Rivalry.
A deceptively simple term, meaning the act of competing, striving to equal or excel. This simple definition, however, leaves out much of the special meaning that rivalry imparts to college sport.

Competition, certainly. But competition with one special opponent. For Georgia Tech, that one has always been Georgia. The intrastate competition has gone on for ninety-five years and shows no sign of abating. And nowhere is the competition more evident than on the football field. No matter what the respective seasons between the Yellow Jackets and the Bulldogs, it’s always the last game that defines the season. Win, and it’s ecstasy. Lose, and the humiliation is almost insufferable.

There are other rivalries, almost as strong. Auburn is Tech’s oldest rival, having played the Jackets back in 1892. They are also the closest, since the series stands equal at 39 wins for both teams, with four ties and a differential of merely twelve points after eighty-eight years. For the basketball team, it used to be difficult to decide whether Georgia or Kentucky was the bigger rival. There was no doubt in 1958 — Tech beat Kentucky and President Harrison declared a school holiday.

Rivalry requires a sense of history. From the mists of alumni memories emerge the storied legends of days gone by that give a rivalry meaning. How else would we understand the Georgia rivalry, if no one knew that it started from poor sportsmanship on the part of an ugly Athens crowd after the upstart Jackets defeated the Bulldogs back in 1893?

Then, of course, there’s tradition. A rivalry must be ongoing, from as long as anyone can remember and stretching ahead as far as schedulemakers work. Rivalry must be allowed to develop and mature through many generations. Otherwise, it’s merely another opponent and the special edge is lost.

Rivalry has always been important in Georgia Tech’s sports history, and it is a continuing process even today. Ever since an enterprising Tech student walloped Ara Parseghian with a fish back in 1974, the Tech-Notre Dame rivalry has been heating up. The basketball team, now competing in the nation’s premier basketball conference, has seven teams with which rivalries are tailor-made. Knowing Tech students, it is inevitable that they will and inconceivable that they will not.

But in the end, Tech sports are always pointing northeast to Georgia. After all, it’s impossible to forget just who is important, when your fight song has a constant reminder:

“Oh, if I had a daughter, sir,
I’d dress her in White and Gold,
And put her on the campus,
to cheer the brave and bold.
But if I had a son, sir,
I’ll tell you what he’d do,
He would yell TO HELL WITH GEORGIA!”
Like his daddy used to do.”
And that’s what it’s all about.

ABOVE: Just wait ‘til next year! TOP RIGHT: Georgia’s Carrie Norris tries to batter his way past Ivey Stokes and Henry Johnson. BOTTOM CENTER: Mike Kelley scrambles to avoid Auburn’s Mike Hardy. BOTTOM RIGHT: Tech’s John Mann crashes the boards against Duke’s All-American Mike Gminski and forward Allen Williams. Close-fought matches surprised Tech’s ACC rivals.
"I would say that the image of football at Georgia Tech is going to improve, and I believe that. I believe that given any help facultywise, that we can sell Georgia Tech. And if we don't get the facilities, then we're still going to lose some key guys that we might get.

"All we need to do is win some, get on TV, go to a bowl game — win. That's all we need.

"But remember one thing about life: it ain't where you start, it's where you end up."

— Pepper Rodgers in the 1974 BLUEPRINT

With those words, Franklin "Pepper" Rodgers came home to his alma mater to rekindle the winning traditions of Georgia Tech football. As a coach and a player, Rodgers had a successful career, which led many to believe he was just the man to revive the "Glory Days," when Bobby Dodd ruled the Flats.

Trouble is, it never worked out that way. In six years, Pepper only managed a 34-31-2 record, hardly what the alumni considered powerhouse football. Their displeasure manifested itself in complaints about Pepper's use of the Wishbone offense, his reluctance to employ the forward pass and his lifestyle, which didn't meet the alumni expectations of a "Tech man." Pepper tried to mollify his critics by using an I-formation and changing his taste in clothes, but losing in the Peach Bowl and a 4-6-1 1979 season finally galvanized the opposition on the Athletic Board that led to his ouster.

Athletic Director Doug Weaver didn't wait long after hiring Pepper's successor to announce his resignation in favor of the directorship at Michigan State University, his alma mater. Though the lure of old times was unquestionably great, it may also be that Weaver's loyalty to his old friend Rodgers didn't advance his standing with the athletic board he served.

Weaver left behind an athletic program showing a profit for the first time in years, with a strong conference membership, and a football coach who may be ideal for uniting Tech's factious and fractious alumni.

William Alexander Curry, Georgia Tech's new head football coach, is the seventh man to hold the position and the fourth alumnus to lead the Yellow Jackets. Curry has been connected with football since his days as a member of Bobby Dodd's program, as he relates:

"I played here from 1960 through the 1964 season. Football was a struggle for me here. I was not a starter until I was an academic senior, so it took an awful lot of repetition for me to fit into the program. My fondest memory is receiving a scholarship from Coach Dodd, when a number of his assistants had rejected me — they were wise, and I'm sure he questioned his own judgement many times while I was here. But that's a great memory, and then we did have a good team — we beat Alabama 7-6 over here in 1962 when they were ranked number one in the nation. The National Football League career that resulted from all that work here was a total shock to everybody. I played for four different teams — two years with the Green Bay Packers, six years with the Baltimore Colts, a year with Houston and a year with the Los Angeles Rams. The coaches I had a chance to work with — Vince Lombardi, Don Shula and Chuck Knox — are outstanding."

Coach Curry then went on to talk about the present Tech team and the recruiting areas he plans to stress.

"I'm very happy that we have some quality players here who are also quality people. Of course, the only indications I have so far are two-fold — little things like promptness and attentiveness in meetings and then their work habits in our off-season program, which is quite rigorous. They have been excellent in every respect. We've got some good folks to work with here — we want to have more, and we're working at that in our recruiting.

"We're not looking for average high school players — we're looking for exceptional players who are exceptional people who are exceptional students, which reduces immediately and substantially the list of people we can talk to. The money is there for a healthy recruiting budget that will allow us to widen our geographic universe from which to select quality players — which means that there is a pool out there, it's just not as easy to get to as it is for schools with lower academic requirements. It's going to require more work on our part, a more careful selection process and a more diligent and articulate assistant coach. We want local people — we're going to work harder than anybody on the people in-state and in surrounding areas.

"The key thing that we're going to emphasize is that a student comes to Georgia Tech not just to play winning football — he's coming here to get the best possible education and at the same time play a top-flight schedule. Not quite as important is the opportunity to play on a winner, and the opportunity to help build a winner.

"First thing you do is work very quickly and build a quality facility — it's going to happen fast. When you're 17-18 years old it's hard to convince yourself that people are more important than buildings. What we do in the interim is convince them that the reason that they're coming is not to go to a building but to an institution comprised of people. Our ability to communicate and work effectively with players, both from a recruiting standpoint and then after they get here, is a tremendous selling tool.

"As long as the academic community
and the faculty are satisfied that we are committed to bringing in quality students — people who can at least do the work, who will be disciplined and make a legitimate effort, then we will have no problem with the faculty. I don’t believe the university has any obligation to make things easier for us. I think we have the obligation to measure up.’

By 1983, Tech will be playing a full ACC schedule and will become eligible for the championship. That’s also about the same time Coach Curry’s contract runs out. Will we be competitive by then? Coach Curry answered:

“We certainly should be competitive in the ACC in three years. We should be able to line up and never embarrass ourselves. Our objective is to win every single game — there is no such thing as a ‘moral victory’ to me. I will never be upset with my players as long as we play with intensity and play to our maximum potential.”

As ked why he took the job, Curry said,

“I love Georgia Tech. I can say that with utter sincerity. I appreciate the way I was handled in the football program — in spite of the fact that I was not a player for a number of years, I was not made to feel that I was less a part than the superstars. Professionally, most people want to be a head coach, and to be a head coach at a great university is the ultimate in our business. I have been in Super Bowls, I have coached in the NFL — right now, I’m absolutely happy where I’m sitting.

“We have a difficult task, but not impossible. I’m here because I believe it can be done, but only with extremely hard work, and only with the complete backing of our alumni, our faculty, our administration and our students. And we’re asking for that.”

TOP LEFT: Bill Curry, Tech’s new head football coach, meets the Atlanta press at the news conference announcing his hiring. TOP RIGHT: Athletic Director Doug Weaver introduces Coach Curry. Twelve days later, he announced his own resignation to go to Michigan State University. BOTTOM RIGHT: Former head coach Pepper Rodgers follows his team onto the field at the Navy game; most of his players were shocked when they learned of Pepper’s abrupt dismissal.
Having achieved full membership in the Atlantic Coast Conference, Georgia Tech has opened a new chapter in her sports history. Overall, Yellow Jacket teams have performed about as predicted, but Tech athletes have also earned the respect of their opponents for their intense competitive spirit and a tenacious, scrappy style of play.

The team most affected by Tech's new conference affiliation is the men's basketball, who find themselves playing top-caliber teams. Coach Dwane Morrison reflects on his initial ACC season:

"It's a great deal of fun, and it's intimidating. The other school seems to be masters of controlling the game and making it look like you're controlling it."

"I think that it's super that Georgia Tech is in the conference and I think that the ACC is a fine one for the overall athletic program. I think that Georgia Tech is as compatible with the ACC academically as any other conference. When they asked me do I think it would be a good idea to get into the ACC, I said, 'Selfishly, no — we're established in the Metro, we've proven we can win.' For Georgia Tech down the road, there's no doubt in my mind that this is where Georgia Tech should be. It's the most prestigious conference in the country."

Though preseason pundits predicted that Georgia Tech wouldn't win a conference game, the Jackets proved them wrong by beating the Virginia Cavaliers. The Jackets were close in two other games as well, losing to both North Carolina and Wake Forest by only one point on their respective home courts. By Coach Morrison's analysis:

"Maryland played the best as a team. Virginia looked like they were awesome and talented. We played out of fear — scared to death."

"But I think what our kids have learned in the process of Georgia Tech in basketball is that you take your talents and use them as properly as you can, work on your weaknesses and enjoy the process. The talk of the conference is Steppe and Horton. I've received hundreds of letters and phone calls from people, stating how much they've enjoyed watching Georgia Tech kids play. What they're saying is if Georgia Tech is not the best team in the country, they're amongst 'em — the best team for their talent. That's what it's all about."

On the subject of sports philosophy, Coach Morrison speaks for all Tech coaches when he says,

"I think that sports in general are a little bit out of line. We've gone a little bit too far in establishing that everybody's got to win — there's always a loser. I think it's carried all the way back to the high schools, and the youngsters have the impression that fame and fortune is what they're after. There's a short cut if they can be a superstar, so they go to school 'X' — that's where most of them come out of, so the assumption follows, 'If I go there, I've got a good chance to be a pro.' That's not true, unless you have the God-given talent when you go there.

"I've been around — if you have a winning athletic program, the students are happy, the faculty is happy, they're more a unit, they're proud of each other. Georgia Tech has in the past and will in the future work as hard as we can, within reason, and if there's no way we have enough here to attract enough great athletes, then we'll never be a winner. If we attract the great students because we can say there's none in the Southeast that can compare to Tech educationally, can we attract the great athletes in the same fashion? We're going to find out."
CONFERENCE SPORTS

Scrappy Jackets Earn ACC Respect
Alabama Overwhelms Tough Engineer Defense
Fifteen years ago, Coach Bobby Dodd dropped Alabama from Tech's schedule because he didn't enjoy losing regularly. Not much changed in the intervening years, since the Crimson Tide handed Tech its ninth straight opening loss by drubbing the Jackets 30-6. Alabama's first score came when Mike Kelley's first pass of the season was intercepted and carried for a touchdown. After that, it was a matter of a powerful Tide wishbone and legions of fresh players which finally wore down a Tech defense that fought 'Bama to a standstill in the early going. Tech did score when Kelley threw to Leon Chadwick in the end zone, one accomplishment Alabama denied to five other opponents.

Down in Gator Country, 60,000 partisan University of Florida fanatics made for a very unfriendly atmosphere. Mike Kelley quickly found himself forced into passing situations as Tech's running game wasn't showing much improvement over its lackluster performance against Alabama. That proved helpful to Florida as they took advantage of an interception to move into an early lead, one that lasted until the second half. A blocked punt by Lance Skelton got Tech back into the game; freshman Ronny Cone burst into the end zone, tying the game. Florida mounted one final drive deep into Tech territory, but Lawrence Lowe preserved the 7-7 tie when he batted down the last-ditch Gator field goal.

TOP LEFT: Crimson Tide fullback Steve Whitman leaps for the touchdown while Tech linebacker Henry Johnson moves to knock him back. TOP CENTER: Al Richardson and Henry Johnson combine to tackle backup 'Bama quarterback Don Jacobs. ABOVE: Another football season begins as the Ramblin' 'Reck leads the team on the field. BOTTOM LEFT: Tech's Mike Kelley spent the day under a fierce 'Bama pass rush. Here Scott Homan puts on the pressure. CENTER LEFT: Gator quarterback Tim Groves is tripped up by Al Richardson, but not before he gained thirteen yards and a first down. LEFT: Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant wears the most famous hat in America onto Grant Field once more.
William and Mary should have given the Jackets an opportunity to work on their play execution. Instead, the Indians made it a contest by intercepting a Mike Kelley pass, and although Kelley made the tackle, it only delayed the inevitable touchdown. Since Tech had only managed two field goals during the first half, they found themselves behind again. The second half saw a dramatic reversal in 'Reck fortunes. Kelley threw for two touchdowns, while Rick Olive contributed a score when he recovered a fumble in the end zone. Ronny Cone scored for Tech’s final tally, while Robert Newman stifled the Indians’ final drive with an end zone interception. It added up to Tech’s first win — 33-7.

The Wrecking Crew, alias Georgia Tech’s defense, put on a masterful performance against the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame. Unfortunately, it went for naught as Irish luck combined with Tech mistakes to give the Irish a bitterly-fought 21-13 victory. The Irish picked off one Kelley pass to set up their first touchdown, while Ronny Cone’s fumble led to a second. Kelley atoned for his mistake by turning a fumbled snap into an 80 yard touchdown bomb, while Johnny Smith brought the Jackets within one with two field goals. The frustrated Tech defense then watched as a bobbled Kelley-to-Chadwick pass was ruled a fumbled lateral, allowing Notre Dame another easy score. Tech’s errors were reflected in the fact Notre Dame only traveled a total of 58 yards for their three scoring drives. The score showed who won the game, but it failed to show a defensive squad that truly played its heart out.
SEC Rivals Frustrate Sputtering Jackets
Following the grueling Notre Dame game, the Jackets went up to Knoxville, Tennessee both emotionally and physically drained. That was evident all day, despite stellar performances by linebackers Henry Johnson and Lance Skelton. Tennessee's offense, in stark contrast to the sputtering 'Reck, was crisply executed behind the devastatingly effective play of quarterback Jimmy Streater. Tech mounted one sustained 72 yard drive near the end of the game, only to see Johnny Smith go wide and short with the field goal. Thus, the Volunteers dealt Tech a 31-0 defeat — the first shutout Tech had suffered since opening day 1977.

An injury-riddled Tech team found itself facing a resurgent Auburn team. Led by the SEC's best backfield tandem, James Brooks and Joe Cribbs, the Tigers were looking to revenge three straight losses to Tech. Leon Chadwick found himself at tailback as Coach Rodgers searched for some means to revitalize Tech's rushing game, but it didn't help much. Tech fans did find a glimmer of hope when the Jackets scored two quick touchdowns to pull within seven points, but the Turkey Buzzards quashed the newfound momentum as they cruised to a 38-14 win.

TOP LEFT: Marlon Heggs goes into the end zone with Tech's second score. Auburn safeties James McKinney (center) and Clifford Toney (left) watch in vain. TOP CENTER: Tech linebacker Mackel Harris moves in on Auburn quarterback Charlie Trotman. ABOVE LEFT: Auburn runningback Joe Cribbs has the ball jarred loose as he is hit by teammate James Brooks. Tech's Ivey Stokes (51) leads the pursuit. FAR LOWER LEFT: Leon Chadwick, tailback for a day, loses his shirt but not Tech's first score. The Jackets were down 21-0 at the time. LEFT: Ben Utt grimaces on the Tech bench as Tennessee rips off another long gain. Leon Chadwick doesn't even look up as the Volunteer fans roar.
Revamped Jackets Bounce Back Against Blue Devils
The season's nadir had to be the Tulane game. Mike Kelley fumbled the first two snaps of the game, and things weren't much brighter after that. An interception set up one Tulane field goal, and the Green Wave got another after a short drive. Tulane went up 12-0 as quarterback Roch Hontas directed a 77 yard touchdown drive. Lynwood Volley finally put the Jackets near the goal line with a recovered fumble, and Rodney Lee scored out of Pepper's old wishbone offense. Any ideas the Jackets had about getting closer were frustrated by a classic ball-control drive, leaving the 'Reck at the short end of a 12-7 score.

The Jackets had a difficult time with Duke's Blue Devils, although they ultimately prevailed 24-14. Each team made a determined effort to give the ball away in the early going, with Tech committing three turnovers and Duke losing one fumble. After that, Kelley settled down and led the Jackets to three touchdowns. Duke's Stanley Driskell did throw one 50 yard touchdown pass to try and keep it close, but the Devils made too many mistakes and never overcame the Tech lead.

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TOP LEFT: Rodney Lee goes up the middle against Duke. TOP CENTER: Marlon Heggs pulls down a Mike Kelley pass against the Blue Devils. TOP RIGHT: Henry Johnson and Kevin Schmidt get there a bit late to block Frank Wills' punt. BOTTOM LEFT: Bo Thomas leads Ronny Cone around end, but Duke's Craig Hoskins stops the play. BOTTOM CENTER: Leon Chadwick, still playing tailback, is off and running. LEFT: Gary Lanier takes control of the wishbone as Tech closes in on Tulane's goal line. Coach Rodgers used his favorite offense in similar situations all year.
Cone Ignites Offense for Homecoming Victory

Tech hosted Air Force for the Homecoming contest. Ronny Cone exploded out of the backfield for 156 yards, one touchdown and his third citation as ACC Rookie of the Week. The sudden reemergence of the running game allowed Mike Kelley and his backup, Ted Peeples, more latitude as they led Tech to two more TDs. For the Falcons, their only threat came after a blocked punt, but the Wrecking Crew prevented the score. Falcon quarterback Dave Ziebart was notable for his ability to move the ball down the field but not across the goal line. The alumni went home happy with Tech’s 21-0 shutout.

TOP LEFT: Henry Johnson brings down Falcon runningback Mike Fortson. TOP RIGHT: Leon Chadwick almost brings in this Kelley pass, but Charles Shugg tips it away. BOTTOM LEFT: David Allen had five sacks of Air Force quarterback Dave Ziebart. BOTTOM CENTER: The majestic symbol of the Air Force Academy. BOTTOM RIGHT: Ronny Cone goes off left end on his way to Tech’s first touchdown. Cone had his best day of the season in the Homecoming game.
Unquestionably, Tech's finest effort this season came at the expense of Navy's Midshipmen. Mike Kelley broke four school records, including the mark for total offense in a game as he rolled up 376 yards. Wide receiver Kris Kentera set a school record by hauling in six Kelley aerials for 203 yards, scoring three touchdowns in the bargain. The injury-riddled Middies were definitely off their early season form, and the Jacket defense broke down only twice, which explained the 24-14 final score.

TOP RIGHT: Bo Thomas powers his way up the middle for a short gain. FAR RIGHT: Kris Kentera hauls in one of three touchdown passes en route to his record-breaking 203 yards receiving. CENTER ABOVE: Defensive swarm shuts down Middie fullback Kevin Tolbert. CENTER RIGHT: Quarterback Mike Kelley now holds school records for most passes attempted, most passes completed, most yards gained passing in a season, most total yards in a game and in a season. RIGHT: Navy quarterback Bob Powers goes down in the firm grip of linebacker Mackel Harris.
Kelley and Kentera Bomb Navy in Record-Setting Show
Resurgent Jackets Revert to Early Form as 'Dogs Win

All year, Tech fans had gleefully followed the fluctuating fortunes of archrival Georgia. The Bulldogs were constantly thwarted by ACC teams, but still managed to knock off five of their SEC competitors. The ACC jinx didn’t work for Tech, though. Much maligned quarterback Jeff Pyburn came off the Georgia bench and went All-World for the day, while Tech reverted to the error-plagued style that characterized the early season. The defensive squad deserved credit; even though Georgia had the ball for two-thirds of the game and recovered six turnovers, the Wrecking Crew only allowed sixteen points. Johnny Smith kicked a 43 yard field goal, his longest ever, for Tech’s only points. The 16-3 Bulldog victory disappointed the Jacket faithful who had hoped the late 'Reck surge would at least end in an even season, rather than the 4-6-1 record that went into the books.

FAR LEFT: Lawrence Lowe goes high to try and block a Rex Robinson field goal. BELOW LEFT: Robert Newman goes for the legs of split end Lindsay Scott. BELOW RIGHT: Matt Rank and Jeff Hipp fight for possession of a Kelley throw. Hipp intercepted Kelley three times in the game. BOTTOM: Bo Thomas goes through the hole opened by Ben Utt and Clint Momon.
Tech's Baby Jackets, under the direction of Coach Terry Tuley, did somewhat better than their varsity brethren with a winning 2-1 record. The jayvees opened by edging out Ft. Benning 10-7. They didn't manage nearly as well against South Carolina's Baby Chicks, however. Graham Head's field goal and Cy Poss' safety came nowhere close to matching the four touchdowns churned out by the Gamecocks.

Traditionally, Georgia Tech and Georgia's jayvee squads meet on Thanksgiving Day to benefit the Scottish Rite Hospital for Crippled Children. It's somewhat sobering for the players to visit the hospital before the game and realize that a lot of the kids they talk to can watch a football game but may never be able to play in one. Large crowds used to fill Grant Field to watch Tech's and Georgia's future stars emulate the varsity, but the NFL and inflation have taken their toll, resulting in the smallest crowd in recent years. Tech won, 16-6, in an error-plagued contest, behind the quarterbacking of Jim Pritchard and the running of Bernard Stover. But what's more important is knowing you've helped a bunch of deserving kids.

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: Eddie Fortier darts through a gaping hole against the Gamecocks. Jeff Pierce fights for the ball with a Carolina defender. After a quick score, Bernard Stover prances joyously in the endzone. Jimmy Stanley races around left end for big yardage. BOTTOM, LEFT TO RIGHT: Jim Pritchard pitches to an open receiver. The most memorable experience for all J.V.'s is visiting the children at Scottish Rite Hospital.
On December 31, 1979, John McKenna ended his thirteen year tenure as Associate Director of Athletics at Georgia Tech. McKenna's retirement ended a thirty-four year career in some facet of intercollegiate athletics, beginning with three years as a football player for Villanova University. The 1937 team went undefeated, and McKenna's play at offensive and defensive center earned him an honorable mention All-American award.

McKenna began coaching football at Malvern Prep in Philadelphia. He put together an auspicious debut, since his 1946 team went undefeated and unscored upon. McKenna's success continued when he went to Virginia Military Institute. The Keydets, in thirteen seasons under McKenna, earned four Southern Conference championships and compiled a 62-60-8 record, with the 1957 team going 9-0-1 and being ranked 20th in the national polls. McKenna was named Southern Conference Coach of the Year three times (1957, 1959 and 1962), while Coach and Athlete magazine afforded him similar honors in both 1957 and 1962.

By 1966, McKenna relates, "I was 51 years old, and the Vietnam War had all aspects of the military establishment in very serious disfavor, and it was next to impossible to recruit athletes to come to VMI. I read in the paper that Tonto Coleman, who was my predecessor here, was leaving the position to become commissioner of the Southeastern Conference, and I called Bobby Dodd just on pure chance, since neither of us knew the other except by reputation. He invited me to come down and interview for the job, and before I left he offered it to me. I enjoyed coaching very much — I was not ready, really, to give it up, but I felt out of fairness to myself and confronted with the difficulties that were being compounded, that I'd better make the move. And after consultation with my family, we decided to leave coaching because it was an opportunity. That's why I came."

As Bobby Dodd's assistant director, McKenna was head of the physical training department and also responsible for the intramural program.

"I had multiple duties, and then with the advent of SAC on the scene, and the placing of greater responsibilities in my hands, they decided to make a separation of the two positions — a fulltime head of the physical education department, and they made me associate director." As for his responsibilities after the change was made, McKenna listed, "all budgeting in sports other than football, coordination of scheduling, use of athletic facilities, excuse from class lists, eligibilities for intercollegiate competition and assistance and counseling in football scheduling as well as the other sports."

When asked what he considered his major accomplishment at Georgia Tech, McKenna said, "I guess I was instrumental in getting Georgia Tech into the Metro Seven Conference under conditions which were very favorable to us, in that it was made plain at the outset that if we were to reenter the SEC, or get a conference affiliation that would allow us to compete in football, we would be able to withdraw without any hard feelings. This was right up front. They accepted us on those terms, and we are now a member of the ACC."

"I personally am very conference oriented. It appears that conference orientation stimulates interest, not only in your student body, but in your fans and, perhaps most importantly, in the news media. As an independent you have to
From those years three events remain. As he puts it, "One is the dual victory of the Georgia Tech basketball team in the North-South Doubleheader back around 1969 or '70. North Carolina, North Carolina State, Clemson and Georgia Tech were the four teams participating, and it is a true doubleheader, not a tournament, and we knew that we were going to play North Carolina and N.C. State. One team was ranked third in the nation, and the other was ranked fifth in the nation, and we beat them both on successive nights. We were brought into the tournament pretty much as a patsy — we were supposed to be a guaranteed victory for the two North Carolina teams — and our guys turned the tables and beat them both. This was just a tremendous achievement and something I got a big charge out of. Second chronologically was Georgia Tech's win over Michigan State out in East Lansing around 1971 or '72. Bill Fulcher was the coach and Steve Sloane was the offensive backfield coach — Steve has gone on to outstanding success at several other schools — but on the opening play of the game, Eddie McAshan threw a bomb to Jimmy Robinson and we scored the first time our guys touched the ball in the game. Then we scored a couple more times, but we were holding on for dear life in the closing minutes, and to beat Michigan State, a perennial power in the Big Ten, away from home, before a full stadium, with what was only a fair football team was a real charge for me, a real kick. Then, of course, a couple of years ago, when Georgia Tech upset Notre Dame out in Grant Field had to be a major achievement. Beating Notre Dame takes some doing on any occasion, and we were in the midst of a kind of poor year, and the kids rose to the occasion and made for me what was the third highlight."

As for Tech's future efforts in the ACC, Coach McKenna offered these thoughts. "I think that our overall sports program will be well-represented in the ACC. I believe that we are very ably coached in all of the sports in which we field intercollegiate teams. We feel that our wrestlers or swimmers, trkmen, our baseball people will all fare reasonably well in the ACC — not being familiar with the level of competition, it's really difficult to say. All I know is our athletes are well coached, and we will provide the necessary budgeting to be on a competitive level."

As for the future of intercollegiate athletics in general, Coach McKenna said, "I think the games of football and basketball, where my local knowledge lies, those particular games are better than they ever have been before. The quality of the play, the ability of the athletes, the rules that regulate them — all of these are far better than they were 23 to 25 years ago. The greatest evil in high-level intercollegiate sports, particularly in the moneymakers of football and basketball is recruiting. There are many, many abuses which I will not specify, but this is an area that will have to be closely watched if it is not going to prove to be a real detriment to intercollegiate athletic programs as a whole. The area of recruiting, where the demand, the urgent necessity to win at any cost, to have national ranking, regardless of the price to be paid; to be in the post-season tournaments, without any regard for conditions which may lead to success or failure; the difference in academic standards at various institutions give certain people a definite edge over others who aspire to an ideal of intercollegiate sports in the proper academic context — these are things which give me misgivings as to the direction we're taking.

"It dismays me to see, for instance, teams beaten by scores of 55-2 or 69-14, as witness our game with Notre Dame. There's no need to humiliate the opposing players and coaches (and even the institution, because the team does represent the institution) and yet this is done for the sake of national ranking and a shot at a bowl.

"The unreasonableness of sports fans, whether they be alumni or people on the street, their failure to recognize or acknowledge that for every winner there has to be a loser, is worse. They have no right to expect undefeated teams, or even teams that go 9-2, and when I say expect, I mean it in the literal sense. I think that if the team goes 6-3, 5-4 or occasionally falls below the .500 mark, this is reasonable. People in businesses and professions are not as successful to the extent that they demand of an athletic team and its coach. I just believe that this is wrong."

Coach McKenna's retirement means that he now has time to pursue studies in astronomy and meteorology. But for those he worked with, his leaving marks a great loss. Georgia Tech's former athletic director, Doug Weaver, said it best: "John always has been, and is, a pro's pro. He has done so much for Georgia Tech in all areas without seeking any recognition. He has made such an impact on all of us with his competence and dedication and accomplished it all with a keen wit and sense of humor. "We are all in his debt."
BASKETBALL

Tech Meets Fierce Competition in ACC Debut Season

Simply looking at the record, Georgia Tech didn’t have a very successful basketball season, winning only eight games while losing seventeen. Of course, simply looking at the record alone ignores the major change in the Jacket program this year — joining the ACC.

In basketball circles, the debate goes on as to whether the ACC is the best or merely among the best in the country. What no one will argue is that the competition is extremely fierce. Many a team has entered an ACC arena only to be overwhelmed by the sheer noise generated by the very partisan and extremely vocal fans as well as the team, while ACC teams on the road merely used their superior talent to blow out opponents instead. The frenzy is almost doubled whenever ACC teams play each other.

For most observers, putting a team like Tech in this environment was akin to throwing Christians into the Roman Colosseum. Both Playboy and Sports Illustrated had no trouble placing Tech last in their preseason polls — the argument was whether Tech could win a conference game.

Though not much more optimistic, no one at Tech was throwing in the towel, either. Head Coach Dwane Morrison installed an offense designed around a patient and deliberate passing attack which waited for an open shot. On defense, the Yellow Jackets played a tight man-to-man to smother opponents, or switched to a 3-2 zone to shut off inside passing lanes. Whether this strategy would work against teams where Tech’s tallest man was looking up at their shortest player, and whose collective talent placed them among the nation’s best was another question.

Tech’s starting five had much to do to counter the loss of Sammy Drummer, Tico Brown and Billy Smith. Morrison put Brook Steppe, last year’s sixth man, up at forward, pairing him with Tech’s most consistent player, Lenny Horton. Rob Noyes, playing center, coped with the likes of Duke’s All-American Mike Gminski and Virginia’s Ralph Sampson by adopting a very physical gameplan. Kerry O’Brien would run the offense from the backcourt, while John Mann joined him at guard, where his contributions would often prove critical, and would be ignored just as often as the season progressed.

EXTREME LEFT: Carolina’s Jeff Wolf tries in vain to block Lenny Horton’s layup. FAR LEFT: Center Rob Noyes splits Duke’s Gene Banks and Mike Gminski as he goes for the basket. FAR LEFT BELOW: George Thomas cuts off Deacon Benny McKaig. LEFT ABOVE: Kerry O’Brien drives around Terrapin Greg Manning. LEFT BELOW: Brook Steppe’s shot goes by N.C. State’s Scott Parzich. Steppe scored an ACC-high 35 points in Tech’s game with Virginia Tech. ABOVE: Alabama’s Mike Davis blocks out John Mann as Mann moves in for the rebound in the first action at Roanoke.
Opening their ACC campaign in their first game, the Jackets absorbed a 55-37 defeat at the hands of the Cavaliers. By the time Christmas arrived, the Jackets had also fallen to Maryland and arch-rival Georgia, while defeating both Presbyterian and Wofford College.

Over the holidays, Tech put on quite a show at the Roanoke (Va.) Times and World News Holiday Classic. Playing Alabama’s Crimson Tide in the first round, Steppe put 25 points on the scoreboard while Horton added 20 en route to the 83-59 blowout. The next night, against last year’s Metro Seven champion Virginia Tech, the Jackets fought hard but came up a bit short, 67-62. Both Steppe and Horton were named to the All-Tournament team, and Steppe was also named Most Valuable Player for his efforts.

Then it was into an ACC meatgrinder as N.C. State, Maryland, Clemson and Duke administered four straight defeats. Tech broke that streak with a 70-60 win over Western Carolina, where Rob Noyes’ play made a big difference, but then exhaustion set in as the Jackets hit a six-game skid. Tech barely missed its first ACC win as Lenny Horton’s layup went in and out against North Carolina.

Brook Steppe broke out of a minor slump by scoring 32 points in Tech’s 70-69 win over Seton Hall. He also added 22 more up in Raleigh as the Jackets dropped another game to N.C. State. But that served as a prelude to the best two games Tech would play all season.

Far left above: Kerry O’Brien, Tech’s defensive point man, follows Clemson’s Chris Dodds around the key. Far left: Wake Forest’s Guy Morgan tries to distract Rob Noyes as the Tech center looks for an open teammate. Left above: Steve Neal goes over Alabama’s Phillip Lockett to fire a jump shot. The Jackets won by their biggest margin of the year, 83-59. Left: John Mann sets up as Vince Taylor waits for the Blue Devil offense to develop. Above: Alexander Memorial Coliseum, Georgia Tech’s home court.
No one at the start of the season really expected the Jackets to be able to beat any of their ACC opposition. On paper, Tech didn’t have much of a chance, especially after the Jackets lost their first eleven games. Thank goodness basketball isn’t played on paper.

Virginia’s Cavaliers came to Alexander Memorial Coliseum confident they could repeat their earlier triumph. Confident, that is, until the game started. In contrast to the slow pace Tech had played all season, Morrison opened up the offense and allowed his players to take shots where once they would have passed off. Tech rebounders were deadly accurate as they hit the breaking guard to start the fast break. Ralph Sampson did manage to score 29 points for Virginia, John Mann completely stifled the other Cavalier threat, Jeff Lamp. For Tech, Steppe poured in 20 points to go with Horton’s 17 as Tech won their elusive first ACC game.

Georgia Tech 62, Virginia 61.

It was hard to see how the Jackets could match that winning performance, especially after losing their final ACC games against North Carolina and Wake Forest (the latter by a 49-48 score). But then Georgia came to Tech. The match seesawed back and forth, with neither side able to get the advantage. After Brook Steppe put in two free throws to send Tech up 40-38, it all came down to Terry Fair’s last shot for the Bulldogs. Lenny Horton pulled down one of his career’s most important rebounds to preserve that two-point margin of victory.

ABOVE RIGHT: John Mann waits for an opening against Cavalier Jeff Lamp. Mann’s superb defensive performance limited Lamp to only twelve points. RIGHT: Steve Neal goes up against Ralph Sampson, the 7-foot-4 freshman sensation. FAR RIGHT, ABOVE: Georgia’s Lavon Mercer controls the opening tipoff against Steve Neal. FAR RIGHT, BELOW: Bulldog Terry Fair gets the rebound as Brook Steppe tries to avoid fouling. EXTREME RIGHT: Lenny Horton takes the ball around Virginia’s Lee Raker. Horton scored seventeen in the Jacket’s first ACC win.
Yes, Virginia, There Is a Georgia Tech
Final Win Gives Team Momentum for ACC Tournament

Tech closed out their season beating West Virginia Tech 67-52. For seniors Lenny Horton, Kerry O'Brien, Rob Noyes and John Mann, it marked their last game at the Coliseum. Horton closed out his career with 1354 points to move into fifth place on the all-time scoring list, and his 169 rebounds made him the team's leader. Kerry O'Brien had seventy-four assists to lead the team in that category.

For Morrison, it was time to prepare for the upcoming ACC Tournament, and then back on to the recruiting trail. Brook Steppe, team scoring leader, would be back for one more year, with both Steve Neal and Steve Shaw back with a year's experience at center. Being in the ACC should prove a great aid in pursuing some of those top-quality athletes that used to pass up Tech in favor of a school where their talents would receive wider exposure. No one said it would be easy, and no one expects to turn the basketball program around immediately. But given a couple of years and two or three good players, who knows how many times we'll beat Virginia? Or, for that matter, N.C. State, Maryland, North Carolina and the rest of the ACC powerhouses?

EXTREME LEFT: Lenny Horton weaves his way past N.C. State's Sidney Lowe and Thurl Bailey. FAR LEFT, ABOVE: Backup guard Steve Peck matches up against Clemson's Horace Wyatt. Peck played in twenty games for the Yellow Jackets. FAR LEFT, BELOW: Duke's Bob Bender passes off to Vince Taylor as Kerry O'Brien plays point for the Jacket defense. LEFT ABOVE: George Thomas presses Maryland's Albert King. LEFT BELOW: Steve Shaw drives to the basket past Cavalier Ralph Sampson. BELOW: Players listen attentively as Coach Morrison spells out the next play during a timeout.
Every year after the basketball season, the ACC gets together for three days of partying, frenzied excitement and some of the best basketball in the nation, and they call it the ACC Tournament. This year Georgia Tech got to experience Tourneymania for the first time and nearly pulled off the upset of the week.  

By virtue of their last-place regular season finish, Tech was granted the dubious privilege of playing the conference champion, Maryland. The Yellow Jackets met the challenge head on and by game’s end the Terrapins were glad to escape with a 51-49 overtime victory.  

Working out of their patient offensive sets, the Jackets kept Maryland from upping the tempo and running away with the game. Kerry O’Brien and Brook Steppe kept the Jackets close in the first half, while Lenny Horton, Steve Neal and Steve Shaw did the job in the second. In the end, the Jackets called on Steppe and he responded by tying the game at the buzzer, then scoring all Tech’s overtime points. Steppe was named the game’s most valuable player, finishing with twenty-one points.  

Coach Morrison called it “a hell of a ball game. A break here or there and we win.” That pretty well summed up Tech’s first year in the ACC as well. Next year, maybe Tech will get some of the breaks they deserved. If they do, the ACC race is suddenly going to be a lot tougher.

RIGHT: Forward Brook Steppe aims another of his short-range jumpers. Steppe finished with twenty-one points and seven rebounds and was named to the All-Tournament second team. FAR RIGHT, ABOVE: Tech’s offense in action. John Mann feeds Lenny Horton after drawing off the Terrapin defense. FAR RIGHT, BELOW: Steve Shaw filled the center spot after Rob Noyes and Steve Neal suffered injuries. EXTREME RIGHT: John Mann looks for help to escape Maryland’s Reggie Jackson. Mann had five assists and contributed two blocked shots on defense.
For Georgia Tech's cheerleaders, this year was another hectic attempt to generate spirit among the student body as well as maintaining interest in the Tech sports program. The ten sideline boosters and their four alternates were chosen during spring tryouts, and led by co-captains Glenn Boylan and Elaine Baker, spent their summer exchanging cheers at a cheerleader camp in Memphis, Tennessee with their counterparts from schools all over the Southeast.

Fall quarter and football season found the cheerleaders in their accustomed sideline spot, exhorting the student body to support the Jackets. Some members of the squad got in a bit of travelling as they followed the team to such places as South Bend, Indiana and New Orleans, Louisiana. Basketball fans could watch the squad at the Coliseum and also at Tech's first appearance in the ACC tournament.

When not involved in their usual duties, the squad was doing public relations work by appearing at alumni functions or attending pre-game events sponsored by different business groups. Judging high school cheerleader competitions filled other empty moments. With the arrival of another spring, the process began again in the never-ending promotion of spirit at Tech.

RIGHT: Jane Justus, Elaine Baker, Sandy Dasinger, Mike Swaney, Chris Saunders and Dave Foley await the upcoming Tech kickoff. FAR RIGHT: Sandy Dasinger, Jane Justus and Joan Dvorsak ride the 'Reck as it leads the football team onto Grant Field. LOWER LEFT: Differentials, probably Tech's most infamous cheer, as executed by Jimmy Bouchillon and Joan Dvorsak. LOWER RIGHT: The cheerleaders incite the crowd to "fire up."
Anyone who has been at Georgia Tech even a short time knows that football is the preeminent sport on campus. It's been that way for a long time, and the enviable Tech winning tradition rests mainly on the reputations of the football teams of Heisman, Alexander and Dodd. But the gridiron doesn't represent the total Tech athletic program. There are many other "Ramblin' Recks" to carry the Tech spirit into other sports.

That's not to say it's easy. Finding a place to practice can be difficult if not impossible, and trying to keep up in class can be trouble. It's rare if a scholarship helps pay the bills and a bit disheartening to give it all you've got but nobody knows except your coach and teammates.

For most of these athletes, it's not glory that keeps them here at Tech. Just the chance to test themselves against some of the country's best or push themselves to do better than they ever have is all the motivation they need. If dedication and determination alone made a great athlete, there would be world-class sportsmen wearing Tech's white and gold, for it's these qualities Tech athletes have in abundance.
Dedicated Athletes Compete Without Recognition

EXTREME LEFT: Georgia Tech's Doug Romberg drives his Olivet opponent to the mat in a heavyweight wrestling match. FAR LEFT, ABOVE: David Alexander crosses the finish line in first place at the Georgia State Collegiate Championship cross-country meet. FAR LEFT, BELOW: Gymnast Tim Fish works out a routine on his specialty, the pommel horse. LEFT: Scott Muir concentrates on a smooth stroke as he aims another putt for the hole. ABOVE: Tech tennis player rushes the net to reach an opponent's low volley with his backhand. The Jacket team had a winning season.
Defense and hitting, however, weren't enough to overcome inconsistency and inexperience on the mound. Danny Suarez opened the season number one in the Tech rotation, but freshman standout Jim Thorsten quickly stepped forward with a five-game winning streak to become the Jacket ace. Powerful Florida State snapped Thorsten's streak there, for although the freshman only allowed the Seminoles five runs, Tech hitters came up with just two runs for him to work with. Thorsten finished the season with a 6-1 slate by beating Auburn in relief. Using right fielder Steve Davison to fill out the rotation pointed up a severe lack of depth in the pitching staff, but Davison did yeoman service in relief throughout the season.

Coach Jim Luck became Tech's winningest coach by posting his 293rd career victory during this season. Fittingly, the record-breaker came against archrival Georgia. Gary Hardie, recently signed by the New York Mets, led the Jacket defense in a flawless performance. Thompson tied the 24-year-old home run record with his eleventh blast to add to the final 9-6 victory margin.

Thorsten's victory over Auburn made it two years in a row for Tech over the Turkey Buzzards, and finished up a 15-16 campaign. Returning Jackets would be facing a full ACC schedule in the 1980 season.

TOP LEFT: Tech batter digs in at the plate. TOP RIGHT: The starting catcher's job was up for grabs at the season's start. Danny Watkins won the position. BOTTOM LEFT: A quick dive back to first avoids the pickoff play. BOTTOM CENTER: The Jackets went 13 and 11 in their home park, Rose Bowl Field. Their road record was 2 and 5. BOTTOM RIGHT: Don Gee takes a turn in the pitching rotation. Gee went 2-0 for last year's squad, with an ERA of 5.33.