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Volleyball from page 32

very proud of our kids...for just hanging in there and maintain-

ing," Johnson said.

Mead was the star of the game, posting a double-double in her first collegiate match with 20 kills and 10 digs. She also had seven as-
sists, a pair of service aces and a .391 hit percentage on the day.

"To just be on fire like that, kudos to her, because it's a lot of pres-
sure being a freshman and playing in [her] first match," Johnson said.

DeMichelis and Hunter notched 13 kills and one ace each, and DeMichelis also had three solo blocks. Stawicka had nine kills, four block assists and a hit percentage of .602.

Mary Ashley Tippins sets the ball in preparation for a spike by Annie Czar-
necki during Saturday's game against Mercer at O'Keefe Gymnasium.

With Georgia out of the way, the Jackets cruised through both of their Saturday games. Tech took down Austin Peay 3-0 and held the Governors below 20 points in all three sets, winning 25-19, 25-18, 25-17.

Austin Peay stayed close in the first two sets, but both times Tech was able to pull away late; at one point, the Jackets had a run of nine straight points in the sec-
ond set. Once again, Mead was the star on offense with a team-
high 11 kills and 10 digs, and as a team the Jackets recorded four solo blocks and 14 assists while holding the Governors to a .099 hit percentage.

The Jackets later faced Mer-
cer in Saturday night's tourna-
ment finale and were once again able to complete a sweep, tak-
ing down the Bears in three sets 25-22, 25-16, 25-17 to win the Regionals Invitational. The Jackets put together several long runs throughout the contest and only allowed the Bears to take the lead once during the match. The Jackets held Mercer to a .105 hit percentage.

Mead was the clear star of Tech's opening weekend. The left-
handed freshman led the team throughout the weekend. Along
with Mead, defensive spe-
cialist Hannah Tucci played in all three matches and finished the weekend with 15 digs. Three other rook-
ies—outside hitter Susan Carlson, middle blocker Annie Czarnecki, and libero Nicky Meye-
er—took the court on Saturday for their first collegiate experience.

"We've got to get better on the ball control side. I think we do some things really well on the offensive side— we’re really in rhythm. We've just got to get back to the basics of passing and play-
ning defense, and not have [any] mental lapses," Johnson said.

The volleyball team travels to Tennessee this weekend for Mid-
dle Tennessee State University's Blue Raider Bash. Tech will face
off against host Middle Tennessee tonight and take on Ohio Univer-
sity and the University of North-
ern Illinois tomorrow in their first road action of the season.
The Gamecocks enter the upcoming season after an 8-3 campaign in which they went 6-2 in conference play and improved from a mediocre 2007 season. Much of the credit for the team’s success last year is credited to senior quarterback Ryan Perrilloux, who won a national championship with LSU before transferring to Jacksonville State before the 2008 season. Last season Perrilloux threw for 2,298 yards and 19 touchdowns while completing 62.8 percent of his passes; he also rushed for 368 yards and seven touchdowns. However, the Gamecocks’ star will not play against the Jackets this Saturday because JSU Head Coach Jack Crowe suspended him for a violation of team rules. Instead, sophomore Marques Ivory will get the nod to start under center for the Gamecocks in the opener against Tech. Ivory, who stands at 6-foot-1 and 235 pounds, went 30-0 as a starter and won two state titles at Northside High School in Warner Robins, Ga., but saw the field only sparingly as a freshman in 2008. His primary target in the passing game will be someone familiar to Tech fans and players—Greg Smith, who spent his first three years of eligibility with the Jackets and was a reserve A-back last season.

JSU enters the 2009 season ranked No. 19 in the FCS Preseason coaches’ poll and is the favorite to win the Ohio Valley Conference this season after finishing last season ranked No. 22 among FCS teams.

Last year Tech defeated JSU 41-14 in the teams’ Thursday night opener. Perrilloux completed 22 of 37 passes and had two touchdowns, but he only passed for 136 yards and threw two interceptions. Leading receiver Maurice Dupree caught nine passes for 39 yards. The Gamecocks were forced to punt six times, and Tech’s talent on offense proved too much for the JSU defense as the Gamecocks allowed 482 total yards.

The Jackets enter the 2009 season as the preseason No. 15 team in the nation after a 9-4 season that included a share of the ACC Coastal Division title. 19 starters return from the 2008 squad, including every starter on offense, but the Jackets must replace three defensive linemen who were selected in the NFL Draft.

Jacksonville State was the first of two Division I-AA teams that the Jackets faced last season. The Jackets rarely used the triple option against the Gamecocks’ defense, choosing instead to hold back until ACC games began, but they were still able to cruise to a 41-14 opening night victory. B-back Jonathan Dwyer averaged more than ten yards per carry, finishing the game with 112 yards rushing on 11 carries and scored two touchdowns in his first collegiate start. Quarterback Josh Nesbitt completed five of 12 passes for 87 yards and was also productive on the ground, rushing for 60 yards and two scores; he sat out the second half as then-true freshman Jaybo Shaw took over the offense. As was the case all year, the majority of Tech’s offense came from the ground game, including all six touchdowns.

The offense should have little trouble against the Gamecocks’ defense, and with Ryan Perrilloux forced to sit out the opening game, Tech’s defense will get to face an offense run by a very inexperienced quarterback. The Jackets will look to build a big first-half lead and allow their reserves to get some playing time late in the game.

**JACKSONVILLE STATE - SEPT. 5 (1:00 PM)**

**SPREAD: Tech (-30.5)**

**PREDICTION: Tech 41, JSU 10**

By Richard Davis, Contributing Writer

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Head Coach Dabo Swinney looks to improve on a disappointing 2008 season as he enters his first full season as Clemson’s head coach. Swinney took over the job midway through last season and faced the Jackets in his first game, but Tech pulled out a 21-17 victory in Death Valley. The Thursday game will be Clemson’s second of the season, four days after their opener against Middle Tennessee State.

During the offseason, Swinney oversaw a battle for the starting quarterback job after the departure of senior Cullen Harper. Swinney decided on talented redshirt freshman Kyle Parker over sophomore Willy Korn, which came as somewhat of a surprise because Korn got plenty of playing time last season as Harper’s main backup.

While Parker’s inexperience may be a concern, he will have the luxury of handing the ball off to running back C.J. Spiller and throwing to receiver Jacoby Ford. The two speedsters return for their senior seasons after combining for over 2,500 yards of total offense a year ago. Spiller had to split carries with James Davis last year but still managed to rack up 668 yards rushing and seven touchdowns, and this season he will be the top option in the Tiger backfield. Ford, who averaged almost thirteen yards per catch and caught four touchdowns, takes over as Clemson’s top receiver this season after playing behind the most prolific receiver in ACC history in Aaron Kelly.

Clemson may be even more dangerous on the other side of the ball, boasting plenty of talent on the defensive line and in the secondary. Ends Ricky Sapp and Da’Quan Bowers should form a formidable pass rushing tandem this season; Sapp enters his senior season after leading the team in sacks last year, and Bowers—the top-ranked defensive end prospect in the nation out of high school—will be looking to rebound from a disappointing freshman season.

Tech earned a big win last season against the Tigers when they traveled to Death Valley and took down the Tigers 21-17. Then-sophomore free safety Dominique Reese returned an interception for a touchdown, and Josh Nesbitt connected with Demaryius Thomas for a 24-yard touchdown in the final quarter to put the Jackets ahead by the final margin.

This year, the Jackets will host the Tigers in the first ACC game for both teams just five days after the Jackets’ opener against Jacksonville State. The game will serve as Tech’s “white-out” game for the 2009 season, a new tradition that began with last season’s home finale against Miami. Head Coach Paul Johnson has been quoted that the team will pass a little bit more than last year, and if so, the Tigers’ formidable pass rush will serve as a key early test for Tech’s passing game. Nesbitt, now a senior, can run away from trouble, but he will still need the offensive line to protect him well to be able to make his reads in the passing game. As the line was heavily focused on run blocking last season, adapting to pass protection could be difficult.

On the defensive end, the added speed in the Jackets’ new 4-2-5 scheme should aid them against an offense that will be centered around quick running back C.J. Spiller. Tech’s priority will likely be to contain Spiller and force the Tigers to win through the air, where they will have to rely on redshirt freshman Kyle Parker. The Jackets’ secondary was key to last year’s victory, and the unit will have to be equally good in this year’s battle for the Jackets to earn their first conference victory.
**Discover the world of GTRI:**

Wednesday, September 16

Student Center Ballroom

11:00 am to 3:00 pm
Players to Watch: Defense

After three seasons as part of the Tech football program, Hall heads into the 2009 season as the favorite to start at the defensive end position opposite junior Derrick Morgan. Although his playing time was limited in 2007 due to injury, Hall played in every game last season in a reserve role, posting 13 tackles and 1.5 tackles for loss on the year. He became a key part of Tech’s defensive line rotation as the year went on.

Hall faces the tough task of replacing departed pass rusher Michael Johnson, a first-team All-ACC end and the team’s sack leader with nine. Still, his speed and game experience should help him become a force along Tech’s defensive line.

With the departure of several key defensive players this past season, particularly among the front four, the Jackets will look to utilize Barnes at defensive tackle to add needed depth and size to the unit. At 6-foot-7 and 341 pounds, Barnes is big enough to play nose tackle in a 3-4 scheme, and his combination of size and agility will give the line a strong presence in the middle as a run stopper.

The year he spent as a redshirt allowed him to learn Tech’s defensive system and adapt to the college game. While Barnes will not be a starter to open the year, he should see playing time early and often in the middle of the Jackets’ defensive front.

Currently one of three cornerbacks competing for two starting spots along with junior Mario Butler and sophomore Rashad Reid, Tarrant returned to the Jackets after being suspended for the 2008 season. With a strong performance in training camp, he has thrust himself into contention for a key role in the defense despite the lengthy absence. At six feet and 202 pounds, he has good size for the position to go with good speed and athleticism.

Even if Tarrant does not win a starting corner job, he is one of the leading candidates to take over kick and punt return duties for the Jackets this season, both areas in which the team struggled in 2008.

The Jackets’ switch to a 4-2-5 defensive scheme was partly due to the emergence of Taylor, who is poised to become a leader in the defensive backfield.

The Atlanta native made a name for himself as a freshman last year when he forced a fumble in the end zone to secure Tech’s victory over Florida State. He has emerged as a strong tackler for the Jackets after registering 69 tackles last season, good for second on the team.

This season, Taylor will shift to the “wolf” position, a new hybrid safety-linebacker role created specifically for Taylor to allow the sophomore to utilize his combination of size and athleticism.
Women’s basketball schedule for 09-10 season released

By Steven Cappetta  
Assistant Sports Editor

This season’s schedule for women’s basketball was announced this past Friday. This year, the Jackets will take on eight different teams that made it to the postsea-son last spring in addition to the tough ACC schedule it battles through each year. Tech will also see its first action in the Preseason Women’s National Invitational Tournament which will take place Nov. 13-15.

The Jackets will open up in the first round against Winthrop in the Preseason WNIT. Tech will play at least three games in the tournament before traveling to Brooklyn N.Y. for the Long Island University Thanksgiving Tournament, which will be held on Nov. 27 and 28. In the LIU Thanksgiving Tournament, Tech will face Seton Hall in the first round.

Some of the major non-confer-ence matchups will include Penn State, Georgia, Oregon and Arizona. On Dec. 2 the Jackets will travel to Penn State to compete in the third annual Big Ten/ACC Challenge. This year’s game against Georgia, scheduled for Dec. 6 in Athens will not be a cakewalk against Georgia and Head Coach Andy Landers.

The experienced Landers is 725-239 in his 30 seasons coach-ing the Bulldogs and this year his team returns four starters and two additional letter winners from last year’s squad that finished 18-14 and lost in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

In last year’s meeting between Tech and Georgia, the Jackets came out on top 57-42 after a key 11-2 run early in the second half sparked the team. The Jackets are now 3-28 in the all-time series against the Bulldogs, but all three of Tech’s wins have come in the last seven years.

Tech will also host the two PAC-10 teams of Oregon and Arizona on December 16 and 20 respectively. At the end of De-cember the girls will participate in the Florida International Holiday Tournament in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. where they will meet Hamp-ton in the first round. This tour-nament will take place on Dec. 28 and 29.

ACC play will not open until Jan. 6, when the Jackets will travel to Chapel Hill to face North Carolina. Last season the Jackets were able to upset the Tar Heels 66-62 for the Jackets first-ever victory over a team ranked in the top three in the nation. In the sec-ond meeting in Chapel Hill, Tech was not as successful, falling 73-