He covers a lot of ground, and his defense has improved, although there are still occasional lapses. Jeremy Sloan has suffered a bit of a sophomore slump but has shown signs of breaking out of it in the last few weeks. Freshman Steven Blackwood has done a fantastic job filling in at all three outfield positions and DHing. He already has a walk-off home run and a grand slam to his credit, and it is building a solid case to be in the Yellow Jackets starting outfield next season.

Starting Pitching: A+
This was supposed to be the strength of the squad, and it surely has been. The starters have a combined record of 22-3 with a 3.93 ERA. Kyle Bakker and Chris Goodhue have also helped preserve late-inning leads. Add in rubber-armed lightning, and solid contributions from Nick Wagner and Jordan Crews from Nick Wagner and Jordan Crews, the bullpens haven’t faced the type of pitching pressure to the defense. The Yellow Jackets are hitting .314 as a team, scoring 8.54 runs per game, and they have 56 HR and 64 stolen bases in 55 games. That would ordinarily qualify as an A+, but there are two major reasons for concern. Tech has achieved these gains against fairly poor pitching staffs, including Duke and Maryland, the weakest teams in the ACC. Another concern is an all or nothing approach at the plate. Tech strikes out 7.8 times a game, and not putting the ball in play kills rallies, especially for a team with so much speed and the philosophy of applying pressure to the defense. The Jackets haven’t faced the type of pitching they are going to see in the coming weeks as they enter the meat of their ACC schedule, and the offense is still a concern.

Defense: C
Team defense was a problem last year and is still a concern this year. The fielding percentage is just average. For a national title contender, the team commits too many errors, and those errors appear to come from mental lapses and breaks in concentration rather than an inability to make plays. Thirty of the team’s 54 errors have come from the left side of the infield, which was expected to be stronger defensively. Davis Myers has not hit well enough to see much action in the field, and Tyler Greene seems to make errors in bunches with one bad play affecting his confidence to make the next one.

As Greene matures and begins to put more trust in his abilities and shake off bad plays, that tendency should disappear. In the meantime, the extra outs given to opposing teams show up in unearned runs, and the Jackets continue to allow more than one unearned run per game, just like last season. On the state of the club’s defensive performance, Coach Hall stated, “I think we’re just average right now. We need to get better.”

“We’ve had some of those. So, we’ve got to get better at that,” Hall said of the careless errors and mental lapses. On Tyler Greene’s defense, Hall said, “I think he’s worked hard to get better, and I think he is getting better. I think he has made some errors where maybe he’s a little careless, but I think he’s improving. I like what I’m seeing.”

Freshmen: A
Micah Owings, Tyler Greene and Jason Neighborgall have been much what we thought we had. I’m still waiting for our offense kind of lagged behind. Lately, I think our offense has gotten a lot better. Our starting pitching has been pretty good. I think our relief pitching has been okay. I’m still waiting for our team to click on all cylinders to where everybody in the lineup is hitting good, where we’re playing good defense, and all the guys we’re running out there to pitch, pitch good. We’ve seen signs of it, and now is the time of year where you really want your team to put it all together and get better.”

Donny Hall
Head Coach
By Katie Neal
Sports Editor

On Saturday, the Georgia Tech men’s lacrosse team traveled to Auburn, Alabama to face SELC conference rival Auburn, who Tech had not beaten since 1997. The Jackets entered the game ranked in the No. 20 position, while the Tigers were in the No. 15 spot. The winner of the contest would take the No. 3 seed in the upcoming SELC tournament in Atlanta.

With an aggressive run and gun style, the higher-ranked Auburn Tigers put forth a tough battle, but ultimately was overpowered 11-7 by the Jackets, who put forth a tough defense and an aggressive offensive throughout the match.

“It was a great team win for us. We came in with a strong game plan and executed it perfectly. This was a monkey we really wanted to get off our back. Our defense, led by freshman goalie Andy Babcock and defenders Mark Munroe, Bryant Jarrell, Brent Burdett, Mike Verga, Alex Hreiz, Brady Broich, Justin Gomez and Mike Algozer, did an excellent job holding AU to their lowest point total of the year,” said Head Coach Ken Lovic.

The first quarter of the game ended with both teams tied at two and the second quarter began with Tech scoring three consecutive goals after Auburn’s one goal to start the quarter.

Ryan Hansen, Gary Bridges and Will Oakley had the significant goals that left Tech ahead 5-3 at the half. Tech’s defense held strong throughout the second half, pushing the Jackets toward their victory.

Freshman goalie Andy Babcock led the Tech defense with his continuous blocking of Auburn shots. The Yellow Jacket defense currently has the lowest goals allowed in the SELC.

“I am happy to get this win, said Babcock. “Auburn is a strong team and I thank my defense, which did a great job limiting Auburn to low percentage shots all day. We faced a number of man-down situations which the defense responded to with perfection.”

“As a senior I am glad to finally see us beat them. We are playing with a lot of confidence right now and it feels great to come together. [Andy] Babcock did a great job,” said defensive teammate Bryant Jarrell.

The Jacket’s offensive team pushed through at the end of the third with two goals of their own from Bob Jeager and Sean Dvoren. The third quarter ended with Tech ahead 7-4.

The fourth quarter led to some added excitement, as Auburn’s Adam Zessinger and Tech’s Bryant Jarrell got into a small battle that led to the referee breaking it up and throwing penalties on both. Tech then stopped Auburn’s penalty attempt and then added four goals to add insult to the Tiger’s injury.

Will Oakley, Jimmy Pallotta, Craig Kronenthal and Jeager all scored for Tech to put the score at 11-4. With the victory over the Auburn Tigers, the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets secured the No. 3 seed in the upcoming SELC tournament. Tech will face the No. 6 seed in the opening round of the tournament, to be held at North Springs High School here in Atlanta.

“This was a huge step for us. We are showing more and more each game we can play with the big boys nationally. This win has secured us a great seed in the upcoming SELC tournament. Offensively, we clicked at the right times today. It felt good to come together for this one; we were really focused,” said midfielder Will Oakley.

Next up for the men’s team will be in-state rivals Georgia Bulldogs, who the Jackets travel to Athens on Thursday to play against for Tech’s season ending game.
Tech takes third at nationals

By Katie Neal
Sports Editor

The Georgia Tech gymnastics club team finished its year in a position that the team members never even fathomed to be in, especially since it is only their second season in competition. The Yellow Jacket team traveled to Austin, Texas on Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12 to compete against 34 other nationally ranked competitors.

At the end of only their second year in existence, the Georgia Tech gymnastics team took home the No. 3 place in the national competition, finishing just shy of the national title that was taken home by Notre Dame.

"When Tara [Hayden] and I started the club last year, we only hoped to be where we are after a few more years," said Elizabeth Deems, one of the co-founders of the club.

The team’s future hopes consist of one day becoming a full varsity team. With the outstanding performances from the past two years, and the dedication of the ladies on the team, that hope could become a reality possibly very soon.

The Jackets had some outstanding performances from all their team members, especially Stephanie Carter, who placed sixth in all-around, second on the floor exercises, and second on the beam, and played an integral part in leading the Jackets towards their finish at nationals. Mary Lambo placed ninth in All-Around and eighth on the beam, and Tara Hayden took eighteenth on the vault.

The Jackets’ third place finish was with a score of 139.475 points, a little less than a point behind first place Notre Dame, who won with a score of 140.7 points. This year’s third place finish was a huge improvement over last year’s seventeenth place ending.
Football

from page 32

"Touchdown" Tony Hollings takes a break to sign a fan’s t-shirt. Hollings was one of several injured players missing from the White-Gold game.

The Technique needs section editors for the summer semester. If you’re interested, e-mail editor@technique.gatech.edu
Spring scrimmage has mixed reviews

By Ryan Peck
Staff Writer

It was a good news, bad news scenario at the Georgia Tech spring football scrimmage this Saturday. The good news is that Tech’s defense looked strong, aggressive and opportunistic. The bad news is that Tech fans hoping for improved play and consistency on the offensive side of the ball took little solace away from that particular Tech effort Saturday. Even more disconcerting, the defense outscored the offense 26-24, without ever having possession of the ball.

Coach Chan Gailey decided to conduct things a little differently in his second White-Gold game. As opposed to the traditional format of an offensive unit and a defensive unit on each team, the Jackets scrimmaged as an offensive team vs. a defensive team. Pitting two different offensive units on separate teams became complicated, and utterly impossible, with the slow of injuries experienced on that side of the ball this spring, particularly on the offensive line. At some positions on the line, Tech had no backups available due to attrition from injuries.

The defense was credited with points as follows: six points for a defensive touchdown, three points for an interception or fumble recovery, two points for forcing the offense to go three-and-out and one point for holding the offense without a score on any series.

Sophomore cornerback Reuben Houston made all the difference for the defensive Jackets. Houston, the hero of Saturday’s scrimmage, intercepted Damarious Bilbo on the team’s first play, and blocked a potential game-winning field goal on the final play to lift the defense to a 26-24 victory over the offense.

Consistency was the difference for the Yellow Jackets at the White-Gold game as the defense outscored the offense 26-24 on the scrimmage. The offensive team’s attempts at continuity were blocked by several false starts.

The Yellow Jackets play tonight at Russ Chandler stadium against Wake Forest Deacons at 7 p.m.

Baseball midseason report card: Grade A’

By Al Przygocki
Senior Staff Writer

The college baseball season is a little over halfway old, and it’s time for some midseason evaluations. It’s time to assess how the freshmen have done, how the position changes have worked out, how the pitching looks, how the defense has performed and what the Jackets need to do to get better. Let’s go position by position, and then answer the big questions at the end.

Catching A

Mike Nickaen has done an outstanding job both behind the dish and from the batter’s box as well. Nickaen has been among the team leaders in batting average and is on the way to being named to the watch list for the Johnny Bench Award which is given to the nation’s top catcher each year. He hasn’t thrown out quite as high a percentage of runners as he did last season, but teams are still hesitant to test him. Andy Hawranick has also done a solid job in a backup role. Hawranick has batted for a solid average, cut down half of opponent base stealers, and has been handling the pitchers very well.

First Base/Designated Hitter: A

Clifton Remole hasn’t played first base as often as he would like, due to a lingering knee injury this season. A solid defensive first baseman, Remoe has had to spend some time as the designated hitter. The pain hasn’t slowed down his bat though, as he recently had a 16-game hitting streak. When he isn’t pitching, Micah Owings has also split time between first base and designated hitter. Owings has been hitting bombs all season, but he needs to cut down on some strikeouts to become a truly fearsome hitter.

Second Base: B

When fully healthy, Eric Patterson is one of the best second basemen in the country. Patterson showed some of this in the first month of the season, as he stole 17 bases in his first 21 games while helping to turn 29 double plays. Patterson has been slowed by a hamstring injury, which hasn’t allowed him to steal a base in over three weeks. Look for E-Pat to get healthy, get his batting average back up to his usual standards and start dominating games from the base paths down the stretch.

Shortstop: A

Brought in for his defense, Tyler Greene has been one of Tech’s best