A season to remember

By Jody Shaw
Associate Editor

They saw the lack of a legitimate big man and the losses of the last two Atlantic Coast Conference Rookies of the Year. They saw a team that struggled with consistency throughout its previous campaign. And they saw a team led by a young head coach whose career winning percentage at the Institute hovered in the .500 range. They simply saw too many unanswered questions to predict anything for the team other than a seventh place finish in the ACC. The preseason pundits only observed the individual parts; they failed to see that the whole is greater.

The transformation of this squad from a group of individually talented young men to a well-engineered team and then to a close-knit family is the story of the 2004 Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets basketball season. It’s a triumphal story that captivated the entire country.

Coach Paul Hewitt penned this tale’s opening when he worked to instill in his players the importance of conditioning, a commitment to defense, an understanding of the lost art teamwork, and, more importantly, the art of the extra pass on offense and “helping the helper” on defense. His team bought into this system whole-heartedly, and it made them greater than the previous one, despite the fact it had less talent.

The players, however, drove the story’s plot and the development of the family. When Theodor Titus Tarver went down with a knee injury during an early fall practice, Clarence Moore and the other seniors made a decision. Since the moment of Tarver’s injury, the team said “family” as it broke each huddle to signify their commitment to each other. What they accomplished together on the court demonstrates they meant it every time.

Off the court, Schenscher has become one of the most popular figures on campus. A group of Industrial Design students made “Luke Schenscher has a posse” T-shirts that have been featured throughout the tournament. Schenscher’s teammates have donned the shirts at press conferences, and the pep band and Buzz wore them in San Antonio.

“I do have one of those. I’m sending it back home to my mom so hopefully she can sport it back home in Australia. But yeah they’re great. I’m pretty happy about it,” Schenscher said.

Schenscher’s family was unable to make it to the Final Four but the family held viewing parties at their home in Hope Forest, Australia. “I think they were saying there were forty or fifty people in the house watching the [Oklahoma State] game and Malcolm Mackey and got tougher over the summer,” said team captain Marvin Lewis. Besides his teammates, coaches around the nation noticed Schenscher’s improvements. “He’s just a different player from November [s]game against Connecticut, and he’s also grown seven inches,” too. He’s got to be 8’3”. He dwarfed everybody on the court. He’s the biggest guy I’ve seen in my life,” said Connecticut head coach Jim Calhoun.

Opposing fans, most notably the Cameron Krazies, taunted Schenscher with chants of “Big Bird,” because of his tall stature and curly red hair. His teammates and coach, however, called him “The Big Fundamental,” because of the fundamentally sound, old-school style of center he played throughout the season.

Off the court, Schenscher has become one of the most popular figures on campus. A group of Industrial Design students made “Luke Schenscher has a posse” T-shirts that have been featured throughout the tournament. Schenscher’s teammates have donned the shirts at press conferences, and the pep band and Buzz wore them in San Antonio.

“I do have one of those. I’m sending it back home to my mom so hopefully she can sport it back home in Australia. But yeah they’re great. I’m pretty happy about it,” Schenscher said.

Schenscher’s family was unable to make it to the Final Four but the family held viewing parties at their home in Hope Forest, Australia. “I think they were saying there were forty or fifty people in the house watching the [Oklahoma State] game and

See Commentary, page 9

From “Big Bird” to Big Man on Campus: Schenscher develops into legitimate star center

By Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

When Chris Bosh left Tech for the NBA last summer and Ed Nelson transferred to Connecticut, many sports pundits predicted the Jackets would suffer from a lack of production in the low post. However, Luke Schenscher shocked the sports critics shocked with sports critics with his growth and developed into a legitimate star center.

“I saw [Bosh’s departure] as an opportunity for me to step up. I knew that I had to step up if the team was to be successful. We needed someone to fill that void of him leaving and I just took it upon myself to make sure that I could step up and help the team out,” Schenscher said.

Schenscher spent all last summer improving his skills in optional workouts, and adding weight to his thin frame. When he arrived on campus two years ago, the 7’1” center weighed only 215 pounds. “We did a lot as a team to help him get bigger. We fed him. We were making sure he would eat four, five, six meals a day to help him get bigger. He played with guys I like.”

Malcolm Mackey and got tougher over the summer,” said team captain Marvin Lewis. Besides his teammates, coaches around the nation noticed Schenscher’s improvements. “He’s just a different player from November’s game against Connecticut, and he’s also grown seven inches,” too. He’s got to be 8’3”. He dwarfed everybody on the court. He’s the biggest guy I’ve seen in my life,” said Connecticut head coach Jim Calhoun.

Opposing fans, most notably the Cameron Krazies, taunted Schenscher with chants of “Big Bird,” because of his tall stature and curly red hair. His teammates and coach, however, called him “The Big Fundamental,” because of the fundamentally sound, old-school style of center he played throughout the season.

Off the court, Schenscher has become one of the most popular figures on campus. A group of Industrial Design students made “Luke Schenscher has a posse” T-shirts that have been featured throughout the tournament. Schenscher’s teammates have donned the shirts at press conferences, and the pep band and Buzz wore them in San Antonio.

“I do have one of those. I’m sending it back home to my mom so hopefully she can sport it back home in Australia. But yeah they’re great. I’m pretty happy about it,” Schenscher said.

Schenscher’s family was unable to make it to the Final Four but the family held viewing parties at their home in Hope Forest, Australia. “I think they were saying there were forty or fifty people in the house watching the [Oklahoma State] game and

See Luke, page 11

2003-2004 Season

Game-by-Game

Exhibitions
Tech 100 Team NIKE 89
Tech 112 Southeastern All-Stars 75

Regular season
Tech 79 Louisiana-Lafayette 45
Tech 75 Hofstra 56
Tech 90 Cornell 69
Tech 77 Connecticut 61
Tech 85 Texas Tech 65
Tech 73 Ohio State 53
Tech 94 Tennessee State 43
Tech 75 St. Louis 62
Tech 74 Alabama A&M 41
Tech 79 St. John’s 66
Tech 90 Marist 40
Tech 86 Virginia Commonwealth
Georgia 83 Tech 80 [201]
North Carolina 103 Tech 88
Tech 75 Virginia 57
Tech 81 Maryland 71
Tech 73 Wake Forest 66
NC State 76 Tech 72
Tech 76 Clemson 69
Duke 82 Tech 74
Florida State 81 Tech 65
Tech 77 Tennessee 62
Tech 88 North Carolina 77
Virginia 82 Tech 80
Tech 75 Maryland 64
Wake Forest 80 Tech 76
NC State 79 Tech 69
Tech 79 Clemson 60
Tech 76 Duke 68
Tech 63 Florida State 60

ACC Tournament
Tech 83 North Carolina 82
Duke 85 Tech 71

NCAA Tournament
Tech 65 Northern Iowa 60
Tech 57 Boston College 54
Tech 72 Nevada 67
Tech 79 Kansas 71 [101]
Tech 67 Oklahoma State 65

National Championship
Connecticut 82 Tech 73

See Commentary, page 9

Front Photo By Christopher Gooley / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

2004 FINAL FOUR

Technique • Friday, April 9, 2004 • 3
Final Four Recap

Last-minute shot lands Jackets in biggest dance

Lewis leads, Bynum finishes as Jackets outgun Cowboys

By Edward Tamsberg
Staff Writer

With 1.6 seconds remaining on the clock, Will Bynum made a clutch layup that launched the Jackets into their first National Championship game in school history. The team tied a school record for the most victories in a season with the win, matching the 1990 Final Four team.

Oklahoma State was the favorite going into the game, and the Cowboys had a large crowd advantage. Orange-clad fans packed the Alamodome.

The Cowboy’s Joey Graham, Tony Allen and John Lucas were expected to be a tough combination for Tech to handle, but as the first half progressed, the Jackets took the lead. Tech led by seven at halftime with the help of Marvin Lewis’ five shots from behind the arc.

“We pretty much depended on Marvin,” said Jarrett Jack after the game. “He put us on his back and we just followed his lead. We have always been there together, but the first half, it was all him.”

The Jackets also had great defense, holding Allen, the Big 12 leading scorer, to only five shots. Luke Schenscher also dominated the boards, with 12 rebounds in addition to his 19 points.

In the second half, OSU fought back and closed in on the Jackets’ lead. Lucas made a three-pointer and tied the game with 28 seconds left on the clock.

“The game was tied and we knew we had the last shot,” said Jack. “The shot clock was off and the momentum was definitely in our favor.”

Bynum was chosen by his teammates to take the last second shot. “[The coaches and players] had confidence in me to take the last shot. Luckily I made it,” Bynum said.

The win against the Cowboys wasn’t the only close game for Tech in the tournament. The team’s last eight wins of the season were decided by less than 10 points. The Jackets also narrowly escaped the St. Louis regional with an overtime win against Kansas.

UConn ends Tech miracle, confirms preseason ranking

By Edward Tamsberg
Staff Writer

In a rematch of the pre-season NIT semifinal game, Tech aimed to repeat its upset of the University of Connecticut. The Jackets had soundly defeated the then No. 1 Huskies 77-61 at Madison Square Garden in November.

However, the tables were turned this time around, as the Jackets faced a strong Emeka Okafor, the Huskies’ star big man, who had suffered back spasms at last fall’s game. Okafor had 24 points, 15 rebounds, and was later named Most Valuable Player for the Final Four tournament, as he led his team to an 82-73 victory.

Though Tech closed the gap to nine points by the end of the contest, the score fails to illustrate the Huskies’ overall domination. At halftime, the Jackets faced a 10-point deficit, which the Huskies increased to 25 points in the second half.

Tech suffered scoring problems throughout the night, as it shot under 30 percent from the field in the first half and 38 percent for the game. Bynum led the Jackets with 17 points, B.J. Elder had 14 and Schenscher had nine.

“Tonight the ball just didn’t fall for me,” Elder said. Elder was not the only one for whom the ball would not fall.

Although Tech had found itself at the lowest deficit of the season, the players and fans never gave up and even chanted “family” toward the end of the game during the Jackets’ final rally.

While the Jackets may have lost the national championship, the team will never forget this year’s season. “We feel like we had a good run at this thing. [We’re] still disappointed not to come out with the victory,” Elder said. “We’ve done a lot for this program, trying to get it back to where it used to be and for the university as well. We’re really proud of that.”

“We kept this thing going as long as possible,” Lewis said.

“We wish we would have got a win. But to keep this team together, this family atmosphere is going to be together forever.”
Tech to remember Texas trip for more than just Alamo

By Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

Tech pays a visit to the Admiral

While basketball was the main focus of the Final Four weekend for the team, Associate Athletic Director Mary McElroy arranged a visit with David Robinson for the Yellow Jackets. McElroy and Robinson were classmates at the Naval Academy. The team took a trip to the retired San Antonio Spurs player’s Carver Academy, a school he founded to provide underprivileged children with the best education possible. The school is based on George Washington Carver and his goals, particularly “service and faith.”

“I was overwhelmed. Those kids over there know four languages; I only know one. When we first got there I thought I really didn’t want to go because we had just gotten out of practice, but after we got there, I was really overwhelmed with what is there,” Anthony McHenry said.

He had a coach Paul Hewitt was equally impressed with Robinson. “I’ll tell you what, if his name is on the paper I’m voting for him. I have never ever met a more impressive man than David Robinson,” Hewitt said.

Governor offers talk in pre-game

Before the game against Oklahoma State, the Jackets received a pre-game pep talk from Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue. The former Georgia football player put aside his college allegiances on Monday afternoon and addressed the Georgia Tech basketball team just hours before the NCAA Tournament title game.

“The whole state is proud of you,” Perdue told the Jackets.

Perdue, a member of the Bulldogs’ football team in the mid-1960s, arrived at the team hotel in San Antonio on Monday afternoon. He attended the Yellow Jackets’ pre-game meal where he delivered a short speech to the team. Perdue, also made an appearance at the Yellow Jackets’ send-off.

Perdue said.

Injuries plague Jackets

While B.J. Elder’s sprained ankle garnered the most media attention, Elder wasn’t the only one on the team with an injury at the Final Four. Muhammad, known for his dunking ability, suffered from tendinitis in his right knee. Muhammad’s pain was obvious in the Oklahoma State game and forced him to return to the bench. He had an MRI Sunday but was still able to play in Monday’s championship game. McHenry had to get five stitches on his chin after he collided with Clarence Moore at the team’s practice at Trinity College last Wednesday. Despite the injuries, all three players were able to play in Monday’s championship game.

Bynum reunites with Chicago pals

San Antonio’s final four lineup became a reunion of sorts for junior point guard Will Bynum. Oklahoma State’s senior guard Tony Allen and Duke’s Sean Dockery are both from the Chicago area. Allen and Dockery played together at Julian High School before Allen transferred to Crane Tech.

Besides being Bynum’s former teammate, Allen is also one of Bynum’s closest friends. The two have been friends since Bynum was in the seventh grade and Allen was in eighth grade. Bynum was the most highly touted recruit and went to Arizona, while Allen went to junior college for two years before he transferred to Oklahoma State and became the Big 12 player of the year and OSU’s leading scorer during the regular season. Allen and Bynum almost wound up together in college when Bynum considered transferring to Oklahoma State. Bynum wanted to transfer from Arizona to a school closer to home after his mother Rose became ill. Bynum strongly considered OSU and committed to Tech at the last minute because Oklahoma State was out of scholarships and Bynum’s mother preferred Tech, among other reasons.

After Bynum made the game-winning shot to win the game against the Oklahoma State was out of scholarships and Bynum’s mother preferred Tech, among other reasons.

After Bynum made the game-winning shot to win the game against the Oklahoma State, among other reasons.

No. 16 Cagers stomp on Roy William’s Tar Heels in thriller

Hoosters win openers

Jack proves he’s Tech’s “go-to” guy at the buzzer

Jackets win close calls against Northern Iowa, Boston College

Thanks to the basketball team for a year of great headlines!

Tech faces Wolf Pack in Sweet 16

Hewitt signs top recruits

Cagers bring back “Thrillerdome”

Devoted Tech fans see hoop dreams come true in St. Louis

Jackets’ “Big Dance” begins today

On the road to San Antonio

No. 19 Cagers wreck Duke streak

Teammates step up in wake of Elder’s injury

Bynum leads Tech to ACC wins

Northern Iowa’s Final Four Notebook - Final Four

See Final notebook, page 9
Shining Moment
By Kimberly Rieck
Sports Editor

It was around 7:30 p.m. when head coach Paul Hewitt heard on ESPN that Will Bynum was transferring to Oklahoma State. Earlier that day, Bynum had called Hewitt to tell him that he was transferring to Georgia Tech. Hewitt said he had no idea he was leaving the team.

Since Bynum’s arrival on campus, the Chicago native has made a huge impact on the basketball team. Bynum scored the winning shot against Oklahoma State with 1.6 seconds left in the Final Four, and received All-Tournament honors in San Antonio. Bynum also made game-saving plays against Nevada and Kansas.

Bynum’s road to Tech wasn’t exactly paved in gold. Bynum grew up in a tough neighborhood in Chicago. “I grew up hard growing up in Chicago. Any wrong move could be the end of your life, so I think I try to take that as no pressure on the basketball court.”

A star at Crane Tech High School, Bynum averaged 27 points per game and was highly recruited, eventually signing with Luke Schenscher’s University of Georgia Wildcats.

Bynum was enjoying his time at Arizona when tragedy struck in the summer after his freshman year.

“I had a lot of people in Madison who are real proud of me,” El- der said. “They’ve given me a lot of support. Knowing they’re behind me makes you feel real good.”

Elder was a star player and student at Morgan County High, and holds the school record for total career points. The town is also planning a “B.J. Elder Day.”

At last Friday’s River Rally in San Antonio, the entire Tech band substituted their usual uniform for the popular “Luke Schenscher has a posse” yellow T-shirts. “They’re great,” Schenscher said. “It’s a pretty big thing on campus. I’m pretty happy about it.”

While the team wore their normal uniforms for the Oklahoma State and Connecticut games, several band members wore dreadlock wigs and headbands in honor of senior of Clarence Moore. Team mascot Buzz appeared in the national championship game wearing a giant Schenscher T-shirt and Moisture Wicking attire.

One for the record books
Tech’s victory against the Cowboys Saturday night placed the year’s team in the record books for most wins in a season. The 2003-04 team, with a 30-6 record, tied the 1989-90 teams for most wins in a season. The 1989-90 team lost to eventual national champion University of Nevada-Las Vegas in the national semifinals.

Final notebook
from page 3

When we played in the NIT. We Ed on the other team, we saw him and a lot of the guys.”

Luke Schenscher, Dave Nelson and Jarrett Jack lead their respective ACC teams to the Final Four, the two also share family ties. Dave and Jack are second cousins through Jack’s father’s side and Duho’s mother-sister. The two never got to know each growing up and didn’t connect until Duho’s senior year of high school. Jack was reading the inter-net about the top high school players in the nation, and Jack’s father mentioned that Duho was his cousin. Jack contacted Duho and the two began staying in touch by phone. Duho and Jack faced each other four times during the regular season and the last time in college was at this year’s ACC tournament. Duho’s transfer from Duke in May, Braves to honor Jackets

The basketball team will throw the ceremonial first pitch at Turner Field Saturday night when the At-lanta Braves face the Chicago Cubs. However, neither the Jacks were origi-nally supposed to throw the first pitch at the season opener, but the Tuesday night game time conflict- ed with the team’s welcome-back celebration.

Nelson consoles former teammates

When the 2001 Atlantic Coast Conference Rookie of the Year walked onto the court in the final minute of the championship game, Ed Nelson was met with boos and jeers from many fans. Nelson had transferred to UC for a summer to be closer to his family.

Although Nelson is a Huskie, he went over to his former teammates after the game to console them. “The first thing I did when I went on the court was console my former team-mates because I felt bad for them losing, it was the first thought in my mind. I told them they had a great run and奪ed the title Nelson said.

Since Nelson transferred schools, he has kept up his Tech ties. “I’ve talked to them all year, and there’s more_APPLICATION involved in basketball. There’s strong friendships involved and we’ve kept communication up. The other day we hung out (in San Antonio) and I went to lunch and dinner with Luke [Schenscher], Dave [Nelson] and my dad.”

“This is not our first time seeing Ed on the other team, we saw him when we played in the NIT. We understand Ed’s decision and we’re cool with Ed. He’s still my friend, I came in with him,” McHenry said.

Despite the negative reception Nelson received from Tech’s stu-dent section at the game, he wasn’t discouraged at all by the boos. I still have a lot of fans that supported me, for every certain amount that sup-port you, you’re going to have some that disagree with you,” Nelson said.

Lewis ties record

Besides leading Tech to its first national championship basketball game, senior Marvin Lewis has now tied former Tech standout Malcolm Macker for the most games played at Tech in a career. Lewis started against Connecticut in his 130th game for the Jackets.

Elder’s home-town aids his mom

Not only has Elder’s success on the court brought much pride to Tech, his hometown of Madison, Georgia is so proud that the town is holding a “B.J. Elder Day.”

Although Nelson is a Huskie, he was traveling with teammate Luke Schenscher. “They’re a posse” yellow T-shirts. “They’re going to be a drastic change Bynum then considered going to Oklahoma State to join Tony Allen, his close friend and former high school teammate.

Bynum, became ill and had to be admitted to the hospital. Bynum left the trip to be with his mom. After she had recovered and he had gone back to school, Bynum decid-ed he wanted to transfer to a school closer to home.

“The first decision was to go back to Chicago,” he said, “but then she was like, ‘It’s going to be a little harder for you to come and visit us because you’re going to Georgia Tech.”’ Hewitt said.

The pinnacle moment of his career at Tech when Bynum scored the game winning shot against OSU. He also scored 17 points against Connecticut in the championship game.

“This is the biggest shot I ever took in my life. It’s like a dream come true, making a shot like this at this high level,” Bynum said. The shot came after Bynum had missed a layup with 1:23 left on the clock. Hewitt agreed.

“Will’s shot meant an awful lot...He’s as tough a kid as I’ve coached. When I grabbed him at half-court, he had tears in his eyes. That was huge for me to see him enjoy that moment,” Hewitt said.

In the final game of the season, Bynum scored a team-high 17 points and was named to the NCAA Final Four All-Tournament team, along with teammate Luke Schenscher.

“It’s a luxury to have a guy like Will Bynum that can come in your game after one of your top scorers gets hurt [B.J. Elder in the St. Louis Regional] and he’s not going to go out there and shrink in the moment, he’s really going to play big,” Hewitt said.
Lewis, Jack provide fire power in wake of Elder injury

By John Scaduto
Staff Writer

Tech vs. Nevada (72-67)
Team responds to Elder injury

A collective gasp resounded from the Yellow Jacket faithful as B.J. Elder went down clutching his ankle early in the game. Nevada’s star, Kirk Snyder, had failed to convert an alley-oop, and as he tried to recover he lost his footing and fell right onto Elder’s leg.

Elder was taken to the locker room for x-rays where it was discovered that he had an ankle sprain. With arguably the deepest guard set in the nation, however, the rest of the Jackets never lost composure.

“Maybe they were hiding it from me, but I never saw them panic,” Coach Paul Hewitt said. “I don’t even know if they realized he wasn’t coming back. They just continued to play.”

Captain Lewis takes over

With leading scorer Elder out for the remainder of the game, Senior Marvin Lewis caught the hot-hand for the night and his teammates just kept feeding him.

“Everybody said we’ve got to pick up our games,” Lewis said. “B.J. is a guy that brings a lot of firepower in regards to scoring. He’s our leader. But everybody just said, ‘we’ve got to do without him and move on.’”

Lewis go 4-9 from beyond the arc and score 23 points—the only Jacket in double figures. The most impressive stretch occurred when Tech finally gained the lead, 63-58, behind consecutive three-pointers by Lewis.

Tech vs. Kansas (78-71)
Team overcomes KU advantages

The odds were completely stacked against Tech for its first Elite Eight appearance since 1990. It faced a Kansas team that had made the previous two Final Fours brought nearly four times as many fans, being only five hours away from its Lawrence campus. On top of its opposition, Elder remained questionable to play.

Behind Jarrett Jack, any of those distractions just seemed to fade away, as Tech opened up the game aggressively, playing as if it were the team trying to make a third consecutive Final Four.

With a selective defensive press that proved efficient and frequent penetration by the guards, Tech dominated the first half. Kansas’ front-court was non-existent, as the team implemented a quick double-team to counter KU big man Wayne Simien. He had no field goals in the first half, and Tech enjoyed a 36-31 lead at halftime.

Slow second half leads to overtime

After a high-speed first half in which both teams looked to force the tempooffensively with little stoppage of play, the second half seemed more deliberate.

A sloppy Tech offense turned Kansas into the aggressor, as it converted quickly on several missed shots and turnovers. Kansas took its first lead of the game at 43-42 on two buckets by Simien. It was now Keith Langford that was slashing to the hoop and either finishing or kicking out to freshman J.R. Giddens for three-pointers.

But Tech would not be denied. Jack began to dominate, driving to the hoop at will, and Coach Hewitt put defensive specialist Isma’il Muhammad on the freshman phenom Giddens. This led to a run that put Tech up 65-58 with 3:30 left to play. It seemed like a comfortable lead with the Jackets solidifying the defensive end and converting on the offensive.

Kasas would come back to tie the game at x and force overtime, but big plays by Jack and Bynum down the stretch was too much for the Jayhawks to handle. The Jackets scored the final eight points of the extra period to earn their first Final Four berth since 1990.
Tech vs. Northern Iowa (65-60)

By Jody Shaw

Associate Editor

"You're going to make a name for yourself on the basketball court," Schenscher's next goal is to achieve his dream. With the Panter's one-point lead in the game, the Jackets were able to hold the Eagles scoreless in the final six minutes. The play of his former teammate, Craig Smith, said. "They said 'Look, Craig isn't playing hard.'" Hewitt praised the BC players for their effort, despite the struggles of their star. "We didn't react well to their stepped-up defense," Hewitt said. "They said 'Look, Craig isn't here today, let's make sure we keep playing hard.'" And so they did. Tech won the game, the decision forced Tech to defend the Eagles a final time. "I wanted him to pull out, but [Jack's] answer made an awful lot of sense," Hewitt said. "He didn't know how close somebody was to him, so you might as well get the sure two and defend it. As it worked out, that was the right decision." The Jackets were able to hold the Eagles scoreless in the final six seconds, but for the second straight game, they held their collective breath as an opponent's game tying three-pointer soared towards the basket.

Jackets win close calls against Northern Iowa, Boston College