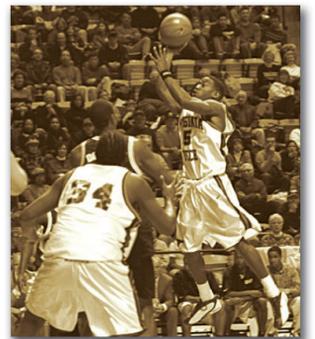
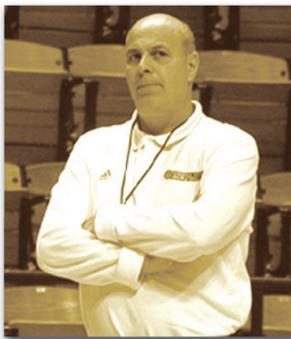
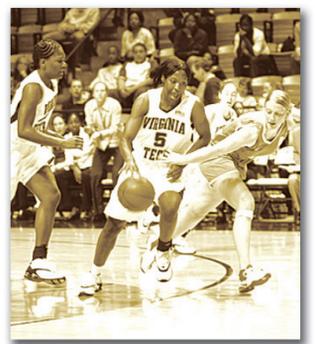


HOKIE HOOPS PREVIEW



MEN'S BASKETBALL:

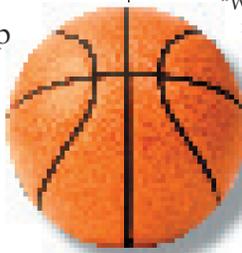
Greenberg to preside over learning year

Classifying the 2003-04 Virginia Tech men's basketball season as a "rebuilding year" would be applicable — the term learning experience, however, would be more accurate.

Classifying the 2003-2004 Virginia Tech men's basketball season as a rebuilding year would be applicable — the term learning experience, however, would be more accurate. "My main goal is to teach them how hard they have to work each and every day," said new Tech head coach Seth Greenberg. "I want them to improve individually and have a better understanding of the game. I want to develop a toughness and maturity in our younger players and help them become leaders."

Inheriting a team that went 12-17 a year ago, including 4-12 in the Big East, the new coach definitely has his work cut out for him. The Hokies lost four players from their 2002-2003 roster (Brian Chase, Eric Branham and Terry Taylor graduated and Dimari Thompkins left for personal reasons) with combined averages of 31.1 points, 15.8 rebounds and 6.7 assists, which makes Greenberg's task even more daunting.

"We are the youngest team in America by far," he said. "We have a total points per game returning among our five sophomores of 10.4 points a game. Add in the three freshmen and you have a lot of guys with question marks on their chest. Someone will step forward, we just don't know who yet." While much uncertainty surrounds the team's younger members, Greenberg can be confident in the contribution of senior swingman Bryant Matthews, who in 2002 became the first player in Big East history to lead his team in points, rebounds, assists, steals and blocked shots. Matthews, who averaged 17.7 points and 7.3 rebounds a contest last season, will anchor Tech's offense once again this year. He must, however, take better care of the ball — he led



--Kumar Malhotra

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL:

Lady Hokies look to make tourney run

The Virginia Tech women's basketball team has tasted tournament play each of the last six seasons under coach Bonnie Henrickson, and they expect no less coming into the 2003-2004 season.

After a successful 2002-2003 campaign, where the Hokies went 22-10 and reached the second round of the NCAA tournament, Tech has set high expectations for themselves.

"We always look for the opportunity to finish top-four in the Big East so we can get a bye in the first round of the conference tournament," Henrickson said. "Our expectations every year are also to advance to the NCAA tournament and we want to be better than last year, and that would mean reaching the Sweet 16."

The Hokies return with a different look this season as fan favorites Chrystal Starling and Emily Lipton were lost to graduation.

"We will feel the loss of them," Henrickson said. "Chrystal shot the three well, and we will need that this year. And we will miss Emily's defense and leadership, although Carrie (Mason) shared a lot of time with Emily last year."

Tech faces a schedule loaded with talent this season. Last year, the Big East sent seven teams to the NCAA tournament, including last year's national champion, the University of Connecticut Huskies.

"What's difficult about the Big East is not just how talented they are, but how different people play," Henrickson said. "Comparing teams like Miami, Villanova, Connecticut and Rutgers shows how completely different they are."

The Hokies' schedule includes teams from many different conferences, as well as an international exhibition matchup with Slovenia-WBC Ilirija, whom Tech dominated 93-36.

"Our out-of-conference schedule will help us prepare for the Big East," Henrickson said. "Iowa State, for instance, likes to shoot the three like Villanova and they are tremendous athletes like Miami."

For the most part, Henrickson and the coaching staff look to play the same game they did last year with only a few differences. Expect to see the Hokies play more aggressive basketball and create higher percentage shots by using the dribble to penetrate into the paint.

Anchoring the middle for the Hokies is First Team All-Big East center Ieva Kublina. Last season, she averaged 15 points, 7.4 rebounds and two blocks per game. She features a strong inside game and an outside game shooting 35 percent from beyond the three-point line and 80 percent from the foul line.

"We will go as she (Kublina) goes," Henrickson said. "She has to touch the ball every possession. She has to shoot it, and we have to give it to her to see if she will draw the double team because she is unselfish, and she will pass it back out."

Henrickson said she looks forward to what this year's team has to offer. "I like our size and athleticism and the fact that we are very unselfish," she said. "I am highly surprised at how capable we are off the dribble trying to penetrate with Dawn (Chriss), Kirby (Copeland) and Mason."

In the preseason polls, Tech has received votes to be in the top 25 but is sitting just outside of it. A couple of early season wins, including a Nov. 23 victory over the University of Virginia, should place the Hokies among the top 25.

--Adam Abramson

New coach Greenberg looks to resurrect Hokie hoops

by Kumar Malhotra
Sports Editor

While "football" is the most common word people around the country associate with Virginia Tech, new head basketball coach Seth Greenberg, would not consider this a football school.

"College athletics has changed in the last five to 10 years," Greenberg said. "There is no such thing as a 'football school' or 'basketball school' - you either have a good athletic program or you don't."

Greenberg said believes in the program here — that's the only reason he left the palm trees and sunny weather of Tampa, Fla. and the University of South Florida for pine trees and fall foliage of Blacksburg.

"It's great to be a part of this 'Hokie Nation.' There is a tremendous passion for this school and athletic department, it's exciting to be a part of."

The passion Greenberg speaks of used to resonate in Cassell Coliseum the way it does in Lane Stadium each time the Hokies take the field. People forget — the Hokies were a NCAA tournament team, reaching the second round less than a decade ago, in 1996.

Obviously the program has declined over the past few years, but Greenberg is confident that Virginia Tech basketball can be resurrected. His confidence is well founded; this isn't the first time he has been in this situation.

"Having been a head coach for 13 years, I understand what I am getting into and that there's no shortcut to (rebuilding a program) — it's a process."

The first step in that process is realizing that the change won't take place over night. Inheriting a team that returns only two seniors and five sophomores from a year ago, Greenberg realizes he must be patient. In fact, he is more concerned with his team learning how to win, not necessarily the amount of wins they register.

"With so many young players, we really have to teach them the process of what it takes to win. The process of competing everyday, not taking plays off and being a good teammate."

Helping preach his message will be Greenberg's staff, none of whom served under him at South Florida. The most heralded of the bunch — his older brother Brad, a former NBA assistant and general manager with the Philadelphia 76ers.

"He's a huge asset whether he's my brother or not. He's coached at the highest level and is one of the best evaluators of talent. He's the guy who brought Drazen Petrovic over here, brought Sabonis over here, drafted Allen Iverson — he has a wealth of knowledge and information. Players respond to him."

While Brad Greenberg's wealth of NBA experi-

ence gives him instant credibility with the players, it's not like little brother has a problem connecting with players.

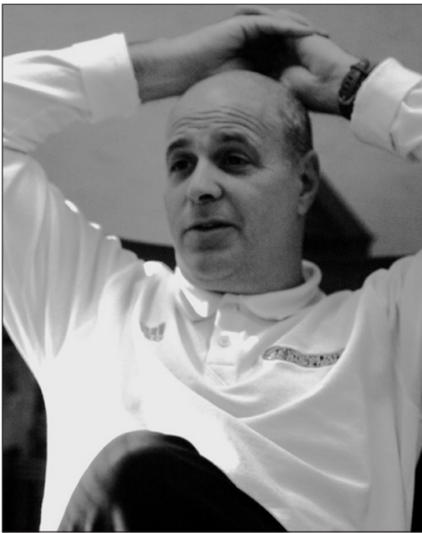
"In coaching today players need to know you care about them as a person" Greenberg said "I want my players to see me away from here, not behind this desk but in a different environment. This is what I do, this is not who I am. These players are an extension of my family, they need to see how this family functions."

The family Greenberg speaks of includes his wife Karen and their three daughters Paige, Jacqueline and Ella. And while the responsibilities of a Division I head coach consumes most of his day, Greenberg try his best to lead a normal family life.

"I don't have a lot of down time, but when I do, I like to go out and see my daughter play volleyball or go to my youngest daughter's basketball game," Greenberg said. "I put in a long day, but I try to include them in everything I do."

With all the uncertainty surrounding the program, it's evident that Greenberg will have many long days ahead of him. The good news is, he's been there twice before and with a career coaching record of 213-170 it appears that he knows what he is doing.

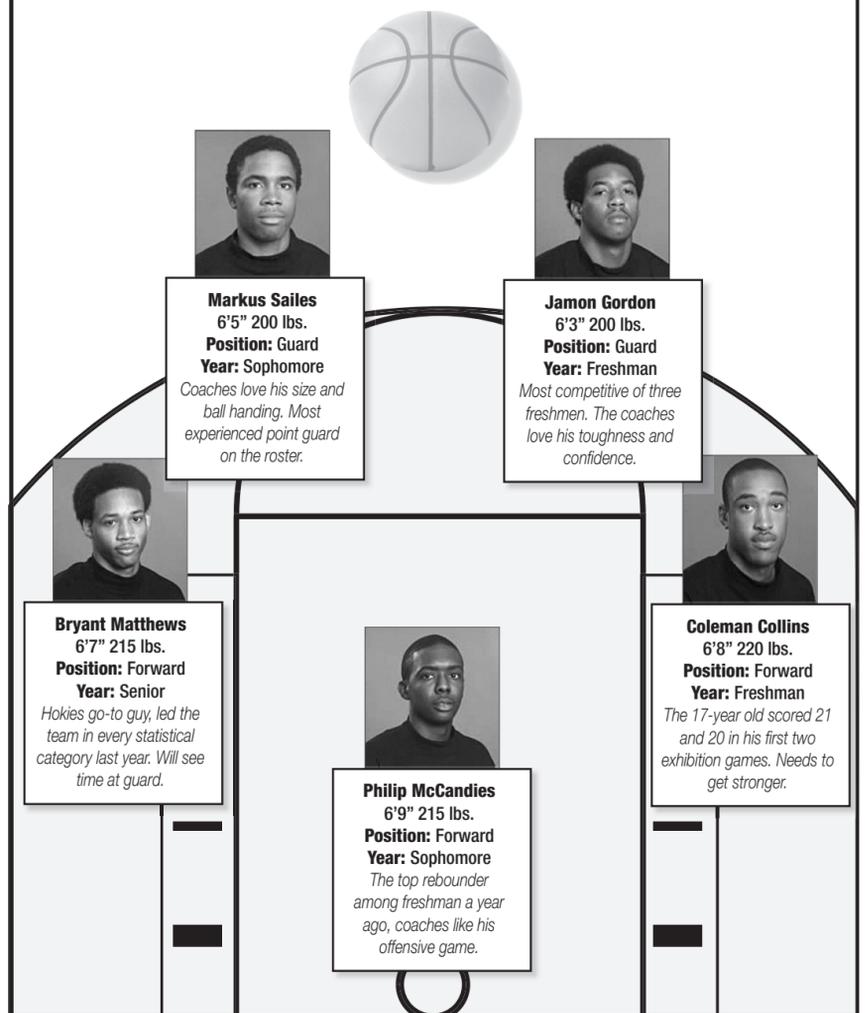
Great news for the Hokies, bad news for the nosebleed seats in Cassell — turns out, there might be a need for them after all.



ERIC CONNELLY/SPPS

Seth Greenberg said he hopes to follow in the tradition of Oklahoma and Texas — schools with strong football and basketball teams.

Men's Basketball Starting Lineups



Other Notable Players

Allen Calloway, a 6'8" 205 lb. sophomore forward/center should split time with Collins and McCandies. Coaches like his shot-blocking and off-ball defense.

Zabian Dowdell, a 6'2" 185 lb. freshmen guard is the Hokies only true point guard. His shooting ability and open-court efficiency should help him see significant minutes. Look for him to split time with Sailes

KEY INJURY — Senior Carlos Dixon, the silky smooth, 6'7" 200 lb. guard/forward has yet to recover from off-season foot surgery. The Hokies will miss his leadership and scoring ability (13.4 points a game in 2002).

CHRIS HEUBERGER

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Women's Basketball Starting Lineups



Carrie Mason
Height: 5'7"
Position: Guard
Year: Sophomore
Made the Big East All-Rookie Team in 2002, lead the team in assists and minutes played.



Dawn Chriss
Height: 6'1"
Position: Guard
Year: Sophomore
Had a solid freshman year and came up big in the postseason. Runs the floor well.



Kerri Gardin
Height: 6'1"
Position: Forward
Year: Sophomore
A good scorer, with the ability to pass, Gardin has exceptional speed. Gives Hokies versatility.



Ieva Kublina
Height: 6'4"
Position: Fwd/Center
Year: Senior
Top returning player from last year's team and a front runner for the Wade Trophy.



Erin Gibson
Height: 6'2"
Position: Fwd/Center
Year: Sophomore
Led the team in field goal percentage a year ago. Solid rebounder and shot blocker.

Other Notable Players

Kirby Copeland, a 5'10" freshman guard poured in 14 points in her 35 minutes of action in the exhibition against Slovenia. Coaches love her defense and passing ability.

Brandy Fowler, a 6'1" center who transferred from Louisburg College last year, where she was a first team NJCAA All-American and a Kodak Jr. College All-American.

Britney Anderson, a 6'0" freshman forward from Blacksburg, will help the Hokies on the board and with her ability to get to the basket on offense.

CHRIS HEUBERGER

Henrickson hopes to stay on winning track with Hokies

■ Bonnie Henrickson has taken the Virginia Tech women's basketball team to the NCAA tournament four times in her six years as coach

by Adam Abramson
 Associate Sports Editor

Virginia Tech women's basketball coach Bonnie Henrickson is all business when it comes to her job and is a model of civility on the Hokies' bench during game time.

Hailing from Willmar, Minn., Henrickson embodies many characteristics of a small-town woman. She's polite, dedicated and passionate about her role in the Tech athletic department.

"I am from a small town, and Blacksburg is actually bigger than where I am from," Henrickson said. "While there is plenty to do in Blacksburg, working here allows me to stay focused. My job is such a big part of my life. I don't really have time to enjoy (Blacksburg's entertainment venues)."

Henrickson began her career in 1988 as an assistant coach at Tech after getting her masters at Western Illinois University. She left the program in 1995 to assist at the University of Iowa.

Since Henrickson returned to Tech in 1997, taking the title of head coach for the first time, basketball has engulfed her life. She has taken the Hokies to the postseason all six years, including four trips to the NCAA tournament. In the six seasons, she has amassed a record of 135-54.

Basketball for Henrickson is a year-round responsibility, and her busiest months are from September to March.

The staff has to balance leading a successful basketball program and looking to the future with recruiting during these months.

"During the season, I might miss an occasional practice to take a trip and usually deal with recruits on our days off," Henrickson said.

"Last year when we played Seton Hall, I had to miss our first charter ever to make a visit. But we just got the commitment (Christie Marrone)."

Henrickson keeps a weekly updated list that reminds her of the contacts for the week, including coaches, parents and handwritten notes to players.

Recruiting allows Henrickson and the other coaches to present Tech as a place where future Hokies want to come and play basketball.

"It isn't hard to sell Virginia Tech," Henrickson said, "We're an outstanding academic institution,



STAFF/SPPS

Tech women's coach Bonnie Henrickson has won 135 games in six years with the team.

and with the strength of our basketball program and the commitment we receive from alumni and students it sells itself."

Henrickson uses her life-long small town experience to sell Blacksburg to recruits and their families as well.

"We tell parents it is a great place to leave your little girl," Henrickson said. "Blacksburg is a safe community with 25,000 people their own age with enough to do."

Henrickson played for St. Cloud State University in college and was inducted to its Hall of Fame in 1996.

She is among the school's best in several statistical categories including points, rebounds, free throws and free throw percentages.

"As a coach, I don't feel like I have as much control," Henrickson said. "I haven't made a bad pass or missed a shot since I have been here."

But she would much rather be on the sidelines than on the floor.

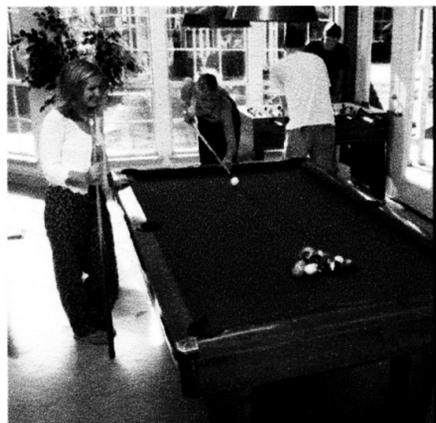
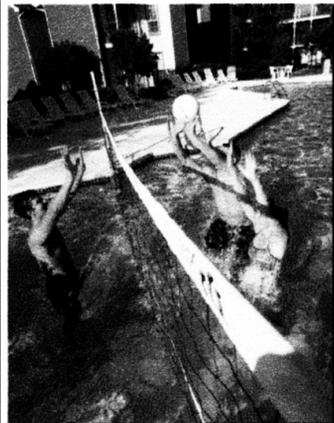
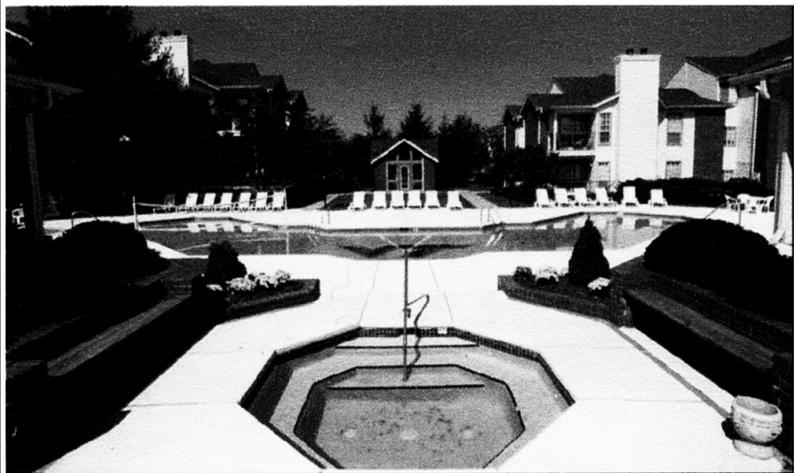
"I would rather be a coach definitely; it is so much different," Henrickson said. "It is time consuming, but I don't know what I would rather do. I love it."

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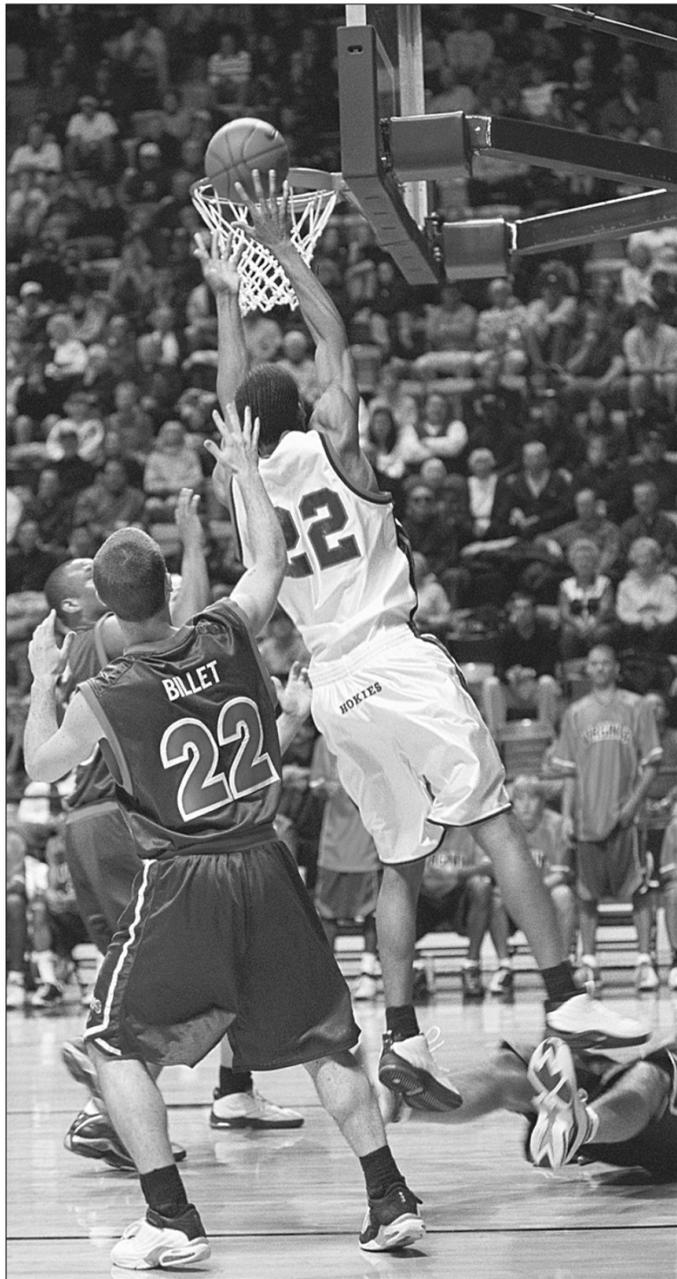
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Matthews provides veteran leadership to young squad



STAFF/SPPS

by **Michelle Hershman**
Associate Sports Editor

In Columbia, S.C., playing football is the thing to do, Bryant Matthews said. So how did Matthews, who was offered football scholarships to Florida State University, University of Miami and Ohio State University, end up in Virginia Tech's Cassell Coliseum?

"A couple other schools offered me football (scholarships), but my mom, she narrowed it down," he said. "She didn't want me to play football, so I honored her wishes and I didn't go seek out those other schools that were offering me (scholarships). So I kind of narrowed my choices down and came to Tech."

Respecting his mother's wishes, the 6-foot-7-inch Matthews accepted the basketball scholarship offered by Tech and continued the sport he had been interested in since middle school.

Three years later, he's moving into his senior year as a Hokie guard/forward with no regrets about the decision. As one of two seniors on the team, Matthews takes on the extra responsibility this year of leading a relatively young team.

"I've got to be more vocal," said Matthews, a physical education major. "I'm not a very vocal person. Coach Seth (Greenberg) helped me with that. He's vocal enough so it'll rub off."

"(I've got to) just continue what I've been doing. Go ahead and practice hard and just lead by example."

The example he set will be tough to follow. Matthews led the team in points last season, averaging 17.3 per game, and he topped other categories such as rebounds, assists, blocked shots and free throws. In the 2000-2001 season, he scored in the double figures 14 times.

Despite his successes, this season, he said he feels like a newcomer also.

"I feel like a rookie because we got a new coach, a new system, we're all new to this," Matthews said. "We all gotta learn something new. I think if everybody just calms down and we go do what we do best, everything comes together."

Matthews said the team is going to work hard at being consistent and giv-

ing the fans a good show this season so Tech basketball can get to the next level. He thinks the year brings with it the possibility of a NCAA bid, but all he and his teammates can do is work like winners and wait for the season to unfold.

When Matthews isn't spending his time attacking the rim or shooting the three, he said he leads a pretty normal life.

"I'm a regular student, I like to do nothing," he said. "I joke all the time, I play all the time. I'm just a regular guy. I sit back, chill and relax and that's about it."

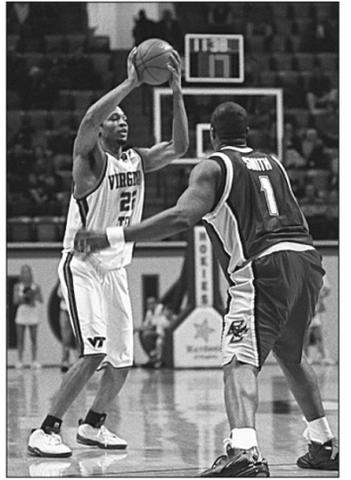
However, most regular students about to graduate from college are making plans for their future and stressing over job interviews, but Matthews is keeping his focus in the present.

"I just want to get to graduation right now," he said. "That's my biggest thing. After that, who knows. I just want to get to the season and after that take it a game at a time and then when graduation comes, we'll see. I don't have any plans till that point."

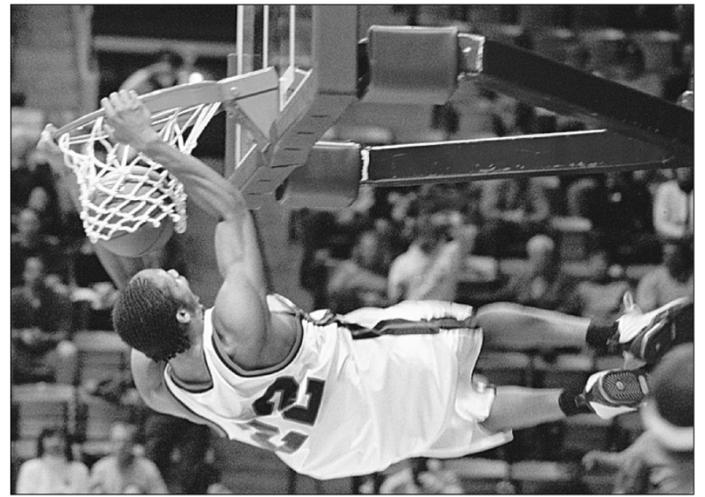
Although he would love to play professional ball next year, especially with his favorite team, the Chicago Bulls, Matthews refuses to concentrate on

what might be. Instead, he's devoting his attention to his senior year, which he begins with no regrets but also no glorious victories in hand.

As for a memory of his career at Tech to take with him after graduation, Matthews is still waiting to see what this last year will bring.



ELEANOR HOPSON/SPPS



STAFF/SPPS

Senior Bryant Matthews led the Hokies in points per game, rebounds, assists, blocked shots and free throws. He also led the team in turnovers.

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Fan turnout doesn't mimic team success

by Michelle Hershman
Associate Sports Editor

Bringing back the glory days. The days when the hearts of Hokie fans were filled with pride for the likes of basketball greats Bimbo Coles and Dell Curry. The days when Cassell Coliseum sold out for every game. The days when Virginia Tech basketball was a tradition, a passion, a lifestyle — a sport with a fan following comparable to Hokie football today.

Frank Beamer and Michael Vick rightfully stole that limelight and have cast it brightly over Lane Stadium for the past decade. But new men's basketball head coach Seth Greenberg said it's time to bring back the glory days and shine the light on the court again.

Can Greenberg convince the student body to turn their attention from a nationally ranked football team to a basketball team that ended the 2002-2003 season dead last in the Big East? Or will the old cliché, loyalty rests with the winning team, prove true?

Greenberg said he believes the Hokies are capable of achieving the same dual-sport loyalty found in schools such as the University of Notre Dame, despite what the scoreboard says.

"We are a great football school," Greenberg said. "But Texas is a football school and they went to the Final Four last year. Oklahoma is a football school and they went to the Final Four. ... They coexist, that's the face of college athletics today."

The question is: how do you evoke interest in a team that has a losing record?

While Greenberg thinks winning games is important to attract fans, he said he believes establishing a relationship with the student body is the real answer.

"The biggest thing is there's got to be a connection," he said. "You've got to get the students to take ownership. Get on the social calendar. We've got to do some outreach. We've got to get people feeling good about it, feeling like they're part of the solution. It's easy to complain, but it's hard to be part of the solution. We want the students to be that sixth man, we want those four, five, six, eight, 10 extra points."

Last season, while the men were struggling to stay alive in the Big East, the women's basketball team pulled out a 22-10 record and a bid to the NCAA. However, the crowd size did not meet the expectations of head coach Bonnie Henrickson, and she too is looking for a change.

"We have won nearly 83 percent of our games at home and we would like our attendance to mirror those numbers," Henrickson said. "It's not that we're unhappy with the fans who do come we just want to get the ones that don't. Realistically, we should have 5,000 or 6,000 in the stands. Last year, we averaged 3,000."

See **FANS**, page 6

Kublina returns after monster season

■ The preseason First-Team All Big East center hopes to follow up her strong 2002-2003 season for the Hokies

by Jin-Gak Bae
Staff Writer

At 6 feet, 4 inches, forward/center Ieva Kublina garners great responsibilities coming off a superb 2002-2003 campaign. With All-Big East first team honors and All-Big East Tournament team selection, Kublina will be the focus of many opponents.

She will hope to control the middle like she has done throughout her career at Virginia Tech. An abundant amount of pressure is on her shoulders as she is expected to exceed the success she has had in previous seasons.

Kublina enters the year as a preseason First-Team All-Big East member and is one of the front-runners for the Wade Trophy, which is given to the national player of the year.

On top of all this, Kublina is expected to be a stronger leader. The team is still young and she will be expected to step up during tougher situations throughout the season.

"This season we have more people who can get involved in our offense," Kublina said. "I expect more players to contribute in our offense and make our team more balanced."

Kublina led the Hokies in many statistical categories last season including scoring (15.0 ppg), rebounding (7.4 rpg), blocks (1.9) and minutes (33). Her 1.9 blocks per game average was tops in the Big East.

Hailing from Riga, Latvia, she brings an international flavor to the game, possessing a good blend of outside and inside efficiency on offense.

"She is a pure shooter, with the ability to shoot from anywhere on the floor and has improved greatly in her ability to put the ball on the floor," said head coach Bonnie Henrickson. "However, she has become more physical but needs to improve on this in

order to improve her professional prospects."

Foremost, she remains humble despite all of her accomplishments and remains excited about home games. During the summer, Kublina worked on improving her ball-handling skills to create more offense facing the basket.

"I love the atmosphere here," Kublina said. "We have great fans. Playing home games is a great feeling, with everyone cheering for you during the games."

"The whole coaching staff has helped me become a better player. They are real knowledgeable about the game and push us."

Kublina is already off to a great start. In the exhibition game against Slovenia, Kublina finished with 18 points, eight rebounds and four blocks leading the Hokies to a crushing 93-36 win.

"I'm excited about our team this year," Kublina said. "We are still a young team but have a great shot to do well and make it into the NCAA tournament."



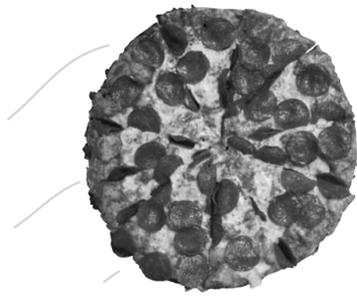
ALLISON JARNIGAN/SPPS



STAFF/SPPS

Ieva Kublina (No. 14), from Riga, Latvia, led the Hokies in scoring, rebounding, blocks and minutes.

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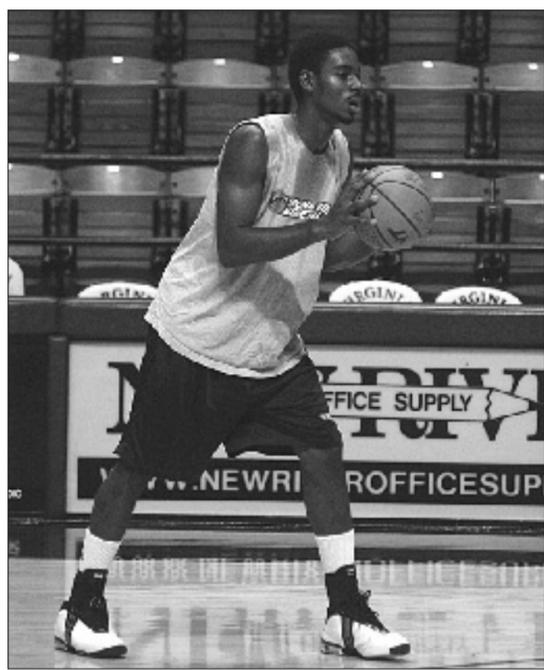
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Freshmen will play major role in final Big East season



ERIC CONNOLLY/SPSS

Zabian Dowdell is one of three freshmen looking to make an impact on the men's basketball team this season.

by Erica Hampton
Staff Writer

The Virginia Tech men's basketball team has three new additions expected to do big things this season: Jamon Gordon, Zabian Dowdell and Coleman Collins. After talking to the group of talented youngsters, it becomes easy to see why they are expected to contribute greatly to the Hokie this season.



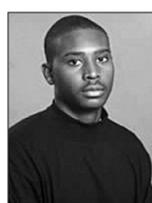
Collins

At Andrew Jackson High School in Jacksonville, Fla., Gordon played the guard position and was awarded three varsity letters while also being an all-city selection three times and getting all-state in both his junior and senior years. He also led the state in steals in both his junior and senior years and ended his high school career with four steals in the state final.

"The biggest change that I had to make was that I have to put my hands up on defense because these players look to shoot, not to drive," Gordon said.

He said other than that, college has allowed him to perfect his high school skills. These fundamentals are things Gordon said he works hard on everyday in practice because

he knows head coach Seth Greenberg expects big things out of him, and he expects to deliver. Gordon has done a good job of delivering for Greenberg in the first exhibition game, where he scored 18 points and had two rebounds, two assists and three steals.



Dowdell

In high school, Zabian Dowdell was a four-year letter winner, starter and captain at Pahokee High School in Pahokee, Fla. He received first team all-state honors as a junior and a senior. He also received player of the year as a senior, as well as small school player of the year in 2002 from Palm Beach Post.

"Even though college players are stronger, faster and smarter, I am prepared for anything that they serve me," Dowdell said.

His hunger and confidence in improving give him hopes of playing a major role this season. If he does not have these intangibles, then he feels like he is not doing his job as a point guard.

In the first exhibition game, Dowdell focused most of his attention on being a great point guard by making sure the ball got down the court and the team executed the plays properly.

In high school, Collins was a three-year letter winner at Chamblee High School in

Chamblee, Ga. He was the most valuable player of both the Georgia-Florida all-star and the Georgia North-South all-star games, and he also won first team all-county and all-region as a senior. Collins also lettered in track, was a semifinalist for the National Achievement Scholarship and won honorable mention for the National Merit Scholarship. He feels his role on the team is to be there when they need him.



Gordon

"Lifting weights and giving it my all at practice will allow me to be the player that I am striving to be," Collins said.

While the fundamental aspects of playing good defense, rebounding and maintaining his presence in the paint can be overwhelming responsibilities for a young man only 17 years old, Collins has no lack of confidence to handle these challenges.

"I can handle it," he said. "I have always had to step up to big responsibilities. This is nothing new to me."

All three freshmen enter this season with great expectations for themselves and for the team.

They feel they are ready, not only to contribute, but to be a major part of the team's success.

Fans: More than 5,000 season tickets already sold for men's team

Continued from page 5

Information and marketing the event to the student body will help increase the numbers, Henrickson said, but the solution lies in the entertainment side of the sport.

"Ultimately, we're in the entertainment business and we need to have a good product," she said. "Some coaches don't want to admit it, but we need to entertain."

The new move to the Atlantic Coast Conference should be a big factor in increasing fan attendance, both Tech coaches said.

With the majority of Tech students coming from Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina, a lot of Hokie fans have also grown up as ACC fans.

"ACC basketball is part of the culture of growing up in those areas," Greenberg said. "The ACC games are

part of almost a winter lifestyle of this geographic footprint. I think our student body could not relate as much to the Connecticut and St. Johns and those schools."

With Tech basketball trying to recapture the limelight and Tech football already swimming in it, other sports that have successful seasons often get overlooked. However, all sports feel the rise and fall of fan interest and attendance.

This year, the men's soccer team is No. 2 in Big East standings with a victory over fifth-ranked St. John's. Head coach Oliver Weiss said he believes the team's success has been partly responsible for increased fan attendance. The numbers have doubled to 700 from last season's average of 350 people attending per game. A couple games have even broken 1,000 in attendance.

"There's a direct correlation between

having people in the stands who are on your side cheering and elevated performance," Weiss said. "The guys feel it — the energy. Everyone has a great seat and the building behind us, McComas Hall, resonates with the crowd's noise. It's phenomenal."

Although Weiss said he believes the team will have loyal fans regardless of its standings, he understands that winning teams always have increased attendance, which fuels further victories.

But athletes can't always count on fickle fans for motivation. Bryant Matthews, a guard/forward for the men's basketball team, said you can't pin a losing record on the size of the crowd.

"If (the fans) are there, they're there," Matthews said. "If they're not, there's still gonna be a game. You still win or lose. That's why I say, you gotta prove yourself, and we haven't done that to

really gain people's attention or keep their attention. It's good if they come out and support us ... but I don't see it as an excuse. If you're losing and the fans are there, you're still losing."

Although the athletes must carry a certain mindset required to play hard no matter the circumstances or the attendance numbers, Greenberg said the crowd is crucial for the team's success.

"College basketball is all about atmosphere," he said. "And the people that create the atmosphere are the students and that's important to me, and it's important to our success."

To get that atmosphere, Greenberg is going to talk to student organizations and work hard to make the games a group experience.

"When guys have baskets on their heads, when they have their faces painted, that's part of your college expe-

rience," he said. "We want our students to not only just come to games but to participate."

Progress has already been made with the Tech Athletic Department receiving orders for more than 5,000 season tickets for the upcoming men's basketball season, said Sandy Smith, assistant director of athletics for ticketing services. Last year, the team averaged a little over 4,000 per game in attendance. The rise in season sales is a good indicator that there will also be a rise in individual ticket sales, Smith said.

Even if the basketball team has no breakout superstar or more wins than losses this season, Greenberg plans to do everything in his power to break the cliché and teach the student body that true loyalty doesn't change with the tide of victory. Loyal fans weather the losses and always know victory is right around the corner.

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Local hero Anderson one of new faces for women's squad

by Ben Aiken
Staff Writer

One comes from right here in Blacksburg, one from the heart of ACC country in Georgia and the third from the African country of Mali.

The freshman class of the Virginia Tech women's basketball team may come from different backgrounds, but they all share a desire to play ball and help Tech exceed last year's 22-10 record and second-round tournament exit. If their high school accolades, attitudes and preseason performances are any indication, they should do just fine.

Forward Britney Anderson is the hometown hero of the group, leading Blacksburg High School to a state championship in 2002 as she earned the Virginia AA Player of the Year award.

This was a follow up to her state championship and AAA Player of the Year award at Meadowbrook High School in Richmond her junior year.

Even though her family is near her and she is already famous locally, she was not always convinced Tech was the right place for her.

"I was just giving Tech a chance because my family lived here," Anderson said. "I didn't really think I would go here."

After getting a chance to visit the facilities, meet the coaches and hang out with the team, she knew she had found the right place.

Coming from a little further south



Anderson

is guard Kirby Copeland. She also is accustomed to winning, as she set the single-season scoring record at Morrow High School in Morrow, Ga., last year and earned honorable mention for the all-state team.

Copeland came to Tech partly because she was ready to experience life outside of Georgia, but the unexpected recent turn of events will actually allow her to play more in and around her home state.

"I'm very excited about moving to the ACC," she said. "The schools are closer to home, and I'll be able to see my family more."

Finally, there is 6-foot-6-inch-center



Copeland

Nare Diawara of Mali, who not only has had to overcome the pressures of being a freshman student athlete, but also the pressures of being in a foreign culture.

The coaches and teammates here have kept her from being too homesick, as well as frequent calls to her family back home and her sister, who is living in New York, she said.

The one thing all three of these women stressed is their commitment to working hard to help the team in any way they can.

"I just want to help the team this year, whether that means cheering from the bench or with my defense in practice, I want to help," Anderson said.



Diawara

Copeland said their past accomplishments don't hold much ground in the college atmosphere.

"It's a different level of competition and intensity here," Copeland said.

This is a sentiment echoed by all three, showing they have not been spoiled by their past successes and they are here to help the team reach its goal of a Sweet 16 berth. The women all seem prepared for the pressures of being prized recruits on a team that seems poised for a successful run in its final Big East season.

In their first preseason game against Slovenia, all three of these players saw significant playing time as the Hokies cruised to a 93-36 victory.

The team starts its season this weekend with games against Miami (Ohio) University and University of Virginia. Then Tech travels to the Virgin Islands for the Paradise Jam, an event all three said they are very excited to play in.

DuBose returns to court after battling illness

by Jana Renn
Sports Assistant

Most of the time, players who are dealt career-ending injuries live their lives wondering why it had to happen to them and dreaming of how their lives would have been much better if they could still play.

No one would blame Virginia Tech women's basketball student assistant Rayna DuBose for having this mindset.

However, the 6-foot-3-inch former center for the Hokies chooses to forget about the past and face the future with an optimistic grin from ear to ear, showing how intensely she values her life.

During the 2001-2002 season, DuBose was a promising freshman who scored 63 points, made 15 of 15 free throws and pulled 31 rebounds in the 13 games she appeared in.

Then, just a week after the season ended, her way of life ended as well. DuBose was

diagnosed with meningococcal meningitis, a rare bacterial infection damaging the central nervous system.

She spent the next few months in intensive care and ultimately had to have parts of both arms and legs removed because of tissue damage.

While the rest of her basketball team enjoyed a winning season last year and made it to the NCAA tournament, DuBose was busy rehabilitating in physical therapy as often as four times a week.

She was also learning to adapt to the new prosthetics she was fit with in occupational therapy to replace the missing parts of her arms and legs.

This year, she is back as a student assistant for head coach Bonnie Henrickson and is as much a part of the team as she was before the whole nightmare took place.

"I practice with (the team)," DuBose said. "I run on the side, ride the bike, I'll play dummy defense even though I'm not

really a dummy, or when they're shooting, I'll rebound for them. I also help the managers out if they need anything."

Even though the physical aspect of the game has been removed for DuBose, having to watch the other girls play while she can't sometimes gets a bit bothersome.

"It's just frustrating," DuBose said. "I get short, and I start dazing off, but it's not that bad of a change (from actually playing)."

With the season Tech's women had last year, it would be understandable for DuBose to look at the team with envy, but she doesn't.

"I was happy for them," she said. "I always wished that I was here (with them), but it doesn't bother me that I'm not able to play. As long as they're doing well, I'm happy."

It would be hard for DuBose to show any envy of her teammates because of the bonds she has made throughout the whole ordeal.

"I've become a lot closer with a lot of people, my coaches

too," she said. "Everybody's there for me whenever I need them."

Those close relationships she has developed help DuBose in all aspects of her life.

"They know that sometimes I might need them to help me with something, and they're all very patient with me," she said. "I'm a very slow person. I like to take my time even if we are in a rush, so they'll do things for me to help me speed up."

She said she notices a difference in the way her teammates interact with each other as well.

"We all get along so well," she said. "Everybody has everybody's back. My freshman year we were all in individual cliques. This year, we're all one group. If one goes out somewhere, we all go out together."

This chemistry may help the team get back to this season's NCAA tournament, which would most likely make DuBose the happiest Hokie of all.



ANDREW LEONARD/SPPS

DuBose scored 61 points in 13 games last season before contracting meningococcal meningitis.

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