

Games from page 32

budding star Lee Hyde. Hyde averaged five to six innings a start last season, but Moranda thought that some of the fatigue was due to too much effort in Hyde's delivery to the plate.

He has spent much of the fall working on the new mechanics and will continue to work through the winter up until the start of spring practices.

"I think [Hyde is] still a work in progress," Hall said. "He's working very hard, and he's buying into some things that he needs to do. Any time that you go through some changes you have to back up a bit before you can go forward. He's had some outings where his results haven't been as good as he'd like, but from our prospective we're seeing him do things that we want him to do."

The surprise of the fall has been the rise of Neighborgall. The junior continued to make enormous strides, and the most significant surprise is his newfound command. Neighborgall made an enormous leap from the end of the season to the beginning of fall and has continued on that progression. A mid-90's fastball with pinpoint control is going to be a dangerous combination for opposing hitters.

"He's been outstanding," Hall said. "He's pitched great every time out, and he's done everything that we've asked for him to do. He's competed well and is throwing a lot of strikes."

Danny Payne appears to be the front-runner to replace Brandon Boggs in centerfield. The highly touted freshman has made great strides in his adaptation of the col-

lege game. Steven Blackwood and Jeremy Slayden will be rounding out the outfield.

After he replaced Wes Hodges at third base at the end of last season, Mike Trapani used a solid spring to catapult himself into the starting lineup at second base to replace Eric Patterson. Whit Robbins, Tyler Greene and Wes Hodges will play first base, shortstop and third base, respectively. Andy Hawranick managed to hold off Matt Weiters for the time being to hold onto the starting job replacing Mike Nickeas.

“[Jason Neighborgall]’s been outstanding. He’s pitched great every time out...”

Danny Hall
Baseball head coach

"I wanted to see Jeremy Slayden be healthy," Hall said. "He was extremely healthy for the entire fall, and he swung the bat great. I definitely wanted to look at our freshman. I think Danny Paine is a great player and a great centerfielder. Matt Wieters is going to be a great player and Fisher is going to be a great player. I'm pleased with the performances of all the freshmen. The guys that you wanted to see play good all got better, and even guys like Cameron Lane and Nick Scherer that may be more role players than established starters all competed hard. I think we had a lot of guys play well."

"I think we'll have a lot of competition at every position," Hall said. "There are guys that are established

starters. Somebody is going to have to beat Trapani out at second base, and I haven't seen anybody do that yet. Weiters will put a lot of pressure on Hawranick, but Hawranick is a great player."

A big key to the success of Tech next season will be the health of Slayden. A healthy Slayden will add a big bat and an exceptional glove in right field. Slayden will be able to add the pop back into the lineup vacated by the departure of Boggs and Micah Owings from last year's squad.

Trapani took advantage of Wes Hodges' injury at the end of last season and used the opportunity to gain experience and impress the coaches. Hodges was injured in the final regular season game against UGA after being hit with a pitch in the face.

Trapani helped the team considerably at the plate and held down third base defensively for the remainder of the season. Trapani made several quality stops at second base during the intrasquad games, and looked impressive at the plate.

"I wouldn't call [Hodges' injury] a blessing," Hall said. "The biggest thing is that Trapani walked on and all he did was bust his butt everyday, and when he got his chance to play he took advantage of the opportunity. That's to his credit. He is one of the leaders on our team, and he performed like that last year."

Next season is still four months away, but the expectations for the team are already building. The Jackets will play 30 games against ACC opponents including home series against perennial powerhouse Florida State. Florida State won the ACC tournament last season by defeating Tech two games in a row in the championship series.

Kayak from page 31

noeing is a much smaller sport than sprint kayaking. The club does not currently own a sprint canoe, however they do hope to purchase one in the future.

In the warmer months, team events are held. During nationals there are two divisions, novice and open paddlers, that are divided into male and female sections. Each section competes in 200, 500, and 1000 meter sprints with heats for single-person, two-person, and four-person sprint kayaks. Points are awarded by place in each heat, and the team point total determines the overall event winner.

The Collegiate Sprint Kayaking nationals alternate locations an-

Laband from page 32

of the Laband family. Each of her two brothers and two sisters played or play several sports. It was her older brother that inspired her to become the person she is today, as Lindsey took his lead and got involved with many sports.

Her dad was even coach of her 'Silver Maidens' soccer team when she began playing the sport. In her senior year of high school, Laband captained the volleyball, soccer, and basketball teams. Further, she received all-state honors in all three sports.

nually between the east and west coast. In 2005 they will be held in Gainesville, Ga.

GT Kayak won the first ever collegiate nationals for sprint kayaking in 2001. During the following three years, GT took second place in nationals with Stanford University placing first.

GT Kayak members refer to Stanford's Sprint Canoe and Kayak club as their sibling, and rivalry.

"[Stanford has] a lot more money, [and] a lot more free time than we do... plus they have water on campus, which makes a huge difference," Goodman said.

Fifty percent of the GT Kayak budget traditionally goes to travel, which has been hurt by recent funding cuts.

While she will graduate with a Management degree, Laband would like to try her hand at coaching or get a master's degree and eventually teach. But for now, she relishes her chance to continue the great setter legacy at Tech.

"The standard is high, so all I can do is try and raise the bar," Laband said.

Currently in the top-ten on the national assist list and on pace to bring Tech another conference title, that is exactly what she is doing.

This week the Tech volleyball team faces Duke on Friday and Wake Forest on Sunday at home.

“We are fortunate that nationals are in Georgia this year instead of California.”

David Goodman
GT Kayak president

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through individual workouts, when I'm in the weight room, when I'm running, that's what I'm thinking about," Will Bynum said.

Last year, Tech achieved the 28 win mark, tied for the highest win total in school history, and went 9-7 in the ACC, which was good enough for third place. Then to top it all off, they waltzed all the way to the NCAA Championship game against Connecticut beating Northern Illinois, Boston College, Nevada, and heavyweights Kansas and Oklahoma State on their way there.

"I like the pressure. We set the standard for ourselves for this year."

Jarrett Jack Basketball junior

"Getting that close last year, it drives you," Jack said. "[You think] 'Could I have done any little thing that would have made a difference?'"

As a result of last year's success, Tech has been getting a lot of pre-season attention, ranging from an *ESPN* commercial featuring dunk specialist Ishma'il Muhammad, to an *ESPN the Magazine* profile on junior center Luke Schenscher.

"I like the pressure," Jack said. "We set the standard for ourselves for this year. The bulls-eye will be on our back every night, so it's on us to perform. When you get to the pinnacle of college basketball, everybody else wants to knock you off. That's just something we're going to have to deal with every night."

Tech returns four starters from the previous season. Key losses

include Clarence Moore, David Nelson, Marvin Lewis, the team's best 3-point threat and Robert Brooks.

"Every year you have a new team," Hewitt said. "You subtract Marvin Lewis, Clarence Moore, Robert Brooks and David Nelson, and it changes the group."

Despite these losses, Tech remains full of veterans and returns with three candidates for the John Wooden Award, given to the nation's best players: senior guard B.J. Elder, junior point guard Jarrett Jack, senior center Luke Schenscher. They return the depth that made them such a lethal team. Junior Ishma'il Muhammad, senior Will Bynum, junior Theodis Tarver and Mario West, the team's only sophomore, will all be prepared to come off the bench for Tech when Hewitt gives them the nod.

B.J. Elder

B.J. Elder, an All-ACC honoree every year he has been at Tech, led the Jackets in scoring during the 2003-04 season with 14.9 points per game. This performance was good enough for top 10 in the ACC.

The lone player to earn All-American mention last year, B.J. upped his points average to 17.8 per game during the postseason, including the ACC Tournament, before spraining his ankle against Nevada in the NCAA Tournament. Although Elder's scoring has remained the same from his sophomore year, he's still scoring despite the rise of others like Schenscher, Jack and Bynum.

With five games of scoring at least 25 points, Elder has also displayed better potential of breaking out into big games than he did as an underclassman, where he only recorded one 25-point performance. On a promising note, Elder has done most of his damage in ACC games, where he averages 15.9 points per game.

In the offseason, Elder has been preparing for the upcoming season with a regular

balance of training and focus that the team has become known for while recovering from the ankle sprain he endured in the postseason last year.

"B.J. had a high ankle sprain... He says he feels a lot better. He feels a lot lighter. He bench-pressed 340, and he realized he's not losing any strength," Hewitt said.

Luke Schenscher

Like many of his teammates, 7'1" center Luke Schenscher has seen his production, awareness and success climb gradually in his years on the Flats.

To continue the success, Schenscher was back in the states over the summer to maintain his off-season workouts after he came within

one cut of making the Australian National Olympic team. And like Elder and Jack and most of the team, Schenscher stepped it up for ACC play averaging 9.1 points per game

and led the Jackets with 6.9 rebounds per contest.

Schenscher also recorded two double-doubles in the postseason: one against UNC in the ACC tourney where he scored 17 points and grabbed 17 boards and the other against Oklahoma State where he sank a personal best 19 points and added 12 rebounds to already momentous night.

"I wasn't sure where Luke was strength-wise. He's skilled and understands the game. He and Anthony McHenry are probably our two smartest basketball players. But [Schenscher] made tremendous strides in the weight room, and people have started to see how talented a player he is," Hewitt said.

Anthony McHenry

Perhaps the most underrated of the returning members of the starting five from last season, Anthony McHenry brings a different beat to the Tech fight song. Noted in scouting reports as being able to guard four positions defensively and able to play any of the five offensively, he averaged 3.2 rebounds, more than a block, almost 1.5 steals a game while adding 3.4 points a contest during the season. McHenry stepped it up offensively during the NCAA Tournament where he averaged 6.5 points a game and 4.0 rebounds.

This season McHenry will look to make his mark and help the Jackets on the road to glory.

Jarrett Jack

Floor leader and starting point guard Jarrett Jack, a third-year from Maryland, is perhaps this team's best individual talent who, despite what he accomplished last year, still has a vast ceiling of untapped potential.

"It's great when you see somebody respect the game the way he does. He doesn't take it for granted," Hewitt said. "You can always point to him as an example of what hard work and dedication will result in."



Perhaps his most amazing feat in a rather amazing college career thus far is the fact that not only has he played in every game in the last two seasons, he's started every one of them. On a team that prides itself on teamwork and unselfish play, versatility and depth, Jack has fortified his role on the team as the man the offense goes through, putting up an astounding 12.5 points, 5.6 assists and 4.9 rebounds a game.

"He shot the ball well last year, and he'll shoot it better this year. There are some little things that he needs to work on, but let's face it, when you score 29 points in an Elite Eight game to get to the Final Four, you have a lot of ability," Hewitt said. "But there is still more to work on, still more to improve. He came here as a tremendous physical talent—size, strength, speed, athleticism, desire to play the game. He'll leave here as a complete player."

Will Bynum

After hitting the game winning shot against Oklahoma, there was not a student on campus who didn't know Will Bynum's name.

"He was huge for us. We don't make it to the Final Four if not for



Photos by Christopher Gooley and Scott Meuleners / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Will. It was tough at times. He's such a talented individual player," Hewitt said.

A strong player off the bench Bynum averaged 9.3 points a game for Tech during the NCAA tournament with a team high 17 against Connecticut. These performances garnered Bynum a nod to the All-Final Four team. In the offseason Bynum has been strong, preparing for the tough schedule ahead.

"I tell you what, if you ask any of our guys right now who is playing well, they will all tell you the same name—Will Bynum. He is playing well and is in the best shape of his life."

Isma'il Muhammed

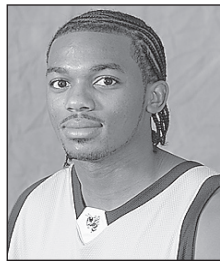
College's version of the "Human Highlight Film" is coming back from a severe case of patella tendonitis to once again entertain *SportCenter's* "Top Ten Plays" on a weekly basis. Considered one of the most pure athletes on the team by Hewitt, Isma'il Muhammad was the "matchstick

man" that started fires on both ends of the court—offensively with his stylish, emotionally-rousing dunks and defensively with his persistent presence grabbing 4.7 rebounds a game, 20 more steals than in his sophomore year.

Zam Fredrick

Zam Fredrick, "Mr. Basketball" in South Carolina, is a 6'1" combo-guard whose claim to fame is that he set the record as South Carolina's all-time scoring leader following in his father's footsteps who was the NCAA national leading scorer in 1981 as a Gamecock. Zam brings speed and the best raw shooting talent of anyone off the bench.

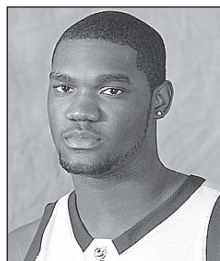
"Zam Fredrick can play both the point guard and two-guard (shooting guard) spots. He's well coached, having played for his Dad," Hewitt said.



Ra'Sean Dickey

Bolstering the frontcourt behind Schenscher, McHenry and Tarver is the 6'9" Ra'Sean Dickey, who plays the power forward position and stands out as a defensive presence boasting 15 rebounds and four blocked shots per game in high school.

"Ra'Sean Dickey is a talented scorer in the low post. I'm not sure if he's a four (power forward) or a five (center). Right now, he's more of a five at 6'9" 1/2... He's going to have to get in better shape," Hewitt said.



"He's a big kid, but he carries the weight well... But he's a talented scorer and an outstanding rebounder."

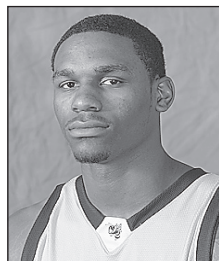
Anthony Morrow

North Carolina's "Mr. Basketball," the 6'5" Anthony Morrow is another pure shooter who possesses raw rebounding talent averaging almost ten rebounds a game in high school. "Anthony Morrow is very well-coached and is an outstanding shooter," Hewitt said. "He really understands the game, and I'm looking forward to having him in. He's a wing."

Jeremis Smith

Receiving comparisons to fellow teammate Isma'il Muhammad is the final recruit in the 2004 class, Texan Jeremis Smith. Standing 6'7", Smith represents the ruggedness and versatility that Hewitt works with in shaping the talent that has brought success to the program, now in Year Five under Hewitt.

"Jeremis Smith may be the best athlete of the group. He is the best athlete in the class, and he and Isma'il are the best athletes on the team," Hewitt said. "It will be interesting to see those guys square off in practice."



Hewitt also mentioned the possibility of Smith filling in the coveted fifth starting spot for Tech from off the bench.

"Jeremis has a chance to step in for [Moore], at least from a numbers standpoint," Hewitt said. "At this point, I'm not sure where Jeremis will play. I eventually would like to play him at the small forward spot," he said.

This story draws on quotes from interviews and articles available on Ramblingwreck.com, an Oct. 15 Associated Press article, an Oct. 14 preseason media day, and an *SI.com* article.

The Coach

Returning for his fifth season at the helm of the Tech basketball program, Coach Paul Hewitt faces his biggest challenge yet: turning a fledgling program into a perennial powerhouse.

Challenging the Jackets for the chance to cut the nets in March are at least 64 worthy opponents who want to make Tech's almost Cinderella run last year just that — a one-time fairy tale.

"What we need to do is make sure our guys get better as basketball players every day they are here and are moving toward their degrees," Hewitt said. "If you worry about the big, big picture too much, then you're not going to do the things you need to do to be successful."

Knowing that he was about to embark on his most important off-season yet, Hewitt told his players to get back down to the basics and develop their skills in shooting, passing and defense while complementing that with conditioning and cardio workouts to insure that the squad came back the most physically fit they have ever been.

In a recent press conference

during the Jackets' media day, Hewitt said, "My philosophy has always been if the players are getting better, then the team will be fine."

Continuing on his philosophy, Hewitt takes pride in his game plans, which he bases around a centerpiece concept of strong pressure defense. Other components of Hewitt's philosophy include selfless play and teamwork, individual player

development and a mental edge the opponent—all of which he stressed over the summer.

During the Final Four run last year, Hewitt said, "In the NBA, it used to be, growing up, the

Knicks vs. the Bullets, the Bucks vs. the Celtics. Now, it's Shaq vs. Yao Ming. What's that? That's not basketball, that's tennis."

Perhaps Hewitt's biggest

tribute to teamwork, something he gives to every player, is a single sheet of paper. On it is the title "Six Principles of GT Basketball" and underneath it is a space for the player's name followed by the words " = the foundation for every successful TEAM."

"Now, it's Shaq vs. Yao Ming. What's that? That's not basketball, that's tennis."

Paul Hewitt
Basketball head coach

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GEORGIA TECH (4-3) VS. NC STATE (4-4)

By Patrick Odneal



Five Key Questions

Tech has beaten NC State in eight of their last nine meetings. However, the last four have been close games.

In 2000 the Wolfpack won a thrilling overtime game 30-23 on their home field. But since then it's been all Tech, winning 29-21 last year, 24-17 in 2002 and 27-17 in 2001.

The Jackets come off a 20-34 loss last week against nationally ranked Virginia Tech. Many picked Virginia Tech to dominate the game from the get-go, but the Jackets started out on top.

Tech's intensity will need to be the kind of gaming-winning performance that they came out with in the first half against the Hokies if they want to win this weekend in Raleigh.

“[The Wolfpack is] not as elaborate in their passing game, but they are much more elaborate in their formations and personnel in the game to create running creases.”

Chan Gailey
Tech head coach



• Which Jacket offense will show up to play against the strong Wolfpack defense?

When quarterback Reggie Ball and receiving corps Calvin Johnson, Levon Thomas and Nate Curry play well, the Jacket passing game is nearly unstoppable. At times, however, the offense has stalled out and has been plagued by turnovers. The Jacket offense faces a Wolfpack defense ranked third in the nation, so the Tech offense must have a good performance.

Running back P.J. Daniels will miss this game due to injury, and Chris Woods will take his place. Woods has been a strong rusher in six of the last eight games and is averaging 5.3 yards per carry. If Woods can keep up that average in this game and if the passing game is on, Tech will easily leash the Wolfpack.

• How will the Jacket defense bounce back after giving up 25 points in the fourth quarter last game?

The Jacket defense has been solid most of the year, with all but two botched plays in the secondary against Virginia Tech last week tarnishing their record. Those mistakes aside, it's hard to discredit the solid performance of the Jacket defense throughout the season. Chris Reis, Gerris Wilkinson and James Butler have proven themselves time and again. A strong defensive performance, like what was seen in the goal line stand against Virginia Tech, can contain the N.C. State offense.

• Will this game be a last-second thriller like the last two Tech played at Carter-Finley Stadium?

All the ingredients are there to make this game come down to the last play of the game—two strong defenses, a history of these two teams playing close games, and the fact that for N.C. State, four of their last six ACC games have come down to the last play of the game. The Jackets will have to play a complete 60 minutes to win this football game.

• How will the Jackets play against a team of similar caliber?

Everyone knows about the cliché of the Tech roller coaster ride—playing well against ranked teams and then losing the ones that are supposed to be easy victories. These two teams have the same conference record, and they have performed similarly against common opponents. Perhaps the real test for Tech is to bring their best stuff against a team of similar caliber.

• How will the Wolfpack's tendency to turnover the ball affect the game?

There is little doubt that N.C. State has done itself a great deal of harm this season with its persistent turnovers. The Wolfpack has turned the ball over 23 times so far this season. However, stat that is the most telling is that N.C. State has turned the ball over 18 in its four losses and only five times in its four wins. Last week Tech was able to capitalize on turnovers by the Hokies. If the Jackets are to be victorious this week, they will need to cause a number of fumbles.

The NC State Wolfpack has the home field and a stellar defense to their advantage. The Wolfpack ranks third in the nation in total defense and second in pass defense.

On offense injuries may hinder them, however. Leading wide receiver Richard Washington is out with a knee sprain, and starting tailback T.A. McLendon is listed as probable after sustaining a shoulder sprain last game.

NC State has a record of 3-3 in the ACC, but four of their last six conference games have been won or lost on the last play of the game. The Wolfpack will come out trying to take Tech down early in hopes of ending their troubling trend.

“We do have good core leadership. Pat Thomas and Andre Maddox have been quick to pull the team together after some close losses, and we've had some close losses...”

John Ritcher
N.C. State junior tight end



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GT Kayak hires new coach, looks to nationals



Photos provided by GT Kayak

GT Kayak spends time at their new digs in Roswell, practicing for upcoming competitions.

By Patricia Breed
Contributing Writer

With colder weather rapidly approaching, most would not be looking for time to spend in the open water. However, there are some that leap at the chance to get wet, even in these colder months.

The Sprint Canoe and Kayak Club, or GT Kayak, was founded in 2000 by Ty Hagler, an IE alumnus who graduated in May 2003. Until September 2004, the club held practice at Lake Lanier in Gainesville, Ga., where Hagler was a member of the Lake Lanier Canoe and

Kayak Club.

This fall GT Kayak was fortunate to obtain boatspace in Roswell, about a quarter of a mile away from the boathouse used by the GT Crew Team, decreasing the commute to practice by almost 40 minutes one-way, without traffic.

Current membership in the club is 37 paddlers. GT Kayak only owns enough kayaks for around 24 members to practice simultaneously, causing them to hold two practice sessions on Saturdays in addition to weekday practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

This fall the team also has its first official coach, James Demby. A first-year Undecided Engineering student, Demby stepped into the coaching position without hesitation despite it being his first semester at college.

"This is something we realized we needed if we are going to take the club to the next level," Club President David Goodman, an M.Arch. student, said. "He has been a member of the club team since two months after its founding."

Demby comes with a distinguished record of kayaking experience behind him. He has been paddling for over five years and has been a member

of the U.S. National Team. Demby has also participated in sprint kayak races in Germany, Poland and Holland and won eight national team championships.

"We thought it was going to be a bit of an adventure when we hired him... [but it is] a good way to keep him paddling. He is one of our best," Goodman said.

Demby seems to be enjoy-

"Paddling is a very big sport internationally, but in America it is not so big..."

David Goodman
GT Kayak president

ing the experience, and does not feel overwhelmed by his responsibilities with GT Kayak as a freshman leader.

"[It's] a little more frustrating than usual, but it's worth it," Demby said.

In spite of not being a popular or well-known sport, sprint kayaking is something that each member of GT Kayak could speak volumes

about.

"Paddling is a very big sport internationally, but in America it is not so big... It is slowly growing in popularity... [Paddling] is something you can do all your life, because it is low impact and you can keep in shape," Goodman said.

Sprint kayaks differ from touring kayaks in both shape and weight. A single-person touring kayak weighs around fifty pounds and is made so that the boat encompasses the rider up to their waist, whereas a single-person sprint kayak weighs around 20 pounds or less and the rider's legs are partially exposed.

A single-person sprint kayak can cost anywhere from 1600 dollars for a beginner kayak to 35,000 dollars for a top of the line model. Two and four person sprint kayaks are also used in competitions.

Sprint kayaking events are held on calm water, either in a lake or on a river. During the winter, the club normally competes in marathon races that are 12 to 20 kilometers in length.

The club does not participate in sprint canoe events, despite its inclusion in the official club name. Sprint ca-

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SPORTS

Technique • Friday, November 5, 2004

EVER INHALED?

Do recent drug busts indicate a wider drug problem at Tech? Students speak their minds. Page 11

DEAD AND LOVING IT

Halloween may be over but vampires still haunt the night. The *'Nique* reviews the ballet *Dracula*. Page 17



White and Gold Games preview season



By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Every year the baseball team holds a series of scrimmages to end fall practice. These games are dubbed "White and Gold" games. Die-hard fans come out to watch.

By Michael Clarke
Senior Staff Writer

The Gold team beat the White squad three games to two as fall practices came to a close. Despite the entertainment for the fans and the competition among the players, the outcome of the games took a backseat to evaluation by the coaching staff. The games gave the coaches an opportunity to evaluate their talent in game situations and to see how the players developed since the untimely end to last season in the Super Regional.

Despite the month of fall practices, the Tech pitching staff has yet to distinguish who will play what role in

the spring. Lee Hyde will probably start, but a lot of that decision depends on changes that occurred to his mechanics during the fall. Jason Neighborgall set himself up for a weekend start for the upcoming season, but the other spots are up in the air.

"In any team, you have to have a good pitching staff," Head Coach Danny Hall said. "The most unsettled area [for us] will be who the starting four or five guys [are]. I'd be hard pressed to say that these are the guys. I can say that there are a lot of candidates, but nobody definite."

Jordan Crews managed to set himself apart to be the closer for the upcoming

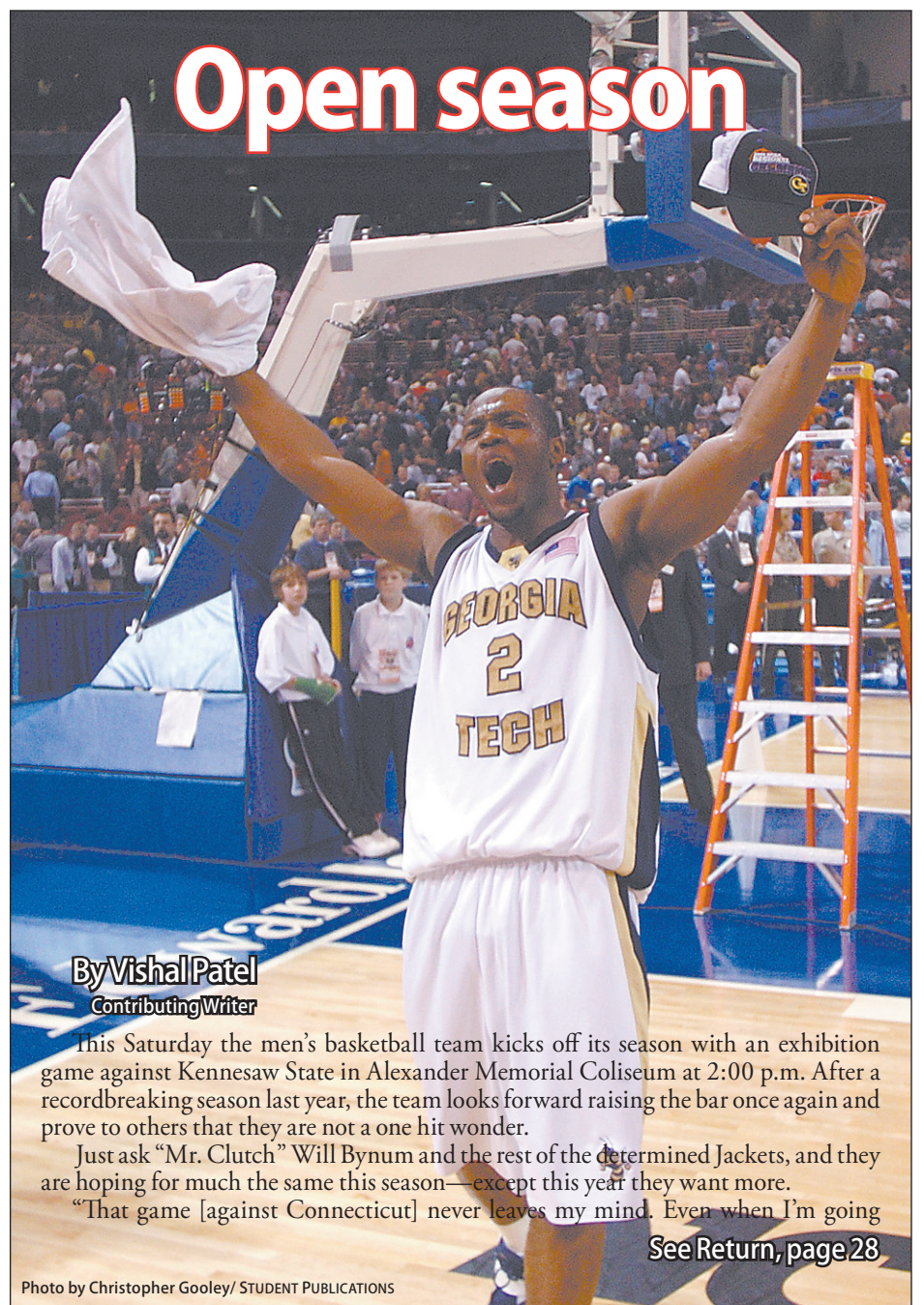
season. Ryan Self and Brad Rulon will be competing for the primary setup role out of the bullpen. The bullpen as a whole has the potential to be one of the strong points of the new team.

"You always want to see a lot of consistency out of your pitchers," Hall said. "I didn't see as much [consistency] as I'd like, but I definitely saw flashes. Especially this last week, I saw some guys make some positive strides forward. That's all that you can ask."

Coach Bobby Moranda looked at fall practices as an opportunity to work on the mechanics of his sophomore

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Open season



By Vishal Patel
Contributing Writer

This Saturday the men's basketball team kicks off its season with an exhibition game against Kennesaw State in Alexander Memorial Coliseum at 2:00 p.m. After a recordbreaking season last year, the team looks forward raising the bar once again and prove to others that they are not a one hit wonder.

Just ask "Mr. Clutch" Will Bynum and the rest of the determined Jackets, and they are hoping for much the same this season—except this year they want more.

"That game [against Connecticut] never leaves my mind. Even when I'm going

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Photo by Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Laband leads volleyball to 17 straight victories



By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

After a rough start, setter Lindsey Laband has pulled off a turnaround season and led the Jackets to the top of the ACC.

By John Scaduto
Contributing Writer

Last season, Tech volleyball graduated one of greatest athletes ever to don a Yellow Jacket uniform in total player Kele Eveland. This season it has been junior Lindsey Laband's job to fill her shoes.

Eveland was the setter on a team that made a run to the final eight of the NCAA tournament—the conductor of an offense that torched through conference play the past two seasons and turned Tech into one of the premier programs in the nation. Further, Eveland left school atop the Tech and Atlantic Coast Conference career assist lists and fourth on the same NCAA list—leaving a huge chasm in the middle of conference's most explosive attack. To have said that the Jackets had suffered a loss would have been an understatement.

However, if one didn't know any better, it would have appeared that there has been little or any drop off in the Jackets play. In fact, the offensive front might have even become more efficient and lethal since last year. Granted, the Jackets started out 2-5, but since then, they have regained their stride from last year.

Indeed the Jackets are still torching the conference, going 10-0 in ACC play and leading the conference in hit percentage (.292), kills (18.32), and assists (16.92). All of

this merely accentuates their current 17-match win streak and the fact that the ladies have only lost five games in that same stretch.

So how has the squad maintained this incredible level of success? The answer may lie in the play team setter Laband.

Laband has stepped right into the position of a legend and played like one herself. Her ability to seamlessly

"There's always a point to play, you always want it—but there's no point in sacrificing the team..."

Lindsey Laband
Volleyball setter

pick up the offense and continue the level of excellence that has gotten Tech to this point has been the answer all season long. However simple she makes the game look, it has been that much a struggle as well.

Since arriving in Atlanta from Monument, Co, Laband has had to battle on many levels. Not only did she fight the homesickness that hurts most freshmen, but she also had to stay focused while knowing that her

real chance on the court would not come for another two years. Even the spring air posed a threat to the new setter, as she came down with pneumonia her freshman year and the flu this past year—so much so that doubts crept up as to whether she would even have a shot at playing this season.

"There's always a point to play, you always want it, but there's no point in sacrificing the team if I can't get through a whole game. That's what I was nervous about," Laband said.

Thankfully, her condition improved this summer so she can do what she wants on and off the court.

"People just started supporting me...and now I don't even worry about it. It's like a huge thing just taken off my shoulders," Laband said.

The 5'11" junior professed that the immense support from the coaching staff and her teammates was a testament to the program itself. The coaches demanded that she take a two-week break from practice during her bout with the flu this spring, and her teammates gave continual assurances of the importance of her health to the team's success and it has paid off.

Luckily, athleticism has never been an issue for Lindsey or the rest

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