

TSL Extra

Issue 8, June 18, 2001

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TSL EXTRA

The TSL Extra is an electronic subscription supplement to TechSideline.com, the premier independent publication covering Virginia Tech athletics. The TSL Extra is produced monthly and costs \$24.95 per year to subscribe. For subscription information, please visit TechSideline.com and click the "TSL Extra" link in the left hand border of the TechSideline.com home page.

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ON THE COVER

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Photography by Michael Ingalls.*

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

This month, we complete the “QB trifecta” with an article about Deep Creek’s Chris Clifton, one of three incoming recruits who will get to compete for the quarterback job at Virginia Tech this fall. Will Hunt was profiled in issue #3, and Bryan Randall was profiled in issue #7.

Unfortunately, having written one of the articles (Hunt) and read the other two, I don’t feel any closer to answering the question of which one of these three kids will be able to contribute, either short term or long term. Short term, I don’t think any one of them will shock the college football world this fall, but that’s not an indictment of their abilities — it’s just very difficult for true freshmen to contribute on the football field, and quarterback is the hardest position of all.

I feel that I know a lot more about the three QB recruits now. I know the most about Hunt, having seen plenty of tape on him and his team, and I have some idea of what types of players Randall and Clifton are. But none of that tells us anything about how these kids are going to perform when they arrive on campus in early July (to my knowledge, all three are enrolling in second summer session) and start participating in freshman practices in early August. Any one of the three could either captivate the coaches or bolt school and go back home after one week. Or, God forbid, trash a knee in the first day of practice as linebacker Camm Jackson did a few years back.

One thing’s for sure: if you’re like me, you’ve had enough talk, and you want for things to start happening. But watching the kids develop is one of the joys of college football, and it’s hard not to rush it.

On another front, the third installment of “The Money-Makers” brings the revenue, expense, and income figures for men’s basketball. We’ve all heard that in college sports, football is the king of revenue, football is the driver, football is the future, etc., etc. That’s true (the numbers bear this out), but once you get a look at the revenue figures for basketball and compare them to football, you’ll know exactly what the story is.

You’ll also find out just where the conferences and the teams stand in relation to each other when it comes to basketball revenue. There are a few mild surprises there, and in general, it’s interesting stuff.

As always, please encourage your friends to subscribe to the TSL Extra (tell them to check out the free sampler available on TechSideline.com), and please, please, *do not* share your username and password with anyone else. Revenue from the TSL Extra is one of our lifelines, and subscription revenue is vitally important to our survival. If you share your access information with five friends, then we make one-fifth as much money, and no business can survive doing that. Your favorite Ford dealership doesn’t give away four cars for every one it sells, so please don’t “give away” TSL Extra subscriptions by sharing your info.

On a more positive note, the start of the football season is now only two and a half months away. The long wait is almost over, and a chance to see the 2001 Hokies in action is almost here. Enjoy issue #8.

Will

Recruiting Profile

Deep Creek QB Chris Clifton

by Neal Williams

You'll see it periodically when a school sends out its list of football recruits.

Where the position should be, it says ATH.

It doesn't happen often. In a league like the Big East Conference, perhaps six of the 150 or so recruits will be designated as ATH.

Obviously, ATH is an abbreviation for athlete.

What it really means is, "We have no idea where this guy is going to play, but we like him so much that we decided to take him and figure that out later."

A year ago, it looked as if Chris Clifton of Deep Creek High in Chesapeake, Va., would carry the ATH tag with him. When he was recruited, that was the thinking. When he committed to Virginia Tech before his senior season at Deep Creek, that was the thinking. Though he'd played mostly quarterback as a junior, the Hokies originally thought they'd find a place for Clifton at wide receiver. Or maybe running back. Or maybe somewhere on defense. Somewhere, for sure.

After all, Clifton was an ATH.

Something happened, however, during Clifton's senior year to change everyone's mind.

Clifton blossomed as a quarterback. Sure, he's still an ATH. But he's a quarterback first and foremost, and that's where he'll get his first look when the Hokies' freshmen report Aug. 6. It may turn out that he eventually plays somewhere else.

Or it might not.

Clifton is one of three freshmen quarterbacks coming to camp, where they'll join holdovers Grant Noel and Jason Davis in the battle to replace Michael Vick. Now an Atlanta Falcon, Vick gave up his final two years of eligibility at Tech. It turned out to be a great move for him, even though it left the quarterback slot at his old school a tad fuzzy.

The other freshmen come in with more impressive resumes from a quarterback's perspective. Randall, from Bruton High in Williamsburg, became the first player from Virginia to rush and pass for 1,000 yards in a single season. He did it as a junior and again as a senior.

Clifton comes in more of a work in progress but with perhaps more of an upside when that work is complete.

"I'm a *much* better quarterback than I was as a junior," Clifton said. "I was stronger. I could throw the ball a lot better than I could my junior year. In my junior year, it probably took just one guy to take me down. My senior year, it took three.

Recruiting Profile

Chris Clifton

“It was a combination of learning the game and getting stronger.”

Clifton led Deep Creek to the Virginia Group AAA Division 6 championship game as a senior. He had 192 passing yards and three touchdowns in one playoff game. For the season, he threw for more than 1,100 yards. Deep Creek was 23-2 with him at quarterback over two years, and Clifton earned All-Southeastern District honors both years.

But the second year was definitely bigger than the first.

“Mechanically, he wasn’t real good before,” said Deep Creek coach David Cox, a former punter at Tech. “He got better as he got older.

“I put him in as receiver for one play this year and he caught a pass for about 40 yards. I think initially everybody was looking long term and seeing him as an offensive player. When I sent the film to them from this year, they saw that this kid came a long way real quick. He just has so much ability. He can run the option, he can drop back, he has a strong arm. He can throw on a five-step drop, on a seven-step drop. His release needs some work for the quick game. That’s something that can be developed.”

Clifton comes by the ATH reputation honestly.

He is an athlete.

In fact, plenty of places still look at him as an athlete first and quarterback second. He made Prep Star’s all-Atlantic region as an athlete, not as a quarterback.

Clifton doesn’t find those designations to be a degradation of his ability under center.

“I take it as a compliment,” he said.

He’s been clocked at 4.5 seconds for the 40-yard dash. That’s not Vick quick, but it’s not shabby.

Perhaps the best indication of his overall athleticism comes on the track. As a junior, he was third in the state meet with a long jump of 23 feet, 8 inches. As a senior, he added an inch and a half and moved up to second. His prep teammate and fellow Hokie recruit, defensive back DeAngelo Hall, was third.

“If you have an athletic quarterback who can run the option, you’re setting yourself up pretty good,” Cox said.

Hall has seen all sides of his athletic buddy. He’s defended against his passes, covered him as a receiver and tried to tackle him when he runs.

“We were in middle school together and he was a running back like me,” Hall said. “We all saw he

Recruiting Profile

Chris Clifton

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had the speed. Then we saw him throw and it was like, 'Oh gosh, he has to be a quarterback.'

"In practice this year, he broke me down a couple of times. I don't like to give people their dues, but he done it to me. We went to a camp and he played some quarterback and wide receiver. I was dominating everybody and he stepped up and gave me a run for my money. He can play anything if you ask me."

Hall said Clifton was indeed improved as a senior quarterback.

"I think it was more confidence," Hall said. "He has the ability now to come off the first option at receiver and go to the next and then the next."

In terms of confidence, Clifton doesn't lag behind anybody. He's different from his fellow freshman signal callers in that he's much more quiet. Randall is very talkative and Hunt isn't far behind. Clifton is polite and well-spoken. He just doesn't say much.

"He keeps to himself a lot," Hall said. "You're going to have to beat it out of him for him to tell you he's all this and all that. You'll never hear him talk about himself."

Clifton says he figured on redshirting this year when he first decided to attend Tech. As a quarterback, he'd be behind Vick. At another position, he'd need time to learn.

Then Vick left and everything changed. Clifton says he's going to go in and "fight" for the starting job. "I'm not about to say it's mine but I am going to fight for it," he said.

He's not familiar with the competition (he didn't attend the spring game). Hall, too, is unfamiliar with all the competition and admits he has a bias. But he thinks Clifton has an excellent shot.

"He can run and throw," Hall said. "I'm not taking anything away from Bryan Randall, but I do think Chris is a little different. (Randall) hasn't shown me he can lay it out to Andre Davis on the fly at 50 yards. I've seen that out of Chris."

Clifton said he's going in with an open mind. If it works out at quarterback, terrific. If not, he'll accept a change.

"I just want to play," he said.

Cox, his prep coach, said he couldn't say if Clifton could get ready in time to play as a true freshman. It's been 15 years since he was at Tech and things have changed. Tech is playing at a higher level.

But he doesn't have any doubt about Clifton's overall ability and capacity to learn.

Recruiting Profile

Chris Clifton

“You get him in there with a guy like (offensive coordinator) Rickey Bustle, who knows what he’s doing and can develop them, Chris can go as far as he wants,” Cox said.

“A lot of people wanted in on Chris late, after the playoffs. Tech was in on him early, was the first to make an offer. He’s one of those kids who just needs to make up his mind what he wants to do and he can do it. If he wants to be mediocre, he can be mediocre. If he wants to be good, he can be good.

“And if he wants to be great, he can be great. He as much ability as anyone.”

The Money Makers, Part 3: Basketball

by Will Stewart, *TechSideline.com*

In part 1 of “The Money-Makers,” we took a look at overall athletic revenue and expenses for Division 1 athletic departments in the 1998-99 academic year. In part 2, we reviewed football revenue and expenses.

This article, Part 3 of the series, takes a look at men’s basketball income and expenses, and then compares that to football income and expenses. We’ve all heard that football is the “cash cow” in college sports, and that it’s the driver in college athletic trends. As the data will show, this is true, but as we examine this data, we’ll make some interesting discoveries about which teams and conferences get more value from the sport of basketball, and how it impacts their bottom lines.

As usual, a reminder: the data are from the 1998-99 academic year (the 1998 football season and the 1998-99 basketball season). Some of the data may have changed rather significantly since then, most notably if a school has undergone a conference realignment or had their conference’s TV contracts, bowl contracts, or NCAA basketball tournament income change. So this data should be taken for what it is: a snapshot from two seasons ago. Even as such, it reveals some interesting things about the relationship between football and men’s basketball as money-making machines for universities.

The Data

The format of the data is very simple. The data covered in this part of the series consist of three numbers for each school in each sport: revenue (basketball and football), expenses (basketball and football), and profit/loss (basketball and football). As with the overall data presented in Parts 1 and 2, definitions of the categories of data (revenue and expenses) were not given. Here is TSL’s best guess at what each category includes:

Revenue: this figure is the total revenue made by a university’s football or basketball program. This figure includes ticket revenue, TV contract and appearance revenue, football bowl money, and basketball tournament revenue. The revenue figures probably also include concession sales and advertising/signage income, including income from radio broadcasts.

I do not believe the revenue figures include money contributed to a school’s athletic fund (i.e., Virginia Tech’s Hokie Club), or money made from licensed apparel. It may or may not include money from apparel and shoe deals, such as Nike’s contract with Virginia Tech, in which Nike outfits some of Virginia Tech’s teams with uniforms and shoes, in exchange for being able to place their logo on the uniforms. These contracts have a certain cash value, and I’m not sure if the football and basketball portions are included here in these figures.

Expenses: this figure is the total expenses incurred by a university’s football or basketball program. This figure includes salaries for administrators and coaches, travel expenses, scholarships, equipment, promotional costs, etc.

As with the overall data from Parts 1 and 2, this data may or may not include expenses for capital

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projects, such as stadium or arena construction, practice field construction, etc. It probably includes cash expenditures for capital items (for example, Frank Beamer’s new football practice fields that were just built, at a cost of about \$1 million, might show up as a line item under expenses), but it probably does not include capital projects that were funded by taking on debt (for example, if Tech took out a \$15 million loan to finance stadium expansion, the portion that was paid for by the loan would probably not appear as an expense).

Profit/Loss: this figure is revenue minus expenses. If the number is in parentheses, then it’s a loss, not a profit.

Virginia Tech’s Data

For the 1998-99 academic year, here is Virginia Tech’s set of data:

School	Football Revenue	Football Expenses	Football Net	Basketball Revenue	Basketball Expenses	Basketball Net
VT	\$11,466,861	\$7,601,331	\$3,865,530	\$1,055,508	\$1,469,593	(\$414,005)

The basketball revenue and net income figures paint a bleak picture of men’s basketball at Virginia Tech. Among the 67 Big Six schools (defined as schools from the six major conferences — ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, PAC 10, and SEC), only 7 lost money. Out of those 67 schools, the Hokies lost more money than everyone but Baylor (\$747k) and Colorado (\$1.07 million).

Side note: in the football revenue article (Part 2), the “BCS schools and Notre Dame” amounted to 63 universities. That number goes up to 67 when discussing basketball’s Big Six conferences because:

- 1.) You add 6 basketball-only schools in the Big East: Providence, Seton Hall, Connecticut, Georgetown, St. John’s, and Villanova, for a total of $63 + 6 = 69$ teams; and
- 2.) You subtract Temple and Virginia Tech, because they were in the “non-Big-Six” Atlantic 10 for basketball in 1998-1999, for a total of $69 - 2 = 67$ teams.

After losing over \$400,000 in 98-99, the Hokies went on to lose even more than that in 1999-2000, posting a loss of \$651,222 on revenue of \$1,016,113, according to a Dec. 28, 2000 article in The Detroit News.

With their loss of over \$600,000 in the 1999-2000 school year, Tech ranked 136th out of the 137 schools surveyed by the Detroit News for their article. Only Colorado, which lost nearly \$1.2 million on just \$1.035 million in revenue, fared worse than Virginia Tech in men’s basketball income in 1999-2000 among the schools sampled.

The list of schools for which the Detroit News accumulated data was defined as “137 of the nation’s largest collegiate athletic programs, including all schools from the ten largest conferences” — the

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Big Six conferences plus the MAC, the WAC, Conferences USA, and the Ivy League (note that the Atlantic 10 is not included in that list).

Of course, for that two-year span of 1998-2000, the Hokies were in the Atlantic 10 for basketball, not the Big East. One major difference between the Atlantic 10 and Tech's new home, the Big East, is TV revenue. The A-10 TV contract used to net about \$100,000 a year for the Hokies, and the Big East contract nets each Big East team just over \$1 million.

The problem is, the Hokies won't partake in that \$1 million in revenue sharing until the 2005-2006 season. Tech will receive no Big East revenue-sharing in basketball, which includes TV and NCAA Tournament money, for the first five years of their Big East membership, under their membership agreement with the Big East.

In addition to no revenue sharing for five years, Tech will pay a total of \$2.5 million to the Big East over the first ten years of their membership, according to an October 6th, 1999 News and Notes article on TechSideline.com. The payments will be \$200,000 per year for the first five years, and \$300,000 per year for the last five years of the ten-year time period. Revenue sharing for Tech will start in year six (2005-2006), and will average approximately \$1.3 million per year, as compared to a paltry \$100,000 that Tech was receiving from the Atlantic 10).

Those dismal figures for basketball revenue and basketball net income will remain that way for at least the next four years, or may even get worse, unless the Hokies increase home attendance and receive appearance fees for being on television. TV appearances are not likely to increase in the near future, but if the team puts together some wins in the coming years, attendance could take an upturn (see the related article "Inside the Numbers: Tumbleweeds in Cassell" this month).

The Big East's Data

Big East Men's Basketball Revenue/Expenses

Team	Revenue	Expenses	Net
Boston College	\$2,123,772	\$1,650,502	\$473,270
Miami	\$2,743,719	\$2,289,633	\$454,086
Pittsburgh	\$2,543,000	\$1,642,000	\$901,000
Rutgers	\$2,640,110	\$1,876,176	\$763,934
Syracuse	\$9,143,064	\$6,168,127	\$2,974,937
West Virginia	\$2,399,894	\$941,082	\$1,458,812
Connecticut	\$5,802,712	\$2,824,266	\$2,978,446
Georgetown	\$1,731,164	\$1,894,602	(\$163,438)
Notre Dame	\$1,563,598	\$1,457,014	\$106,584
Providence	\$3,582,087	\$2,062,346	\$1,519,741
Seton Hall	\$2,046,611	\$1,417,076	\$629,535
St. John's	\$3,090,259	\$2,052,504	\$1,037,755
Villanova	\$2,725,039	\$1,649,229	\$1,075,810
Big East Average	\$3,241,156	\$2,148,043	\$1,093,113
Big Six Conf. Ave.	\$4,289,423	\$2,091,937	\$2,197,486

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Note: Big Six conferences include ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, PAC 10, and SEC.

In reviewing this data, several key points jump out at me. I'll cover them one by one.

First of all, there are those wacky Syracuse figures again. Much like with the football figures, Syracuse made *way more* than any other Big East team on basketball, and spent *way more* than any other Big East team. Again, I'm forced to wonder if Syracuse does some strange accounting tricks that other Big East schools don't do. Unfortunately, for brevity's sake, I can't reprint the football figures here, but you can look them up in last issue's feature and see the similarity in Syracuse's inflated basketball numbers and their inflated football numbers.

Secondly, as with football, the West Virginia Mountaineers are the picture of frugality and efficiency. Their basketball income ranked 8th in the 13-team league, but their expenses were the smallest, resulting in a net income that was 4th in the league. In last month's football figures, WVU was 2nd (out of 8 teams) in revenue and 7th in expenses, finishing a runaway first in net income from football.

Third, UConn is king of the Big East in basketball net income, by a narrow margin over Syracuse. I've said it before and I'll say it again, Connecticut is a financially well-run athletic department with competitive teams and great support from their fans. As a true all-sports member (which they will be when their football team joins the Big East in 2005), they are a credit to the league and a tremendous asset.

The Huskies know how to run successful sports programs both on and off the field, and the potential for them to succeed in Division 1-A football is there. I think in their attempts to succeed at the 1-A level in football, the biggest questions they'll have to answer will be in recruiting and coaching. With their new football stadium approved and in the works, the facilities are in place, and I think they'll get the fan support, so that's half the battle.

Lastly, the Big East's financial performance in basketball with respect to their peer Big-Six conferences is strikingly similar to their financial performance in football. In this case, I *can* reprint the football numbers, and here they are, combined with the basketball numbers:

Category	Big East Average	Big Six Conf. Average
Football Rev.	\$10,269,049	\$13,719,125
Football Exp.	\$7,713,910	\$7,226,445
Football Net	\$2,555,140	\$6,492,680
Basketball Rev.	\$3,241,156	\$4,289,423
Basketball Exp.	\$2,148,043	\$2,091,937
Basketball Net	\$1,093,113	\$2,197,486

In both cases (football and basketball), Big East average revenue is about 75% of the BCS/Big Six average revenue, expenses are about equal, but net income is much lower (Big East teams net

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38% of the BCS average in football and 50% of the Big Six average in men's basketball).

Speaking of how the Big East compares to the other Big Six conferences, let's take a look.

Comparing the Big Six Conferences

The Big Six Conferences are the six conferences that are part of the BCS bowl contract in football and are, as a rule, true all-sports conferences: the ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, PAC 10, and SEC. Let's break down total basketball revenue and expenses and per-team basketball revenue and expenses for those conferences.

Total Men's Basketball Revenue and Expenses 1998-99 Season, By Conference, Sorted by Revenue

Conference	Revenue	Expenses	Net
BIG TEN	\$70,628,395	\$25,086,035	\$45,542,360
SEC	\$53,406,565	\$26,319,112	\$27,087,453
ACC	\$51,873,157	\$18,156,086	\$33,717,071
BIG EAST	\$42,135,029	\$27,924,557	\$14,210,472
PAC 10	\$38,114,769	\$20,342,475	\$17,772,294
BIG 12	\$31,233,434	\$22,331,531	\$8,901,903

Per-Team Men's Basketball Revenue and Expenses 1998-99 Season, By Conference, Sorted by Revenue

Conference	Per-Team Rev.	Per-Team Exp.	Per-Team Net
BIG TEN	\$6,420,763	\$2,280,549	\$4,140,215
ACC	\$5,763,684	\$2,017,343	\$3,746,341
SEC	\$4,450,547	\$2,193,259	\$2,257,288
PAC 10	\$3,811,477	\$2,034,248	\$1,777,229
BIG EAST	\$3,241,156	\$2,148,043	\$1,093,113
BIG 12	\$2,602,786	\$1,860,961	\$741,825
Average	\$4,289,423	\$2,091,937	\$2,197,486

Note: Big Six conferences include ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, PAC 10, and SEC.

The Big Ten's status as the top conference in total revenue, total net, per-team revenue, and per-team net is a surprise. I think that when most of us outside the Big Ten think of the conference, we think of football: Michigan, Ohio State, Penn State, and company. But our first impression of the Big Ten as a basketball conference is that it's not on par with the ACC, or the PAC 10, or maybe even the SEC. When I think basketball, I think of North Carolina, Duke, UCLA, Arizona, and Kentucky. I don't think of the Big Ten schools.

But on second thought, the Big Ten is a great basketball conference, too. Bobby Knight's Indiana Hoosiers are as storied a program as any other (never mind that Knight is gone now), and in recent years, we've seen Michigan's Fab Five and the national champion Michigan State Spartans. Yes, football is king in the Big Ten, but basketball plays a mean second fiddle (if I may be allowed to mix my metaphors).

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Also worth noting is that the Big East Conference, despite being formed (and perceived) first and foremost as a basketball conference, finishes near the bottom of the pack in per-team revenue and per-team net income.

Expenses are fairly uniform across the Big Six conferences. The conferences all spend within the range of \$1.86 million to \$2.28 million per team. But per-team revenue fluctuates between \$2.6 million per team (Big 12) and \$6.4 million (Big Ten).

Among the 67 Big Six teams, only 6 lost money on men's basketball in 1998-99. Four of the six teams come from the Big 12: Colorado, Baylor, Texas, and Texas A&M. The other two teams are Georgetown and Southern California.

Big Six Conference Money-Losers in Men's Basketball

Team	Revenue	Expenses	Net
Colorado	\$974,627	\$2,046,960	(\$1,072,333)
Baylor	\$393,346	\$1,140,631	(\$747,285)
Texas	\$2,871,815	\$3,140,676	(\$268,861)
Georgetown	\$1,731,164	\$1,894,602	(\$163,438)
Texas A&M	\$2,049,701	\$2,155,097	(\$105,396)
Southern Cal.	\$2,195,302	\$2,214,366	(\$19,064)

Note that Virginia Tech and their \$414,000 dollar loss do not appear on this list because the Hokies were in the Atlantic 10 in basketball in 1998-99, not a Big Six Conference.

The Non-Big-Six Conferences

In football, once you get outside the BCS conferences, revenue figures drop off dramatically. In basketball, it's a slightly different story, because outside of the Big Six, there are some pretty good basketball conferences and teams.

The two most notable non-Big-Six basketball conferences to Hokie fans are Conference USA and the Atlantic 10. CUSA is of interest to Hokie fans because it contains many teams from the old Metro Conference that Tech was a part of for about fifteen years, and the A-10 is of interest to Tech fans because it was the Hokies' basketball home from 1995-96 to 1999-2000.

Basketball is the key sport in those two conferences, so we'll take a look at them, but we can throw the MAC (Mid-American Conference), where basketball is most decidedly *not* the key sport, in for fun as well.

Here's a look at the previous per-team revenue table, with those three non-Big-Six conferences added in:

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(continued from page 13)

Per-Team Basketball Revenue and Expenses, 1998-99 Season

By Conference, Sorted by Revenue

Conference	Per-Team Rev.	Per-Team Exp.	Per-Team Net
BIG TEN	\$6,420,763	\$2,280,549	\$4,140,215
ACC	\$5,763,684	\$2,017,343	\$3,746,341
SEC	\$4,450,547	\$2,193,259	\$2,257,288
PAC 10	\$3,811,477	\$2,034,248	\$1,777,229
BIG EAST	\$3,241,156	\$2,148,043	\$1,093,113
CUSA	\$3,079,916	\$1,514,391	\$1,565,525
BIG 12	\$2,602,786	\$1,860,961	\$741,825
A-10	\$1,947,304	\$1,289,042	\$658,262
MAC	\$511,537	\$691,084	(\$179,547)
Big Six Average	\$4,289,423	\$2,091,937	\$2,197,486

Note: the Big Six averages include all teams from the ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, PAC 10, and SEC (67 teams total).

Unlike in football, a non-Big-Six conference actually trumps a Big Six conference in per-team revenue. Conference USA members bring in just over \$3 million per team in men's basketball revenue, which tops the Big 12 figure of \$2.6 million and puts CUSA in sixth place.

And when you look at per-team net income, CUSA is a close fifth, ahead of not only the Big 12, but the Big East. CUSA even nips at the PAC 10's heels when it comes to per-team net, and could overtake them in any given year, depending upon how school fortunes and NCAA payouts fall.

The ringleaders in Conference USA for men's basketball are Louisville (wait until you see their revenue figures in an upcoming table), followed by Memphis, Marquette, St. Louis, and Cincinnati. Out of twelve teams in CUSA in 1998-99, five, or nearly half, had over \$3 million in basketball revenue. Only three of the twelve CUSA teams — Tulane, Houston and Southern Miss — lost money, and none of those three lost more than \$161,000. CUSA is a financially viable conference when it comes to men's basketball.

As for the Atlantic 10, only three of their twelve teams lost money in 1998-99 on men's basketball: Fordham lost \$470,000, Virginia Tech lost \$414,000, and St. Joseph's reported a negligible loss of \$126 (that is not a typo).

In the A-10, Dayton led the way with over \$4 million in basketball revenue and a \$2.8 million net gain (the Flyers enjoy great fan support), followed by UMass (\$3.7 million in revenue, with a \$1.6 million net gain) and Xavier (\$3.1 million in revenue, with a \$1.6 million net gain). Men's basketball isn't the money machine in the A-10 that it is in CUSA, but it's financially healthy.

The Top-Ten Money-Makers and Money-Losers

The next three tables present:

The Money Makers

- 1.) The top 10 money-making schools in terms of total revenue
- 2.) The top 10 money-making schools in terms of net income
- 3.) The bottom 10 money-making schools in terms of net income

Note that the figures for tables 1 and 3 include members of the Big Six conferences and CUSA only. Table 2 (Top 10 in net income) incorporates teams from other conferences as well, to show that UNLV and New Mexico (of the Mountain West Conference) crack the top 10.

Top 10 Schools in Men's Basketball Revenue, 1998-99 (Big Six Conferences and CUSA Only)

Team	Conf.	Revenue	Expenses	Net
Kentucky	SEC	\$11,903,284	\$4,614,286	\$7,288,998
Louisville	CUSA	\$10,849,105	\$2,126,900	\$8,722,205
Syracuse	BIG EAST	\$9,143,064	\$6,168,127	\$2,974,937
UNC	ACC	\$8,497,161	\$2,436,583	\$6,060,578
Arkansas	SEC	\$8,473,845	\$3,328,091	\$5,145,754
Illinois	BIG TEN	\$8,234,218	\$3,500,952	\$4,733,266
Minnesota	BIG TEN	\$8,031,721	\$1,878,729	\$6,152,992
Wisconsin	BIG TEN	\$7,633,794	\$1,686,978	\$5,946,816
Arizona	PAC 10	\$7,565,963	\$3,173,772	\$4,392,191
Kansas	BIG 12	\$7,410,659	\$1,703,394	\$5,707,265

Top 10 Schools in Men's Basketball Net Income, 1998-99 (all schools)

Team	Conf.	Revenue	Expenses	Net
Louisville	CUSA	\$10,849,105	\$2,126,900	\$8,722,205
Kentucky	SEC	\$11,903,284	\$4,614,286	\$7,288,998
Minnesota	BIG TEN	\$8,031,721	\$1,878,729	\$6,152,992
UNC	ACC	\$8,497,161	\$2,436,583	\$6,060,578
Wisconsin	BIG TEN	\$7,633,794	\$1,686,978	\$5,946,816
Kansas	BIG 12	\$7,410,659	\$1,703,394	\$5,707,265
Arkansas	SEC	\$8,473,845	\$3,328,091	\$5,145,754
UNLV	MT. WEST	\$6,666,854	\$1,634,366	\$5,032,488
New Mexico	MT. WEST	\$7,020,509	\$1,992,162	\$5,028,347
Ohio State	BIG TEN	\$7,283,037	\$2,393,086	\$4,889,951

Feature

The Money Makers

(continued from page 15)

Bottom 10 Schools in Men's Basketball Net Income, 1998-99 (Big Six Conferences Only)

Team	Conf.	Revenue	Expenses	Net
Colorado	BIG 12	\$974,627	\$2,046,960	(\$1,072,333)
Baylor	BIG 12	\$393,346	\$1,140,631	(\$747,285)
<i>Virginia Tech</i>	<i>A-10</i>	<i>\$1,055,588</i>	<i>\$1,469,593</i>	<i>(\$414,005)</i>
Texas	BIG 12	\$2,871,815	\$3,140,676	(\$268,861)
Georgetown	BIG EAST	\$1,731,164	\$1,894,602	(\$163,438)
Texas A & M	BIG 12	\$2,049,701	\$2,155,097	(\$105,396)
Southern Cal	PAC 10	\$2,195,302	\$2,214,366	(\$19,064)
Washington State	PAC 10	\$1,347,980	\$1,332,842	\$15,498
Notre Dame	BIG EAST	\$1,563,598	\$1,457,014	\$106,584
Oregon State	PAC 10	\$1,560,219	\$1,252,039	\$308,180
Nebraska	BIG 12	\$2,226,674	\$1,857,022	\$369,652

Note: Virginia Tech is shown for reference, despite not having been a Big-Six conference member in 1998-99.

Basketball Versus Football

All those numbers are fine and dandy, but one of the burning questions about basketball revenue is how it compares to football revenue. The best way to answer that question is to look at how total basketball revenue compares to total football revenue, and how basketball net income compares to football net income.

Here's a table that shows football and basketball revenue figures for the Big Six conferences and CUSA.

FOOTBALL/BASKETBALL REVENUE COMPARISON 1998-99, BIG SIX CONFERENCES AND CUSA

CONF.	PER-TEAM FB. REV.	PER TEAM BB. REV.	FB/BB RATIO
ACC	\$9,910,345	\$5,763,684	1.72
BIG 12	\$10,848,748	\$2,602,786	4.17
BIG EAST	\$10,269,049	\$3,130,944	3.28
BIG TEN	\$15,660,438	\$6,420,763	2.44
PAC 10	\$13,836,290	\$3,811,477	3.63
SEC	\$18,690,772	\$4,450,547	4.20
CUSA	\$4,950,345	\$3,079,916	1.61
AVE.	\$12,052,101	\$4,105,701	2.94

The importance of basketball revenue relative to football revenue is shown by the ratio in the right-hand column. The lower the ratio is, the higher the basketball revenue is relative to football revenue. Given that, it's not surprising to see that CUSA (1.61) and the ACC (1.72) have the lowest ratios, indicating how important basketball is to those two conferences. The numbers verify our

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perceptions with regard to those two conferences.

On the other end of the spectrum are the Big 12 (where football dominates basketball) and the SEC (where per-team basketball revenue is #3 among the conferences listed, but football revenue is a runaway #1, which throws the ratio off).

The average ratio of 2.94 means that the teams from the Big Six conferences and CUSA, on the average, make almost three times as much revenue on football as they do basketball.

Now here's the table for net income from football and basketball.

FOOTBALL/BASKETBALL NET INCOME COMPARISON 1998-99, BIG SIX CONFERENCES AND CUSA

CONF.	PER-TEAM FB. NET	PER-TEAM BB. NET	FB/BB RATIO
ACC	\$2,928,810	\$3,746,341	0.78
BIG 12	\$4,892,880	\$741,825	6.60
BIG EAST	\$2,555,140	\$1,048,088	2.44
BIG TEN	\$8,458,087	\$4,140,215	2.04
PAC 10	\$5,937,437	\$1,777,229	3.34
SEC	\$11,083,527	\$2,257,288	4.91
CUSA	\$550,925	\$1,565,525	0.35
AVE.	\$5,512,616	\$2,101,492	2.62

Net income is the true measure of the importance of football versus basketball to the teams in a given conference. After all, net income answers the question, "How much money does a team make off of football or men's basketball that can be used to pay for other, non-revenue sports?"

Again, the lower the ratio, the more important basketball is relative to football. A ratio of less than 1, which was registered by the ACC and CUSA, means that a school/conference nets more money from basketball than they do football. In the case of the ACC, conference members on average net about \$800,000 more from basketball than football, whereas in CUSA, the teams net over \$1 million more per team from basketball than football.

The Big 12, with its last-place net of \$741,825 per team from basketball and its football/basketball ratio of 6.60, is clearly a conference where football is in the driver's seat when it comes to net income.

On average, the teams from the Big Six and CUSA net over two and a half times as much money on football as they do basketball.

Next month: a look at revenue from men's sports vs. revenue from women's sports.

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The Data

As usual, the data that went into this report are available. If you want to see the complete set of data for football and men's basketball revenue and expenses, you can access the data as a web page, or you can download the Microsoft Excel 97 file.

Web Page link — note that this is a large file, but it still loads fairly quickly:

<http://www.techsideline.com/tslextra/issue008/fbandbbrevenue9899.htm>

MS Excel File (Excel 97 compatible):

<http://www.techsideline.com/tslextra/issue008/fbandbbrevenue9899.xls>

(Right-click the link and do a "Save Link As" or "Save Target As" to save the Excel file to disk.)

The Big East 2001, Game by Game

by Jim Alderson

I often get e-mail this time of year asking me if I really think some wild upset that has shown up in other writings will actually take place. The answer is, no, I really don't think Rutgers will beat Miami, and I was quite surprised in 98 when Temple actually beat Tech. I do spend many hours this time of year poring over the BE schedule and working out various scenarios. Following is how I think the upcoming year will actually play out. As always, these predictions are guaranteed to be correct unless they are not.

August 26

Syracuse-Georgia Tech: The Kickoff Classic. Frank Beamer wanted no part of this game, and Mikey T. coaxed Syracuse into the breach. It is hard to see, given their OOC, what in the world the Orange were thinking about in scheduling this game, because it seems a very difficult one for them to win, and a loss could prove fatal to bowl hopes for a team that figures to hover around the .500 mark. The Yellow Jackets are a veteran team with realistic hopes of finally ending Florida State ACC domination, while three years post-McNabb Paul Pasqualoni is still searching for a quarterback. The 'other' Tech wins by fourteen.

September 1

Connecticut-Virginia Tech: Welcome to the big time, Huskies. Nothing in their I-AA existence or their brief I-A life has prepared UConn for what will hit them when they venture onto that new Lane Stadium turf. It is also the perfect vehicle for Beamer and the Tech staff to get some reps in for Noel and the new O-line under quasi-game conditions. Kevin Jones will see a lot of playing time as Tech seeks to unearth a new marquee player. Zounds, this will be a rout.

West Virginia-Boston College: When Phil Elmassian sprung this defense on the Big East in 93, it was new. Now, most of the conference runs some variation of what is now known as Bud Foster's defense. Tom O'Brien and the BC staff have spent a lot of time over the years studying it, and won't be surprised. This is also O'Brien's fifth year on Chestnut Hill, the year most coaches really start to make their mark; his Eagles will be pretty good, good enough to beat the Mountaineers by twenty.

East Tennessee State-Pitt[sburgh]: Walt Harris and the Panthers open the new stadium by ripping a dog. Do the Steelers get to open with an XFL team?

Navy-Temple: The Owls' Big East farewell tour opens, naturally, not at Veterans Stadium but at decrepit Franklin Field. The irony will escape few. Navy stinks while Temple looks decent, leading to a predictable Owls win.

Rutgers-Buffalo: The Greg Schiano Era kicks off against the team that lost badly last year to UConn. It will get tougher for Greg, but he will have a week to enjoy being undefeated as the Knights roll.

Syracuse-Tennessee: Neyland Stadium on a short week. Yikes. Syracuse showing up at the bottom of published BE standings at 0-2 is going to send their message board faithful, not the most sup-

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portive of fans in the best of times, into a frenzy. Paul circles the wagons after the Vols win by ten.

Miami-Penn State: Larry Coker's first game against the oldest of the old pros, Joe Paterno. Add in the dedication of the latest Beaver Stadium addition and an emotional lift from the triumphant return of Adam Taliferro from serious injury, and all the ingredients are in place for a monumental upset. The only problem is the Lions are no longer a very good team. Miami scores late to win 21-17.

September 8

Western Michigan-Virginia Tech: All OOC griping aside, this game is going to be very difficult. WMU's Gary Darnell would have been the new Tech coach had Frank skipped off to Carolina, and I don't imagine he is thrilled at still being stuck in the MAC. He will have the Broncos ready to play. This game has embarrassing upset written all over it, but the Tech ground game and solid defense, with a Special Teams score thrown in, eventually wears down Directional, and Tech escapes with a 24-20 victory.

Ohio-West Virginia: Rich Rodriguez coaches at Mountaineer Field for the first time. The problems exposed by BC don't seem so bad when viewed against MAC opposition. WVU rolls by twenty-five.

South Florida-Pitt[sburgh]: People call Tech's OOC bad? If Antonio Bryant is not in jail and still on the team, he should have a field day, and the Panthers might score seventy.

Temple-Toledo: This one might throw a wrench into the 'Let's Win A Bunch of Games to Show the BE We Still Belong' Bobby Wallace strategy. The Blades are pretty good for a MAC team, and it will be a tough one for the Owls. Temple wins a close one.

Rutgers-Miami: Butch's two coordinators from last year square off. Unfortunately for Schiano, Coker is still on the sideline with all the talent. The Canes roll by fifty.

Central Florida-Syracuse: The 'easy' game on the Orange's OOC is a Knights team that is not all that bad. Teams making their first visit to the Carrier Dome generally do not have pleasant experiences, and if the 'Cuse fans stop posting 'Fire Pasqualousy' messages long enough to actually show up and cheer for their team, the Dome will mess with CFU's head enough for Syracuse to get their first win by fourteen.

Boston College-Stanford: O'Brien and the Eagles do wonders for the BE's power rating as they travel to Palo Alto and pull a mild upset by downing the Cardinal.

September 15

West Virginia-Maryland: Rich Rodriguez squares off against Ralph Friedgen; the former ACC battle of the Offensive Coordinators becomes one of bosses. Friedgen, who should have gotten his own program years ago, won both times when he was at GT and Rich at Clemson, and nothing much changes. The Terps have better talent and should have won last year. This year they do in an

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offensive shootout, 35-31.

UAB-Pitt[sburgh]: Considering whom they opened with, this qualifies as a major OOC game for the Panthers. The Blazers are making big strides under Watson Brown, but they will have been demolished by Florida State the week before and in no shape to battle Pitt. Harris and the Panthers move to 3-0.

Connecticut-Temple: This will be an instant rivalry, albeit a short one. The Owls won't take too kindly to lining up opposite their BE replacements, and will win by twenty-eight.

California-Rutgers: Schiano brings his Knights home for the first time against the Bears. This would be an opportune time for Greg to partially wipe away the memory of the woeful Terry Shea years and create a buzz around his program. He does, and the BE shows it owns the PAC 10 as Rutgers pulls the upset, 31-27.

East Carolina-Syracuse: Pasqualoni will still be in a world of trouble at 1-2 and the top of the BE left to play. If he loses this one, he is in some serious job trouble. As usually happens in June, the Pirates are talking big. This game, however, will be played in September, when reality sets in. The Orange, greatly aided by the Weirdness Factor of playing in the Dome, wins 23-21.

Washington-Miami: Grudge time for the Canes. Boy, did this game screw up the works last year, costing, among other things, a Tech berth in the Sugar Bowl had the Canes gone to the Orange. There will probably be a decent crowd for the Orange Bowl for this one, and, while Coker is once again up against a proven head-coaching winner, the Huskies don't appear to have the talent to win there. Miami goes to 3-0 with a 28-23 win.

September 22

Virginia Tech-Rutgers: Frank Beamer owned no one like he did Terry Shea, and probably shed a tear at his firing. Schiano may very well recruit well enough to make this an interesting rivalry, but he hasn't yet, and Tech has too many horses. The Hokies roll by thirty.

Temple-Bowling Green: Another tough OOC MAC game for the Owls, showing that if you often play tough MAC games you are not long for the Big East, unless, of course, you are Virginia Tech. The Falcons are tough at home, and knock off the Owls, as BE conference offices in Providence echo with the sighs of relief.

Syracuse-Auburn: Back to the fire for Pasqualoni and his Orangemen. Can the Dome work its magic a third time against good SEC opposition? It says here yes. Syracuse sweeps the home stand, beating Auburn 17-14 and causing their message board alumni to begin bragging about how good they are.

Kent State-West Virginia: There is never anything wrong with a program that a visit from Bottom Ten regular Kent cannot cure. If any WVU fans still irked at the BC and Maryland games bother to

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show up, they will see the 'Neers even their record at 2-2 by pounding the Golden Flash.

Boston College-Navy: O'Brien has done fairly well with the 'Go To Bowl Games by Scheduling Service Academies' method. Navy is lousy and the Eagles will roll by forty.

September 29

Central Florida-Virginia Tech: Bludgeoning the Knights with the ground game last year worked quite well, thank you, and there is no reason to expect it won't happen again. Tech has superior talent everywhere, and it shows in a 38-14 win.

Miami-Pitt[sburgh]: As we speak, Walt Harris is watching film and devising strategies for this game while Larry Coker is still learning his way around the big office. The Panthers should get a good crowd in the new stadium for what will be the most important game in the Harris regime. A win vaults Pitt solidly into the BE elite. It is quite tempting to pick the Panthers, but the Canes have dominated all BE teams except one. Miami pulls out a late win.

Connecticut-Rutgers: Rutgers generally does not have winning records at the end of September, but then the Knights generally do not have UConn and Buffalo on their schedule. Schiano becomes the talk of Jersey as RU goes to 3-2.

Army-Boston College: The Eagles are the BE's best-kept secret at 4-0 after ripping Army.

October 6

Virginia Tech-West Virginia: This series has much to do with Don Nehlen currently spending time with his grandchildren. Tech has won six of the last seven against the 'Neers, and if Rich Rodriguez is going to be in the hills for an extended period of time, he is going to have to beat Tech. Not this year, Rich.

Pitt[sburgh]-Notre Dame: The schedule has done Harris no favors, as the Panthers have to travel to South Bend a week after the tough Miami loss. Pitt has a long history under Harris of stinking up the joint the game after emotional losses. This will be no exception, as all those gaudy pre-season predictions go down the drain and the Panthers fall.

Temple-Boston College: Who would have guessed a couple of years ago that a BE match-up would feature the undefeated Eagles and 3-1 Owls? Conference officials hide under their desks in Providence until word comes that BC has pulled out a 41-38 win.

Troy State-Miami: Coker and the Canes take a break from living on the edge. Fans will be checking out South Beach by halftime as Miami wins by a bunch.

Syracuse-Rutgers: The last time the Orange came calling at Rutgers, the Knights pulled off the biggest win in the Terry Shea Era [admittedly, there were not a lot of wins to choose from]. Schiano

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will have them excited on the Banks for this one and thirty-five thousand show up. All of those freshmen will be in over their heads, however; Syracuse wins by twenty.

October 13

Boston College-Virginia Tech: Gameday would show up for this one were it not for the bigger names getting it on in Tallahassee. Tech and the Eagles give the BE a monster game between unbeaten and ranked teams. It is unfortunate it occurs the same week as Miami-FSU. George Welsh once said that no coach in the country had spent as much time studying the Tech defense as Tom O'Brien, although it might be debatable how much he has learned, as his personal losing streak to Beamer and Company is now six. The Eagles will be ready to play, but the upside to ABC scarfing up the Canes and Noles is this game more than likely goes to ESPN primetime, and Tech wins at home at night.

Miami-Florida State: A national biggie. If FSU gets by Georgia Tech at home in September, it will be a game of top 5 teams. Miami has the better team but no coach has been in more of these games than Bobby Bowden, and he lives for them. Coker's inexperience finally catches up with him as Florida State wins 24-17.

West Virginia-Notre Dame: South Bend is no place for WVU to be the week after another loss to Virginia Tech. Nehlen doesn't seem so bad as the 'Neers drop to 2-4.

Syracuse-Pitt[sburgh]: The Orange are the one BE team Harris has never beaten. The Panthers will limp into this game after two tough and high profile losses, while Pasqualoni is basking in unaccustomed admiration following four straight wins. The promising Pitt season is slipping away and it is gut check time. The Panthers respond and pull out a 28-23 win.

Rutgers-Temple: The Owls are bragging about those twenty-five thousand season tickets sold. I bet half don't show up for this clunker. The BE's final Yawn Bowl goes to Temple by twenty, and Wallace and Gittes and Cosby will have plenty to say about the dastardly Big East afterwards.

October 20

Pitt[sburgh]-Boston College: The marquee game in a light BE week. The Panthers will have their season back on track while BC will have a long injury list courtesy of the Tech defense. They start whispering 'Gator Bowl' around the Steel City as Pitt pulls off a 35-31 win.

Temple-Syracuse: They will be starting to hold their collective breath for days at a time in Providence at the thought of the lame-duck Owls snatching one of the BE's bowl berths. No matter what happens, if five other conference teams are bowl eligible Temple stays home, and Syracuse moves a step closer with a ten-point win in the Dome.

Navy-Rutgers: I bet the Knights would vote to add Navy to the BE. Schiano gets RU back on track employing the 'When all else fails schedule a service academy' method and the Knights blast the

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lousy Middies by thirty.

October 27

Syracuse-Virginia Tech: Frank Beamer broke his Carrier Dome hex last year; Paul Pasqualoni is still looking to break through in Lane Stadium, where his Orange have suffered woeful beatings. The ESPN cameras are back to display why Dome teams rarely win big. It won't be 62-0, but Tech wins easily enough. The bright side for Pasqualoni is that when he comes back in 2003, if he comes back, there will be a visitor's media room, so he won't have to conduct his post game news conferences outside where the handful of Syracuse fans can get at him.

West Virginia-Miami: It is going to be a tough October for WVU. The Canes will have had eleven days to stew over the FSU loss and will take it out on the 'Neers.

Pitt[sburgh]-Temple: With Miami and Tech coming up, it will be getting pretty close to last-stand time for the Owls. Temple will have added incentive, as they perceive Pitt's abstention during the 'boot Temple' voting by Big East members as getting them bounced out of the league, while the Panthers will be looking ahead to what they see as a huge game the next week. It bites them, as Temple pulls off a huge and conference-embarrassing win 42-31.

Notre Dame-Boston College: I am high on BC this year, and the visit from the Irish shows why. It is always a big game for the Eagles, while for Notre Dame it falls this year between their tilts with Southern Cal and Tennessee. You can't get sky high for them all, and the Irish don't. BC lives to beat Notre Dame, and they will be living large on Chestnut Hill following the ten-point Boston College win.

November 3

Virginia Tech-Pitt[sburgh]: This game is serious trouble. Walt Harris is one coach who has our defense down cold. Disappointment over prior losses never seems to faze the Panthers a whit when it comes to the Tech game - they are always ready to play. Beating Pitt requires an offense that can win a shootout, and all quarterbacks who pulled this game out last year are gone. Tech goes down.

Rutgers-West Virginia: The grumbling in Morgantown abates a bit as WVU takes out the year's frustrations against the Knights.

Temple-Miami: The Owls will be flying high as they head to South Florida. The Era of Good Feeling abruptly ends as the Canes, in a fifty-point thrashing, demonstrate why Temple is on its way out of the BE.

November 10

Virginia Tech-Temple: The last BE home game for the Owls. I doubt Frank Beamer will be issuing

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any glowing testimonials for Temple or Veterans Stadium and its miserable playing surface. What he will do is have his Hokies send them on their I-AA way with a thirty-point beating.

Miami-Boston College: Three times Butch Davis took Miami teams to BC and three times the Canes got away by the skin of their teeth. Coker is not as fortunate. The Eagles spring a huge upset, finally giving television networks something to show during UM-BC games other than the Flutie pass.

West Virginia-Syracuse: WVU's recent record in the Carrier Dome is about as abysmal as ours. It gets worse as the Orangemen become bowl eligible with a close win.

Pitt[sburgh]-Rutgers: All of those freshmen playing for Schiano have worn down and the Panthers hit their stride. An easy Pitt win.

November 17

Virginia Tech-Virginia: By the time this game is played, the walls of Merryman should be covered with stupid algroh quotes. At this point in time, Tech is better, and all of the running of algroh's mouth doesn't change that fact. The Tech defense and ground game chews up and spits out the Hoos in a twenty-point Tech victory.

Temple-West Virginia: The Big East might have more eligible teams than bowls to place them, which means the Owls will be the first team on the outside looking in. A team that has been riding on emotion finally deflates in their last BE game, and the Mountaineers work off a season's worth of frustration in a big win. No one from the conference will be there to wish the Owls a fond farewell.

Syracuse-Miami: It hasn't been too long ago that Miami message boards crackled with posts demanding that Coker, seen as the weak link on the Canes staff, be fired. Those posts will be back, at least until the angry Canes get through beating the daylights out of Syracuse.

Boston College-Rutgers: Schiano has injected life into the Knights program. The future is still in the future, however, and he would do best by spending this Saturday recruiting, as the Eagles will win by three touchdowns.

November 24

Pitt[sburgh]-West Virginia: A very tough inaugural year for Rich Rodriguez finally ends as the Panthers pull ahead early and coast to a twenty-five point win that will have their fans gnashing their teeth over the Temple loss.

Boston College-Syracuse: The Orangemen will need this one for bowl eligibility while BC will already be there. That and the Dome should provide enough incentive for SU to break their two-game losing streak to the Eagles and win 21-17.

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December 1

Miami-Virginia Tech: Lane Stadium in December against the Canes from South Florida. I like our chances. They may have the better overall talent, but Tech has the better coaches, fans and insulated underwear. The Hokies win another Big East Championship with a 24-20 win.

Final Big East Standings

Virginia Tech	6-1	10-1
Miami	5-2	8-3
Pitt[sburgh]	5-2	8-3
Boston College	4-3	8-3
Syracuse	4-3	7-5
West Virginia	2-5	4-7
Temple	2-5	5-6
Rutgers	0-7	4-7

The Bowls

The good guys head back to Bourbon Street and the Sugar Bowl. An 8-3 Notre Dame squad steals the Gator Bowl, causing the Insight.com to snap up Miami. Pitt[sburgh] heads to the Music City as all of their NFL alumni buy a bunch of tickets, while the aloha, not wanting BC a second straight year, takes Syracuse, but BC's large television market lands them somewhere. West Virginia and Rutgers go recruiting, and Temple goes bye-bye.

Catching Up With Torrian Gray

by Scott Veith

In 1998, Torrian Gray was in the process of solidifying himself as a National Football League defensive back. Three years later, he's submitted to the idea that he'll never play another down of football.

Gray was a prominent force in the defensive backfield for the Minnesota Vikings. But a knee injury on a kickoff ended his career instantaneously.

"In my second season I played in the nickel package for the first 8 games, Gray said. "That's when I suffered my knee injury. I was covering a kick and just got hit the wrong way and my knee went out. So I spent the rest of that year rehabbing. Then I spent my whole third year rehabbing. That's when I realized I wouldn't make it back. I'd just lost too much speed."

For a guy who once chased down Virginia's Tiki Barber from behind in the 1996 Tech/UVa game, the idea of losing speed was hard to swallow. But he resigned himself to the end of his football career.

In a matter of month, Gray managed to make the switch to coaching. He made a few phone calls, went on a few interviews and eventually found himself as a defensive backs coach for division 1-AA University of Maine.

This season, Gray enters his second year as a U. Maine staff member. He oversees the entire secondary, including cornerbacks, safeties and outside linebackers and also works with inside linebackers in passing situations.

Gray said he's fortunate to have come across such a good job without prior coaching experience.

"At first, I thought I'd have to do a graduate assistantship," he said. "But they had a situation here (at Maine) where a guy had just left and I had played in the same defense at Tech. So that worked out well for me."

Last season, Gray was a little skeptical about joining the coaching ranks without giving his playing days one last shot. After a season-and-a-half of rehabbing his torn-up knee, Gray decided enough was enough and traded in the pads for a clipboard and whistle.

"I was a little disappointed because I worked my butt off to try to get back," Gray said. "But I got to live the life (of an NFL player) for a while, and I'll never forget that. I definitely miss it. I'd be a much richer man if I was still playing, but I'm doing what I love now, so I'm not complaining."

Gray thinks he made the right decision by getting into coaching. His excitement for the game is as strong as ever, and his eagerness for success is second to none.

I learned first hand about Gray's dedication to his job and doing what's expected of him. I left a phone message for Gray at the U Maine football office at 8:30 p.m. on a Monday night. By 7:00 a.m. on Tuesday, both Gray and Maine Head Coach Jack Cosgrove had called me back and ex-

Torrian Gray

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plained that they just missed my call. That means they were both at work *before* 7:00 a.m. the morning after working until almost 9 at night.

Gray is also savvy about the business of college football and knows the hours will be long for the rest of his career. But he's longing for the days when a Division I program sweeps him up.

"I haven't been in the business all that long," Gray said, "but I've been told that the higher up you go, the easier it gets in terms of responsibilities. We have fewer coaches than a D-I program, so everyone does a little more."

Gray said in total, that U. Maine has fewer than 10 coaches. That includes full-time staff, restricted earnings coaches, graduate assistants and volunteers. Some Division I programs have as many as 20.

He said going from a player to a coach was an easy transition, but some things came naturally to him. He still gets excited when his guys put on their game jerseys.

"It's a little different now because I'm putting my trust in people that I've coached rather than in myself," he said. "But it's exciting to see these guys do the same things I used to do."

He even talks like a coach now. This past off-season, two U. Maine graduates signed free agent contracts with NFL teams. Gray takes pride in the fact that he helped them get to where they are.

"It's exciting to see those guys with that kind of opportunity and to know that I had a chance to work with them," he said. "It'll be fun to watch them try and make the cut."

Gray said he still thinks about the days when he strapped on the maroon and orange in Blacksburg. He said, "The one thing I miss the most is Saturday afternoons, walking down the tunnel. Just the whole transition from what happens on Friday up until game time is something I'll never forget."

And two years ago when Tech played in the national championship game, Gray felt like a proud daddy whose kid just brought home a good report card.

"It was awesome to see them actually with a chance to win it all. I was proud of the program, to see how far they had come," he said. "It was nice."

And he said he wishes his U. Maine team had a quarterback like Michael Vick.

"Special is the one way to describe (Vick)," Gray said. "I love to watch any talented athlete, but when you put together his strength and speed with an arm like that, you've got something special."

And Gray does his best to keep up with what's going on with the Hokies. He checks the websites of the Virginia papers every chance he gets.

Torrian Gray

But no matter how much he loves Tech, he's a Black Bear now. And he's got work to do.

"I'm excited about the group of guys I have coming back this season, he said. "We've got a good group that's easy to work with. And we have a guy that will be a senior this season that I'd like to think has a shot (at the NFL). He's a 5'6" guy, but he's got the speed and quickness. I just hope he doesn't get overlooked because of his size."

Gray is happy in Maine, but if the Hokies called at the end of the season and needed a defensive backs coach, Gray would be on the next flight out of Portland.

"In a heartbeat," he said. "If the opportunity (to coach at Virginia Tech) came up, I'd be there in a heartbeat."

Scott Veith is a producer for WBRE TV 28 in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania and a sports correspondent for TRIP Magazine of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Analysis

Inside the Numbers: Tumbleweeds in Cassell

by Will Stewart, *TechSideline.com*

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, Virginia Tech was a basketball school.

Yes, it sounds hard to believe, but in the past, the popularity of men's basketball at Virginia Tech arguably exceeded the popularity of football, and in many years, there actually wasn't any argument to be made: basketball was king.

Those whose memories of Virginia Tech basketball don't go further back than ten years find that hard to believe. Men's basketball at Tech is a non-factor to a Hokie fan who hasn't followed Virginia Tech sports for more than a decade. It has been a decade-plus exercise in futility interrupted only by the Ace-Custis led teams of the mid-90's who won a 1995 NIT championship and made an appearance in the NCAA's in 1996.

The growing disinterest in men's basketball at Virginia Tech is reflected in attendance, or lack thereof. As a rule, after peaking in the late 80's, attendance has been on a steady decline, a downward spiral that was slowed for three brief seasons by the mid-90's NIT champions mentioned above.

This decline in attendance has dire financial consequences. As detailed in this month's article "The Money-Makers, Part 3: Basketball," the Hokies lost over \$414,000 on men's basketball in 1998-99, and over \$650,000 in 1999-2000. Tech is one of just a handful of teams in the "Big Six" conferences (the ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big 10, PAC 10, and SEC), the Atlantic 10, and Conference USA that did not make money off of men's basketball.

As part of the agreement to enter the Big East in July of 2000, the Hokies will not share in Big East basketball revenue for the first five seasons of membership in the league. With one year under their belts, this means that for another four years, Virginia Tech will not partake of their portion of Big East revenue-sharing, which would have been in the neighborhood of \$1.3 million per year. Multiply that figure by five years, and that's approximately \$6.5 million that will not flow into Tech's athletic coffers.

The primary way for Tech to make up this lost revenue is through ticket sales. The problem is that with attendance on the decline for most of the last decade, Tech's ticket sales are hitting bottom, not rising. And because of the slack demand for tickets, prices have held steady at \$10 for years. Compare that with Syracuse, which charges \$19 per ticket for a Big East Conference game — despite having a healthy supply of 32,000 seats for basketball in the Carrier Dome — and UConn, which not only charges \$25 per ticket, but even charges students \$5 a seat (student tickets at Tech are free).

Virginia Tech has averaged about 4,200 fans per game for the last three years, and at \$10 a ticket, that's only \$42,000 per game in ticket revenue. At Syracuse, where they average crowds of 19,282 in the Carrier Dome (source: Big East web site), a \$19 ticket price will bring revenue of \$366,358 per Big East game, almost *nine times* what the Hokies make. UConn averaged crowds of 12,769, and if the average ticket price is \$20, that's \$255,380 per game.

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Tech's sparse attendance was 4,508 per game for the 2000-2001 season, 13th in the 14-team Big East. Only Miami, a bastion of poor support for men's basketball, was worse, averaging just 2,898 fans per game.

The Hokies' low attendance is a double-edged sword. Not only does it bring in paltry gate receipts, but it prevents the raising of ticket prices. Virginia Tech basketball is stuck in a rut of low attendance and low ticket revenue.

But this article is not meant to be a study of how much money the Hokies make (or don't make) from basketball. It is meant to be a study of the history and trends of VT basketball attendance.

A Once-Feared Venue Stands Quiet

Cassell Coliseum, whose claustrophobic atmosphere and steeply banked rows of seats once made it one of the most feared venues in college basketball, is a toothless tiger these days, a cavernous collection of empty seats smattered with a few thousand fans.

With the exception of a few Big East games that drew around 6,000 fans and produced some good noise (one characteristic of Cassell Coliseum is that any crowd over about 4,000 can be pretty loud), Cassell is just a pale imitation of its former self in terms of atmosphere and noise.

Only the diehards and the true fans of Virginia Tech basketball remain these days. They know that they're watching Virginia Tech basketball at its lowest point, and they await the days that Big East membership brings the fans — and the excitement — back to "the Cassell."

Those days may come, but for now, attendance is the lowest it has ever been. It bottomed out in 1998-99 (4,040 fans per game) and 1999-2000 (4,042), bouncing back slightly in 2000-2001 (4,508) when the Hokies entered the Big East. There are many reasons why attendance has gotten so sparse, and I'll touch upon those later, but for now, let's take a look inside the numbers.

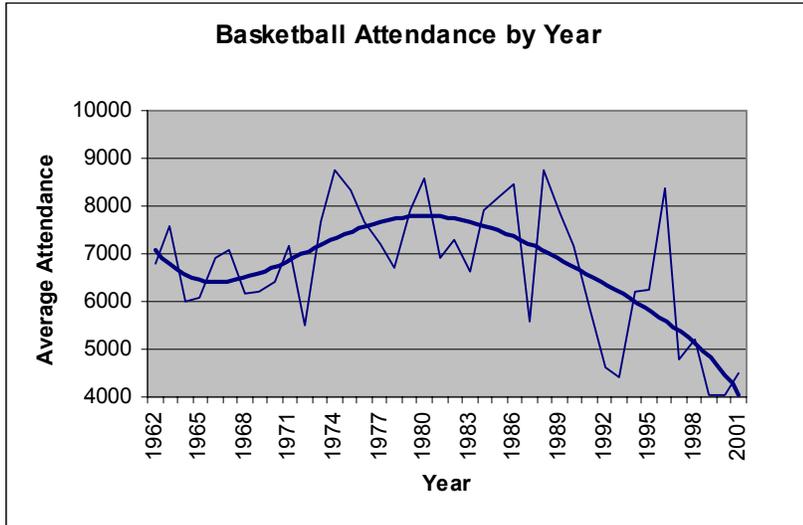
Attendance figures for the 40-year history of Cassell Coliseum, from the time it opened in the 1961-62 season to the present, are published each year in the men's basketball media guide. The data isn't presented as per-game attendance, but rather, as total attendance, along with the home won-loss record for that year. So you have to add the won-loss record up and divide the total attendance by that number to get per-game attendance. It takes a little time to set up a spreadsheet, but once you do that, you can manipulate the data however you want.

Surprisingly, the year-by-year average attendance figure jumps and spikes almost to the point of making a graph look like noise. From the time Cassell Coliseum opened to the present, the graph of average per-game attendance moves back and forth from the mid-5000's to nearly 9,000 for all of Cassell's first three decades. Average attendance doesn't drop below 5,000 until the 1990's and 2000's, when it does so six times: 1992, 1993, 1997, 1999, 2000, and 2001.

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Since there are 40 years of attendance figures, I won't pass them all on to you in the body of this article, but at the end, I will give you a link to the data in an Excel spreadsheet.

And in looking at the data, I struggled a little bit with how to present it in an easily digestible format. Talking about all forty years would no doubt make your eyes glaze over, so I thought I would just point out some trends and what I'll call some "macro numbers."

In the following data, the "Season" column indicates the year that a basketball season ended. So if I give you a figure for 1967, for example, I'm talking about the 1966-67 basketball season.

Ave. Attend.	# of Times	Seasons
8,000-9,000	7	74, 75, 80, 85, 86, 88, 96
7,000-7,999	11	63, 67, 71, 73, 76, 77, 79, 82, 84, 89, 90
6,000-6,999	12	62, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70, 78, 81, 83, 94, 95
5,000-5,999	4	72, 87, 91, 98
4,000-4,999	6	92, 93, 97, 99, 2000, 2001

If that's too much to look at all at once, just look at the top row and the bottom two rows. They point out what those of us who follow Tech men's basketball know intuitively: the highest attendance was in the 80's, and the lowest was in the 90's and 2000's.

Here's another way to look at the data: the following table shows how many seasons from each decade fell into certain ranges of average attendance.

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Number of Seasons w/Attendance Between ...					
Decade	4k-5k	5k-6k	6k-7k	7k-8k	8k-9k
1962-1969	-	-	6	2	-
1970-79	-	1	2	5	2
1980-89	-	1	2	3	4
1990-2001	6	2	2	1	1

Looking at this table shows how remarkably consistent the 60's and 70's were, how strong the 80's were ... and how weak the 1990's/2000's were. For the first 28 years of Cassell Coliseum's existence, average attendance dipped below 6,000 just twice. Since then, in the last 12 seasons, it has gone below 6,000 eight times. The 12 seasons of the 1990's/2000's have registered the 7 lowest-rated seasons in terms of average attendance. Ouch.

And here's one more look at the data by decade.

Decade	Ave. Attendance	% Change
1962-1969	6594	-----
1970-79	7352	+11.5%
1980-89	7615	+3.6%
1990-2001	5455	-28.4%

That makes it pretty clear that attendance is on a serious decline. After steadily rising from the 60's through the 80's, attendance plummeted 28% from the 1980's to the 1990's/2000's.

Trends in Attendance

1.) *Winning Helps, Losing Hurts*

Let's take a look at that first table again:

Ave. Attend.	# of Times	Seasons
8,000-9,000	7	74, 75, 80, 85, 86, 88, 96
7,000-7,999	11	63, 67, 71, 73, 76, 77, 79 82, 84, 89, 90
6,000-6,999	12	62, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 70 78, 81, 83, 94, 95
5,000-5,999	4	72, 87, 91, 98
4,000-4,999	6	92, 93, 97, 99, 2000, 2001

Note the top row. Attendance was high in 1974 and 1975, the years following the 1973 NIT championship. It went up again in 1980, the first year after Tech's 1979 Metro Conference Tournament Victory and NCAA appearance. It was high during 1985, 1986, and 1988, when the Hokies went a combined 61-28 and featured Dell Curry (85 and 86) and Bimbo Coles (88) in their heydays. Lastly,

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attendance was high in 1996, the year after Tech's 1995 NIT victory and the year of their last NCAA tourney appearance.

On the other hand, the ten lowest-attended seasons had a combined record of 121-162. Only two of those ten seasons had winning records: in 1972, the Hokies went 16-10, and in 2000, they were 16-15.

2.) *Star Power Aids the Cause*

It is no secret that having a star player brings in the crowds. Bimbo Coles and Dell Curry are numbers 1 and 2 in career scoring at Virginia Tech, and oh-by-the-way, they could electrify a crowd like no one to ever put on a Hokie uniform.

Tech has had other great players: Dale Solomon, Ace Custis, Allan Bristow, and other greats that I never saw play and can't vouch for. But Curry, with his long-ball ability, and Coles, with his relentless drive to the hoop, were the best, both in production and in style.

Curry and Coles brought in the most fans. From the 1983 season through the 1986 season, Curry ruled the roost, and from 1987 to 1990, it was Coles. Not coincidentally, 6 of those 8 seasons are ranked among the top 16 in attendance overall. Curry's freshman season (1983) and Coles's freshman season (1987) are the only two seasons that didn't bring in average attendance over 7,000 per game.

3.) *A Good Conference Boosts Attendance*

After the 1965 season, the Hokies exited the Southern Conference, and they did not join a basketball conference again until the 1979 season, their inaugural season in the Metro Conference. After the Metro summarily booted the Hokies after the 1995 season, Tech switched to the Atlantic-10 from 1996-2000.

For the Hokies, the glory days of the Metro Conference were from 1979 to about 1990, when the conference started to fall apart. During the decade of the 80's, Louisville (the Evil Empire) and Memphis State (back before they dropped the "State" from their name) were Top 10 fixtures, and Tulane, Florida State, and Southern Mississippi fielded excellent teams at various times. Names like LaBradford Smith, Pervis Ellison, Keith Lee, William Bedford, Alton Lee Gipson, John "Hot Rod" Williams, and Pee Wee Barbour among others, made Hokie fans quake with fear. (I may have gotten some of those spellings wrong, by the way, but I remember the fear clearly.)

That stretch from 1979 to 1990 encompassed 12 seasons, and 9 of those 12 seasons fall into the top 18 seasons for average attendance of all time. Only the 1981, 1983, and 1987 seasons failed to average over 7,000 fans per game during those 12 seasons.

More Hard Times Ahead?

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Things did not get much better this past season, despite Tech's entry into the Big East for basketball. After five games, the Hokies were averaging just 4,060 fans per game, despite a reported attendance of 10,052 - a capacity crowd - for the UVa game. If you take away the UVa game, the average attendance plummets to 2,562 fans per game for the first five games. Ugh.

Once the Big East schedule kicked in, attendance picked up, and Tech was able to average 4,508 fans per game for the year, despite going 8-19, including a 6-9 home record that was the first losing record in Cassell Coliseum's 40-year history.

And the dirty truth is that the reported attendance is higher than the actual attendance, and in some cases, much higher. This is because reported attendance is based on tickets sold, not on a count of fans coming through the door. Anyone who went to the UVa game this season knows that there were only about 8,000 fans there, tops, and that's being generous. There were a lot of empty seats in Cassell that night, despite the fact that the game was sold out.

During the 1996 season, when the Hokies averaged a fifth-best 8,358 fans per game, the true packed houses were few and far between. I remember watching Bill Foster on TV one night, talking to a reporter during the post-game interviews and saying, "I keep hearing about how loud this place is when it's full. I'm still waiting to see it full." Then he glared directly at the camera. "I mean, *really full*." The Hokies recorded only two home sellouts during that 22-4 regular season —UMass and Xavier. And only one, the UMass game, was truly full.

Most casual fans perceive the Tech men's basketball program (if they pause to think about it at all) as hopelessly floundering. Player defections, mounting losses, and fan apathy have taken their toll, and just when you think it can't get any worse, it takes another bad turn.

There's nowhere to go from here but up. And for those of us who remember what Cassell Coliseum was like when it was full — *really full* — we can't wait to get there.

The Data

To see the attendance data for Cassell Coliseum that was used to write this article, you can either view it as a web page or download it as a Microsoft Excel 97 file.

Web Page link:

<http://www.techsideline.com/tslextra/issue008/cassellattendance.htm>

MS Excel File (Excel 97 compatible):

<http://www.techsideline.com/tslextra/issue008/cassellattendance.xls>

(Right-click the link and do a "Save Link As" or "Save Target As" to save the Excel file to disk.)

Inside TSL: Short Takes

by Will Stewart, TechSideline.com

Instead of a long article focusing on one topic, this month I thought I would cover a variety of TSL topics. Let's get started.

Rome Talk

Last month's "Inside TSL" detailed, among other things, a conversation between radio host Jim Rome and former (I still hate using that word) Tech QB Michael Vick. You'll recall that at one point in the conversation Rome asked Vick about the work Vick is doing with the Tech Licensing department to sell Vick-related products to raise scholarship money. Rome mentioned the name of the TechSideline.com web site several times, providing some great free publicity for the site.

After recounting the conversation between Rome and Vick, I slammed Rome fairly hard:

Rome is a punk. He's respectful to his guests, but among his listeners and callers, he encourages endless smack-talk and drivel that anyone with a brain has no interest in listening to. Whereas most radio talk shows consist of back-and-forth dialogue between the host and callers, Rome's callers instead get on the air and then go on rambling, smack-filled monologues for as long as Rome decides to leave them on the air, or until they say, "I am out" and hang up. I don't remember the last time I heard Rome actually talk to one of his callers. If you've heard one of these calls, you've heard them all.

In general, the attitude of disrespect that Rome encourages and cultivates is just pathetic. Like I always say, "If you don't have the time or talent to speak or write correctly, then just talk smack." It's much easier and takes no talent. Kind of like rap music.

But I have to admit that now that Rome mentioned TechSideline.com on the air three times, I no longer think he's just a punk. Now he's a punk who has mentioned the name of my web site on a national radio broadcast.

That's pretty harsh, and I wondered if it would bring any Jim Rome fans out of the woodwork for a rebuttal. It did. Randy Ferguson, a TSLX subscriber who is a Rome fan, dropped me the following email:

Will-

Sorry, but as a devout listener of the Rome show, I must (as in the words of Rome) "smack" my own...that's you! I enjoy your TSL Extra column, but your blatant "smacking" of JR was totally unnecessary. Sure Rome's not for everyone and I can agree with that, but calling him a punk after he totally gave your site some major run is weak. So he said it was MV's site, so what? The guy went out of his way to pimp your site, give him a break.

Rome is absolutely one of the most hilarious, insightful, and fair mem-

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bers of the sports media. This is why so many of the top athletes are comfortable on his show, he tells it like it is...I know you don't like it every year when VT denies you press credentials, because the VT athletic administration stereotypes people who do their business on the Internet...therefore you of all people shouldn't be so quick to judge others and what is legitimate or not...I thought you were a more objective writer than that.. and oh yeah, take your butt down into any VT locker room and tell all the athletes rap music is for idiots...yeah right...I'm ouuttttttttt!

Chuckle. That, my friends, is the type of discourse that is very common to Rome fans, meaning that it's very honest, straightforward, doesn't pull any punches, and ends with, "I'm ouuuuuuttttt!" It was like getting a Jim Rome telephone call delivered to my email In-box.

I thought about what Randy had said, and he had some good points. I reviewed the comments I had made about Rome in TSLX #7, and I decided that they didn't really accurately relay how I feel about Rome himself, or his show. So I replied to Randy and attempted to clarify myself.

One of the good things about devotees of the Rome show who like his style is that you can talk to them openly and honestly — heck, they *demand* it. So I was a little more outspoken in my reply to Randy than I normally am with complaint letters. Here's my response:

Randy:

All right, here's my "take" on Rome: calling him a punk was not accurate, because that's not what I think about him. I USED to think he was a punk (still don't like the Chris Everett thing — I don't believe in disrespecting people, and that's what Rome did; he deserved to get smacked out of his chair). Having listened to his show, here is what I think of Rome: he is very knowledgeable about his subject matter, and he's a good interviewer. And yes, he's funny — his Monday show after the XFL's debut weekend was hilarious.

However, I cannot stand the format of his show. If all he did was interviews and commentary, I would love his show. But when he turns it over to his callers, it dumbs down to a third-grade level. I'd like to hear some intelligent discourse and to learn some things — what I DON'T want is to listen to "Jim in Chi-Town's" idiotic "take" on A-Rod, Charles Barkley, Deion Sanders, and the price of luxury boxes in the Jacksonville Jaguar's stadium. This thing of having half-drunk high school dropouts call in and ramble on a negative diatribe for 30 seconds to a minute without any give and take between the caller and the host is just not something that appeals to me. Rome is funny and intelligent — 99% of his callers are not, and that's wasted air time that just contributes to

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bringing down the lowest common denominator of what's acceptable in society.

You ought to know from watching my behavior on the board that I'm pretty conservative. I believe in respecting people, exchanging ideas, and agreeing to disagree. I think people ought to always try to act with class and dignity (I don't always do that, but I TRY). I'm not part of the new generation that thinks trash talk, self-promotion, and insulting and demeaning other people is okay. Therefore, I don't like the format of Rome's show, because outside of his interview segments, it's built on trash talk. Again, if you've heard one of his callers, you've heard them all.

Rome says, "If you've never heard the show, just give it a few weeks, and I promise, you'll warm up to it." Well, I've warmed up to his portion of it, but I'll never warm up to the constant stream of callers who ought to keep their ideas to themselves and shouldn't be allowed to demonstrate their lack of brain power to the entire country.

And he was not "pimping" my site — he was repeating the only thing he could remember from a press release he had skimmed during the last commercial break. No problem there, that's his job, but he definitely was not "pimping" it.

And I'm not even touching the rap music comment.

Rack me, Randy — I'm oooooouuuuuutttt!!

— Will in R-Town (Radford)

Those of you who are familiar with Rome's show might get a little kick out of the "rack me" reference (on Rome's show, getting "racked" is a good thing — I think — not a painful blow delivered to a sensitive area of the body) and my R-Town signature. That's done very much in the Rome style.

Randy's response was very brief, something along the lines of, "I can deal with your response. Thanks for the explanation." So we had both said our piece and were content to go our separate ways.

Why do I share this particular exchange with you? After all, I get tons of email every day, some of it more interesting than this, most of it less so. I suppose I passed it along because I wanted to clarify my thoughts on Rome and his show, in case I wasn't clear last issue.

One thing's for sure, by the time we were done, Randy and I understood each other. Maybe there is something to the way Rome does things ... nah.

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Thanks for agreeing to let me print the letter, Randy.

Traffic Statistics

There seems to be no end to the growth of traffic on TechSideline.com. Every year, just when you think the number of Hokies posting on TSL and reading the articles can't get any bigger, it does. Since most TSLX readers seem to enjoy the occasional discussions of traffic statistics, here are some more facts and figures for you.

We are currently smack-dab in the middle of the off-season, with absolutely nothing going on — school is in summer session, recruiting is quiet, and no Hokie sports teams are currently active. And yet we're pulling just over 80,000 page views a day, and have been for the last three months.

To give you some perspective, the undefeated 1999 football season and the run to the national championship game produced an average of 90,000 page views a day in the months of November and December of 1999. That was the height of Hokie hysteria, and yet, less than two years later, we're almost doing that much traffic in the quietest months of the year.

Before giving you some statistics, let me define what a "page view" is: a page view is logged whenever someone reads a message board post or an article on TechSideline.com. For example, if you hit the home page, the Football page, or the future schedules page, or read an article or a message board post, it will register as a single page view.

"Hits" are a different measure of traffic that is usually much higher than "page views." A hit is registered every time an image or a block of text is downloaded, meaning that there are multiple hits per page view. TSL, for example, registers about 3 or 4 hits per page view, which is indicative of a web site that is efficiently designed and doesn't overuse graphics. Poorly designed web sites with a lot of embedded graphics will produce 5-10 hits or more per page view.

So when you hear someone say "My site got a million hits last week," don't get too excited about that. If it's a poorly designed site with lots of images that is hard to navigate, it's going to generate a lot of "hit" traffic without necessarily generating a lot of "page views."

Here are TSL's average daily page view stats for the last year and a half. Our stats package only goes back for a year, and I didn't record the stats in late 1999/early 2000, so the figures given for October 1999 through January 2000 are estimates done from memory.

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Month	Page Views Per Day
Oct-99 (est.)	80,000
Nov-99 (est.)	90,000
Dec-99 (est.)	90,000
Jan-00 (est.)	70,000
Feb-00	56,198
Mar-00	43,490
Apr-00	49,852
May-00	48,890
Jun-00	52,364
Jul-00	61,589
Aug-00	93,416
Sep-00	109,759
Oct-00	118,476
Nov-00	143,000
Dec-00	116,565
Jan-01	177,893
Feb-01	131,936
Mar-01	72,083
Apr-01	80,945
May-01	83,413
Jun-01	86,593

To boil it down to its essence, here's what the figures show:

Time Period	Page Views Per Day
1999 football season	90,000
2000 recruiting period	70,000
2000 summer	50,000
2000 football season	115,000 *
2001 recruiting period	175,000 **
2001 summer	83,000

*I say just 115,000 page views a day during the 2000 football season because the Beamer-to-UNC saga in November of 2000 created an artificial spike in page views (143,000 per day for Nov. 2000) that wasn't related to the football season.

** The huge traffic increase between the 2000 and 2001 recruiting seasons is the result of the addition of a recruiting database and a recruiting message board from 2000 to 2001.

The big question here, and this is why I printed the figures, is, "What is the traffic going to be during the 2001 football season?"

There are three ways I can see to predict it:

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1.) The traffic during the 2000 football season was 2.3 times the traffic of the 2000 summer. Since the 2001 summer traffic is hovering around 83,000 page views a day, the 2001 football season traffic could be $83,000 \times 2.3 = 190,900$ page views a day. Gulp.

2.) Traffic increased by a factor of 1.66 from summer of 2000 to the summer of 2001 ($83k/50k = 1.66$), or from year to year for comparable time periods. Multiplying the 115,000 page views of the 2000 football season by a factor of 1.66 would equate to — get this — 190,900 page views a day during the 2001 football season. Gulp again.

3.) The traffic during the 1999 football season was 90k pages per day. It jumped to 115k pages per day during the 2000 football season, a factor of $115/90 = 1.27$. If you multiply the 115k page views per day by that same factor of 1.27 to estimate the traffic during the 2001 football season, you get 147,000 page views per day for 2001.

So, traffic during the upcoming football season will average somewhere between 147,000 page views per day and 190,900 page views a day, with signs pointing towards the higher range.. Wow, I can, uh, hardly wait.

Now if only TechLocker.com sales, TSLX subscription sales, and banner ad revenue would take a comparable jump, I could get off this macaroni-and-cheese and mayonnaise sandwich diet.

New TSL Logo Vote Coming Soon

One lingering “to-do” task has been a redesign of the web site logo. We have wanted to do a new logo ever since we changed the name from HokieCentral.com to TechSideline.com back in November of 2000, but we were just too pressed for time until spring of 2001.

The problem since then has been agreeing on a new logo. A logo has to serve many varied functions: it has to fit into a page header in reasonable fashion, like the current logo does. Page headers are 600x100 pixel images, so that’s a challenge.

A logo also has to fit well on T-shirts, hats, and other merchandise, whether embroidered or screen printed. It has to be easily identifiable and has to look good in any combination of maroon, orange, and white.

That’s not too much to ask.

At one point, we were growing so frustrated (or, as my two-year-old likes to say, “fuss-er-ated” — sorry, using what children say to get a laugh is a VERY weak literary device, but there you have it) that I put out the call to the TSL faithful to see if they could come up with some good ideas. I got some interesting concepts from the readers, including one or two that would work well on page headers, but not really on T-shirts, hats, etc.

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Back to square one. The problem here is that you've got two people working on logo designs: me and our company president, who manages our business affairs, our store, and has a strong background in graphic design. So he considers working on TSL logo concepts to be a welcome break from the business- and store-related tasks he deals with every day.

Unlike him, I have no background whatsoever in graphic design, so my creative brain is not cluttered like his with all these extra thoughts about what is and isn't appropriate in graphic design.

That disparity has led to him disliking my unpolished, unprofessional designs, while I am unmoved by his designs, which are well-executed from a graphic design standpoint but just don't "move" me in any way. So I pass my designs his way, only to hear "No," while he passes his designs my way, just to see me shrug my shoulders and go, "Eh...nah."

So we're going to settle this the best way possible, by chaining ourselves together at the wrist and battling it out to the death in a cage match ... uh, never mind, I forgot that this is the TSL Extra and not the WWF Extra.

What we're really going to do is take my two favorite designs and his two favorite designs and put them up for a vote on the web site. This will occur in late June/early July, and once the fans pick a favorite design, there's no looking back. We'll update the site graphics and move into production on T-shirts, hats, etc.

Of course, I'm not going to tell you who is responsible for what design, and my esteemed opponent may throw in a fifth design for you to vote upon. However it works out, I'll be glad to get this thing behind us and move forward with a new logo.

So look for that poll soon, in about two weeks. Due to its nature, it will be embedded into a News and Notes update, not on the home page.

See you next month.