Football

The Jackets settled and decided to try to convert a fourth-and-one situation, but a false start penalty forced them to punt; the snap was off track, and redshirt sophomore punter Chandler Anderson was forced to kick the ball out of the end zone, resulting in a safety that gave Miami a 33-10 lead at the end of three quarters.

Tech added a score when Nesbitt hit Thomas for a 56-yard touchdown, but it was the only sign of life from the Jackets in the final quarter.

Miami used its running game to run down the clock, as James and Cooper combined for nine carries on a drive that lasted nearly five minutes before ending with a missed field goal.

The Jackets’ final drive saw Nesbitt get tackled twice, throw an interception that was negated by a roughing-the-passer penalty and fumble the ball. He recovered from that sequence and threw an accurate deep pass to Thomas, but the ball bobbled off the receiver’s fingertips and fell incomplete.

Two plays later, Tech turned over the ball on downs, and Miami ran the final seconds off the clock.

The offense struggled against a quick Hurricanes defense that had ten days to prepare for the game and seemed to have made the most of the time. Mitchell contained junior B-back Jonathan Dwyer, holding him to just seven yards on first half with a shoulder injury.

Allen led Tech with 45 yards through the air or seven carries on a drive that lasted near six minutes of time. Miami contained junior B-back Preston Lyons—who had one carry—were the only Jackets to average over three yards per carry.

Nesbitt was able to connect on some deep passes late in the game, but once again the only receiver to make a catch was Thomas, who had six receptions for 133 yards.

“Can we be better on offense? You bet, and we need to be better... We need to block the perimeter better...We have to do a lot of things better,” Johnson said.

More concerning, though, were the struggles of Tech’s defense. After the Hurricanes opened by attacking through the passing game, they established run game.

The scheme did not matter. The Hurricanes opened by attacking through the air or sets could not contain Miami’s balanced offense through the air or on the ground and only forced the Hurricanes to punt once.

Asked whether the switch back to a traditional 4-3 defense scheme from the current 4-2-5 might be in order, Johnson said that the scheme did not matter.

“It won’t matter what we play if we don’t put our eyes where they belong and play defense. That’s part of our problem. We won’t do too much all of that stuff... We could play a 4-12-9 and it won’t matter.” Johnson said.

Injuries also became a concern for Tech. Dwyer sat for the entire second half, but he has practiced since and is expected to play this week. Redshirt junior defensive end Robert Hall suffered a knee injury that kept him out of the lineup against North Carolina, and two defensive backs—

either Michael Becerra or sophomore Cooper Taylor—remain questionable for Saturday’s game with undisclosed injuries.

The Jackets were set to play two games against the University of Windsor and one against the University of Western Ontario from October 3-5. It would have been Tech’s first international trip since 1991.

Basketball

The men’s basketball team cancelled three exhibition games scheduled to take place over fall break against a pair of Canadian college teams.

The series went against an NCAA rule that prevents teams from making international trips within 30 days of the beginning of preseason practices. Tech received a waiver to play the series, but decided in the end not to.

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Rain washes away softball exhibitions

The first four games of Tech softball’s fall series against local opponents were called off due to the recent heavy rains. For this weekend, Tech had scheduled a Saturday doubleheader against Georgia Perimeter College and a Sunday doubleheader against Georgia State to be played at Newborn Field.

Weather permitting, on Sunday the team will play its annual Alumni game between past and present Jackets players. The following weekend Tech will face North Georgia and Kennesaw State to conclude the fall series.
The doubles teams in Division I included Gomez with Ortiga and Smith with O’Brien. Roebuck and Kenny, Miljevic and King, and Muguruza and Potvin competed in Division II doubles play. Tech went undefeated on the first day of gameplay as Potvin, Gomez and O’Brien each won their singles matches in Division I. Roebuck won in both Division II singles and doubles, winning 7-5, 6-4 against Joe Nicolazzi in singles play and teaming with Potvin to defeat William John and Timion Mejs in doubles by the score of 8-1.

After day two of gameplay, Gomez was able to push into the quarterfinals of Division I singles. Muguruza, Miljevic and Roebuck were able to survive through the day and make it into the round of 16 in Division II singles.

In the round of 32 for Division I singles, both Gomez and Potvin were able to advance. In the round of 16, though, Potvin was unable to win again after dropping his match in the third set to Duke’s Henrique Cunha 2-6, 6-2, 1-0 (8). In Division II singles, Ortiga and Magin Ortiga made it to the quarterfinals.

Gomez was declared co-champion. All matches were cancelled due to heavy rains and flooding.

In the quarterfinals, Gomez defeated Vanderbilt’s Ryan Lipman 6-1, 3-6, 1-0 (3) and also eliminated Cunha 6-2, 6-3. He shared the championship with Georgia’s Nate Schnugg. There was no champion in Division II singles due to rain, but Miljevic was able to advance to the semifinals after both quarterfinal competitors who would have faced him withdrew.

The men’s team has this weekend off and will prepare to host the Georgia Tech Fall Invitational from Oct. 5-7.
Volleyball looks to continue success vs. ACC opponents

By Andrew Nelson
Contribution Writer

The Jackets’ volleyball team begins conference play in earnest this weekend, and the team’s 7-4 record through four early-season invitational tournaments has generated confidence and enthusiasm among the coaches and players.

Tech started off with a five-set victory over Georgia in the season opener and has seen success throughout the first four weeks of the season. The team has swept both of its home invitational tournaments, and the Jackets’ 1-4 record so far on the road has come against talented competition.

The Jackets have also had a number of notable individual performances along the way, with two players earning ACC Volleyball Player of the Week awards so far: one for freshman rightside hitter Monique Mead and one for senior middle blocker Brittany Roderick. Mead earned the recognition after posting 37 kills and 30 digs in the season-opening Georgia Tech Regency Suites Invitational, including 20 kills in the win over Georgia, as she powered Tech’s attack in the three-game sweep. Roderick earned the honor after leading Tech to a 3-0 sweep in the Courtyard Classic with an average of 2.54 kills and 0.77 blocks per set for the weekend.

This is Head Coach Tonya Johnson’s first season with the Jackets after 11 years of collegiate volleyball coaching at LSU and Texas. She left the latter after the Longhorns posted a 31-3 record last season and reached the NCAA Final Four.

Johnson’s success has continued early on as the Jackets won their opener and have picked up six more early-season wins.

“I think we’ve been pretty successful so far, and hopefully some day we can be in the top ten,” Johnson said.

Johnson’s initial goals for her first season include executing fundamentals well, an especially important task for the six freshmen on the team. She has changed the training style slightly, running drills and working on techniques for blocking and defense during practice.

“The drills] really break [the game] down for every aspect, and every drill has a purpose,” said senior outside hitter Chrissy DeMichelli.

During the weekend games, Johnson noticed several areas for the team to improve upon, including improving their transition game, keeping the outside hitters in rhythm and playing the ball a little higher. Still, the team was facing top competition in No. 9 Minnesota and a Denver team that went 25-7 last season, and even though the Jackets lost both matches at the Denver Pioneer Classic, Mead was happy to have the chance to play against a team in the national top ten.

As the team heads into the ACC schedule in earnest, returning players are meshing well with the large group of six freshmen, who have replaced five graduated seniors. Johnson says the team has been very receptive to the new-comers, many of whom have been able to contribute significantly already. Mead has earned a start...

Jordan McCullers makes a dig during a game at O’Keefe Gym. McCullers has been the team’s primary libero and leads Tech with 3.73 digs per set.

See Volleyball, page 25
North Carolina is currently one of four ACC teams ranked in the AP Top 25 after starting the season 3-0. Saturday’s game against Tech marks the beginning of the Tar Heels’ ACC schedule. The UNC defense has held teams to an average of 200 yards per game of total offense and forced at least one turnover in each game. They have allowed just three touchdowns on the season and 22 total points in three games. In their game against East Carolina University last week, sophomore defensive end Robert Quinn had a career-high two sacks in a 31-17 victory.

Against Connecticut in week two, UNC’s offense gained just 268 total yards and committed two turnovers, but their defense was able to hold the Huskies to 196 yards of offense. The Tar Heels came back in the fourth quarter and, with the score tied at 10, they took the lead when a rare Huskies holding penalty in the end zone resulted in a safety. UNC held on to win 12-10.

While the offense is averaging nearly 30 points a game, they have still struggled to hold on to the ball. The Tar Heels defense was able to force seven turnovers, but the offense has committed the same number of turnovers. The offense has been led by junior quarterback and co-captain T.J. Yates, who has thrown for 726 yards and 7 touchdowns so far this year. Their production has become better as the season has gone on, with Yates increasing his passer rating by more than 30 points from his first outing against The Citadel, when he was 9-for-20 for 114 yards. Draughn rebounded from a rough game against UConn to post 84 yards on the ground in the win over East Carolina.

Tech’s run offense, No. 16 in the nation with nearly 250 yards on the ground per game, faces the Tar Heels’ run defense, No. 7 in the nation after holding their first three opponents to an average of 52.3 yards per game. The UNC offensive line will look to better protect Yates with Tech redshirt junior defensive lineman Robert Hall being out for the game.

After the first three games of the season the jackets are struggling on both sides of the ball. With a defense that is currently ranked in the bottom third in FBS, giving up an average of 377 yards per game, and an offense that has struggled to open up opportunities through the air, the jackets are looking to rebound in their third home game of the season against North Carolina.

The Jackets will need a renewed spark on offense when they take on the No. 6 defense in the nation. Tech has lacked last year’s luster, breaking a hand of big runs but generally not serving as the weapon it was in 2008. Junior B-back Jonathan Dwyer, only averaging 56 yards per game, which still has him in the top hundred rushers in the nation but well below last year’s average. Junior quarterback Josh Nesbitt leads the team in rushing with 71 yards per game, but currently has thrown just one more touchdown this season than junior place-kicker Scott Blair, with two and one respectively for the season.

Junior defensive end Derek Morgan has been a bright spot for the defense. Morgan is averaging one and two-thirds sacks per game this season and has six and a half tackles for loss on the season, setting back the opposing offenses 31 yards. The defense as a whole has struggled over the past two games, though, particularly in pass defense. Tech will look to improve last year’s loss to the Tar Heels, a 28-7 decision on the road in which the Jackets had a number of opportunities but were unable to capitalize. Dwyer had 157 rushing yards in last year’s contest, including a 85-yard touchdown run, but with the junior nursing a shoulder injury, Tech will need to rely on outside runs with the A-backs more often. Defensively, the Jackets will look to shut down UNC running backs Shaun Draughn and Ryan Houston, who combined for 164 yards and two touchdowns in last year’s meeting.

PREDICTION: Tech 21, UNC 17
Jackets stumble in ‘09 road opener

Football falls in second ACC game, 33-17 at Miami

By Nishant Prasadh
Sports Editor

A late comeback attempt was not enough to save Tech’s football team last week, as then-No. 20 Miami built a large early lead and went on to defeat the Jackets 33-17 in Coral Gables, Fla. Tech dropped to 2-1 overall (1-1 in ACC play) after the loss and dropped out of the AP Top 25 poll for the first time since late last season.

“I am disappointed in the way we played Thursday night and the way we coached. It was a group effort... They did to us what we did to them a year ago. We need to get better,” said Head Coach Paul Johnson in his weekly press conference on Tuesday.

The Jackets put up 472 rushing yards in their home finale against Miami last season, but this time the Hurricanes rebounded and shut down the option attack. Tech managed just 189 rushing yards, and no player reached 50 yards individually.

Meanwhile, Tech’s defense allowed 545 total yards as the fatigue from playing three games in 12 days seemed to set in for the players. Miami running back Javarris James and Graig Cooper combined to 163 rushing yards and two touchdowns. Miami received the opening kickoff of the second half and drove 60 yards on six plays for a touchdown.

The Hurricanes responded by driving downfield for a Matt Bosher 34-yard field goal. Tech’s offense was unable to do much on its final two possessions of the first half, and the score remained 17-3 at halftime.

Miami received the opening kickoff of the second half and drove 60 yards on six plays for a touchdown.

Hurricane running back Javarris James had 23 yards on three carries, and his three-yard touchdown run put Miami ahead 24-3. Tech responded with a 39-yard field goal by Nesbitt to cut the lead to 24-10. Tech’s defense had no answer for Harris and the Miami offense. The Hurricanes continued to run frequently with James and Craig Cooper, and Harris went three-for-three on the drive and hit tight end Jimmy Graham for his third touchdown pass of the game.

Both the women’s and men’s tennis teams opened their fall seasons last weekend in tournaments where both teams saw immediate success. The women’s team hosted Florida, Georgia and Princeton in the three-day Georgia Tech Fall Invitational. The men’s team traveled to Athens, Ga., where 10 players and five doubles pairs competed in the 42nd annual Southern Intercollegiate Championships.

The three teams that came to Atlanta to face Tech proved to be tough competition for the Jackets based on the success of each of them saw last season. Princeton was the Ivy League champion last season. Miami reached the Elite Eight at the NCAA Tournament and finished ranked No. 7. Georgia finished as the No. 5 team nationally and reached the Final Four led by Chelsie Gullickson, who was a semifinalist in the 2009 NCAA Singles Tournament.

Tech opened up the first day of competition on Sept. 18, and the women won six of their seven singles matches. Sophomore All-American Irina Falconi played at the top singles position and won over the Tigers’ Hilary Bartlett, 6-0, 6-1. Senior Amanda McDowell earned singles win No. 110 of her career when she downed Princeton’s Melissa Saisorns 6-1, 6-1. Sophomore Hilary Davis fell behind against Princeton’s Taylor Marable but came back to win a close one 6-2, 6-3, 7-6 (7-3).

Other victories on the day for Tech came from junior Sasha Krupina, sophomore Lynn Blau and freshman Elizabeth Kolloren, who won in straight sets in her debut with the Jackets. Kolloren and Krupina also picked up an 8-4 doubles victory later in the day.

Day two of the Invitational saw a battle between top-ten players as Falconi, ranked No. 8 in the nation, faced No. 6 Laura Vallverdu of Miami. Falconi completed a 7-6, 6-4 straight-set victory against last year’s NCAA Singles Tour.

Tennis teams open season with wins

By Steven Cappetta
Assistant Sports Editor

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