

BEYOND THE WHITE AND GOLD

World Series transforms Omaha with baseball glory

By Asif Heerji
Senior Staff Writer

Omaha, Neb. is known from July to May of every year as a small town in the Midwest, on the border of Nebraska and Iowa and in the middle of nowhere. But during the month of June, the city transcends itself from a small town of less than a million people, to the center of attention of the baseball world.

Each year for the past 57 years, coaches, players, fans and media have turned out to experience the pinnacle of collegiate baseball, the Men's College World Series.

Each February, 293 teams, from 31 different conferences around the nation, take the field to compete for one of eight spots and earn the right to battle in a double elimination tournament for baseball glory. A coach's dream, a player's fantasy and a fan's greatest enjoyment; the College World Series in Omaha fulfills all desires.

In its 60th rendition in 2006, history was made on many fronts as the Atlantic Coast Conference tied a CWS record with four teams in the field, previously done by the Southeastern Conference twice (2004,

1997). In addition to Tech, North Carolina, Clemson and Miami all advanced to Omaha.

Driving into Omaha, you could just feel the excitement, the hype, the privilege of being able to be at the height of the NCAA championship. All of the frenzy, the craziness, the media hype and distractions were ever prevalent just by entering the city. The buzz that the College World Series creates every year is comparable to the Super Bowl.

The Jackets knew they had arrived when they took a chartered flight to Omaha, were greeted with a private buffet and to top it off, were welcomed by baseball legend and ESPN baseball analyst Jeff Brantley during their scheduled batting practice at famous Johnny Rosenblatt Stadium.

They were then featured and held an autograph session in the main concourse where fans lined up inside and outside the stadium to get a chance to meet the players. Finally, the team enjoyed a hearty barbecue meal with the seven other participants of the College World Series.

When the first pitch was ready to be thrown, the Jackets were prepared.

Tech opened the CWS against the top seed in the field and ACC foe, the Clemson Tigers.

The Jackets got off to a sizzling start, as sophomore catcher Matt Wieters delivered an RBI single to right field and scored on a Kindel blast to centerfield to stake Tech to a 3-0 in the first inning. After maintaining a 4-0 through seven and a half innings, the Jackets were in the drivers seat, and poised to advance to the winners bracket until an eighth inning meltdown flushed away all hope.

Tech had not blown a save all season in 2006, but the bullpen was finally penetrated by the Tigers offense. Clemson scored eight runs in the eighth inning and went on to win 8-4.

Starter Lee Hyde went seven plus innings and allowed two runs, but the bullpen could not hold the Tigers in the eighth. Andy D'Alessio's three-run homer staked the Tigers to a 6-4 lead and they never looked back.

The players, 16,045 fans and media were stunned at the comeback as Clemson showed they could overcome a deficit, as they did so for the fourth consecutive game.

After a heartbreaking defeat at the hands of the Tigers, the Jackets went to a picnic at the local Kiwanis Club's lake house nearby and tried to put the loss out of their minds. In addition to the cookout, some of the players and coaches showed off

their water skiing abilities on the lake. Soon enough, it was back to work as the team prepared for an elimination game against Cal State Fullerton.

Game two for Tech started off very similar to the first, as the Jackets scored three runs in the first inning again. A Kindel RBI single, a Whit Robbins sacrifice Fly and a Hodges RBI single spotted starter Wood to a 3-0 lead and later, a fielding error gave him a 4-0 lead. However, the Titans would not go quietly as they tied the game after six innings.

Part of a dramatic finish, Wieters led off the seventh inning with a controversial solo home run to left-center field and gave the Jackets a 5-4 lead. The sophomore sensation then came on to close out the game and got out of a jam in the eighth inning unscathed.

But then in the ninth, with two outs and two strikes against Brett Pill, the right-hander gave up a double to put runners at second and third with two outs.

After an intentional walk, pinch-hitter Cory Vanderhook, hit a slow chopper over the mound which took an odd bounce and went out

of the reach of shortstop Michael Fisher and into shallow center to allowed two runs to score and gave Fullerton an eventual 7-5 victory over Tech, eliminating the Jackets from national title contention. Fullerton stayed alive in the CWS and advanced to face Clemson in an elimination game.

Although the season ended on a very sour note, all of the coaches, players and fans were proud of the team for all that they overcame throughout the course of the rough season. Injuries played a key factor in cutting the Jackets run short, but the veteran leadership got the team through the tough times for a great season.

As the 2007 school year comes upon us, many of the veterans from the squad will move on to bigger and better things.

Starting in the fall, the Jackets will rev it up again in hopes to advance to the College World Series for the fourth time in school history. Danny Hall has led all three CWS teams.

Omaha may be a small town in the Midwest but for a short time during the beginning weeks of summer it becomes a mecca for baseball fans, players and coaches across the nation.

"A coach's dream, a player's fantasy and a fan's greatest enjoyment; the CWS in Omaha fulfills all desires."

"Driving into Omaha, you could just feel the excitement of being able to be at the NCAA championship."

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Baseball from page 16

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Clemson scored eight runs in the eighth inning and went on to win 8-4. Starter Lee Hyde went seven plus innings and allowed two runs, but Brad Rulon, Ryan Turner, Jared Hyatt and Tim Ladd could not hold the Tigers in the eighth.

Andy D'Alessio's three-run homer off of Turner staked the Tigers to a 6-4 and they never looked back. Tech had previously been 45-0 when leading after the seventh inning.

"It was a good game for us for about seven innings, and I thought Lee Hyde pitched magnificently. Now we have to

regroup and do the best job we can to stay in this thing," Hall said.

With the win, Clemson moved on to the winners bracket against North Carolina, and Tech went to the losers bracket to face Fullerton.

Tech's second game in the CWS was an elimination game against Cal State Fullerton. The game started off very similar to Tech's first game as they scored three runs in the first inning for the second straight game.

A Kindel RBI single, a Whit Robbins sacrifice fly and a Hodges RBI single spotted starter Wood to a 3-0 lead and later, a fielding error gave him a 4-0 lead. However, the Titans would not go quietly as they scratched across a run in each of the fourth and fifth innings and two in the sixth to tie the game at four.

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ers led off the seventh inning with a controversial solo home run to left-center field and gave the Jackets a 5-4 lead. The sophomore sensation then came on to close out the game and got out of a jam in the eighth inning unscathed.

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runs to score. This gave Fullerton an eventual 7-5 victory over Tech, eliminating the Jackets from national title contention. Fullerton stayed alive in the CWS and advanced to face Clemson in an elimination game.

"[Those were] probably two of the toughest losses that I have been a part of. [For us] to lead both games most of the way and not be able to close them out is tough," Hall said.

"The ball just didn't bounce the Yellow Jacket way."

Wieters, despite taking the loss, became the first player to both catch and pitch in a College World Series game since 1990, when Gettys Glaze did it for The Citadel, which also was a game played against Cal State Fullerton. The Jackets finished the season with a 50-18 record.

There are four seniors from this year's team who played their last two games of their careers in Omaha. Many underclassmen may also declare early for the draft making the trip to Omaha the last time they wear a Jacket jersey

Baseball players plan for future

By William Bretherton
Senior Staff Writer

While the season ended in Omaha for Tech's baseball team, many players on the team are continuing to play baseball throughout the summer.

For the seniors, their playing days in college have come to an end, but their pro careers may have just begun.

While neither Steven Blackwood nor Mike Trapani were drafted in the Major League Baseball Draft, both will try out with major league teams in the minors.

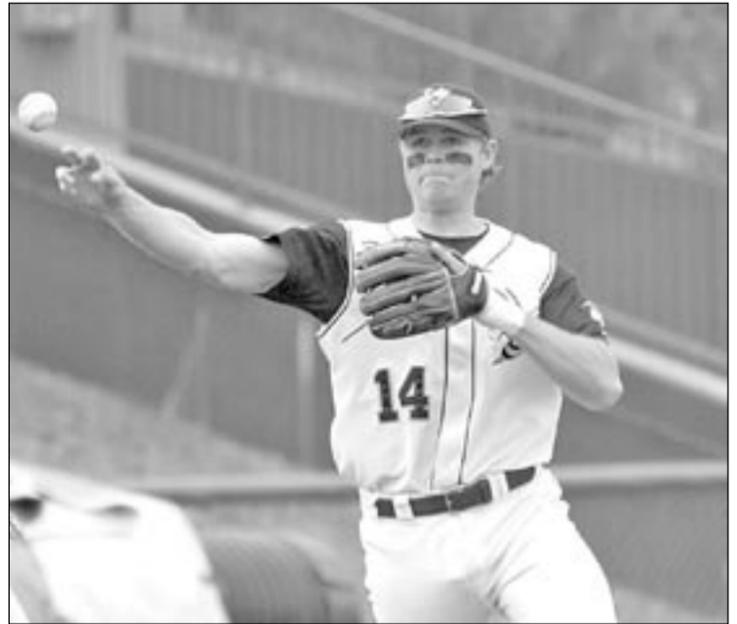
Trapani was signed as a free agent by the Detroit Tigers and will most likely report to Single-A baseball with the Lakeland Tigers, where he will meet up with a former Tech teammate, pitcher Andrew Kown.

While Blackwood has not yet signed with a team, he will most likely be signed in the near future. If he does not end up signing with a team, then he will continue his academic career at the Medical College of Georgia in pursuit of a career as a doctor.

The seniors are not the only ones moving on though. Many prominent players on the team were chosen in this year's major league draft and will be leaving school early to try their hands at professional baseball.

While junior third baseman Wes Hodges had an injury hampered season, he was the highest drafted player on the entire team. The Cleveland Indians were able to overlook Hodges performance this season and used their 69th pick in the draft to select one of the most highly touted third basemen in the entire talent pool.

Among other selections were starting pitcher Blake Wood, starting pitcher Lee Hyde, first/third baseman Whit Robbins, starting pitcher Tim Gustafson, and relief



By Darren Sabino/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Third baseman Wes Hodges was the highest drafted player from this year's team. He was drafted 69th by the Cleveland Indians.

pitcher John Goodman.

Wood is the only one out of these to officially sign with a major league team. He was selected in the third round by the Kansas City Royals, and was designated for assignment to the Class A Burlington Bees as soon as Tech's run in the College World Series had concluded.

Hyde was selected in the fourth round by the Atlanta Braves, and was assigned to Danville. With the departure of Wood and Hyde, the Jackets' starting rotation will be significantly less experienced.

Robbins, Gustafson and Goodman have not signed pro contracts at this point, but all of them will be making their decisions some time in the near future.

It is possible that both Gustafson and Robbins will leave, while Goodman will be returning for his senior season to help the team either as a starter or as a closer.

While there are many players

leaving Tech forever, there are many others that are leaving for the summer to tune up their skills.

There are many notable Tech starters headed to summer leagues including standout catcher/closer Matt Wieters, Ryan Turner, Luke Murton, Michael Fisher, Brad Rulon and John Goodman to name a few.

Notably absent from the list of players joining summer league teams is Danny Payne. He is most likely using this time to recover from his season-ending injury that was suffered on April 29th.

Competition in the Cape Cod league started this past Monday, with Michael Fisher, John Goodman and Brad Rulon participating.

Freshmen Chris House, Eddie Burns and Jason Haniger are playing in the Northwoods League.

Brad Feltes is spending his summer playing in the Coastal Plain League.

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Let's give vaccine safety a boost

Yellow Fever is a tropical disease spread by mosquitoes. The yellow fever vaccine has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and used to vaccinate humans since the 1930s. The major purpose of this study is to compare the amount of yellow fever vaccine virus in the blood after receiving the vaccine with salt water placebo or after receiving the vaccine with a protein (immune globulin). We hope to use the information from this study to learn safer ways of administering vaccines.

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- You will receive \$35 for each study visit for time and travel costs, plus \$50 for the vaccine report card

This study is being performed by Carlos del Rio, MD, and Harry Keyserling, MD. This study will be done at Hope Clinic of the Emory Vaccine Center in collaboration with the Emory Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases.

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SPORTS

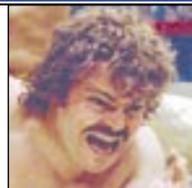
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TRIP EXPLORES VALENCIA

Tech students and professors travel to Valencia, Spain to study history, biology and spanish culture. Page 7

WRESTLING FOR ORPHANS

Jack Black transforms from a Mexican monk to an outrageous luchador to feed his beloved orphans. Page 9



Jackets fall in two games at World Series

By Asif Heerji
Senior Staff Writer

The Tech baseball team began a mission dating back to June 2005, after they lost a heartbreaking super regional in Atlanta for the second consecutive year.

That mission: to reach the pinnacle of Collegiate Baseball and land themselves at the College World Series in Omaha, Neb. With four seniors and eight juniors, the veteran-laden squad was determined, more than ever, to reach baseball heaven as they ran off 16 consecutive wins to open the season, the second greatest start in school history.

Ranked as the top team in the country, the Jackets, fans and the country knew that this was the year that Tech would break through.

However, halfway through the season, injuries started to pile on. Tech's ace pitcher, Blake Wood, battled with shin splints throughout most of the season, which caused him to have an off year after excelling in 2005.

Closer-turned-starter Tim Gustafson, who was named Most Outstanding Player in the 2005 Atlanta Regional, was out for the season with

arm trouble.

Sophomore leader and table-setter Danny Payne, who led the team in batting, hits, runs, RBIs, on-base percentage, steals and home runs, was out for the season with a shoulder injury.

Second-round draft pick Wes Hodges was limited in his role down the stretch of the season with a stress fracture in his leg.

Starting left fielder Jeff Kindel, who was forced to make the move from right when Payne was injured, was slowed with a partially torn posterior cruciate ligament in his knee.

Even with an assortment of players injured, both veterans and newcomers to the team

stepped up and gave the team a second wind, leading the Jackets to 19-11 in the ACC and deep into the conference tournament, earning the No. 8 overall seed, the fourth consecutive year Tech had accomplished that feat.

With wins over Stetson and Vanderbilt in the Atlanta Regional, and a two-game sweep of College of Charleston in the Atlanta Super Regional, the Jackets were poised to make a run as they advanced to the College World Series in Omaha for

"Our guys are special and that's a good reason why we are here at the College World Series."

Danny Hall
Baseball Head Coach



By Christopher Gooley/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Lee Hyde threw seven innings in the first game of the College World Series against Clemson, allowing only two runs, but the bullpen gave up six runs in the last two innings to give the Tigers the win.

the first time in five years. Tech was the first team to punch their ticket to Omaha in 2006.

"Our guys are special and that's a good reason we are here at the College World Series," said Head Coach Danny Hall in an NCAA press conference.

Unfortunately, the trip was cut short as Tech lost each of their first two games, both heartbreakers, and was the first team to punch their ticket out of Omaha.

In game one, Tech opened the CWS against the top seed and familiar ACC rival, Clemson. The

Jackets got off to a sizzling start, as sophomore catcher Matt Wieters delivered an RBI single to right field and scored on a Kindel blast to centerfield to stake Tech to a 3-0 lead in the first inning. After

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sports shorts

Robinson selected to leadership institute

The director of women's basketball operations, LaChina Robinson, has been selected to participate in the 2006-2007 NCAA Leadership Institute for Ethnic Minority Females. She is one of 25 women selected to participate in the organization. The program was designed to address the shortage of women of color in athletics administration throughout the NCAA. Each participant is awarded a \$3,000 scholarship upon completion to help defray costs of the 12 month program.

Golfers start play in Palmer Cup

Two Tech golfers started competition in the Palmer Cup yesterday. Roberto Castro and Kevin Larson are competing in the annual event which pits American collegiate golfers against European collegiate golfers. The matches are being held at the Prestwick Golf Club in Prestwick, Scotland. The coach for the U.S. team is Chris Haack, who also serves as Georgia's head coach. The U.S. team won last year's match.

Track competes in USATF

By Matthew Winkler
Sports Editor

The track team recently concluded competition at the USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships in Greensboro, N.C.

On the fourth and final day of competition sophomore Shantia Moss led the Jackets in the 100-meter high hurdles semi-finals as she clocked in a time of 13.52 seconds to finish in 14th place. Senior Andriane Lapsley completed the 200-meter dash with a time of 24.13, to finish in 23rd place in the competition.

On the third day of competition, Moss clocked in a time of 13.36 in the 100-meter high hurdles quarterfinals. Senior and All-American Brandy Depland posted a mark of 43 feet, 3.25 inches in the triple jump to finish in sixth place for the Jackets.

In the 400-meter dash Ashlee Kidd finished in 10th place with a time of 52.37. Lapsley finished in 20th place in the 100-meter dash with a time of 11.64.

Junior Fatmata Fofanah finished 17th in the 100-meter high hurdles with a time of 13.79.

To round out the third day of competition, freshman Juan Cave tied the school record in the men's high jump. He posted a mark of seven feet, 1.5 inches. Cave finished third and just missed the cut for making Team USA which will compete in



By Jamie Howell/STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

All-American Brandy Depland finished in 6th place in the triple jump for the Jackets at the USA Track and Field Outdoor Championships.

at the IAAF World Junior Championships.

On the first day of the championships, freshmen Kimery Hern finished third in the hammer throw to lead Tech. She posted a throw of 169 feet, 6 inches. Alana Cooten finished fourth in the hammer throw, posting a mark of 168 feet, 6 inches.

Another bright spot for the Jackets was Kidd being selected to represent the United States in the 4x400 meter relay. She will compete at the 2006

North American, Central American Caribbean Under 23 Track and Field Championships on July 7-9 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

Kidd earned All-American honors at the NCAA outdoor championships and has been an All-American in the 400-meter dash for the past three years.

Kidd will compete with 400 other athletes from 28 countries in the event which is held every two years.

by the numbers

6

The number of sports represented in this year's class of the Georgia Tech Hall of Fame. Former basketball coach Bobby Cremins and former basketball All-American Travis Best headline the class. Gus Georgetown, Kent Hill, Karen Lounsbury Russell, Cris Omiecinski Leone, Brad Rigby and Octavius Terry represent the rest of the Hall of Fame class.

2

The number of McDonald's All-Americans that Tech has on the basketball team. Javaris Crittenton and Thaddeus Young were both ranked in the top 10 high school seniors of 2006. Both players are expected to contribute significant minutes to the team this season.

10

Number of baseball players who have reached the Major Leagues since 1996. Eight players from this year's 50-18 College World Series squad have been drafted by Major League teams.