So you coach at Rice?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said, ‘Well, come on.’ He was there with his wife and an alumni and his wife from Texas A&M. He used to be the head coach there. He took me over to the bar and bought me a couple of beers, and we talked football. That was probably the biggest thrill of my football life.”

A couple of years later, in 1978, Hanly landed a job as the offensive line coach at Georgia Tech under Pepper Rodgers. He spent two seasons in that role, and while there, he worked for a year with Spurrier (1979), who is now the head coach at South Carolina. He also worked with former NFL great Norm van Brocklin, who was the running backs coach.

Georgia Tech fired Rodgers after the 1979 season, which left Hanly looking for work. He decided to get out of the coaching profession, and he took a job with Levi Strauss & Company, where he worked in sales for the next 20 years.

Where Are They Now? | les hanly

“The biggest mistake I ever made financially was getting out of coaching when I got fired at Georgia Tech,” Hanly said. “Steve Spurrier went on and started coaching at other places and made a lot of money. But one of my fellow coaches got a job at Levi’s, and he talked his boss into hiring me. I would be making \$70,000-80,000 compared to between \$15,000-20,000. So for financial reasons, I got out.”

Hanly coached on one other team – an arena team in Jacksonville, Florida. He did that on the side while working another job, and he said he finally retired in 2004 or 2005.

He and his wife of 28 years, Lois, today live in Morrow, Georgia, just south of Atlanta, and near her family. They have a daughter, who turns 27 in October.

Hanly and his former teammate, Page, plan on coming to Blacksburg the weekend of the Miami game for a reunion of the 1965 team to commemorate the 50 seasons of Lane Stadium. Like several of his teammates, he came up three years ago to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Class of 1965’s freshman season.

Like others who have been away for a long time, he was amazed at what he saw.

“It was nice,” he said. “The baseball field used to be between the Coliseum and the stadium. That had changed around. I thought that was cool. The football practice field was right there.”

A return trip should be a fun time for Hanly – though nothing may ever top drinking a few with the Bear.



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SEIZING A SECOND CHANCE

Corey Marshall was on the verge of being dismissed from the Tech football program, but head coach Frank Beamer gave him a second chance, and he has turned his career – and life – around

by Jimmy Robertson

At this point roughly one year ago, Corey Marshall was treading water in his own personal sea of confusion, waves of self-doubt tumbling over him.

He was drowning in anger and guilt, and he admittedly blames no one but himself. The captain of his own ship, he had scuttled it, and he found himself hoping that the rhythmic swells of life would push him toward some welcoming shoreline. None emerged.

Fortunately for Marshall, the captain of the Virginia Tech football program – head coach Frank Beamer – sailed in. Beamer may lack true nautical skills, but the longtime coach knows a lot about football and even more about people. Against the wishes of some of his coaching crew, he decided to toss Marshall a life preserver.

Marshall has been clutching it ever since.

“I definitely respect him three times over,” Marshall said. “He’s pumped life back into my career, and I have great respect for him. That’s a guy you run through a wall for.”

By now, Tech fans know the story, or at least the public version. A gifted defensive lineman out of North Dinwiddie, Virginia, Marshall seemed destined for stardom once he arrived at Tech, but poor choices eventually sunk him, and Beamer let him go adrift of the football program for a spell last fall, leaving him alone to choose his future.

That Marshall found himself in such a place came as a surprise to those who know him – and comes as a surprise to those meeting him for the first time. He comes across as a thoughtful, introspective young man and is wonderfully articulate. He wants to be a sports broadcaster when the tides of football recede, and 10 minutes into a conversation with him, one can see that he actually would be very good at that.

But no one really saw that side of him, at least up until now, because, well, Marshall gave people other reasons to look at the dark side. The issues started his sophomore year. He didn’t get into specifics, but he said he started showing up late for position meetings and team meetings. He started missing classes, and as a result, his grades suffered.

“It’s the little things that turn into big things

over time,” he said. “There was a lot of human error involved. When you do that, you have to understand that your leash gets shorter every time. It’s more that it kept happening than those incidents themselves. You have to pick a path and figure which way you want to go with it. Bad habits are hard to break. What I was raised to do and coached to do wasn’t what I was giving out.”

That prompted a couple of meetings with Beamer, who delivered ultimatums. Marshall paid them little heed, though. Then by August of last year, Beamer had put up with enough. He called Marshall into his office and delivered some poignant news.

“I definitely respect him three times over. He’s pumped life back into my career, and I have great respect for him. That’s a guy you run through a wall for.”

–Corey Marshall on Tech head coach Frank Beamer

It was time for Marshall to move on.

“There’s never been a moment in my life when I’ve been that frozen in a moment than when he was telling me that everything I had worked for in my life was going to be gone – and I was the reason it wasn’t there anymore,” Marshall said.

The news prompted Corey’s mother, Joyce Combs-Marshall, to come to Blacksburg. She met with Beamer and some of the coaches, and they came up with a new plan.

Since Marshall played as a true freshman, he could take a redshirt year, practice on the scout team and get his act together. Marshall and Beamer would meet in January after the bowl game to discuss his future.

Marshall knew what he needed to do, but struggled to come to terms with what was happening. He spent a lot of time alone, which probably wasn’t the greatest recipe for steering one’s life back on track.

“There were a lot of sleepless nights,” he said. “I think guilt set in a lot because I thought I was letting a lot of people down by not accomplishing the things I knew I could accomplish here. I

came here because of the John Graves and the James Gayles, people of that ilk. To let it slip away because of some bad habits popping up was disappointing. To look yourself in the mirror ... at a certain point, if you know better, then do better.”

Marshall’s guilt really bubbled to the surface on Saturdays last fall. His teammates – and best friends – spent their Saturdays playing in front of 60,000 fans at Lane Stadium or on the road at unfriendly venues, all in pursuit of an ACC championship. He knows they could have used him, too. BC ran for 196 yards and Maryland rushed for 184. Tech lost both games.

Marshall and Beamer met again last January. Beamer agreed to let him back into the program, but with conditions, not the least of which was showing up at every team meeting and strength and conditioning session on time. Off the field, Marshall needed to pull up his grades.

Beamer, often criticized for skewing soft on discipline, believes in second chances. He sees something in young people that few often see, or perhaps refuse to see.

Beamer’s belief in Marshall resulted in a transformation like no other.

“The turning point was sitting in Coach Beamer’s office when I was having that talk and him telling me what I needed to do to get back in the good graces of things,” Marshall said. “I was in limbo or no man’s land at that point, and I was trying to figure everything else out. I needed to get the academics right and do the right things off the field and show them that I’m a high-quality guy, a high-character guy. I took those steps.”

Life preserver in hand, Marshall became a model student. He attended study halls and met with tutors, and he started making solid grades. He showed up at every lifting session, never once giving Dr. Mike Gentry or his staff any problems. His attitude, commitment and focus showed on the field as well during Tech’s spring practice.

By the end of the spring semester, Marshall was the MVP of Tech’s defense following spring practice and academically back on course.

“I was very surprised,” Tech defensive

line coach Charley Wiles said of Marshall's turnaround. "It's a credit to him. It's a credit to him that he wanted to do what was right and get his schoolwork right. He wanted to be a big part of this football team. It's important to him.

"He's been great to deal with. He's really positive. He wants the same thing we want. He's 100 percent on board."

Another requirement for Marshall's return to the team was that he stay at defensive tackle. His first two seasons, he bounced back and forth between end and tackle, with mixed results. In Marshall, Wiles saw a terrific defensive tackle, but only a solid defensive end.

At times, Marshall balked at playing defensive tackle, preferring, like many others, to stay at end. But Beamer left him no choice on the subject during their discussion about his return to the program.

"At that point, I wanted to get on the field and prove to them that, when my mind doesn't tie up my feet, I can be as explosive as what we've had in the past couple of years," Marshall said. "I think they're seeing that now."

Marshall has been a force on the interior of Tech's defensive line, though his stats may not reflect that. He missed the East Carolina game because of a sprained ankle suffered in the Hokies' huge win over then-No. 8 Ohio State, and he played a limited number of snaps against Georgia Tech as a result.

But Marshall's ability to disrupt things forces opponents to focus on him and enables guys like Chase Williams and Deon Clarke to make plays. Both of those players are having career years.

"It's been real nice having Corey back," Wiles said. "He had a great camp, a great William & Mary game and a great Ohio State game, and then he got hurt. We need to get him back 100 percent healthy again.



After taking a redshirt year last season, Corey Marshall has come back and played outstanding football, and he anchors Tech's defensive line now that Luther Maddy is out indefinitely with an injury.

"But he's good. You won't see a better defensive tackle in our league than him. He's that good."

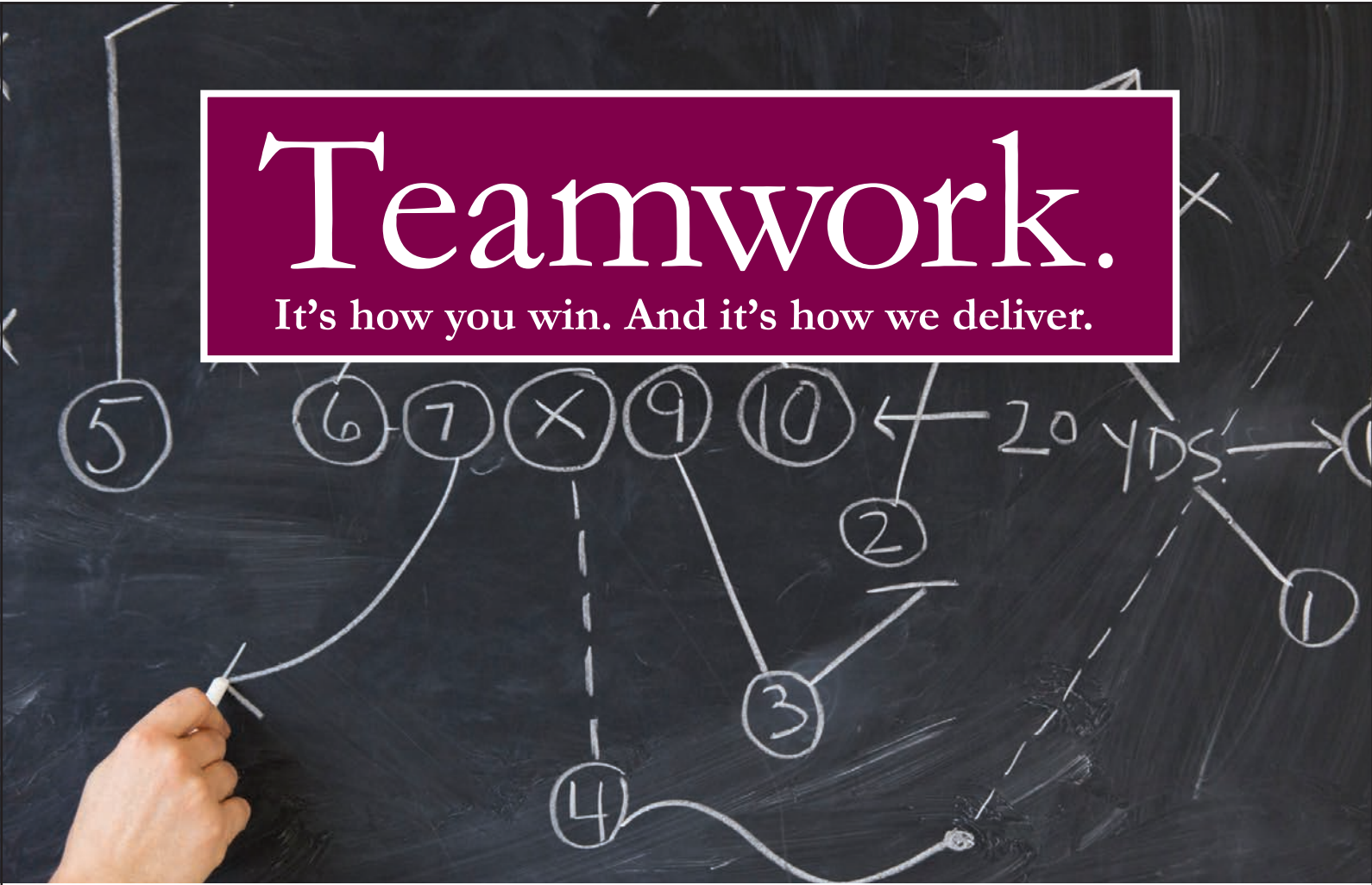
Marshall has finally navigated himself into calmer waters, a mature young man with sophisticated plans for his future. Yes, he, like every other college football player, wants to play in the NFL – he has another season of eligibility remaining – but if the winds of life blow him in another direction, he will be ready, whether it be a career in broadcasting or putting a degree in human development to use by following in

his mother's footsteps and working in the social services field.

"Going to the NFL is high on my list, but every year I've seen guys who could play their a---- off and then have circumstances keep it from happening," he said. "David Wilson (neck), James Gayle (shoulder) ... You always want to plan ahead."

Corey Marshall made the decision to chart a better course for himself. Tech coaches, players and fans are certainly thankful.

So, too, is he.



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FORMER CLUB GOALKEEPER HELPING SAVE HOKIES

Ben Lockler didn’t make the cut in 2013 following his first tryout for the Tech men’s soccer team, but the walk-on earned a spot on the roster this past spring and has worked his way into a part-time starting role

by **Marc Mullen**

The stories are certainly out there, the ones where a student-athlete bides his or her time sitting on the sidelines. Sometimes, he or she sits for years until the final season of eligibility rolls around when an opportunity presents itself. On rare occasions, a starting role is earned.

There are also plenty of stories where non-recruited students use their athletics ability to earn a spot as a walk-on in a varsity program and eventually earn a starting role. Tech’s successful football program boasts of many such individuals.

But how about this one – a combination of the two? A student-athlete who earns a walk-on position on a varsity team for the first time *entering* his senior year, and by the fourth game of the season, has been named a starter.

Well, that is the exact story for goalkeeper Ben Lockler of the Virginia Tech men’s soccer team.

He earned three starts in net for the Hokies through the first month of the 2014 season.

“The spring semester of my junior year, I tried out for the team, and that was after [Kyle] Renfro had just graduated, so they [Tech’s coaches] had a spot open” Lockler said. “They told me I could train with them in the spring, and it’s just funny to me because, when I first went to the tryouts, I was like, ‘Wow, this is fun! I’m getting to try out for the team.’

“Then they told me I could train with them, and it was like, ‘Wow, I actually get to train with them. Maybe I’ll be able to keep up.’ And then after two weeks, I was hanging with them and thinking, ‘Maybe I’ll get into the back half of one of the spring games.’ But by the end of the spring games, I was the starter. So it was just funny because I went from, ‘Wow, this is cool’ to

training with them for a couple days to, by the end of spring, starting games.”

Lockler isn’t just some guy that the Hokies picked up off the street to help them replace the loss of Renfro, their four-year starting net minder. The Ocean Lakes High School graduate played for a pretty successful club team – the Virginia Rush – and was being looked at by smaller schools during his recruiting process.

VMI made a serious push, and some Division II schools also were interested in him. He was actually considering VMI for a little while, but at the end, he just decided to come to Tech.

“I got a couple of offers from some smaller schools – Hampton-Sydney, I took a visit there,” Lockler said. “But then at the end of it, I just decided to go to Tech because I liked the feel of it. It was a different environment from VMI. I

wasn’t just writing off playing soccer in college. I was looking at opportunities to play college soccer, but when it came down to it, I just decided I wanted to go to a bigger school like Virginia Tech.”

When Lockler got to Blacksburg, he pursued the chance to play soccer, but went the club route, and it was certainly not what he expected. He remembers there were about 150 guys who came out to that tryout for the club team when he was a freshman, and those numbers stayed steady each of the three seasons he played with the team.

“Club soccer was a lot better than I had expected it to be,” Lockler said. “Not that I had low expectations, but it was a lot more competitive than I thought it would be. You really have to compete to play. There is definitely not a lack of talent, and it’s really competitive.

“From a student-athlete perspective, it’s a little bit less of a time commitment because we only train four days a week for about two hours a night, and so it was less of a requirement. However, whoever started in games was kind of based on who could come out to the most

practices. When you’re playing for Tech [on the varsity team], you don’t miss a practice.”

Trying out for the varsity team was always in the back of Lockler’s mind, but he didn’t pursue it in the spring semester of his freshman year. He waited until the spring semester of his sophomore year (spring of 2013), but was sent home after just three days.

However, that setback didn’t deter him, as he was again out there for tryouts this past spring and finally made the squad.

“I ended up playing club for three years, and I absolutely loved it. I am still great friends with all those guys,” Lockler said. “It just really worked out where I got to play a lot my freshman year [for the club team] and more than if I would have gone to another school and played college soccer. I probably wouldn’t have gotten as much playing time.

“So the way it worked out for me was perfect because I got to go play club for awhile and got some experience and got a little bit bigger – I put on some weight. I was pretty skinny in high school, and I used to email coaches and say, ‘Hey,

I’d like to play college soccer for you.’ They would say ‘Cool, you are 5-foot-10, 150 pounds, what position do you play?’ and then I would write them back, ‘Goalie’ and then they would write me off.

“But just the way it worked out was perfect, and then I got the opportunity to try out for the varsity team and I was lucky for the way that came together.”

Walking on and earning a spot on the varsity team, again, isn’t unheard of, but to do that with just one year of eligibility left is rare. Couple that with the news that Lockler got the morning of Sept. 9 of this year – he was getting the start that evening versus Longwood in the Hokies’ fourth game of the season – makes this story quite unique.

“I started a couple of the exhibition games, but the first regular-season game I started was Longwood,” Lockler said. “My parents were planning on coming out to the UVa game that Friday, which is a lot closer to our house than Tech. But I texted my dad about 11 a.m. that morning and said, ‘I’m starting tonight.’

“And I guess he was sitting there working, and he looked at his pile of work and thought ‘I’m just about finished with that.’ Then he called my mom and asked her ‘Do you want to take a ride to Tech in the next half hour?’ So they drove out on a Tuesday night to see me start my first game. That was really cool.”

Lockler’s parents, retired Naval Captain John Lockler and wife Ann, made the trip from Virginia Beach to see the eldest of their two children earn a victory in net in his first collegiate start, as the Hokies rolled to a 4-1 victory. He would make starts in two of the next three games, including at No. 15 Virginia in which he made five saves in a 1-0 loss.

He also saved four shots in a 2-0 shutout of Wake Forest, the team’s first win over the Demon Deacons in 15 tries. Tech last beat them 17 years ago by an identical 2-0 score, which also was the last time the Hokies held them scoreless.

Lockler credits his family and his friends for the support he’s received in chasing his dream of making the varsity team.

“It’s really weird to think about it, and it’s just kind of hard to believe,” Lockler said. “When I look back at it over the past three years, the transition is definitely crazy.

“My friends and family, though, they have been great heading into every year, telling me




Ben Lockler (25) had started three games heading into a Oct. 4 match against No. 9 Syracuse and had allowed just two goals.

that if I wanted to try out, I should do it. They would tell me ‘You can do it.’ They have been as supportive as I could have ever asked for. I’m just still thankful that I can be out there, and I do not take it for granted.”

Before ending this story, it should be noted that Lockler, who is a human nutrition, foods and exercise major, will close out the men’s

soccer season just weeks before graduating from Tech – and that’s a half semester early, adding just another small curve to this tale.

Rather than just focusing on a final semester, he decided to challenge himself with the rigors of a men’s soccer season without the promise of ever getting into a game. He has certainly proved his worth. 

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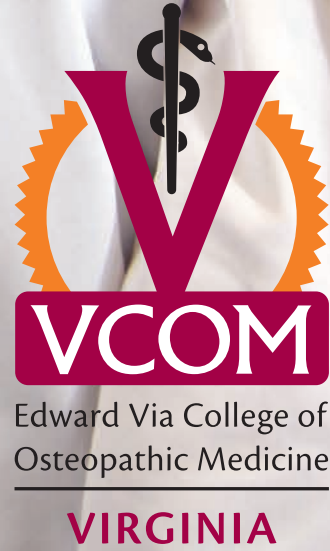
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Morgan Latimer, the school record holder in the 200-yard butterfly, is one of nine seniors on a Tech men’s swimming and diving team looking to accomplish big things again this season.



CHASING GOLD

The Tech men’s swimming and diving team is looking to repeat as ACC champions, while the women’s team thinks it has enough talent to make a run for the title this season as well

by Marc Mullen

There are many people who consider, at least at the collegiate level, the sports of track and field, swimming and diving, and wrestling to be individual sports more than team sports. Those are, of course, the only collegiate sports that Virginia Tech offers that crown more individual champions at their respective conference meets than team champions.

Ironically, though, it’s been those three sports – toss the 2012 men’s cross country team’s title in there as well – that have produced the past seven ACC team titles for the Hokies. That includes the 2014 men’s swimming and diving title that earned the 17th of the 18 team championships Tech has won since joining the ACC.

The men’s swimming and diving title came as no surprise. The program had steadily improved on its placing in the conference meet since the

2005 championship when the Hokies took seventh. However, what is most fascinating is that the men’s team won a team title with just one male winning an individual event.

“Well, that is close to unheard of, and that just shows the key to having so much depth,” Tech head swimming and diving coach Ned Skinner said. “When I use that word ‘depth,’ that doesn’t mean just a couple of guys that score a couple of points. It means, of your roster of 16 swimmers at the ACC meet, your 14th guy is still scoring in the top eight or top 16 of an event. That’s really how we got it done.

“So maybe we weren’t earning firsts, but we were getting thirds, fifths, sevenths and 10ths, and that really made a difference in the meet. The other thing that is interesting, when you talk about our depth, was that there were 64 scoring

opportunities at the ACC meet and our men converted on 60 of them. That, to me, speaks to how we were able to get it done.”

The Tech men, much like the men’s track and field team did before it finally broke through to dethrone Florida State a few years back, took a few years to figure out the ACC system. The process began with back-to-back fifth-place finishes at the 2008 and 2009 championships, and then came back-to-back fourths and back-to-back seconds in 2012 and 2013.

They almost led wire to wire last season, as their divers gave them a huge cushion to start the meet (all three diving events are competed a week earlier at the women’s meet, and although the points aren’t factored in until a particular day, everyone already knows the results). NC State took a brief lead after the 100-yard freestyle event

on the final day of the meet, but the meet was essentially clinched when then-junior Morgan Latimer took home a silver medal in the 200 butterfly for Tech.

This year, the team has loftier goals. Yes, the men want to repeat, but they also want to improve upon their NCAA results, which have hovered in the top 20 each of the past three seasons.

“We want to defend it and start a winning streak, and I feel like our men have great leadership to do that,” Skinner said. “I feel like they learned how to win and have applied it already with their summer and their training so far this fall, just with what it takes day in and day out to be great.

“Even though we’ve been in the top 20 three straight years at the NCAAs, we feel like we can still be better at that meet. Our goals this year, to be honest with you, are not just to win the ACC – that was kind of the real goal last year, and of course, we want to repeat. But I think we want to make sure that we are strong throughout the year and make our season plan stronger than ever to carry us through March.”

To improve upon last year’s performance at the national meet, Skinner points to the leadership of his upperclassmen, who have set a new tone for the program. These are not necessarily guys who have made immediate impacts for the team out of high school.

“It does start with leadership, and for us, it means that we have a group of men, and in particular, senior men, that have rewritten the way we do our business,” Skinner said. “They demand excellence from each other, from themselves and from their team, and they live the life and show what needs to be done. It’s super impressive.

“A guy like Owen Burns, who showed up as a freshman and kind of had some growing pains ... to see the young man he’s become is very

rewarding. Collin Higgins, who’s from North Carolina, is now the ACC record holder in the 200 backstroke and he’s the final Higgins of three kids that came through here. Then, Morgan Latimer is just all world for the Hokies out of the pool and in the pool. Some of these guys didn’t even make the conference team their freshman year, so to see them develop the way they have and bring the program up to new heights is so impressive.”

A quick glance at the Tech men’s swimming record book reveals that members of this year’s squad currently hold eight school records. That includes Michael Szuba in the 1000 and 1650 freestyle events, Higgins in the 200 backstroke (which is the ACC record as well), Brandon Fiala in the 100 breaststroke and 200 individual medley, Harrison Cefalo in the 200 breaststroke, Latimer in the 200 butterfly and Robert Owen in the 400 IM.

That shows the breadth of the men’s depth and doesn’t even include the divers, who lost

superstar Ryan Hawkins to graduation.

“T.J. Shinholser was an All-American last year at the NCAAs, and he’s got a couple of teammates who are rock solid,” Skinner said. “Jared Butts, who’s our captain, has had a great career at the ACC level and has made the NCAAs, and we know he wants to finish his career off on a great note.

“Then there’s freshman Mauro Silva from Mexico, who is fantastic and highly accomplished. So we have some young guns in our arsenal, and Logan Stevens has really come along strong and he was a difference maker in our ACC title. Ryan gave us so many points, those three guys [Stevens, Butts and Shinholser] were super virile and made an impact as well.”

On the women’s side, it was a displeasing 2014 ACC meet, as the team came in fifth after placing a program-best second the previous year. They did, however, turn in a fourth straight top-25 finish at the NCAAs and return solid performers in the pool and on the diving boards.



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“In 2013, the women were runner-ups at the ACC meet just behind UVa, but last year, they slipped to fifth, which was, of course, disappointing to them. There were a few things with that, though,” Skinner said. “They are going to be very strong this year. The women saw what the men did last year, and with that sort of a sibling rivalry there, they’ve created their own team standards that they want to hold each other accountable for, and I think they’re doing a great job with it.

“We’ve got some newcomers who are outstanding swimmers, and we have some returners who have ACC championship experience and NCAA All-America experience, so I feel like this should be as strong of a women’s team as we’ve had in some time, if not ever.”

Two women whom Tech fans should get accustomed to hearing/seeing over the next five months, if they haven’t heard of them already, are Kaylea Arnett and Weronika Paluszek.

Arnett, a senior, has accomplished more than any other Hokie in program history. Just to name a few – she’s a three-time ACC Diver of the Year and a four-time ACC champion, she has seven All-America honors and she captured bronze in the 1-meter event at the NCAA Championships last year, the highest finish ever for a Tech swimmer or diver.

Paluszek, a junior, is a two-time honorable mention All-American who owns both school records in the breaststroke events and holds the ACC mark in the 200 and won the ACC title in 2013.

“The women are a deep team,” Skinner said. “Fiona Donnelly represented Scotland in the Commonwealth Games this summer, and she really had a great summer. Weronika Paluszek from Poland was national champion in the 200 breaststroke this summer.

“Jess Hespeler, who is a rising sophomore, had a huge summer for us. We feel like we have just a great nucleus of people, and also on the diving side, starting with Kaylea Arnett, arguably the greatest student-athlete that’s ever walked through our doors – swimming or diving. For her senior year, we’re really excited about what she can bring to the table.”

Skinner is also high on some of the newcomers to his program.

“Adriana Grabski comes in highly touted as a freshman,” he said. “She’s a hard worker. She’s tenacious and talented, and we think she has a chance to be one of our best ever. Klaudia Nazieblo is also from Poland, and we’re really excited for her to be here and she’s full go. She’s amazing. She is coming off of the European Championships this summer, and we think she’s world class.

“Then, with our strong diving, Emma Villareal,

a freshman from Texas, we think is going to be outstanding coupled with already strong diving with Ashley Buchter and Kelly Stockton. We think we’ve got a really bright future this year.”

The approach to this season – getting stronger than ever to carry them through March – started with beefing up the schedule to compete against some tougher opponents.

“We have a great dual meet schedule this year, and Penn State is going to be coming to our very first meet in October, so we are excited to have them,” Skinner said. “Then at our Fall Invite in November, we’ll have the University of Alabama coming and the University of South Carolina coming.

“We feel like we’re not only swimming our traditional ACC schools, but we’re also trying to step up our game and swim some of the best schools in the country to make sure we are race tested. I think, if you can compete against the best, you’re just going to get better.”

Atlanta is the site of this year’s ACC Championships, with the women starting things off in the second-to-last week of February. The men will follow a week later in their attempt to repeat and add another ACC trophy to the trophy case.

Both teams are dreaming big. Both have talent and depth – and it would surprise no one if both made a splash this season. 





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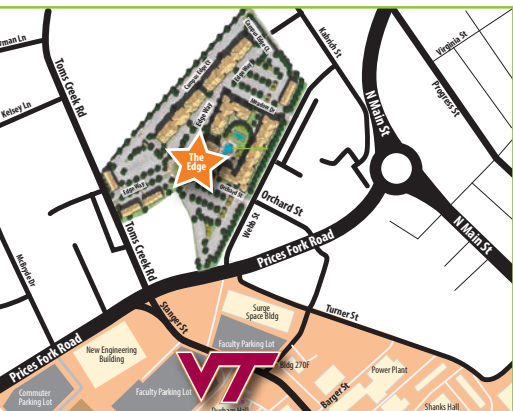
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