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.
Published by the Virginia Tech Athletics Department

Inside Hokie Sports (ISSN 8750-9148) published nine times a year, normally every first Friday of the month, beginning in September of one year and ending in June of the succeeding year, at 165 Spring Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24061. Inside Hokie Sports is published by the Virginia Tech Athletics Department.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICES: $37.95 for one year (11 issues) and $69.95 for two years. You can get an online subscription for $25 and both the online and the print version for $50. Mail all subscription inquiries, renewals, address changes, written inquiries and complaints to Inside Hokie Sports, Jamerson Athletic Center, Virginia Tech, 165 Spring Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24061.

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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.

“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.”

LaToasha 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
Kristin Goff Sutphin

HOKIE CLUB LEVEL: Golden Hokie
Champion

CURRENTLY RESIDES: Floyd, Virginia

WHAT YEAR DID YOU GRADUATE? 2007; PMBA (professional master’s in 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 Gamer Greatness, a Steward of Sportsmanship in their Stadium Seat, a Bird who Becomes Greatness, a Steward of Sportsmanship in their Region, and a Hokie who Helps to Hatch the Hokie Nest Egg. A Fellow of a Flock who Loves to Level in Lane, a Youngster who strivesto Finish First, a Lineman who Strives to Finish First and a Beast with the Ball, a Fellow of a Flock 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: 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 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.

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: Do you have any tailgating traditions?
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.

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.

Lu Merritt
Senior Director of Development for Intercollegiate Athletics

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 “hold 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. The conference has 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
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 college center;
• Ieva Kublina, whose stellar career helped the women’s basketball program to receive a Rhodes Scholarship (William W. Lewis, 1961, and Mark Embree, 1996).

Beyer nominated by Tech as Rhodes candidate
Virginia Tech men’s basketball player Christian Beyer was nominated 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, 1961, 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 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 67 games in which he played. He currently lives in his hometown of Forest, Virginia, where he helps coach his old high school team.

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 female student-athletes 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 has applied for district level interviews. Around 270 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.
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. 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.

“Nobody does it better.”

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Go Tech!

Virginia Beef Industry Council

BEEF UP TAILGATE

Register to Win!

October 8 – November 2

For every $20 purchase in beef products at participating Kroger locations, fans will be entered to win a tailgate prize package courtesy of The Virginia Beef Industry Council and Kroger.

Prize pack winners will receive:

BEEF Tailgate package, on-site tailgate with beef product provided by VBIC, 4 Virginia Tech Game Tickets, 4 pre-game sideline passes, a signed football from VT head coach Frank Beamer, and a $100 Kroger Gift Card.

Williams honest with his approach to Tech challenge

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 resumes 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.
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 blueprint 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, revives 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 re-organizing, and re-energizing anything that involves, revives or bounces when it comes to Virginia Tech basketball.

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 Chick-fil-A all-state selection as a wide receiver last year at Trinity Christian Academy, Ford led Tech in receiving after five games. He became 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 LSU, the Hokies would be the head coach at Texas, would you be playing at LSU right now?

IF: (laughs) Yeah, probably. When Coach Strong left, he called. He talked with my mom. He said I had a chance to be a starter at Texas, so I wasn’t going there, and Coach [Bobby] Petrino and I talked, but Coach [Charlie] Wiles did a great job for Tech, along with Coach [Aaron] Moorhead. 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 LSU.

BR: Who were your other two finalists?

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

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 73 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 recruiters who are all-state high school kids from Florida, I picture guys like Peter Warbrick or Quanorris Bulldogs or Andrew 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: Hmmm. Let me look. [checks phone for answer]. 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 that 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 in an instant is as talented. He’ll be a treat to watch over the next few years at Tech.
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, as 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 conferences 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. 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.”
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 you to 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.

“Also 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 major, and there are three majors, and they’re all different majors. So all of my interests were combined.”

Q: What is it specifically that you like about television advertising?
KC: “When I watch commercials, I get really into the music of it. I think they do a really good job of creating the mood. I don’t usually see TV commercials on purpose, but I’m all about them. I love them.”

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 want to take my options open. 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 wrestler for 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 you to deciding to pursue an electrical engineering major?
CM: “I really wanted something that I knew I could dive into, and my dad [who is a civil engineer] kind of talked to me about electrical engineering. Once I started doing it, I really interested me. I found that I was interested in it, I took an interest in the power systems side of it – things like transmission lines and the analysis of power systems. Those 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 was interested in 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. But for me, it was like, 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 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 do it.”

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.”

Q: What is it specifically that you like about television advertising?
KC: “When I watch commercials, 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.”

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

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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 of a new indoor football practice facility.

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

Buzz Williams is the forearm on the latter project, as he was hired in late March to replace Smith paused for several seconds before giving a reply.

"All of that," Williams said with a smile. "But whether you're a freshman or Joe 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 (2,108), assists (148) and free throws attempted (185).

But Williams hadn't necessarily committed to Williams 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 with the same team 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 12.9 points per game, the most of any returning player. He mostly played the off-guard position, but swapped over to the point guard spot on occasion when Wilson left the game for a breather.

"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. Senior Jared Eddie and Cadiarian 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 we're still new to each other, and we're still new to each other."

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In addition to being high-quality, good-character people, they do what was going on. They’re all good dudes and all get along great. They came in and gelled with the team immediately, “Smith said of the newcomers. “We had them in here for a week before Williams arrived in Blacksburg.  

From the day he was hired, Williams has said that the team in Blacksburg can play, but they’re just really good. “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.  

“Williams also likes this group of newcomers. “Of course, they can play, but they’re just really good.” 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 into what was going on. They’re all good dudes and came from good homes. You can see it.”  

Williams 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 that 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 “fairy 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 these 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 went March Madness five NCAA Tournaments. This is a man who went to the Sweet Sixteen three times. This is a man who won the 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**
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 facing 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 from 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 I don’t regret it at all.”

Conyers said. “Actually, she’s a freshman at Tech.” Then Conyers was a two-time all-district point guard two days later.”

Conyers has played in 53 games and has made a start in each of the past four years, but 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 dietitian. Long-term, she’d like to work with kids and educating those with Type-2 diabetes.

Conyers took 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.

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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 dietitian. 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.
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.”

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 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.
A s 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

- **First televised game at Lane (Oct. 29, 1966)** – The first televised game at 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 game vs. William & Mary and Tech beat Florida State in 1967**


- **John Bell’s three interceptions vs. FSU (Nov. 10, 1973)** – Tech jumped out to a 21-0 lead and knocked off Richmond 21-0. 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.

### 1970s

- **Wayne Latimer’s field goal vs. FSU (Oct. 11, 1973)** – Tech scored 10 fourth-quarter points and beat Florida State 13-10. Roscoe Colos tied the game with a 36-yard touchdown run, and then Wayne Latimer’s 63-yard field goal accounted for the final margin. The field goal still stands as a school record.

- **Ron Zollicoffer’s catch vs. William & Mary (Nov. 27, 1976)** – Zollicoffer caught a 21-yard touchdown pass from John Beck with 36 seconds left for the game-winner.

- **Roscoe Colos’ 214 yards rushing vs. Tulsa (Nov. 6, 1976)** – Tech lost 35-13 to Tulsa, which scored 14 unanswered points in the fourth quarter. But Roscoe Colos did his part, rushing for a then-school and Lane Stadium-record 214 yards. Colos 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.

- **Rick Razzano’s 21 solo tackles vs. Richmond (Sept. 27, 1975)** – Tech jumped out to a 21-0 lead and knocked off Richmond 21-0. 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.

### 2010s

- **George Constantinides’ game vs. Richmond (Oct. 25, 1967)** – Constantides 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.

- **First game ever at Lane Stadium.**

- **Rick Razzano’s 21 solo tackles vs. Richmond (Sept. 27, 1975)** – Tech jumped out to a 21-0 lead and knocked off Richmond 21-0. 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.

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Tech to a 17-13 win over the Tigers. 42 totes for 179 yards against Memphis helped holds the school record for carries in a game. His

– Cyrus Lawrence still ranks as

Steve Casey's touchdown pass to Sidney Snell (Nov. 17, 1979)

• Steve Casey's touchdown pass to Sidney Snell (Nov. 17, 1979)

– Tech jumped out

First night game at Lane (Nov. 25, 1982)

• 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 (242 yards) and the nation’s No. 1 rush defense, which held UVA to 11 yards rushing.

Bruce Smith had four sacks against Duke in 1987.

– 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 49 career sacks.

Ashley Lee set an NCAA record against Vanderbilt in 1983.

– 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 22-10 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 92 yards for a touchdown on the final play of the first quarter. Tech and South Carolina played in the nation’s No. 1 rush defense, which held UVA to 11 yards rushing.

– 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.

• Nick Cullen’s career day vs. Southern (Nov. 21, 1993) – Nick Cullen rushed for 114 yards and a touchdown, as the Hokies handed Rutgers (Nov. 21, 1998) – Jamel Smith’s interception return vs. West Virginia 34-6 in a Thursday night game. The defense sacked WVU quarterbacks eight times – twice by Cornell Brown – and picked off two passes to aid the cause. The win marked the program’s 100th win 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 Nuevo, a standout defensive end, tipped away a pass in the waning moments to preserve the win.

– Torrian Gray running down UVa’s Tiki Barber (Nov. 29, 1996) – Torrian Gray ran him down at the Tech 19 after an 80-yard gain. The Hokie’s defense held the Cavaliers to a field goal and later went on to a 26-9 win.

– Michael Vick flip vs. JMU (Sept. 4, 1999) – Michael Vick’s career got off to a good start against James Madison in a 47-0 victory. On his first one, a 7-yard run, he flipped over a JMU defender into the end zone for the second 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 33 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 Shyrock Stadium’s 140,000 fans, the Hokies rolled to a 26-9 win.

– Antonio Freeman’s big game vs. Temple (Oct. 16, 1993) – Antonio Freeman caught nine touchdown passes in 1993 and three of those came in Tech’s 15-7 Homecoming win over Temple. He caught eight passes for 192 yards, including touchdown receptions of 66, 63 and 52 yards from quarterback Maurice DeShazer.

– 100th win at Lane (Sept. 22, 1994) – Duane Thomas rushed for 194 yards and Ken Onoleine added 64 yards and a touchdown, as Tech routed West Virginia 34-6 in a Thursday night game. The defense sacked WVU quarterbacks eight times – twice by Cornell Brown – and picked off two passes to aid the cause. The win marked the program’s 100th win at Lane Stadium.

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• Michael Vick flip against JMU in 1999 was one of many memorable moments for him.

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– 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 Shyrock Stadium’s 140,000 fans, the Hokies rolled to a 26-9 win.

– Jamel Smith’s interception return vs. Rutgers (Nov. 21, 1998) – 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 Nuevo, a standout defensive end, tipped away a pass in the waning moments to preserve the win.

– Michael Vick flip vs. JMU (Sept. 4, 1999) – Michael Vick’s career got off to a good start against James Madison in a 47-0 victory. On his first one, a 7-yard run, he flipped over a JMU defender into the end zone for the second 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 33 yards for a touchdown to account for the Hokies’ final score.
• André Davis’ performance vs. WVU rental car driven by ESPN’s Lee Corso.

• André Davis had a quarter – best known for the lightning bolt that struck the thunderstorms rocked the area and left the field high, but the game was never played as severe weather had already slowed the game down.

The Hokies were set to open the season – Georgia Tech lightning game (Aug. 27, 2000s)

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 25-point lead. These two started the rout.

Tailback Darren Evans set a Virginia Tech Athletics

2000s

• Georgia Tech lightning game (Aug. 27, 2000) – Behind Michael Vick’s three touchdown passes and André Davis’ 172 yards receiving, the Hokies clinched a perfect regular season with a 38-24 win over BC. Tech secured a spot in its first national title game in the process.

• 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.

• Tech win over BC caps undefeated season (Nov. 26, 1999) – Behind Michael Vick’s three touchdown passes and André Davis’ 127 yards receiving on six catches, finished with 273 all-purpose yards.

• 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 thwarted the Tigers 26-6 at Lane Stadium. Lee Suggs rushed for 92 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 24-21, but tailback Lee Suggs set an NCAA mark. He extended his streak to 27 games, 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 climbed Syracuse 51-7, and DeAngelo Hall led the way. The Tech comeback 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 25-point lead. These 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.

• Eric Green’s blocked punt vs. Miami (Dec. 1, 2000) – 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.
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 Smith’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 Dryell 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 fumble recoveries 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.

• Tyrod Taylor pass to Danny Coale vs. Nebraska in 2009.

• 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.

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

• 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.

• Logan Thomas’ performance vs. Miami.

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

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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 anniversary of the venue by spotlighting various players who played in that game.

Hanly wasn’t a superstar player, at least not in the ilk of guys like quarterback Bobby Owens and running back Tommy Francisco. But Hanly was a hard-nosed, blue-collar Southern boy, according to Hanly, the 1965 team featured just two seniors – a direct result of the rest of the group deciding to hang it up. Hanly, though, quickly became a starting spot.

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Hanly played both ways as a sophomore, as well as a different position.

Hanly went from walk-on to starter at Tech and ultimately became a star for Coach Jerry Claiborne – and the type who wasn’t a part of many wins during that time.

“‘Well, come on.’ He was there with his wife and an assistant at Florida State from 1963-67, ended up getting the 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 (1976), 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 hired Rodriguez after the 1979 season, which left Hanly looking for work. He decided to get out of the coaching profession, as someone he hired, had resigned. 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.”

“Last year he worked in sales for the next 20 years. 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 earned a starting spot at Tech for the following season as a graduate assistant.”

Hanly and his former teammate, Page, plan on coming to Blacksburg to watch the game.

A return trip should be a fun time for Hanly – and Morrow, Georgia, just south of Atlanta, and near her family. They have a daughter, who turns 27 in October.

“Let’s do this,” he said. “The baseball field used to be between the Coliseum and the stadium. That’s changed around. I thought that was cool. The football practice field was right there.”

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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.

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 admitted blame 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 guy you run through a wall for. “It’s the little things that turn into big things,” 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.”

Beamer let him go adrift of the football program for a spell last fall, leaving him alone to choose his future. Marshall was treading water in his own personal sea of confusion, waves of self-doubt tumbling over him. He called Marshall into his office and delivered some poignant news. “The turning point was sitting in Coach Beamer’s office 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. “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. “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 know I could accomplish here. I came here because of the John Grovees 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 knew they could have used him, too. BC ran for 196 yards and Maryland rushed for 184. Tech lost both games.

“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.”

Marshall knew what he needed to do, but he didn’t get 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.”

Marshall needed to pull up his grades. “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 know I could accomplish here. I came here because of the John Grovees 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.”

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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.

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 set together. Marshall and Beamer would meet in January after the bowl game to discuss his future.

Marshall knew what he needed to do, but he 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.

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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.

“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.

“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.
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 athletic 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 both?

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men’s soccer spotlight | ben lockler

“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 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 so 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.
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 cross more individual champions at their respective conference meets than team champions.

Interestingly, 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 2010 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 the ACC 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 say 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 earning thirds, fourths, 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 do convince 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 2010 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 the team did, however, turn in a fourth straight top-25 finish at the 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 ACC meet. That showed the breadth of the men’s depth and doesn’t even include the divers, who lost superstar Ryan Hawkins to graduation.

“Then there’s freshmen 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, Silva and Skinner] were super versatile and made an impact as well.”

On the women’s side, it was a disappointing 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 ACC meet and return solid performers in the pool and on the diving boards.
“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.

“Here’s 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 Grabiecki 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 Villarreal, 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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