TECH’S TRAILBLAZERS

Fifty years ago, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 opened doors for minorities, including doors in sports, and people like Jerry Gaines (top right), John Dobbins (left), and Anne (bottom) and Lynne Jones (bottom right) broke barriers, helping shape the future of Tech athletics.

WHAT’S INSIDE:
Six former Tech athletes were inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame.
The Virginia Tech women's soccer team closed the regular season with a 14-5 overall record and a 5-5 mark in ACC play. The 14th-ranked Hokies (as of press time) won two of their final three matches, beating Syracuse 5-0 and Louisville 3-0, both on the road. Tech did not qualify for the four-team ACC tournament, but the Hokies received an NCAA Tournament bid for the seventh straight season and hope to make a repeat run to the College Cup.
Dear Hokie Club members:

The Hokie Club is preparing for end-of-the-year giving, and it is an important time for all of our donors. Our student-athletes have benefited from your generous support during the past year, as your gifts have provided the needed funds for scholarships and facilities. I am asking that you continue your support for these 500 outstanding young people who represent us so well in the classroom, in the community and in their chosen sport.

I traditionally take this time to emphasize several key dates that affect your membership: December 1 is the last day to set up or upgrade your membership using either “HokieMatic” or “Employee Payroll Deduction” to qualify for privileges to be awarded before the benefits deadline. To make any changes to your existing HokieMatic, including increasing your monthly deduction, please submit a new form indicating the updated information. HokieMatic forms can be found on the Forms page of our website, www.hokieclub.com.

The benefits deadline of Dec. 31 is perhaps the most important deadline for Hokie Club members besides your anniversary month membership renewal. Now is the time to make your gift, Don’t wait until December when there is always too much going on in our everyday lives. Make your gift today and position yourself for Hokie Club benefits for the 2015 season.

Our December office hours are affected by the university’s holiday schedule and late December becomes very hectic in terms of a higher volume of phone calls and gift processing. Checks must be postmarked by Dec. 31 and online contributions must be made at www.hokieclub.com by midnight EST on Dec. 31.

December at Virginia Tech is like many other schools in the ACC and across the country that are being challenged to meet the dismal costs of higher education. The budget for the 2014-15 academic year is set at $1.5 million - $1.5 million for tuition, room, board and institutional fees. You can help by increasing your gift by 10 percent and by referring friends and fellow Hokies to join. You can also earn extra Priority Points when a referral of yours joins the Hokie Club.

Your past support of the athletics program is very much appreciated. We currently have approximately 500 student-athletes on team rosters. For the spring semester, 55 percent of our student-athletes had a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher and 50 percent had a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during their time at Tech.

Your annual support helps all 22 athletics teams by providing scholarship support. I see our student-athletes on a regular basis and continue to be impressed with their drive to be successful; their management of their time and their service to the community. We are very fortunate to have great young men and women here at Virginia Tech.

Lu Merrill
Senior Director of Development for Intercollegiate Athletics

Q&A

Q: A Hokie is ...
A: I’ve been asked this question several times. It’s almost one of those things that you can only understand if you are part of it. To me, a Hokie is someone who is part of a special and unique family, a person who loves all things Virginia Tech and supports Hokie Nation in any way he/she can through thick and thin. A Hokie represents Tech with pride and confidence. Lastly, a Hokie is someone who can through thick and thin.

Q: What is your best memory of Virginia Tech athletics?
A: I can’t pick just one memory of Virginia Tech athletics since I have so many. But my best memories are: upsetting No. 2 Tech athletics? maroon uniform – and, of course, winning the game.

Q: Describe your perfect day at Virginia Tech.
A: Tailgating for a night game at Lane Stadium and seeing the Hokies in the all-maroon uniform – and, of course, winning the game.

Q: I’m a Hokie Club member because ...
A: There is one reason why I joined the Hokie Club, and that was the hiring of Whit Babcock. To me, it seems that Virginia Tech did an excellent job choosing the successor for Jim Weaver. I think we are in good hands with Whit and have confidence that he’ll lead Virginia Tech athletics in the right direction. Also, when Whit hired Buzz Williams as the next basketball head coach, it showed me that he’s willing to spend the money to bring talent to Blacksburg.

Q: My favorite Virginia Tech sports are ...
A: My favorite Virginia Tech sports are football and basketball. I didn’t realize how fortunate I was to be able to go to as many games as I wanted while being a student. I look forward to the day when we make our first appearance in the college football playoffs and when we return to the (NCAA) tournament and become part of March Madness again.

Q: What caused you to become a fan of Virginia Tech?
A: I became a fan of Virginia Tech the day I got my acceptance letter in the mail. I knew Tech was the right school for me 10 minutes into the campus tour before I applied. Instantly, it felt like I had to be a part of the Hokie family. I’m so glad I made the decision to go to Virginia Tech.

Q: A Hokie in 2005 at Cassell Coliseum [in basketball] – oh, and any time a Fuller has committed to playing Virginia Tech football. Thanks, Mr. and Mrs. Fuller!

Q: What is your favorite memory of Virginia Tech athletics since I have so many. But my best memories are: upsetting No. 2 Tech athletics? maroon uniform – and, of course, winning the game.

Q: Describe your perfect day at Virginia Tech.
A: Tailgating for a night game at Lane Stadium and seeing the Hokies in the all-maroon uniform – and, of course, winning the game.

Q: I’m a Hokie Club member because ...
A: There is one reason why I joined the Hokie Club, and that was the hiring of Whit Babcock. To me, it seems that Virginia Tech did an excellent job choosing the successor for Jim Weaver. I think we are in good hands with Whit and have confidence that he’ll lead Virginia Tech athletics in the right direction. Also, when Whit hired Buzz Williams as the next basketball head coach, it showed me that he’s willing to spend the money to bring talent to Blacksburg.

Q: My favorite Virginia Tech sports are ...
A: My favorite Virginia Tech sports are football and basketball. I didn’t realize how fortunate I was to be able to go to as many games as I wanted while being a student. I look forward to the day when we make our first appearance in the college football playoffs and when we return to the (NCAA) tournament and become part of March Madness again.

Dear Hokie Club members:

The Hokie Club is preparing for end-of-the-year giving, and it is an important time for all of our donors. Our student-athletes have benefited from your generous support during the past year, as your gifts have provided the needed funds for scholarships and facilities. I am asking that you continue your support for these 500 outstanding young people who represent us so well in the classroom, in the community and in their chosen sport.

I traditionally take this time to emphasize several key dates that affect your membership: December 1 is the last day to set up or upgrade your membership using either “HokieMatic” or “Employee Payroll Deduction” to qualify for privileges to be awarded before the benefits deadline. To make any changes to your existing HokieMatic, including increasing your monthly deduction, please submit a new form indicating the updated information. HokieMatic forms can be found on the Forms page of our website, www.hokieclub.com.

The benefits deadline of Dec. 31 is perhaps the most important deadline for Hokie Club members besides your anniversary month membership renewal. Now is the time to make your gift, Don’t wait until December when there is always too much going on in our everyday lives. Make your gift today and position yourself for Hokie Club benefits for the 2015 season.

Our December office hours are affected by the university’s holiday schedule and late December becomes very hectic in terms of a higher volume of phone calls and gift processing. Checks must be postmarked by Dec. 31 and online contributions must be made at www.hokieclub.com by midnight EST on Dec. 31.

December at Virginia Tech is like many other schools in the ACC and across the country that are being challenged to meet the dismal costs of higher education. The budget for the 2014-15 academic year is set at $1.5 million - $1.5 million for tuition, room, board and institutional fees. You can help by increasing your gift by 10 percent and by referring friends and fellow Hokies to join. You can also earn extra Priority Points when a referral of yours joins the Hokie Club.

Your past support of the athletics program is very much appreciated. We currently have approximately 500 student-athletes on team rosters. For the spring semester, 55 percent of our student-athletes had a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher and 50 percent had a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher during their time at Tech.

Your annual support helps all 22 athletics teams by providing scholarship support. I see our student-athletes on a regular basis and continue to be impressed with their drive to be successful; their management of their time and their service to the community. We are very fortunate to have great young men and women here at Virginia Tech.
Tech cross country teams finish sixth at ACC Championships

The Virginia Tech men’s and women’s cross country teams finished sixth at the ACC Cross Country Championships at Panorama Farms in Earlysville, Virginia, on Oct. 31. Sarah Rapp and Paige Kwartunas were the only two Hokie competitors to finish with All-ACC honors after finishing in the top 10 of the women’s 6K race. Rapp was the Hokies’ top finisher, placing sixth with a time of 20:20.70. On the men’s side, Stuart Robertson barely missed out on All-ACC honors, coming in 27th. Only the top 21 finishers earned All-ACC recognition. Robertson posted a time of 24:00.32 in the men’s 8K race. Darren Barlow was only a few spots behind Robertson in 27th place, finishing in a time of 24:21.31.

Notre Dame added to Tech’s football schedule

As part of the agreement to join the ACC for all sports except football, Notre Dame will play five football games each year against ACC teams, and on Oct. 21, the league office announced Notre Dame’s future opponents. Virginia Tech will take on Notre Dame four times between 2016 and 2021. The Hokies travel to Notre Dame for a Nov. 10, 2016, game, and in what will be the first meeting between the two schools. The Irish come to Blacksburg for an Oct. 13, 2018, game. Tech goes to Notre Dame for a Nov. 2, 2019, game, and the Irish come back to Blacksburg in 2021 (date to be determined).

Tech’s non-conference schedule is booked through 2021, though AD Whit Babcock plans to make changes to the 2019 schedule. That year, Tech is slated for just five home games, and Babcock wants the program to play at least six each year. The 2019 schedule currently includes road games at Wisconsin, at Notre Dame, at Georgia Tech, at Miami, at BC and at Virginia. For a look at Tech’s future schedules, please click this link – http://www.hokiesports.com/football/schedule/future/.

Two from 1946 Tech team pass away

Inside Hokie Sports learned recently that two former Tech football players who played on the 1946 team that ultimately received an invitation to the 1947 Sun Bowl – the school’s first bowl game – passed away over the summer. Both men are still living.

Paul Zender, a New Kensington, Pennsylvania, native, passed away in Lawrence, Kansas, this past May at the age of 91. He played in the 1947 Sun Bowl as a back, and he graduated from the school with a degree in mechanical engineering in 1945. He worked as a project engineer for three different companies, the last being the Sunflower Army Ammunition Plant in Lawrence, Kansas. He retired in 1985. He leaves behind a wife of 59 years, Sandra Patricia Wickham, and a daughter, a son-in-law and four grandchildren.

John Gerngross, a native of Laurel Springs, New Jersey, passed away in Santa Barbara, California, in late June at the age of 90. A center on the 1946 team, he graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. Gerngross later got his Ph.D. in electrical engineering and started his career at General Electric. He worked for several different companies over his career before retiring, and then he got back into engineering after his son, John, Jr., started Condr Engineering. He worked with his son until retiring a second time in 2003. Gerngross leaves behind his wife, a son, a daughter, four grandchildren and a step-grandson.

Only four players who played in that Sun Bowl are still living.

Tech and West Virginia announce Black Diamond Challenge

Virginia Tech and West Virginia University have come to a mutual agreement in which the two schools will play each other in common varsity sports when schedules permit over the next several years. The series will be called the Black Diamond Challenge, a tribute to the region’s history in the coal industry.

The two schools already have agreed to years in certain sports:

• The Hokies and the Mountaineers have agreed to extend the men’s basketball series through 2018. Tech will play the Mountaineers in Blacksburg on odd-numbered years, while traveling to Morgantown during even-numbered years.

• In baseball, the two schools have agreed to a home-and-home series for the next two seasons. West Virginia will come to Blacksburg next spring, with the Hokies returning the trip to Morgantown in the spring of 2016.

• In football, the scheduled games between the two schools will remain with no new additions.

• In wrestling, Tech and West Virginia have agreed to a four-year series (one match per year), beginning next season.

The osteopathic medical school in Blacksburg, Virginia, could be the place for you.

www.vcom.edu
As he sat in his bed at night last month, Luther Maddy felt tormented. He hadn’t faced this difficult of a decision since he chose Virginia Tech as the place to play football and get his college education on Feb. 1, 2011.

He tossed, he turned, and he prayed.

“I prayed about it every night, waiting for God to give me a sign,” Maddy said. “Then that one day, I woke up and I had a feeling that was the direction I wanted to go.”

Three days before the Hokies’ game at Pittsburgh, Maddy decided to end his season and get a second surgery to repair cartilage in his troublesome right knee. He injured the knee in the Hokies’ loss to East Carolina and had surgery to repair a torn meniscus on Sept. 23 shortly after the Georgia Tech game. He expected to miss a couple of games and then be back to finish his senior season on a positive note.

But the knee responded slowly to rehab, and as it turned out, he has cartilage damage. Since he played in just four games before the halfway point of the season, he decided to hang it up for 2014 and apply for a medical hardship waiver. And since he has never taken a redshirt season, he almost assuredly will receive the waiver from the ACC and be able to return as a fifth-year senior in 2015.

“I think I could have played, but I don’t think I could have been my real self – explosive, making plays in the backfield, running sideline-to-sideline, things like that,” he said. “If I was able to come back and play, I don’t think I could have made those plays. “The first week, week and a half [after the surgery], I did some little things in the rehab room and then I started doing some running. I could run straight, but changing directions made it hurt. I thought, ‘I can’t play the way I want to play if I can’t do those things.’ And that’s [changing directions] the main thing when you’re playing the defensive line. It wasn’t feeling better. I prayed about it a lot and then I woke up one morning and decided this was the best decision for me.”

Maddy, Tech’s most experienced and productive defensive lineman, becomes the latest in a list of all-conference caliber players sitting out this season. Guys like Kalvin Cline, Brandon Facyson, Trey Edmunds and Shai McKenzie have missed all or most of the season. Marshawn Williams, Woody Baron and Chase Williams also have missed time. This alone partly explains why the Hokies have been shrouded in inconsistency.

But Maddy was the player whom the Hokies could least afford to lose. Tech possessed little depth at defensive tackle. Defensive line coach Charley Wiles had only five at the start of the season, and that included a true freshman (Ricky Walker).

In losing Maddy, the Hokies lost a third-team All-ACC player from last season, one who recorded 55 tackles, 6.5 sacks and 13.5 tackles for a loss. The loss of his presence showed in back-to-back Thursday night losses to Pittsburgh and Miami. The Panthers rushed for 210 yards and the ‘Canes rolled up 364 on the ground.

“Thursday night was the toughest because I knew if I was in the game, I could have done something to help the team,” Maddy said a week after that Miami game. “That never happens to a Bud Foster defense, teams running for 300 yards. That’s a rarity, especially in Lane Stadium. And Chase [Williams] wasn’t playing either, so we didn’t really have a leadership presence or experience that could direct the defense. In the middle of the defense, you can get vulnerable.

“If I was there, I think I could have helped. It was hard watching them run for 10 yards, 15 yards [a carry]. It was hard to watch, but they’ll [the coaches and players] get it fixed.”

For the Hokies, the silver lining in Maddy’s situation is that he gives them a cornerstone player to build around for the 2015 season. He would anchor a defensive front seven that returns everyone but Williams.

For most in Maddy’s situation, though, that would be a small consolation. He planned for a big senior season, and in turn, a hopefully bigger May (e.g. NFL Draft). Now he faces 4-6 months of rehab and additional months in waiting for next season.

“I like Blacksburg, though,” he said. “Great people here.

That type of attitude certainly endears him to Tech fans, and it certainly serves him well. It beats the alternative.

For sure, it beats agonizing over the future. Maybe now we can get some rest.
Hall of Famers Grove and Suggs special on and off the field

Two of the brightest stars in Virginia Tech football history — center Jake Grove and tailback Lee Suggs — were inducted into Virginia Tech’s Sports Hall of Fame on Oct. 31 in Blacksburg. Grove was a unanimous All-American and the 2003 winner of the Rimington Trophy, presented to the nation’s top collegiate center. Following the 2003 season, he was named a first-team All-American on all five of the major teams, becoming just the third unanimous All-American in school history.

Suggs rushed for 1,207 yards and led Division I-A in scoring during the 2000 season. He finished second in total touchdowns (56), stands second in the BIG EAST first team.

Suggs rushes for 1,207 yards and led Division I-A in scoring during the 2000 season. He finished second in total touchdowns (56), stands second in the BIG EAST first team.

Lee Suggs (22) and Jake Grove (64) rank as two of the all-time greatest players - people - in Virginia Tech history.

Jake: “I had a partial offer to VMI and a full scholarship to Virginia Tech. That was it. Coach Beamer and Coach [Rickey] Beurtle came to my high school to look at someone else. Then two weeks later, Coach Beurtle called and said they were offering me a scholarship.”

Bill: You turned out to be more than good — one of the best players in Virginia Tech history and one of the best centers in college football history. Was there a point during your career that the light went on?

Jake: “Well, (pauses) I remember this: In 2000, we were playing at Miami, and it was really hot down there. I had to block two guys on one play — Damione Lewis the defensive tackle and Don Morgan the middle linebacker. They were the best of the best, great college players who were both NFL players, too. We had a third-and-5 and ran a zone play. I knocked down Davis and then hit Morgan so hard that I about knocked myself out. We got the first down and I said to myself, ‘If I can block those two guys, I can block anyone.’”

Bill: Lee, how about you? Do you remember your first big game?

Lee: “Well, I was really excited for the Georgia Tech game in 2000, but then it got cancelled because of weather. We went down to East Carolina a couple weeks later, and I had a big night in my first real prime-time game. I remember getting a lot of confidence that night at East Carolina. But the real big game was Pitt. We were losing, and Mike [Vick] got knocked out of the game. Coach [Billy] Hite came into the locker room at halftime and challenged us. He told us that one of us had to step up because Mike was out for the game, and we were going to have to run the ball in the second half. I knew it would be me. I knew I would be the guy (he rushed for 165 yards and three touchdowns as the then-No. 2 Hokies rallied to beat Pittsburgh).”

Bill: UConn.

Lee: “Oh man. Every time I see UConn play, I think about that game.”

Bill: That play occurred during the 2001 season opener. Early in the second half, you took the handoff, ran down the left sideline and then .... disaster.

Lee: “It was a zone play. I got run through the line and went left. I got to the second level and saw the safety. He had a bad angle on me, and he was going too fast. He was going to cut back, and if I got by him, I was going to score. No doubt, I was going to score. But I planted my leg and went down, and there was this sharp, burning, shooting pain in my knee, most painful thing I ever got up and walked off the field, and the trainers looked at my knee. They didn’t tell me anything, but I could tell by their faces that it wasn’t good.”

Bill: You had torn your ACL. You were lost for the season after opening day in 2001.

Lee: “It was hard. I didn’t want to watch football after that, wanted nothing to do with it anymore. But Mike Goforth [associate AD for sports medicine] and Keith Doolan [senior director of sports medicine] worked with me. They kept me going every day at 8 a.m., rehabbing and coming back. I lost a little speed, but the knee was stronger than ever.”

Bill: Lee, you scored at least one touchdown in every game from 2000, you came back — all 14 games and an NCAA-record 27 straight games overall — after the ACL injury. Yet in your Hall of Fame speech, you gave the credit to the doctors and trainers, and to Jake, André Davis and Jarrett Ferguson.

Lee: “How could you not want to run behind Jake Grove? I mean, look at him! And André Davis would stretch the defense. And Jarrett just led the way into the end zone. Really, I just followed my fullback. Running the ball depends on so many people. I was just lucky to have a lot of great teammates.”

Bill: You guys share this wonderful trait called humility: that is special. It’s very genuine as well, and that’s one reason why you were so popular as players here. Tell us what you’re doing now.

Jake: “I’m coaching my high school football team with my old high school coach, and that keeps me busy. Plus, raising my two little girls. I live with my wife on our 260-acre farm in Forest.”

Lee: “I’m working for United Social Sports in Washington, D.C. We have 100,000 participants in adult leagues in the metro D.C. area in sports from kickboxing to softball.”

Both Grove and Suggs spent much of the weekend talking about their families, friends, coaches and teammates. They were special players who earned their degrees, were named All-Americans, and had NFL careers, but they’re both parents of beautiful kids and raising families. These two guys were Hall of Fame players and Hall of Fame people even before they were elected into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame. They have worked so hard and certainly earned their well-deserved place in Techie immortality.
Seniors ... what's next?

Research has shown that athletes who have a successful transition out of their sports are able to capitalize on transferable skills, but one of the main barriers to using those skills is that athletes may not be aware of them. The Senior Transition Seminar, sponsored by the Office of Student-Athlete Development, is combating that issue, focusing on assisting Virginia Tech student-athletes as they transition out of college athletics.

This program, which has been held for the past few years, allows seniors to define and identify transferable skills and to learn how to use them to achieve their postgraduate career goals. With the help of a panel of former Hokie student-athletes and also Clinical Psychologist Dr. Gary Bennett, and Johanna Smith, assistant director of career services, senior student-athletes were able to hear firsthand about what to expect during the transition out of athletics.

Athletics transition is an important aspect of being a college student-athlete. It is a topic that is often ignored because, for many student-athletes, contemplating life after college sports can be considered daunting or admitting to failure. Dr. Bennett shared that many student-athletes struggle with athletics transition when their identity is that of a student-athlete. The panel of former Hokie student-athletes played an integral role during the program by providing authentic information regarding their own personal experiences competing at the college level.

“I remember always being known as Courtney the softball player,” former softball player Courtney Liddle (2010-13) said. “Once my senior year arrived, I realized that softball was not all I was and I had to start thinking about what else I was passionate about.”

She shared that, once she got excited for what was next, her athleticism performance improved and she was able to let go. Former football player American Kevin Jones spent five years in the NFL with the Detroit Lions and Chicago Bears. He recently joined the Tech athletics staff in July as the special assistant to the director of athletics and shared with the seniors that determination and teamwork were two of the most important skills attained through football that he uses in his current position.

“If you are determined enough to get what you want, you can do it,” Jones said. “You can always take something that you may not be good at and make it better.”

Passion seemed to be a consistent theme throughout the evening. Lorenzo “Zo” Williams began his career at Tech as a safety on the football team in 2008. After suffering several injuries and undergoing surgery during his junior year, Williams made the difficult decision to end his collegiate career early and admitted it took him a few years to determine what he was passionate about outside of football.

Williams went on to pursue his master’s in higher education administration and post-secondary education at Arizona State University and returned to Blacksburg in September as a service center representative in human resources. He has dreams of continuing his education and earning his Ph.D.

Toward the conclusion of the evening, student-athletes were asked to share the top five skills they developed through athletics. Time management, competitiveness, teamwork and overcoming adversity were mentioned most often. They then had the opportunity to describe how these skills and others could be applicable to their professional development. Many of the students in attendance expressed anxiety about initiating the dialogue about life after college. Smith reminded them that it was not too late to begin thinking about how their transferable skills can play a role in assisting them in reaching their career goals.

“If you have never thought about them, then it’s not too late,” Smith said. “The first step is to start thinking about how your strengths can be transferable across the board.”

The Senior Transition Seminar is a great step of the way to provide guidance during this challenging and exciting journey.
Q: You were originally in the human nutrition, foods and exercise program, but changed majors to human development. What prompted you to change majors?

JF: “I started in HNFE because I thought I wanted to do physical therapy and stuff like that. But then I realized that I didn’t want to do that. I wanted to get into coaching, and I didn’t need to take HNFE classes if I wanted to go into coaching. Plus, I like human development. So that’s what I want to do when I graduate. I want to go into coaching.”

Q: In high school, you played for a coach who obviously is very special to you. What was that like?

JF: “My dad was my high school coach. It was awesome because I think he’s one of the greatest coaches. Our high school team always did really well. I’m from a small town where sports aren’t a big thing. He took the program from nothing to winning state championships, so I think he’s great. We won the state championship when I was there, and my little sister was on the team. So that was great.”

Q: Given your parents’ professions, I’m guessing academics played a very important part of your life. Is that correct?

JF: “My mom is a teacher, and my dad used to be a teacher, so academics are very important in our family. They both taught at my high school. There were some ups and downs to it. My dad used to talk to our family. They both taught at my high school.”

Q: You had to coach. That was a challenge. You have kids from 8 to 18, and I can’t communicate with them. They’re running around, and you want to get them into a line, but they can’t understand what you’re saying. Athletes run camps all the time, but this was totally a different animal. It made me think, ‘Do I want to coach college, or are there any international opportunities out there that I could do because that was fun?’ I guess if that door opens, then it well open.”

Q: What are your plans following graduation next spring?

JF: “My plans after I graduate are to hopefully go to grad school and be a graduate assistant. I want to be around a volleyball team and learn how things are done and then get some experience. Then I’ll go from there.”

Q: You have two sisters who are or have coached in college at some point. How do you go about becoming a college coach?

JF: “My [older] sister [Sam Erger] is the director of operations at Baylor. She was the head coach at Hill College in Texas [a junior college]. My other sister [Kirstin] coached at Colorado Christian [in Lakewood, Colorado]. She teaches now. ‘I’ve e-mailed coaches. That’s the route I’ve been told to go. A few had gotten back in touch with me. One was in Pennsylvania, and they told me there was a position open. I don’t know if I want to go to Pennsylvania. I’d like to go somewhere where my family is at because I’d like to live with them for free. I’m just keeping my options open.”

WJ: “I’ve been planning on going to medical school, but recently I’ve begun to reconsider and think more about what I want to do. I’m going to take a year off. I took the MCATs [Medical College Admission Test] this year, and I didn’t get a good score, so I’m going to take them again. It was just too hard to study on my own during basketball season, with practices and games and taking classes. I’m going to take a year off and decide if I really want to go to medical school. It’s normal to take a year off. Some people take two or three years off before going to medical school.”

Q: When will you decide if you want to go to medical school?

WJ: “I want to decide by the time I graduated or shortly thereafter. Usually you take MCATs the year before matriculation. So, say I wanted to go to medical school right after I graduate in the spring, you would usually take the MCAT the spring of your junior year or the beginning of the summer. You can take the MCATs all the way up to that fall. I could study all summer and take it at the end of the summer or the beginning of the fall. Then I could enroll in med school the following fall.”

WJ: “I’ve been planning on going to medical school, but recently I’ve begun to reconsider and think more about what I want to do. I’m going to take a year off. I took the MCATs [Medical College Admission Test] this year, and I didn’t get a good score, so I’m going to take them again. It was just too hard to study on my own during basketball season, with practices and games and taking classes. I’m going to take a year off and decide if I really want to go to medical school. It’s normal to take a year off. Some people take two or three years off before going to medical school.”

Q: What originally led you to wanting to pursue a degree in the medical profession?

WJ: “I like helping others, and that was probably the main thing. That, and knowing that it was hard work, and I like to work hard. It’s a position of prestige and power, and I want to work toward something like that. The only reason I’ve been reconsidering it because of the MCATs and hearing from doctors I’ve been shadowing about what they would do if they could do it over. A lot of them wouldn’t go through it because of the debt and lower and lower pay due to the insurance situation. So I want to take a step back before I dive into the four years of going down that path. I haven’t ruled it out, but I need to take in every option.”

WJ: “I did a field study past this summer at a local hospital. How did that go, and what did you learn?”

WJ: “I did a field study with LewisGale Hospital Montgomery with Dr. [David] Stockard [a general surgeon] and Dr. [Daniel] Osimani [a cardioligist]. At the beginning of the summer, I did an internship where I shadowed an oral surgeon. Dr. Roselle is the one I did about 80 hours with. I got to see tons of surgeries. I was all over the hospital seeing stuff, so that was really cool. I got to learn what it was like to be in the actual field and not just in a class. It was cool to be in front of it and see it first hand if you were in the profession.”
Jerry Gaines, left, Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player.

Jerry Gaines (left), Anne Jones and Lynne Jones were recognized at Tech for their roles in breaking down racial barriers in college athletics. Also, Dee Dobkins, the wife of former Tech football player John Dobkins, was recognized. John Dobkins, who passed away in 2003, was the school’s first African-American football player. CIVIL RIGHTS ACT HELPS BREAK SPORTS BOUNDARIES

Fifty years ago, a landmark piece of legislation opened doors for minorities and women, and people like Jerry Gaines, John Dobbins and Anne and Lynne Jones became pioneers at Tech, showing the way for those coming behind them...
Gaines refuses to dwell on them and instead remembers the ones who reached out at the risk of offending society's perceptions at that time.

“Very often, my former students will come up to me and say, ‘You never told me,’ and I’ll say, ‘That’s right. I didn’t.’”

“Very much so,” he said when asked if he always have it.”

“Very much so,” he said when asked if he never shared that information,” he said.

Jerry Gaines becomes the first black athlete to participate for Tech, earning a full scholarship in track and field.

John Dobbins becomes the first black athlete to play football at Tech, though he didn’t play as a freshman (as per NCAA rules in that era).

Gaines was a curiosity to some of his teammates, many of whom had never been in contact with an African-American. Most came to respect and admire Gaines, though he also coached track. In 1987, he received the High School in Chesapeake, Virginia, where

John Dobbins becomes the first black scholarship football player. He, like Gaines, was a pioneer. He was the first African-American scholarship football player at Tech.

Few people knew this when he passed away of a heart attack while walking into the Volvo plant in nearby Dublin, Virginia, his place of work for nearly 30 years. The truth is, like Gaines before him, he never saw himself as a pioneer, so he rarely talked about his role in Tech history.

“He was a very quiet man,” Dora Dobbins said. “He didn’t talk a lot about it. He really didn’t. In fact, there were a lot of people who didn’t know it.

When he passed away and they [media members] started doing the articles about him and had his picture on TV, people were saying, ‘I didn’t realize that.’ It just wasn’t something he talked about.”

John Dobbins arrived at Tech in the fall of 1966.

LINDA ADAMS, JACQUELYN BUTLER, LINDA EDMONDS, FREDDIE HARiston, MARQuerite HARRER AND CHIQUITA HUDSON BECOME THE FIRST BLACK FEMALES TO ENROLL AT TECH

Jerry Gaines becomes the first African-American president in U.S. history.

After President Barack Obama became the first African-American head coach of the basketball team at Tech, joining the women’s tennis team.

Jerry Gaines becomes the first African-American track and field star in American collegiate history. He was a pioneer.

When he passed, I told my children that I was going to have to put him in a Hokie shirt,” Dora Dobbins said. “When we had the services, I put him in a Hokie sweatshirt, and his casket had the Hokie flag in the background. He was truly a fan. He loved the Hokies.”

DOBBINS ANOTHER PIONEER

Former Tech football player John Dobbins passed away in 2003, but to get an indication of how much he loved Virginia Tech, consider the outfit that his longtime wife, Dora, had him dressed in before laying him to rest.

“Very often, my former students will come up to me and say, ‘You never told me,’ and I’ll say, ‘That’s right. I didn’t.’”

When he passed, I told my children that I was going to have to put him in a Hokie shirt,” Dora Dobbins said. “When we had the services, I put him in a Hokie sweatshirt, and his casket had the Hokie flag in the background. He was truly a fan. He loved the Hokies.”

Dobbins, though, was more than a fan or a player. He, like Gaines, was a pioneer. He was the first African-American scholarship football player at Tech.

Few people knew this when he passed away of a heart attack while walking into the Volvo plant in nearby Dublin, Virginia, his place of work for nearly 30 years. The truth is, like Gaines before him, he never saw himself as a pioneer, so he rarely talked about his role in Tech history.

“He was a very quiet man,” Dora Dobbins said. “He didn’t talk a lot about it. He really didn’t. In fact, there were a lot of people who didn’t know it.

When he passed away and they [media members] started doing the articles about him and had his picture on TV, people were saying, ‘I didn’t realize that.’ It just wasn’t something he talked about.”

John Dobbins arrived at Tech in the fall of 1966.
1969 after being recruited as a running back out of nearby Radford High School by then-head coach Jere Claborn. In fact, Dobbins, though, had a different experience than Gaines, partly because he arrived two years later and times were changing rapidly in those days. Also, unlike Gaines, Dobbins understood Southwestern Virginia in the late 1960s, and he understood Virginia Tech. After all, he lived just 15 minutes from campus.

Dobbins grew up as a Virginia Tech fan, even though the team had no black players and the school had few black students. He knew all about the Gobbler. His high school coaches often brought him to games.

His knowledge of the players and program enabled him to adapt socially a little easier than Gaines. He and his teammates would hang out together, even after he and Dora got married during his junior season. Like Gaines, though, he never really encountered overt acts of racism.

“He has a pretty good experience at Tech,” Dora Dobbins said. “The things that happened were more in high school, things like the name-calling, and when they stopped to eat, they wouldn’t allow blacks to come in. He went through that in the community, but he did not want any recognition. He didn’t want people to know that he had bought this child shoes or things like that.

“He seemed to get along fine with the blacks. He liked Tech. He was a big fan.”

Dobbins and his wife have bought football season tickets since the 1970s. They took their two children to games back then and let them run around on the bleachers because, as Dora laughed, “There was nobody hardly there.”

Following his playing days, John Dobbins taught at a preschool-school in Roanoke for two years. Then he landed the job at Volvo, where he worked his way into a supervisor’s position.

Dobbins and his wife have bought football season tickets since the 1970s. They took their two children to games back then and let them run around on the bleachers because, as Dora laughed, “There was nobody hardly there.”

She kept the season tickets even after Dobbins’ passing. It seemed to be the perfect tribute to a quiet man who loved her and Virginia Tech, one who kept his role as a pioneer to himself.

“Some people go on and on about things, but he just wasn’t like that,” Dora said. “John did so much in the community, but he did not want any recognition. He didn’t want people to know that he had bought this child shoes or things like that.

“He had some problems at Tech, he didn’t tell me about them. He seemed to get along fine with the guys. He had a good experience.

“He liked Tech. He was a big fan.”

1987

Reene Dennis becomes the first female athlete to have her jersey retired by Virginia Tech. Dora Dobkins and her daughter told Jones that Jones thought highly of Jones, and it seemed like late intervention when Jones changed from No. 73 to No. 25 shortly after Dobkins’ passing.

“We were telling Kevin the story, and he got very emotional,” Dora said. “He said, ‘you just never knew why things happen in life. Now I know why I changed my number to 25.’”

Following his playing days, John Dobbins taught at a preschool-school in Roanoke for two years. Then he landed the job at Volvo, where he worked his way into a supervisor’s position.

Dobbins and his wife have bought football season tickets since the 1970s. They took their two children to games back then and let them run around on the bleachers because, as Dora laughed, “There was nobody hardly there.”

She kept the season tickets even after Dobbins’ passing. It seemed to be the perfect tribute to a quiet man who loved her and Virginia Tech, one who kept his role as a pioneer to himself.

“Some people go on and on about things, but he just wasn’t like that,” Dora said. “John did so much in the community, but he did not want any recognition. He didn’t want people to know that he had bought this child shoes or things like that.

“He had some problems at Tech, he didn’t tell me about them. He seemed to get along fine with the guys. He had a good experience.

“He liked Tech. He was a big fan.”

WOMEN’S RISE TO PROMINENCE IN TECH ATHLETICS

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 not only prohibited racial discrimination, but also discrimination based on sex. This was designed to ensure that women would have a way to fight discrimination in the workplace, just as minorities would be able to do the same.

Eight years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed, another law entitled Title IX was passed. This law requires gender equity for boys and girls in every educational program that receives federal funding. Most people view Title IX through the prism of college athletics, but this law addresses many other areas, too (access to higher education, career education, education for pregnant and parenting students, employment, etc.).

Virginia Tech began introducing women’s sports not long after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed in 1967. The school hired its first full-time female health and physical education instructor, Shirley Ann Moll, who organized a women’s intramural program. In 1970, the school sanctioned its first varsity sport – swimming.

In 1976, the university initiated a search for its first director of women’s intramural athletics and hired Jo Kalser, who was expected to direct the women’s intramural program, coach, and lead the development of women’s sports. She oversaw basketball, swimming, tennis, and track and field, and she later oversaw volleyball and field hockey after the university added those two sports in 1979.

Many today consider her the pioneer of Tech’s women’s sports.

“She was the one who really got women’s sports going,” Anne Jones said.

Jones and her twin sister, Lynne, were the first female athletes at Tech to receive scholarship aid. The War, West Virginia, natives came to Tech largely because the aid they received – and Kalser, who also coached field hockey, was the one who recruited them and offered them the partial scholarships even though she wasn’t the tennis coach.

“That’s the only school we really wanted to come to,” Anne Jones said. “We also looked at Marshall and the University of Kentucky. My first choice was Tech otherwise. So in that respect, we really wanted the scholarship from Tech. We had been down a couple of times for football games with our father, and we loved the school.”

Anne Jones went on to become a terrific tennis player at Tech, winning nearly 65 percent of her matches during her career. She enjoyed her time at Tech, though the school had only modest tennis facilities, and both the men’s team and women’s team practiced at night because the university rented the courts during the day and wanted to keep that revenue stream. There was also little in the way of locker room amenities.

“She didn’t have a locker room,” Jones said.

Bruce Smith becomes the school’s first overall top selection in an NFL draft, going to the Buffalo Bills.
Her playing career and coaching tenure coincided with some of the biggest changes in regards to women’s sports at Tech. The athletics department started putting more resources into its women’s programs – and the subsequent results were championship trophies, as Jones can attest.

“We ended up with better facilities and more funding,” she said. “We were able to travel more, and we got an assistant coach. We were able to give the full compliment of scholarships.”

Tech’s moves into the BIG EAST and later the ACC for athletics resulted in increases in financial payouts from those conferences. That money has been used to help women’s sports, and the athletics department is one of a small group of schools in compliance with Title IX standards. Last year, then-AD Jim Weaver added women’s golf to the slate.

“I think Tech has done a good job,” Jones said. “I really do. I imagine there are some people who would disagree with that, but I think, as far as coming along and the quality of the Olympic sports, I think they’ve done a good job.”

WATCHING THE NEXT GENERATION

Fifty years ago, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 changed America forever, and gradually, played a role in changing the landscape of college athletics. It opened doors, not just ones that had been shut, but also locked.

On Nov. 1, at halftime of Tech’s football game against Boston College, athletics department officials took the time to recognize Gaines, the Dobbins family and the Jones twins for their roles in shaping the history of Tech athletics. Michael Vick, Bruce Smith and Kevin Jones came to prominence because of people like Gaines and Dobbins. Amy Wetzel, Angela Tinsley and Queen Harrison received scholarships as female superstar athletes because the Jones twins broke that barrier. If nothing else, the recognition during the BC game served to educate Tech fans, alumni and students, many of whom know nothing, or very little, about these trailblazers.

Of course, that doesn’t really bother them. They don’t view themselves in that light anyway.

“I never think of it that way, but we probably were,” Anne Jones said.

“That’s just the way it turned out,” Gaines said. “I didn’t want to make it a big deal. I wanted to be known as someone who came along and added something without leaving dirty footprints.”

None of these individuals left dirty footprints.

On the contrary, in fact.

But they certainly left large ones, ones that can never be filled. And hopefully, the coming generations appreciate that.
Six more introducted into the Virginia Tech sports hall of fame

By Jimmy Robertson

On Oct. 31, the Virginia Tech athletics department introduced six new members into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame at a banquet on the Tech campus. The new inductees bring the total number enshrined to 175. The Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame was established in 1982. Here’s a closer look at each new inductee:


Brendon de Jonge’s story is a lot of free time these days. As a professional on golf’s PGA Tour, he finds himself traveling all over the world playing golf, especially now that the PGA Tour has implemented a wraparound schedule that essentially eliminates any sort of offseason – the schedule starts in October and ends the following September.

De Jonge’s career thus led him to Malaysia where he graduated Virginia Tech’s Hall of Fame weekend, and much like former teammate Johnson Wagner did a year ago, he sacrificed coming to the banquet that was supposed to honor him and five others for induction to the Hall. That sort of cemented de Jonge’s thoughts on how he was going to be attended.

“I can’t be a big fan of it,” he said. “I had a very easy transition,” de Jonge said of coming from Zimbabwe in eastern Africa to Blacksburg. “I fit in quickly. We were such a close-knit team, and we all got along well. Everyone enjoyed each other’s company.

But other than that, everything went smoothly.”

During the fall of 2000, de Jonge became the first Hokie ever to win two tournaments in one season when he notched back-to-back titles at the NCAA East Regional Preview and the EDU Seaside. His stroke average that fall (72.1) was the lowest ever for a Tech golfer. Over the course of the 2001-02 season, de Jonge helped Tech win a nation’s-best six tournaments, including the BIG EAST Championship. He then finished 2nd at the NCAA Championship, pacing the Hokies to eighth place as a team.

Entering the spring of his junior season, de Jonge was ranked seventh nationally. He helped Tech to its second consecutive BIG EAST title the first time since the 1998-99 season that saw Tech fall just short of an NCAA Regional bid.

Dobbe was a left-hitter against Tennessee that season for Tech and earned her own season record for strikeouts with 290.

Dobbe still ranks second in career wins (93), ERA (1.75), strikeouts (926), shutouts (47) and complete games (111), and is third-all-time in winning percentage (.694).

As a sophomore, Dobbe tossed three no-hitters during her career, including 17 in a row against Youngstown State, including 17 in a row at one point. She repeated as an All-Atlantic 10 selection and also earned second-team All-East Region honors.

The perfect game ranked as one of Dobbie’s most memorable moments.

“Hitting a perfect game is really exciting to do it, and for us, a team to do it.” Dobbie said. “It’s exciting that we’re going to go to the college world series. I think as any of us as a team would have expected to do that. It’s really hard to join in one memory.”

Tech moved to the BIG EAST Conference in 2003, and despite undergoing shoulder surgery during the summer, Dobbe posted 15 wins and a team-low 1.20 ERA that was fifth in the nation. She doubled those wins during her senior campaign, posting 30 victories to lead the nation in that season that saw Tech fall just short of an NCAA Regional bid. Dobbe threw a no-hitter against Tennessee that season for Tech and earned her own season record for strikeouts with 290. Dobbe still ranks second in career wins (93), ERA (1.75), strikeouts (926), shutouts (47) and complete games (111), and is third-all-time in winning percentage (.694).

Dobbe graduated from Tech in 2002 with a degree in human nutrition, foods and exercise (she also had a minor in chemistry). She played overseas in Holland and New Zealand before deciding to go to medical school in Vancouver and become a doctor.

“Coming back to Canada, the Canadian held just about every school record for pitching, which is amazing considering she never expected to play at Tech.

“To be honest, I never thought I was going anywhere,” she said. “I was going to stay in British Columbia and go to Simon Fraser University. I was playing softball and maybe was going to consider volleyball, and that was it.”

The success of her former Canadian summer teammates – former Tech teammates Kara Krumhardt and Michelle Johnson – swayed her, and she got off to a fast start with the Tech softball team in 2004 on her way to a record-setting career as a pitcher. She accounted for 25 wins in the circle as a freshman, sparking the Hokies to a program-record 54 victories. She threw 34 complete games, 17 shutouts, and posted a 0.92 earned run average, gathering Atlantic 10 Conference Rookie of the Year honors and a spot on the all-conference team.

As a sophomore, Dobbe tossed three no- hitters and struck out 216 batters, becoming the school’s first perfect game winner. She also broke another school record for strikeouts in a game when she fanned 18 batters against Youngstown State, including 17 in a row at one point. She repeated as an All-Atlantic 10 selection and also earned second-team All-East Region honors.

The perfect game ranked as one of Dobbie’s most memorable moments.

“That was pretty exciting to do it, and for us, a team to do it,” said Dobbe. “It’s exciting that we’re going to go to the college world series. I think as any of us as a team would have expected to do that. It’s really hard to join in one memory.”

Dobbe finished mediecal school in 2010 and is wrapping up a five-year residency in orthopaedic surgery training in Edmonton, Alberta. Provided she passes her exams in May, she will be an orthopaedic surgeon, and then she plans on doing a pediatric orthopaedic fellowship, specializing in kids with orthopaedic injuries.

As a junior, Grove became a dominant closer his final two seasons at Tech. He graded at better than 90 percent as a relief pitcher, and at the end of his senior season, he earned first-team ACC honors on five different teams, becoming the third unanimous All-ACCC in Tech history. He also won the Dave Rimington Trophy, which goes annually to the nation’s top center.

It was a meteoric rise for a young man who was lightly recruited coming out of Jefferson Forest High School near Lynchburg, Virginia.

“Things really fell into place for me,” said Grove. “I worked very hard and I was at Tech, I couldn’t have done it anywhere else.”

Suffice it to say, Grove overcame his early- career inanities. He played every game as a redshirt freshman in 2000 and then worked his way into the starting lineup the next season, ultimately becoming a rare three-year starter on the offensive line.

Grove won over the hearts of Tech fans because of his toughness. As a redshirt sophomore, he played the last eight games with a broken hand – and still led the team with 49 knockdowns.

Grove became a dominant closer his final two seasons at Tech. He graded at better than 90 percent as a relief pitcher, and at the end of his senior season, he earned first-team ACC honors on five different teams, becoming the third unanimous All-ACCC in Tech history. He also won the Dave Rimington Trophy, which goes annually to the nation’s top center.
have done it without my teammates and my coaches, as well as the professors who helped me get my degree. It’s such a great place to go to school and play football. I would never change a thing.”

Following his senior season, Grove was a second-round National Football League draft pick of the Oakland Raiders. He played six full seasons in the league – five with Oakland and one with the Miami Dolphins. Despite nagging knee and shoulder injuries, he started 75 of his 66 games in the NFL.

After retiring from the NFL, Grove ultimately found his way back home. He bought a farm near the one where he grew up – and which his parents still run – and lives there with his wife and two daughters.

This past summer, Grove’s high school coach, Bob Christmas, returned to Forest, Virginia, to take over the reins of Jefferson Forest’s football program again. He asked Grove to join his coaching staff. Grove spent a couple of weeks thinking about it before Christmas called to get a decision.

Christmas called on the day Grove’s grandfather passed away.

“You can call it a sign or whatever,” Grove said. “It was interesting how it worked out. When I was at Tech, I talked a lot about my grandfather in different interviews. He was a very important part of my life. I decided that it [being a high school assistant coach] was something I would be committed to and was ready to embrace the challenge. It’s been a really good experience thus far. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed coaching.”

Grove’s Tech jersey was retired in 2006. He will be honored at this year’s ACC Night of Legends event in Charlotte, North Carolina, the night before the ACC title game.

IEVA KUBLINA (2000-04)

Ieva Kublina’s impact on the women’s basketball program at Virginia Tech is still easy to see. All one has to do is look at the Hokies’ record book.

The former center from Riga, Latvia, is currently ranked among the top 10 players in 15 of the 20 major career individual statistical categories at Tech and still remains among the top five in 10 of those.

KUBLINA appeared in 31 games as a freshman in 2000-01 and went on to play in all 226 games of her Tech career. She started 99 of those games, including the last 95 in a row. As a sophomore, she posted career bests of 13.8 points per game and 7.8 rebounds a contest. She was named the BIG EAST Conference’s Most Improved Player that season and was a unanimous pick for first-team All-BIG EAST honors in 2003 and second-team recognition in 2002 and 2004. She is still first all time at Tech in blocked shots (156), second in rebounds (843) and games played (216) and third in points (1,647).

“I could count the number of times we won championships on one hand,” Kublina said. “That alone makes him more than worthy of being honored.”

KUBLINA was unable to make it back to Blacksburg for the Hall of Fame banquet and the football game against BC.


Though now he lives in Silver Spring, Maryland, Lee Suggs spent several years of his post-Tech career in Ohio, and he made several wages on his beloved Hokies when they took on Ohio State on Sept. 6. Later on that evening, he felt as though he had won the lottery.

“It felt good,” he said. “Living up there, people in Ohio think Ohio State can do no wrong. It felt good that night.”

Suggs left Tech fans feeling great on many occasions following a storied career from 1999- 2003. He rushed for more than 1,000 yards on two occasions, joining Cyrus Lawrence and Ronoce Cole as the only players in school history to do so.

Suggs holds three single-season school records, which include marks for total touchdowns (28 in 2000), rushing touchdowns (27 in 2000) and points scored (168 in 2000). He also holds the career marks for total touchdowns (56) and rushing touchdowns (51).

“That alone makes him more than worthy of entering the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame. I was honored,” he said. “I wasn’t aware that you had to be out of school 10 years. I saw a couple of years ago where Andre [Davis] did [gain induction into the Hall], I was wondering if it was going to happen, and if it did, when it was going to happen. Then I got the letter and saw where you had to be 10 years out, so I felt really honored. It’s a good feeling.”

Suggs burst onto the scene as a redshirt sophomore during the 2000 season, rushing for 1,207 yards and leading Division I-A in scoring. He was named the co-BIG EAST Offensive Player of the Year and was a unanimous pick for first-team All-BIG EAST after setting six conference
Sugg tore his ACL in the first game of the 2001 season and missed the remainder of that year. But he bounced back for his final season, rushing for a personal-best 1,325 yards and 22 total touchdowns in 2002.

Suggs scored touchdowns in all 14 games that season, setting an NCAA Division I-A season record for most games scoring a touchdown, a mark he still shares. During his Tech career, Suggs broke a 32-year-old NCAA Division I-A record by scoring at least one touchdown in 27 consecutive games, a mark he still shares. The previous mark was 25 straight games.

The only thing that ended the streak was time – Suggs’ eligibility expired after the Hokies’ win over Air Force at a bowl game in San Francisco. He remains ranked sixth on Tech’s career rushing list with 2,767 yards.

“When people see me and find out who I am, they mostly want to talk about Virginia Tech football and how was it playing with Mike [Vick] and how was Coach [Frank] Beamer,” Suggs said. “I don’t get too many questions about the touchdown game streak. I guess that is the most important one.”

Suggs was drafted by the Cleveland Browns in the fourth round of the 2003 NFL Draft. He spent parts of three seasons with the Browns. He later got into coaching, serving as an assistant at Oberlin College, a Division III school southwest of Cleveland.

Today, he works as a field crew supervisor in Silver Spring for United Social Sports.

DAWN WILL (1996-2000)

When Dawn Will played lacrosse at Virginia Tech in the late 1990s, she never really gave being inducted into the Hall of Fame much thought. In fact, she didn’t know that the Hall of Fame existed.

So when she received a call this summer from Donna Smith, the administrative assistant in athletics communications who helps organize the Hall of Fame dinner, informing her that she had been selected for induction, she was surprised.

“I was very surprised and full of gratitude for the school,” Will said. “Because no lacrosse players had been inducted, I wasn’t really aware of it. When she went through all the things that they were doing, I was really surprised and shocked, to be honest.”

Will became the first women’s lacrosse player at Tech to be inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame, and she certainly has worthy credentials. A scoring machine during her playing days, Will still shares or holds outright just about every school record for scoring.

Will made an immediate impact in 1997. She became one of the Hokies’ featured performers on offense, starting 12 of the team’s 15 games as a freshman. She finished the season third in both goals (29) and total points (24).

She set a new standard in 1998 by scoring 46 goals to break the previous team mark of 39. She started 13 of 14 games that season, posting 55 total points and helping the team to eight wins on the way to team MVP honors. As a junior, Will broke her own record for goals with 60 as Tech won the inaugural Atlantic 10 Tournament and earned its first top-20 ranking in the sport with an 11-6 season. Will was named all-conference, all-tournament, all-region and honorable mention All-American.

“Would say when we won the Atlantic 10, just realizing that we had achieved a big goal that year,” Will said of her most memorable moment. “I didn’t think that was going to happen.”

During the 2000 season, Will earned third-team All-America recognition after helping Tech to the A-10 regular-season championship. She was named the A-10 Player of the Year after compiling 61 goals and 74 points.

Scoring goals appeared to come naturally to Will. Even today, she still ranks as the Hokies’ all-time leader in goals in a career (186), goals in a season (61) and points in a season (74). She is tied for the top spot in goals in a game with nine and is second in points in a game with 11.

Today, Dawn Will Cliffe lives with her family in Severna Park, Maryland, where she works part time as an IT Consultant. Her husband, Kennedy Cliffe, is a former Tech golfer.###
In the last issue, Inside Hokie Sports listed 50 of the greatest Tech football moments in Lane Stadium history. The list started with the first decade, and in fact, the first game, which occurred on Oct. 2, 1965.

In this issue, Inside Hokie Sports is focusing on 10 great games against rival Virginia at Lane Stadium as part of the magazine's ongoing celebration of 50 seasons of the stadium. With the list in the last issue, this is not an all-inclusive list – the two teams have played at Lane Stadium on 22 occasions – and the list does not attempt to rank the games in terms of importance. They’re all great.

The list of great games against UVa starts with the first decade – the 1960s, and a game that members of that first team to play in Lane Stadium have never forgotten.

• Tech rolls past Cavaliers in UVa’s first appearance at Lane Stadium (Oct. 23, 1963) – Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VT), as the school was known then) opened Lane Stadium just three weeks before the University of Virginia football team made its first appearance at Lane Stadium. In its first game, the Cavaliers hadn’t played in Blacksburg in nearly three decades (27 years). In that era, the two teams mostly played in Roanoke, with a sprinkling of games in Richmond and Norfolk.

This game also marked the inaugural Governor’s Cup. The Virginia Tech athletics department added lights to Lane Stadium in time for the 1963 contest against UVa, and the two teams played under the lights on national television – the first night game ever at Lane Stadium. WTRV handled the broadcast.

Then-Coach Al Allen was a standout on the Virginia Tech defensive line in the early 1950s and earned 121 tackles in a career that included three All-American honors. He played in 19 games during his college career and was named to the College Football All-America Team by the Associated Press.

The Hokies had big expectations heading into the 1975 season. But the 1975 season marked the beginning of Tech’s turnaround and ushered in an era of great Tech defense.

The victory turned out to be the most lopsided in the series in 20 years. Tech finished with an 8-4 record and went to the Peach Bowl – its first bowl appearance in 19 years.

Offensively, the Hokies rolled up 410 yards behind the rushing of tailback Cyrus Lawrence, who set a school record at the time with 40 carries. He finished with 194 yards and scored two touchdowns. Steve Cassow threw a touchdown pass. VPI victory turned out to be the most lopsided in the series in 20 years. Tech finished with an 8-4 record and went to the Peach Bowl – its first bowl appearance in 19 years.
fourth quarter. The Hokies went for two points and didn’t convert, leaving them ahead by seven.

Tech’s defense took care of the rest. The Hokies registered five of Virginia’s final four drives, including a big one in the end zone by linebacker Mike Johnson with 8:18 left in the game. Virginia finished with just 129 yards of offense and only stayed in the game because of four Tech turnovers.

Copeland led the Hokies with 124 yards rushing. The Hokies finished with a 5-2 record in 1986. Their defense closed the season ranked No. 1 in the nation in rushing.

• Stallions’ run wild in 32-point win over Cavaliers (Oct. 23, 1986) – Virginia Tech head coach Bill Dooley certainly had the Cavaliers’ number toward the end of his tenure, as he won six of his final seven games against the Hokies.

Dooley’s final game against Virginia was one to remember. The Hokies jumped out to a 1-4 lead, and they owned the second half, ousting Virginia 21-0 en route to a 42-10 victory.

Fallbacks Maurice Williams and Eddie Hunter, whom many consider to be the original “Stallions” (the nickname given to Tech’s running backs), paved Tech’s attack. Williams rushed for 143 yards on 18 carries and scored two touchdowns. Halfback Chapman threw two touchdowns passes to Donald Wayne Smalls, as the Hokies amassed 477 yards of offense, Virginia finished with 297.

The Hokies finished with a 10-1-1 record after beating NC State on a Chris Kinzer field goal in the Peach Bowl. The season ended up being Dooley’s last – he resigned shortly before the season ended because potential NCAA violations resulted in the university asking Dooley to step down from his AD role.

• Black shoes spark Hokies to 38-13 upset of No. 17 Cavaliers (Nov. 24, 1990) – Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer was in his fourth year with the school, but he had not beaten rival Virginia in three previous attempts, and fans were getting antsy.

Before the game, Tech’s seniors elected to wear black cleats with maroon jerseys – something the program hadn’t done in six years. Then, right before going out on the opening kickoff, they elected to spray black paint on their white cleats. The changes worked as Tech jumped out to a 24-10 win in 2004 and 2012. The Hokies went for two points in both games. The 2004 game resulted in the university asking Dooley to step down from his AD role.

• 24-10 win in 2004 kept Tech ACC title hopes alive, and the Hokies went on to clinch their first season in the league with a win over Miami the following week.

Randall completed 16-of-22 in the game for 200 yards, with two touchdowns, while Humes ran for 95 yards. Virginia finished with just 299 yards.

Tech quarterback Will Furrer threw three touchdown passes and tailback Vaughn Hebron rushed for 142 yards on 30 carries to lead the attack. Virginia played without quarterback Shawn Moore (injury), and backup Matt Blandin threw for 363 yards and two touchdowuns, but he was intercepted three times.

Virginia had been ranked No. 1 earlier in the season, but came into the game having lost two of its previous three games.

For the Hokies, this game was their bowl game. Tech finished the season with a 6-5 mark and won three of its final four games. The only loss came against Georgia Tech – which went on to claim a share of the national championship that season.

• Hokies rally past Virginia to keep ACC title hopes alive (Nov. 27, 2004) – In one of the rare meetings between Tech and UVa as ranked opponents – it has only happened nine times in the 95 games in the series – the Hokies needed a win to keep their ACC title hopes alive in their first season as a member of the league.

Tech entered the game ranked 11th, while Virginia was 16th. Neither team scored in the first half, and a 35-yard pass from Marques Hagans to Alvin Pearman gave the Cavaliers a 7-0 lead with 10:24 left in the third quarter.

The Hokies scored the next 10 points, getting a 31-yard field goal from Brandon Pace and a 20-0 lead at 10 on a 19-yard field goal by Connor Hughes with 1:35 left. The rest of the game was all Tech. On the ensuing drive, the Hokies went 80 yards in seven plays, and Randall found Hyman again, this time for 35 yards and the touchdown. That made it 17-10 with 55:29 remaining. On their next possession, the Hokies struck again, going 58 yards in six plays. The drive ended when Cedric Humes scored on a 37-yard

Bryan Randall’s two passing touchdowns against Virginia was a 24-10 win in 2004 kept Tech ACC title hopes alive, and the Hokies went on to clinch their first season in the league with a win over Miami the following week.

Randall completed 16-of-22 in the game for 200 yards, with two touchdowns, while Humes ran for 95 yards. Virginia finished with just 299 yards.

The following Saturday, the Hokies beat Miami 16-10 in Miami to clinch the program’s first ACC championship. Tech finished 10-3 overall after falling to Auburn 16-13 in the Sugar Bowl.

• Late field goal keeps alive Tech winning streak over UVa (Nov. 24, 2012) – This was not necessarily the prettiest of games, but it was certainly memorable at the end.

The Hokies struggled against a Virginia squad that came in with a 4-7 record, and they trailed 14-7 in the third quarter after Virginia defensive lineman Brent Urban returned a fumble by Tech quarterback Logan Thomas 16 yards for a touchdown.

But Thomas made amends for the mistake. Toward the end of the third quarter, he led the Hokies on a 13-play, 85-yard drive, and he finished the drive with a 4-yard touchdown run that knotted the game at 14.

Things stayed that way, too, after Tech kicker Cody Journell missed a 33-yard attempt with 3:38 left in the game. Tech’s defense, though, came up big, as cornerback Antone Exum intercepted a Michael Roero pass at the Virginia 36 and returned it to the Virginia 24. The Hokies then salted away the final 5:23 on the clock and won the game when Journell hit a 29-yard field goal as time expired to give the Hokies the win.

The win marked Tech’s ninth in a row over Virginia. More importantly, the Hokies became bowl eligible and finished the season 7-6 after beating Rutgers in the Russell Athletic Bowl.
The latter happened in 1965, as Inside Hokie Sports continues to celebrate the 50th season of Virginia Tech. The Gobblers went 7-3 in Dawson’s senior year, but three straight losses to end the season probably prevented them from getting a bowl bid. The next spring, in 1968, Dawson graduated with a degree in civil engineering.

The move proved to be a parting from Dawson to Blacksburg nearly 55 years ago. Suffice it to say, things have worked out well ever since.
Among the Samson-Akpan household, he might be considered a pioneer. Back in 1984, Ikemesit Samson-Akpan left his Nigeria home for the United States. The youngest of six children, many of whom stayed in their native country, Samson-Akpan challenged himself by leaving his family and friends to pursue an advanced education. After earning a civil engineering degree from the University of Akron, he decided to stay in Ohio, where he met Melissa Weir, married and started a family in Fairlawn – a suburb of Akron.

Fast-forward almost 30 years, and his youngest child, daughter LaTasha, had similar aspirations. She grew up with a soccer-crazed father and played the sport, just like her two older brothers. Standing almost 6-foot tall, though, she gravitated toward the sports of basketball and volleyball, the latter enabling her to experience the conundrum her father had faced many years ago – a decision to leave the safe haven of family and friends to pursue an education.

LaTasha would end up choosing to attend Virginia Tech, play on the volleyball team – she is currently playing in her final season for the Hokies – and major in engineering. It’s a journey that draws many parallels to her father’s path.

“We absolutely discussed this in detail,” said Ike Samson-Akpan, Sr., referring to the similarities between their choices. “My first year in the United States after arriving from Nigeria was very difficult for me to adjust without having the comfort of family and friends. I grew up with it. I called and spoke to my mother, who convinced me to give it time and try to make the best of my new life.

“I listened and here I was giving my daughter the same advice, which we hoped she would heed. I think stepping out of one’s comfort zone allows students to explore who they are and what they aspire to do. LaTasha is very close to her family and has a great circle of friends at home. However, after visiting Virginia Tech, she knew that this was the school for her.

“Before she left, we told her that we are only a phone call away, and if she was in need, we would be there. We talked about individual success and independence all the time. This decision was just one step toward that goal. Her mother and I left the option up to her to set her own goals and vision of where she wants to see herself in the future. She has always been instructed that education would be the key to her future, and that any sacrifices she makes now would pay off later."

Despite the advice, LaTasha admitted that she didn’t fair any better than her dad did during her first year in Blacksburg. The struggles may have not been the same, as she was serving a reserve’s role on the Hokies’ bench and struggling to adjust to the rigors of her major, but they were difficult to overcome.

On August 27, 2011, LaTasha played in her first college set against High Point, but would not see the court again until her sophomore season, and the fifth game at that.

“I had no clue what was going to happen when I first came in,” she said. “When I realized I wasn’t going to get any playing time, I took that very hard. I had always played my whole life, and then, now I’m just going to be sitting on the bench.

“And having to deal with that and then dealing with school and time management... all of that was a struggle my freshman year. I really struggled. But after accepting the fact that my playing time was going to be limited, it kind of got better. But at first, initially, I didn’t like it.”

As one usually does, she figured it out and got on track. She would make sure she stayed on top of things academically, knowing that her work would be hard and take a lot of time. She would also use her professors’ office hours and get help that

FOLLOWING HER FATHER’S ADVICE

Tech volleyball standout LaTasha Samson-Akpan was hesitant about leaving her family in Ohio to come to Blacksburg, but her father, drawing on his past experiences, encouraged her to do so — and she’s thankful that she listened.

by Marc Mullen
way, as they were more than willing to provide guidance.
On the court, she went from a serviceable substitute her sophomore year into a 3-2 match starter in 2013 and has started every game this season as well – 24 at publication time. She currently leads the team from her middle blocker position in attacking at .37 percent and is second in blocks with 76.
With such a young Hokies’ team, though, she knows that this year isn’t all about stats.
“This season, there have been a lot of highs and lows, and mostly because it’s been a learning process. We’ve got a young team,” LaTasha said. “This is such a big learning season, a big adjustment season for the program.”
“And being the oldest player at my position with two freshmen behind me, it’s different as well. If the other two come to me and ask me questions during practice or when we are sitting out on the sideline, I try to help them out.
“But for the rest of the year, we just need to play, have fun and enjoy what we are doing and not worry too much about results. If we just play, have fun and enjoy what we are doing and that, the end result will come.”

In May, LaTasha will graduate with a degree in civil engineering, the same degree her father earned. She credited her father for giving her the opportunities over the summer and during vacations to accompany him to his office.
His employment history consists of several civil engineering firms and construction firms, where he has worked on many private and individual projects. During her time with her father, LaTasha was exposed to all aspects of civil construction projects ranging from bridge construction to underground utility construction to building construction.
“Early on, she was given general office duties, but once I saw that she had a true interest in the field, she was given tasks with greater responsibility,” he said. “An example of this would be she was given an assignment to evaluate two bridge construction projects for the Ohio National Guard that we had just won.
“We discussed structural formwork and other engineering aspects that were required to construct these bridges. She asked several relevant questions that highlighted her interest in this profession. She was also exposed to site gradation evaluation and how to determine elevation placement of structures.”

Upon graduation, LaTasha is tinkering with the idea of moving to the Raleigh, North Carolina area to start her career, as her father and her have identified Northern Virginia and North Carolina as growing economies that will need help in keeping up the demands of infrastructure growth and the increased demand for green engineering.
She is very close to her family, especially her two nieces – Isoma, who is 4, and Louis, who is 3 and are the daughters of her oldest brother, AC. She also has a middle brother, Ike, Jr., and most of her mom’s side of the family is in the Ohio area. She struggles with the idea of being so far away and hasn’t ruled out returning home.
“My dream state to live in is North Carolina,” she said. “So hopefully I get a job in North Carolina and that would work out perfectly. I’ve always just loved North Carolina. It’s like the perfect spot. It’s not too hot because I don’t want to go too far south, and Ohio was just way too cold for me. So it’s just a nice balance of weather for me.
“But I think of tough being here, and not being able to see my nieces grow up. When they do come to visit, they are so happy. I can hear them when I’m on the court, ‘Auntie, Auntie,’ just screaming for me and wearing their ‘32’ jerseys. They make me so happy. And that’s the one thing that I struggle with the most.
And then the one thing that I struggle with, I want to move back there. All my family is there. So if I moved away, I would be all on my own, but… that’s just the hardest thing I’m struggling with right now.”

That’s the same struggle her father faced almost 30 years ago after his graduation from Stevens. And his decision seemed to work out well for him. Hopefully her decision will work out just as well.
For five straight years, the Virginia Tech baseball players have lost their hair during fall ball, and it hasn’t been because of the stress put on them by the coaching staff. Starting in 2010, the Hokies have shaved their heads and raised money and awareness for the St. Baldrick’s Foundation, an organization that supports childhood cancer research, and the “46 Mommas Shave for the Brave” organization.

After a modest start for donations in years 1 and 2 of the team’s “Shave for the Brave,” the Hokies have turned to social media each of the past three years, and the results have been staggering, pushing past $25,000 each time. This year’s total of $31,000 and still counting pushed the team’s five-year total to more than $100,000.

“In the past five seasons, to raise that much money is a true testament to the student-athletes we have in our program,” Tech head baseball coach Patrick Mason said. “But we couldn’t have done this on our own. This year, we had Great Clips volunteer four barbers to help shave participants, Bull & Bones donate food to feed everyone and Fox 21/27’s Tara Wheeler, a former ‘shavee’ herself, serve as a guest shaver.

“Reaching that goal is a cumulative effort that involves all the friends and families of our players and staff that donated to this great cause.”

There was also a first at this year’s event, as Lynn Surum, also known as “Betsy,” joined the players, coaches and support staff in shaving their heads. She wasn’t the first woman to have her head shaved at a Tech baseball event, but she became the first Hokies’ mother to shave her head, as she is the proud mother of sophomore Ricky Surum.

“My mother, who is now deceased 20 years, and my sister, a breast cancer survivor, have both been through chemotherapy and radiation, so I wanted to shave my head as a nod of respect to them,” Lynn Surum said. “Virginia Tech and this baseball team and these coaches have been so wonderful to Ricky, so I wanted to help them in their charitable endeavor, and I thought that I could get the attention of a lot of Ricky’s friends’ parents in Wellesley and Cape Cod, Massachusetts and Atlanta, especially to donate. “I also did it to show solidarity with the kids that are fighting cancer, support St. Baldrick’s good work, and it was a way of saying to the kids, and to the baseball players ‘It’s only hair. It’s temporary. Focus on the important stuff. If you are healthy, the hair grows back!’

“The Virginia Tech baseball players are undoubtedly heroes and role models to many young cancer patients in our region and beyond, and I wanted to be a part of an event showcasing their strong character.”

The event is held in conjunction with the efforts put forth by Melina McAlwee, whose son Levi Mayo – an adopted member of the Tech baseball team – was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a highly malignant primary brain tumor, when he was 4. Now 14, he is cancer free, but every day, 46 mothers in the United States are told their child has cancer, so the fight never ends.

Levi was honored on the field during the Hokies Fall World Series game, which was being played before and during the Shave event. He was also presented with a brand new pair of Nike sneakers, the same kind the Tech players wear.

At the first shave, the Hokies raised $500. Four years later, the total is more than six figures, signifying the undeniable success of the event and showing that the Hokies can, indeed, make a difference.
After finishing as an NCAA runner-up last season, Devin Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.

44 Inside Hokie Sports

TECH LOOKING FOR A THREE-PEAT AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Led by the return of Devin Carter, this Virginia Tech wrestling team may be the best since Kevin Dresser took over, and he has huge expectations for the 2014-15 season.

by Jimmy Robertson

A year ago, using the added push from an emotional home crowd, the Virginia Tech wrestling team destroyed the competition at the ACC Championship, winning its second straight straight league title in convincing fashion.

The Hokies lost two of their top individual champions off that team to graduation, but everyone else returns, making Tech the overwhelming favorite to three-peat in the ACC.

Yet Tech coach Kevin Dresser is thinking beyond Tech's 2014-15 success hinges with Carter, whose

45 Inside Hokie Sports

season preview | wrestling

season preview | wrestling

Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.

44 Inside Hokie Sports

TECH LOOKING FOR A THREE-PEAT AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Led by the return of Devin Carter, this Virginia Tech wrestling team may be the best since Kevin Dresser took over, and he has huge expectations for the 2014-15 season.

by Jimmy Robertson

A year ago, using the added push from an emotional home crowd, the Virginia Tech wrestling team destroyed the competition at the ACC Championship, winning its second straight straight league title in convincing fashion.

The Hokies lost two of their top individual champions off that team to graduation, but everyone else returns, making Tech the overwhelming favorite to three-peat in the ACC.

Yet Tech coach Kevin Dresser is thinking beyond Tech's 2014-15 success hinges with Carter, whose

45 Inside Hokie Sports

season preview | wrestling

season preview | wrestling

Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.

44 Inside Hokie Sports

TECH LOOKING FOR A THREE-PEAT AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Led by the return of Devin Carter, this Virginia Tech wrestling team may be the best since Kevin Dresser took over, and he has huge expectations for the 2014-15 season.

by Jimmy Robertson

A year ago, using the added push from an emotional home crowd, the Virginia Tech wrestling team destroyed the competition at the ACC Championship, winning its second straight straight league title in convincing fashion.

The Hokies lost two of their top individual champions off that team to graduation, but everyone else returns, making Tech the overwhelming favorite to three-peat in the ACC.

Yet Tech coach Kevin Dresser is thinking beyond Tech's 2014-15 success hinges with Carter, whose

45 Inside Hokie Sports

season preview | wrestling

season preview | wrestling

Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.

44 Inside Hokie Sports

TECH LOOKING FOR A THREE-PEAT AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Led by the return of Devin Carter, this Virginia Tech wrestling team may be the best since Kevin Dresser took over, and he has huge expectations for the 2014-15 season.

by Jimmy Robertson

A year ago, using the added push from an emotional home crowd, the Virginia Tech wrestling team destroyed the competition at the ACC Championship, winning its second straight straight league title in convincing fashion.

The Hokies lost two of their top individual champions off that team to graduation, but everyone else returns, making Tech the overwhelming favorite to three-peat in the ACC.

Yet Tech coach Kevin Dresser is thinking beyond Tech's 2014-15 success hinges with Carter, whose

45 Inside Hokie Sports

season preview | wrestling

season preview | wrestling

Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.

44 Inside Hokie Sports

TECH LOOKING FOR A THREE-PEAT AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Led by the return of Devin Carter, this Virginia Tech wrestling team may be the best since Kevin Dresser took over, and he has huge expectations for the 2014-15 season.

by Jimmy Robertson

A year ago, using the added push from an emotional home crowd, the Virginia Tech wrestling team destroyed the competition at the ACC Championship, winning its second straight straight league title in convincing fashion.

The Hokies lost two of their top individual champions off that team to graduation, but everyone else returns, making Tech the overwhelming favorite to three-peat in the ACC.

Yet Tech coach Kevin Dresser is thinking beyond Tech's 2014-15 success hinges with Carter, whose

45 Inside Hokie Sports

season preview | wrestling

season preview | wrestling

Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.

44 Inside Hokie Sports

TECH LOOKING FOR A THREE-PEAT AND MUCH, MUCH MORE

Led by the return of Devin Carter, this Virginia Tech wrestling team may be the best since Kevin Dresser took over, and he has huge expectations for the 2014-15 season.

by Jimmy Robertson

A year ago, using the added push from an emotional home crowd, the Virginia Tech wrestling team destroyed the competition at the ACC Championship, winning its second straight straight league title in convincing fashion.

The Hokies lost two of their top individual champions off that team to graduation, but everyone else returns, making Tech the overwhelming favorite to three-peat in the ACC.

Yet Tech coach Kevin Dresser is thinking beyond Tech's 2014-15 success hinges with Carter, whose

45 Inside Hokie Sports

season preview | wrestling

season preview | wrestling

Carter is aiming to get back this season - and win it all.
184 pounds – Gabel, a redshirt junior from Parker, Colorado, moved up after wrestling at 174 last season. He went 14-9 overall and 7-3 in dual meet action, but missed a chunk of the season with a knee injury. He still qualified for the NCAA Championships after finishing fourth at the ACC meet, and he won a match.

“Austin does everything right,” Dresser said. “He trains perfectly. He just has to mentally figure it out and wrestle with more confidence. He needs to trust his training and trust his ability. He and Chris Moon are a lot alike.”

Freshman Zack Zavatsky is listed as the backup here. Zavatsky was a top-75 recruit out of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, but Dresser wants him to take a redshirt year.

197 pounds – This is the weight class in Tech’s lineup with some uncertainty. Whoever wins the job has a tough task in replacing Penny, who enjoyed a terrific senior season.

Right now, David Reck, a redshirt freshman from Stafford, Virginia, and Jared Haught, a redshirt freshman from Parkersburg, West Virginia, are battling for the job. Haught went 24-4 while wrestling unattached last season, and he won three tournament titles.

“Jared looks to be the favorite,” Dresser said. “He’s a hard-working guy. He trains hard, and he’s tough. I’m curious to see how he competes.

“The thing with Walz is that, as a coach, you don’t like inconsistency,” Dresser said. “I’d call him ‘Ty-inconsistency’ Walz, and I don’t see a lot of change in that right now. That concerns me. On his good days, it’s like, ‘Wow.’ But then some days I feel like anyone can beat him. He’s got to get consistent, but the ability is there.”

Dun Garwood and Brandon Taylor are pushing Walz. Garwood took a redshirt year last season and went 17-5 while wrestling unattached.

Dresser’s talented and relatively experienced squad will grapple with the toughest schedule in school history. The Hokies face Virginia, Pittsburgh and NC State all have in Blacksburg, but all within an eight-day span. Outside the conference, Tech plays host to Ohio State and travels to both Penn State and Iowa State.

Penn State won the national championship last spring, while Ohio State came in sixth and Iowa State finished 12th. NC State (19th), Pittsburgh (22nd) and Virginia (29th) each finished in the top 25.

“I wanted to get us in some big venues,” Dresser said. “You wrestle at Iowa State and you wrestle at Penn State … you’re in hostile environments. Everyone is against you. The referee is against you. It’s hot in there. Those are tough environments. When we get to the ACC’s and the nationals, I want us to be battle tested. So we’re going to have a lot of battles.”

Dresser feels like the Hokies have established themselves as a top-10 program, and the results certainly prove that. Tech has finished 18th, 10th and eighth, respectively, at the NCAA Championships each of the past three years.

“Now, he wants to get in the top four, get a trophy and maybe even contend for it all.”

Can this team do it?

“A lot of factors play into it,” Dresser said. “You’ve got to stay healthy and have a little luck — and be damn good. We’re going to try and be damn good and hope the luck falls into our lap.”

Reward Yourself

with a Pete Dye River Course membership and experience more than golf benefits. Membership offers • unlimited play with no time restrictions • advanced tee time preference • reduced cart fees • pro-shop discounts • member only events

Contact Pete Dye for a full listing of membership benefits and special non-resident, Virginia Tech staff, faculty, and student rates.
LIVE ACROSS FROM CAMPUS!    PHASE II NOW LEASING!

the Edge apartment homes

321 Edge Way | Blacksburg | vtcampusedge.com
(540) 552-EDGE (3343) | theedge@cmgleasing.com

- Fully furnished apartments & townhomes
- Individual leases & utilities included
- Private bathroom & walk-in closets in every bedroom
- Washer/dryer in each home
- Club inspired Fitness Center & Yoga Room
- Resident lounge with billiard tables, game room & tanning beds
- High-tech study & collaboration areas with video conferencing
- Covered bike storage, picnic areas and sand volleyball

PHASE I OPENING THIS FALL!
PHASE II OPENING MAY 2015!

On Tom’s Creek Road & Prices Fork Road.

Proud Partner of VT Athletics

Professionally Managed by CMG Leasing