Swinging for Success
Tech men’s track team has best in the nation, but can they hack it in Ohio at the NCAA Championships? Page 19.

Hat Corner, Hat Bat
Senior pitcher Matt Boggs says although he grew up a Georgia fan, Tech baseball is what he does best. Page 19

Men’s tennis player Roger Anderson to NCAA Singles Championships
Junior Roger Anderson, the nation’s 19th-ranked singles player, made his NCAA Singles Championships appearance May 22 at the Texas A&M Tennis Center in College Station, TX. Anderson fell in the first round to UGA’s Brandon Wagner.

First-ever Tech women’s tennis player in NCAA Singles Championship
Junior singles player Jaime Wong fell to the nation’s 4th-ranked player from Stanford in the first round of women’s singles on May 21. Wong finished the season with a 21-15 singles record, the second on the team for total wins, and became the first Georgia Tech women’s tennis player to attend the championship.

Nine Track and Field members go to NCAA Championships
Six women’s track members and three men’s members head to Louisville, Kentucky for the NCAA Outdoor Championships. Chris Sinnotte, Bryan Swarn, Brenton Mahoney, and Nicole Campbell are each ranked in the top 10 for their respective events.

Lady Jackets’ successful softball season cut short
ACChamps fall in first round of regional finals, miss trip to WCWS

By John Parsons and Al Pryzegocki

The Lady Jackets fell one game short of the Women’s College World Series, dropping both games of the regional finals to Florida State on May 19th. Having played through the winner’s bracket, the softball team had two chances to beat Florida State and punch the last ticket to Oklahoma for the WCWS. It appeared that the win would come in the first game. The softballers poured out a season-high 15 hits, but managed only two runs in a 3-2 loss in nine innings.

“It was absolutely devastating. I have never felt anything like it as a coach,” Coach Kate Madden said of losing the first game. “We had a runner in scoring position two different times with two of our stud hitters up there. We had chances, and we all thought we were going.”

When asked if it was hard to play the second game after losing the first in a heartbreaking fashion, Coach Maddens said she “knew it would be hard, because we had 15 hits, almost good enough for two full games. (The team) just hit the crap out of the ball. What I did was to tell them that we have one more shot and you may never be in this position again, ever in your career, where you are one game away from playing in the World Series.”

Florida State’s momentum carried over in the second game, outplaying Tech in a 6-1 decision. The loss came a week after the Lady Jackets claimed the first ACC title in program history. Pitcher Jessica Sallinger was especially dominant, pitching a 2-3 inning and allowing just one earned run, while striking out 29.

Sallinger was the driving force behind the success of the team all season, setting both the Tech record for wins in a season by going 28-9, and the single season record for strikeouts with 337 and a microscopic 1.17 ERA.

She was named Atlantic Coast Conference Rookie of the Year and the first ACC pitcher to be named ACC Player of the Year.

“Can’t really explain it,” she said. “I had no idea what the competition was going to be like at this level. In high school, you pitch from 40 feet, and you move back three feet in college. I had no idea that I’d be able to make that adjustment so quickly. I’m still in awe.”

Tech shortstop Tara Knudsen had one of the top offensive seasons in Yellow Jacket softball history and was named a first-team NFCA All-American. Only the second All-American in program history, Knudsen garnered All-ACC and first-team Southeast All-Region recognition and led Tech in nearly every major offensive category this season.

Under the guidance of ACC coach of the Year Kate Madden, the Lady Jackets finished with a record setting 52-18 mark. The Jackets won 13 more games than the previous school high of 39 and will return 13 of 15 players for next season.

“This team just really meshed very well,” Madden said. “This year everything came together. Everybody was shooting for the same goals.”

Softball Notes for 2002
1st ACC Championship Title
1st NCAA Regional appearance
1st in USA Today/NFCA Top 25 polls
Record-setting 52 wins for the season.
Men’s Golf aims for first NCAA title

By Al Przygocki
Senior Staff Writer

Georgia Tech’s Men’s Golf Team is once again ranked first in the country and will be attempting to bring home the program’s first national title this weekend as they travel to Columbus, Ohio, to compete in the NCAA Championships. The Yellow Jackets have finished in the top four of the last four years but are hoping to achieve what has been expected of them for years—a national title.

Georgia Tech’s Men’s Golf Team earned Coach of the Year accolades for the third time. By Daniel Uhlig / STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Men’s Golf Head Coach Bruce Heppler

Bruce Heppler
Men’s Golf Head Coach

“After getting through the regionals and tying with Clemson for the win there, we’re looking forward to going up to Columbus and the Scarlet Course this week,” said Tech head coach Bruce Heppler. “Seven times this year we’ve beaten a field like this to win, so our guys have a lot of confidence. If they play like they’re capable, there is no reason we can’t win the region and have a chance to win.”

Two weeks ago, the Yellow Jackets shared the team crown with second-ranked Clemson as both teams ended in a flat-footed tie at the NCAA East Regionals held at Settindown Creek in Roswell, Ga. The title was the fourth regional title in program history, and the seventh team title overall to extend their school record for wins in a season. The seven team titles are the most by an ACC team since the NCAA began placing scheduling limitations in the early 1990s and include a streak of four in a row earlier in the season.

Tech has found a good deal of success in recent years in the NCAA Championships, finishing fourth and second in the last two years and posting 10 top-10 finishes in its history. The fourth-place finish came a year ago and the second-place showing was in 2008, as the Jackets fell in a playoff for Oklahoma State, with both teams finishing the 72-hole event at an NCAA-record 36-under par. That marked the second time that Tech had been the runner-up in the event, matching the finish of the 1993 team.

Georgia Tech’s lineup will remain the same as it has for each of the last nine tournaments, with Troy Matteson, Kris Mikkelsen, Matt Weibring and Chan Wongluekiet and Nick Thompson making up the Yellow Jackets’ contingent. One of the most solid starting fives in the nation’s top 32 individuals and all boast scoring averages among the nation’s top 32 individuals and all boast scoring averages below 75.-tech has three players ranked in the nation’s top 15, including Matteson (7th), Mikkelsen (14th) and Weibring (15th), while only one other team (Texas) has three players ranked in the top 50.

The efforts of the team have gone unnoticed, as the Jackets placed third on the All-ACC team, with Matteson earning the honor for the second-straight year and Mikkelsen and Weibring each being named to the team for the first time. Along with those honors, Chan Wongluekiet became the third Tech player to be named ACC Rookie of the Year, joining Matt Kuchar and Bryce Molder. Head coach Bruce Heppler earned Coach of the Year accolades for the third time.

When last season ended, Matthew Boggs was Tech’s starting left fielder and figured to be headed back to the infield to play second base, where he began his career. With the emergence of freshman Eric Patterson, Boggs did the veteran thing and asked where he could play to help the team. That meant a move to third base, one of the hardest positions to play in baseball.

After struggling on offense and defense, Boggs’ hot hand continued on April 11, as he was 26 for 106 with 10 RBIs in 28 games for a .245 batting average to go along with quite a few errors. Starting the Maryland series and carrying through the ACC Tournament, Boggs is 45 for his last 96, with 27 RBIs in 32 games. Boggs set a new career record for RBIs and earned ACC Player of the week honors.

In trying to explain the turnaround around Boggs, said, “I just focused more on hitting and let whatever happened on the field happen. I really think that helped me out, not worrying about it so much, I was a little more relaxed at the plate.”

His second half even resulted in Boggs’ first career home run, which brought a smile to faces of the fans, his teammates, and even Boggs himself.

“When I hit it, I knew that one didn’t get out, I was never going to hit a homer run, because that was as good as I can hit a ball. Rounding the bases, I was trying not to smile, but once I got to third, I couldn’t hold it in. Everybody made fun of me for how big my smile was coming around the bases, but it was exciting. The week after, it ran through my mind quite a few times.”

The two hallmarks of Boggs in his career have been toughness and effort. Matthew Boggs is Tech’s career leader in being hit by a pitch (53), a category not for the faint of heart. He is a gritty player who leads by example, as the fifth-year senior usually carries a silent intensity to the game.

“As far as being a leader, I don’t like to be a real vocal leader. If the time comes, I will say something, but usually I like leading by example. One thing that I’ve tried to make a point of is that in baseball there are so few things that you can control and playing hard is one of those things.”

Boggs is also at his best in the post-season, starting with an outstanding performance as a freshman at the Wichita Regional to help spearhead a Tech comeback win in the championship game.

“My freshman year at Wichita, I had a great regional, might be the best I ever played. Ever since then, once we’ve gotten to the post-season, I’ve always played pretty well. I don’t know if I’m more focused or what, but I feel like I definitely play better.”

Boggs is hoping to play well this weekend and take another step towards getting the Jackets back to Omaha for the College World Series for the first time since 1994.

“When I came to college, that was the top priority. It feels like something’s missing since we haven’t been there. We were so close my freshman year. I remember sitting in the dugout before the championship game [in the Super Regionals and] nobody on our team had a doubt that we would win that game. We ended up losing, and I remember how badly that felt...It would be very special to make it this year.”

In the regionals, Tech will host three visiting teams, Coastal Carolina, Louisdville, and intrastate rival Georgia. Boggs actually grew up a Georgia fan and if he hadn’t been a baseball player, there was a good chance he would’ve ended up in Athens.

“If it hadn’t been for baseball, I probably wouldn’t have ended up here because both my parents went to Georgia. I grew up being a Georgia fan, and everybody gives me grief about that all the time. I also thought about possibly going to some of the Ivy League schools. I’m glad that baseball worked out.”