WHAT'S INSIDE:
Marshawn Williams is optimistic about being ready for the 2015 football season opener.

ACC CHAMPIONS
Chris Uhle and the Virginia Tech men's track and field team vaulted past the competition and won the ACC Indoor Track and Field Championship – the program's third indoor title and second in the past three years.
Watching Hokie baseball feels great! So does having a bank that won’t pitch you a checking account with a bunch of hidden fees. At Union, you get really free checking with no minimum balance. That’s a home run for Hokie fans. Go to bankatunion.com to learn more – and feel good about where you bank.
Both the Virginia Tech men’s and women’s swimming and diving teams finished in third place at the 2015 ACC Swimming and Diving Championships held on separate weeks in Atlanta in late February. C.J. Fiala (in the photo) and the men’s team won six medals, set six school records and had 13 top-five finishes overall in coming in behind champion NC State and second-place Louisville. Kaylea Arnett won three medals for the women’s team, including two gold medals which enabled her to win the ACC Most Valuable Diver Award for the fourth straight year.

Both squads had several competitors qualify for NCAA competition, which was to be held later in March.

“I’m extremely appreciative of the scholarship opportunity that I have had as a Hokie student-athlete. Having a scholarship has given me the opportunity to leave college debt free, which is a huge benefit heading into a competitive and evolving work force. Thank you so much to all the kind people who have helped in raising and donating money for student-athlete scholarships. You have given us a truly incredible gift.”

C.J. Fiala
Senior | Centreville, Virginia

“I am so thankful for every person who helps make our athletics scholarships possible. It takes the passion of many people at all levels of Hokie Nation to make this happen. The Hokie Club and our amazing supporters have positively impacted my life in countless ways, and I will always be grateful for this.”

Morgan Latimer
Senior | Richmond, Virginia
COST OF ATTENDANCE
WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

On Jan. 18 at the NCAA Convention held in Washington, D.C., five conferences – the ACC, Big 12, Big Ten, SEC and Pac-12 – passed a package of legislation that centered on student-athlete benefits, concussion safety protocol, and scholarship protection.

We, as an athletics department, set forth our answer to these changes in our Pylons of Promise (www.hokiesports.com/pylons/). Much has been written about the “cost of attendance,” an impactful piece of this new legislation that closes the gap between a traditional scholarship and the maximum amount of scholarship allowed by an institution.

Below is a list of questions and answers to educate those unfamiliar with this term.

What is the cost of attendance? A student’s cost of attendance (COA) is an estimate of expenses designed to represent his/her projected actual cost to attend a specific college or university. The cost of attendance number serves as a maximum, and comprises only those expenses that are directly related to college attendance. Typical items include tuition, fees, room, board, transportation and miscellaneous personal expenses.

Athletics scholarships already cover all this, right? No. Currently, the maximum allowable athletics scholarship covers just tuition, room, board, books and fees. An athletics scholarship does not cover all the incidental costs of attending college. That’s what we mean when we say there is a “gap” between what an athletics scholarship covers and the maximum amount of scholarship allowed by an institution, and this NCAA legislation closes that gap. Athlete-students must find a way to pay for these expenses.

What are some of these incidental costs? Some examples include gas for one’s vehicle, transportation, toothpaste, laundry detergent, razor blades, curtains, bed sheets, etc.

How much extra will it cost to close this gap? It will be different for each university. Virginia Tech, the difference between the current full scholarship and the new full scholarship will be nearly $3,600 for most student-athletes, and more than $3,600 for out-of-state student-athletes. That equates to an increase of approximately $950,000 extra dollars per year.

How is that number determined? Each school’s financial aid office tabulates the cost of attendance within federal guidelines originating from the Higher Education Act of 1965.

How will schools pay to close this cost-of-attendance gap? That will be left up to the individual schools within the five conferences and those schools outside of the five conferences that elect to participate. The Athletics Department pays for scholarships through donations to the Hokie Club’s Annual Fund. Additional money will need to be raised to close the cost-of-attendance gap, as well as pay the annual scholarship costs for all of Virginia Tech student-athletes, now approximately $12.9 million.

SCHOLARSHIP COSTS AT VIRGINIA TECH

The following is the list of donors who upgraded their memberships in 2014.

FRAZIER LATEST ADDITION TO VTAF STAFF

Trey Frazier serves as an annual giving officer within the Hokie Club. His primary responsibilities include identifying, cultivating, soliciting and stewarding annual gift prospects and donors to the Virginia Tech Athletic Foundation. He joined the Hokie Club staff in November of 2014 after serving as a development coordinator and donor to the University of Wisconsin Athletics program. He holds a undergraduate degree in finance from theVirginia's Master's in Business Administration and master of sports administration.

During his time at D-U-N-S, Frazier was a three-year letter winner on the football team. He was honored for his work with the Ohio University Athletics program while completing his graduate education.

In his role at Virginia Tech, Frazier resides in Christiansburg with his dog Beasty.
Deadline for renewing season tickets is April 6

On March 2, the Virginia Tech athletics department began accepting season ticket renewal applications for the 2015 football season, and all Hokie Club members and 2014 football season ticket holders have until April 6 at 5 p.m. to renew their tickets.

Those who renew before March 30 at 5 p.m. will be eligible to receive “Early Bird” perks. These perks are listed in the 2015 ticket catalog, and to be eligible to receive “Early Bird” perks. These season ticket holders have until April 6 at 5 p.m. and all Hokie Club members and 2014 football renewal applications for the 2015 football season, department began accepting season ticket for the upcoming season compared to last season, but for this year's schedule includes four other games against teams that played in bowl games last season (Duke, North Carolina, Pittsburgh and NC State).

By Jimmy Robertson

Ford talks about basketball future

Before this past football season, Isaiah Ford was adamant about playing both football and basketball at Virginia Tech. But after playing as a true freshman last season – and starting 11 games – the Jacksonville, Florida native came to the realization that his body needed rest following Tech’s bowl win over Cincinnati. So he never approached men’s basketball coach Buzz Williams about a tryout.

"Coming from high school, it was a long season," Ford said. "I was a little worn down. My legs weren’t under me, I thought it would be important to rest and really hit the weight room and worry about getting bigger and stronger."

Ford, who set Tech with 55 catches for 709 yards and six touchdowns in 2014, has put on eight pounds since the season ended. He played last season at 174 pounds and recently checked in at 182.

"It’s paying off," he said of the offseason program. "I feel a lot stronger, and I’m gaining weight, so that’s a plus." Ford averaged more than 30 points per game his senior season at Trinity Christian Academy in Jacksonville. He said he misses basketball and will try to play both sports next season.

"I still think I can do it. I’m going to try and do it next year," he said. "I miss it a lot. I had to work more in basketball. Football came more naturally to me. With basketball, I had to spend a lot of time on my own, just in the gym working hard, and I could see the results. Maybe that’s why I liked it so much." Ford averaged more than 30 points per game his senior season at Trinity Christian Academy in Jacksonville. He said he misses basketball and will try to play both sports next season.

"I still think I can do it. I’m going to try and do it next year," he said. "I miss it a lot. I had to work more in basketball. Football came more naturally to me. With basketball, I had to spend a lot of time on my own, just in the gym working hard, and I could see the results. Maybe that’s why I liked it so much."

Coleman earns All-ACC honors – in track

Virginia Tech tailback J.C. Coleman grew up participating in track and field and has wanted to continue that ever since arriving in Blacksburg, but his schedule never really afforded him the opportunity until this spring.

Coleman made the most of that opportunity after finishing fifth in the 60-meter dash at the 2015 ACC Indoor Track and Field Championship held at Rector Field House on Feb. 20-21. Coleman earned four points for the Hokies, who won the ACC men’s title with 101 points.

"My expectations were just to come out here and compete," Coleman said. "I wasn't expecting to make it to the finals, but then as I started training more, I'm like, 'Hold on, I can really do this.'"

Coleman said several factors played into his decision to approach the track and field staff about participating. He wanted to work on his speed, but he also liked competition.

"Everyone welcomed me with open arms," he said. "People I don't even know came up to me and congratulated me and were rooting for me. I love the track team. It's a family atmosphere, and I love that."

Several of Tech’s coaches jumped onto the track and field and cross country, the decision to participate in track and field and cross country, the decision to allow Coleman to run was a no-brainer.

"He approached Coach [Charles] Foster [Tech’s sprints coach] about it," Canelli said. "We said absolutely. We can use that. We’re pretty thin in the sprints anyway. What he did, making the final and then getting fifth in the final, was that was ahead of our expectations. In a must like this, you need a couple of things like that to push you over the top."
Tech football program uses strength and conditioning testing for much more than personal benefit

Luther Maddy had every reason to feel great about himself. He hoisted 450 pounds in the bench press during the football team’s testing in that category, the best on the squad. The number also represented a personal best for him.

But minutes after the testing concluded, the player afterthoughtly known as “Big Lu” by his teammates and Hokie Nation was disappointed.

“I really wanted to get 470,” he said. “I really wanted to help the Lone Survivor Foundation.”

During this testing session, Maddy and his teammates were lifting for a much bigger cause than themselves. They lifted for U.S. combat service members and their families.

In a much-publicized event, at least locally, the Virginia Tech football team received more than $39,000 in pledges to go to the Lone Survivor Foundation, an organization founded by retired U.S. Navy Seal Marcus Luttrell and whose mission is to restore, empower and renew hope for U.S. combat service members and their families.

The Lone Survivor Foundation does this by providing educational, therapeutic and wellness opportunities for combat service members and their families. The Foundation, an organization founded by retired U.S. Navy Seal Marcus Luttrell and whose mission is to restore, empower and renew hope for U.S. combat service members and their families.

The Lone Survivor Foundation sends the greatest “This was in the players’ wheelhouse,” Gentry said. “We were already going to max and work hard, so if we could help other people, that was a bonus. They really bought into it.”

The initiative made such perfect sense, considering Tech’s military tradition and because many of the players have family members in the military. Plus, most of them had seen the movie “Lone Survivor,” which was based on Luttrell’s story and a mission while serving in Afghanistan. Others had read the book.

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但在几分钟后测试结束时，这名球员被自己的表现所惊异。“我真的很想得到470磅，”他说。“我真的很想帮助Lone Survivor基金会。”

在那次测试会中，Maddy和他的队友们是为一个更大的原因而举重的，而不是自己。他们举重是为了U.S.美军战斗人员及其家属。

在一次公开的活动中，在至少本地，弗吉尼亚Tech大学的橄榄球队收到了超过39000美元的承诺，用于Lone Survivor基金会，一个由前任U.S.海军陆战队队员马库斯・卢特雷尔（Marcus Luttrell）创立的组织，其宗旨是为美军战斗人员及其家属提供教育、治疗和疗养机会。

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Burden embracing the opportunity to be at Tech, looking forward to Tidebreaker recruiting players with old friends

Last month, Virginia Tech named 31-year-old Norfolk, Virginia, native Zohn Burden (pronounced ZOHN) its new receivers coach for the Hokies, moving him into the role vacated by Aaron Moorehead, who left for Texas A&M. Burden grew up in Virginia Beach and graduated in 2002 from Salem High School, where he was coached by current University of Virginia running backs coach Chris Beatty. He played collegiately at VMI before getting into coaching at Fork Union Military Academy. He then had two stints at Old Dominion, from 2007-10, when he coached defensive backs, and then from 2012-14, when he served as the Monarchs’ passing game coordinator. Burden also spent one year as the wide receivers coach at the University of Rhode Island.

I had the chance to visit with the newest member of Tech’s coaching staff and ask him some questions:

**BR: Welcome to Virginia Tech. It’s nice to have you here.**

**ZB:** “Thank you. It’s nice to be here.”

**BR: Give me your early impressions so far of Tech.**

**ZB:** “Honestly, it’s been great. Even better than I thought it would be.”

**BR: Why?**

**ZB:** “The people. The people here are just incredible. The atmosphere. The legacy and the tradition you see when you walk in the doors is a drawcard for you.”

**BR: For an in-state guy like yourself from Virginia Beach, what was your perception of Virginia Tech football from the outside, and specifically, from the view as an assistant coach at ODU?**

**ZB:** “Being from Virginia, I watched this football program grow, and a lot of kids I want to high school with a chance to come here and play football in college. I’ve always been a fan. Virginia Tech has always been a special place for me. As far as being the receivers coach at ODU, I’ve always been keeping up with Virginia schools, and Virginia Tech was just always one of those places that you always checked the score whenever they were on TV.”

**BR: Let me tell you that Virginia Tech people — fans and coaches — took notice of what you guys were doing at ODU. Everyone saw those passing yards and scoring totals. How do you do it?**

**ZB:** “We had a great quarterback, we had some really good receivers, and we had a good chemistry of all the skill players. The ODU program is built around the offense. It’s all catered toward that, and we just let the quarterback run the show.”

**BR: Did you know that you always wanted to get into coaching?**

**ZB:** “No. It kind of just fell into my lap. I had a chance to get to Fork Union as soon as I graduated from VMI, and Coach [John] Shuman told me, ‘You’re kinda good at this,’ and I stuck with it from that point.”

**BR: We’ve had several coaches here at Virginia Tech, in many different sports over the years, with a Fork Union background. Each one talks about how the discipline learned as a coach. Is that something that you carry with you?**

**ZB:** “I agree 100 percent. Waking up at 5 a.m. becomes a natural thing starting when you’re there until however old you happen to be. Those small things, like shining your shoes and tucking your shirt in, carry you a long way in life.”

**BR: Coach Shuman is one of the best ever. What do you think makes you — a Virginia Tech’s reputation for coaches and your own perspective today — a good coach?**

**ZB:** “I think I can relate to my players, and I’m coaching the wide receiver position, which I played at VMI. So it’s been a natural transition for me, and I think kids feed off my energy as far as how I like to coach the position. I want them to get better each and every day.”

**BR: At Virginia Tech, you’re inheriting a talented, but still relatively young, receiving corps, with guys like Isaiah Ford and Cam Phillips. When you watched the tapes, what were your initial impressions of the receivers here at Virginia Tech?**

**ZB:** “I think the sky’s the limit for these young guys. That’s the beauty of being the receivers coach here now. The previous coach left a great room of kids that want to work and get better. They work hard, and they listen when you ask them to do something.”

**BR: Let’s talk recruiting. One of the aspects that has Tech fans excited is your background as a Virginia Beach guy, and clearly, some of the best players ever at Tech are from the Hampton Roads area. How would you describe your recruiting philosophy?**

**ZB:** “I’m all about building relationships. That comes from growing up around this area, playing high school football in Virginia Beach and the Tidebreaker Townsend coaches. There are still coaches there now that I played against when I was in high school, and they know who I am, but I think building relationships is my goal, and then maintaining those relationships where you go.”

**BR: You obviously have a very close relationship with Coach [Chip] West and Coach Beatty at UVA. That’s going to make for some very interesting recruiting battles in the 757 area, isn’t it?**

**ZB:** “Oh you’ll see! It will be fun. Chip helped me get to ODU, and we worked together there, so yeah, it will be fun.”

Looking ahead, there’s no question there will be some really interesting recruiting battles between Tech and UVA, specifically in the 757 area with the Bucken-White-Beatty triangle in Blacksburg and Charlottesville. Their familiarity with the region — and each other — certainly adds a new flavor to the Tech-UVA rivalry.

But more than recruiting, Tech has added a close-knit, experienced coaching staff this off-season. That was a blow to lose Moorehead, but coach Frank Beamer has added a real rising star to his staff, which is encouraging.

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**THE VOICE MAIL**

**Dear Bill,**

I think it is imperative that Tech fans be able to tailgate the entire day of next year’s OSU game. Tech weekend night games are ruined by the university not allowing Hokie Club members to park earlier than a few hours before the game. I, for one, plan to be out there in the morning and know many other locals that are planning for the same. I am basically a Hokie Club member so that I can have a great tailgate/parking spot. Please pass along to Mr. Babcock and see if he can pull some strings. Regards, Robert, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Hi Robert,

I will pass on your note. As you know, that’s a regular workday on Virginia Tech’s campus — regular workday for faculty, staff, researchers, and of course, a full class day for students. For the previous Labor Day game in 2012, Tech opened up parking lots on 4:30 p.m. the day of the game. The RV lots opened on Saturday at noon.

Dear Bill,

The recent passing of Dean Smith made me think about basketball history, specifically the four corners offense, perhaps perfected by Coach Smith and Phil Ford. Some research showed it was invented by Neal Baisi of West Virginia Tech. I’ve also heard ESPN analyst Stephen A. Smith, who lives in the 757 area with the Burden-West-Beatty triangle in Blacksburg and Charlottesville, describes your birth as the inventor. So I ask you, Bill, who deserves the credit for this unique piece of basketball history? Tim Levish, Wayneboro, Virginia.

Hi Tim,

I don’t know Coach Baisi, nor have I had the opportunity to watch his teams play. However, I did have the opportunity to visit with Coach Noe, and we discussed what he called his “Mongoose” defense. (By the way, you have a keen memory if you recall that article from many years ago.) I’m not sure if Coach Smith adopted any of his “Four Corners” scheme from Coach Noe’s “Mongoose,” but I’m sure someone out there will submit a clarification.

Bill,

You mentioned on tonight’s broadcast that the Hokies will have five new players join the basketball team for the 2015-16 season. Who are these players? Todd, Virginia Beach.

Today:

Thank you for listening. The Hokies have two players sitting out this season: guard Seth Allen, who transferred from Maryland, and forward Zach LeDay, who transferred from South Florida. In addition, Virginia Tech signed three players during the early-signing period in November: forward Chris Clarke from Virginia Beach, guard Justin Robinson from Munassas, and forward Kenny Blackshear from Orlando. You can read more about that trip here: http://www.hokieports.com/mbasketball/recaps/20141112aaa.html

If you don’t recall Seth’s time at Maryland, here are some clips: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TzsYbjXLGY. And here’s Zach in action at UCF: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GxMCX5Sa-o. And here’s Zach in action at USF: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35bgw8lJ7v4.

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Keeping up with Compliance

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

Q: Hey, did you catch Buzz Williams’ new argyle sweater that he broke out in the second half of the Hokies’ win over Georgia Tech? That thing was quite the fashion statement. Anyway, Adam Smith said he wanted one just like it. Could Buzz give his players a sweater like that without running afoul of the NCAA sheriff? Thanks, Megan in Blacksburg.

TP: “First of all, it’s important to realize that any tangible items—other than apparel and equipment used in practice or competition—given to student-athletes must be classified as ‘awards.’ Permissible awards given by schools to student-athletes then fall into one of three categories: participation, championship (e.g. ACC regular season, ACC tournament), or special achievement (e.g. MVP, most improved). NCAA regulations place annual monetary limits on each category.

“A sweater would fall into the participation category. If Coach Williams wanted to give a sweater to each team member as an ‘award,’ his ability to do so would depend on two things: the cost of the sweater, and the total value of awards received—or to be received—in that specific category by his student-athletes during the course of the academic year. The annual cumulative limit for participation awards is $225 for underclassmen and $425 for seniors.

“So . . . to finally end a long-winded answer to your question, Coach Williams could do this, provided the cost of the sweater did not exceed NCAA-mandated limits, either by itself, or in combination with other awards given in that category.”

Q: As you probably know, two members of the Virginia Tech football recruiting class—Coleman Fox and Zachariah Hoyt—are from nearby Salem, Virginia, roughly an hour away. Could those two drive to Blacksburg after school and participate in spring? They wouldn’t be missing any class time at their high school in this scenario. Thanks, Eric in Christiansburg.

TP: “No, they wouldn’t be able to because they will not have graduated from high school yet, nor are they enrolled at Virginia Tech and taking classes. We run into similar questions in the past when Blacksburg High School prospective student-athletes sign letters-of-intent with Virginia Tech. You have to be enrolled and be a full-time student. NCAA regulations do allow incoming student-athletes to enroll in summer school before the fall of their freshman year and participate in team activities.”

Q: Can recruits take officials after National Signing Day if they haven’t signed an official letter-of-intent? Thanks, Chris in Christiansburg.

TP: “Prospective recruits can take official visits at any time except when there is a dead period. Dead periods occur periodically throughout the calendar year, and during this time, no in-person contact is allowed, even if a prospect happens to visit a campus (though electronic communications are permitted).

“In football, for instance, a dead period began two days before the signing period started this year (Feb. 2) and ended the day after the signing period began (Feb. 3). After that date, coaches are allowed to bring uncommitted recruits to campus for official visits—though this rarely happens. Most prospects return their letters-of-intent on the first day of the signing period (referred to as ‘National Signing Day’).

“National Signing Day isn’t the only day on which letters-of-intent can be signed, but merely the first day prospects can sign and submit their letters-of-intent. From the NCAA perspective, there isn’t a signing ‘day,’ but a signing ‘period.’ This year, that period runs from Feb. 4 through April 1 for football.”

Q: I know coaches can’t tweet to recruits, but I was wondering if fans could do this. It seems like a way for fans to help in the recruiting process. Matthew in Lynchburg.

TP: “Technically speaking, tweeting at recruits is a violation of NCAA regulations. As soon as you communicate with a recruit and try to persuade him/her to attend a specific school, you automatically become what is known in NCAA legislation as a ‘booster,’ and boosters aren’t allowed to recruit prospects.

“Everybody understands that this rule is hard (ok, almost impossible) to monitor and enforce, but it’s an easy rule to follow. Please let the coaches do the recruiting. In any event, it’s highly doubtful that tweeting at recruits has any impact on their final decision.”

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Cawley Bromley is a senior on the Virginia Tech lacrosse team and has started every game this season. She graduates in May with a degree in human development, focusing on child and adolescent development, and she wants to work with children in some capacity in the future.

Q: Why did you decide to major in human development?
CB: "I originally went into the major because I wanted to go into elementary education, and that's the path you take to go into elementary education because Tech doesn't have that major. Right now, I'm deciding if I want to go to grad school for elementary education. I'm figuring out what I want to do, but elementary education has been my path for the past four years."

Q: What is it about elementary education that interests you?
CB: "I just love kids. I love working with students. I'm doing a field study right now where I go to Price's Fork Elementary School [in Blacksburg] four times a week, and I work in the classrooms with a teacher and help the students with things they're struggling with. I work a lot with IEP students [Individualized Education Program for disabled students] and helping them with their academics. I'm in a fifth-grade classroom, and I really like it."

Q: Has that field study reinforced your decision to major in human development and pursue a career in education?
CB: "It's definitely reinforced that I want to work with students, or with kids. I'm not 100 percent sure that I want to be a teacher, but I definitely want to be in a field where I'm working with students and helping people with their problems. I've worked a lot one-on-one with IEP students, and it's just amazing when they have an 'A-ha' moment. There's nothing more rewarding than that."

Q: Have you done any other internships or field studies in which you've worked with children?
CB: "No, but during the summer, the past three summers, I've worked for the town of Cary, where I live, and I run a lacrosse camp for boys and girls every week. It's boys and girls, ages 8 to 13, so I've seen a bunch of different ages and how they interact with each other. It was a great experience, and it definitely has helped me when I've been in the classroom this year."

Q: If you weren't a teacher, what do you think you'd like to do?
CB: "There are always non-profit organizations. I've been looking into things right now. I'm not 100 percent sure about what I'm doing, but I've always had an interest in guidance counseling. I'd have to go to grad school for that, and the same with elementary education."

Q: Would you go to graduate school here at Virginia Tech?
CB: "I don't think so. I think I'd stay in-state and live at home and save some money."

Q: What is your short-term plan once you graduate from Virginia Tech in May?
CB: "I'm not 100 percent sure, but what I've discussed with my parents is to come home for a year and try to find a job. Since I'm not 100 percent sure what I want to go to grad school for, I'm going to take the year and figure that out, and then hopefully go back to school the following year, either full time or part time."

Florian Nicoudl got a degree from a university in France before coming to Virginia Tech and playing tennis for two years. He will graduate from Tech with a degree in economics this May. He's been applying to graduate schools, where he wants to get a master's degree in international business before pursuing a career in the sports industry.

Q: Why did you decide to major in economics?
FN: "I started my college career in France, and I started, at first, in something that was HNFE (human nutrition, foods and exercise) related. But I didn't like it, so I just switched. I wanted to go more into a business field, and I like economics. The school I went in to France, I studied more economics and management. So I get a degree in France and then I transferred to Virginia Tech because I wanted to keep playing tennis. "I really like the mathematical part and applying it to economics. You have a general view of what the world looks like. You have to study all the fields related to business, so I've done some management classes, some finance classes, some economics classes ... you get a really broad view of the world – and I like it."

Q: Have you done any internships or field studies?
If so, please tell us about those experiences.
FN: "No, so far, no, I haven't done any. I've worked some tennis camps, but nothing related to economics. I hope to do one this summer, and I'm applying to grad school, so hopefully, I'll get into a good program and then do an internship."

Q: So you plan on going to graduate school after you get your undergraduate degree from Virginia Tech. In what subject would you like to get your master's?
FN: "My plan is to get my master's in international business. I'm applying to several schools, and the last few weeks, I've been very busy. I've been doing work as far as getting recommendation letters and a cover letter and working on my resume. I'm applying to some French programs and some American programs, and seeing where it's going to lead me."

Q: Will you be applying to graduate school at Virginia Tech?
FN: "Unfortunately, no. The program isn't what I want. I'm looking for something that is pretty specialized, and it's not offered at Virginia Tech. My favorite one is one in France, but I'm also applying to NC State."

Q: What would be a dream job for you?
FN: "Traveling inside my job. I won't be able to stay in an office and work all day in an office. I'd like to travel and meet different people and different personalities. My dream would be to work in the skiing area. I love skiing and all that's ski related, or I'd like to work in the tennis area. I'd like to work in a sports industry."

Q: Would you like to work in the United States or go some place else?
FN: "It doesn't matter to me. I'm not stuck to one place. I've been used to traveling, and it's not a problem for me to leave everything. Now with Skype, you can talk to your family a lot, and that's great because I'm very close to them. But it's not a problem for me to work in the U.S. or Canada or anywhere. I'm not stuck to one place. I'd like to find a job abroad, somewhere besides France. Maybe in the long run, I'd go back, but right now, I'm willing to discover some new experiences."
Looking back at last season, your unit really played well with the final four games of the season after the BC and Miami losses. What did you do differently that maybe you weren’t doing the first part of the season?

BF: “I don’t think it was anything that we were doing different schematically. You had some guys playing in significant roles for the first time, and the best teacher is experience. The more the kids played, the more comfortable they felt and understood what we were doing with the defense.

“We gave up too many big plays, particularly early. That was our nemesis. But at the end, we didn’t give up as many big plays. If you take away the fourths of the season, there were eight new faces in significant roles for the first time, and the best things, and we grew up a lot. The last three-fourths of the season after the BC and Miami losses. What did you do differently that maybe you weren’t doing the first part of the season?”

BF: “Our goals don’t change a whole lot. We’ve got to continue to grow and improve. We’ve got to develop some depth. We’ve got to find out who can play and compete at a high level. We do that every spring.

“Defensive coordinator Bud Foster has a veteran group returning and wants to spend the next year.”

BF: “I’m anxious to see some young kids step up and play, particularly up front. A guy like Melvin Dooley are going to get a lot of reps, and they need a lot of reps. Those are kids that we’re excited about. We want to see what Vinny Mihota can bring to the table, and we’re excited about Yosh Nijman. At linebacker, Chase Williams had a great year, but he needs a lot of reps. Those are kids that we are excited about. We want to see what Vinny Mihota can bring to the table, and we’re excited about Yosh Nijman. At linebacker, Chase Williams had a great year, but he needs a lot of reps. Those are kids that we are excited about.”

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IHS extra

Tech Defense

Defensive coordinator Bud Foster has a veteran group returning and wants to spend the 15 spring practices evaluating younger players and creating depth at certain positions.

by Jimmy Robertson

Looking to carry strong 2014 ending over to spring practice

Continued on page 20
Ronny needs to speak up. That's a take-charge position, by his performance. He's only going to get better. He's an instinctive guy. He really did a nice job a chance to be a really good mike linebacker.

The kid is about. He's got speed, and he's physical. he left off. He's got great vision. He has some solidifying himself as the mike linebacker with a knee injury, and he played well, four games when Williams went down.

“Another guy who is intriguing is Holland Virginia. Many considered him one of the top defensive line recruits in the country. a defensive lineman from Manassas, Virginia. Many considered him one of the top defensive line recruits in the country. He's still in high school, but can he figure top defensive end. We know what Dadi [Nicolas] can do, and we just want to keep his timing sharp.

People are running three and four receiver packages. We like to play a lot of matchup zones and man free (all defensive backs are in man coverage except the free safety, who is a "safety valve") and contest all throws and put pressure on our whip or nickel guy. We find out more about them. But Adonis may be – we haven't decided yet, but we like to start our year guy [enrolled in January], and he's a tall, explosive big man. If he can come in and figure in, then we'll do that. We'll try to work him in the mix. He's just got to get in great shape where he can sustain a high level of play.

That's the difference between high school and this level. It's the consistency of high level of play. If you go three-quarter speed, you're going to get beat. That's what young kids have to figure out. Every play is a critical play on defense at this level. “I hope he's going to take off from where he left off. He's got great vision. He has someuce legs and it's about. He's got speed, and he's physical.

We're going to have Kansas State in [on March 2], and Gregg Williams [assistant with the NFL's Tennessee Titans] is going to come in. He's speaking at our coaches' clinic, but he's going to come in early, and we're going to meet.

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IHS extra | Q&A with Bud Foster—Defensive Coordinator & Inside Linebackers Coach. Continued from page 19

BF: I hope so. Tim's got to get to the point where he's in great shape. He's a dynamic, explosive big man. If he can come in and figure in, we'll do that. We'll try to work him in the mix. He's just got to get in great shape where he can sustain a high level of play.

BF: I'm still concerned about defensive end. We won't have Ken this spring, and Dwayne Alford is graduating and is giving up football, so that takes a guy out. We've brought in Yosh Nijman, and we have to find out if he's a defensive end or a defensive tackle. We hope he's a defensive end. We know what Daddi [Nicolas] can do, and we just want to keep his timing sharp this spring.

If you go three-quarter speed, you're going to get beat. That's what young kids have to figure out. Every play is a critical play on defense at this level. "But I'm excited about Tim. He's a big athlete with good foot and good explosiveness and change of direction. I'm anxious to get him here."

"Another guy who is intriguing is Holland Virginia. Many considered him one of the top defensive line recruits in the country. A defensive lineman from Manassas, Virginia. Many considered him one of the top defensive line recruits in the country. He's still in high school, but can he figure into the mix next fall?"

Yes, and I can tell you, they're a pain in the tail [laughing]. But you look at it, and Georgia Tech was different because of that guy. "That's where our nickel defense has come in. We created the 3y package, and we ran that quite a bit, particularly on third down. We've been a little exotic out of that, with some pressures and such. We've tried to get in our base defense out of it, too. It's been a good package for us the last few years, and we've been able to develop that a little more as we've gone along." "That's where our nickel defense has come in. We created the 3y package, and we ran that quite a bit, particularly on third down, and we've created the mismatch.

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Inside Hokie Sports

Construction continues on Virginia Tech’s new indoor practice facility, as workers from W.M. Jordan Company have finished the framing and the roof of the building and have been hanging precast concrete on the exterior. As can be seen from these photos, workers attached the three observation decks and also started installing glass along the side of the facility.

The $22.5 million project features a building that is 210 feet wide, 400 feet long and 85 feet high and will have an artificial turf surface. Eight-foot padded walls, wide sidelines, a full scoreboard and 40-second clocks on each end will allow for a full-contact scrimmage.

Tech administrators expect the facility to be ready for use in time for the upcoming 2015 football season.
Marshawn Williams practically jumped into the starting lineup as soon as he set foot on campus, as running backs coach Shane Beamer started him in the Hokies’ second game of this past season – one at Ohio State. Williams scored on a short touchdown run in that game, part of a 35-point outburst that lifted the Hokies to a 35-21 victory over the then-No. 8 Buckeyes.

Williams started eight games, missing the Pittsburgh game with an ankle injury. But his season came to an end after his tore his ACL against Duke on Nov. 15. He finished second on the team in rushing with 475 yards and he scored four touchdowns.

Williams underwent surgery in December, but he expects to be back for the season opener against Ohio State. He took some time to answer some questions about his injury, his rehab and his expectations heading into the season:

Q: For starters, how are you feeling?
MW: “I feel good. Every day is different. I don’t know exactly how I’ll feel. But today [Feb. 24], and the past couple of days, I’ve felt good. The weather has been so crazy. Some days, I feel fine. Other days, I’ll feel a little achy. I can tell when it’s about to rain or snow, but it feels fine.”

Q: When the injury occurred, did you know immediately what it was?
MW: “Actually, I didn’t. When I was younger, in rec ball, I hyperextended my knee a couple of times. So when this happened, I’m like, ‘Yes, it’s just a hyperextension.’ When I was laying there and I realized how fast Mike [Goforth] and Keith [Doolan] had gotten there, I realized it was a little bit more than I thought it was. But when it first happened, I wasn’t thinking, ‘Oh, there’s something wrong.’ I didn’t know what it was until they checked it and told me.”

Q: So what goes through your mind after you get news like that?
MW: “For me, it happened so fast that I ended up laughing all the way up until the next day. I didn’t believe it. I thought I was going to wake up and be able to play in the next game. It was different. I had never been seriously injured before, so that was just different to me. I was a little blown away.”

Q: Were you in a lot of pain in the days after the injury?
MW: “Not so much pain, but sleeping was terrible. It was just different, just having something in your body that hurts is different, and I had some swelling. I wasn’t in too much pain during the process. Maybe if I tried to get up and didn’t have my brace on, it would buckle. Other than that, I wasn’t in too much pain.”

Q: Was it just a torn ACL, or was it a total reconstruction of your knee when you underwent surgery in mid-December?
MW: “I had my ACL reconstructed and my LCL [lateral collateral ligament, which is a ligament on the outer side of the knee] repaired.”

Q: Are you able to do everything in the weight room right now, or do you have to hold off on certain things?
MW: “I’m not able to do anything with my lower body right now. It’s all upper body. But here in the next few weeks, I should be able to get into some of that stuff.”

Gearing up for major comeback

Marshawn Williams has his sights set on playing in the Hokies’ season opener against Ohio State despite tearing his ACL in November of this past season.
I've never really been hurt. Even in the Pitt game, because of the surgery. I'm not ready, I want to be in game shape by the time we play. For them to tell me that probably won't happen until I'm back in game shape. "It hurt, just to watch and not being able to participate? That makes me want to go faster than I'm used to."

Q: Do you think you will be nervous or tentative when you come back?

MW: “Well, I’ve talked to Shai [McKenzie, who tore his ACL this past season] and Tech’ linebacker] Sean Huelskamp and Ken [Ekanem, a defensive end who tore his in high school]. They all said it was a process and takes a while. I’m ready for it, just trying to get back.”

Q: Do you think you can come back and be the same player that you were?

MW: “I think everybody that tears an ACL is a little nervous. It’s all up to me. Whatever I put in is what I’ll get out. If I put in enough work, hopefully, I don’t miss a beat and come back being myself. There’s always that thought, ‘What if it happens again?’ and you’re a little timid.”

Q: Have you talked with someone who has been through the process of rehabilitating an ACL to get some insight?

MW: “For me, the sky is the limit. As much work as I put in, that’s all I watched every game, though. I’d text Coach [Shane Beamer] after every game and tell him what I thought and how I felt and went from there.”

Q: Do you think you will be nervous or tentative when you come back?

MW: “I think everybody that tears an ACL is a little nervous. It’s all up to me. Whatever I put in is what I’ll get out. If I put in enough work, hopefully, I don’t miss a beat and come back being myself. There’s always that thought, ‘What if it happens again?’ and you’re a little timid.”

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MW: “Well, I’ve talked to Shai [McKenzie, who also tore his ACL this past season] and Tech’ linebacker] Sean Huelskamp and Ken [Ekanem, a defensive end who tore his in high school]. They all said it was a process and takes a while. I’m ready for it, just trying to get back.”

Q: You appear to have changed your body over the course of the fall and this winter. It looks like you’ve lost weight. What are you weighing?

MW: “Right now, I’m still [as listed at 209 during the season] and trying to go down. I’m on a diet, just trying to stay down. They say the lighter you are, the better your rehab is.”

“My brother started the diet with me because he wasn’t able to compete, and my nature is to compete. So we started a competition as to who could lose the most weight. He started this diet, and I’m doing everything he’s doing. I’m winning right now. He’s lost more in the waist than I have. I really want to get down as much as I can to help with my rehab. Then I’ll get back to where they [the coaches] want me to, but put it in a good way.”

Q: Will you go to spring practices and watch, even though you won’t be able to participate?

MW: “Oh, yeah, I’ll definitely be in everything as much as I can. That’s my nature, to be around football, and I wouldn’t feel right not to be around, so everything I’m able to do, I’m going to be there. Hopefully, I’ll be able to put on pads, but I doubt it. That’s up to Mike [Golden].”

Q: Do you think you can come back and be the same player that you were?

MW: “I think so. I look at Adrian Peterson [an NFL running back who rushed for more than 2,000 yards the season after tearing an ACL]. He had the biggest comeback ever from an ACL. Just watching him and his process, he was really going after it. That makes me want to go faster than I’m able to, and that’s my problem. I want to rush this along as fast as I can, but I can’t. And that’s kind of killing me.”

Continued from page 24

A Cleaner World - Blacksburg
A Cleaner World - Roanoke
Alumni Hall
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Beliveau Estate Winery
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Sorvets of Roanoke, Montgomery & Pulaski
Shott Motor Mils
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South Main Auto Service
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Sovinski
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Substation II
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Neither of the Virginia Tech swimming and diving teams brought home a team championship from the 2015 ACC Swimming and Diving Championships held in Atlanta the final two weeks of February.

But head coach Ned Skinner felt very good about what his men’s and women’s programs accomplished nonetheless.

And he should. Both finished in the top three of the ACC team standings, making Tech the only ACC school with both programs in the top three.

The Tech men’s team, which won the 2014 ACC crown, recorded 1,123 points. NC State, which finished second behind the Hokies a year ago, won the title with 1,231 points, while Louisville came in second with 1,178.5 points. The Hokies won six medals, set six school records and had 13 top-five finishes.

On the women’s side, the Hokies claimed eight medals, including three by star diver Kaylea Arnett, and finished the meet with a score of 1,018 points. Virginia won the ACC team championship with a score of 1,308.5, and North Carolina was the runner-up with 1,255. The Hokies edged out fourth-place Louisville, which finished with a score of 1,123.

“Clearly, our objective for the men was to defend that title and win, and even though we fell short of that goal, I’m proud of the men’s fight and determination,” Skinner said. “We had a couple of things not go our way, and we just didn’t have any margin of error if we wanted to win. We stayed in the meet throughout, and then Louisville passed us. There were four teams in contention, and we were happy to at least get a podium finish and get past UNC.”

“I think the women, based on what we saw going into the meet, we thought a third-place finish was rock solid.”

The Tech men entered the swimming portion of the men’s championships with 297 points. That was because the divers staked their claim on the second day after competing a week earlier at the women’s championships.

Tech’s divers claimed a silver and a bronze medal, and several other high finishes in the three events earned valuable points.

The biggest surprise came from Logan Stevens, a junior from Covington, Kentucky, who had never finished higher than third place in any diving event. He performed on the big stage, claiming silver in the 3-meter event with a score of 384.75 points.

“It’s a great story,” Skinner said. “He was a recruited walk-on. He came here for no money. He came here because of Virginia Tech, and he and Ron [Piemonte, Tech’s diving coach] have really clicked. He was right there in the hunt to get a bronze, too, in the platform, and he got passed by his teammate, Thomas Shinholser, and finished fourth. It was awesome to see him emerging.”

Shinholser, a sophomore from Beverly, Mass., won the bronze medal in the platform event with a score of 370 points, while Stevens finished behind him in fourth. Kyle Batta aided the cause with a fourth-place finish in the 1-meter diving competition, posting a score of 366.55 points, and Shinholser was behind him in eighth with a score of 308.35.

During the swimming portion of the championships, Brandon Fiala and Robert Owen won gold medals for the Hokies.

In the morning prelims, both Fiala and Burns broke school records in the 200 IM, but it was Fiala’s time that set the new school record at 1:43.73.

Owen, a sophomore from Bridgewater, Mass., won the 400 IM in a thrilling battle with second-place finisher Christian McCurdy of NC State that was dead even through the final 100 yards. Owen stretched to take gold by .33 seconds with an NCAA automatic-qualifying time of 3:41.78. After breaking the school record in the morning prelims, Owen’s evening swim broke that record by two seconds in the finals.

“Brandon Fiala has emerged as a superstar and not just because he won an ACC title,” Skinner said. “This is a guy who really continues to come into his own. When you get to the top of the conference, that’s a big deal.”

“The same with Robert Owen. We swept the IMs, which is cool, and those guys are on track. Owen Burns made the finals in everything. He’s such a fighter and has such heart. I thought those three guys really came into their own.”

Tech won the bronze medal in the 800 freestyle relay after Burns, Lucas Bureau, Morgan Latimer and Michal Simha hit the wall in an NCAA A-cut time of 6:21.48. After finishing within the “A” standard, the quartet automatically qualified for the NCAA Championships.

Yet after placing in five relays last year en route to the championship, Tech only placed in the 800 freestyle relay this time around.

“NC State is just so strong in freestyle, which also carries over to their relays,” Skinner said. “Last year, when we won, we medaled in all 10 relays. This year, unfortunately, we only medaled in one. We really need to work on our sprinters and our sprint program, and we need to do that through recruiting and through preparation.

“The way we have done it here is through balance. We’re good in diving, we’re good in distance freestyle, we’re good in IM, we’re good in fly, we’re good in sprinters ... we just weren’t able to score enough points across the board in every event to counter their [the Wolfpack’s] sprinting. That’s how we did it last year. We just fell a little short in some areas where we have been strong.”

On the final day of the competition, Jake Ores, a senior from Loveland, Colorado, won the Hokies’ final medal, a silver in the 1,650 freestyle, with a school-record time of 14:57.98. It was his second career medal in this event (bronze, 2014) and his second top-five finish of the week.

“Jake was coming off a great season, so he set himself up,” Skinner said. “We knew he had what it took to have that breakthrough. He made us realize how great he is. He’s someone who is going to be in the hunt to have a shot at the Olympic team [in 2016].”

At the women’s competition, Arnett, a senior from Spring, Texas, was the top story, as she was named the ACC’s Most Valuable Diver for the season.

The Tech men’s team, behind six medalists, finished third at the ACC Swimming and Diving Championships.

Kaylea Arnett led the Hokies with three medals.

Kaylea Arnett

Photo Credit: John E. Declue

Continued on page 30

HOKIES THIRD AT ACC SWIMMING AND DIVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

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fourth straight time. She won the gold medal in the platform event on the final day of the meet – her sixth career gold medal – after posting a score of 295.3 points. Her six career gold medals are the most by a diver in ACC history and the most by any Virginia Tech swimmer or diver.

On the first day of the competition, Arnett captured gold in the 3-meter diving event, finishing with a final score of 369.45 points. She marked her third career medal in the event. She won gold last year as well and took silver as a sophomore in 2013.

On the second day, Arnett took the bronze medal in the 3-meter diving event, scoring 333.45 points. She only trailed first-place finished Katrina Young of Florida State by four points.

“Her spirit just doesn’t Quit,” Skinner said. “She’s one of the most hard-working athletes I’ve ever coached. She’s happy. She’s calm. The bigger the moment, the better she’s doing. She just has it. At that level, it doesn’t come along very often. We feed off her, and the swimmers, even though they do totally different things, feel the confidence that she exudes because she does it in such a mild, positive way.”

Tech’s other individual medalists included Klaudia Nazieblo, Emma Villarreal and Fiona Donnelly. Nazieblo, a freshman from Wroclaw, Poland, won two bronze medals. She finished third in the 200-yard butterfly with a school-record time of 1:55.26 and third in the 200-yard backstroke with a school-record time of 2:14.42.

Villarreal, a freshman from McAllen, Texas, won a bronze medal in the platform diving event with a score of 279.95 points, while Donnelly, a sophomore from Belper, England, won a bronze in the 400 IM – the first medal of her career. She broke the school record with a time of 4:08.99.

The Hokies’ 400-yard medley relay team also claimed a bronze medal. The group of Nazieblo, Weronika Pulaszek, Maggie Gruber and Jessica Hespeler finished with a time of 3:34.75.

Other strong performances came from Mackenzie Stewart, a junior from Port Clinton, Ohio, who finished tied for fourth with Paluszek in the 100 breaststroke and fifth in the 200 breaststroke, and Gruber, a sophomore from Gibsonia, Pennsylvania, who claimed seventh in the 100 butterfly.

“In particular, on both sides, we were happy with the way our underclassmen are starting to emerge,” Skinner said. “I think that bodes well for the future. They didn’t seem fazed or nervous. They just have it.”

“The Hokies have a lot to look forward to in our annual quest to win one of these things – and that’s what we want to do. We want to win ACC team championships and advance to NCAAs and get as high as a finish as we can. We felt like we swam very fast. It’s just a quick meet now. It’s as good as any meet in the country. It’s as deep as the Big Ten. It’s as fast as the SEC. We stand toe to toe with any conference in our sport. This is the big league.”

Those who qualified now gear up for the upcoming NCAA Championships. The Tech men’s team has finished in the top 20 for three consecutive years, while the women’s team has finished in the top 25 for three straight years.

“The path began with the NCAA Zone A Diving Championships held March 9-11 in Buffalo, New York, after the magazine deadline. Most of Tech’s divers qualified for the event.

“They continue to be the best diving program in the conference, if not the country,” Skinner said. “They’ve won the top diving programs in the country. They’re in the top three every year at the NCAA in points scored, and Ron Piemonte is outstanding – as a person, as a Hokie and as a coach of diving.”

The women’s national competition will be the third week of March in Greensboro, North Carolina, while the men’s national competition will be the last weekend of March in Iowa City, Iowa.
Two days in sunny and warm Miami, Florida, is probably not the typical precursor to an international student's first ever days in the United States, especially for one who is enrolling at Virginia Tech in January.

But that is exactly where Weronika Paluszek found herself in late 2012. The newest member of Tech's swimming and diving team, along with Michal Szuba, a newcomer on the men's side, arrived in Miami a couple days before the Hokies were going to begin their winter training in the Sunshine State.

The pair, whom both hail from Wroclaw, Poland, took in the sights before meeting with their teammates, doing some training and heading back to Blacksburg to finish off the 2012-13 swimming and diving season.

"I only had one bag actually because we flew directly to Miami because of the training trip," Paluszek said. "We flew to Miami two days before to see the city, and we spent a couple nights there before the training trip.

"So I had in my bag winter clothes because it was winter in Poland and then we were going to go to Blacksburg, which is going to be cold, too. I had training things because we are on a training trip, and I'm going to need those things and I had summer clothes because we were in Miami for two weeks. That's what was in my bag. When we get back, my mom sent me three big boxes with clothes and whatever from home, so that's how I have my closet full right now."

She may have come to Tech with just a single bag with clothes, but in her three seasons at Tech, she has added some ACC medals and set a couple of school records. She took home gold medals in the 200-yard breaststroke and the 400-yard medley relay and scored a bronze in the 200 breast at the 2013 ACC Championships.

A year later, she was a three-time bronze medal winner in the same three events and went on to be a two-time honorable mention All-American (100 and 200 breast) at the 2014 NCAA meet. This past season, she picked up another bronze in the medley relay and just missed out on medaling in the other two — placing fourth in both the 100 and 200 breast.

She also holds the school records in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke and set the ACC record in the 200 backstroke in 2013 before it was broken last year.

Winning, though, wasn’t new to Paluszek. In Poland, she was the national champion in the 200 breaststroke in both 2011 and 2012, and she also won the national championship in the 100 breast in 2011.

Her transatlantic journey did not stop her success in the pool, but she quickly found out the differences between swimming in her home country and swimming on an American college campus.

First, for anyone who has been to the Christiansburg Aquatic Center — or any collegiate swim meet for that matter — he or she can attest that it is certainly not an individual sport.

"It is more team bonding here in the States, 100 percent for certain," she said. "Swimming is an individual sport, but not here, because going to ACCs, it's all about what we can do to make our team as high as possible. In Poland, I had amazing friends, who I spent more than half my life with, but it was me and my race. What I can achieve? Can I win this Polish Nationals or make the cut for the juniors or European Championships?

"That [team building] also caused how the atmosphere is here with the team. Everyone is cheering for each other, and it's like a family. We have a really amazing program and are led by great coaches, but I think the atmosphere and how we treat each other and how we are with each other is the most important and the most impressive thing. At first, actually, it was kind of annoying when everyone was at practice yelling, 'Let's go.' I'm like, 'I know I have to swim. You don't have to do that.' But now, I'm one of the persons who does it all the time."

Another struggle Paluszek had to overcome was her limited weight room experience.

"I didn’t lift at all in my life before I got here, so that is a big difference," she said. "I am getting better. I’m not a heavy lifter, and I don’t think I ever will be. But when I came here, I had no idea what was going on in the weight room and especially since I got here in January in the middle of everything.

"The assistant coaches in the weight room, one of them was always with me and showing me everything. I had troubles with remembering which exercises were which, and on the card, I was putting the Polish translation for the names. And then, in America, you use pounds and we use kilograms, so that was another thing that caused me problems."

Paluszek was born and raised in Wroclaw, the largest city in western Poland with a population of more than 600,000 citizens — also making it the fourth-largest city in the country. In addition, it is the third-largest educational center in Poland, with more than 150,000 students in 30 colleges.

Continued on page 34

Weronika Paluszek was a dominant swimmer in her native country of Poland, and she's continued finding success during her three years in Blacksburg with the Hokies

by Marc Mullen
Swimming Spotlight | Weronica Paluszek

Continued from page 33

However, at an early age, an idea was put in the back of Paluszek’s mind of going to the United States to further her education. She comes from a sports family, as her mother, Katarzyna, used to teach physical education in school and her dad, Krzysztof, used to be a soccer coach. But it was her dad’s mother, Janina, who was the swimmer.

“When I was younger, I was actually doing a lot of different sports – I did tennis, I really loved horseback riding, and I also did gymnastics. But when I got to the age of 11, I needed to pick something,” Paluszek said. “So I decided to go with swimming because I liked it, and the coaches thought that was what I was going to be good at. My parents never pushed me to do it. Even when I was 11, my mother, I remember her telling me that it was my decision and I needed to decide if I wanted it or not, so I’m just kind of kept going from that."

“My dad always had friends in different sports because of his job, and that was always with me that maybe I would go to States for college because it’s a good opportunity and it’s easier to connect school and sport in States than it is in Poland. It was an idea when I got older, and to connect school and sport in States than it is because it’s a good opportunity and it’s easier for me that maybe I would go to States for college because of his job, and that was always with me that it was my decision and I needed to decide if I wanted it or not, so I’m just kind of kept going from that."

“When we are together, we speak Polish,” Paluszek said of her Polish teammates. “And when we are around people, we speak Polish and people get mad, kind of. Ned [Skinner, Tech’s head coach] kind of gets upset a little too when we do, especially now since Klaudia is here. When I talk to her at practice, he gets mad.

“But Michel and I hung out a lot, especially when we first got here. This is totally different from where we are from so we have just gone through this journey together.”

Q: What is the one thing you miss about Poland?
WP: “Besides family and friends, I miss the food. Yes, of course, Polish food. I can’t even find some of those products here. Just everything in America is not natural. It’s processed, and the food here just tastes different. But of course, I miss all the traditional Polish foods. My grandma asked me like months before what I want her to make me when I get home. But it depends. I can’t really say; but I really like pierogis (think ravioli) stuffed with cheese, potato filling, sauerkraut and/or ground meat) and galumpki (stuffed cabbage rolls wrapped around minced pork or beef, onions and rice).”

Q: How much has your English improved since living here?
WP: “I took English as a second language, and I also took German in primary school, but I can’t speak that at all. And, oh yes, it has improved. I didn’t realize when I came here that it was really bad. But now people talk about it all the time, about how I could barely speak English when I got here. I’m not trying to say that it’s super great, but I think it’s gotten so much better, and I feel so much better about it.”

Q: Have you picked up any American fashion styles since you’ve been here?
WP: “I would say that I did not pick it up. I see the differences. I just prefer the European style. In Poland, and generally in Europe, you wouldn’t go to college in sweatspants and flip-flops, and that’s just normal here. I’m walking to class here, and I’ll see people in class in their sweatspants and sweat socks and flip-flops. I don’t know what they just did, but they probably just woke up and just came straight to class from bed. So I don’t really do it, only really to go from practices.”

Q: What is your major, and what are your future plans?
WP: “I’m actually in public relations right now. I came here as undecided, and then I thought communications might work. I was thinking about going into law school when I was at home, but I can’t do it here because it would be so different and wouldn’t make any sense. When I’m done, I want to go back to Poland. So I was looking at journalism and the communications department, but I realized that if I do PR, I would have more options after graduation, and I can still be a journalist with a PR degree. I just thought I wanted to have as many options when I was done, and I thought that was the best for me.”

Q: What was your biggest fear coming to the United States for school?
WP: “I would say that if I had a problem, or if I was having a bad day, who was I going to talk to? Would I be able to pick up the phone and call my parents or my friends? Even with technology, I wasn’t sure. But I Skype with my parents each week, which is good, and I email friends, too. But it wasn’t too bad because the team became my second family, and I’m really glad that I picked Virginia Tech because of the people, the environment. I would never have wanted it any differently.”

Q: You have several pets, but they are back home, is that correct?
WP: “Yes, they are at home. I have two dogs, a German shepherd named Ajsys and a St. Bernard named Sonja. Our cats are Barsa, and she had a baby, actually two, but the one died. We kept the other and her name is Chelsea.”

These are a few of our favorite things...
I reached record numbers. Inspired donations to the ALS Association that the disease through social media platforms and Association, as it raised the public’s awareness of running as a way to bring about this awareness.

The “Ice Bucket Challenge” originated with former BC College lacrosse players – coincidentally the Ice may have been on the minds of a few Boston baseball player Pete Frates, who suffers from ALS. "Yards for Yeardley," or known on social media as "#yards4yeards," challenged teams to run collectively a million yards over a one-month period in honor of the former lacrosse player. The initiative helped bring teams closer together by training for a purpose, and also, the almost 570 miles ran by each team helped bring awareness to a problem that affects 1 in 5 college females, according to studies conducted by the U.S. Justice Department.

According to an ESPNW.com article written on the campaign, there were more than 150 teams that participated, including the Virginia Tech women’s lacrosse team. Those teams also included high school teams, college teams across all divisions and even some men’s programs.

"I actually saw it on some of my former teammates' Instagram accounts, and I started chatting with them, and I was like, 'What is this about? '"Kolarik said. "And it was just really important for me because you could never stop spreading the word about relationship violence. It’s always going to be there, and people don’t actually realize some of the signs and everything that goes into it."

"And especially with a team like ours because we have 33 girls on the team, and you never know what could be going on with your team, especially if you are a coach. You are not there 24/7. It was really important for me to spread this here at Virginia Tech because Virginia Tech, as a school, has been through so much in other aspects of violence. So to help join this cause was important to me."

Kolarik said she first reached out to the seniors on the team and asked if they would be on board with this and asked them if it was something they wanted to do. Without hesitation, they jumped right on it.

"The women were responsible for tracking their own yards, and each week, would send their numbers to Kolarik, who would compile them. The team ended up going beyond the million-yard mark, pushing past 1.3 million yards."

"The lacrosse community is so small. Everyone knows someone, somewhere, and now with social media, everyone was putting it up there and using the hashtag '#yards4yeards,'" Kolarik said. "You could just click on the hashtag and see all the images out there – all the people, the teams, and everyone just posting pictures to spread the word."

"Tech’s players participated over winter break, and the distance ran came to about 18 miles per player. Almost tripling that number for the Hokies was freshman Tristan McGinley, who ran 96,290 yards by herself over the break in her hometown of Moorestown, New Jersey."

"She logged most of her miles on the treadmill or running around an indoor track."

"It was just so easy to me because I wasn’t really running for myself, then I really didn’t want to do it. But this, I was running for a cause and to reach a team goal and bring awareness for Yeardley and her foundation. It just made it so much easier because I’m not running for myself."

"But it was so cool. The whole lacrosse community has a love for lacrosse, and that’s why we’re playing it. But it was really cool how it wasn’t just our team doing it because we have Kim. Or it just wasn’t a UVa thing. It was a whole lacrosse-program-wide community thing. We all had this goal, and we didn’t want it for us. We wanted it for love, and we wanted it for the One Love Foundation. But it was cool how we all got to the goal as a team."

During the holiday break, Tech lacrosse staff was posting pictures of its players running in all sorts of locations on its Instagram page (VT_Lax), with its updated total. There were images of girls on the beach, in the snow, on the turf and on the treadmill, all in an effort to reach a goal to raise awareness.

"It was cool to see, because it showed that, even though we were all in different parts of the country, we were still working hard to reach the goal," McGinley said.

This may well mark the five-year anniversary of the tragedy that rocked the UVa lacrosse community, and for Kolarik, it certainly doesn’t seem like that long ago. "I wear the One Love bracelet on my wrist, and so, she always had me, and I’m always thinking about her," she said. "It really doesn’t seem like it was five years ago. It seems like I was just out there on the lacrosse field playing with her."

"But the takeaway from this is that I hope people just keep supporting the One Love Foundation and its mission to spread awareness of relationship violence. And I hope that people keep celebrating Yeardley Love’s life."
The Virginia Tech men’s track and field team got some clutch performances on the final day and won the program’s fifth ACC team crown, including its third indoor title by Jimmy Robertson

While watching his athletes in competition, Dave Cianelli likes to find a remote spot at the venue, preferring to observe in solace and to live out his angst at a distance.

Following his men’s team’s performance at the 2015 ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships on Feb. 26-28, Cianelli – the director of Tech’s track and field and cross country programs – came on Feb. 26-28, Cianelli – the director of Tech’s track and field and cross country programs – came out of his hiding place, and the normally stoic coach displayed another side, donning a Hokie Bird hat and wearing a smile.

Victors get away with such shenanigans.

Dominating the pole vault competition and getting clutch performances from the middle-distance runners and jumper Manuel Ziegler, the Virginia Tech men’s track and field squad captured its third ACC indoor title. The Hokies – who finished in fifth place last season at the league’s indoor meet – amassed 101 points, besting second-place Florida State by 14.5 points.

The team title marked the school’s 20th since joining the ACC for the 2004-05 season and the second this month – wresting won the league’s regular-season dual meet title two weeks prior. Of those 20, nine are by the track and field programs, including five by the men.

“A championship like this doesn’t happen by accident,” Cianelli said, only moments before getting a shower courtesy of a couple of his athletes. “It takes a lot of preparation and a lot of thought in building a team that can go into a meet and have a chance to win. You have to go back a year with a recruiting class and the kids on the team that have come so far within a year.

“When I see this, it’s a 12-month process. You go in and you let them go. You let them compete, and at the end of the day, you see how it ends up. The way we competed, even if we had finished second, I wouldn’t have asked for any more. It’s very gratifying to see it all come together.”

Tech relied on its pole vaulters, who accounted for nearly a fourth of the Hokies’ scoring. Five Tech vaulters scored a total of 25 points, with Chris Uhle leading the way. Uhle claimed a gold medal with a vault of 18 feet, 1.25 inches (5.59 meters) was enough to win the competition and claimed the school record.

Uhle proved to be the one to beat in the pole vault from his first jump. After passing on the first height, Uhle hit six straight heights on his first attempts. Georgia Tech’s Nikita Kirilov stayed even with Uhle until he was forced to leave the competition due to an ankle injury. Uhle’s mark matched his career best.

This is my senior year, and this is what I’ve been training for four years,” Uhle said. “To finally have that medal in my hand, it just feels great. Being able to replicate my personal best is something I’m proud of.”

Tech’s middle distance team also came up big. Patrick Joseph started the day by winning the mile race, with Neil Gourley finishing third. It looked as if Duke’s Nate McClafferty was going to claim the title with two laps remaining, but on the final lap, Joseph used a tremendous kick to surge ahead of McClafferty and claim the win with a time of 4 minutes, 13.97 seconds.

Gourley earned his bronze in a time of 4:10.23, earning Tech a total of 16 points in the event.

The best performances, though, came in the 5,000. With the team race tightening, the Hokies displayed another side, donning a Hokie Bird hat and wearing a smile.

With the addition of the team that have come into the conference, the points have gotten spread out more, Cianelli said. “It doesn’t take quite as much as it used to [to win]. Looking at it, I thought we had a shot, but just like two years ago, I knew we needed to have an outstanding meet. It would take as close to a perfect meet as you could get.”

Tech also got points from J.C. Coleman, as the football player decided to try track this winter and ended up finishing fifth in the 60-meter dash. Marck Barta claimed seventh in the shot put. Thomas Kruziak was seventh in the weight throw, and the 4x400-meter relay team of Prince Owoas, Martin Dully, Chester Heibden and Dante Price finished seventh.

“Following his men’s team’s performance at the 2015 ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships,” Cianelli said. “I didn’t care about the distance.”

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“All that counted was the title,” Ziegler said. “I didn’t care about the distance.”

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“Following his men’s team’s performance at the 2015 ACC Indoor Track and Field Championships,” Cianelli said. “I didn’t care about the distance.”
Those aren’t the ones that grab the headlines, but those are the ones that make a huge difference in a meet that’s close like this.”

On the women’s side, the Hokies finished in eighth place as a team with 44.5 points. Clemson won the team title with 102 points, followed by Florida State (81) and Notre Dame (74).

The Hokies’ lone victory on the women’s side came from Hanna Green, who stormed from behind on the final lap of the 800-meter race to win. On the final straightaway, Green used a powerful kick to edge Clemson’s Natoya Goule — who had the nation’s best time — by 14 hundredths of a second. Her time of 2:03.43 was an event and school record. Amanda Smith finished fourth for the Hokies.

Sarah Rapp added eight points to the team total when she finished in second in the 3,000 with a time of 9:12.86. Paige Kvartunas claimed fourth in the same event.

Shannon Morton finished fourth in the women’s mile with a time of 4:43.48, and the women’s distance medley relay finished fifth. The team of Katie Kennedy, Nora McKiver, Shalonda Mitchell and Katarina Smiljanic posted a time of 11:22.81.

Shortly after receiving his dousing, Cianelli addressed his athletes, telling them to spend the weekend enjoying what they accomplished before starting to prepare for the NCAA’s indoor meet (for those who qualified).

When asked what his celebratory plans included, Cianelli wasted no time in responding. “Sleep,” he said.

Hanna Green finished second in the 800 at the ACC meet a year ago, but won a gold medal this time, edging Clemson’s Natoya Goule at the finish line.

ACC Champs Again Continued from page 39

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Thomas Curtin’s gold medal in the 5,000-meter run toward the end of the meet helped the Tech men seal their third ACC Indoor championship as a program.

Hanna Green finished second in the 800 at the ACC meet a year ago, but won a gold medal this time, edging Clemson’s Natoya Goule at the finish line.
Carmen Farmer enjoyed a nice career as a softball player for the Hokies, and now she is making a name for herself in rugby.

The spark for rugby was lit in 2012 while in Fort Myers, Florida. Her team lost 8-0 in the Division II Club National Championship held in Annapolis, she became intrigued – and passionate – about the newfound hobby.

“Then just the athleticism. I played a lot of sports growing up, and this was one where I could take aspects from each one of those. It was a new challenge. I had never played a contact sport, and I found that interesting and intriguing. “I was disappointed to see Maryland leave the ACC,” Farmer said. “I’d usually go to the games whenever they [the Hokies] came up to College Park. That still doesn’t seem right for them to be playing Big Ten teams.”

**FORMER TECH PLAYER FINDS SUCCESS IN ANOTHER SPORT**

Frank Beamer, Head Coach, Virginia Tech Football

The right decision can make all the difference in the outcome.

After a few years spent going to law school and several years spent practicing law in various capacities along Maryland’s Eastern Shore, former Tech softball player Carmen Farmer found herself looking for something to scratch a competitive itch.

Once a lanky, slick-fielding shortstop for the Hokies more than a decade ago, she tried a number of different avenues — something she wouldn’t have in private practice. She usually takes vacation days when participating in rugby camps, or a leave of absence, which is what she did to participate in the World Cup last summer.

Farmer isn’t playing since then.

“I took some time off,” she said. “It’s really a huge commitment, and you have to juggle that with a full-time job, which most of the athletes do for obvious reasons. Our World Cup team last year had an average age from 19 to 20 or 19 to 20.

Farmer would like to continue playing, but she also wants to be fair to her day job. She currently works for a small land trust on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, living in Cambridge, Maryland. But the Terrain’s non-profit organization works to protect rural lands and rededovpe existing buildings and infrastructure within towns.

Her work with the Terrain’s non-profit organization allows her some flexibility in terms of scheduling. She usually takes vacation days when participating in rugby camps, or a leave of absence, which is what she did to participate in the World Cup last summer.

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Farmer is married, but has no children. She usually gets back to Blacksburg once or twice a year for a football game or a softball game, and she came back this past fall to watch the Hokies play Boston College. That marked her first trip back in a couple of years.

Farmer often went to Tech softball games when the Hokies visited College Park to play Maryland. And the Terrapins’ move to the Big Ten eliminated that series.

A lot of things can happen in a football game. And in life. That’s why it’s important to know that LewisGale’s Emergency Rooms are fast, efficient and provide quality healthcare you can trust.
Jim Thompson knew something was amiss. Virginia Tech’s longtime men’s tennis coach had watched Sebastien Jacques destroy opponents from his No. 6 spot in the lineup for three years, but during the 2010-11 season, he witnessed a completely different player, one who struggled to beat, and often lost to, the most mediocre of opposition.

“I thought it was motivation … his senior year, he doesn’t care as much any more, he’s going to play No. 6 again probably,” Thompson said. “I kept thinking, ‘Man, c’m on, just try.’”

As it turned out, Jacques was trying. His body, though, refused to cooperate.

After conducting a series of tests, both here in the United States and in his home country of Canada, doctors finally located the problem for the former Tech tennis player, who graduated in 2011 with a degree in marketing and returned to his home of Magog in the province of Quebec. They found a pineal cystic tumor on his brain, and that was creating pressure within his head, leaving him feeling fatigued and taking away his concentration and focus.

That diagnosis, however, only marked the first step of what turned out to be a four-year odyssey.

Doctors in Canada refused to operate to remove the cyst. They deemed a procedure too risky, and they weren’t totally sold on a removal being the panacea of the problems. That left Jacques searching for other options.

Continued on page 46
In Canada, they don’t have enough experience with how to remove the cyst,” Thompson said. “But in the U.S., there are maybe six to 10 doctors who do a lot of these surgeries and get good results, and almost all the patients present the same type of symptoms and problems that Seb has had.

“He got to the point where he needed to try and get it removed because he had no quality of life. He couldn’t have worked a job because the energy level wasn’t there to do it. He was just lying around most of the day.”

Jacques, 26, went online to seek help, and in 2013, he found a surgeon in Santa Monica, California, named Dr. Daniel Kelly, who performs these types of surgeries annually. But then came the next problem – how to pay for it? The surgery costs more than $80,000.

He tried to go through the governmental process in Canada – the Canadian government runs the healthcare system – but that yielded nothing, as doctors refused to sign off on the risky procedure. That left Jacques in a situation where he needed to raise the money on his own.

Jacques established a profile page on YouCaring.com, a free website that allows people in need to raise money. He shared it on his social media platforms (e.g. Facebook), and the tennis community responded.

So, too, did Hokie Nation. A story about his journey appeared in The Roanoke Times on Jan. 26, and not long thereafter, Jacques raised the $80,000 he needed.

“Tennis Canada helped him a little. Three guys really helped him a lot, and then he raised the additional himself?” Thompson said. “It was awesome to see the people who didn’t know him or didn’t know much about him who gave to it. It was like, ‘Hey, you’re a Hokie. You’re part of our family.’

It was awesome to see that. I thought he was going to struggle to raise it and we would have to help him with that, but he was able to raise it pretty quickly.”

Jacques and his parents flew out to California, and Dr. Kelly performed the surgery, which took more than three hours, at the Providence Saint John’s Health Centre on Feb. 12. He was scheduled to be there for three weeks and hoped to be home in mid-March.

“He has to heal from the surgery, but two little things that he’s said so far is that he was always chewing gum because he had this metallic taste in his mouth. He said the day after the surgery that he didn’t have that taste any more,” Thompson said. “That was a good sign. He also thought he had better strength in his hands already.”

Thompson flew to California the day before Jacques’ surgery to be with him and his parents. He spent the better part of two days there before taking a red-eye flight back to Virginia. “It was important for me to be out there for his family and for him and our relationship,” Thompson said. “We have a great relationship. It meant a lot to go and be there with him. I knew it wasn’t going to be easy for him.”

Jacques’ doctors have reversed the use of any electronic devices, citing complete rest as the best thing for his brain. But Thompson gets text updates from Jacques’ parents, and Jacques already is up and walking around.

Doctors remain optimistic about a full recovery for Jacques, according to Thompson.

“Hopefully he has the ability to go out and pursue whatever he wants to pursue,” Thompson said. “He was a very bright student here, and he’s going to have options in the business world. If he heals enough and wants to teach tennis, he’ll have options there as well.

“It’ll be fun for me to see what he decides to do. It won’t surprise me if he decides to help other people. He’s already brought attention that healthcare in Canada wasn’t able to do this, so I think he could become a spokesman for that in some type of way.

“This was a four-year process for him. That’s a lot of your life.”

Now, thanks to an American doctor, the American health care system and the generous support of so many, Jacques has many more years to spread his message.”

Continued from page 45
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