

THE EXTRA POINT

Virginia Tech vs. U.Va.

COLLEGIATETIMES



DOWN TO THE WIRE

COLLEGIATE TIMES

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FILE 2015

J.C. Coleman (4) stiff arms Kirk Garner (2) to avoid being tackled on a kickoff return, Nov. 28, 2015. Garner brought Coleman down on the play.

HOKIES VS. HOOS: A RIVALRY REVISITED

With the ACC Championship game and a 12-game win streak against the University of Virginia on the line, the Hokies will host the Wahoos for the last game of the season and a chance to win the ACC Coastal.

NATHAN LOPRETE
sports staff writer

Virginia Tech and the University of Virginia met for the first time in 1895. The Hokies traveled to Charlottesville in hopes of beginning their six-game season with a victory. Virginia dominated the game however and cruised to a 38-0 win. This was the beginning of this storied rivalry.

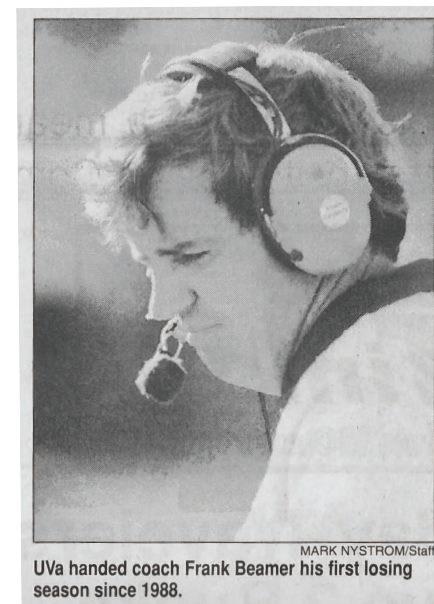
What got the rivalry started, though? A football player by the name of Hunter Carpenter who came to Virginia Tech in 1898. His main goal was to beat Virginia, and he had many opportunities to do so. Carpenter played at Virginia Tech from 1900 to 1903, played at the University of North Carolina in 1904 only because he wanted to have another shot at beating Virginia and came back to Blacksburg for one last season in 1905. This was before

the strict eligibility rules we see today. U.Va. went so far as to accuse him of being a professional player, but Carpenter signed an affidavit saying he hadn't received payment.

Carpenter got his wish in his final game against Virginia in 1905. Mid-way through the game with VPI leading 11-0, Carpenter was ejected for throwing the ball at a U.Va. defender. His team, however, would hold on, getting him his win against Virginia. The Cavaliers refused to play VPI again until 1923 because of the incident.

Both teams would exchange wins over the next few years; some even ended in a tie, such as the game in 1935 that ended with a score of 0-0.

The Cavaliers won six straight from 1947-1952 before the Hokies won six in



U.Va. handed coach Frank Beamer his first losing season since 1988.

A STATISTICAL LOOK AT JEROD EVANS' FIRST YEAR SUCCESS

Jerod Evans needs just two more touchdown passes to break the single-season record set by Tyrod Taylor. However, the quarterback is also the Hokies' leading rusher.

PETER BEDROSIAN
football beat reporter

When new head coach Justin Fuente brought in his own quarterback in his first year, many fans were nervous, and rightfully so, as most first-year quarterbacks don't perform at a high level. But Jerod Evans has put those worries to bed, performing at an elite level so far this year. The junior college transfer is playing at an All-ACC level and is a big part of the renewed feel of Virginia Tech football.

Tech fans have not seen a quarterback like Evans in Blacksburg since former quarterback Tyrod Taylor. Not only does he remind people of the dynamic and elusive Taylor, he is doing it in his first year under center and is threatening some of the old quarterbacks' records. Records and statistics don't paint a perfect picture of a player's performance, but it is not a bad barometer and is telling of the season Evans is having.

“He is on pace to pass the single-season records for passing yards and touchdowns and will be close to the single-season records for completions and completion percentage.”

I will preface this by saying that there are a lot of factors that go into the reason these statistics stand out. The players around Evans, the coaching staff, the system and several others could be reasons as to why Evans has thrown more touchdowns than Michael Vick, for example, but nonetheless these are impressive numbers.

Evans' success starts with his performance on the ground. He is on pace in a 13-game season to be the team's leading rusher, which would make him, and Logan Thomas in 2012, the only quarterbacks to lead the team in rushing since the Beamer era began in 1987. He is also on pace to rush for more yards than 14 of the players who led their respective teams in that same time period. Evans leads the team in carries, which helps with his numbers, but he is averaging a solid 4.6 yards per carry on the season including negative sack



LOREN SKINKER / COLLEGIATE TIMES

Jerod Evans (4) prepares to throw the football, Nov. 12, 2016. Evans has been effective on both his feet and through the air this season.

yardage.

Evans is the same type of big-bodied athletic quarterback that Thomas was, but is quicker and more elusive, like Taylor. He is a nice mix of both, which allows him to avoid sacks and make defenders miss in the open field, but also means that he can fight through arm tackles and stand as a threat in short yardage situations.

Evans is well on his way to making his mark in the passing game as well. He is on pace to pass the single-season records for passing yards and touchdowns and will be close to the single-season records for completions and completion percentage. Nationally, Evans is 13th in passing efficiency, which is an inclusive measure of how a quarterback performs. This is especially impressive because he is surrounded by some of the nation's best, including Heisman frontrunner Lamar Jackson and last year's ACC Player of the Year Deshaun Watson. He is also on pace to finish the season with the best touchdown to interception ratio in Tech history just ahead of Taylor, which speaks to how prolific he is while taking care of the ball. All of this has been done in only his first year at quarterback in a new system with new coaches.

While many were not fans of former quarterback Michael Brewer, he excelled in throwing short to mid-range passes with great touch, although his arm strength

see **EVANS** / page 8



LOREN SKINKER / COLLEGIATE TIMES

Jerod Evans (4) throws a quick screen pass, Nov. 12, 2016. Evans racked up over 300 passing yards on the night.



ALEXA JOHNSON / COLLEGIATE TIMES

Sam Rogers (45) flies through the air after a low hit against Georgia Tech, Nov. 12, 2016.

EXIT LIGHT: HOKIES SAY GOODBYE TO SENIOR CLASS

At the end of Fuente's inaugural year, the Hokies will lose some of their most consistent career players, like Sam Rogers and Ken Ekanem.

CHASE PARKER
football beat reporter

Virginia Tech is a destination of which many football players dream. "Enter Sandman," Power Five conference play, Thursday night games, the electric crowd — it's all a part of the tradition in Blacksburg.

On Nov. 26, 12 football players will be recognized for living that dream as it will be Senior Day at Lane Stadium. The setting couldn't be more fitting, as the Hokies will be facing their arch rival Virginia in a game that — if Tech wins — will result in a ticket to Orlando to compete in the ACC Championship Game.

This year's senior class consists of

some big-name starters who have been leaders in the locker rooms, play-makers on the field and fan favorites throughout the last four years.

Offensive Seniors:

The offensive senior list is headlined by fullback Sam Rogers. In 2013, he joined the team as an invited walk-on and has since become one of the undisputed leaders on the roster. Rogers has racked up 1,275 total yards of offense and nine total touchdowns throughout his career at Virginia Tech.

The former walk-on's signature play as a Hokie came in week one of 2015 when Ohio State came to Blacksburg in one of the most hyped-up games in school history. After trailing 14-0 early in the second quarter, Rogers went out

on a perfectly executed wheel route and caught a pass from Michael Brewer in stride down the sideline. He made a couple shifty moves on his way to the end zone, bringing life back to the crowd and team. That play went down as a 51-yard touchdown reception — the longest score of Rogers' career.

There will also be two starters on the offensive line that will be playing in their home finale, as both Jonathan McLaughlin (RT) and Augie Conte (RG) are seniors. The pair have served as the anchors to the right side of the line this season.

Defensive Seniors:

Ken Ekanem has emerged as one of the defensive leaders — and rightfully so. The 6-foot-3 defensive end has racked up five

sacks this season and six tackles for loss. One of Ekanem's most impactful plays of his career came earlier this year against ECU. In the third quarter of the game, the senior rushed around the edge and sacked Pirates' quarterback James Summers in the end zone for a safety, which put the icing on the cake in the Hokies' dominating 54-17 victory.

The man to Ekanem's left, Woody Baron, will be leaving the Hokies as well. The nose tackle out of Tennessee has had a season to remember. In his first year as a starter, Baron has racked up 46 total tackles (16 of which were for loss) and 4.5 sacks in his 2016 campaign.

Nigel Williams is the third defensive lineman who's finishing up his Hokie career.

2016 FOOTBALL SENIORS



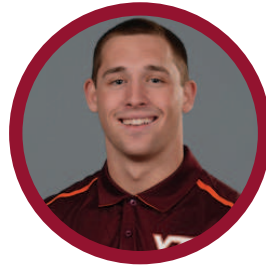
WOODY
BARON



CHUCK
CLARK



KEN
EKANEM



JOHNATHAN
GALANTE



DER'WOUN
GREENE



JONATHAN
MCLAUGHLIN



BRENDEN
MOTLEY



WAYNE
MUTTER



SAM
ROGERS



ROBERT
WARFEL



NIGEL
WILLIAMS

The 6-foot-2 defensive tackle missed significant playing time this season due to an ankle injury, but his impact has been felt when he's on the field. The 297-pound Goliath has been a key in stopping the run for the Hokies' defense throughout his career, using his size and power to plug holes and bully around opposing offensive linemen.

The defensive backfield is going to be losing a key piece as well. Free safety Chuck Clark has been making plays since his freshman year and has collected two interceptions in his career. Perhaps his most memorable play came against U.Va. last season when he caught the game-clinching interception, cementing Frank Beamer's legacy and sending the Hokies to their 23rd consecutive bowl game.

Backups and Special Teamers:

Backup quarterback Brenden Motley filled in nicely in 2015 when then-starting quarterback Michael Brewer went down with an injury. The 6-foot-4 QB is truly a hometown player, as he went to high school in Christiansburg, Virginia, just 10 minutes away from Virginia Tech.

Der'Woun Greene and Johnathan Galante both logged plays as special teamers throughout their careers. Backup placekicker Robert Warfel will be honored on Senior Day as well.



Sam Rogers (45) runs the ball down the field against Georgia Tech, Nov. 12, 2016.



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ALEXA JOHNSON / COLLEGIATE TIMES

HOKIES COME UP SHORT AGAINST GT

LOREN SKINKER AND ALEXA JOHNSON /
COLLEGIATE TIMES

With a trip to the ACC Championship on the line, Justin Fuente and company fell to the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets at home. Georgia Tech ran the triple option on almost every play, completing only two passes. Still, the Hokies struggled on defense all day. Yellow Jacket quarterback Matthew Jordan ran for 121 yards and two touchdowns. The Hokie offense, conversely, failed to get into a groove all game, although Jerod Evans did rush for two touchdowns in the fourth quarter. However, the Hokie quarterback threw two interceptions, one of which was on a pass to the end zone intended for tight end Bucky Hodges. Including a Hokie fumble on the opening kickoff return, turnovers were the difference in the 30–20 loss. Hodges also fumbled in the fourth quarter when fighting for extra yards after converting a first down. Most importantly, this year's rivalry game against U.Va. carries more weight, as a Hokie victory means a trip to Orlando.





BEN WEIDLICH / COLLEGIATE TIMES

Tech defenders Woody Baron (60) and Trevon Hill (94) react after ECU quarterback Philip Nelson (9) was forced to throw out of bounds to avoid the sack.

WOODY BARON SHINING IN HIS SENIOR SEASON

Woody Baron hasn't found himself in the spotlight much during his career at Virginia Tech. His senior campaign is quickly changing that.

DAVIS CARBAUGH
sports staff writer

Senior defensive tackle Woody Baron has certainly made the best of his last year playing in Lane Stadium. As one of the anchors to Bud Foster's "Lunch Pail Defense," Baron has given opposing quarterbacks and offensive coordinators nightmares all season long.

He started only seven games in his first three years as a Hokie, but Baron has made his name known during his final year in Blacksburg.

Through 10 regular season games this season, Baron has totaled 4.5 sacks and 16 tackles for loss. Baron has elevated his game significantly in his last year at Tech, piling up more solo tackles and sacks this year than in his previous three seasons as a Hokie. In fact, he has had more tackles in his senior season than the three previous seasons combined.

In a monumental ACC Coastal matchup against Miami earlier in the season, Baron was able to sack opposing quarterback Brad Kaaya 2.5 times. He has exceeded expectations this season and proved himself as a crucial piece in Foster's defense.

While his stats are impressive by themselves, Baron's constant pressure — a difficult stat to measure — on opposing quarterbacks throughout games is what sets him apart. Baron is the type of player that rival offensive linemen prepare all week to face on game day.

The Nashville, Tennessee, native measures in as small for a defensive lineman, standing at 6-foot-2 and 280 pounds. However, his quickness off the snap and effective use of hands make up for his smaller stature. If he keeps up the high level of play, it is very likely that Baron will finish his final season with All-ACC defensive honors.

Baron's work ethic in practice throughout his four years at Virginia Tech is a major reason for the success this season. "If you make the plays in practice, more than likely you're going to make plays in the game," Baron stated. "We're practicing what we're going to see in the game on Saturday."

Transitions can be tough on head coaches, but Justin Fuente has never had to doubt the consistency of Baron's play. Alongside defensive end Ken Ekanem, Baron is unquestionably the Hokies' leader on the defensive line.

"If we execute, we can play with anybody," Baron said. "I think that we're on the rise: we can only get better." The remainder of the Hokies' season consists of a crucial ACC matchup with U.Va. and a potential trip to the ACC Championship Game. There is no doubt that Baron and the Hokies are eager to finish the season strong under first-year head coach

Fuente.

Despite being recruited during Frank Beamer's tenure, Baron and his 11 fellow seniors on Virginia Tech will be Fuente's first graduating class. Fuente and Baron have shared success this year, but the community off the field is important to Baron as well.

"It's been incredible, just being a part of the Hokie family is something I'll never forget. Walking into Lane is an incredible experience," Baron said during an episode of Tech Talk Live earlier in the year. "Just being a football player has been great, but it's only a fraction of what (it means) to be a student athlete at this school and a part of the Blacksburg community."



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RIVAL: Hokies' trip to the ACC Championship not set in stone

from page 2

a row from 1958–1963. The battle between the two schools went back and forth for a while, but Tech was beginning to form its football program.

In 1995, the Hokies traveled to Charlottesville to play the No. 13 Cavaliers. U.Va. led 29–14 at the end of the third quarter before Tech mounted a comeback for the ages. Led by Jim Druckenmiller and Jermaine Holmes, the offense got rolling.

With 12:59 left on the clock, the Tech quarterback found Holmes for a 10-yard score. After a Hokies' field goal cut the lead to six, the Cavaliers were hoping for one more stop.

On first and 10 with 53 seconds remaining, Druckenmiller dropped back and threw a deep ball to Holmes for the game-winning score. The 32-yard strike sent Tech fans into a frenzy. Virginia Tech's former broadcaster, Bill Roth, shouted, "Jim Druckenmiller has engineered the greatest comeback I've ever seen." That line makes U.Va. fans cringe to this day.

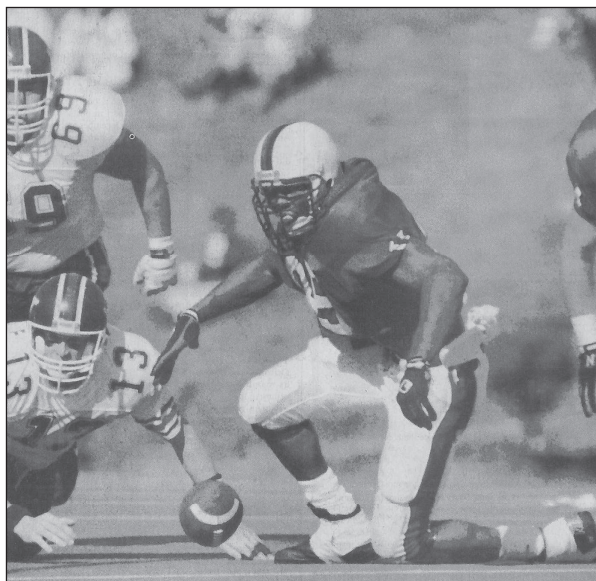
In 2003, Virginia beat Virginia Tech 35–21. Tight end Heath Miller had 13 catches for 145 yards. He would go on to have a successful NFL career with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Matt Schaub was quarterback for Virginia that year. He also played in the NFL, making the Pro Bowl twice.

Virginia Tech's current win streak against the Wahoos began in 2004 when Bryan Randall threw for 200 yards and two touchdowns as the Hokies rolled U.Va. 24–10.

“Virginia Tech's former broadcaster Bill Roth shouted, 'Jim Druckenmiller has engineered the greatest comeback I've ever seen.'”

In 2005, Tech found itself ranked No. 7 when it traveled to Charlottesville. Marcus Vick threw two touchdowns, and Branden Ore ran for 115 yards. Cedric Humes scored three times, and Ore added two touchdowns as well. Virginia Tech cruised to a 52–14 win.

In 2008, the teams met with the ACC Coastal on the line. Virginia Tech was trying to clinch its third trip to the ACC Championship Game in four years. Tyrod Taylor had himself a day on the ground and through the air. The quarterback threw for 137 yards. He ran for the exact same amount.



FILE 1991

U.Va. beats Tech at Scott Stadium, Nov. 23, 1991. This was Beamer's first losing season since 1988, going 5–6.

The game was tied at 14 in the fourth quarter when Taylor led the Hokies into Cavalier territory. With 6:37 to play, Dustin Keys drilled a 28-yard field goal, giving Tech the lead. U.Va. drove down the field, but the Hokies' defense stood tall. U.Va. quarterback Marc Verica threw into the endzone and Dorian Porch came up with the interception. That sealed the deal for Virginia Tech, and the Hokies escaped with a 17–14 win.

Tech had to defend the Coastal again in 2011. With his team ranked No. 5 in the country, Logan Thomas exposed the U.Va. defense through the air. Thomas threw for 187 yards and two touchdowns. He also got help from running back David Wilson, who ran for 167 yards and two scores. The Virginia Tech defense sacked U.Va. quarterback Michael Rocco four times and picked him off twice. Tech scored in each quarter and shut out the Cavaliers 38–0.

In 2012, the Hokies needed a win to become bowl eligible. Antone Exum picked off Rocco with under four minutes remaining and Tech was in business. A few plays later, Cody Journell knocked in a 29-yard game winner as time expired to stun the Cavaliers in Blacksburg.

Tech has found itself in similar situations the last two years. Needing a win to become bowl eligible, the Hokies grinded out two close games to keep the streak alive. A Bucky Hodges touchdown with less than two minutes to play got it done in 2014. In 2015, the Hokies closed on a 10–0 run and escaped with a 23–20 win. That included a Joey Slye 41 yarder with 1:38 to play.

Rivalry week is at the end of the season on purpose, and that's because there's often something to play for. For the Hokies, a trip to the ACC Championship is on the line. Tech hasn't been in that situation since 2011. For U.Va., the Cavaliers will simply want to spoil the fun and end their 12-year losing streak.



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EVANS: New quarterback finds home in record books

from page 3

limited throwing into small windows or throwing an effective deep ball. Evans has the same touch, but also has the arm strength to thread the needle and stretch the field. He is statistically the most accurate passer since Bryan Randall and has shown the ability to stay alive in the pocket when it collapses to buy himself extra time. It has been a while since fans in Blacksburg have seen a quarterback with a pocket presence like Jerod Evans, and it will only improve with his time learning under Fuente.

“There are a lot of factors as to why this team has surpassed expectations this season, but Evans is near the top of that list.”

Aside from the statistics, Evans has done a remarkable job coming into a new program and running a new offense with a commanding presence. The junior college transfer has displayed a strong arm, great decision-making skills, great athleticism on the ground and toughness. Most importantly, he is a perfectionist. Much in the way his coach is, Evans rarely ever pats himself on the back. Even when he tied the single game school record for touchdown passes with five against Boston College, Evans found issues with his performance. "After I threw it, I said, 'No, that ball should not have been thrown,'" Evans said in response to a question about his touchdown pass to a double-covered Isaiah Ford. His demeanor and approach to the game is just as valuable as his skillset, and it is showing as the Hokies have already surpassed expectations for the season and could return to the ACC Championship Game for the first time since 2011.

There are a lot of factors as to why this team has surpassed expectations this season, but Evans is near the top of the list. The first-year quarterback has been better than advertised in a league that is not easy to play in. If he can continue to grow with the coaching staff and the players around him, he will be a big problem for defensive coordinators next year and will surely cement his place in Virginia Tech football history with more broken records.



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