

8 p.m. — In the team's second, and final, exhibition game of the year the Deacs face William and Mary at Spry Stadium. The first exhibition of the year, a 3-0 shutout of Greensboro College, showed no reason to doubt these Deacons will deliver on high preseason expectations.

SPORTS

Women's golf season ends at NCAA Regionals.

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 23, 2001

Deacs take third ACC title in four years

By Mike Scott
Assistant Sports Editor

While most Demon Deacon students were working on résumés, honing foreign language skills or studying scantily clad members of the opposite sex this past summer, the Demon Deacon baseball team kept itself busy by pounding the opposition, winning the 2001 ACC Tournament, the team's third such title in four years, May 16-20 in Fort Mill, S.C.

The Deacons' run to the title began May 16 against UNC. Senior Cory Sullivan took the mound for the Deacons, but he lasted only 3.2 innings, his shortest outing of the season. Sullivan more than made up for his subpar hurling with his performance at the plate, leading the Deacon offensive charge by going 3-for-4 with two runs, two RBIs and his 10th homer of the season. Also contributing at the plate were senior Corey Slavik, who went 2-for-3 with two runs, three RBIs and a home run (also his 10th of the season), and sophomore Ryan Johnson, who went 3-for-4 with an RBI.

Unfortunately the Deacon gloves weren't as adept as the Deacon bats, and the Heels were able to capitalize on Deacon errors, scoring five unearned runs to keep the spectators interested. But in the end, the Deacon offense proved to be too much for UNC, as senior Dave Bush closed the door for his 14th save of the year, tying him for the national lead and giving the No. 3-seeded Deacons an 11-8 win over the No. 7-seeded Tar Heels.

Next up for the Deacs were the Virginia Cavaliers on May 17. In a game that was almost the opposite of the tournament opener, the Deacs squeaked by the 'Hoos on the strength of their pitching, prevailing 2-1 on.

Sophomore Ryan Braun teamed with Bush to dominate the Virginia hitters. Braun pitched six innings and struck out a career-high 10 batters. When he began to tire, Head Coach George Greer called for Bush, who struck out five in three innings of work to earn the win. Tied at one going into the eighth, Sullivan led the inning off with a single and was then sacrificed to second by senior Jason Aquilante, bringing freshman Jamie D'Antona to the plate. D'Antona, the co-National Freshman of the Year, laced a two-strike single down the left field line to score Sullivan and give the



Photo courtesy of www.wakeforestsports.com

The Demon Deacon baseball team poses with its ACC Championship Trophy following their 17-4 rout of N.C. State in the title game on May 20 in Fort Mill, S.C.

Deacons the margin they needed to take the game.

The Deacons were rewarded for their win over UVa. with a date on May 18 against fourth-seeded Georgia Tech. In a bold move, Greer gave the ball to freshman Kyle Sleeth against one of the nation's most powerful lineups.

Perhaps buoyed by his boss' confidence, Sleeth responded, holding the powerful Yellow Jackets to three runs on seven hits over seven innings. When Sleeth walked the first two batters of the eighth, Greer called on Bush, who promptly exterminated the Yellow Jackets, pitching two shut-out innings and allowing only one hit to earn his 15th save of the year. With the win, the Deacons earned a matchup with top seed Florida State on May 19 and assured themselves the opportunity of playing for the conference title. The game proved to be the Deacons' only hiccup during the tourney, as FSU tomahawked their way to a 15-2 victory. The loss to the Seminoles meant only that the Deacs would not have the luxury of being able to lose another game, making the May 20 championship game sudden death.

Joining the Deacs in the championship tilt would be surprising

eighth seed N.C. State, which pulled off a giant upset over Florida State. The Deacs apparently did not want any anxiety during the game, as they pasted the Wolfpack 17-4 to win their third conference title in four years.

The game was never in doubt, as Sullivan led off with a home run. The senior showed why he was a finalist for national player of the year, dominating all aspects of the game, going 3 for 3 with three runs, five RBIs and two home runs, while also pitching eight innings and allowing only four runs on seven hits.

It was a fitting end to the season, with Sullivan providing both the offense and the pitching before yielding to Bush, the Tournament MVP, shut the door for the Deacs in the ninth. All season, both of these seniors had stepped up when the Deacons needed them.

Afterwards, Greer talked about his jack-of-all-trades senior.

"Cory Sullivan, what can I say?" Greer said. "He leads the game off with a home run and comes out in the bottom of the inning and strikes people out. He hits another home run and gets a big RBI single. He is just immense. He is what college baseball is all about — someone

who can do it all."

Once again the Deacons did not have much time off, as they traveled to Knoxville, Tenn., as the first seed in their NCAA Regional to face Tennessee Tech in the first round May 25. For the first time in school history, the Deacons failed to win their first-round game, falling 9-7. The Deacs fell behind 7-1 midway through the contest. The Deacs tried to mount a ninth-inning rally, as D'Antona led off with a home run, but the effort fell short. Due to this loss, the Deacons faced the prospect of needing four straight wins over the next two days to advance from the regional.

This near-impossible task began May 26 against Middle Tennessee State. The Deacons' 6-3 win earned them a return date with Tennessee Tech, who had lost to Tennessee, for the right to face the Vols the next day. The Deacs avenged the previous day's loss with an 18-5 domination. Halfway there, the Deacs would have to defeat Tennessee in consecutive games to advance to Omaha and the College World Series.

The Deacons were impressive once more during the morning game May 27, victimizing the Volunteers 10-3 to set up a final game for the right to go to advance to

the Super Regionals.

Tennessee jumped out to an early lead, going up 4-0 after two innings and 6-2 after five. But Bush was summoned during the sixth, and the senior held the Vol offense in check the rest of the way. Unfortunately, Tennessee's Patrick Hicklen matched Bush, so the score was still 6-2 as the Deacons stepped to the plate in the top of the ninth. With one out, senior Matt Price and junior Jamie Athas singled, putting runners on the corners. After Aquilante singled to score Price and senior Carlos Brackley grounded out, Sullivan stepped to the plate.

But it seemed the Deacons had used all their comeback magic in their three games over the last two days. After putting the team on his shoulders for much of the year, Sullivan for once could not come through, as he grounded out to end the game, and with it the Deacon season. While the Deacs fell short of expectations in the regional, the 2001 season was a huge success. And while the ACC champs will lose Sullivan, Athas and Slavik to the draft as well as several other seniors, hopes are high for another strong season, with D'Antona, Bush and a host of younger players looking to defend their conference title.

Welcome freshmen coaches

By Jordan Webster
Sports Editor

Hey, rooks. Welcome to the big leagues.

That's right. You've been promoted, the whole lot of you. All 990 freshmen. You ain't in high school anymore.

To which most of you will likely reply: "Thank God". Which would be the appropriate reaction.

So, congratulations on your admission to the Class of 2005. It's nice to have you. And while for the first several weeks (or months, depending on how well you progress) you'll get the equivalent of the rookie treat-

ment — lousy class registration times and either banishment to South Campus or quarantine to Palmer and

Piccolo — keep this in mind: you're in good company.

The upcoming school year will be one impacted very much by rookies, although ones not quite like yourselves. They have slightly nicer accommodations than the 10-by-10 bomb shelters that you share with another person — offices in the Haddock Athletic Center. But they have slightly loftier goals and slightly more intense pressure than making the Dean's list or avoiding the Freshman 15. Meet Jim Grobe and Skip Prosser, new head coaches of the football and men's basketball teams, respectively. And your classmates, in circumstance, if not in title.

Like you, Grobe and Prosser are embarking on journeys that have no defined conclusion. Like you, the arrival of Grobe and Prosser on campus represents numerous things: a goal accomplished, a challenge presented and the hopes of a successful conclusion.

OK, so it's not quite the same. I mean, sure, you each have challenges, but does an A in that intro level biology class really carry the same weight as trouncing Carolina in basketball season? Of course not. That would be silly. Trouncing Carolina is far more important. But you see what I'm getting at.

But the "rookie" atmosphere that surrounds the athletic department should make your rookie seasons much more exciting. Both Grobe and Prosser will be so far off the courses that were beat into the ground by their predecessors that they'll need a compass and flares to get back to campus.

Prosser will likely institute a run-and-gun, shoot-from-the-hip mentality in his new team, as he did with Xavier at his last stop and as his mentor Pete Gillen does at Virginia. So you can take former head coach Dave Odom's slow-and-steady-wins-the-race strategy and shove it up your student handbook, never to be seen from again. No one really knows what Grobe plans to do with the football team, but rest assured — the requisite draw play on third-and-12 will suffer the same fate as Odom's stall ball, or your handbook, for that matter. Long gone.

So you've picked a good year (or maybe it was your parents that picked a good year) to show up. Things will be fun. Less losing, more winning. That's what we're hoping for. And you'll be a part of it.

Not that winning hasn't been a part of Deacon athletics, pre-you. Both distant past and very recent. The aforementioned Palmer and Piccolo? That would be Arnold Palmer, one of the best golfers

Bush shuns Devil Rays, will likely return for senior year

By Jordan Webster
Sports Editor

If the Deacs are to successfully defend their crown in 2002, they will have to manage to do it without much of the core of last season's squad, a depletion that included draftees, graduates and Head Coach George Greer's top assistant.

What may be bigger news, though, is who is returning. ACC Tournament MVP David Bush, the team's closer, will likely return to school for his senior season instead of inking a deal with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, who selected Bush in the third round of June's Amateur Draft.

"At this point, he's coming back to school," Greer said. "David likes school, likes his friends, and likes playing baseball, and he didn't feel comfortable with the Tampa Bay people at this point."

Bush anchored a Deacon pitching staff that was wrought with injuries in 2001, and has continued his stellar work this summer in the Cape Cod League, a league for the country's top collegiate players. As of July 7, Bush had not given up a run in 11.1 innings of work, fanning 16 batters, and was considered one of the league's top prospects.

Greer will no longer benefit from the assistance of associate head coach and recruiting coordinator Bobby Moranda, who departed for an identical position at ACC rival Georgia Tech in July. The 36-year-old Moranda had spent six seasons work-

ing under Greer, and had been listed in Baseball America as one of the top 10 assistant coaches in the nation. Moranda also worked with the Deacon pitching staff.

"Coach Moranda had an offer at Georgia Tech that he felt he couldn't turn down," Greer said. "We talked about it, and he just felt it was best for him and his family."

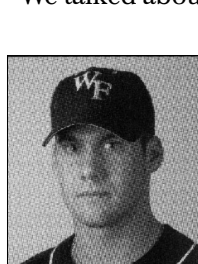
Moranda spent six seasons coaching at the Virginia before accepting a position with the Deacons.

To replace Moranda, Greer has promoted two assistants, Jamie Mabe and Michael Holmes. Mabe, who joined the Deacon staff prior to last season from Young Harris College in Georgia, will assume primary recruiting duties.

Holmes, a Deacon hurler from 1994 to 1997, will take over as pitching coach.

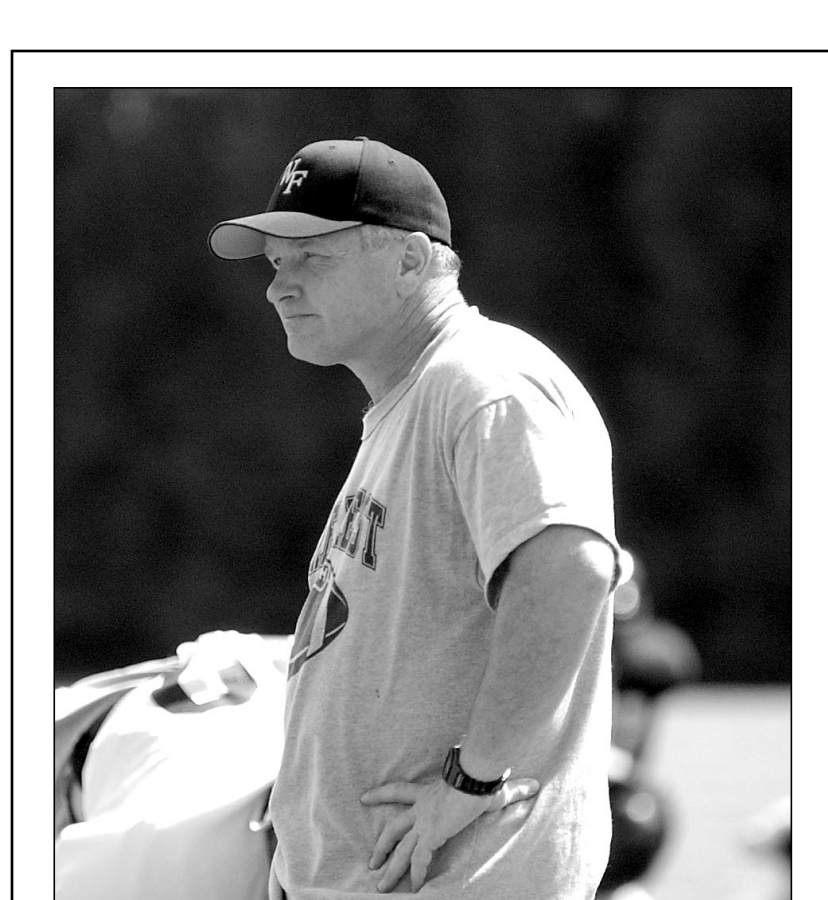
"We had numerous coaching inquiries from around the country (about the coaching vacancies)," Greer said. "After our search, we thought that Holmes was the best fit for the pitching coach situation and Mabe was a fit for our recruiting."

Also gone from last year's team will be three



Bush

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Zachary Klein/Old Gold and Black

Dog days of summer

Head Coach Jim Grobe supervises his Demon Deacons during practice on Aug. 20. Grobe has been putting his squad through two-a-days for the almost two weeks. The Deacs open the season Sept. 1 at East Carolina.

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