**Baseball**

From page 28, a near inside the ballpark homer against Georgia Southern a few weeks ago. He has only committed two errors this season giving him an impressive .958 fielding percentage. Patterson has helped turn up 17 double plays.

On the speed of Patterson, Coach Hall said, “We have several guys that I give the green light to, and let them run whenever they feel like they can run. Patterson is a great base stealer.”

**Shortstop:** B

Tyler Greene is one of only three Tech players to start every game this season, and is hitting a respectable .387 with 10 doubles on the season. Blackwood is third on the team in doubles, as he is hitting a respectable .238 against him. Owings has a 3-2 record with an ERA of 3.99 with opponents hitting .215 off of him. A few of Burks no decisions could prove. Ryan Self has done the best job out of the bullpen. Self has pitched in 15 games, and has only given up three earned runs in 10 innings pitched.

**Offense:** 

The Jacket found their stride in early Southern California. But this year the defense has kept opponents hitting .215 off of him. A few of Burks no decisions could prove. Ryan Self has done the best job out of the bullpen. Self has pitched in 15 games, and has only given up three earned runs in 10 innings pitched.

**Relief Pitching:** C

Tech’s relief pitching has been the one area that needs the most improvement. Tech’s bullpen has allowed late inning rallies nine times this year, and the team was only able to manage to pull two wins out of it. If the Jackers have dreams of Omaha, they can’t afford to give up leads to the competition that they will be facing down the stretch.

“We have to continue to pitch better. We need to get a little better effort out of our bullpen. Those are things that we’ve been trying to solve over the last few weeks, and we’ve seen flashes of our bullpen pitching very good, but we still need to keep working to get better,” Hall said. Owings will be a needed addition to the bullpen. Freshman John Goodman has pitched well, but will need to continue to improve. Ryan Self has done the best job of the bullpen. Self has pitched in 15 games, and has only given up three earned runs in 10 innings pitched.

**Defensive:**

The defense has been the area of the great improvement for the team this year. The past few years the defense has been a Achilles heel, but this year the defense has kept them in the games. The Jackers have a 970 fielding percentage and have committed only 35 errors on the season. “That has been one of our bright spots. That has been one reason that we’ve improved,” Hall said on his team’s defense.

**Close Games:**

Tech is 2-1 in extra inning games, and they are only 7-7 in games decided by three runs or less. Tech has played a tough schedule. They have played eight games against teams ranked in the top 25, and have a record of 3-5 against them. The team’s record could have been 5-3 had they not given up a few late inning leads, but with maturity the wins will come.

“We’ve lost a few tough ones, and I think that down the stretch we will win those games,” Hall said.

**Overall:**

Tech has had a roller coaster season, but the team is starting to come together. If the bullpen can catch the rest of the team, the Jackers will have a great chance in June to have another magical run to Omaha.

The swagger is coming back to Tech and that can be dangerous for their opposition to see. Tech will take its newfound confidence on the road to No. 14 North Carolina this weekend.

**Hewitt**

From page 28, who understand what it takes to be successful in the classroom and on the playing field.”

Hewitt’s allegiance to Braine and Clough is understandable. Despite a 16-15 campaign in 2002-2003, a season that was largely viewed as an underachieving one, Braine gave Hewitt a vote of confidence by offering him a rollover contract that bumped his salary up to $750,000 annually.

Hewitt had been adamant that he would remain at Tech as long as Braine and Clough are in the picture. Tech’s head coach had been forced to deny interest in the St. John’s vacancy ad nauseam over the past few weeks because his New York ties made the move seem feasible. He was raised in the Long Island area and has a deep connection to the Northeast, but Hewitt’s home is clearly in Atlanta for the time being.

The news comes as sweet music for Tech. Hewitt will return the bulk of his lineup in 2004-2005, as well as adding four sensational freshman recruits. A possible fifth, Randolf Morris, could give the Jackets the nation’s No. 1 recruiting class next season. Morris has narrowed his choice down to Tech, Kentucky, and the NBA.

“We’re going to have Paul for a while, and that means an awful lot to our depth of ability of the program,” Braine said.

Hewitt, the 2001 ACC coach of the Year, is 142-81 in seven seasons as a head coach. He was 66-27 at St. John’s College in New York from 1997-2000.

After apprenticing under coaching great George Raveling at the University of Southern California many years ago, Hewitt has found a valuable lesson concerning the college coaching industry. “If you do your job well,” Hewitt said, “people will notice and compensate you fairly.”

**Sports**

**Baseball**

From page 28, the road to No. 14 North Carolina this weekend.

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Owings pursues national championship instead of pros

By Kyle Thomason
Contributing Writer

“[I] just want to get the ball, it doesn’t matter whether it’s to start or close the game.”
Micah Owings
Pitcher/Infielder

“I believe he’ll be going [pro]. I don’t think he’ll ever see Georgia Tech. I think he’ll take that opportunity and go. Anywhere from round one through four, it’s tough to turn down,” commented Gainesville High School coach Wayne Vickery after his star pitcher and infielder, Micah Owings, was taken by the Colorado Rockies as the No. 50 overall pick of the 2002 Major League Baseball draft.

It was certainly a difficult decision for Owings.

“It’s every kid’s dream to go play professional baseball and not have to worry about school for a while,” said Owings, who at first was leaning toward signing with the Rockies.

Owings decided not to rush things, and to take plenty of time to consider his options. As the summer wore on, negotiations with the Rockies started to slow, and Owings’ turned to two pillars of his life, his family and his faith, to lead him to the right decision.

That decision turned out to be Owings turning down a high six-digit signing bonus from the Rockies and heading to Tech. Owings’ father, Jim, is a Tech alumnus, and a former wide receiver and track all-American.

Many all-Americans would have a tough time accepting a move from the number-one starter role to the bullpen, but Owings only cares about winning. “I talked to coach and told him that I wanted to do whatever he thought would be best for the team,” said Owings.

Owings concentrates hard on his studies. “Time management is very important to me,” Owings said.

Although he was not playing all the time, Owings certainly understood the situation. “I wouldn’t want to have to decide how to fill out that lineup with the twenty best college players in the country to choose from,” Owings said. Owings stressed, “the good certainly outweighed the bad.”

After a challenging summer on the field, Owings is enjoying a stellar sophomore season. He currently leads the Yellow Jackets with 10 home runs and 35 RBIs and has been a leader on the mound, posting several impressive performances and holding opponents to a .215 batting average.

Although the Jackets’ 17-13 record has not been quite what was expected, Owings asserts, “We’re a lot better than our record shows.”

The goal for the team still remains being crowned national champion in Omaha this June.

“We all believe that we have the talent to win [the championship]. We had dominant pitching at the first of the year, and we’ve had dominant hitting lately, we can just feel that we’re so close to putting it together,” Owings said.

Owings moved to the bullpen and made his first relief appearance of the year against Georgia on March 24 and tossed three and two-thirds shutout innings to close the game. After the performance, Danny Hall said, “Micah has been our Friday night starter, but we’ve had some thoughts of keeping him in the bullpen after the way he pitched up at Georgia last week, and we have to decide what we are going to do with him.”

Many all-Americans would have a tough time accepting a move from the number-one starter role to the bullpen, but Owings only cares about winning. “I talked to coach and told him that I wanted to do whatever he thought would be best for the team,” said Owings.

Owings has not narrowed his interest down to a certain industry, but is interested in the possibilities that exist in restaurants and landscaping industries. Owings also says that he would love the chance to open a gym with his brother Josh, currently a trainer at Georgia’s Ramsey Center.

Owings has another major business decision ahead of him shortly. Draft day will be a major event at the Owings household; both Micah and his brother Jon Mark, a senior at Gainesville High School and Clemson signee, will probably see their names flash on draft day.

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“[I] just want to be an entrepreneur like my dad, although I don’t think I’ll be following him into computers,” said Owings.

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by the numbers

130
Number of games Marvin Lewis played in his Tech career. This ties him with Malcolm Mackey for the most games played in Tech history. Along with Robert Brooks, he has played under head coach Paul Hewitt for all four years that Hewitt has been Tech.

7
The place that the men’s basketball team was originally predicted to finish in the ACC’s preseason media poll. The team finished fourth in the ACC after a close loss to Duke in the ACC semifinals.

2
Place that Buzz finished in the mascot competition at the National Cheerleaders Association (NCA) Chick-Fil-A Cheer and Dance Championships in Daytona Beach. Buzz was just edged out by Missou- ri’s Truman the Tiger.

15
The number of batters Jessica Salinger struck out during a one-hit shutout against Georgia State on Wednesday afternoon. She fanned the first nine batters that she faced. Teammate Erin Voeltz tossed a three-hitter that she faced. Baseball: A-

12
The number of different Tech players who scored at least one run in Tuesday’s 25-3 win over Georgia State. Micah Owings crossed the plate four times and hit a grand slam.

Hewitt signs on for six more years

By Ryan Peck
Senior Staff Writer

Amid rampant internet and media speculation that Hewitt was the top target for the vacant St. John’s job, Athletics Director Dave Braine decided to put all the rumors to rest last week. Braine did so by locking up Hewitt with a six-year, rollover deal that will pay him approximately $1 million annually through the 2010 season. The deal was finalized on April 1, but Tech fans and Hewitt can rest assured that it was no April Fool’s joke.

“He’s going to be at Georgia Tech for a good while,” Braine said. “I know he’s happy, and we are.”

Hewitt, 40, became a hot commodity following a brilliant coaching job this season with the Jackets. Hewitt entered this season with a 48-44 record in three years at Tech, but guided the Jackets to a 28-10 record in 2003-2004, including a trip to the national title game. The 28 wins tied a school single-season record (1990).

“It really wasn’t a pressing issue in my mind because I have a pretty good situation here,” Hewitt said last Thursday. “I have two people, in Dave Braine and Dr. Clough.”

Midseason report: Jackets headed in right direction

By Michael Clarke
Contributing Writer

Tech’s baseball team is now past the midseason point. The team has an 18-13 record, and has started to come out of the slump that plagued them for much of the first half of the season. Tech has seen its fair share of ups and downs this sea- son, and now it’s time to find out what they are doing right and which areas might need im- provement.

Catching: A

Mike Nick- eas has done an outstanding job behind the plate this season. He has started in 29 of the 31 games, and has only committed one error. Nickees is hitting a respectable .306 with a team leading 19 walks and only 12 strikeouts on the year.

Hitting: B-

Clifton Remole usually hits in the bottom third of the lineup for the Jackets. Remole was the starting first baseman at the beginning of the season, but after the injury of outfielder Jeremy Slayden, he has split his time between first base and the outfield. He has started in 29 games this season and has a .294 batting average. Remole has a fielding percentage of .970. Freshman Whit Robbins has also seen time at first base this year. Robbins is hitting .296, and has only committed one error on the season, giving him a .992 fielding percent- age. First base has become a posi- tion by commit- tee with Hawranick, Nickees and Owings all seeing some time at first base in addition to Robbins and Remole.

Designated Hitter: A+

When Micah Owings is not pitch- ing, he sits in the DH spot. Owings is hitting .339 on the year, and has a .550 on-base percentage and .667. He has also driven in a team-high 40 runs on the year.

“He’s been hot, and that has been one of the reasons that we are scor- ing a lot of runs,” said Coach Danny Hall. “He’s been hitting in the mid- dle of the order and swinging the bat very well.”

Second Base: A+

Eric Patterson is one of the top second basemen in the country. Tech’s leadoff hitter has a .475 on base percentage, and has stolen 21 bases on the year. Patterson has hit four triples on the season including...