

page 3

Homecoming returns after two-year hiatus

BY CAMREN GANDEE
CORRESPONDENT

West Virginia University celebrated Homecoming this week, as students took part in rich school traditions, competitive activities and charitable events.

This year's Homecoming events were put together by the National Pan-Hellenic Council, the Professional Greek Council and the Interfraternity Council. The organizations work together every year to coordinate Homecoming and Greek Life activities.

With the University celebrating Homecoming at full capacity for the first time in two years, event organizers felt it only necessary to give this week some extra pizzazz by giving each day a unique name.

"I think a thing we really wanted to display this year is how we all come together, so everyday is named something



PHOTO BY MALLORY HRICOVEC

A student paints a bowl during the Empty Bowls Painting Contest on Sept. 28th, 2021.

different," said Aubrey Keller, vice president of programming for the Panhellenic Association at WVU. "We really wanted to show how, even after the happenings of COVID, we're still able to get together and show love for our university and community as a whole."

Each name is associated in some way with the events that were held on the given day.

'Mountaineers are Creative' Monday got the festivities rolling on Sept. 27 as fraternities and sororities showed off their artistic creativity and held their annual banner drop.

Tuesday, known as 'Moun-

taineers Give Back,' saw some newer additions to the Homecoming traditions. The day was dedicated towards helping those in need and was put on with the help of two non-profit organizations, Empty Bowls and Project Linus.

Empty Bowls, an initiative that combats hunger in West Virginia, held a bowl-painting event in the Mountainlair Tuesday night for Greek Life members.

"There's a competition all week through Greek Life, so we signed up through Delta Gamma to paint these bowls and learn about hunger in West Virginia," said exercise physiology major Abby Kunns as she helped design her team's bowl. "And [the bowls] get sold and the profits go to ending hunger in West Virginia."

The Greek Life chapters present in the Shenandoah Room during this event were given themes to base their designs off of. The categories

were decades and famous movies.

Shortly following the start of the Empty Bowls event, Project Linus got rolling with a blanket-making event where students got in groups to help make blankets.

Project Linus is a non-profit that provides blankets for children who have been through traumatic experiences.

"Project Linus comes with the fabric and they have groups, like us, make the blankets for children who are in need," said Shawn Gray, a senior social work major. "They could be in foster care, or could be sick, just any children who are in need of a nice warm hug in the form of a blanket."

On Wednesday, fittingly known as 'Mountaineers Stand Together,' the Center for Fraternal Values and Leadership held a sexual assault prevention seminar, where renowned motivational speaker and rape survivor Brittany Piper shared self-care tips with

students.

The annual Greek Games were held Thursday night on the Mountainlair Green, where eight teams composed of a variety of fraternities and sororities competed in an olympic-style tournament.

The day known as 'Mountaineers are Strong' consisted of a tug-of-war match, a drive-by carwash, a water balloon toss, musical yoga mats and a rock-paper-scissors bracket tournament.

On 'Mountaineer Friday,' students were welcomed to enjoy games, music and giveaways at the Mountainlair. Mountaineers head football coach Neal Brown made an appearance at the event.

Homecoming Week will conclude with a college football matchup at Milan Puskar Stadium between the Mountaineers and Texas Tech Saturday. During the halftime ceremony, the University will crown Homecoming Royalty.

Sex crimes declined on campus during the pandemic, stalking continues upward trend

BY TRENTON STRAIGHT
NEWS EDITOR

Last year, WVU saw a dramatic drop in reported sexual violence, as shown in the University's latest Clery Report.

University Police Interim Chief Phil Scott said this is likely due to less students being on campus.

"This reporting cycle brought with it some anomalies largely due to the number of students who were not attending in-person classes. As we all know, it was a different kind of year and some of the areas with increases may reflect that," Scott said.

There was also the absence of larger events like FallFest and FoodFest, which often drive an increase in campus crime.

Domestic violence saw the most significant decline — the lowest it's been in over seven years. These cases saw a 70% decrease from 2019 to 2020.

Reported rape cases also saw a downward trend, dropping from 13 to nine in 2020.

The previous year saw the highest numbers of rape and fondling cases since before 2014.

There were no reported incidents of dating violence for the last two years. Historically, these numbers have been fairly low compared to other reported sex crimes.

Though cases of sexual violence were at a low during the pandemic year, stalking numbers continued an upward trend.

Stalking saw a 56% increase during 2020, jumping from nine to 14 reported cases in that year.

It's important to note WVU's annual Clery Report doesn't fully represent sexual violence on campus, as many cases go unreported.

The annual report pulls data from University Police and other local agencies, including Morgantown police and fire departments.

In 2019, WVU's classification of sexual assault changed in accordance with the Violence Against Women Re-

authorization Act, according to April Kaull, University spokesperson.

The University Clery Report had previously only categorized two types of sexual assault — forcible and non-forcible. Now, rape and fondling are recognized as two distinct categories of sexual assault.

Non-forcible sexual offenses were expanded into categories including statutory rape and incest.

As part of Homecoming Week at WVU, many students and organizations on campus are speaking out about sexual violence.

WVU Greek Life sponsored a self care for survivors seminar Wednesday with guest speaker Brittany Piper, a rape survivor.

Piper shared her story and the trauma she's lived for the past decade with a room full of students.

"[People] talked about how strong, how brave, how composed I was. They refer to me a survivor who refused to be broken," Piper said about her experiences after her rapist's

Sex offenses are down, stalking continues upward trend

Sex crime numbers on and off campus by the year, per WVU's annual Clery Report

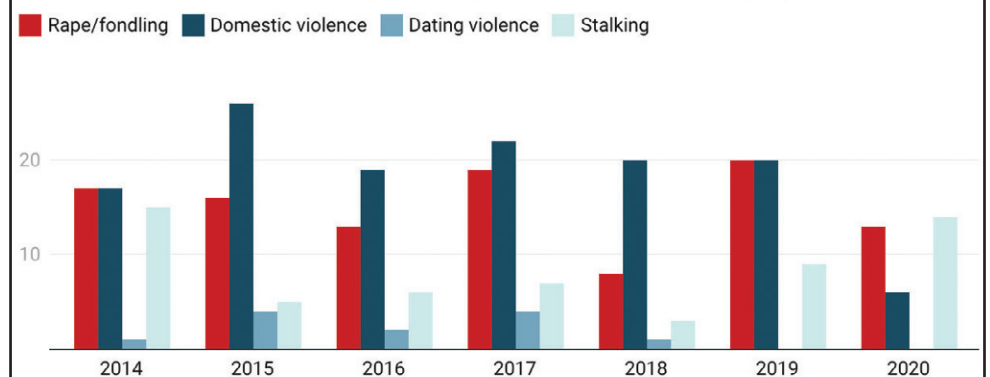


Chart: Trenton Straight • Source: WVU Clery Act Report (2016-2021) • Created with Datawrapper

sentencing. "But what people didn't know is that point in my life, I was at the lowest point in my life."

It took two years for Piper's rapist to be sentenced to life in prison.

She followed her story with advice to survivors on how to cope with their trauma when surrounded by triggers like rape culture.

"That's what trauma does to us. It leaves an imprint, a

legacy," Piper said. "And it's not about pretending it's not there. It's more about coexisting with it and loving ourselves through that process."

Katie Moore, assistant director for the Center for Fraternal Values and Leadership, said this was the first sexual assault prevention event held during Homecoming in recent years.

She added the event was made possible by the Big 12

Sexual Assault Prevention grant.

This weekend at the Texas Tech game, Student Government Association will hold a sexual assault prevention tailgate for students.

Next month, the Women's Resource Center will be holding a "Silent Witness Exhibit" from Oct. 5-12 to honor people murdered by acts of domestic violence.



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BY SADAF NIKZAD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

WVU announced the 2021 Homecoming Court candidates on Thursday, Sept. 16. This year, there are seven people on the court.

Homecoming Court applications went live on Aug. 30 and were due on Sept. 3. To be selected, students had to fill out the application through WVUEngage.

According to past applications, "the selection process for royalty is based

upon leadership activities and campus involvement." An essay must be submitted as well.

All applicants must have a minimum overall GPA of 2.5, must be a full-time student, must be a senior and must not have been on

Homecoming Court in the past.

The applications are sent to a panel of judges who pick the candidates. The candidates who are selected must go through an interview process, and the court is voted on from there.



From left to right: Morgan Glass, Raimah Hossain, Ethan Cade, Ally Simon, Kylie A. Parker, Makenna Myers. Not pictured: Hunter Moore.

PHOTOS COURTESY WVU / SEAN HINES

Meet the 2021 Homecoming candidates

Ethan Cade, a senior environmental geoscience major and member of the Honors College from Wayne, is sponsored by the WVU Student Sierra Coalition. He serves as an SGA college senator for the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences and the president of the WVU Student Sierra Coalition. Cade also serves as a member of the Outdoor Adventure Club and Advisory Board for the Department of Geology and Geography and is a participant in the Summer Undergraduate Research Experience and was selected as a West Virginia 4H All-Star.



Morgan Glass, a senior biochemistry major and member of the Honors College from Wheeling, is sponsored by the Undergraduate Research Association. She serves as an SGA senator for the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design, president of the Global Medical Brigades and a Presidential Student Ambassador. Glass is also a member of the Helvetia Honorary Society and Mountaineer Manics and a teaching assistant for the Department of Biology and an Eberly Scholar and Honors Foundations Scholar.



Raimah Hossain, a senior biomedical engineering major from Starkville, Mississippi, is sponsored by Camp Kesem at WVU. She serves as the inclusion coordinator for SGA, an ambassador for the WVU Honors College and a member of Camp Kesem at WVU. Hossain is a participant in the WVU Summer Undergraduate Research Experience and served as a "Say it Loud" TedxWVU speaker in 2020. She is also a Neil S. Bucklew Scholar and Diversity Scholar.



Ally Simon, a senior industrial engineering major and member of the Honors College from Elkins, is sponsored by the Society of Women Engineers where she serves as the president. She serves as an ambassador and SGA college senator for the Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources and a member of the Honors Hall Council and Statler Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Conference Planning Committee. Simon is the recipient of the WVU Scholarship of Distinction, a finalist for the Alumni Academy Leadership and selected for the Deloitte Junior Mentorship Program.



Hunter Moore, a senior mechanical and aerospace engineering from West Milford, is sponsored by the Student Government Association. He currently serves as the WVU student body vice president and a member of the Experimental Rocketry team, Engineers Without Borders and WVU College Democrats. Moore also serves as an ambassador for the Benjamin M. Statler College of Engineering and Mineral Resources and a member of the Honors EXCEL Program. He is a Neil S. Bucklew Scholar, Statler College of Engineering Research Scholar and WVU Engineering Excellence Scholar.



Makenna Myers, a senior global supply chain management major from Ruffs Dale, Pennsylvania, is sponsored by Alpha Xi Delta where she serves as the chapter president. She also serves as a member of the Supply Chain Management Association, Greek Leadership Academy and Women in Business. Myers is the recipient of the WVU Scholarship of Distinction, Robbins Global Travel Award and the Deno Castelli and Chambers College Scholarships.



Kylie A. Parker, a senior exercise physiology major and member of the Honors College EXCEL Program from Wheeling, is sponsored by Chi Omega Sorority where she serves as the president. She is also a member of the Honors EXCEL program, Exercise Physiology Club and peer mentor and teaching assistant for the Honors College. Parker is the recipient of the Scholarship of Distinction, Arista Cup (Panhellenic) and has been selected for the Nancy Walton Laurie Leadership Institute.



See who's crowned
Homecoming Royalty
at the WVU vs. Texas Tech
game on Oct. 2 during halftime!



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WVU drops gendered titles for Homecoming royalty

BY LARA BONATESTA
CULTURE EDITOR

The 2021 Homecoming court looks a little different this year. Instead of having an even amount of men and women on the court as in previous years, this year's homecoming court did not take gender into account when selecting finalists.

While in previous years there have been an even number of men and women on the homecoming court, this year's court consists of five women and two men.

"We have a top seven right now, and so that top seven, however it lays out, and however the students identify, can be a very mixed bag," said Thanh Le, the director of student engagement and leadership at WVU.

Le, who is responsible for overseeing homecoming, ex-



PHOTO BY DUNCAN SLADE

Students campaign for Makena Myers, chapter president of Alpha Xi Delta sorority.

plained that this year the two winners will be called "Homecoming royalty" rather than "King and Queen."

He said this decision was made after speaking with various students, faculty and staff who were in support of the change.

While the title change did not take place until this year, Le said that the gender re-

quirement on homecoming court applications was actually removed several years ago.

"We actually removed the gender requirements for king and queen. It just wasn't announced," he said.

After the gender requirements were removed, Le explained, students were able to apply for the crown that they wanted, based on how they



PHOTO BY DUNCAN SLADE

Students campaign for their Homecoming candidate.

identified.

Yet while students could apply for either crown, the terms King and Queen were retired this year in an effort to be as inclusive as possible.

"This year, I think we wanted to kind of be even

more inclusive and try to create an opportunity for all of our students and to get rid of the king and queen titles and just be more of a royalty," Le said.

Le explained, "We wanted to remove any kind of barrier

that would hinder anybody that wanted to run."

This year, when they are crowned, both of the homecoming royalty will receive a scepter, a bouquet of flowers and a crown. The royalty will be able to choose the style of crown they would prefer to wear.

The cloak, which was formally given out to the homecoming king, will not be handed out this year.

The homecoming royalty will be crowned at half-time during the football game against Texas Tech Saturday, Oct. 2 at Milan Puskar Stadium.

The two homecoming court members with the two highest scores will be crowned as royalty. According to Le, these scores will be made up of 50% results from the student vote and 50% application and interview scores.

Another Homecoming comes and goes without Tent City

BY LADIMIR GARCIA
ASSISTANT CULTURE EDITOR

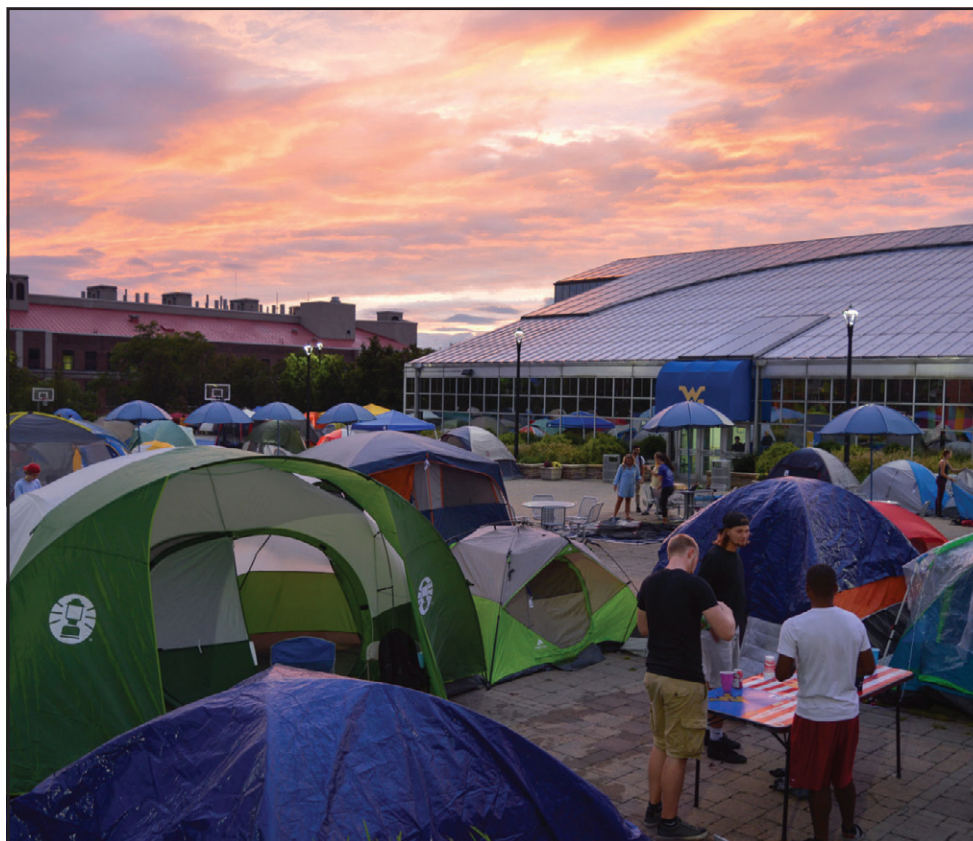
After a one-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, West Virginia University is once again holding homecoming festivities, but things might look a little different compared to past years.

Over the decades, WVU has lost and gained a lot of different homecoming traditions that have shaped the way students look back at their time here at the university.

Sabrina Cave, the Executive Director for Student Enrichment, recalls Tent City as one of the most recent traditions that has faded over the years.

"Students would camp out in tents the entire week, I think they would set up on Sunday, and they had to tear down by like, early Friday afternoon," Cave said. "And it was just a way for them to sort of get together and kind of have fun and they would play games and over the years, students got more elaborate in their tents, they would have TVs and all kinds of things."

Tent City started in 2014 when almost 300 tents were pitched in the Mountainlair Plaza. Students camped out



Tent City in 2016.

for a week to get a front row spot on the set of ESPN's College Gameday.

The event lasted for four years.

Homecoming also brings back a lot of alumni. After a year of not being able to attend, many of them are eager

to come back.

Kevin Berry, the chief operating officer of the WVU alumni association, said many of the alumni are eager to participate in the upcoming festivities.

"So, I would say that after not being able to have home-

coming last year, that many of our alumni are eager to see the traditions again and participate in those traditions," Berry said.

Due to the pandemic, the way alumni interact with the homecoming festivities might also look a little different com-



STAFF PHOTO

Students play a video game in Tent City in 2016.

pared to past years.

Berry said the University will be holding virtual events to accommodate alumni that might not attend homecoming due to COVID-19.

"A great example is that homecoming is typically the largest alumni weekend of the year for our School of Medicine. So, they are going to do their School of Medicine weekend, virtually this year," Berry said. "That's just one example of one of the things that they're doing so that individuals can participate."

Berry also highlighted the earlier homecoming traditions

that WVU has hosted over the years.

"They've done things in the past like a homecoming dance and typically what they would do at the homecoming dances, that's where, you know, the homecoming queen would be introduced, as well as the game captains that happened in the 1950s," Berry said.

However, both Cave and Berry highlighted the traditions that are still being carried from past years.

From the homecoming parade to the crowning of our homecoming royalty.

Jinkies! Scooby-Doo wins Homecoming Banner Drop

BY DA STAFF

Homecoming banners dropped Monday at noon as part of a decades long tradition for Greek Life at WVU.

This year, banners were judged based on originality, clarity, aesthetics, craftsmanship and adherence to directions. Each team's banner was judged by over 50 higher education professionals from across the nation via Google Form.

Voting for banners began

Monday evening on the Center for Fraternal Values and Leadership's Instagram page. Pictures of all the banners were posted and followers were encouraged to vote for their favorite on the CFVL's Instagram story.

The Today team banner (Scooby-Doo) won first place, the 60's team (101 Dalmatians) won second place and the 2010's team (Monsters University) won third place.

Photos were provided by WVU Greek Life.



Today Team Banner - Alpha Phi, Lambda Chi Alpha, Alpha Phi Omega and Epsilon Tau Pi. This banner took first place.



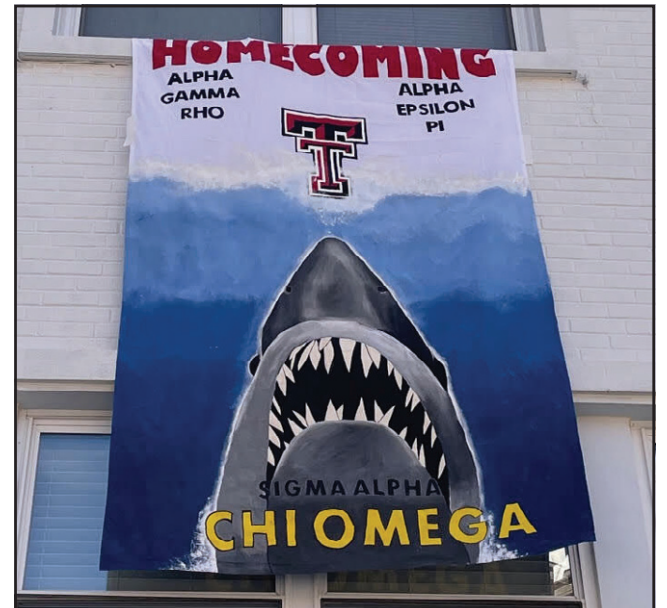
2000's Team Banner - Delta Gamma, Phi Sigma Phi, Omega Phi Alpha and Alpha Kappa Psi.



60's Team Homecoming Banner - Alpha Omicron Pi, Sigma Nu and Phi Mu Alpha.



80's Team Banner - Alpha Omega Epsilon, Delta Chi, Pi Beta Phi and NPHC Sororities.



70's Team Banner - Chi Omega, Alpha Gamma Rho, Alpha Epsilon Pi and Sigma Alpha.



90's Team Banner - Kappa Kappa Gamma, Pi Kappa Phi, Sigma Alpha Mu and Beta Psi Omega.



Future Team Banner - Sigma Kappa, Pi Lambda Phi, Sigma Phi Delta and Phi Sigma Pi.



2010's Team Banner - Alpha Zeta Delta, Phi Kappa Psi, NPHC Fraternities and Sigma Alpha Iota.

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Revisiting the 2012 WVU homecoming game

BY CHARLES MONTGOMERY
SPORTS EDITOR

As West Virginia approaches its battle with the Texas Tech Red Raiders, the Mountaineers are not riding very high. A 16-13 loss to then-No. 4 Oklahoma was hard fought, but it was still a loss for WVU.

Now, West Virginia turns its attention to one of the greatest traditions in college football: homecoming.

Over the last few homecoming games for the Mountaineers, they've performed well and have a solid record. The opponent for WVU on homecoming will be a familiar one as it has played Texas Tech twice on homecoming since joining the Big 12.

In the past two meetings with the Red Raiders on homecoming, West Virginia is 1-1 with the most recent meeting coming in 2017. That meeting was a 46-35 win over then-No. 24 Texas Tech. Since 2007, West Virginia is 10-4 in homecoming games.

Before we look more towards the future with the 2021 homecoming game, let us move back towards the past and revisit one of the greatest games in the history of West Virginia football. That game is the 2012 meeting between West Virginia and then-No. 25 Baylor on Sept. 29, 2012.

2012 Homecoming Game

Many stars were on the field that day for the Mountaineers to include quarterback Geno Smith and wide receivers Tavon Austin and Stedman Bailey. Those three would be the main facets of the game for West Virginia as they contributed to one of the most electric games in Milan Puskar Stadium history.

The two teams combined for 1,507 total yards of offense with 13 total touchdowns and just one turnover for the entire game. Smith finished the game breaking two school passing records as he went 45-of-51 (88%) for 656 yards and eight touchdowns.

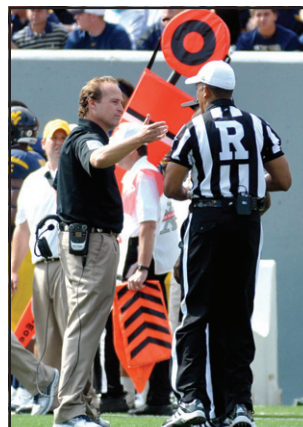
Smith went on to break the school record for most passing touchdowns in a single season with 42. He finished with the second-most passing yards in a season in 2012 (4,205) after he already set the record



West Virginia takes the field.



The West Virginia Mountaineer takes the field.



West Virginia former head coach Dana Holgorsen talks to a referee.



PHOTOS BY PATRICK GORRELL

West Virginia wide receiver Stedman Bailey attempts a catch.



West Virginia celebrates a touchdown.

in 2011 (4,385). He also broke the school records for most career passing yards (11,662) and touchdowns (98).

This was West Virginia's first-ever Big 12 game and it was the first time Milan Puskar Stadium participated in Stripe the Stadium.

It was an offensive show-down if there ever was one, but don't expect something like that this Saturday against Texas Tech. The Mountaineers are much-improved on the defensive side of the ball and the offense doesn't look like the most capable group that can score 70 points.

Don't be surprised if West Virginia does something miraculous. It is homecoming week.



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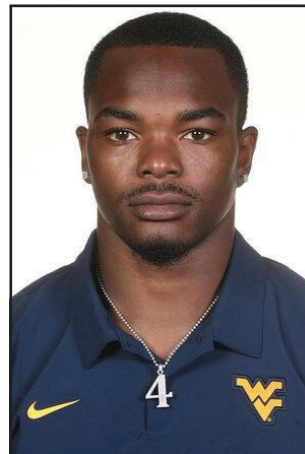
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WVU Football 2021 Homecoming Court

BY CHARLES MONTGOMERY
SPORTS EDITOR

Jarret Doege, Quarterback

Jarret Doege is running as your West Virginia 2021 starting quarterback. Doege has been your starting quarterback for a few years now and he has done well. Doege has started 16 career games heading into the matchup against Texas Tech and WVU is 9-7 in those games. In 2020, he was not very turnover prone as he only threw four interceptions, but in 2021, that hasn't been the case. After just four games, Doege has thrown four interceptions compared to just seven touchdowns. That doesn't mean you shouldn't support him. Doege is also very generous as he gives the ball away so many times to WVU opponents. Jarret Doege is your 2021 starting quarterback.



PHOTOS COURTESY WVU ATHLETICS

From left to right: Jarret Doege, Akheem Mesidor, Leddie Brown and Jackie Matthews.

Akheem Mesidor, Defensive lineman

Akheem Mesidor was overshadowed last season due to his teammate Darius Stills getting most of the recognition on the defensive line. In 2021, it was the same case heading into the season, but this time it was Dante Stills that was getting most of the national accolades. Despite all of this, Me-

sidor has established himself as the rock of the West Virginia defensive line with 19 total tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss and one sack. Through four games, Mesidor is gaining more national attention and the folks at home should be aware of this when watching WVU football. Akheem Mesidor is one (he's not the only one that plays on the defensive

line) of your 2021 starting defensive linemen.

Leddie Brown, Running back

Before the 2021 season began, head coach Neal Brown said that the offense would run through Leddie Brown. Through the first four games, that's not exactly the case with Leddie Brown only averaging

16.5 carries and 80 yards per game. That's not necessarily "running the offense" through Leddie Brown. However, don't be alarmed. Leddie Brown finished with his second-most yards in a game in his career with 161 against Virginia Tech. The season is still early which gives him plenty of time to replicate the 1,010-yard season he had a year ago. Leddie Brown

is your 2021 starting running back.

Jackie Matthews, Cornerback

Heading into this new season for West Virginia football, cornerback Jackie Matthews was still relatively unknown after seeing limited action in 2020. In 10 appearances, Matthews finished with three total tackles. Now in 2021, Matthews has been impactful in all four games including his first career interception against the Oklahoma Sooners on Sept. 25. He is quickly becoming a staple of the WVU secondary that was looking to fill holes left by Tykee Smith and Dreshun Miller — both transferred in the offseason. Through four games, Matthews has 12 total tackles, three tackles for loss, two pass breakups and one interception. Jackie Matthews is one of your 2021 starting cornerbacks.

Neal Brown in search of first win over Texas Tech

BY NICK KREMER
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

This Saturday, third-year head coach Neal Brown will attempt to pick up his first win over Texas Tech as the Mountaineers have lost their last two games against the Red Raiders by a combined 28 points.

"They've (Texas Tech) had our number the last two years," Brown said about his struggles against Texas Tech. "We have not played very well, they beat us, but we have not played very well."

Texas Tech is coming off of a huge loss to Texas this past weekend. In its last game, Texas Tech gave up 70 points and 639 total yards.

Although West Virginia (2-2, 0-1 Big 12) is also coming off of a loss, the team lost in a much different way. Unlike Texas Tech (3-1, 0-1 Big 12), West Virginia kept its opponent to a low total in points and yards.

This season, Texas Tech has been among the top of the Big 12 in total offense ranking third with 1,844 yards. West Virginia on the other hand has ranked near the bottom of the Big 12 in offense with 1,480 yards of offense.

West Virginia has been a strong defensive team this year ranking third in the Big 12 in points allowed per game (16.8) while Texas Tech ranks ninth (33.5 ppg), only



PHOTO BY DUNCAN SLADE

West Virginia head coach Neal Brown discusses a call with an official during the first half of the game between the West Virginia Mountaineers and the Maryland Terrapins at Capital One Field at Maryland Stadium in College Park, MD on Sept. 4, 2021.

above Kansas.

The West Virginia defense has allowed the fourth fewest passing yards in the Big 12 but will now have to face the top passing offense in the conference. Texas Tech has passed for 301 yards per game.

During its game against Texas, Texas Tech lost starting quarterback Tyler Shough to a broken collarbone. Henry Colombi will get the start for

the Red Raiders.

Colombi was the team's starting quarterback a season ago when WVU lost to TTU in Lubbock, Texas.

"The quarterback that started against us and really hurt us last year extending plays, he'll start again this week," Brown said. "The number 13 wide receiver (Erik Ezukanma) is a big time player, he is a great player, I put him up there with the

guys from Maryland (Dontay Deemus and Rakim Jarrett), maybe better."

Colombi will rely on wide receiver Ezukanma who is leading the Red Raiders in completions and yards. The junior has averaged over 100 yards receiving per game and he ranks No. 15 in the country and first in the Big 12 in receiving yards per game.

"They do a good job getting him (Ezukanma) the

ball, they target him a bunch," Brown said.

Ezukanma has a team-high 23 receptions this season which is 28% of the Red Raiders' total receptions.

The Texas Tech run defense has been less than stellar this season allowing 125 yards per game. The team also allowed over 300 yards rushing to Texas last weekend. The Mountaineers will have the opportunity to be

productive in the running game and the team should take advantage of that.

In each of its two wins this season, West Virginia has run the ball 30 or more times for over 100 yards. In the two losses, the team has a combined 50 rushing attempts for 95 yards.

The game is set to kickoff at 3:30 p.m. from Milan Puskar Stadium and it will be televised on ESPN2.



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