

TO GIVE UP OR GIVE EVERYTHING



DTH FILE/HALLE SINNOTT

Sophomore sparkplug Ryan Switzer scored all nine of his touchdowns in 2013 in the final seven games of the season. After dissapointing himself in the first six games, he knew he had to make a change.

Sophomore Ryan Switzer flipped a switch last season — can he do it again?

By Daniel Wilco
Senior Writer

Ryan Switzer misjudged the flight of the ball, and it was slowly soaring over his head. Two Virginia defenders were quickly approaching, and Switzer's eyes drifted upfield to eye a potential escape route during the November game. He extended his gloved hands in order to guide the floating pigskin safely into his chest, but he had taken his eyes off the ball. It slipped right through. A muffed punt — the stuff nightmares are made of.

'Everything was moving so fast'

When Switzer first got to Chapel Hill, his eyes were upfield. It wasn't a nightmare, though. He was living out his dream of playing college football and the opportunities were endless. But he lost sight of the ball. In his first six collegiate games, the kid who

had enough high-school MVP trophies piled in his room to warrant a TLC show had scraped together just 174 all-purpose yards and zero touchdowns. "The game wasn't fun anymore," he said. "It kind of hit me that I wasn't playing how I play. I wasn't making the big plays." To be fair, as it is for most college freshmen, Switzer's first year was wrought with change. Though he had made his name in the recruiting circuit as a talented tailback, UNC coaches saw his forte elsewhere — at wide receiver. And adjusting to UNC's pace was tiring. "In a high-tempo, complex offense, you don't really have time to think; you only have time to react," said co-offensive coordinator and wide receivers coach Gunter Brewer. Unfortunately, Switzer's reaction was to think. "I was a little bit nervous," Switzer said. "I'd been wanting to play college football my whole life, and being out there, it was all sur-

real to me. Everything was moving so fast, especially mentally." All of that movement and change culminated in a Thursday night game in October against Miami. UNC was 1-4, on the verge of an irrecoverable downward spiral, and Switzer was playing on the biggest stage of his career. But he couldn't live up to his own expectations. The Tar Heels lost, and Switzer was close to losing hope. "I had a pretty decent game against Miami, but that was it. I had a pretty decent game," he said. "We were 1-5, things weren't going well, and we needed a spark. I said, 'I've got to do something.'" Switch on, Switz on

With the football on the ground and Cavalier defenders descending upon him during that game in November, the pressure had reached its peak, and the only options were

to give up or to give everything. So Switzer flipped a switch. Three broken tackles and 60-odd yards later, he reached pay dirt. He had snatched success from the jaws of disaster. In the first game after he decided to switch on, Switzer found the end zone for the first time, and UNC won a game for the first time in five weeks. Switzer went on to tally eight more touchdowns and rack up almost 700 all-purpose yards in the final seven games of the season. He went from averaging 10 yards per punt return to 25 and tied an NCAA single-season record with five returns for a touchdown. North Carolina won six of its last seven games. "I wish I could have had what I had the last seven for the first six, but I didn't," Switzer said. "But people remember what you do the last half of the season. And they definitely remember all of that." How could they forget?

SEE SWITZER, PAGE 4

Mack Hollins: The Unlucky Kid

Now a scholarship player, the walk-on is looking to prove himself yet again.

By Dylan Howlett
Senior Writer

Here comes The Unlucky Kid, swallowing another mouthful of misfortune. Mack Hollins often takes the most out-of-the-way route to the football field, his dad thought it uncanny enough to attach "unlucky" to his middle son's name. "When it came to getting lucky breaks," Richard Hollins says, chuckling, "Mack always had to toe the rope." Here he is, walking on with North Carolina's special teams, jamming his foot through the tradesman's entrance to Division I football. It's the job no one wants, sprinting with the abandon of a runaway train through a mine-field of brawn. "Mack," says Luke

Paschall, Hollins' special teams and scout team coach, "Effort's going to be how you get on the field. It may not be receiver, but special teams. And effort." Effort? No sweat. "Mack's one of the hardest workers on the team, easily," says senior Luke Heavner, a fellow walk-on and receiver. "Outwork everybody" served as the coda to Richard's text exchanges with his son. Put your head down, do your job. Someone will notice. Everyone soon warms to the guy who, as Richard says, would give them the shirt off his back. The upperclassmen give him nicknames, chat him up, wrap their arms around him, elect him special teams captain in 2013, see him win a scholarship and soar up the depth chart this week to No. 2 on the weak side. He's the walk-on who is far less an outsider than a brother. Easy, there. Can't be that easy for The Unlucky Kid, he who wears No. 13. He who gets kicked off his football team in Rockville, Md.,

during his senior year for defending himself against an antagonistic teammate. He who clears his name after a month-long court dispute when the lineman's parents file assault charges. He who takes a three-month football sojourn after high school to Virginia's Fork Union Military Academy when no D-I program calls. "You're just out here in no man's land trying to function and taking orders and marching," says John Shuman, Fork Union's football coach. The day before he leaves for UNC's training camp in 2012, Mack sprains his ankle hopping off of his Rockville patio. Richard shakes his head. "You can't make the club in the tub, man." Yes, this is more like it. Two years before the scholarship lands, Mack takes out loans and pays for out-of-state tuition, for room and board at Craige North his first year and Odum Village his second. He

SEE MACK, PAGE 4

'Shak' Rashad brings flavor to Tar Heels

Whatever name you call him, the junior bandit is the team's personality.

By Robbie Harms
Senior Writer

Quick. Pay attention. We don't have that long with him. He's a college football player, Shakeel Rashad, a 6-foot-2, 245-pound bandit with practice and class and workouts and film. He always has to be at the next place, because wasted time means wasted opportunity to get better. Right now — a muggy Thursday after UNC's afternoon practice, when beads of sweat dot his shirtless frame — hundreds of players across the country are surely talking to the media, repeating those stock

phrases that have all but eliminated personality. Yes, that's the easy way to typify him: a Division I athlete, another 20-year-old assigned the thankless task of being a full-time student and a full-time moneymaker for the university. But that'd be unfair. Rashad's something more. Always has been. So let's cherish him before he has to go. Here we go... The question: "Favorite color?" "Salmon," he says, deep-voiced and well-spoken. "People will call it pink. Maybe I'm color blind, maybe I'm not, but I call it salmon." Car? "Is it (New York Knicks guard) J.R. Smith that has an armored truck? I love that." SEE SHAKEEL, PAGE 4

Offense: Key players to watch

Though North Carolina football coach Larry Fedora hasn't said who his starting quarterback is, the depth chart does clearly reveal other offensive threats.

Quinshad Davis

Wide Receiver



The 6-foot-4, 215-pound Davis returns to Chapel Hill for his third season with the Tar Heels as a preseason All-ACC candidate. As a sophomore, Davis just missed All-ACC honors, but did receive honorable-mention accolades. During the 2013 season, the South Carolina native finished with 48 catches for 730 yards and a team-leading 10 touchdowns. His 109 career receptions through his freshman and sophomore campaigns is the second-highest number for a Tar Heel in his first two seasons of play, only behind Hakeem Nicks who had 113. Davis' lanky frame should be an advantage in the endzone again in his junior season. He's also thrown two touchdown passes.

Bug Howard

Wide Receiver



When Howard takes the field Saturday it'll be almost one year removed from his first career touchdown — a 15-yard reception from the hands of quarterback Marquise Williams. Since then, he's recorded three more — finishing his freshman season with 22 catches for 278 yards and four touchdowns. Like Davis, Howard's build is advantageous both to him and his quarterbacks looking for him in the endzone. At 6-foot-4 and 200 pounds, he and Davis, along with sophomore Dalton Stogner are the tallest receivers Fedora has. Bug — who got his nickname from his grandmother — has added muscle during the offseason and should be a bigger threat.

T.J. Logan

Running back



Though quarterback Marquise Williams led the entire North Carolina football team in rushing yards, with 536 in 2013, Logan wasn't far behind with 533. Now a sophomore, Logan is ready to take more control of the ground game and is coming off of a freshman season that featured four rushing touchdowns and an average of 5.7 yards per carry. Logan, along with Romar Morris, Khris Francis and talented newcomer Elijah Hood will look to carry an offense that boasts a slew of depth at the running back position. As a freshman, Logan appeared in nine games and started four. He racked up 201 all-purpose yards in UNC's 39-17 Belk Bowl victory against Cincinnati in December.

Jack Tabb

Tight end



Tabb, a 6-foot-3, 250-pound senior out of Red Bank, N.J. could possibly be poised with the biggest challenge of anyone on the team — replacing Eric Erbronn. During the 2013 season, Erbronn, who was the No. 10 pick in the NFL Draft to the Detroit Lions, finished his junior year with 62 receptions and 973 receiving yards. Tabb, on the other hand, finished with just seven receptions and 119 receiving yards. As a junior, Tabb appeared in 11 games at tight end and special teams. He also has a little bit of experience at linebacker, recording 11 tackles on the season. Though the senior is expected to see time on both sides of the ball, replacing Erbronn will likely take priority as the true challenge.



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Defense: Key players to watch

With four starters gone to the NFL and four more suspended for the team’s opening game Saturday, the defense will call on its few leaders to pave the way.

Dominique Green
Safety



As a true freshman, Green made an immediate impact on the UNC defensive backfield with his aggressive style of play. The walk-on started all 13 games for the Tar Heels during the 2013 season and finished sixth on the team with 59 tackles, second on the team in interceptions and third on the team in pass breakups. Green’s stellar freshman campaign resulted in him receiving a scholarship during the offseason and has him poised for success in 2014. With the loss of Tre Boston, who led the team in tackles and interceptions in 2013, to the NFL, Green enters this season as one of the leaders in the secondary and has the potential to claim all-conference honors.

Norkeithus Otis
Bandit



The 6-foot-1, 235-pound Otis enters his senior season with lofty expectations after being named to the watch list for the Bednarik Award, which is presented to the College Defensive Player of the Year. Otis exploded onto the scene during the 2013 season at the bandit position — finishing second on the team with 7.5 sacks and 13 tackles for loss — after a majority of his playing time came on special teams during his first two years in Chapel Hill. In UNC’s Belk Bowl win over Cincinnati, Otis recorded seven tackles, two tackles for loss and a sack. With the loss of Kareem Martin to the NFL, Otis becomes the leader of the UNC defense.

Jeff Schoettmer
Linebacker



The redshirt junior linebacker from Dallas looks to continue to anchor the Tar Heel linebacking corps in 2014. After posting only 23 tackles in 2012, Schoettmer played in all 13 games in 2013 and concluded his breakout sophomore season with 85 tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss and six quarterback hurries. In the Belk Bowl against Cincinnati, Schoettmer played through a shoulder injury and recorded one tackle. He had offseason surgery on the shoulder, which forced him to miss spring practice, but has returned to practice this fall at full health. The 6-foot-2, 235-pound linebacker looks to be a key contributor for the Tar Heels at one of its strongest positions.

Tim Scott
Safety



After practice Wednesday, North Carolina football coach Larry Fedora announced that four players are suspended for the team’s opener against Liberty for an alleged hazing incident. Brian Walker, Des Lawrence, M.J. Stewart and Donnie Miles will all be absent from the sidelines Saturday, leaving Scott to pick up a secondary that will now be without two starters for a game in Walker and Lawrence. Scott — the only starting senior in the defensive backfield — has transitioned into a free safety from a cornerback to fill the role of Tre Boston. As a junior, Scott started in all 13 games and finished with 49 tackles, including six in the Belk Bowl where he played safety.

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DTH FILE/ISABELLA BARTOLUCCI

After his breakout second half of last season, Ryan Switzer stands alone as UNC's only true freshman to earn All-America honors.

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SWITZER

FROM PAGE 1

The freshman who couldn't live up to his own expectations was quickly blowing past everybody else's.

Suddenly, the award hoarder was back with a vengeance.

He became the first true freshman in North Carolina history to earn All-American honors and was named to almost any other All-Anything team he was eligible for.

He received the College Football Performance Award for the nation's top punt returner, just a year after former second-round pick Giovanni Bernard did.

He snagged the MVP trophy in the Tar Heels' Belk Bowl victory and then he took two records away from the bronze hands of Charlie Justice, who stands watch on the outskirts of Kenan stadium.

The Ryan Switzer who stood in the shadows for six games was gone, replaced by the one who overshadowed

any comparisons.

Switch on, Switz on.

Comparisons

This was the real Switzer. His hands are legendarily quick, his feet even faster – he ran the fastest shuttle on the team this year – and his vision impeccable. But that's not what makes Switzer great or what helped him flip that switch, says quarterback and roommate Mitch Trubisky.

"One of his greatest assets is his desire to be great," Trubisky said. "His hunger is off the charts. Nobody wants it more than him."

And after the second half of the 2013 season, nobody saw more comparisons than Switzer – from 'Gio 2.0' to Wes Welker, with whom he shares the NCAA punt return record.

But now he faces the harshest comparison of them all – can 2014 Ryan Switzer live up to the precedent 2013 Ryan Switzer set? The ever-confident Switzer holds one absolute true, regardless of expectations.

"When the ball is in my hands, I can make a play," he said. "I can make something out of nothing."

And as far as comparisons go? Those are nothing.

"I like to think of myself as my own player," he said. "And hopefully one day, people will say, 'I want to be the next Ryan Switzer.' Or, 'I model my game after this guy.' That's what I'm working for."

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SHAKEEL

FROM PAGE 1

Hobby?

"Binge-watching Netflix." TV show?

"That's tough. I'm in the middle of 'One Tree Hill' right now. It's incredible. I'm about to finish the last season. But all-time TV show? One Tree Hill's making its way up there, but '24' probably. I've watched '24' like eight times through now."

New Year's resolution?

"Eat vegetables at least twice a week."

Dream job?

"Is this assuming I have the abilities to do whatever I want?"

Yes.

"Professional singer."

Biggest pet peeve?

"Prime numbers."

Why do you wear No. 42?

"(Hitchhiker's) Guide to the Galaxy: 'What is the answer to life, the universe, and everything?' And if you just google that – 'What is the answer to life, the universe, and everything?' – No. 42 pops up."

Life dream?

"Hit the lotto straight out of college, and then I'd live on a beach somewhere and fish for my own food."

Nickname?

"I have a lot of nicknames. I'm the only one that calls myself all of them."

He laughs.

"There's St. Shaktrick, Shakinabox, Shakadilly, Shaktastic, Shakapotamus, Shaktus..."

Here he enlists help.

"Jeff, give me some nicknames!" Rashad shouts to friend and linebacker Jeff Schoettmer.

Schoettmer names a few.

"Shaktus...did I say Shakattack?" Rashad continues. "Umm Shakadocious? You just kind of add anything to Shak, and that's my nickname."

Who is Shakeel Rashad?

"He's...that's tough...He's Shak. Shakeel Rashad is 'insert nicknames here.' That's what I'm gonna go with. That's all I am."

He sold himself short.

He was born in Charleston, S.C., and shaped by Jacksonville, Fla., where he wakeboarded and played sports.

In middle school he noticed that he was bigger than his classmates. In high school he had no eyebrows for two weeks.

"We were just hanging out one night and we just, ah, I don't know, I just woke up the next morning with no eyebrows," Rashad explains. "And

apparently he had put Nair on 'em in my sleep.

Episcopal High in Jacksonville, Rashad says, had 800 students across six grades. Its football team had 19 to 25 players. Rashad, 82 tackles and eight sacks as a junior, was one of its best.

He picked UNC because of its colors and "sick uniforms." He enrolled early in January 2012. He moved in on a Friday. He took a final tour on Saturday. He went to bed early on Sunday, because he was excited about starting college football.

He tore his meniscus the following morning in the first workout.

He rehabbed and returned for his freshman season: 18 tackles, a forced fumble and an interception in 11 games. He was excited for a strong sophomore season.

He re-tore his meniscus on the first day of training camp "running into a bag, something that doesn't even hit back." He rehabbed and returned for the last five games, when he had nine tackles and a sack.

Now, he's back, again.

Coach Larry Fedora says the linebacking corps, of which Rashad is a member, is experienced and motivated. Rashad likes the offense, especially its running backs.

"It's a trio," he says.

"Actually there's more than that. What comes after trio? Quad? Quad? Quado?"

Quartet.

"Quartet! Like the Barbershop Quartet. That's what it is. It's an incredible quartet."

Rashad smiles a lot. He laughs even more. He knows what he is: a breath of fresh air in a culture that too often suffocates character.

"I've never been good at being serious," he says. "The fact that I come in and people like embrace the fact that I'm the goofball makes my life a heck of a lot easier."

Shoot. Rashad has to leave soon. A golf cart of his teammates approaches.

"C'mon Shak, we gotta go!" shouts one of them.

"C'mon Shak!" yells another.

"C'mon Radioshak!"

OK. Last question: How should this story end?

"One of the characters in One Tree Hill, his sign-out is – he's a newscaster, news reporter – his sign-out is – his name's Mouth – he's like: 'I'm Mouth, and you just heard a mouthful.' So probably, 'I'm Shak, and you just heard a mouthful.'"

Then he's gone.

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MACK

FROM PAGE 1

buys a meal plan and scarfs down Ramen noodles and PB&J in between practices, film sessions and classes.

Here's Mack: Trying to claw his way onto the team, trying to leap from special teams chum to the Kenan Stadium turf, trying to impress a group of coaches that barely recall this 6-foot-3-inch, 200-pound unknown. And he's worried, above all, how his parents will afford the cost of out-of-state tuition. Richard, an assistant fitness trainer at Life Time Fitness and Karyn, who works in sales, toil to keep oldest son Brian at Stanford and Mack at UNC, with youngest son Drew helping the cause by opting

for the Marines. But that's the deal, Richard would tell them: Don't you worry about a thing. We're doing our job – you do yours. Two years later, they'd drive six hours down from Maryland to thank the coaching staff in person for awarding Mack his scholarship.

The job of the walk-on isn't for the faint of football. Richard knew it, having roomed with one in the early '80s as a wide receiver at West Virginia. "It's not going to be easy," Richard always said.

Neither is switching positions, from safety to wide receiver in 2013. Or learning a new playbook. Whatever's necessary to sniff the roster.

"There's nothing easy about it," says Heavner. "You've gotta come out, and if you

screw up, that was your shot, and you get it taken away."

Here's one shot for Mack: He's on the field at Kenan Stadium in September 2013, by now a special teams regular. There are players, Paschall says, who play until they think the play is over. Then there are players who play until the play is truly over. Mack embarks on a 35-yard sprint, barreling downfield "like a racehorse," Richard says, catching up with his incendiary punt returner Ryan Switzer to lay the last blocker on his backside.

Now, in 2014 and a few weeks shy of his 21st birthday, he's here, far more than noticed, working his way into UNC's receivers' rotation.

Shuman and Paschall, now at Arkansas State, are convinced that one day he will get a call from an NFL team.

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Pirates both lose and return 14 starters



Ruffin McNeill coached ECU to a 2013 upset over UNC.

Ruffin McNeill enters his fifth season at the helm of East Carolina football after coaching the Pirates to a 10-3 record last season, including an upset win against the Tar Heels.

McNeill spent 10 years at Texas Tech before he was named head coach of his alma mater on Jan. 21, 2010.

As a player, McNeill was a star defensive back in the late 70s and by 1980, he had landed his first job as a defensive high school coach.

In his four years at East Carolina, McNeill owns a 29-22 overall record.

Key Offensive Returners:

Quarterback Shane Carden, wide receiver Justin Hardy, offensive tackle Ike Harris, wide receiver Isaiah Jones, center C.J. Struyk, offensive tackle Tre Robertson.

Key Defensive Returners:

Cornerback Detric Allen, inside linebacker Zeek Bigger, nose tackle Chrishon Rose, defensive end Terrell Stanley

Key Departures:

Running back Vintavious Cooper, offensive guard Will Simmons, wide receiver Reese Wiggins, cornerback Adonis Armstrong, outside linebacker Derrell Johnson, free safety Damon Magazu, defensive end Lee Pegues, strong safety Chip Thompson, inside linebacker Kyle Tudor, outside linebacker Gabe Woullard, kickoff returner Lance Ray, punter Trent Tignor

Key Newcomers:

Wide receiver Trevon Brown, wide receiver Curtis Burston, defensive back Blake Norwood, defensive back Cody Purdie

Breakout Player:

Wide receiver Justin Hardy is one of East Carolina's most electric playmakers. He was selected as a third-team All-American by Phil Steele's College Football Preview Magazine, and in 2013, he set single-season school records for receptions (114) and receiving yards (1,284).

| EAST CAROLINA | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Last year's record | 10-3, 6-2 - C-USA |
| Finished in division | 2nd - East |
| 2014 predicted finish | 2nd - AAC |
| Biggest game | at South Carolina |



SOURCE: ECU MEDIA RELATIONS

DTH/TYLER VAHAN

San Diego State on roll as Aztecs keep winning



Rocky Long has three back-to-back winning seasons for SDSU.

Rocky Long heads into his sixth season at San Diego State and his fourth as the Aztecs' head coach.

The two-time Mountain West Coach of the Year is 25-14 in his three years at the helm of San Diego State University.

Long started as a quarterback at the University of New Mexico and posted consecutive winning seasons in 19-1971.

In his first year, Long guided the Aztecs to an 8-5 season — the best inaugural season for a head coach at San Diego State since 1986.

Key Offensive Returners:

Quarterback Quinn Kaehler, wide receiver Ezell Ruffin, offensive lineman Darrell Greene

Key Defensive Returners:

Defensive end Dontrell Onuoha, linebackers Josh Gavert and Cody Galea,

Key Departures:

Running back Adma Muema, left tackle Bryce Quigley

Key Newcomers:

Linebacker Fred Melifonwu, defensive tackle Sergio Phillips, defensive end Dakota Turner

Breakout Player:

Quarterback Quinn Kaehler

Biggest Question Mark:

Running back Donnel Pumphrey must replace Muema, who had most of SDSU's carries last year. But the Aztecs' two-back system made sure Pumphrey had lots of experience.



SOURCE: SDSU ATHLETICS MEDIA RELATIONS

DTH/CHRIS GRIFFIN

| SAN DIEGO STATE | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Last year's record | 8-5, 6-2 MWC |
| Finished in division | 2nd - West |
| 2014 predicted finish | 3rd - West |
| Biggest game | at North Carolina |



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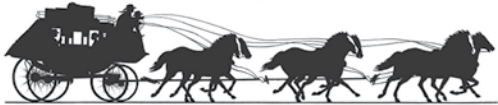
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QB Stoudt to take over Clemson’s offense

Pat James
Assistant Sports Editor

For three years, Clemson quarterback Cole Stoudt stood on the sidelines as Tahj Boyd, the ACC record-holder for passing touchdowns, helmed one of the most dynamic offensive attacks in the nation. But after carrying the Tigers to a 32-8 record during that span, including a victory in 2013’s Orange Bowl, Boyd is in the NFL, and Stoudt has inherited the keys to Clemson’s high-octane offense. Filling the shoes of one


of the best quarterbacks in college football for one of the nation’s top offenses is a pressing task for the senior, who has taken less than 300 snaps in his career. Ever since being officially crowned Boyd’s successor on April 14, Stoudt said he’s ignored the spotlight and lofty expectations set for him and remains concentrated on leading his teammates into battle Aug. 30 against Georgia. “I knew that when I was announced the starter that the quarterback is the face of the program, and I knew there was going to be some pressure of people constantly talking to you, constantly looking at your every single move,” Stoudt said. “But it’s just something I really don’t focus on that much, because I don’t want to be focused on what other people think of me.” Despite entering this season with limited playing experience, Stoudt has proven himself when he’s been thrust onto the field. As a backup, Stoudt completed 86 of 119 passes for 742 yards and eight touchdowns with one interception — most of which he posted in garbage time. He shined in the team’s spring game by passing for 304 yards and four touchdowns on 16-of-24 passing. Stoudt said he’s had to bid his time over the past three years — seeing his snaps increase each season and Boyd flirt with the NFL draft following a stellar 2012 season — but his patience

is what has allowed him to reach this point and mature throughout the process. “I was very patient for the last three years, and every single time I got in, I just maximized my opportunity,” Stoudt said. “Coaches come up to me and say, ‘One reason why you’ve succeeded is because of your patience.’ And I totally agree with that.” Coach Dabo Swinney said he doesn’t see Clemson’s offensive production dipping with Stoudt under center and his experience in the offense led by offensive coordinator Chad Morris is what will allow the Tigers to keep firing on all cylinders. “He’s very smart. He understands what we’re doing,” Swinney said. “This guy has been in the system for three years — every meeting, same coach, same system — so he’s very prepared.” After Boyd and the offense successfully carried the Tigers over the past three seasons, it’s the defense, led by 2013 All-American defensive end Vic Beasley, that appears to be Clemson’s strong suit heading into this season. But Beasley, who predicts the defense could finish the season ranked as the nation’s best, said he trusts Stoudt and the offense to not miss a beat. “I have a lot of confidence in it,” Beasley said. “I believe in Cole. He’s my quarterback, so I’ve got to believe in him. It’s in his hands.”

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A new era begins for Duke football

By Brendan Marks
Assistant Sports Editor

David Cutcliffe knows what everyone thinks about Duke football. They say last year was a fluke. They say quarterback Anthony Boone can’t stay healthy, or too many key players are missing from last season. The excuses go on. The coach hears these things and ignores them. He has a point. For a team that won ten games and made it to the ACC Championship game a year ago, it doesn’t make sense to change anything. “I don’t think we’ve ever changed; I think we were being, without anybody knowing it, extremely successful when we were 3-9 two years in a row, and the reason I say that is that we were getting better every single day,” Cutcliffe said. “When we go to work, regardless of the outcome on Saturday, when we go back on that practice field, the blueprint has to be great habits.” Those habits finally paid off for the Blue Devils (10-4, 6-2 ACC) in 2013. With 11 players



DTH FILE PHOTO

With two 3-9 seasons still fresh on their mind, the Blue Devils are ready to prove their winning 2013 season wasn’t a fluke. to the NFL, the Blue Devils are now without two of their best defenders from 2013. Another loss came Aug. 11, when linebacker Kelby Brown tore his ACL. Even with the ACC’s leading tackler David Helton back, Brown’s 114 tackles from last season will be tough to replace. “I hate to say it this way, but man, it seems like I got all the glory, but David did all the dirty work; you know, he led the ACC in tackles, barely got any recognition for it. But he’s not a guy who needs that,” said Brown. “He knows the defense really, really well, and he makes almost no mental errors, and that’s what it takes to be a great linebacker.” The media will assume they know his team, but for Cutcliffe, none of those critics matter. After all, he saw what his team could accomplish — why listen to anyone else?

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FSU primed to repeat as ACC champs



Florida State is seeking its second consecutive ACC title.

Coach Jimbo Fisher and his Florida State football team culminated their 2013 season with a BCS National Championship. But after Georgia stole defensive coordinator Jeremy Pruitt in the off-season, Fisher will need quarterback Jameis Winston and his offense to replicate their 2013 form if the Seminoles have any hope of reaching the first College Football Playoff.

Key Offensive Returners:

Quarterback Jameis Winston, offensive tackle Cameron Erving, kicker Roberto Aguayo

Key Defensive Returners:

Linebacker Terrance Smith, defensive back P.J. Williams

Key Departures:

Wide receiver Kelvin Benjamin, running back Devonta Freeman, linebacker Telvin Smith

Key Newcomers:

Running back Dalvin Cook, wide receiver Ermon Lane, defensive end Lorenzo Featherston

Breakout Player:

Defensive end Mario Edwards Jr.

Biggest Question Mark:

Quarterback Jameis Winston enters the 2014 season following one of the most decorated college football seasons ever. Winston, who won the Heisman Trophy and the BCS National Championship as a redshirt freshman, will either lead the Seminoles to another title or back into mediocrity.



SOURCE: DTH FILE PHOTO

DTH/CHRIS GRIFFIN

Miami football moves into new chapter

With sanctions out of the way, Miami can focus on football.

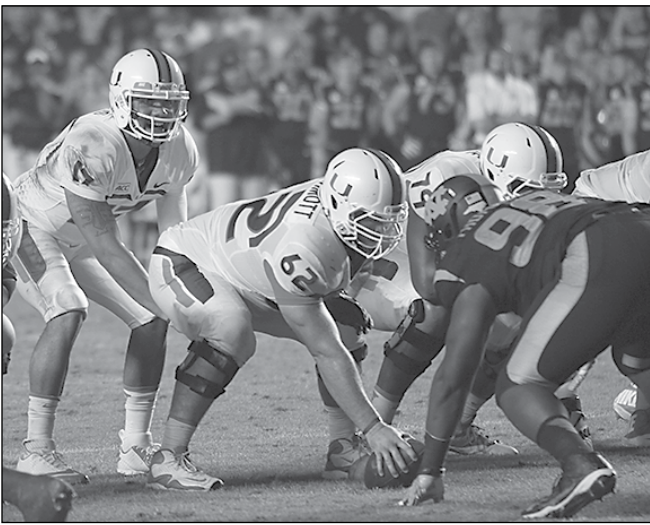
By Carlos Collazo
Assistant Sports Editor

The 2014 season offers the Miami football team a chance to put some ugly things in the rearview mirror. It can move past a 2-4 collapse that ended its 2013 season and, perhaps more importantly, forget about answering NCAA scandal questions.

In coach Al Golden's fourth year at the helm with the Hurricanes, he's done dealing with bowl bans and sanctions that came from the Nevin Shapiro scandal. Shapiro, a booster, provided impermissible benefits to players, which led to a two-year, self-imposed bowl ban in 2011 and 2012.

"This is the first time I've been sitting in front of you at this event and not had to deal with that," Golden said. "And I think this year we feel like, as an organization, we're back to attacking."

"And that part of it is exciting."



DTH FILE PHOTO

Miami barely edged out UNC last season in the 'Zero Dark Thursday' matchup. This year, the two will square off in Miami.

But Golden still has to deal with several key departures, including the loss of the 2013 starting quarterback Stephen Morris. The opening day starter will be freshman Brad Kaaya.

Kaaya beat out senior transfer Jake Heaps from Kansas, and though the decision was a tight one, Golden still has more uncertainty in other places.

"I like our quality on the

offensive line, the quantity part of it is my concern," he said. "Just making sure we have enough depth—especially for number eight, nine and ten offensive linemen, it's probably going to have to come from a young guy."

"The biggest thing for us defensively is just for the defensive line to continue to improve like they did in the spring. And that the depth that we added really provides

the impetus that we need."

Defense was one of the Hurricanes' biggest weaknesses last season, as Miami allowed 160.3 rushing yards per game for 73rd in the Football Bowl Subdivision and 265.5 passing yards per game for 34th.

Still, junior running back Duke Johnson has gone up against the 2014 unit many times already in practice this year and has come away impressed.

"Defensively, man, we actually look pretty good," Johnson said. "This offseason all the guys are pretty much honking and eager, getting ready, excited for this upcoming season ... looking to be a top-10 defense."

The defense has been equally impressed with Johnson.

"It's pretty hard to tackle Duke," said senior linebacker Denzel Perryman. "I won't lie to you, it was pretty hard. You don't know if he's going to run past you, give you a move, try to run you over — nothing."

"He came back, and you couldn't even tell he had an injury."

Having Johnson at 100 percent is critical for the offense, as he was one of the best run-

ning backs in the league last season while healthy and on the field before a season-ending ankle injury. In just eight games last season, he rushed for 920 yards and scored six rushing touchdowns.

This season he wants to improve and eclipse the 1,000 yard rushing mark. But first,

there's another thing on his list.

"My team hasn't reached the ACC Championship yet," he said. "I don't think we've even won the Coastal by itself yet. We were co-Coastal champs."

"(We) still have a lot to prove."

sports@dailytarheel.com

Veteran coach Frank Beamer says he's confident in younger Hokies

Many obstacles still exist for Tech as the 2014 season opens.

By Ben Salkeld
Staff Writer

After a rare two consecutive seasons finishing in the middle of the ACC, the Virginia Tech football team — on the surface — looks like it might still be a little ways off from a return to its usual conference championship contending status.

An abundance of youth and inexperience, a struggling offense and the graduation of several key leaders from the team are all obstacles that the Hokies must overcome in order to return to dominance.

Coach Frank Beamer is entering his 28th season with the team with optimism and believes his squad has a shot at taking the Coastal Division title.

"I think it comes back to your players and where they are in their development and how well they are prepared to play consistently," Beamer said. "To me, we should be another step closer in that way."

After overseeing a team that ranked 91st in total offense in the FBS, offensive coordinator Scot Loeffler will be fielding a squad that has yet to name a replacement for three-year starting quarterback Logan Thomas.

Last season, Thomas threw for 2,907 yards, with 16 touchdowns and 13 interceptions and also scored four rushing touchdowns.

He was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals in the fourth round of the 2014 NFL

draft (120th overall pick).

"Every year when a group of seniors leave, you always go into the weight room and it always feels really empty and really quiet," said senior wide receiver Willie Byrn. "That feels especially true with (Thomas' departure)."

Vying for a chance to fill that void will be redshirt senior Mark Leal and red-shirt junior Michael Brewer, who just joined the team after transferring from Texas Tech.

Beamer is also looking to improve the production from the linebacker, kicker and running back positions.

Virginia Tech's improved intangibles seem to have the whole team riding a wave of optimism.

"It's the small things I've noticed," senior defensive tackle Luther Maddy said. "After workouts, nearly the whole team is getting extra work in. Being a leader and a senior, that gives me a lot of confidence knowing that these guys are taking this seriously."

Beamer isn't rushing any decisions, nor is he setting any wild goals or looking fearfully at other ACC opponents. For now, he's focused on helping his team reach their potential.

"I'm not ready to say we have to win a certain number of games," he said. "I think as long as you play as well as you can, you feel like you can win a division championship. You feel like you've got a shot at least."

"And I think right now, it feels like (all of the Coastal teams) have got a shot, and you've got to make the most out of it."

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DTH FILE PHOTO

Virginia Tech has a history of being an ACC-championship contender until recently. This year's Hokies hope to right the ship.

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Doeren's Wolfpack rebuilding enters year 2

By Andrew Romaine
Staff Writer

The "This is Our State" billboards are gone. N.C. State has ditched the slogan. And now, the N.C. State football team will try to start anew — both in the market-

ing department and on the gridiron.

Second-year head coach Dave Doeren will put last season's 3-9 record behind him and focus on working out the kinks of his new system.

"I'm not a guy who walks around and talks about the

past all day long — I don't believe in that," Doeren said. "When it's relevant and it can help us, we'll talk about it, but I'm more interested in where we're going than where we've been. We used the off-season to study it, and we made the changes we felt we needed to make to get better."

Some of N.C. State's struggles in the 2013 season were caused by the growing pains that come with adjusting to a new coach and a new style of play. Senior tailback Tony Creecy, who has recovered from turf toe, said that last year's team was divided in their acceptance of Doeren's new schemes.

"When (Doeren) first came, I feel like there were

two different teams: one that bought in and one that didn't," Creecy said. "We weren't one, and I think this year we became one."

In an effort to make this year's team more cohesive, Doeren has employed motivational speakers, team cookouts and even military-style bonding exercises. This August, a group of special-operations Marines led the Wolfpack players through an exhausting regimen designed to build camaraderie and leadership skills.

Doeren acknowledged that the 2013 team lacked senior leadership, partly because everybody was learning at the same time. After a year of experience in the new

system under their belts, this year's seniors will have more opportunities to teach the young players.

"I feel a hundred times more prepared than I did at this time last year," defensive end Art Norman said. "There's a lot that goes into implementing a new system, and I don't know if everybody sees that. But now that we're past all that, we know all of the basics, and we can spend more time helping the younger guys."

In addition to stronger leadership, this year's N.C. State team will have better playmakers on offense: a healthy Creecy, a talented group of sophomore receivers and a promising quarterback

"I'm not really into ... campaigns. I just want to play football."

Art Norman,
Defensive end for the Wolfpack

in Jacoby Brissett, who transferred from Florida. If the Wolfpack can avoid injuries, it should be able to navigate a relatively weak schedule and become bowl eligible.

As for a new marketing

tagline, Norman had no ideas. "I'm not really into slogans or campaigns," he said. "I just want to play football."

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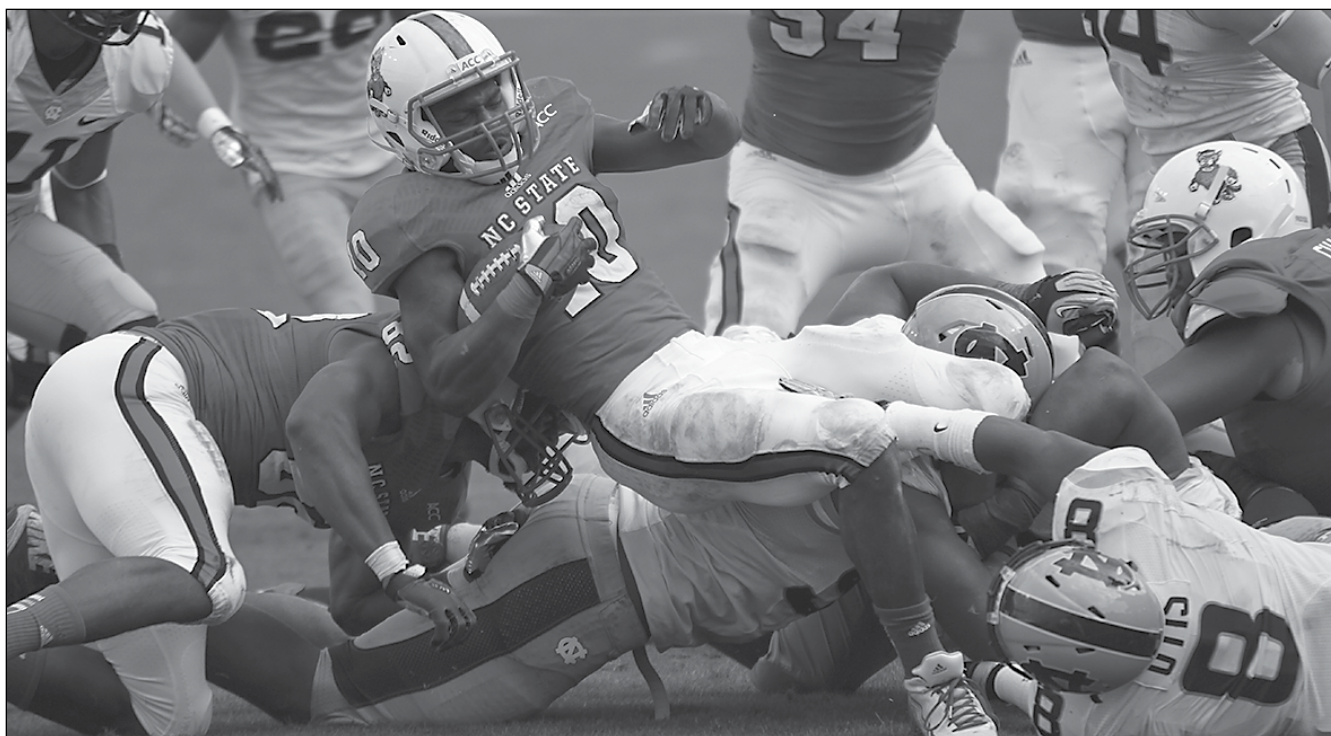
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DTH FILE/CHRIS CONWAY

Dave Doeren, second-year head coach for the Wolfpack, said his players have adjusted to his fast-paced offense and are ready to play a strong season with the team's new quarterback Jacoby Brissett, who transferred this year from Florida.

Virginia hopes to avoid last place

By Max Miceli
Staff Writer

There are seven teams in the Coastal Division of the ACC, and in 2013, the University of Virginia football

team found itself safely in seventh place with no conference wins on the year.

Despite having the second leading rusher in the conference in tailback Kevin Parks, who rushed for 11 touchdowns with 1,031 yards, the team finished 2-10 at the hands of poor quarterback play and one of the worst turnover margins in the ACC.

Coming into a season where the Cavaliers are returning nine defensive starters and Parks, there's no question that the pressure manifesting around the team's potential improvement falls on the shoulders of the teams quarterbacks, redshirt sophomore Greyson Lambert and junior David Watford.

While Watford started every game in 2013, coach Mike London said Lambert is currently the team's number one guy taking snaps.

"David has done everything we've asked him to do," London said. "Him on the field makes

us a better football team."

With that thought process in mind, it's possible UVa gives Watford snaps at receiver despite Watford having one catch for a loss of four yards in 2013.

Though Watford has more in-game experience, Lambert isn't completely lacking in experience, appearing in seven games last season. And his teammates seem to be confident in his abilities as a leader.

"He has that leadership that everyone looks up to," Parks said of Lambert. "He makes smart decisions and he makes the right throws we need to win."

Even when Lambert spent time as a redshirt, his teammates could tell he was taking his training seriously.

"You saw the effort," safety Anthony Harris said. "It wasn't like a redshirt year for him was a year to take off. He was always setting an example. Guys have respected him for that."

And now that he has his

chance, he'll have to make the most of it, knowing that if he fails, Watford is right behind him ready to step back in.

Parks isn't worried about his quarterback's commitment though, and when he recently visited Lambert's house, he was reassured of how seriously the former backup took his job.

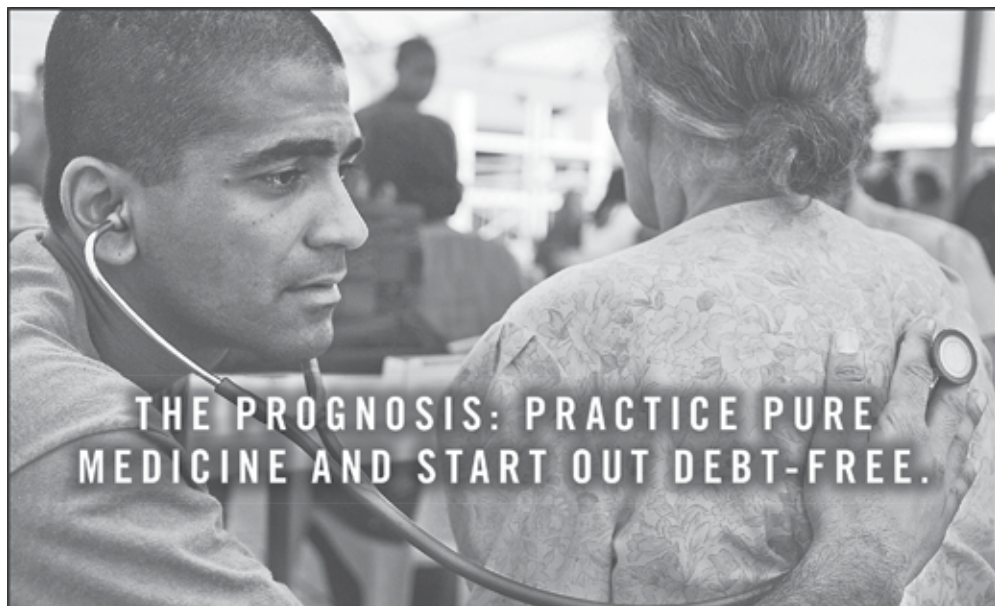
"I looked up and he had one of those whiteboards on his walls with plays on there," Parks said. "He's a student of the game. He'll give us an opportunity to win."

Coming off of a 2-10 season that's the one thing the Cavaliers will be looking for in 2014 — an opportunity to win.

Whether it comes from Watford or Lambert, that's what the team wants, and both quarterbacks know.

"It isn't about who's going to be the starter," Harris said. "It's about who can help us win the most games."

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DTH FILE/ CAMERON ROBERT

With nine starters returning to the defensive squad, the Cavaliers are ready to vindicate themselves after the team finished in last place in the Coastal Division of the ACC.

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Problems plague the unlucky Irish

Georgia Tech seeks to finish strong

By Patrick Ronan
Staff Writer

Larry Fedora and the North Carolina football team want this season to be a big step toward being an elite program. They may not get a better chance than when they travel to Notre Dame to take on the historic Fighting Irish.

The Tar Heels are trying to get their program where the Irish have been for decades, but after four players were suspended this month for possible academic fraud, it might be the Irish who come into Notre Dame Stadium on their heels, desperate for a win.

Earlier this month, Notre Dame confirmed that four players will not practice or play for an undetermined period of time while they are investigated for “academic dishonesty,” according to a university press release. Director of athletics Jack Swarbrick confirmed that wide receiver DaVaris Daniels, cornerback KeiVarae Russell, defensive lineman Ishaq Williams and linebacker Kendall Moore are the players facing possible expulsion.

Russell may prove to be the biggest loss for the Irish. Considered the team’s top defensive back, Russell was supposed to lead a strong secondary looking to anchor a defense that lost its entire front seven from the 2013 season.

Daniels, another sure-fire starter, was the team’s top returning receiver and Williams and Moore were both expected to start or contribute heavily, leaving new defensive coordinator Brian VanGorder even thinner up front.

But while VanGorder struggles to find a clear leader within the defense, new offensive coordinator Mike Denbrock has serious stability in the position that matters the most.

Quarterback Everett Golson took the Irish to an undefeated 2012 regular season and date with Alabama in the Discover BCS National Championship game as a redshirt freshman. After sitting out last season for academic problems of his own, Golson is back and was named the team’s starter by head coach Brian Kelly in a press conference on Aug. 13.

“How he handled himself with the team, our workouts, his spring practice, then his leadership in the summer and camp here — he’s put himself in the position to be our starter,” Kelly said.

In 2012, the Irish had an abundance of proven talent. Now all eyes are on Golson to carry the load.

“It’s a heightened responsibility on my part now that everything is pretty set for week one,” Golson said in a press conference. “It’s my job to get these guys right on offense and lead this team.”

Loads of talent on the ground, academic investigations and an unproven defense: sounds much too familiar to the Tar Heel faithful. Expect an offensive battle where a turnover or defensive stop decides the outcome.

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By Logan Ulrich
Staff Writer

Few things remain constant in college football from season to season. Players come and go, and dynasties rise and fall.

But Georgia Tech football stays the same.

The last time the Yellow Jackets failed to qualify for a bowl was 1996. Current coach Paul Johnson has led the team to six straight bowl appearances in six seasons and to one ACC championship vacated by the NCAA in 2009.

However, the Yellow Jackets face a bit more uncertainty this season.

“The big question mark in my mind is replacing the defense,” Johnson said.

Georgia Tech lost explosive pass rusher Jeremiah Attaochu to the NFL, whose 12.5 sacks led the team by a wide margin. The closest player was junior defensive lineman Adam Gotsis, with just 5.5. How the squad will replace Attaochu’s production remains unknown, as the team returns only one starter from last year’s defensive line.

“It’s going to be a hard one to bite,” senior linebacker Quayshawn Nealy said, “We’ve got some freshmen who are pretty talented. They’ve got to step in and make some plays.”

Defensive back Jemea Thomas and linebacker

Brandon Watts, the two leading tacklers from last season, left for the NFL. Talented redshirt junior linebacker Jabari Hunt-Days will also miss the season due to being ruled academically ineligible by the NCAA.

Nealy, the defense’s most experienced and productive returning player, says the defense’s focus this year will be on closing out games — an issue that repeatedly cost the team last season.

“Knowing what we could have done and seeing what we did do, it’s unacceptable,” senior offensive lineman Shaquille Mason said.

It’s hard to blame the defense for being used to production from the offense. Under Johnson’s trademark flexbone offense — a throwback to an old-school style of play focused on running the football — Georgia Tech averaged 35 points and close to 300 yards rushing per game.

The offense isn’t without its question marks though.

Both top rushers from last season, Robert Godhigh and David Sims, have graduated and moved on.

Godhigh and Sims will be



DTH/FILE PHOTO

The Yellow Jackets are ready to take on this season with a new defensive strategy focused on closing out games.

replaced with a stable of running backs led by senior Zach Laskey, who Johnson believes is poised for a massive year.

“I think (he) had the best spring of anybody on our team,” Johnson said. “He’s bigger, he’s stronger, he’s more mature.”

Redshirt sophomore Justin Thomas is expected to replace Vad Lee at quarterback.

But both he and redshirt junior Tim Byerly could see

playing time this year.

No matter who starts at quarterback, Johnson doesn’t plan to change the way the Yellow Jackets play football.

“We’re committed to running the football,” Johnson said.

Under Johnson, some things at Georgia Tech will always be the same.

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Petrino returns to an unproven Louisville team

The 2014 season marks the return of coach Bobby Petrino for the Louisville football team. Petrino, who previously coached for the Cardinals from 2003-2006, will lead a team that lost three first-round NFL draft picks – free safety Calvin Pryor, defensive end Marcus Smith and quarterback Teddy Bridgewater.



| LOUISVILLE | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Last year's record | 12-1, 7-1 AAC |
| Finished in division | 2nd - AAC |
| 2014 predicted finish | 3rd - Atlantic |
| Biggest game | vs. Florida State |

Key Offensive Returners:

Wide receiver DeVante Parker, wide receiver Eli Rogers, running back Dominique Brown

Key Departures:

Quarterback Teddy Bridgewater, defensive end Marcus Smith, free safety Calvin Pryor, safety Hakeem Smith

Breakout Player:

Quarterback Will Gardner

2014 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

| DATE | OPPONENT | LOCATION |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Aug. 30 | Liberty | Chapel Hill |
| Sept. 6 | San Diego State | Chapel Hill |
| Sept. 20 | East Carolina | Greenville, N.C. |
| Sept. 27 | Clemson | Clemson, S.C. |
| Oct. 4 | Virginia Tech | Chapel Hill |
| Oct. 11 | Notre Dame | South Bend, Ind. |
| Oct. 18 | Georgia Tech | Chapel Hill |
| Oct. 25 | Virginia | Charlottesville, Va. |
| Nov. 1 | Miami | Miami |
| Nov. 15 | Pittsburgh | Chapel Hill |
| Nov. 20 | Duke | Durham |
| Nov. 29 | N.C. State | Chapel Hill |

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Pitt looks to roots for 2014 season

The Panthers will have to replace star DT Aaron Donald.

By Ben Coley
Staff Writer

With the 2014 college football season looming ahead, coach Paul Chryst is reminded of Pittsburgh's past.

From former stars Tony Dorsett and Dan Marino, to the lesser known linemen Mark May and Russ Grimm, the Panthers have a rich history.

And Chryst said he wants his players to keep the tradition alive.

"We have a great opportunity and challenge to bring (the program) back to the relevance it was," Chryst said. "I want them to feel that pressure. You've got some big timers and you have to deliver for them."

After a 7-6 season and a Little Caesar's Pizza Bowl win against Bowling Green, the Panthers are positioned to do just that, but the team will be without key starters on both sides of the ball.

Quarterback Tom Savage and defensive tackle Aaron Donald, both now in the NFL, were anchors for the Pittsburgh Panthers last season.

Savage's replacement will likely be redshirt sophomore Chad Voytik, who replaced an injured Savage in the second half of the bowl game.

Chryst said the coaching staff must ensure that Voytik knows the offense and understands what he can do with it.

Voytik has put himself in a position to be successful over the summer months, Chryst said.

"I like the way he has approached the offseason," he said. "I think he's finding that he's accomplishing something with the work he has put in and that may be as powerful as anything."

As for the defense, the Panthers must fill the void left by Donald, a unanimous All-American who led the team with 28.5 tackles for loss and 11 sacks.

Redshirt senior Ray Vinopal said he has the utmost faith in the players set to replace Donald.

"I don't see any drop off in production up front," Vinopal said. "We have plenty of talented guys so there's no reason they can't do the things he accomplished."

The brightest spot for the Panthers this upcoming season is the return of sophomore Tyler Boyd who, as a freshman, impressed many with his 85 receptions and 1,174 receiving yards — both of which are Pittsburgh freshman records.

Boyd said he is confident the Panthers will receive the respect they deserve during the season.

"We had a lot of young guys starting that have proven themselves in a great conference like the ACC," Boyd said. "A lot of people know that we have players coming back so that we can make a run for everybody's money."

Chryst said his first year in the ACC has reinforced the respect he held for the coaches and players, but added that the team is ready to make its mark.

"We feel fortunate and proud to have Pitt as part of the ACC," Chryst said.

"But we want to be more than just a part of it."

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Orange seek to build off 2013



Syracuse looks for a bowl repeat with Hunt in driver's seat.

When Coach Doug Marrone left for the Buffalo Bills after the 2012 season, the Syracuse football team did not have to look far to find his replacement. After leading the Orange to a 7-6 record and a bowl win against Minnesota in his inaugural season as head coach, Scott Shafer hopes his veteran offense will lead to even more victories in 2014.



SOURCE: SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

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Key Offensive Returners:

Quarterback Terrel Hunt, running back Prince-Tyson Gulley, tight end Josh Parris, offensive tackle Sean Hickey

Key Defensive Returners:

Strong safeties Ritchy Desir and Darius Kelly

Key Departures:

Defensive tackle Jay Bromley, running back Jerome Smith, linebacker Marquis Spruill

Key Newcomers:

Running back Ervin Phillips, wide receiver Steve Ishmael

Breakout Player:

Quarterback Terrel Hunt

| SYRACUSE | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Last year's record | 7-6, 4-4 ACC |
| Finished in division | 3rd - Atlantic |
| 2014 predicted finish | 4th - Atlantic |
| Biggest game | vs. Florida State |

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Wake hands off offense to Wolford



Wake will have to move on without key offensive weapons.

The Wake Forest Demon Deacons will look like a much different team on offense this season. Top receiver Michael Campanaro was drafted in the sixth round of 2014 NFL Draft by the Baltimore Ravens, while three-year starting quarterback Tanner Price graduated. True freshman John Wolford will be handed the keys to the offense and will try to improve it, after ranking last in the ACC in scoring offense in 2013.

Key Offensive Returners:

Running back Orville Reynolds, center Cory Helms, wide receiver Tyree Harris, offensive guard Tyler Hayworth and offensive tackle Dylan Intemann

Key Defensive Returners:

Cornerback Merrill Noel, cornerback Kevin Johnson, safety Ryan Janvion and linebacker Brandon Chubb

Key Departures:

Quarterback Tanner Price, wide receiver Michael Campanaro, running back Josh Harris and nose tackle Nikita Whitlock

Key Newcomers:

Quarterback John Wolford (true freshman starter) and wide receiver E.J. Scott (transfer from Virginia)

Breakout Player:

Wide receiver Tyree Harris could have a breakout season now that Michael Campanaro is gone.

Biggest Question Mark:

The biggest question mark is Wolford, who threw for 3,317 yards and 38 touchdowns his senior year in high school.

Eagles try to soar without Williams



| BOSTON COLLEGE | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Last year's record | 7-6, 4-4 ACC |
| Finished in division | 4th - Atlantic |
| 2014 predicted finish | 6th - Atlantic |
| Biggest game | at Florida State |

The Eagles will have to revamp their entire offense this season now that record-setting running back Andre Williams was taken in the NFL draft and three-year starting quarterback Chase Rettig have both moved on.

Key Offensive Returners:

Running back Myles Willis, left guard Bobby Vardaro, center Andy Gallik and right guard Harris Williams

Key Defensive Returners:

Defensive tackle Mehdi Abdesmad, linebacker Steven Daniels, cornerback Manuel Asprilla and safety Sean Sylvia

Key Departures:

Running back Andre Williams, quarterback Chase Rettig, wide receiver Alex Amidon, left tackle Matt Patchan, defensive end Kasim Edebali and linebacker Kevin Pierre-Louis

Key Newcomers:

Quarterback Tyler Murphy (Florida transfer)

Breakout Player:

Defensive tackle Mehdi Abdesmad, who recorded 17 tackles in four games last year before a season-ending knee injury.

Biggest Question Mark:

With the departure of prolific running back Andre Williams — who set a school record with 2,177 rushing yards — will the offense be able to stay true to form this season?



| WAKE FOREST | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Last year's record | 4-8, 2-6 ACC |
| Finished in division | 6th - Atlantic |
| 2014 predicted finish | 7th - Atlantic |
| Biggest game | at Florida State |

SOURCE: WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

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