

# ACC Preview

By Adam Kilgore

**SUNDAY** | National Men    **YESTERDAY** | Local Men    **TODAY** | ACC    **TOMORROW** | Big East    **THURSDAY** | Women

## How They'll Finish

- 1. NORTH CAROLINA**  
 The Tar Heels were supposed to endure a rebuilding process last season, but Coach Roy Williams and monstrous Tyler Hansbrough wouldn't allow it. After being bounced from the NCAA tournament in the second round by George Mason, a year of experience and a loaded freshman class make the Tar Heels a Final Four favorite.
- 2. DUKE**  
 Point guard Greg Paulus will miss the early season, a tough injury to overcome considering he led the ACC with 5.2 assists per game last season and the Blue Devils lack depth. Dunking machine Josh McRoberts will have to pick up his slack, and DeMarcus Nelson will need to show his potential.
- 3. BOSTON COLLEGE**  
 The Eagles have proved for two seasons they belong in the ACC, and this year should be no different for Al Skinner's consistent team. Jared Dudley is one of the league's best inside-outside forces and a tremendous rebounder. Sean Williams won't replace Craig Smith's offensive firepower, but he may be the league's best shot blocker.
- 4. GEORIGIA TECH**  
 The Yellow Jackets return four starters and their top three scorers, but their new starter might be their best. Freshman Thaddeus Young was voted the league's best freshman, and classmate Javaris Crittenton will contribute, too. They'll be steeled in practice by 6-foot-8 Jeremis Smith, who averaged 8.2 rebounds, the highest returning total.
- 5. VIRGINIA TECH**  
 Under the radar since they joined the ACC, the Hokies think this will be their breakout year. They return all five starters, including smooth power forward Coleman Collins and electric guard Zabian Dowdell, who can focus on scoring more with slick-passing freshman point guard Nigel Munson in the picture.
- 6. FLORIDA STATE**  
 Al Thornton is one of the country's most underrated players, an athletic, 6-8 forward who averaged 16.1 points and 6.9 rebounds and made 47.6 percent of his three-point attempts. The Seminoles need to replace the scoring and rebounding of Alexander Johnson, but they'll contend.
- 7. VIRGINIA**  
 With a new arena and the conference's best back court, the Cavaliers won't be pleased with anything less than an NCAA tournament appearance in Dave Leitao's second season. That back court, Sean Singletary and J.R. Reynolds, averaged 34.7 points per game last season, but wore down because of depth issues. A solid crop of freshman should fix that.
- 8. MARYLAND**  
 Highly touted as a freshman, battle-tested as a senior, D.J. Strawberry needs to be a star this season. He'll get help from equally experienced Ekene Ibekwe, a senior who has been around so long they can actually pronounce his name in College Park now. The Terps return two other players who started games last season, but who's going to score?
- 9. CLEMSON**  
 Coming off a 7-9 conference record, its best since 1997-98, and an NIT appearance, Clemson could be the ACC's dark horse. Nine of its 13 losses last season came by six points or less or in overtime, and the Tigers return four starters. They play smothering defense, but they need to find a go-to scorer.
- 10. MIAMI**  
 The run-and-gun back court of Guillermo Diaz and Robert Hite gave Miami basketball an identity last season, and it also gave the Hurricanes 50 percent of its scoring. It's gone now, and the Hurricanes will have to rely on bruiser Anthony King and a more team-oriented approach.
- 11. WAKE FOREST**  
 Despite having Justin Gray and Eric Williams, two of the league's top players, the Demon Deacons staggered to a 17-17 record and last-place ACC finish at 3-13. Now that Gray and Williams are gone, it's safe to say Skip Prosser could be facing a rebuilding season and a trip to the hot seat.
- 12. NORTH CAROLINA STATE**  
 Sidney Lowe takes over for former coach Herb Sendek, who is now at Arizona State, and Lowe inherits only one returning tarter, Engin Atsur, when every other ACC team returns at least two. The Wolfpack has won an NCAA tournament game in three straight years, one of only eight teams to do so, but expect that trend to stop this year.



BY GRANT HALVERSON — GETTY IMAGES

**Greg Paulus of Duke won't get to pass to J.J. Redick or Shelden Williams and will miss the early portion of the season because of a foot injury.**

### WHAT'S HOT

#### Got Its Groove Back?

A year after sending four teams to the NCAA tournament and zero to the Final Four, the ACC seems poised to once again challenge for being the best conference in the country. League coaches have been campaigning for more respect, but their teams may do the talking for them. Of last season's NCAA tournament teams, only N.C. State figures to not return, while five teams that didn't qualify — Virginia, Virginia Tech, Georgia Tech, Clemson and Maryland — have plenty of experience.

#### Frosh Pit

One of the predicted consequences of the NBA's age-limit rule was that power conferences such as the ACC would benefit, because kids with NBA talent would want only to attend high-profile schools. In Year 1 A.S. (After Stern), that's exactly the case. Other than Ohio State, the ACC could be the largest beneficiary. North Carolina's Ty Lawson and Wayne Ellington, Georgia Tech's Thaddeus Young and Javaris Crittenton, Duke's Jon Scheyer and Gerald Henderson and Virginia's Will Harris headline a bumper crop that will help the conference reassert itself.

#### Straight to the Point

Duke point guard Greg Paulus led the ACC in assists last season, the fourth freshman to do so and the first since North Carolina's Ed Cota in 1997. Though Paulus will miss the first season's few weeks because of a foot injury, the ACC won't be without showstopping point guards. Virginia's Sean Singletary is leading returning scorer in the conference. Virginia Tech's Zabian Dowdell has started 57 games, and his freshman backup, Nigel Munson, is a more pure, pass-first point guard. Lawson might be the league's best freshman.

### WHAT'S NOT

#### Inside Muscle

Craig Smith and Shelden Williams only faced each other once last season, which was a shame. They could have staged a steel-cage match, and it would have been worth watching. Those brutes are gone, as are Wake Forest's Eric Williams and Clemson's Akin Akingbala. Those four players comprised the ACC's four leading rebounders last season and make for a lot of missed toughness. North Carolina's Tyler Hansbrough eats up space with impeccable footwork and position, but he lacks the intimidation Smith and Williams brought.

#### Parity

The games will decide how tightly packed the conference is or isn't, but the preseason outlook suggests a three-tiered delineation within the league. Duke, North Carolina, Boston College and Georgia Tech stand above the rest, while Wake Forest, Miami and North Carolina State have little hope to rise above the status of bottom-feeder. How well those five middle teams play and beat up one another will decide who will be smiling on Selection Sunday.

#### North Carolina St.

Only eight schools have won an NCAA tournament game in each of the past three seasons, but Herb Sendek didn't stick around to see if he could make it four, moving cross-country to take over the Arizona State program. The Wolfpack returns a single starter, Engin Atsur, while every other ACC team returns more than one. Sidney Lowe, this is your life. The first-year coach faces a daunting rebuilding process.

### OVERRATED

#### Greg Paulus's injury

Yes, Duke lacks depth at point guard, and yes, Paulus led the league in assists last season. But he was feeding the ball to the country's best shooter in J.J. Redick and most fearsome post player in Shelden Williams. Any point guard would have rang up big assist numbers. Paulus also had a penchant for making a costly turnover at the wrong time in big games, which cost Duke against Georgetown and against LSU in the NCAA tournament. Freshman Jon Scheyer will likely receive more playing time early than Coach Mike Krzyzewski would have liked.

### UNDERRATED

#### Clemson

There was no outcry when the NCAA tournament shunned the Tigers last season as there was locally for Maryland, nor any surprise as there was for Florida State. But Clemson might have had a more impressive season. The Tigers went 19-13, but nine of their 13 losses were by less than six points or came in overtime. Clemson might be the league's most seasoned team. Two seasons ago, freshmen made 68 starts for Clemson. Those players are coming into their own as the Tigers return four starters.

### TOP 10 PLAYERS

1. Tyler Hansbrough, N.C.
2. Jared Dudley, Boston Col.
3. Sean Singletary, Virginia
4. Josh McRoberts, Duke
5. Al Thornton, Florida St.
6. Thaddeus Young, Georgia Tech
7. Reyshawn Terry, N.C.
8. Coleman Collins, Virginia Tech
9. Ty Lawson, N.C.
10. Sean Williams, Boston College

### MUST-SEE GAMES

- Nov. 12:** Arizona at Virginia  
**Dec. 2:** Kentucky at North Carolina; Georgetown at Duke  
**Dec. 3:** Florida at Florida State  
**Dec. 23:** Boston College at Kansas  
**Jan. 27:** North Carolina at Arizona  
**Jan. 28:** Boston College at Duke  
**Feb. 11:** Connecticut vs. Georgia Tech  
**March 1:** N. Carolina at Georgia Tech  
**March 4:** Duke at North Carolina

### MARYLAND ROSTER AND SCHEDULE

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
1	F	Landon Milbourne	Fr.	6-7
2	G	D.J. Strawberry	Sr.	6-5
5	G	Eric Hayes	Fr.	6-3
10	G-F	Jason McAlpin	Jr.	6-4
15	F	James Gist	Jr.	6-8
21	G	Greivis Vasquez	Fr.	6-5
23	G	Mike Jones	Sr.	6-5
24	G	Parrish Brown	Sr.	6-1
25	F	Ekene Ibekwe	Sr.	6-9
31	C	Will Bowers	Sr.	7-1
32	F	Jerome Burney	Fr.	6-9
33	F	Gini Chukura	Sr.	6-5
35	F	Dave Neal	So.	6-7
50	F	Bambale Osby	Jr.	6-8

Month	Date	Opponent	Time
November	7	Hampton	8:30
	8	TBD in 2K Sports Hoops Classic, TBA	
	12	Florida A&M	7
	16	TBD in New York, TBA	
	17	TBD in New York, TBA	
	20	Winthrop	8
	24	High Point	1:30
	28	at Illinois	7
December	3	vs. Notre Dame at Verizon Center	6:30
	6	Fordham	8
	10	at Boston College	6:30
	13	UMKC	8
	23	American	1
	28	Mount St. Mary's	8
	31	Siena	1
January	4	Iona	8
	10	Miami	9
	13	Clemson	2
	16	at Virginia	8
	21	at Virginia Tech	7:30
	24	Georgia Tech	9
	30	at Florida St.	8
February	3	at Wake Forest	8
	6	Virginia	9
	11	Duke	5
	14	at N.C. State	7
	18	at Clemson	4
	21	Florida St.	9
	25	North Carolina	5:30
	28	at Duke	9
March	3	N.C. State	3:30
	8-11	ACC tournament in Tampa	

### VIRGINIA ROSTER AND SCHEDULE

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
1	G-F	Will Harris	Fr.	6-6
2	G	J.R. Reynolds	Sr.	6-2
11	F	L. Mikalauskas	So.	6-8
12	F	Jamil Tucker	Fr.	6-8
21	C	Tunji Soroye	Jr.	6-11
24	G-F	Mamadi Diane	So.	6-5
30	F	Adrian Joseph	Jr.	6-7
31	F	Andy Burns	Fr.	6-8
33	F	Jason Cain	Sr.	6-10
34	F-C	Ryan Pettinella	Jr.	6-9
44	G	Sean Singletary	Jr.	6-0
45	G-F	Solomon Tat	Fr.	6-5
55	F-C	Jerome Meyinsse	Fr.	6-8

Month	Date	Opponent	Time
November	12	Arizona	7
	19	Morgan State	3
	22	UNC Asheville	7
	26	Md. Eastern Shore	3
	29	at Purdue	7:30
December	3	N.C. State	3:30
	16	Hampton	2
	19	Appalachian St. in San Juan, P.R.	4
	20	Central Florida or Utah in San Juan, P.R.	TBA
	21	TBA in San Juan, P.R.	
	28	American	7:30
January	3	Gonzaga	9
	7	Stanford	5
	10	at North Carolina	9
	13	at Boston College	2
	16	Maryland	8
	21	Wake Forest	1
	24	at N.C. State	9
	28	at Clemson	1
February	1	Duke	8
	3	Miami	8
	6	at Maryland	9
	10	at Virginia Tech	4
	13	Longwood	7
	17	Florida State	1
	21	at Miami	7:30
	24	Georgia Tech	3:30
March	1	Virginia Tech	7
	3	at Wake Forest	1
	8	ACC tournament in Tampa	

### VIRGINIA TECH ROSTER AND SCHEDULE

No.	Pos.	Name	Yr.	Ht.
1	G	Zabian Dowdell	Sr.	6-3
3	G	Nigel Munson	Fr.	6-0
13	G-F	D.Washington	Jr.	6-7
14	F-C	R. Krabbendam	So.	7-0
15	F	Terrance Vinson	Fr.	6-8
21	F	Lewis Witcher	Fr.	6-9
22	G	Jamon Gordon	Sr.	6-3
23	G	Marcus Travis	Jr.	6-3
24	G	Markus Sailes	Sr.	6-5
33	F	Coleman Collins	Sr.	6-9
34	F	Cheick Diakite	So.	6-9
40	G-F	A.D. Vassallo	So.	6-6
42	F	Chris Tucker	Sr.	6-6

Month	Date	Opponent	Time
November	10	Coppin State	7:30
	14	West Florida	7
	23	Western Michigan in Orlando	7:30
	24	West Virginia or Montana in Orlando, TBA	
	26	TBA in Orlando	
	29	Iowa	7
December	3	George Washington at Verizon Center	4
	6	Old Dominion	7
	10	Appalachian State	2
	17	Wake Forest	5:30
	21	Seton Hall in New York	6:30
	23	Campbell	7
	30	at Marshall	4
January	3	Richmond	7
	6	at Duke	noon
	10	at UNC Greensboro	7:30
	13	North Carolina	3:30
	17	at Florida St.	7
	21	Maryland	7:30
	23	at Miami	9
	28	at Georgia Tech	3:30
	31	N.C. State	9
February	3	at Boston College	1
	10	Virginia	4
	13	at North Carolina	8
	18	at N.C. State	4
	21	Boston College	7
	24	Miami	noon
March	1	at Virginia	7
	4	Clemson	1
	8	ACC tournament in Tampa	