Beyond the White and Gold

College vs. pro: college wins another point

By John Parsons

Senior Staff Writer

Over the last couple of weeks, a pair of situations have developed in the sports world that prove yet again that college sports are better than the pros.

I’m talking about the resignations of Matt Doherty at Carolina and Jerry Krause from the Chicago Bulls.

The delightful here is that Doherty got forced out after just three years while Krause lumbered through the halls of the Bulls’ front office for 18 years.

No body really likes either of these guys. Both have terrible people skills.

Doherty once bounced a basketball off Joe Forte’s head to make a point in practice. His last name isn’t Harrick, after all.

What this shows me is that there is far less room for you in college athletics if you aren’t a people person.

Doherty couldn’t, at least not legally, slide a couple grand to a player to make amends for being a jerk in practice. His last name isn’t Harrick, after all.

Sure, you can get by with mediocre people skills, at least as long as you’re winning.

Gary Williams at Maryland isn’t mean, but he’s not a happy little chatterbox either. He’s got winning to speak for him though.

Mike Krzyzewski is easily the most respected coach in the ACC and it turns out that he’s the best at talking to the media.

Krzyzewski comes across as polished, yet personable at the same time. Furthermore, everyone that knows him, media or otherwise, likes him.

So there seems to be a self-correcting nature to college coaches. They just shouldn’t bittergeteed out over time, often heading to the NBA to lead the Hawks in several years of futility.

There still seems to be a problem with pro sports though. How can they get rid of all the bastards like Jerry Krause that populate the rankings of front office executives?

Well, they can’t. They can’t because the environment is completely results based.

Remember the front office soap operas that surrounded Jerry Jones and Jimmy Johnson during the Cowboys Super Bowl runs? Has anybody ever gotten along with Bill Parcells?

So what’s the solution for the fans? Just stop caring, if that’s possible.

I’ll listen to youth that vauchieved this, but then I remember my column a month ago where those of you that read it had 15 minutes of your lives wasted by my inane Roy Keane ramblings. Speaking of which…

See, if we got rid of all the people that pissed us off, there wouldn’t be anything to write about. Except those lame, far-from-amazing citizen pieces that cause us to dread pre-game shows.

Knudsen

sen’s College World Series berth by just one RBI hit that never came. Knudsen would like to help out in this department.

“We want to repeat as ACC Champions and make it back to an NCAA Regional,” said Knudsen.

“We basically just want to have another good season like we did last year.”

As for Tara off the field, she’s a lot like any other college student.

She describes herself as not being very superstitious, with only her visor being a set part of her game routine. Like any student, she greatly values any time she gets to sleep.

“I like to hang out with my teammates. We don’t have a lot of free time in season, so I spend most of my free time resting.”

Knudsen says she will stay in softball as long as possible. She’s considering going into coaching when her playing days are over.

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Baseball star Murton swings under the radar no longer

By Al Przybylo
Senior Staff Writer

Matt Murton is an unlikely star. Without the dashed hopes of a Major League team that drafted him or any of the fanfare that seems to be a prerequisite for playing baseball at Tech, the quiet redhead just put his head down and went to work. Three years later, he’s turned himself into one of the best outfielders in the country and a prob-able first round pick in this year’s draft.

It’s a wonder that the scouts could have missed the MCOough- ought native looking at his high school career and his top notch AAU experience. A three-year letterman in basketball and an honor roll student, he broke a slew of school hitting records at Eagles Landing High School. In summer ball, he played on the East Cobb Yankee team that won the Connie Mack World Series in 2000, and the year before he won the Home Run Derby at the same event.

Murton tried to explain his lack of recognition, the big redhead decided to get to work and turn himself into a better player. That hard work has paid off, and he has become the team’s leading hitter, as he is either first or second in 12 different offensive categories, every-thing from RBIs to stolen bases.

These accomplishments haven’t gone unnoticed this time around. Murton has been named to All-America teams in each of his three seasons, and several draft guides listed him as a likely first rounder in this June’s draft.

When asked if the upcoming draft weighs on his mind, Murton responded, “For me, I just need to come out and play hard everyday, and I think my abilities will take over and allow me to be in the situation that I want to be in come June. Of course, it’s something you think about here and there, but for the most part, I’m just out here enjoying Georgia Tech and playing the game of baseball.”

When asked if there was a possibility that he would return to Tech for his senior season, the left fielder said, “I here’s always that opportunity. You never know how things are going to go. You might not get drafted where you think you might get drafted, and if it looks like it might be better to come back to school, that’s definitely an option.”

To get better prepared for taking his game to the next level, Murton spent time in the weight room, worked on his fielding, and never stopped working on his hitting. Another thing that Murton has done to continue to improve is to spend his summers in the Cape Cod League. The league is full of college all-stars who get the chance to play in a wood bat league against others of the same talent level. Murton has done very well up there, earning back to back league championships for his high school team and an MVP award and a home run derby title, too.

Describing his summer experiences, Murton said, “The Cape Cod League is a wonderful league. The opportunity to play everyday with good competition was awesome. Con-tinuing, the left fielder said, “The wood bats are great. In someways, I enjoy hitting with the wood bats over the aluminum. You get a better feel. I’m pitching that you face is pretty solid there. It’s a great combination. It’s a league where hitters don’t always thrive, so when you get a chance to go up there and prove that you can hit, it makes it even that much better.”

At Tech, Murton has become noticed not just for his hitting exploits and his bright red hair. He’s also been noticed for his hitting music on Sundays. Every hitter selects music that will be played when he is coming up to bat. Murton has a hit list of different pieces "Boom" by POD for most occasions and "My Life is in You, Lord" performed by Joseph Garlington. The crowds enjoy clapping their hands along to the gospel song, and Murton enjoys success at the plate. In 13 Sunday games using the inspirational music, Murton has gone 22 for 47 (.468) with six home runs and 27 RBIs.

“[I] had gotten to a point where I felt like I had to do something about Sunday. I wanted to let my light shine, and my mom and I had been talking about it, and we had come across this song," said Murton. "We used it, and things started going well with it," he continued. Asked how the music helps him succeed, Murton replied, "It’s definitely a comfort zone. Sunday for me is a day to worship the Lord. Sunday morning, I get a chance to get to church. When I come to the park Sunday, I can get just relax, and I have a great feel of what life’s all about, so I can just get in the batter’s box and relax.”

Fornow, Murton’s goals are simple. It’s all about unfinished business. Making the College World Series last year was special, but Murton and the entire team are focused on getting back to Omaha and making sure they win it all this time.

"The College World Series is unbelievably impressive. Everyone always builds things up, and then you get there and it’s kind of a letdown. For us, it wasn’t. It was everything they had advertised. The only thing that we were kind of disappointed with was our performance. We felt that maybe we could have done a little bit better," said Murton.

When asked about the possibility of ending his college career with a College World Series championship, Murton commented, “To get a chance to play in the College World Series once again and have a shot at the national championship would be a great finish to what has hopefully been a good college career.”
Spring Practice

In the fall, said Gailey, Damarius Bilbo, who has worked hard this spring to become more consistent, had a breakout performance in scrimmage March 30. Bilbo consistently made good decisions in completing 13 of 21 passes for 136 yards and a touchdown. Gailey feels that one of the reasons Bilbo struggled last year was because he tried to do too much.

"I'm getting the hang of it," Bilbo said, "it's getting easier. With the mental toughness coming up with the physical part of it, it's getting easier."

Gailey has said that Bilbo will get as many repetitions as they can give him because the coaching staff knows the least about him. In a scrimmage March 21, Bilbo worked exclusively with the first team offense, while Pena and Suggs split time with the second team.

"We're just not getting it done. Our pass protection has to improve for us to be a consistent offense." Chan Gailey

Head Coach

The kicking duties have primarily been held by Dan Burnett. Redshirt freshman David Jordan and Junior Christian Schroeder have also seen action in scrimmages. Tech took a hit when preferred walk-on Kyle Keown decided to accept a scholarship to Vanderbilt. Gailey said holder Hal Higgins appears to be the front-runner for the punting job.

The Yellow Jackets have restructured their coaching staff after the departure of offensive coordinator Bill O'Brien to Maryland. Gailey hired his former Dallas Cowboys Assistant Coach Buddy Geis to be the passing game coordinator and receivers' coach. Patrick Nix was elevated to running game coordinator and will also coach the quarterbacks. Gailey is expected to call the plays with Geis and Nix involved in developing the offensive game plan.

Tech concludes its spring practice with its spring football game Saturday, April 12, at 11 a.m. at Bobby Dodd Stadium.

"We know where A.J. is. We know where Brian [Camp] is. We don't know where Damarius is and can be without reps, so we give him a few more reps than other guys right now," Gailey said. The spring practice has been frustrating one for the offense Chan Gailey has been especially tough on the offensive line. The unit gave up five sacks in the most recent scrimmage Saturday. Defensive ends Tony Hargrove and Eric Henderson turned in impressive performances and Gailey was able to see firsthand how far ahead the defense is compared to the offense.

"There's no excuses," said Gailey. "We're just not getting it done. When we do get it done, we can complete passes and make some things happen. Our pass protection has to improve for us to be a consistent offense."

Another area of concern for the Jackets this spring is the secondary. Tech graduated three of four starters in this crucial area. The only returning starter is cornerback Jonathan Cox, who started every game last year.

"Reuben Houston has the inside track to start opposite Cox at the other corner position. Junior James Butler and Sophomore Dawan Landry are slated to start at the safety positions. 

"Landry and Butler are playing pretty well right now," said Gailey. "Reuben has gotten better this spring. He's a very solid player."

With Hollings out, Ajenavi (Ace) Eziemefe, Micheal Sampson, P.J. Daniels and Jermaine Hatch have all been getting reps. Hatch sat out last season after tearing his anterior cruciate ligament in his knee. Sampson, Daniels, and Hatch have all had bright moments this spring. Ace Eziemefe has been hampered this spring by an injured left ankle.

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Damarius Bilbo
Possible starting QB
Football seeks consistency in spring practices

By Clark Nelison
Contributing Writer

Georgia Tech opened its spring football practice March 14 looking to develop consistency and depth, especially at the quarterback position. The Jackets must also find players to replace four starters on offense, four starters on defense, and both kickers. Head Coach Chan Gailey and the Jackets coaching staff have had keen eyes on the quarterback position this spring.

Last year’s starter A.J. Suggs returns to the Flats, but the job is up for grabs. Gailey wants more consistent play from the position this year.

The Jackets must find replacements for the placekicker and punter positions, as these were hit hard by graduations. In other areas, Tech will look to develop quality depth with five-letterman returning.

Gailey has said that hitting will focus on getting back to the basics of the game, not implementing new offensive and defensive strategies. “If it’s going to be basic stuff, so we can find out who can play the game, who can block, who can tackle, who can run, who can catch and who can defend,” he said.

Tech was decimated by injuries last season during its seven-win campaign. Injuries to the team’s best offensive and defensive players forced the staff to shuffle the lineup on many occasions.

By John Parsons
Senior Staff Writer

Last year’s lidyjackets went into the softball season with very modest expectations for the year. After all, they were coming off a 24-29 season and a 2-6 ACC record. They eventually settled on a goal of 52-18 for a robust .743 winning percentage.

That success led to high expectations for this season, with the team even garnering a preseason number 19 ranking in the N F C A / U S A T o d a y poll. Much of the reason for the high expectations had to do with the breakthrough year enjoyed by shortstop Tara Knudsen.

Knudsen finished 2002 with a .374 batting average, 16 home runs and 51 RBIs. She now ranks in the top five in seven single season statistics at Tech. For her efforts she was named to the All-ACC and All-Southeast Region teams and was a third-team All-American. That shared in these high expectations.

“I’d like to make the All-ACC team again,” she said.

The season didn’t start off as expected though, with the ladyjackets running up a 13-11 record through their first 24 games. Tara’s bat was sorely missed in the lineup. She only managed to go 5-24 with a single home run in the first two weeks of the season.

“We were all disappointed because we knew we weren’t playing our best,” Tara said. “I was struggling at the beginning of the season, so I sat down with Coach (Kathi) Siley and we worked on getting back to my way of hitting.”

Knudsen is also working hard to improve in the field. She has improved a lot there over the last two years, bettering her range and fielding ability. Knudsen is not satisfied just yet, though.

“I’d like to improve that more this year too,” she said. “I haven’t been as agile in the field as I want, so I still need to improve in that area.”

With the team playing well again, having gone 16-5 over their last 21 games, the Lady Jackets are looking once again like a team that could win an ACC championship. The softball team also has unfinished business in the CAA tournament. Last year, they missed a World Series appearance.

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By Daniel Uhlig / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Knudsen knows her spot in sports

Senior Staff Writer

When we come out of spring practice, we expect to have a better idea of where we stand at the position, but I’m not ruling out having an open competition for the starting position in the fall.”

Head Coach Chan Gailey

On the QB position

By Daniel Uhlig / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Pro vs. College

Which is better? Beyond the White and Gold judges the popularity contest between professional and college sports.

Page 24.

Beesball quiz

Do you know who is the jack’s leading hitter and has been an All-American for the past three seasons? Check out the answer. Page 25.

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The opposing players’ batting average against the Lady Jackets’ sophomore pitcher Jedd and Sallinger. Sallinger picked up two conference wins over the weekend. She is 16-10 with a 1.15 earned run average for the season.

23

Number of regular season games left this year for the Georgia Tech Yellowjacket baseball team, including tonight’s game against Duke University in Raleigh.

0.139

The opposing players’ batting average against the Lady Jackets’ sophomore pitcher Jedd and Sallinger. Sallinger picked up two conference wins over the weekend. She is 16-10 with a 1.15 earned run average for the season.

69

On the QB position

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11.41

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by the numbers

69

Longest pass completion of the 2002 season for Tech’s offense. T. He threw by second-string quarterback Damarus Bilbo to receiver Kerry Watkins.

6.9

Number of yards per carry averaged by Tony H. against Georgia Tech this year for the Georgia Tech offense. T. He threw by second-string quarterback Damarus Bilbo to receiver Kerry Watkins.

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