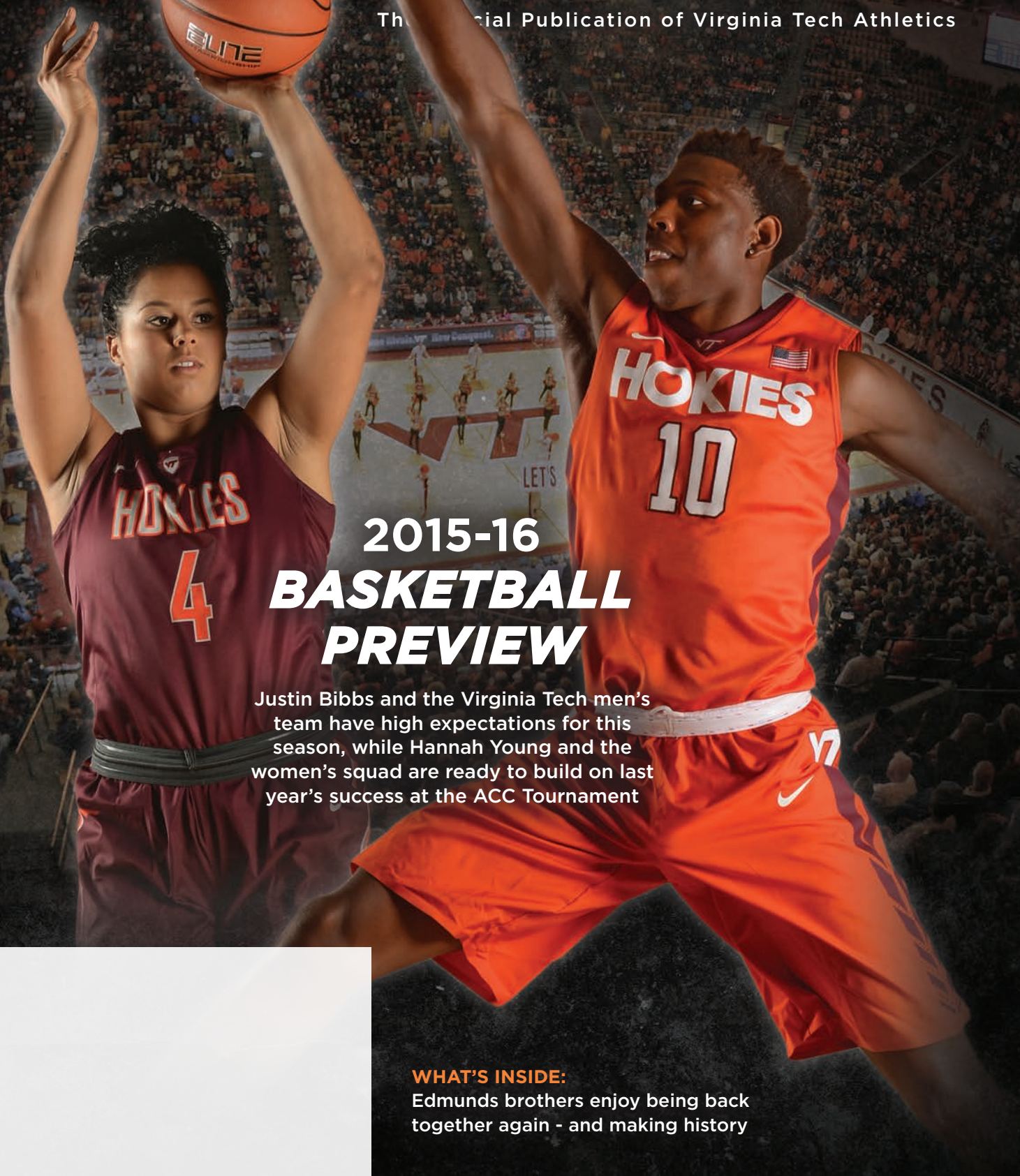


inside

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HOKIE SPORTS

The Official Publication of Virginia Tech Athletics



2015-16 **BASKETBALL PREVIEW**

Justin Bibbs and the Virginia Tech men's team have high expectations for this season, while Hannah Young and the women's squad are ready to build on last year's success at the ACC Tournament

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Edmunds brothers enjoy being back together again - and making history

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PERFECT EVENING FOR A TECH WIN

On absolutely perfect evening following days of rain in Southwest Virginia, Virginia Tech huddled together before the match and then came together during the match, using two second-half goals to knock off West Virginia 2-0 in a non-conference tilt at Thompson Field on Oct. 6. The win avenged last season's 3-0 loss to the Mountaineers in Morgantown, West Virginia.

Tech, which snapped a two-match losing streak, broke a scoreless deadlock early in the second half on a goal from Som Essomé, who scored off a pass from Dan Lauretano. Eleven minutes later, Reece Alexander scored for the Hokies off a pass from Merlin Baus. Ben Lundgaard preserved the shutout with six saves.

The victory marked Tech's fifth win of the season.



THE STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPERIENCE

"I am very grateful to be on scholarship because it helps me not only financially, but also shows that all the hard work that I put in during high school paid off once I got to college. I think scholarships help motivate players to perform to their best ability."

Daniel Lauretano
Senior | Chester, Virginia





The Donor File

Jeff Jones

HOKIE CLUB LEVEL:
Platinum

CURRENTLY RESIDES:
Columbus, Ohio

GRADUATION YEAR: 2008

FAMILY: Jean Jones (mother); James Jones (father); Jennifer Jones (sister; Class of 2005)



Q&A

Q: A Hokie is ...

A: Brotherhood, honor, leadership, sacrifice, service, loyalty, duty, and Ut Prosim. A Hokie is proud to say, "I AM a Hokie!" and bleeds maroon and orange!

Q: The Hokie Nation is real because ...

A: We are all a family. We all embody Ut Prosim and understand what it means to be part of a community both in times of heartache and joy. We work hard, play hard and are dedicated, prideful and loyal to our own as much as to our immediate family.

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

A: I've been a Hokie since my older sister enrolled at Virginia Tech in the fall of 2000. My family and I fell in love with the campus, people and traditions the first day we took a tour of the university. Virginia Tech is the only university I applied to. I enrolled early and have never regretted it!

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

A: My best memory is the 2003 Virginia Tech football season. I was a freshman in the Corps of Cadets and was able to march on the field prior to each home game before helping form the tunnel for 'Enter Sandman!' I will never forget the win against Texas A&M during the

aftermath of Hurricane Isabel or the blowout of No. 2 Miami later that year.

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

A: I began donating the year I graduated to be eligible for season tickets, as well as to continue to be involved with the university.

Q: Do you have any gameday superstitions? If so, what are they?

A: I won't wear the same clothing combination for a game after any loss, and I'll continue to wear the same shirt after a win. It's hard to believe, but I can remember what I was wearing after each attended loss for the past 15 years.

Q: Describe your perfect day at Virginia Tech.

A: My perfect day would begin with a round of golf at the River Course prior to brunch at Boudreaux's and then an afternoon tailgating with family and friends followed by an emphatic Hokie win. A celebration drink at Top of the Stairs would cap off the day!

Q: What motivates you to give back to help Virginia Tech athletics?

A: I understand what it means to be in a situation where you have to pay for your own college tuition. It can be

difficult. Student-athletes have the added pressure of performing on the field in addition to the classroom. The past/future experiences, camaraderie and relationships made due to Virginia Tech athletics are priceless in my opinion. I am fortunate enough to be able to help support our student-athletes and will continue to do so as long as I am able.

Q: I'm a Hokie Club member because ...

A: I want to help improve Virginia Tech athletics and attract the best students and athletes to the campus. I'm a strong believer that athletics achievements will attract higher levels of academically inclined students as well as help improve the infrastructure, university programs and exposure of Virginia Tech to the rest of the nation.

Q: My all-time favorite Virginia Tech football player is ...

A: Tyrod Taylor. He embodies selflessness, leadership and the will to win. I named my 6-year-old walker hound after him (Taylor).

Q: My all-time favorite Virginia Tech student-athlete from another sport is ...

A: Dell Curry. He is our only first-team men's basketball All-American and continues to educate and teach basketball through his family.



110% HOKIE Basketball Experience

DEADLINE APPROACHING

Hokie Nation, the 110% HOKIE campaign is still ongoing, but the deadline is quickly approaching to get in on the basketball experience package. Contributors who give an extra 10 percent of their yearly donation to the Annual Fund by Nov. 13 are eligible to be a part of this unique experience.

The basketball experience will be held Dec. 13, as part of the men's and women's basketball doubleheader when the Hokies take on Lamar and Coppin State, respectively. Single-game tickets will be available for purchase at \$5 per ticket for the women's game and \$10 per ticket for the men's game.

All 110% HOKIE participants will be able to take photos on the Virginia Tech Carillion Court at Cassell Coliseum following the men's game. The event will conclude with a tour of the Hahn Hurst Practice Center, which has recently been refurbished with new graphics and other upgrades.

Anyone who made a gift by the initial 110% HOKIE campaign deadline of July 1 for the football experience is eligible to participate in the basketball experience as well.

The 110% HOKIE campaign is the Hokie Club's way to get the whole "team" involved. Hokie coaches and student-athletes give 110 percent every day. Whether it's in the classroom, in the community or in competition, they are passionate about Virginia Tech. Now the Hokie Club is asking fans to do the same by adding an extra 10 percent to their annual Hokie Club gift from last year. This investment will directly impact all of Virginia Tech's talented student-athletes who work tirelessly every day to bring academic success, ACC championships and national recognition to their teams, the university and Hokie Nation. Now it's fans' chance to take the challenge by giving 110 percent.



Two former Tech football players pass away

Mike Zeno, a prominent football player in the late 1960s, passed away in Utica, Michigan, in late August.

Zeno, a product of Akron, Ohio, lettered at Tech in 1958, 1959 and 1960 and was a standout lineman, playing on both sides of the ball. He played for legendary coach Frank Moseley, who retired from coaching after Zeno's senior season in 1960 and became the school's athletics director.

Zeno worked as a sales representative with Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company before retiring. He graduated from Tech in 1962 with a B.S. in distributive education.

Also, Mark Webb, a nose guard in the mid-1980s, passed away the final week of

September at the age of 50. The Meadowview, Virginia product's final collegiate game came in the 1986 Peach Bowl in which the Hokies beat NC State on Chris Kinzer's field goal as time expired.

Webb, who graduated with a degree in sociology in 1987, lettered all four years at Tech (1983-86). As a senior, he recorded 33 tackles and a sack, and he also broke up two passes and recovered a fumble. His junior year, he finished with 22 tackles, including two for a loss. His best season came during his sophomore year – which also happened to be Bruce Smith's final season. Smith received a lot of attention from opponents, which allowed Webb to register 41 tackles and seven sacks.

Moore named an ACC Legend

Former Virginia Tech defensive end Corey Moore will be honored as one of the 2015 Atlantic Coast Conference Class of Football Legends, as announced by the league office on Sept. 29.

Moore made a name for himself as one of the football program's best defensive players in school history during his career from 1997-99. In 1998, he garnered first-team All-America honors and was the BIG EAST'S Defensive Player of the Year following a season in which he recorded 13.5 sacks. He also added 67 tackles, including 18.5 for a loss, and he blocked three kicks on special teams. He earned Music City Bowl MVP honors following the Hokies' win over Alabama.

In 1999, he again earned first-team All-America honors and became just the second unanimous All-American in school history (Jim Pyne). He posted a BIG EAST record 17 sacks to go with 11 other tackles for a loss and 60 total tackles. He won the 1999 Nagurski Award as college football's Defensive Player of the Year and the Lombardi Award as college football's Lineman of the Year.

Moore, who works as an undergraduate advisor in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at Michigan State, will be honored with 13 other ACC greats at the ACC Night of Legends held at the Belk Bowl on Friday, Dec. 4 – the night before the ACC's football title game.

Macho playing well in Canada


Former Tech defensive back Macho Harris is playing for the Saskatchewan Roughriders in the Canadian Football League and enjoyed a terrific game recently, intercepting three passes in a 33-21 win over the Montreal Alouettes.

He twice intercepted former Tennessee quarterback Jonathan Crompton, and his final interception came against former Marshall standout Rakeem Cato. He returned that one 50 yards for a touchdown.

At press time, Harris had 46 tackles on the season, with four sacks and the three interceptions. He signed with the Roughriders in 2012 after bouncing around in the NFL for three years, with stops in Pittsburgh, Washington and Philadelphia – which drafted him in the fifth round of the 2009 NFL Draft.


Harris recorded 61 tackles for Saskatchewan last season and has 137 so far in his four years with the team.

Harris played at Tech from 2005-08 and still ranks third in career interceptions with 15 behind Gene Bunn (18) and Tyrone Drakeford (16), and he ranks second in return yardage with 278 yards behind Ashley Lee's school record 351 yards. Harris' four touchdowns on interception returns are a school record.



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editor's desk | by Jimmy Robertson

Young DB's getting unexpected on-the-job training this season

In 1996, when your humble editor started working in this athletics department, the sports medicine office consisted of a trainer, a team physician and a few graduate assistants.

Today, that same office consists of at least 10 full-time staff members, numerous graduate assistants and student trainers, and access to any number of doctors through the Edward Via Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine and the surrounding areas. They all devote countless hours each week to the care of Tech's student-athletes.

Unfortunately, the ones assigned to the football team have been working overtime.

In the span of about 10 days in early October, that same staff ruled tailbacks Shai McKenzie, Marshawn Williams and Kendall Fuller out for the rest of the season. The ruling on McKenzie and Williams came as no shock given the ACL injuries they suffered last season. Their return for 2015 always carried with it question marks. The ruling on Fuller, though – a crusher.

No fan wants to see this happen to anyone, but the All-American stands as a fan favorite with Hokie Nation, partly because of his play on the field and mostly because of his family's history with the school.

Tech already had dealt with injuries to quarterback Michael Brewer and linebacker Andrew Motuapuaka, who both missed games. But Fuller represented the key to the Hokies' defense. Much of what coordinator Bud Foster and defensive backs coach Torrian Gray like to do is predicated on the cornerbacks' ability to play man coverage. Few do that better than Fuller.

Tech lost its first two games without Fuller heading into a Friday night tussle with NC State. Without him, Tech's cornerbacks featured Brandon Facyson on one side and a combination of Greg Stroman, Mook Reynolds, Donovan Riley and Terrell Edmunds to fill the other side and the nickel roles. Only Riley possessed any experience out of that bunch. The other three had a combined 26 snaps of collegiate experience – all by Stroman – coming into this season.

Factor in that Gray has committed to Adonis Alexander, another true freshman, as the rover to take the place of the dismissed C.J. Reavis, and the Hokies suddenly look vulnerably young in the secondary. East Carolina and Pittsburgh took advantage.

"They don't have the experience we'd like for them to have, and it showed in some instances," Foster admitted. "They're still talented kids, and we're looking forward to those guys continuing to improve and grow."

"The kids are playing hard. We just need to execute. The young kids in particular, and even a few older kids, you've got to be consistently good, or a play or two or three usually is what determines the outcome in a tight ball game."

After going with Stroman against East Carolina and playing Reynolds in the nickel role, Gray went with Edmunds against Pittsburgh and played Stroman as the nickel back. Edmunds held up fairly well in his first collegiate start, but he himself thought he played just OK. Most of that self-criticism stems from the outcome of the game, a 17-13 loss.

"I just don't think you can play a good game

or a great game and come out with the loss," he said. "The only way a person can play good is if you come out and actually win the game."

"I think he's good prospect," Foster said of Edmunds. "I'm really excited about his potential. It's unfortunate with some of those guys, him included, that you're seeing first-time players playing and getting their first experiences this way."

Edmunds gives the Hokies some size at the spot at 6-foot-1 and 205 pounds. He also gives the Hokies some athleticism with his near 40-inch vertical jump.

But can he backpedal with the ACC's best? Can he turn and run stride for stride down the field, or keep with receivers on crossing patterns?

Foster and Gray are committed to finding out. The staff elected to move Stroman to receiver following the Pittsburgh loss. That leaves the other young guys to fill the rather large void in Fuller's absence.

"The communication," Edmunds said when asked what the Hokies would miss the most without Fuller. "Him being an older guy, just like Chuck [Clark] and Brandon, they're older guys, so they're talking to us young guys about everything. I'm not going to say I don't know what I'm doing, but they might call a check faster than I can. That's a big part that we're missing right now."

These young guys need to find it in a hurry. The clock on this season is winding down, and Tech's season could very well hinge on what these guys learn – and more importantly, how quickly they do it.



Grandpa Gil and our connection with sports

To be clear, this is not a column declaring that sports aren't important. They are. I am someone whose livelihood depends on sports. Beyond that, nearly every relationship I have in life is rooted in sports – from the lifelong friends I made while playing in Little League, to the players and coaches who gave me an education in the sports I have broadcast, to the influential people throughout sports that helped me become the “Voice of the Hokies.” In fact, I am often annoyed when people argue that sports pale in importance to other pursuits. Sports teach lessons. Sports forge bonds. Sports create connections between generations.

Through the years, I have made countless personal sacrifices in the name of career and sports. Weddings, anniversaries, reunions and birthdays – all missed. All without hesitation, and rarely with a glance back to view what I hadn't been there to witness in person. In my private moments, I often reflect on my selfishness when it comes to sports. I have a tendency to become immersed in results – mine, and the team I am covering. I tend to shut everything, and everyone, out.

That was the mode I woke up in the morning after the Hokies' loss to East Carolina. That Saturday had not been among my finer days. I imagine many Hokies felt the same way. The team had lost. Frustration throughout the fan base was undoubtedly rising. From a broadcast perspective, our crew had an extremely challenging day. Our booth at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium was comically ill equipped for a broadcast of our technical complexity. Rain-splashed windows, no



Photo courtesy of Jon Laaser

Gilbert Wolter was a pilot in the 179th Field Artillery Group during World War II. On Aug. 2, 2015, his family arranged for him to take a final flight in the plane he flew in the war – the L-4 “Grasshopper.”

monitors and dark numerals on darker jerseys presented challenges for Mike Burnop and me to see what was happening on the field. Suffice it to say, I didn't feel as though it had been one of our better efforts. Even if it had been, it was still a loss. The five-hour drive in the rain back to Blacksburg that culminated at 3 a.m. didn't help.

Frank Beamer had made a comment about “exhibition games” following the game. I understood what he meant, but others misinterpreted the statement. With “Tech Talk Live” scheduled for Monday, I knew the reality was I would have to handle genuine negativity for the first time in this role. I didn't want to get out of bed. I finally forced myself up at 11 a.m.

A text message from my mom, Debbie, was

waiting when I did. My grandpa, Gilbert, was not doing well. He is a 95-year-old fighter, previously in World War II and now in denying the end of his extraordinary life. It looked like that fight was ending. It appeared he had suffered a second stroke. He was non-responsive. When he had been, he couldn't feel parts of his body.

If I wanted to say goodbye, I needed to get to Chicago. Like the Hokies, I had an extremely hectic week ahead. I was ashamed that was my first thought.

Grandpa was the guy who dressed up as Santa Claus every year and gave all the grandkids presents. Mine were always sports related – golf clubs, baseball cards, Starting Lineup figurines.

Those presents were an extension of our

relationship. Grandpa was the guy who chipped golf balls in the front yard that I would gleefully chase around. His short game needed work, but he did it because I loved it. I became the captain of my high school golf team. Golf remains a passion.

Grandpa was a top engineer at Sunbeam in Chicago. He took the train into the city every day, helping to create many of the products we still rely on today. He would have fit in nicely at Tech. He did fit in nicely at Purdue. Dr. Sands, Tech's president, can probably relate.

By the time I came around, going into the city was a chore for him. He took me to Wrigley Field every year anyway. We watched Cubs games together on WGN. Harry Carey, the Cubs' famous broadcaster, was my friend when we moved and I didn't have any. Grandpa was, too. I've been a lifelong Cubs fan. My career has followed Harry's.

Grandpa smiled when I stole one of his beers. Grandpa paid for my books at college. He paid for them again when the first attempt didn't go well. Grandpa paid off my student loans so I could chase my broadcasting dreams unencumbered. After one season in rookie league baseball, he asked when I would be calling games for the Cubs. It wasn't because he didn't understand the business. He believed in me.

I needed to be the host for “Tech Talk Live.” I needed to ask why we had committed 11 penalties again. I needed to prep for Pittsburgh. I needed to replace some of our rain-soaked equipment.

I needed to get to Chicago.

Mike Burnop said to go. Andrew Allegretta did, too. They would pick up the slack. Frank Beamer graciously rescheduled our weekly interview to accommodate my trip. Family is important to him. I've felt that since the moment I met him.

When I walked into Grandpa's hospital room, he lit up. Amazingly, he was rebounding. He was confused as to why I was there. It was the middle of the season after all. He knew that because he has listened to every game. We talked about Purdue. He wasn't happy that we had won. He joked about the loss “not surprising him.” I get a lot of my humor from him. He was happy for me. He asked if I had seen the train and the drum. I had.

One of the first things I noticed when I took this job was the Purdue game. It seemed coincidental then that the Hokies were playing the Boilermakers for the first time in program history. It doesn't now. He loves that I am the “Voice of the Hokies.” But to him, I was calling the Boilermakers that day. Part of me was.

Grandpa's mind is still sharp. His body isn't.

He doesn't have much to look forward to any more. But he rarely misses a Cubs game. My mom dutifully writes down the TV schedule for him. Grandma turns on the games for him. They turn on the Hokies, too.

I tried to say goodbye. He asked when Michael Brewer was coming back. I tried to tell him I wouldn't be where I am today without him. He disagreed. He was wrong. He said he was proud of me. I told him I had always been in awe of him. He asked when it was supposed to stop raining in Cincinnati. The Cubs were in a rain delay. And a playoff race.

We finished our talk. It may have been our last. With Grandpa, I can't be sure. As I turned to leave, the Cubs had just come back on. He was smiling. I like to imagine he was thinking about the day when I'll call Cubs' games. It was perfect.

Sports are important. So are grandpas. I have one of the best. We would have been close anyway. Sports made sure of it. He most likely will be gone soon. Sports won't be. I needed to go to Chicago for my family. Even in a tough week, the Hokies here understood that. That's why they're my new family. I'll need sports to distract me now that I'm back. It wouldn't hurt if we won a few either. Grandpa would like that. My new family would, too.

Now about those penalties ...

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Tech student-athlete uses *Nike internship* to position herself for the future

by Reyna Gilbert-Lowry



Jessi Thon spent this summer in Oregon working an internship at Nike's headquarters.

Accenture recently released the results of its 2015 U.S. College Graduate Employment Study, which surveyed more than 2,000 students who graduated from college between 2013 and 2015. Forty-seven percent of the 2013 and 2014 graduates indicated that they found a job as a result of internship, apprenticeship or co-op opportunities. These results clearly indicate the benefits of applied experiences during college and come as no surprise to senior lacrosse player Jessi Thon. Although the public relations major won't walk across the graduation stage until next May, she knows all too well the impact that the right internship can have in preparing for professional success and achieving postgraduate career goals.

This summer, Thon was selected to take part in the Nike Sports Marketing Internship Program, and she spent 12 weeks at the Nike World Headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon. She is optimistic that her time spent in Oregon provided her with the experiences and relationships necessary to be successful once her time on and off the Virginia Tech lacrosse field comes to an end.

Q: Why did you decide to apply for the Nike summer internship?

JT: "I think this is the hardest question for me to answer because, in my mind, I just thought, 'Why wouldn't I?' It is arguably every athlete's dream job, working for the company that has helped him or her to excel in sports and look good doing it. I love what Nike stands for, and I like how it all began. It was started to help track runners run faster and perform

better, and that's what Nike still does today, but on a much larger scale. Innovation is so intriguing, and new products are so exciting, but going behind the scenes and being a part of the process seems even more enticing."

Q: What was a typical day like? What were your responsibilities?

JT: "I would get into work around 8 every morning and check my calendar for the meetings that day. I worked on products in the tennis department, so there were always changes being made to the "looks" that our Nike athletes were wearing. The main project this summer was planning for the Rio Olympics. After the boards were updated in the morning, I would go in and out of meetings and finish any projects my boss would have for me that day."

Q: How will you apply the skills you learned in the internship in your future?

JT: "My biggest takeaway from this summer was communication, in all forms. I always thought it was one of my strong suits. Being able to express myself has never been something I thought twice about, but it was a huge wake-up call, especially in an environment I wasn't quite used to. Answering emails and setting up meetings and making sure the right people were included seems simple until you make the meeting for the wrong day, and you put a random person on the invite (haha!). All jokes aside, it was an adventure, and I truly am so thankful for the opportunity. This gave me a great starting point for my future. I am much more comfortable meeting new people and


establishing myself as a business professional to my possible employers and peers."

Q: You are a public relations major. How did the internship apply to your major?

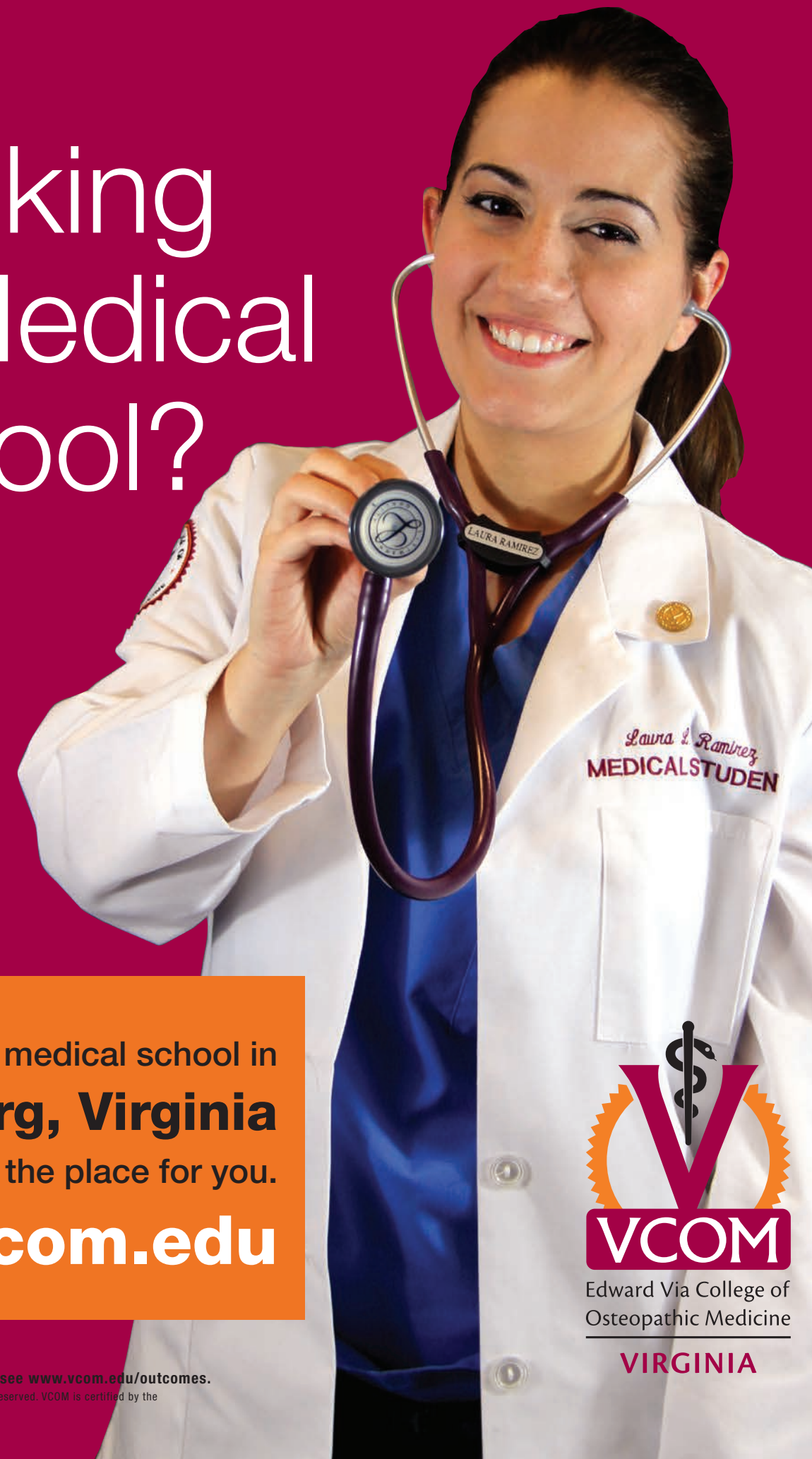
JT: "I think my communication background helped me to develop great relationships with not only my team, but also the Nike community. Everyone is so dedicated to the brand and what Nike stands for. That made it easy for me to come in and learn so much in such a small amount of time. A big task for me this summer was to set up meetings with people in different departments to get a feel for what they do and network at the same time. It was nerve-racking, but exciting, meeting new people for coffee and picking their brains. I loved hearing their stories, how they got to Nike and why they are still there and still love what they do."

Q: What are your future career goals?

JT: "I would love to find my way back to Nike, possibly working in sports marketing or brand marketing. Nike's culture is contagious, whether you are a consumer or an employee. The "swoosh" is just too tempting not to buy, but I want to know why. The reason why we gravitate to Nike products is because of the branding, and I would love to be a part of that."

Thon became aware of the Nike internship through the Office of Student-Athlete Development, which is committed to ensuring a first-class experience for all Virginia Tech student-athletes through a focus on leadership training, career development and a commitment to community outreach. 

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SHALONDA MITCHELL

CROSS COUNTRY
Richmond, Virginia

by Jimmy Robertson

***Shalonda Mitchell** is a member of the Tech women's cross country team and is pursuing a degree in accounting and information systems. She has a job lined up with Deloitte, an international professional services company, once she graduates next May.*

Q: Why did you decide to major in accounting and information systems?

SM: "I wanted to do business – I had my own little business in high school selling candy – so when I came to college, I always knew I wanted to do business. At first, I was going business administration, but I didn't realize how broad business was. Then a girl on the team, Courtney Dobbs, was doing accounting and finance, and she gave me so much advice and encouragement. So at first, I was doing the same thing, double majoring in accounting and finance, but then I learned that finance wasn't for me. I've always been a fan of numbers, and math is my favorite subject. Accounting was the right amount of math, and it's a great career path. There are always jobs in accounting when you get out of college."

Q: Have you completed any internships, and what did you do?

SM: "I've done two internships. I've done one with Deloitte [in McLean, Virginia] last summer, and this past summer, I did an internship with Five Guys at their corporate office in Northern Virginia [Lorton, Virginia].

"With Deloitte, it was an eight-week internship, and the first half, I was with a client, Washington Gas. They were preparing for an audit, and I would go to the client site every day. The other half was with Blackboard, Inc., the software company. I went to their corporate office every day because we were helping them become Sarbanes-Oxley compliant. We were basically getting them ready for their audit. I'd sit in every day, gathering evidence and information for the audit, testing different controls, interviewing some of the staff there ... I'd sit in on different presentations with the client. In between those two, I also helped with Rosetta Stone, just with sampling and population data.

"With Five Guys, I basically took the place of a staff accountant. I had the same responsibilities. I'd help with closing the books and performing reconciliations. I worked a lot with the software, preparing different journal entries and accruals. I'd help with acquisitions and with fixed assets. I kept up with accounts payable department. It was cool because I gained experience with public accounting while I was with Deloitte and with accounting for a private company with Five Guys."

Q: You're also working during the season, correct?


SM: "Yes, right now, I'm working in the controller's office here at Virginia Tech. I'm an accounts payable assistant, so it's cool doing that. It's one more thing that I can put on my resumé."

Q: What are your plans for the future?

SM: "I have a job lined up with Deloitte after I graduate. I got that lined up last summer. I'll be working in risk services advisory. It's close to the audit department. They work hand in hand. I'm not sure what client I'll have, but I know it will be a commercial client. I'd like to stay for five years and then go work for a private company. I also like to travel a lot, so I want to get that out of my system. I know with the work I'll be doing in advisory that I'll get to travel a lot, so I like that.

"I wanted to start working with them to get my foot in the door because I know that will offer so many opportunities for me. But I know that once I settle down and have a family, I'd like to go work for a company like Five Guys or any company and perform accounting."

Q: Will you take the exam to become a certified public accountant?

SM: "Yes. That's why I will be here through the spring. I could graduate in December, but I want to get 150 credit hours to take my CPA exam and become a certified public accountant. That's another goal I have. The exam is whenever you get your degree. The more certifications you have, the more job opportunities there are. My goal is to take it before I start working and try to pass it because I don't want to have to stress while working." 

***Daniel Lauretano** is a forward on the Tech men's soccer team and has played in nearly 60 matches in his career. He will graduate next May with a degree in communication and already has a job lined up with Ryan Homes in Richmond.*

Q: Why did you decide to major in communication?

DL: "I started off in business, and I was taking a lot of the entry-level courses and I got a feeling that I didn't know which way I wanted to go, whether it was marketing or finance or accounting. So I ended up getting out of business. I didn't see the need to put myself through all that stress when I didn't know the route I wanted to take. I got into communication. I took an entry-level course, and I really enjoyed Buddy Howell's Intro to Communications. He made the class so interesting that I met with him about potential careers. He told me that the cool thing about communications was that you could go toward anything. Being a communications major helped me in my career fairs as far as being approachable and being able to talk with the HR reps. I thought it would be something temporary, but it ended up lasting with me."

Q: But real estate is your passion, right?

DL: "I've always had the competitive drive with sports. In soccer, nothing was ever guaranteed for me. You have to compete for everything in the sports world, and that helps me in terms of real estate and sales. Real estate is cyclical. Ever since I was a little kid, I was fascinated with the way homes were built, and more importantly, the investment process of people putting hundreds of thousands of dollars into a mortgage. Seeing homes built is kind of this unique art or creation because every home is different. I can truly say that real estate is what helped me think outside of soccer and what was going to be next for me.

Q: What sort of internships have you done, and what have you learned from them?

DL: "This past summer, I worked with NVR, Inc., which is home building and construction. Primarily, I worked with Ryan Homes [in Richmond], which is a branch of NVR, and they deal with mortgages, they deal with financing, they deal with building construction, and of course, the sales division. My role as an intern was working with sales and production. I got to see homes that were being built from the ground up to getting a home ready for a QI [quality inspection]. It was cool to see the building aspect and then seeing the relationship aspect of the customers putting their trust and their money into our company.


"Going into it, it was 50-50 whether I was going to love it or whether I was going to be missing soccer. I enjoyed it so much. My role was so active that it made me feel like I was playing soccer. It was always go, go, go. I was on the job site, I was working with new customers ... it was really cool. I'm thankful to this day that I was able to come into my senior year with a job offer."

Q: Have you done any other internships?

DL: "I'm doing another one with Re/Max 8 and James Nolen [a local real estate agent]. This one will help give me more of a feel for the sales aspect and what it is to be an agent. Every market is different, but it's good to get that experience. It's going to help me a lot when I start in Richmond."

Q: Will you be working for Ryan Homes after graduation next spring?

DL: "Yes. This summer, my internship was like an interview process. I was evaluated. I worked under a project manager, and above our project manager was our production and division managers. My role was to help the project manager make sure the home was built on time. I'm going to be working as a project supervisor and under the project manager and making sure that everything in our home construction process is going according to plan.

"I still want to stay involved with soccer. I want to pass along the traits that I've learned to the younger generation, so I do see myself doing some type of coaching in the future, whether its with a travel team or youth. It would be a hobby, though. My career is set for the near term." 

DANIEL LAURETANO

MEN'S SOCCER
Chester, Virginia

by Jimmy Robertson

BIBBS, HOKIES READY *to turn the* CORNER

Justin Bibbs and a young Virginia Tech men's basketball squad expect to be much improved heading into the 2015-16 season

by Jimmy Robertson

Summer vacations for most student-athletes usually consist of a few weeks at home with their families and then a return to Blacksburg for workouts and to take a few classes.

Justin Bibbs' summer took on a little more of an extreme look.

Bibbs spent a good chunk of his summer in Greece, where he wound up mining gold. The sophomore on the Tech men's basketball squad made the USA's U19 World Championship team in late June as an injury replacement – Kentucky freshman Isaiah Briscoe suffered a concussion in one of the practices – and the Americans ultimately won the gold medal after a hard-fought, overtime battle with a stubborn Croatia squad in early July.

By being a part of the team, Bibbs, who averaged 2.2 points and 1.8 assists per game in the tournament, became the first Tech player to win a gold medal in FIBA-related international competition.

"It gave me a sense of knowing what it takes to win the gold," Bibbs said of the experience. "On the court and off the court, I learned to be a better teammate, just rooting for my teammates and not caring about what's going on. Just making sure that everyone is OK. That's what really happened and what I took from the experience."

The 6-foot-5 Bibbs now hopes to deliver a gold-medal performance for the Hokies this

upcoming season. Actually, he hopes *his team* plays well enough to be of that quality.

Tech opens the 2015-16 season on Nov. 14 looking to snap a four-year streak of last-place finishes in the ACC. In year No. 1 under coach Buzz Williams, the Hokies lost 22 games. They won just two conference games.

The transition year turned out to be a roller coaster ride. In one sense, the season could have been so much better, as the Hokies lost seven games by three points or less and another game by five points in overtime. Yet Tech also lost eight games by 15 points or less.

"Any time you take over a program, there is going to be an adjustment as to how we go about things versus how things have been done in the past," Tech assistant coach Isaac Chew said. "I thought the biggest thing we tried to establish was our culture, how it was going to be and what was accepted and what wasn't going to be accepted. Throughout the year, we established our culture, and we didn't sacrifice our culture for wins and losses."

With the first year now complete under Williams, optimism abounds as the season opener rapidly approaches. Tech returns six players who played in at least 30 games a year ago, including a nucleus of four of whom were freshmen last season, led by Bibbs.

The Dayton, Ohio product is the Hokies' leading returning scorer at 11.4 points per game. He shot 42.7 percent from the floor,

including 41.3 percent from beyond the 3-point arc.

"I'm looking forward to it," Bibbs said of the season. "I know what to expect – the competitiveness and how teams play against us. I'm looking forward to being on the court with the new guys and the returning players."

Tech also gets the services of two transfers – Seth Allen and Zach LeDay – who sat out last season while meeting the NCAA's transfer requirements. Allen, a 6-1 guard, transferred from the University of Maryland after averaging 13.4 points and 3.0 assists per game his sophomore season. LeDay, a 6-7, 235-pound post player, averaged 4.1 points and 2.5 rebounds per game as a sophomore at South Florida.

Plus, Williams and his staff added a tremendous recruiting class, paced by arguably the state of Virginia's top prospect in Chris Clarke, a 6-6 forward from Cape Henry Collegiate School in Virginia Beach with the ability to play multiple spots. Justin Robinson, a guard from Manassas, Virginia; Kerry Blackshear, a post player from Orlando, Florida; and Johnny Hamilton, a junior college post player from Trinidad and Tobago who played at Jacksonville College in Texas for two years, team with Clarke to comprise a class that ESPN ranked No. 35 nationally.

The strength of this team probably will be on the perimeter, even with the loss of Adam



Jalen Hudson scored 23 points in the Hokies' overtime loss to then-No. 4 Duke last season, and Virginia Tech's coaches expect to see more of that type of production this upcoming season.

MEET *the* NEWCOMERS



- A 6-10 forward who earned first-team all-state honors (Class 8A) as a senior
- A first-team all-area selection by the Orlando Sentinel as a senior
- Averaged 22.6 points, 13.3 rebounds, 5.3 assists and 3.4 blocked shots per game last season
- Scored 10 points in the Florida vs. USA all-star game

KERRY BLACKSHEAR, JR.
Freshman • Orlando, Fla.



- A 6-6 forward who was the Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association Division I Player of the Year
- Averaged 15.8 points, nine rebounds and four steals per game as a senior
- Led his high school to back-to-back state championships
- Ranked the No. 42 and No. 54 prospect nationally by 247Sports and ESPN, respectively

CHRIS CLARKE
Freshman • Virginia Beach, Va.



- A 7-0 center who played at Jacksonville College in Elk, Texas the past two seasons
- Averaged nine points and 8.9 rebounds per game last season
- Shot 61.7 percent from the floor last season
- Among the nation's leaders with 112 blocked shots last season

JOHNNY HAMILTON
Junior • Rio Claro, Trinidad and Tobago



- A 6-1 guard who was the Gatorade Player of the Year in the state of Maryland
- Averaged 22.2 points, 7.8 assists, 4.3 rebounds and 2.2 steals per game for St. James School as a senior
- Led St. James School to an 18-8 record last season
- A top 200 prospect nationally (No. 162) by 247Sports

JUSTIN ROBINSON
Freshman • Manassas, Va.

Smith, who decided to transfer following last season. The Hokies return steady Devin Wilson, who started 28 of 33 games at the point guard spot a year ago, and he averaged 6.5 points and a team-best 4.2 assists. Allen and Robinson also figure into the mix at the point. Allen gives the Hokies some much-needed ACC experience, having played in a successful program at Maryland.

“He’s been in the league,” Chew said. “You have the thought that he will come in and be productive because he’s done it before, but we don’t want to put any more added pressure on him. He’s tried to change his body and his mental approach to the game. He’s tried to take the right strides to become a better person and a better player.” Tech features similar depth at the other

perimeter positions. Ahmed Hill started a team-best 30 games at shooting guard last season, averaging 8.7 points and 3.7 rebounds per game. Hill will miss the first part of the season with a knee injury, but Tech’s staff expects him to be back. Jalen Hudson also returns after a freshman season in which he averaged 6.9 points and 2.0 rebounds per game. The 6-5 Hudson had

some monster games last season, scoring 18 points in a loss at Syracuse, 23 in an overtime loss to Duke, and 32 in the Hokies’ upset of Wake Forest in the ACC Tournament. Often referred to by Williams as the Hokies’ most talented player, Hudson only needs to find more consistency. Bibbs himself possesses the ability to play multiple positions, along with Clarke, who led

his team to the private schools state title last season and was the state player of the year (Division I). He averaged 15.8 points, nine rebounds and four steals per game. So how will things shake out along the perimeter? “We don’t pencil guys in anywhere,” Chew said. “We’re going to put the five best players on the floor. The hardest-working guys and

the toughest guys will play. “We do feel good about our perimeter players. In this league, you have to have good perimeter players. This is a league where you have to be able to create your own shot, and I think we’ve addressed some of our needs.” These perimeter players give the Hokies some firepower and add to the strength of the team from last season. Collectively, the team



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shot the ball well last year, ranking seventh in the ACC at 44.6 percent and second in 3-point percentage at 38.9 percent. Only Notre Dame shot better from beyond the arc than the Hokies among league schools.

The issues with this team could be in the post, though the staff added size and depth there for this upcoming season. A lot of potential success starts with LeDay, who gives the Hokies bulk and two seasons worth of Division I experience.

"A lot of people don't talk about him because he didn't come in with as much fanfare as Seth did, but the one thing he adds to our team is that he is our kind of guy – a tough guy and a hard worker," Chew said. "He'll do everything we'll ask. He gets what we are about."

Other depth in the post comes from the signings of Hamilton, a 7-foot center, and Blackshear, a 6-10 forward. Those two combine with LeDay, Satchel Pierce, another 7-foot center who averaged 3.2 points and 2.4 rebounds per game as a freshman last season, and Shane Henry, the team's lone senior who averaged 2.3 points and 2.7 rebounds in 31 games last year, to give the staff options down low.

Tech needs for that group to produce, particularly on the boards. The Hokies ranked at the bottom or near the bottom of the ACC

in nearly every rebounding category (offensive rebounds, defensive rebounds, rebounding margin, etc.) last season.

The Hokies also ranked near the bottom in scoring defense (14th, 69.4 ppg). But a lot of that goes back to rebounding. Tech played solidly defensively, but gave up many second-chance points.

"We struggled early on, but as the year went on, we got better at rebounding," Chew said. "It's an everyday process. It's about being in the right position and guys giving great effort and doing what they're supposed to do. That's a constant area of improvement, no matter who you have."

If nothing else, this squad features much more depth than last season. A year ago, the roster featured 10 players for much of the season, with two of those – Will Johnston and Christian Beyer – being former walk-ons.

Now, the roster features at least 12 players and more upside potential. It certainly allows Williams and his coaches to play more in line with their internal philosophy.

"It's pretty simple," Chew said. "We want to play down hill, and we want to play in the paint. We want to play with toughness and great effort. Defensively, we want to keep people out of the box and limit their opportunities around


the basket. That's been our philosophy. It's not a magic potion. We're hoping we can do a little bit more of that this season."

The Hokies have the makings of an interesting – and improved – squad, but the league remains a bear. Tech's conference schedule includes two games with Virginia, two games against a Miami squad that many are hyping, games at defending national champion Duke, Notre Dame and Syracuse, and a home game against league stalwart North Carolina. The non-conference slate features games against West Virginia, Iowa State and Northwestern.

But the Hokies aren't looking ahead. They simply want to get better each and every day.

"You always have to have high expectations, but we want to play one game at a time," Chew said. "We want to put ourselves in positions to win games. Our approach has to be that this is an everyday process. What are we doing today? How are we preparing to beat this team?"

"If we go about it the right way every day, then we'll put ourselves in position down the road to do the things we want to do."

For sure, this will be a young squad – only one senior – and it figures to be an exciting one. Tech fans hope it will be a winning one as well. 



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EDMUNDS BROTHERS

by Jimmy Robertson

TREY, TERRELL AND TREMAINE EDMUNDS BECAME THE FIRST GROUP OF THREE OR MORE BROTHERS TO PLAY IN THE SAME GAME UNDER FRANK BEAMER IN BLACKSBURG

It was late summer of 2014, and both Trey and Terrell Edmonds were participating in summer workouts with Dr. Mike Gentry and his staff, prepping for the pending 2014 campaign.

Nearly every day, though, someone asked one or the other or both about their younger brother. Would Tremaine, a hulking linebacker, eschew the advances of Southern Cal and come to Tech? Would he be the one to be different and go to his father's alma mater, Maryland, instead of coming to Blacksburg?

On July 31 of last year, the players – and Hokie Nation – found out, as Tremaine announced his decision to sign with Tech

during a news broadcast on a local NBC television affiliate. He decided the rural pleasantries of Southwest Virginia suited him better than star-studded Southern California, and he opted to blaze his own path rather than follow his father's. More importantly for the Tech football program, he became the latest to continue the "family tradition" for which the program has become noted. He determined that Blacksburg was "home" for him.

His older brothers said they stayed out of his recruiting process, but they certainly like reaping the rewards. Now, 14 months later, Tremaine, too, said he felt like he got the best of all worlds – a great university, a nationally

recognized football program, and of course, the opportunity to be a part of both with the people who matter the most to him.

"To be honest, the decision was up to me," he said. "At the end of the day, I really liked Tech. Every time I came up here, the coaching staff treated me good. The community is great, and this really is a family type of school.

"I am my own person, but at the end of the day, I think all of us [his siblings] are. I don't think any of us would let someone convince us to do something we didn't want to do. I think we all went to the place we were satisfied with."

"I was excited," said Trey, the oldest.

"When Tremaine made his decision ... you can't explain it. Looking back on it and seeing them at practice with me every day and on game days, I love it, man. I love it."

The Edmonds brothers are just the latest set of brothers to play for head coach Frank Beamer since he took over in 1987. In fact, 25 sets of brothers have played for Beamer, including current players Ronny Vandyke, who played with brother Devin before Devin took a medical hardship, and Kendall Fuller, who played with Kyle during Kendall's freshman season.

A few days before the Hokies opened their conference slate against Pittsburgh, Beamer

took time to reflect on what that says about his program.

"That's one of the things I'm most proud of is the number of brothers and cousins and so forth that we've had here in the program," Beamer said. "It certainly says that we're doing the right thing and we're treating people right. A brother is going to tell a brother if something isn't right, and that guy, they're not coming here. I think we've gotten about every combination that we've gone after, too, which says something."

Tremaine's commitment and later his signing of the binding letter-of-intent prompted discussions on when he would get

to play in the same game with his two older siblings. Some expected him to take a redshirt year – something not uncommon with young linebackers playing a rather difficult position in coordinator Bud Foster's defense. But Tech's staff always planned on playing Tremaine, at the very least on special teams.

Tremaine spent all of his preparation time this past winter and summer doing the things it takes to get on the field as a freshman. That consumed him. Playing with his brothers wasn't really a part of his mindset at the time.

"After I made my commitment ... we had thought about it [playing together] before, but I was just worried about coming to college

and doing what I had to do,” he said. “I knew I had a chance to get on the field, but it was just a dream come true to play with them. I give all the thanks to God on that one.”

It didn’t take long for the Edmunds brothers, products of Danville, Virginia, to make history at Tech. In the season opener against Ohio State on Labor Day evening, Beamer assigned all three of them to the kickoff team. In fact, he even lined them up side by side for the entire nation to see.

“They are equipped athletically to do what each position calls for, so I said, ‘What the heck? Let’s line ‘em up side-by-side and let ‘em roll,’ Beamer said.

They became the first group of three or more brothers to play in the same game at Tech. Coincidentally, it marked the first time that Trey and Tremaine had played together on the same team – the two never played

together in high school.

According to research done by the athletics department’s strategic communications people, the Edmunds brothers became just the third group of three or more brothers to play in the same game in college football history. The Selmon brothers – Lucious, Dewey and Lee Roy – first played in the same game for Oklahoma in 1973, and the University of Central Florida’s Cliff, Jordan and Justin McCray played in the same game for the Golden Knights in a 2010 game against Rice.

The Edmunds’ playing together against the Buckeyes started quite the media firestorm. A screenshot of the three of them made its way through various social media platforms, and an ESPN blogger, among numerous other media members, blogged about it.

“That thing went global,” Trey said. “It was on all the social networks, and fans around

here have seen it. People from back home in Danville have seen it. People everywhere are telling us.

“For them to comment on it and tell us how great of an accomplishment that is and telling how we should cherish that moment ... that speaks volumes. I give God the thanks that we’re all at this level right here and playing football.”

Their parents, Ferrell and Felecia Edmunds, are thankful, too, as they don’t have to pick and choose which son to watch each Saturday. In other words, their sons’ decisions simplified weekend travel arrangements.

Ferrell, the head football coach at Dan River High School, coaches his team’s games on Friday nights, and then the next morning, he and Felecia catch a plane or hop in the car to go watch their sons. And for six games a fall, that place is Blacksburg, a two-hour drive

from Danville through the tobacco croplands and up Rockcastle Mountain.

They take pride in watching their sons play. Of course, their sons get their athletic genes from them. Ferrell once served as Dan Marino’s security blanket in Miami, where he was a two-time Pro Bowler, and he also spent two seasons with the Seattle Seahawks. Felecia ran track at Southern Illinois.

That their boys, though, all decided to come to Tech and play together really comes as no surprise. Family means so much to this family, a byproduct of the way Ferrell and Felecia raised their sons and a continuation of the way in which both of them were raised.

Yes, most football fans know of Ferrell from his days in the NFL, but few know he grew up as the eighth of nine children in Danville, and his father worked a local mill, while his mother worked at a tobacco factory.

The family relied on each other to get by, so Ferrell knows nothing else when it comes to family, and Felecia shares her husband’s same view on its importance.

“From day 1, they always told us that family came first, and they didn’t want us to grow apart from that,” Terrell said. “They told us during the recruiting process that, whether we went to the same school or not, they wanted us to talk to each other every day and still stay in good contact. They wanted us to remember that we were brothers at the end of the day. They didn’t want us to stray from that.”

“That’s a great family,” Beamer said. “It starts at home with mom and dad. They’re very respectful kids, very mannerly kids. They’re very athletic kids. They’re a delight to have in the program. I’m really glad we’ve got all three of them in the program.”


All three of them are making contributions

and figure to make even more in the future. If they do, they would only be continuing a Virginia Tech trend.

Not just players, but also families have served the Hokie well over the years. Brothers tend to follow brothers, and Beamer never takes that for granted.

“We never assume any of them are coming,” Beamer said. “We recruit hard to get them here. About the time you think you’ve got it figured out, something happens. So you better recruit hard and never assume anything.”

Virginia Tech football is definitely a family affair. Beamer said that the first day he took the job in 1987. Twenty-nine years later, he continues to say it.

The Edmunds brothers are only the latest example. They hail from Danville, Virginia, but right now, they all agree – Virginia Tech is home. 

BROTHERLY LOVE <i>at</i> VIRGINIA TECH The following sets of brothers both have played football at Tech under Frank Beamer (includes the years they lettered):	NATHANIEL ADIBI (2000-03) XAVIER ADIBI (2004-07)	VINCENT FULLER (2001-04) KYLE FULLER (2010-13) COREY FULLER (2012) KENDALL FULLER (2013-14)	ANTOINE HOPKINS (2009-12) DERRICK HOPKINS (2010-13)	ORION MARTIN (2005-08) CAM MARTIN (2006-09)	RYAN SHUMAN (2006-08) MARK SHUMAN (2013)	RONNY VANDYKE (2012, 14) DEVIN VANDYKE (ON 2012-14 TEAMS)	BLAKE WARREN (2002-05) BRETT WARREN (2004-05, 2007-08) BEAU WARREN (2007-10)
	KEN BAREFOOT, JR. (1987-88) JASON BAREFOOT (1988-90)	KIRK GRAY (1990-92) KEITH GRAY (1994)	BILL HOUSERIGHT, JR. (1995) JAKE HOUSERIGHT (1998-2001) JONAS HOUSERIGHT (2006-08)	ANDREW MOSS (1990) BILLY MOSS (1992)	TERRY SMITH (1990) ERIC SMITH (1992)	MICHAEL VICK (1999-2000) MARCUS VICK (2003, 2005)	T.J. WASHINGTON (1994-96) TODD WASHINGTON (1995-97)
	NEKOS BROWN (2006-09) WILEY BROWN (2010-11)	CHAD GRIMM (2006) CODY GRIMM (2006-09)	CONNOR KISH (FR.) KEVIN KISH (FR.)	D.J. PARKER (2004-07) MATT WRIGHT (ON 2006 TEAM)	BILLY SWARM (1991-92) JOE SWARM (1992-93)	ED WANG (2006-09) DAVID WANG (2011-14)	RICH WILLIAMS (1987-88) RYAN WILLIAMS (1991-94)
	TREY EDMUNDS (2013-14) TERRELL EDMUNDS (R-FR.) TREMACHINE EDMUNDS (FR.)		KEVIN LEWIS (2000-04) JONATHAN LEWIS (2002-05)	WILLIE PILE (2000-02) BEN BARBER (ON 2009 TEAM)	ANTHONY THIBODEAU (2000) JOHN THIBODEAU (ON 2003-04 TEAMS)		

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Ryan Malleck has overcome obstacles and injuries to become one of Virginia Tech’s leaders and most dependable players

by Jimmy Robertson

The evening before the Ohio State game, throngs of people gathered in the Cassell Coliseum parking lot to listen to country music superstar Brad Paisley serenade them and get them ready for the big game.

Tech’s football players missed the show, but most probably enjoyed music of their own choosing in their rooms at the team’s hotel in Roanoke. At least one of them was sure to go old school, probably choosing the folk rock and lyrical writings of Bruce Springsteen ahead of today’s hip-hop R&B or the crossover appeal of country music.

Ryan Malleck’s iTunes collection of “Born to Run,” “Backstreets,” his favorite – “Thunder Road” – along with other eclectic tunes from Springsteen serves him perfectly fine, considering he grew up 30 minutes from Springsteen’s childhood home in Long Branch, New Jersey. Hokie Nation can have Paisley, but Malleck himself would love to see Bruce bring himself and his E Street Band and play along Beamer Way.

“Oh, I love Bruce,” he said.

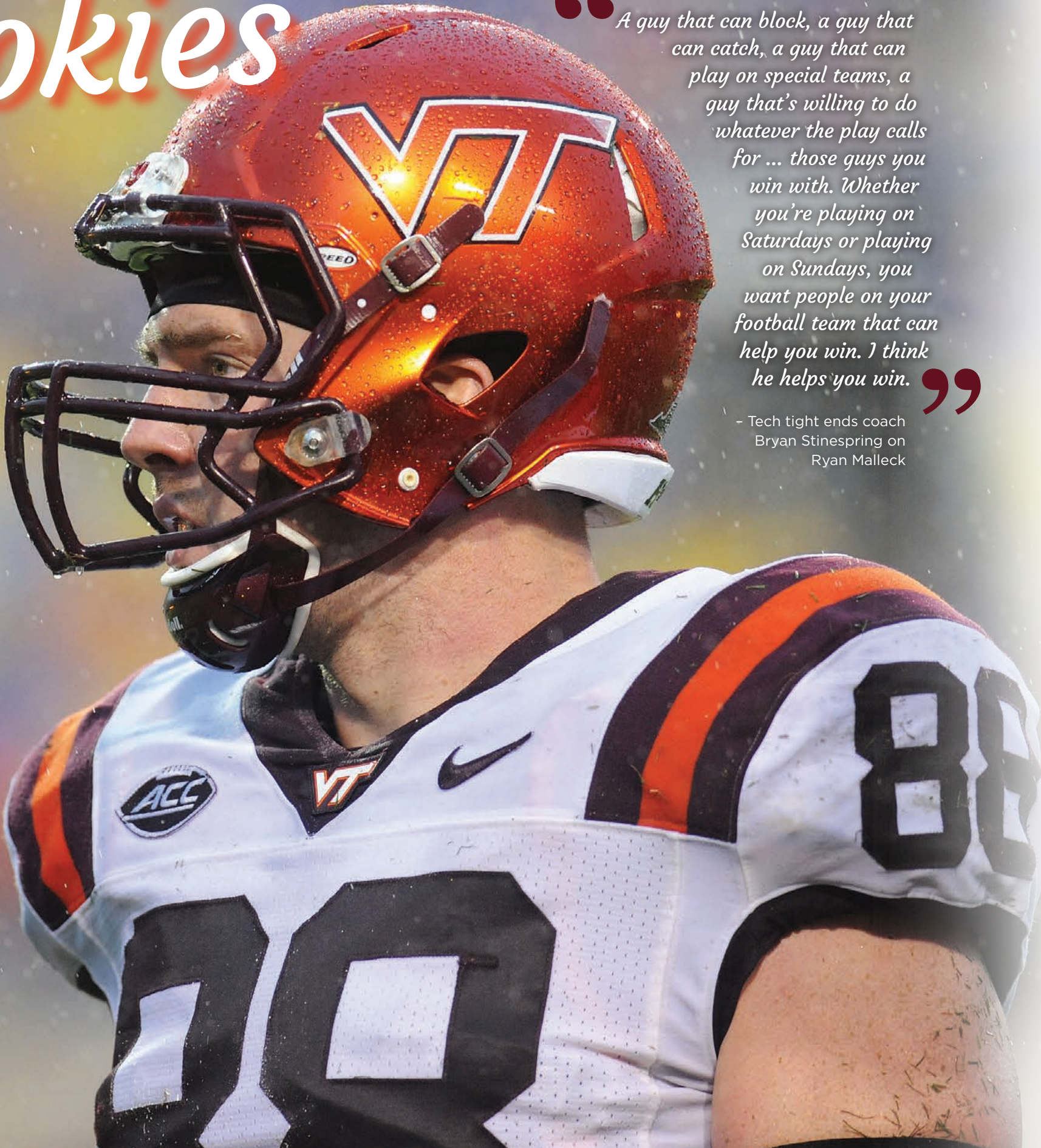
Malleck hopes that “Glory Days” are ahead for himself and the Hokies, as they get ready to enter the stretch run of the 2015 season. A senior and arguably the most dependable player on Tech’s offense, he knows these final few games represent his final chance at collegiate glory. A late-season burst to a popular bowl game at a warm locale would serve as mouthwash to the bitter taste of three straight subpar seasons, at least by this program’s lofty standards.

It also would cap what has been, at times, a difficult stretch for him personally. He nearly lost his father, his family’s New Jersey home just dodged Hurricane Sandy’s array of punches, and on the gridiron, he missed an entire season because of a shoulder injury, one that occurred without any contact.

His father, Stephen, is fine now five years after several heart attacks almost cost him his life. A retired postmaster, he spends a lot of time these days helping friends and going to his son’s football games – something he and the family never take for granted considering the disaster that nearly took place in late summer of 2010.

The doctors diagnosed him with pneumonia because he struggled to breathe, showing symptoms associated with that particular ailment. This happened shortly before Ryan began his senior season at Point Pleasant Borough High School, and a gut sense that something wasn’t quite right led to an emergency room visit that saved Stephen Malleck’s life.

“He needed to have a heart transplant, and he got put to the top of the list because he was in such dire need,” Malleck said. “They ended up finding it on Aug. 9, 2010. We all remember because it was my brother’s birthday.



“A guy that can block, a guy that can catch, a guy that can play on special teams, a guy that’s willing to do whatever the play calls for ... those guys you win with. Whether you’re playing on Saturdays or playing on Sundays, you want people on your football team that can help you win. I think he helps you win.”

- Tech tight ends coach Bryan Stinespring on Ryan Malleck

“It was the toughest time of my life. I’m really close to my dad. He taught me everything I know. You could tell something wasn’t right. One night, I was going to go out with my friends, and he asked me, ‘Are you staying with me?’ He wanted me to soak his feet in hot water to get his mind off of it because he could barely breathe. My mom worked nights, so I stayed in that night. I remember me and him hanging out, and he was in so much pain. The next day, we went to the emergency room. He knew it wasn’t pneumonia, but something else.”

The visit led to the heart transplant, which ultimately saved his life. At the time, Malleck wanted to focus on his father’s recovery, so he made a somewhat hasty commitment to the University of Maryland, clearing his mind of the recruiting process clutter that comes with being a good prospect. He liked then-coach Ralph Friedgen, and Maryland’s depth chart at the tight end spot looked appealing. He envisioned being able to play right away.

And he did – only at Virginia Tech. Maryland officials forced out Friedgen, and Malleck decided to give more thought to his college future.

“I took official visits to Miami and here, and I really enjoyed my trip here for my official,” he said. “I remember going to Miami, and when I left New Jersey, it was snowing, and it was 70 in Miami. That was nice.

“But I liked it here better. I think my decision came down to the coaching staff. The coaching staff has been here for a long time, and they’re not going to leave. I liked the way Coach [Frank] Beamer tried to do things. He really tried to sell the school and not worry about downplaying other schools to persuade me to come here. He just told me what Virginia Tech was all about.”

Malleck worked his way onto the field in his first season on campus. He played mostly behind Chris Drager, as Tech lacked depth at the spot.

The next season, he moved into the starting lineup, and he wound up playing nearly 600 plays from scrimmage. But he received yet another scare in late October that season.

Between classes and football, he rarely watched the news, but he caught wind of a storm building in the Atlantic and barreling toward the Northeast. The storm morphed into Hurricane Sandy, and she lashed out at the New Jersey and New York shorelines.

The Malleck family lives in Point Pleasant, New Jersey, roughly a half mile from the beach. The night the storm arrived, Malleck lost touch with his parents, his older brother and younger sister.

“I was a little worried, but I just never thought it was going to be that bad,” he said. “I knew we had some damage, but I didn’t think it would be as nearly as bad as it was.”

He returned home during one of the Hokies’ late-season off weeks and got a firsthand look at the

devastation. What he saw came as a shock.

“I had a bunch of friends that had to have the whole first floor of their houses redone,” he said. “One friend could go in his basement and had water all the way up to his waist.

“Just riding down to where I go to the beach, you used to have multimillion dollar homes, and they weren’t there any more. It was devastating. My brother sent me a video of him kayaking through the town. That’s how bad it was.”

Hurricane Sandy, though, spared the Malleck’s home, and his visit left him feeling thankful for that. He returned to Blacksburg and finished a solid season.

Entering his junior season, Malleck figured to be the go-to guy for the Hokies. New offensive coordinator Scot Loeffler, with his NFL background, loves using tight ends, and he envisioned Malleck catching 50-plus passes.

But a week before the Hokies opened the season against No. 1 Alabama, Malleck injured his shoulder in practice – and no one even hit him on the play.

“It was the week before we played Alabama,” he said. “It was a goal-line period. Logan [Thomas] put it up high, and I tried to grab it with one hand and came down, and it popped out. I knew right away that it was pretty serious.

“It was tough. I tried going the next few days with a brace on it, but every little thing – I couldn’t reach out and grab a ball without it sliding out. I got an MRI, and it came back that there was some damage done to the rotator cuff and labrum. I just knew that I couldn’t do it.”

Tech’s sports medicine staff told Malleck that he needed surgery and ruled him out



Ryan Malleck’s ability to run, block and tackle has made him an invaluable commodity on Virginia Tech’s special teams the past two seasons.

for the season. Fortunately, he could take a redshirt season and ultimately chose that route.

A year ago, Malleck returned to action and became the consistent threat that the staff envisioned, albeit somewhat in the shadow of Bucky Hodges’ great season. Still, Malleck caught a career-best 24 passes for 195 yards and two touchdowns, and he also played more than 100 snaps on special teams.

He continues in that same role this season, making big catches (e.g. Ohio State and East Carolina) and playing on special teams.

“A guy that can block, a guy that can catch, a guy that can play on special teams, a guy that’s willing to do whatever the play calls for ... those guys you win with,” Stinespring said. “Whether you’re playing on Saturdays or

playing on Sundays, you want people on your football team that can help you win. I think he helps you win.”

Malleck would like to play on Sundays and possesses a lot of attributes that NFL scouts love, but he also understands the odds. He hasn’t quite narrowed down a career post-football, though he figures to have options once he wraps up work on his two degrees – residential property management and marketing management.

For sure, he wants to move back as close to the New Jersey shore area as possible to be near the beach and closer to his family. Many make jokes about the state of New Jersey, but for him, it’s home. For him, that area of the country is his “Promised Land.”

And certainly, Bruce would approve.

Getting to know RYAN MALLECK

It’s Friday night in the offseason. What are you doing?

“I’m usually hanging out with friends. I’ll play video games or go out to the bars in downtown. I like going out every once in a while, but I’m not a guy you’re going to see out every weekend.”

It’s a couple of hours before a football game. What music are you listening to as you prepare?

“I have two songs by Eminem – ‘Lose Yourself’ and ‘Till I Collapse.’ I listen to some Bruce Springsteen, too. I’ll put on his Pandora station and listen. I grew up listening to classic rock with my dad. I love Bruce, I love AC/DC ... all that kind of stuff. Stiney [tight ends coach Bryan Stinespring] and I are huge Bruce fans. He’s been to, like, 30 concerts. He’s a huge fan.”

Twitter or Facebook ... what’s your social media platform of choice?

“I don’t have Twitter. I have Facebook, but I don’t go on Facebook that much either. I have Instagram. I like Instagram. I never got into Twitter. I don’t post much. My family will come down for a game, and I’ll post a picture of them. In the preseason, I’ll post something. I’ll look at it, but I’m not a guy who’s going to post much.”

If you could trade places with someone for a day, who would it be?

“Jason Witten [tight end for the Dallas Cowboys]. I think we play similar as tight ends. He’s been doing it for so long. I’ve got a lot of respect for him. He blocks and runs routes. He’s still healthy. He still gets the job done. He’s been consistent for 10-plus years.”

What’s your favorite food?

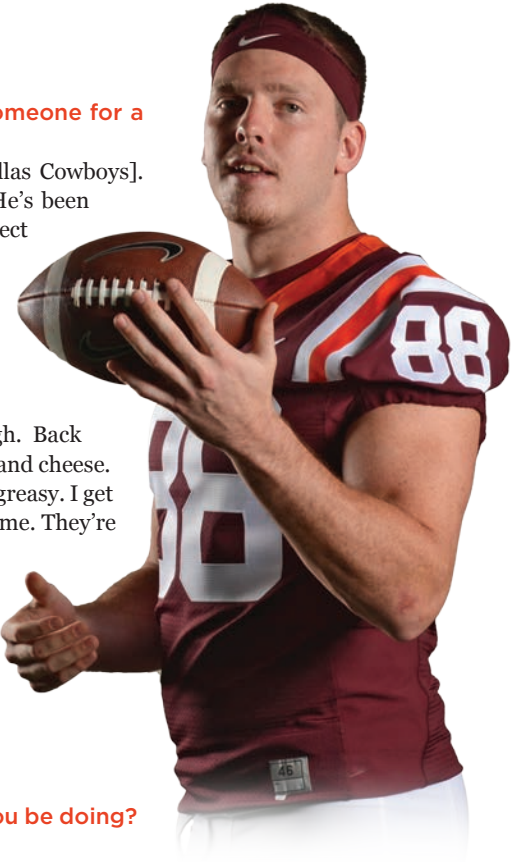
“I love pizza. Not from here, though. Back home, I’ll go get pizza and pork roll egg and cheese. It’s like a breakfast sandwich. It’s really greasy. I get four or five of those things when I go home. They’re so good. My mom will send some up to me, too. Some people might know it as Taylor Ham, but we call it pork roll in New Jersey.”

What’s your favorite movie?

“American Sniper. That movie is so good.”

In 10 years from now, what will you be doing?

“Ideally, playing football.”



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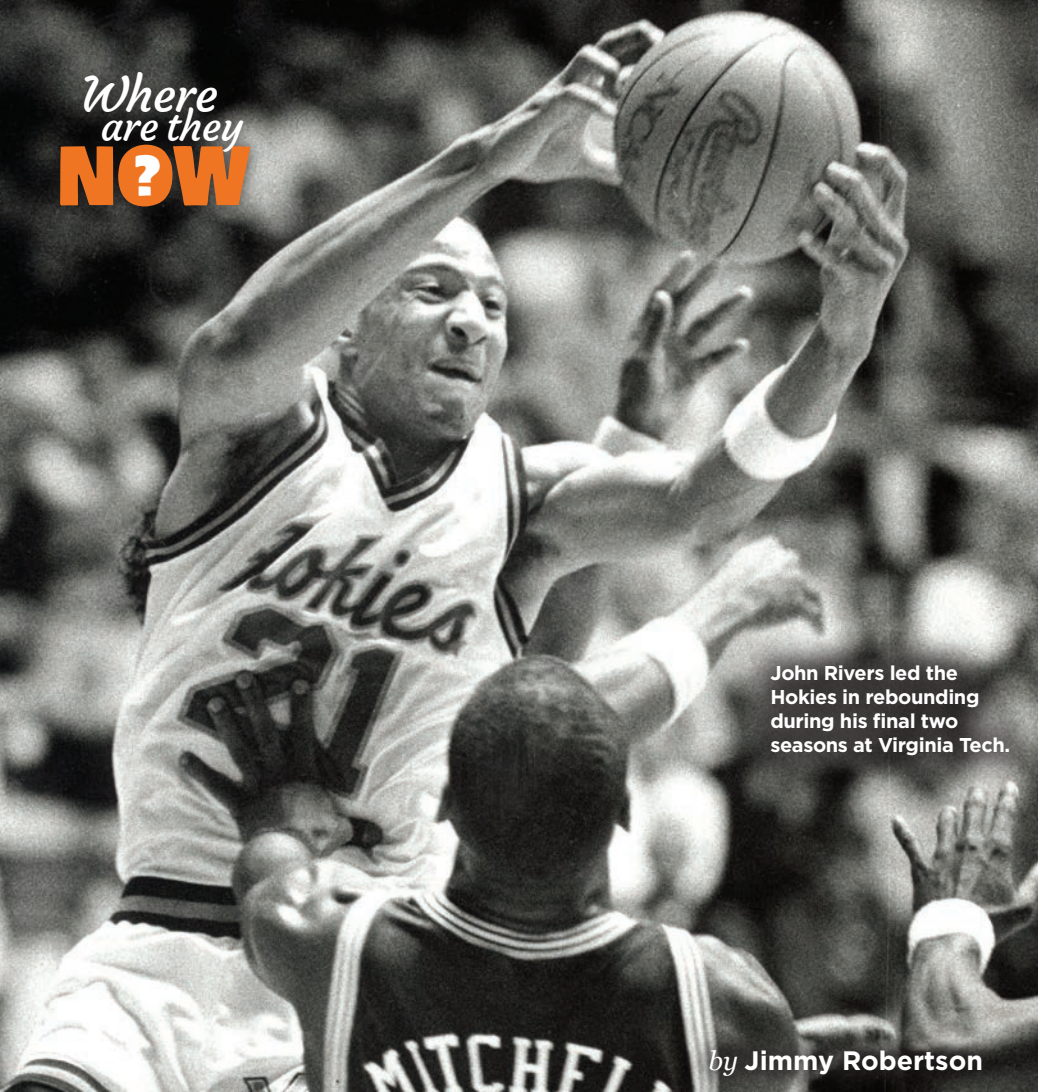
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John Rivers led the Hokies in rebounding during his final two seasons at Virginia Tech.

by Jimmy Robertson

JOHN RIVERS is one of the **RARE ATHLETES** to excel in both **FOOTBALL** and **BASKETBALL** at **TECH**

High school prospects wishing to play two sports at Virginia Tech – and more importantly, be successful in them – would be wise to learn of the exploits of John Rivers and perhaps even reach out to him for advice.

Rivers wasn't the first Tech athlete to play two sports, but he did play two of them quite well during his time in Blacksburg that spanned the late 1980s and early 1990s. He contributed to the basketball squads of both Frankie Allen and Bill Foster and also to Frank Beamer's early football teams.

Those looking to do both at any major college should heed his warning.

"Oh my gosh," Rivers said in a recent phone interview. "I tell people right now that you have to have the mentality for it. You've got to

have the drive to play both sports. It's not an easy thing. If you don't have the right mindset, you will fail out of school easily.

"Trying to keep up with your grades and classes ... you've got to meet with your professors to be able to understand and learn what you need to be doing in those classes and when. I didn't have much of a break time because I always went from one sport to the next. Then when basketball was over, there was spring football.

"So there were no breaks, and I was here for both sessions of summer school because it was tough to take a big load of credit hours while playing a sport. I used the summers to catch up on what I was missing during the school year."

To his credit, Rivers graduated from Tech

in 1992 with a degree in consumer affairs. He did so in four years while playing both football and basketball. Since leaving Tech, he has worked for DuPont at that company's facility in North Carolina before landing his current job at Nucorp Steel in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, not far from his childhood home in Moncks Corner.

Allen recruited Rivers to play basketball, and many other schools showed interest before his football coach, who also served as the athletics director, told basketball coaches that Rivers wanted to play football in college. Rivers didn't find that out until later, but it certainly explained why the flow of basketball offers subsided. He ultimately signed with Allen and the Hokies.

A year later, he decided to give football a go.

"It was something that I wanted to do, and when I was being recruited, I was told at that time that it could be a possibility," he said. "I don't think that they [the basketball coaches] really thought or wanted me to play football. I think it was pretty much a recruiting thing they used to get me to come there.

"When I got there, I didn't think much about it. But then, at that time, Rickey Bustle [former Tech offensive coordinator] knew of me and knew some about me, but they didn't really recruit that deep into South Carolina to the point that he knew about how good I was in football. He used to always talk to me and ask me what I thought about coming out. After my sophomore year, I made that decision. They had let Frankie Allen go, so I decided to try my hand at football."

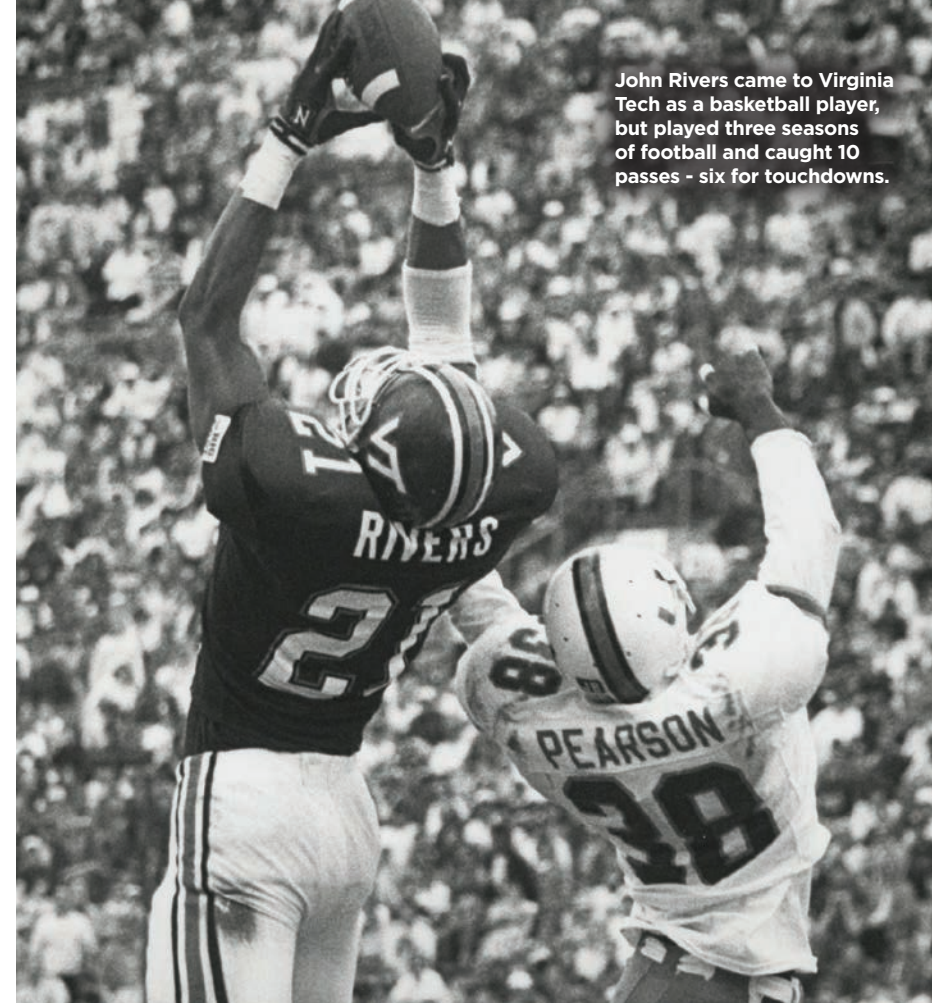
Rivers went out for football the summer before the 1990 season. He played receiver in high school and started out at that position for the Hokies, but Tech's coaches thought he lacked the pure speed for the position. They envisioned him more as an H-back and ultimately they used him on fade patterns in the end zone.

In his first game, he caught a 5-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Will Furrer. In his fifth game – versus then-No. 2 Florida State in Tallahassee – he caught touchdown passes of 4 and 3 yards from Furrer.

He played in 10 games and caught four passes the entire season, all for touchdowns. He also became a weapon on special teams, blocking two kicks.

"My first year, they found a role for me, and I wasn't mad about it," Rivers said. "I was able to score touchdowns. The group that we had at that time, we were the ones that started 'Beamer Ball.' We blocked field goals and punts and all that stuff. We were the ones who started Beamer Ball."

The next year, Rivers played in 11 games and caught six passes, two for scores. He also blocked another kick.



John Rivers came to Virginia Tech as a basketball player, but played three seasons of football and caught 10 passes - six for touchdowns.

He finished his career with 10 catches, six for touchdowns and he blocked three kicks. His best football memory was that 1990 Florida State game, a game in which the Hokies led 21-3 and later 28-25 in the third quarter before falling 39-28.

"For us to come in and play the way we did and almost beat them was big," he said.

Rivers also enjoyed success on the basketball court. During his junior season, he started 24 of 28 games in what would be Allen's last season, averaging 9.7 points and 9.0 rebounds per game. The Hokies swept perennial Metro Conference powerhouses Memphis State and Louisville that season.

As a senior, he averaged 10.6 points and a team-leading 8.1 rebounds per game, starting 26 of 27 games under Foster. He led the Hokies in rebounding 17 times that season, and he also led the team with 38 blocked shots. His best performances came in a win over Florida (19 points and 11 rebounds) and in an overtime loss to Virginia (15 points, 16 rebounds).

"There were some that felt like I'd be a good NBA player, but they felt like I needed some years in a minor league, and at that time, they didn't have the NBDL [NBA D-League] or anything like that," Rivers said. "There was talk about playing overseas, and then I was also looking at possibly doing something on a football level, too. I was trying to get into

camp. I did some of the little combine stuff, but nothing really came of it."

Today, Rivers lives in the Charleston, South Carolina area, but he keeps up with the Hokies and his former teammates (mostly through Facebook). He checks in often with football assistant coaches Cornell Brown and Torrian Gray – both were freshmen when Rivers was a senior.


He gets back to Blacksburg occasionally, but spends most of his fall Saturdays watching his son, Derek, a junior for Youngstown State. A defensive end, Derek earned first-team All-Missouri Valley Football Conference honors as a sophomore after finishing with 50 tackles and 14 sacks.

Rivers expects to be in the New River Valley area more often in the future to watch another one of his children, daughter Lydia, who signed to play basketball for Radford University and is a freshman this fall.

His kids' athletics exploits have saved him a lot of money so far.

"My youngest is 13," he said. "She's up and coming. She's very competitive. I'm not expecting anything less from her. She's excelling in volleyball and basketball."

Then he added with a laugh, "In all, it's going to save me a lot of money."

Of course, the real joy for him will be watching them enjoy success. He himself knows quite a bit about doing that. 

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TECH WOMEN *with* LOFTY EXPECTATIONS

The return of Regan Magarity and a lot of key components, along with the addition of a talented recruiting class, has created optimism for the upcoming season.

by Jimmy Robertson

Virginia Tech women's basketball coach Dennis Wolff has a nice blend of youth and experience on his roster as the Hokies ready for the 2015-16 season.

On an absolutely perfect September afternoon, a group of women's basketball players gathered at Tech's Hahn Hurst Practice Center for their latest session in preparation for the upcoming 2015-16 season.

One young lady, a particularly tall and athletic sort, launched jumpers and made smooth moves to the basket. Her fluidity stood out, and even a basketball novice could figure out that this young lady brings something special to a team.

Regan Magarity and her significant assortment of skills return to the Tech basketball program this season – and that is one of many reasons why head coach Dennis

Wolff is optimistic about the Hokies. Magarity played in five games a year ago, averaging 14 points and 10.6 rebounds per game before a calf injury that required surgery sidelined her for the rest of the campaign.

Wolff likened the injury to a football team losing its starting quarterback. The end result for his squad? It finished 12-20 overall, 1-15 in ACC play last season.

"It impacted us in a variety of ways," Wolff admitted. "Forgetting about what she did statistically, she's physical as a player and she's mentally tough, and for a bigger player, she has ball-handling skills that we thought would enable us to run some offense.

"When you're changing course midstream, it's not an easy thing. But she had successful surgery, and she's back playing and doing everything with the team right now. She looks good."

Magarity received a medical hardship waiver from the NCAA, which gives her four more years to play for the Hokies. Now a redshirt freshman, she hopes to pick up from where she left off last season.

The 6-foot-3 Norrköping, Sweden product scored 25 points in her Tech debut, and in her third game, finished with 10 points and 17 rebounds. She scored 17 points and grabbed nine rebounds in her fourth game. Overall,

she scored in double figures in three of the five games in which she played, and she also reached double figures in rebounds in three of the five.

Magarity's return, along with the return of a host of other players, give Wolff arguably his best team since he took the head job in 2011. The Hokies' top seven scorers and top eight rebounders return. Plus, the three-member recruiting class of Chanette Hicks, Kelly Koshuta and Alana Gilmer was ranked 19th nationally by ESPN HoopGurlz.

Tech's only personnel loss came in the form of Kelsey Conyers, who started 22 games last season and averaged 3.6 points per game. She will be missed, as she was a "glue" player whom everyone respected.

But there is no denying that the Hokies return a lot of pieces – the first step toward enjoying success.

"Kelsey Conyers was an integral member of the team, but she's the only player we lost," Wolff said. "You're essentially returning the whole team, plus Regan and plus a good recruiting class. There is reason for optimism, primarily because of the experience of the returning group and getting Regan back."

Another reason for optimism is the way the Hokies played in last March's ACC Tournament. Tech knocked off NC State, getting a buzzer-beating 3-pointer from Hannah Young to upset the Wolfpack 57-56. In the next round, the Hokies rallied from a seven-point, first-half deficit to beat Pittsburgh 51-45.

Their season came to an end with a loss to Florida State, but the two tournament wins provided some impetus heading into the offseason.

"We had a bunch of tight games all season," Wolff said. "The last regular-season game was at Boston College and was a winnable game, but we didn't manage the last minute of the game.

"Collectively, they [the Hokies] just continued to try and be coached and continued

to believe we were close. We hadn't lost that train of thought. Then we had some kids make some big plays in the NC State game, and we collectively played well in the Pittsburgh game.

"What it [the two wins] did was give us a positive push into spring and summer workouts. You had a little foundation from the wins, and the ladies carried it over and really embraced the lifting, the conditioning and the individual workouts. That was a much-needed boost at a good time."

The strength of the 2015-16 squad probably centers around a core of perimeter players, led by guard Vanessa Panousis. As a sophomore last season, she averaged 13.5 points, 3.1 rebounds and 3.2 assists, and she set a Tech single-season record for 3-pointers made with 77.

The Sydney, Australia product has made 135 3-pointers in her career and is well ahead of pace to break Carrie Mason's career record of 200.

"She tries to do the right thing every day," Wolff said. "She tries to practice the right way. She's good with her teammates. She had very good coaching in Australia. She's got a strong family. She's the type of student-athlete we want here at Tech."

Panousis spent most of the summer playing for the Australian team at the World University Games held in South Korea. The Australians finished in fifth place at the event, and Panousis' best performance came in Australia's 85-40 win over Brazil when she scored 14 points, hitting 6 of 8 from the floor. She played mostly in a reserve role.

Panousis has played mostly the point guard position in her career at Tech, but Wolff envisions Hicks, the freshman point guard from Norfolk, Virginia, playing a lot with Panousis in Tech's backcourt. Hicks averaged 14.1 points and seven assists for Maury High School last season.

"I don't want to give Chanette too much



Virginia Tech post player Taijah Campbell has started 67 of the 72 games in which she has played entering this upcoming season.

too early, but Chanette can guard a bigger guard even though she's small," Wolff said. "She's extremely quick and active. She plays unselfishly, as does Vanessa. I think she can make Vanessa a better player. At times, Vanessa's had to handle the ball all the time."

Magarity, Young, Rachel Camp, Sami Hill

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BROOKS

Freshman
Union Hall, Va.



20

HEIDI
BROWN

Freshman
Winchester, Va.



22

ALANA
GILMER

Freshman
North Easton, Mass.



12

CHANETTE
HICKS

Freshman
Norfolk, Va.



33

KELLY
KOSHUTA

Freshman
Vienna, Va.



- A 5-9 forward who is an invited walk-on
- Averaged 13.4 points, 4.5 rebounds and 2.5 steals per game as a senior at Franklin County High School
- A first-team Conference 3 team selection as a senior
- A first-team Piedmont District choice as a senior

- A 6-0 forward who is an invited walk-on
- Averaged 18.3 points per game as a senior at Sherando High School
- Scored more than 1,000 points in her career (1,154 points)
- A first-team Conference 21 selection last season

- A 6-0 forward ranked the No. 16 wing prospect nationally by ESPN HoopGurlz
- Scored 1,458 points in her career at Archbishop Williams
- Scored 18 points and grabbed 14 rebounds in the MIAA Division 3 state title game to lead Archbishop to the title
- Was one of just five girls from Massachusetts nominated for the McDonald's All-America Team

- A 5-6 point guard ranked as the No. 15 point guard prospect nationally by Collegiate Girls Basketball Report
- Averaged 14.1 points, seven assists, six rebounds and 6.7 steals per game as a senior
- All-Tidewater Defensive Player of the Year for three straight years
- A second-team all-state choice as a senior (Class 5A) by the Virginia High School League

- A five-star recruit according to ESPN HoopGurlz
- Ranked the No. 32 overall prospect nationally by Collegiate Girls Basketball Report
- A first-team all-state choice (Class 6A) and the Washington Post All-Met Player of the Year
- Averaged more than 20 points and 10 rebounds as a senior

and Gilmer also figure into the backcourt mix, mostly at the small forward spot. Magarity possesses the ability to play inside and outside, and so, too, does Young, a senior who started 16 games last season and averaged 6.2 points and 4.5 rebounds per game.

Camp, who can play shooting guard or small forward, started 28 games last season as a freshman, averaging 11.4 points and 5.6 rebounds per game. Like Camp, Hill can play multiple spots. She played in all 31 games last year and averaged 3.7 points per game.

Like Panousis, Hill played in the World University Games in South Korea, starting for the Canadian team that lost to the U.S. in the championship game. She saw 20 minutes of action in that game, scoring a point. She scored four points in the Canadians' semifinal win over the Russians and five points in the Canadians' quarterfinal win over the Czech Republic.

Gilmer, a 6-foot freshman from North Easton, Massachusetts, averaged 18.1 points

and six rebounds per game her senior season in high school.

In the post, senior Taijah Campbell returns along with junior Sidney Cook, the transfer from Seton Hall. Campbell averaged 7.4 points and 6.8 rebounds per game last season, while Cook started 15 of the 29 games in which she played and averaged 6.0 points and 5.5 rebounds. Of course, Magarity and Young can help in the post as well, and Tara Nahodil, Dominique Powell, Dee Croker and Koshuta add depth. Koshuta, the Washington Post Player of the Year last spring, averaged more than 20 points and 10 rebounds per game during both her junior and senior seasons at James Madison High School.

The Hokies played well defensively a year ago, ranking in the middle of the pack in the ACC in most defensive categories. They need to improve offensively, though – they ranked last in the ACC in scoring offense and field-goal percentage. The talent should equate to

more productivity on offense this season.

“We have some better options,” Wolff said. “Regan can play inside and outside, and that helps us immensely. Her getting hurt last year really messed us up. It took us a while to get settled in, but we have a good mindset now.”

The Hokies will find out what they are made of rather quickly. Tech plays at Georgetown, at Penn State as part of the Big Ten/ACC Challenge, and at Tennessee within its first eight games.

Overall, the Hokies' schedule includes nine games against teams that made the NCAA Tournament last season. But the home slate features league games against teams that the Hokies match up favorably with – BC, Clemson, NC State and Pittsburgh.

“To me, there are three tiers in this league,” Wolff said. “The top tier is really tough. Those are teams that are competing for the national championship. There is a middle tier that we're capable of getting into, and that puts you

into postseason tournaments, whether that's the NCAA or NIT. I think we have a team that can do that.

“The teams that we're competing with, we had to go on the road last year, but they're coming to us now. Pitt, NC State, Clemson and BC all come to us. We have to make some hay in those games.”

The key for the Hokies is quite simple – they need to stay healthy. Players such as Panousis,


Magarity and Campbell need to stay healthy because of their experience or production, or both.

Tech also needs to take what it did in last March's ACC Tournament and carry it over to the 2015-16 season.

“We need to bottle the mindset that we had at the end of last season in the ACC Tournament in regard to team play and everyone pointing in the right direction,” Wolff said. “We need

to bottle that and bring it into this season. We have to take and learn from what was positive in all those things.”

The Hokies haven't been to postseason play since 2007. They haven't been to the NCAA Tournament since 2006.

But if they stay healthy and those returning players take the next step in their developments, they could be playing well into next March. 

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WOMEN'S GOLF *finally* TEES OFF!

On May 13, 2013, former Tech athletics director Jim Weaver announced the addition of women's golf as the school's 22nd intercollegiate program. On July 8 of that same year, he hired Carol Robertson as the head coach. On Aug. 28, 2014, the program held its first practice.

This past Sept. 20, the program teed off for the first time, as the Hokies played in the Lady Paladin Invitational held at the Furman University Golf Course in Greenville, North Carolina. Amanda Hollandsworth, a redshirt freshman from Floyd, Virginia, who was the program's first commitment, hit a tee shot on the opening hole to launch the program officially into competition.

Paced by Hollandsworth, the Hokies finished in seventh place in the three-day, 17-team field. Hollandsworth shot 5-over-par in the event to come in 10th in the race for medalist honors. Elizabeth Bose, a freshman from Norfolk, Virginia, shot 6-over-par and came in 14th, while Allison Woodward, a redshirt freshman from Unicoi, Tennessee, finished 38th at 11-over-par.

The Hokies will play four tournaments in the fall, finishing their fall season by the end of October. They open the spring season on Feb. 12 at the Florida State Match-Up in Tallahassee, Florida. 



Virginia Tech student-athletes listened to a presentation from Jonathan Orr on Sept. 9 that focused mostly on the importance of budgeting.

meetings and learned that Orr already had spoken to student-athletes at both Clemson and NC State.

“My counterpart at Clemson said he was great, and I really respect her opinion,” White said. “Then I met with him after a session, and he was really sincere. You could tell he cared.”

The session with Orr included student-athletes from most of the department’s varsity sports. He spent the first part of the session introducing himself and also getting to know a few of the student-athletes. Then he dove into the presentation, showing slides interspersed with video clips.

The overriding point during the presentation was simple – make a budget.

“The key is budgeting,” he told the group. “If you can gain this skill now, it will help you for the rest of your life.”

Orr showed the student-athletes how to create a monthly budget by simply adding their monthly income – in their case, from their scholarship allotments – and subtracting any expenses (rent, utilities, gas, etc.). If the expenses were more than the income, then he or she needed to make an adjustment by sacrificing on the expense side. After tabulating the numbers, the student-

athletes then needed to execute the plan.

Orr gave an example of a professional athlete who lacked these financial management skills. Vin Baker, who made more than \$100 million playing in the NBA, squandered most of his money, mostly in his struggles with alcoholism. Today, he is in training to become a Starbucks manager.

“The thing about a budget is you’re telling every dime you have coming in where to go as opposed to life’s circumstances dictating where you’re going to spend your money,” Orr said. “Do you have a plan for every single month? Over the last five years, almost six, I’ve been practicing this. I can tell you where every single dollar has gone. It’s important. When you see you don’t have enough, you’re going to have to sacrifice.”

Orr also went over topics such as credit and credit card debt, telling the student-athletes to avoid credit card debt. He delivered some staggering numbers, too, telling the group that 21 percent of college graduates leave their institutions with an average of \$7,000 in credit card debt.

Overall, he told them, managing money is the same whether one does it for oneself or for a major corporation.

“The same skills that you use to manage

your money as a college student are the same skills you’d use if you were managing a company,” he told them. “It’s just two different levels, but it’s the same skills.”

Athletics department personnel may do more events like this one in the future. In fact, the Office of Student-Athlete Development tentatively has planned for another session next spring.

Some sports already have been proactive about financial management. This past August, Tech head football coach Frank Beamer and his administrative staff brought in two representatives from Morgan Stanley, a nationally recognized investment firm, to address the players about managing their money.

It only makes sense. Students spend their lives getting an education ultimately to get a job and make money. So they need to learn how to manage money once they receive it.

“Managing one’s finances is an important topic for today’s student-athletes,” said Reyna Gilbert-Lowry, an associate AD for student-athlete development. “We want to provide resources to our student-athletes, so that they can make smart decisions about money.

“These are tools that will help them the rest of their lives.” 

Financial session yields impact on Tech student-athletes

Former college and NFL player Jonathan Orr tells his story, teaches basic financial management skills

by Jimmy Robertson

Once he signed his first NFL contract, Jonathan Orr never thought he’d have to worry about money again.

Sure, he had heard about athletes blowing their money, buying cars and jewelry and extravagant homes. But he swore to himself that he would never be in that situation.

Yet less than two years later, he found himself in that exact situation.

“I said that would never be me,” Orr told a group of Virginia Tech student-athletes. “In less than two years, it was me. I remember sitting at home and calling the NFL Players Association and seeing if they would allow me to have access to the money I had put up for retirement. I needed it. I said it would never be me, but I ended up in that situation.

“It was a lack of basic financial management skills. I didn’t understand simple things. I had no idea that these things existed, and had I

known back then or prior to, I would have saved myself a lot of heartache and pain, and I wouldn’t have lost as much money as I did.”

Orr gradually worked his way out of his financial mess, eventually getting a job in the Nashville Public School system. He now serves as the executive administrator of operations and finance with The Salvation Army in his hometown of Detroit, Michigan, and he also has established Athlete Transition Services Corp., an organization that helps athletes avoid the financial pitfalls that befell him.

Orr, a former University of Wisconsin receiver who was a sixth-round draft choice of the Tennessee Titans in the 2006 NFL Draft, came to Blacksburg on Sept. 9 and taught an hour-long Money Management 101 course to a group of Tech student-athletes. The group of 92 student-athletes gathered

at the McConnell Auditorium within the Merryman Center to listen to Orr tell his story and to learn some basic money management concepts.

The Office of Student-Athlete Development within the Tech athletics department scheduled the event as yet another way to help student-athletes prepare for life after college. This office has scheduled speakers on financial-related topics in the past, but never one as well received as Orr.

“This was the best attended session, and we’ve had the best feedback,” said Danny White, assistant AD for student-athlete development. “Jonathan brought energy to the topic. He was great. He was funny and appropriate and kept everyone interested.”

White played a major role in getting Orr to Blacksburg. He met Orr at one of the ACC’s student-athlete development office

READY *to* DIVE IN

The Tech swimming and diving programs lost several accomplished athletes from last season's squads, but the Hokies' staff is confident in a talented group of returners - including the NCAA qualifiers below - and newcomers as they prepare to jump into the 2015-16 season

*by Evan Nicely
Special to Inside Hokie Sports*



Continued on page 42

To be both smart and talented is a hard combination to find, but it's been a winning formula for the Virginia Tech men's and women's swimming and diving programs.

As the 2015-16 season begins to ramp up, the Hokies are looking to build off of last season, when both teams finished in the top three at the ACC Championships. The two teams combined to send 26 qualifiers to the NCAA Championships, while also landing 38 on the All-ACC Academic Team and being named a Scholar All-America Team by the College Swimming Coaches Association of America.

This season, the Hokies will have to replace a few All-America performers and some of the most successful athletes to come through the program. But they have a stockpile of talented freshmen and returners who are ready to excel.

"We're returning NCAA qualifiers who did well during the season and who have higher goals for this season," senior assistant coach Sarah Stockwell said. "Having such a great group of kids returning sets a great precedent for leadership in practice and in competitions."

The team will lean on its experience and leadership, as it faces a very challenging schedule with six teams that finished inside of the top 30 last year. The list includes SEC teams Kentucky and LSU, as well as Penn State, West Virginia and a trip to the Tennessee Fall Invitational.

"We feel that we have a strong balance of nationally elite programs and some teams and coaches that I have long admired," Tech head coach Ned Skinner said of his schedule prior to the start of fall practice.

This year, the women's program will have one of the more difficult tasks in replacing the only four-time ACC Women's Diver of the Year in Kaylea Arnett. She won gold medals



One of just seven seniors on the Virginia Tech women's swimming and diving squad, Mackenzie Stewart will help the Hokies in the individual medley and breaststroke events this season.

in the 3-meter and platform events at the ACC Championships last spring, while pulling in a bronze medal in the 1-meter. She finished her career with six gold medals – the most by any diver in ACC history and the most by any Tech swimmer or diver.

Tech head diving coach Ron Piemonte, the reigning ACC Women's Diving Coach of the Year, will be tasked with molding a group of

young, but talented divers, to fill the void left by Arnett. Freshman Ashlynn Peters, who, like Arnett, hails from Texas, will be one of those looked to step in and step up.

"Our diving roster is a pretty young one," Stockwell said. "I think someone like Ashlynn Peters has the ability to step up and really perform as a freshman and kind of shake up the ACC a little bit with her talents."

The women's team features seven seniors this season, led by Weronika Paluszek, a returning All-American in the 200-yard breaststroke. The Wroclaw, Poland product claimed eighth in that event at the NCAA Championships last spring after finishing fourth in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke events at the ACC Championships.

Holly Harper, Mackenzie Stewart and Alyssa Bodin are also seniors who return. Harper claimed sixth in the 100 backstroke at the ACC Championships, while Stewart finished fourth and fifth in the 100 and 200 breaststroke, respectively. Bodin played a role in the 200 medley relay team that came in sixth at the ACC Championships.

Arguably, the top returner is honorable mention All-American Klaudia Nazieblo, who, like Paluszek, hails from Wroclaw, Poland. Nazieblo, who competes in the backstroke, butterfly, individual medley and freestyle events, finished 14th in the 200 butterfly at the NCAA Championships.

Nazieblo won two bronze medals at last year's ACC Championships in the 200 butterfly and 100 backstroke, and she also was a part of the 400 medley relay team that claimed bronze.

"We expect continued greatness," Stockwell

said. "[Nazieblo] is a hard worker in the water. She trains really hard outside of the water, in the weight room and during dry land [exercises]. She's another one we expect to continue to accelerate toward the championship segment and keep doing what she does best – and that's getting her hand on the wall first."

Not only are the Tech women excited about the returners, but they also have a few other talented freshmen in addition to Peters.

"On the women's side, you've got Abby Stone and Sidney Pesetti among others," Stockwell said. "Both classes are full of great talent and athletic swimmers who are ready to swim fast."

On the men's side, the team lost several talented seniors – eight of them to be exact, including, most notably, Morgan Latimer. The Richmond, Virginia native finished his stellar career by becoming an honorable mention All-American in the 200 butterfly after finishing 16th. Latimer's impressive career also included six ACC top-10 finishes, two ACC silver medals and six ACC relay medals.

This year's squad only has four seniors, led by swimmers Lucas Bureau and Michal Szuba. Bureau was part of the 800 freestyle relay team that won a bronze medal at the ACC

Championships last spring, and he also holds the school record in the 200 freestyle. Szuba finished fourth at the ACC Championships in the 500 freestyle and sixth in the 1,650 freestyle, and he, too, was a part of the winning 800 freestyle relay team.

Also, diver Logan Stevens is a senior. The Covington, Kentucky product won a silver at the ACC Championships in the 3-meter event, and he finished fourth on the platform.

In addition to those three, Tech also returns ACC gold-medal swimmer Brandon Fiala, as well as sophomore sensation and NCAA honorable mention All-American Robert Owen.

Fiala, a junior from Centreville, Virginia, was part of the 400 medley relay team that finished 16th at the NCAA Championships this past spring, thus earning him an honorable mention All-America nod. He also claimed gold in the 200 IM at the ACC Championships and finished fifth in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke events.

Owen, a junior from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, spent much of his offseason in Blacksburg continuing to get better. He hit the weight room and practiced, skipping more traditional student summer vacations in hopes of continuing to make a name for himself on the national scene.



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NCAA qualifier Logan Stevens, who also won a silver medal at the ACC Championships last spring, could be the next great diver at Virginia Tech.

Owen won a gold medal in the 400 individual medley this past season at the ACC Championships and competed this summer at the U.S. National Championships in San Antonio, where he took home a sixth-place finish – three spots better than where he finished the previous year at the same event.

“He’s really, really talented,” Skinner said. “He has an incredible feel for the water.”

Stockwell also saw a lot of work and progress this fall from Owen – a benefit of his work throughout the offseason.

“I think [Owen] has continued to make his weaknesses his strengths and improve outside the pool to help him be better in the pool,” Stockwell said. “I think he’s setting himself up for a great season.”

Joining the squad this year is a group of 14 newcomers. They are led by freshmen Michael Craddock, Sean Workman and Brent Benedict.

Benedict, a Corry, Pennsylvania product whose cousin by the same name played football at Virginia Tech, will be competing in the butterfly, sprint freestyle, and backstroke events. Craddock, from New Castle, Virginia, will do the freestyle, individual medley and the breaststroke. Workman, from O’Fallon, Illinois, was already an Olympic Trial qualifier in the 200 backstroke before he even started classes. He also just missed the Olympic Trial time in the 100 backstroke.

“All of those guys are standout swimmers who put in a lot of good work this summer

and came in ready to go,” Stockwell said. “I think they’re really going to shake up the ACC with their talents.”

In addition to the freshmen, there are also new faces on the coaching staff. Skinner has hired new assistant coaches in Josh Huger, who spent the past two years as an assistant at William and Mary, and Nate Destree, who spent the past two years as a graduate assistant at West Virginia.

“I think having some new faces on staff helps bring a new energy, a set of ideas and concepts that’s continued to elevate our training,” Skinner said. “Every year, we go back to the drawing board, use the things we’re good at and make them better. Find things that we can tweak and make them stronger and faster. I think having two new faces to contribute a lot of energy and a lot of thought has really, really helped.”

For the staff and swimmers, the long offseason has made the team eager to get back onto the diving platforms and into the pool.

“Everyone is very excited,” Stockwell said. “I think that both teams are eager and itching to start racing and competing. We’ve been doing some dry runs here in practice, but nothing quite like the real deal. They’re itching for it.”

The team is getting ready for its first dual meet, which is on Oct. 30. Queens University (N.C.) and Richmond come to the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, Tech’s home, for the event.

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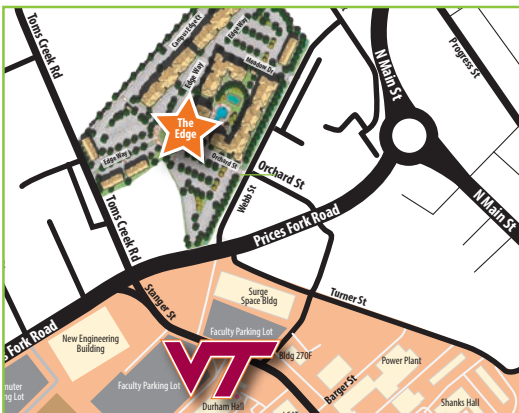
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