

SPRING OUTLOOK

SPRING TWO-DEEP

as of March 27

Offense (Multiple)

SE	11	Dyrell Roberts (6-2, 188, r-Sr.)
	83	Corey Fuller (6-2, 191, r-Sr.)
LT	54	Nick Becton (6-6, 328, r-Sr.)
	69	Mark Shuman (6-7, 322, r-So.)
LG	76	David Wang (6-1, 286, r-Jr.)
	64	Matt Arkema (6-3, 285, r-So.)
C	74	Andrew Miller (6-4, 300, r-Jr.)
	79	Caleb Farris (6-3, 310, So.)
RG	55	Brent Benedict (6-5, 311, r-So.)
	60	Laurence Gibson (6-6, 312, r-So.)
RT	71	Vinston Painter (6-6, 304, r-Sr.)
	70	Jake Goins (6-5, 291, r-Fr.)
TE	86	Eric Martin (6-2, 264, Sr.)
	9	Randall Dunn (6-2, 244, r-Sr.) OR
	88	Ryan Malleck (6-4, 250, So.)
QB	3	Logan Thomas (6-6, 262, r-Jr.)
	6	Mark Leal (6-0, 212, r-So.)
FB	45	Joey Phillips (5-11, 233, r-Sr.)
	32	Riley Beiro (5-9, 232, r-So.)
TB	20	Michael Holmes (5-11, 208, r-Fr.)
	4	J.C. Coleman (5-7, 176, Fr.) OR
	25	Martin Scales (5-11, 226, r-Sr.)
FL	7	Marcus Davis (6-4, 228, r-Sr.)
	80	Demitri Knowles (6-0, 174, r-Fr.)

Defense (4-3)

DE	99	James Gayle (6-4, 250, r-Jr.)
	66	Tyrel Wilson (6-1, 220, r-Jr.)
DT	98	Derrick Hopkins (6-0, 298, Jr.)
	96	Corey Marshall (6-1, 250, So.)
DT	92	Luther Maddy (6-1, 288, So.)
	97	Kris Harley (6-0, 283, r-Fr.)
DE	42	J.R. Collins (6-2, 252, r-Jr.)
	95	Zack McCray (6-4, 245, r-So.)
OLB	43	Jeron Gouveia-Winslow (6-2, 212, r-Sr.)
	28	Alonzo Tweedy (6-2, 189, r-Sr.) OR
	37	Ronny Vandyke (6-3, 215, r-Fr.)
ILB	58	Jack Tyler (6-0, 230, r-Jr.)
	47	Brian Laiti (6-3, 223, r-So.)
ILB	36	Chase Williams (6-1, 224, r-So.)
	41	Derek DiNardo (6-0, 215, r-So.)
CB	17	Kyle Fuller (6-0, 181, Jr.)
	30	Donaldven Manning (5-9, 155, Fr.)
FS	34	Kyshoen Jarrett (5-10, 188, So.)
	2	Michael Cole (6-1, 200, r-Fr.)
ROV	8	Detrick Bonner (6-0, 186, r-So.)
	13	Boye Aromire (6-0, 196, So.)
CB	1	Antone Exum (5-11, 217, r-Jr.)
		Carl Jackson (5-8, 182, r-So.)

Specialists

PK		Michael Branthover (5-8, 187, So.)
		Skyler Hutcheson (6-0, 200, r-Fr.)
		Connor Goulding (5-9, 183, r-So.)
P		Connor Goulding (5-9, 183, r-So.)
		Michael Branthover (5-8, 187, So.)
		Scott Demler (5-11, 201, r-Sr.)
		Ethan Keyserling (6-2, 205, r-So.)
SN	65	Joe St. Germain (5-11, 216, r-So.)
		Lukas Stump (5-11, 202, r-So.)
		Logan Baker (5-11, 222, r-Fr.)
		Jimmy Fitch (6-1, 186, r-So.)
H	12	Trey Gresh (6-1, 213, r-So.)

*Will not participate in contact work during the spring:
SE D.J. Coles, OC/T Michael Via, TB Tony Gregory, DT Antoine
Hopkins, LB Bruce Taylor, LB Tariq Edwards.*



TECH QUICK FACTS

Location: Blacksburg, Va.

Enrollment: 31,000

President: Charles W. Steger

Director of Athletics: Jim Weaver

Head Football Coach: Frank Beamer (Virginia Tech '69)

Hokies' 2011 Record: 11-3 overall; 7-1 ACC; Coastal Division Champions

Beamer's Overall Record: 251-121-4 (31 years)

Beamer's Record at Tech: 209-98-2 (25 years)

Faculty Chairman of Athletics: Dr. Larry Killough

Conference: Atlantic Coast Conference

Nickname: Hokies

Colors: Chicago maroon and burnt orange

Media Relations: Dave Smith (540) 231-6726

Sports Information Fax: (540) 231-6984

Tech Athletics on the Internet: www.hokiesports.com

OFFENSIVE LINE



Andrew Miller

HEADLINES

Key Losses: tackle **Blake DeChristopher**; tackle **Andrew Lanier**; guard **Jaymes Brooks**; guard **Greg Nosal**

Key Returnees: center **Andrew Miller**

Tech loses four players who started every game over the past two seasons. Redshirt junior Andrew Miller moved into the starting center spot last spring and will be expected to become the leader up front this spring.

Battle to Watch: The battle for the guard spots will be a focal point. **David Wang** is expected to have the edge at left guard if he stays healthy, but the right guard position is wide open.

Players to Watch: Sophomore **Caleb Farris** and redshirt sophomore **Brent Benedict** could be the wild cards on the front line. Farris is listed at center but will also get a look at guard. Benedict, a highly touted transfer from Georgia, will be moved inside to guard after working as a tackle. Both have the ability to make an impact.

LEFT TACKLE

Nick Becton (r-Sr.) – Coaches want him to be the catalyst for the offensive line ... Becomes an anchor guy after splitting time last year ... Needs to raise his play to that level ... Gives you the protection aspect with his size and long arms ... Is what you are looking for in a left tackle.

Mark Shuman (r-So.) – Is big, tough and athletic ... Has had trouble making progress due to injuries ... Will be one of the focal points during spring workouts ... Coaches want to come out of spring feeling like he is in a position to help.

Nick Acree (r-So.) – Needs to step up this spring ... Has shown flashes of potential ... Has to become more focused in terms of knowing the position and playing with better technique.

LEFT GUARD

David Wang (r-Jr.) – Was named the most improved offensive player in spring practice a year ago ... Impressed the coaches with his physical play ... Was looked to for a big year in 2011 but suffered a broken foot in the second game of the season ... Has been cleared to compete in the spring ... A leading contender to start but must prove he is ready.

Matt Arkema (r-So.) – Has the potential to become a top backup or even a spare starter with a good spring showing ... Needs to work hard and show what he can do ... Possesses good tools and athletic ability ... Could play a key role for the Hokies.

Tyler Barfield (r-Jr.) – Is expected to help provide depth at guard ... A top performer in the strength and conditioning program.

CENTER

Andrew Miller (r-Jr.) – Was Tech's top offensive newcomer last spring ... Is now the Hokies' most experienced lineman after starting all 14 games in the fall ... Is a tough, hard-nosed player with excellent ability ... Needs to become a leader up front ... Still has room to improve his game ... The coaches will be looking for added progress this spring.

Caleb Farris (So.) – Coaches were pleasantly surprised by his maturity and toughness last spring after he entered school in January ... Must continue to progress, while the coaches look for the best way to increase his opportunity to play more on Saturdays ... Will likely become a center-guard combo ... If successful, he will be a valuable asset in Tech's efforts to rebuild the line.

Michael Via (r-Sr.) – Joins Miller as the only current Tech offensive linemen with a collegiate start ... Got three starts at center as a redshirt freshman in 2009 ... A talented and valuable player who has been plagued by injuries ... Played most of last season with a torn ACL ... Underwent surgery after the bowl game and will miss spring workouts.

RIGHT GUARD

Brent Benedict (r-So.) – A highly regarded transfer from the University of Georgia ... Worked at tackle while sitting out last fall ... Has maturity to go with his size and ability ... Coaches want to see what he

can do inside at guard during the spring ... Has the potential to be a real asset up front.

Laurence Gibson (r-So.) – Will be in the competition for a starting job ... Brings a lot of length to the position ... Has the tools but coaches want to get him playing faster and moving his feet ... Needs to have a good spring.

RIGHT TACKLE

Vinston Painter (r-Sr.) – Will move into the top spot at right tackle ... Has shown the potential to do the job, now needs to take the next step ... Is big, strong and can run ... Will get a lot of reps and direction during the spring, which will be a big benefit ... Needs to show what he can do ... A key part of Tech's plan along the offensive front.

Jake Goins (r-Fr.) – Is still working to get bigger and stronger ... Coaches like his toughness and growth potential ... Needs reps to improve his knowledge of the position ... Coaches will take a close look at him this spring.

Coach Newsome on the offensive line: "Obviously, the biggest thing for us is we lost four starters, but I like the group we have. I think we are athletic, we just don't have a ton of game reps, so this spring is going to be critical. Competing every day against a defensive line that has all its players back will help us. Just getting some experience in game-like situations is the biggest thing but I think we have enough ability."

RECEIVERS & TIGHT ENDS



HEADLINES

Key Losses: split end **Jarrett Boykin**; flanker **Danny Coale**; tight end **Chris Drager**

Key Returnees: split end **D.J. Coles**; flanker **Marcus Davis**; flanker **Dyrell Roberts**

Boykin and **Coale** depart ranked one and two, respectively, in career pass receptions at Virginia Tech. **Coles** and **Davis** combined for 66 catches and eight TDs last season, while **Roberts** is a proven playmaker who returns after missing all but three games last season due to injury.

Battle to Watch: The graduation of **Drager** leaves a void at tight end that should make for good competition during the spring. The coaches are anxious to see if **Randall Dunn** can become an every-down player at the position.

Player to Watch: Redshirt freshman **Demitri Knowles** has shown the explosiveness and speed that the Hokies are looking for at the receiver positions. He will be a top candidate for the No. 4 receiving spot and for duties as a return man.

SPLIT END

D.J. Coles (Sr.) – Will not see contact work during the spring after injuring his knee late in the fall ... Is coming off a personal-best season that included 36 catches for 480 yards and three touchdowns ... Will play an important role when August rolls around.

Dyrell Roberts (Sr.) – With **Coles** out, will move to split end this spring just to get more reps ... Missed most of last season with an arm injury but has played in a lot of big games for the Hokies ... A playmaker with all the skill sets ... Coaches are looking forward to getting him back from a leadership standpoint and a playing standpoint.

Corey Fuller (r-Sr.) – Is getting back in the swing of playing football ... Ran track at Kansas two years, then sat out a season after transferring to Tech ... Takes long strides and can really run ... His skill set is there, just need to get him playing consistently and at full speed.

E.L. Smiling (r-So.) – Has size and ability, but coaches need to see what he can do ... Has battled some injuries ... Will be a big spring from a playing standpoint.

Kevin Asante (r-Fr.) – A young player who can really run ... Brings a physical presence to the position ... Has good hands and skills ... Needs to take advantage of his opportunities during the spring and show consistency.

Christian Reeves (r-Fr.) – A big target with good hands ... Runs well ... Needs to improve his route running ... Coaches are looking forward to seeing what he can do.

FLANKER

Marcus Davis (r-Sr.) – The number one guy going into the spring ... A fast, physical, athletic playmaker ... Had 30 catches and a team-best 17-yards per catch average in 2011 ... Tied for the team lead with five TD receptions ... Will be a big spring from the standpoint of taking a leadership role and stepping up his consistency.

Demitri Knowles (r-Fr.) – Has coaches excited for a lot of reasons ... Can be explosive and become a big play receiver ... Needs to gain consistency in blocking on the perimeter and with his routes ... Capable of doing big things in the kicking game from a return standpoint.

Willie Byrn (r-So.) – A talented walk-on ... Adds depth as a receiver ... Could also figure in as a return man on special teams.

Coach Sherman on the wide receivers:
“We lost a lot of production at these positions but overall, I like the group we have, I like the make up. We have four seniors coming back and we will be looking for a lot of leadership and playmaking ability out of those guys. Then, out of the younger players, we are trying to find some guys who can step up, produce and fill in the backup roles. From that standpoint, we’ve got some guys the jury is still out on.”

TIGHT END

Eric Martin (Sr.) – The Hokies’ most experienced player at tight end ... Brings toughness to the position ... Was the second TE each of the past two seasons ... A solid, dependable performer.

Randall Dunn (r-Sr.) – Brings a lot of athleticism to the position ... Has the ball skills of an H-back ... Can be a strong suit in the passing game and help take some pressure off of the receiving corps ... Will get an opportunity to become more of an every down player.

Ryan Malleck (So.) – Coaches really like his frame and potential ... Catches the ball well and makes really good adjustments for the ball ... Brings something to the running game with his size ... Will be in the thick of the battle for the starting duties.

Duan Perez-Means (r-So.) – Moves over from defensive end ... Coaches are anxious to see what he can do at the TE spot ... Makes the Hokies bigger and longer at the position ... Played tight end in high school.

George George (r-Sr.) – Saw brief reserve time at TE in two games ... A hard worker who is consistent at what he does ... Understands the game but must continue to work at playing a little quicker.

Darius Redman (r-Fr.) – Is still learning the system and trying to get comfortable with it ... Has tools and size ... Runs well for the position ... Must become more consistent catching the ball and gain experience as a blocker this spring.

Coach Stinespring on the tight ends:
“At tight end, (A) we want to establish the starter and (B) we would like to get **Randall Dunn** in a position where he will help us every down, that he will be a catalyst in our offense. We want to continue bringing along **Ryan Malleck** and **Darius Redman**, knowing that we have **Eric Martin** and **George George** who bring a lot of experience to the position. We also are anxious to see what **Duan Perez-Means** brings to the table and how the move from defensive end fits him.”

RUNNING BACKS & QBS



Logan Thomas

HEADLINES

Key Losses: tailback **David Wilson**; tailback **Josh Oglesby**

Key Returnees: quarterback **Logan Thomas**; fullback **Joey Phillips**

With Wilson departing early for the NFL and Oglesby graduating, the Hokies will have to turn to freshmen at the tailback spot during the spring. Not so at quarterback, where Thomas had a record-setting first season, or fullback, where Phillips started every game.

Battle to Watch: The most experienced returning player at tailback, redshirt junior **Tony Gregory**, will miss spring practice due to a knee injury, leaving redshirt freshman **Michael Holmes** and fresh out of high school true freshman **J.C. Coleman** to handle the bulk of the work. The results promise to be interesting.

Player to Watch: Tailback **Michael Holmes** showed a knack for making plays while redshirting in the fall. This spring Holmes will get a chance to show if he can put that knack to use on a consistent basis at a position the Hokies need to solidify.

TAILBACK

Michael Holmes (r-Fr.) – Showed a great work ethic and toughness while redshirting in 2011 ... Studies the game to try and get better ... Has a knack for making plays ... Possesses good vision and has the ability to make a cut and get upfield in a hurry ... Can catch the ball out of the backfield ... Has shown a lot of positive things.

J.C. Coleman (Fr.) – Entered school straight from high school in January ... Coaches are hoping he is the type of back they can do a lot of things with ... Possesses the speed and ability to make big plays ... Has added 10 pounds since his arrival, which should help his durability and ability to run between the tackles ... Hokies would like to come out of spring saying he is a player they have to have on the field in the fall.

Martin Scales (r-Sr.) – A talented, physical player ... Can do a lot of things out of the backfield ... Will move from fullback to tailback for the spring ... Possesses ability as a runner after working at tailback in high school ... Also plays a key role on special teams.

Daniel Dyer (r-So.) – A tough guy who is smart and has a knack for making plays ... Does a good job as a starter on special teams ... Just a good football player.

Tony Gregory (r-Jr.) – Will miss spring workouts after injuring his knee in the Sugar Bowl game ... Underwent surgery and should be able to return in the fall ... Could be tried in the secondary when he returns to action.

FULLBACK

Joey Phillips (r-Sr.) – Started last season and did an outstanding job ... Knows what to do ... Doesn't miss assignments ... Is a physical blocker ... A weight room warrior with a great work ethic ... Had the top power clean on the team during the off-season ... Also contributes on special teams.

Riley Beiro (r-So.) – Moved from tailback to fullback last spring ... Another player who has what you are looking for from the fullback standpoint ... Has a little nastiness to him ... A Super Iron Hokie ... Contributed on the kickoff return team last year.

“**Coach Shane Beamer on the running backs:** “The tailback position is limited right now from a numbers standpoint with David (Wilson) leaving early, Josh (Oglesby) graduating and Tony Gregory coming off knee surgery; so Michael Holmes and J.C. Coleman are our top two guys right now. It is important just to figure out what Michael and J.C. can do, what they can handle and what role they may or may not play in the upcoming season. At fullback, we are really pretty solid. That is one of the positions on offense where you are comfortable.”

QUARTERBACK

Logan Thomas (r-Jr.) – Made his first year as a starter one to remember ... Posted a Tech season record 3,482 yards of total offense and registered the second highest single-season passing total for a Hokie with 3,013 yards ... Tossed 19 TD passes and ran for 11 more ... Is big and strong ... Makes good decisions and remains poised under pressure ... Will work on

seeing the whole field better during the spring ... A year ago his experience was a weakness, now it is one of his strong points.

Mark Leal (r-So.) – Coaches feel really good about his progress ... He understands the passing game ... His poise and demeanor are real assets ... Does a good job of finding the right guy and knowing where to throw the football ... Doesn't need a lot of space to throw the ball ... Just needs general experience to learn more about the packages and plays, and get a better overall understanding of defenses ... Coaches plan to put him on the field and let him play more during the spring.

Trey Gresh (r-So.) – Hasn't gotten a lot of reps, but in the opportunities he has had he has performed well ... A smart player who understands the game ... Still needs to get his arm a little stronger, but that should come with reps ... Also contributes as the Hokies' holder on placekicks ... Coaches want to get him enough work where he feels comfortable to play.

“**Coach O'Cain on the quarterbacks:** “I feel much better than I did going into the spring this time last year when I had an unknown quantity. We had a young man we felt could be very good but you just didn't know. Obviously, this spring, with the season that he had, I feel really good about where Logan is right now. He did a remarkable job. I also feel really good about Mark Leal. I have tremendous confidence in him. I believe he could go in and not just keep us in a game but win a game. So, I really feel good about the position going into the spring. Getting our timing down and finding a comfort level with the new receivers will be one of our areas of focus.”

DEFENSIVE LINE

HEADLINES

Key Losses: none

Key Returnees: tackle **Antoine Hopkins**; tackle **Derrick Hopkins**; end **James Gayle**; end **J.R. Collins**

Not only do all four starters return, so do the top four backups, including **Luther Maddy** who started seven games last year as a true freshman when **Antoine Hopkins** was lost due to a knee injury.

Battle to Watch: After returning just one starter on the D-line last year, the top eight return this spring. But that doesn't mean there won't be any challenges from new faces. Expect redshirt freshmen **Dadi Nicolas** and **Kris Harley** to battle for playing time at end and tackle, respectively.

Player to Watch: Young end **Dadi Nicolas** still needs a lot of work but he has the skill set to become a top newcomer. The redshirt freshman works hard and plays like everything is on the line. He's hungry and the only thing missing is reps.



James Gayle

END

J.R. Collins (r-Jr.) – Started 13 games at end last season and started at tackle in the win over Georgia Tech ... Led the defensive line in tackles with 59 and the team in QB hurries with 29 ... Collected 9.5 tackles for loss, including six sacks ... A very productive player who is physical and chases down plays ... Has a great motor and plays the game with emotion.

James Gayle (r-Jr.) – Is ultra talented ... Could become a dominate player in the ACC if he keeps tapping that talent ... Named second-team All-ACC in 2011 ... Tied for sixth in the league in sacks with seven ... His 12.5 tackles for loss were second best on the team ... Coaches want him to show more detail in his preparation and film study this spring.

Tyrel Wilson (r-Jr.) – Played a key role in the defense's success last fall ... Stepped in and started two games when needed ... Matured and made plays ... Not the biggest guy but will beat people with his toughness, speed and quickness ... Will battle for playing time.

Zack McCray (r-So.) – Made important strides during the 2011 season ... Was in the rotation at end ... Tall, smart and athletic ... May see some practice time at tackle during the spring ... Coaches like his potential.

Dadi Nicolas (r-Fr.) – A raw talent who is relatively new to football ... Needs to develop his instincts ... Has a good skill set to go with an outstanding work ethic ... Will get as many reps as possible.

Justin Taylor (r-Fr.) – A strong, young player who will get a chance to show what he can do ... Possesses good football instincts ... Works hard in the strength and conditioning program ... Is entering his second spring session after enrolling in January 2011.

Matt Roth (r-Fr.) – This spring will help determine where he fits in best ... Has gotten bigger but could still use some more weight ... Needs to make the most of his reps.

Dewayne Alford (Fr.) – Entered school in January ... Went through off-season workouts ... Is conscientious ... Will get an opportunity to show what he can do.

TACKLE

Antoine Hopkins (r-Sr.) – A two-year starter who is a force in the middle ... Missed the last nine games in the fall with a knee injury ... Will be held out of contact work in the spring ... Expected to be ready in August.

Derrick Hopkins (Jr.) – Started every game in 2011 ... Played great but didn't get much rest due to depth issues ... Strong against the run ... Coaches want to see him improve as a pass rusher ... A key player on the D-line.

Luther Maddy (So.) – Came through as a freshman for the Hokies ... Started seven games after Antoine Hopkins was injured ... Got better each game out

... Played well in the Sugar Bowl ... Still has some work to do fundamentally ... Will concentrate on that during the spring as well as becoming a more consistent playmaker.

Corey Marshall (So.) – As a freshman end, he moved to tackle when injuries struck last year ... Started a game and gave the team a boost ... Is athletic and runs well ... Will get some work at both spots this spring.

Kris Harley (r-Fr.) – A highly recruited player who redshirted ... Coaches want to see his work ethic and how hungry he is ... Has good ability ... Can be a good player for the Hokies.

Coach Wiles on the defensive line: "Overall, we need to get better. We did some good things last year, we developed some depth due to injuries. Now our goal is for both our veteran guys and our young guys to improve, to become more complete football players. Just being more detail oriented in their preparation, their film study, those types of thing are where they can really grow. We are looking to find our best combination, our best football players. We got through the season last year, but we need to create even more depth. We want to get a two-deep where there is not any dropoff, and we can just roll guys in there."

LINEBACKERS



MIKE

Bruce Taylor (r-Sr.) – Will sit out the spring while recovering from a foot injury suffered during the season ... Started the first eight games before being sidelined ... Still finished seventh on the team in tackles with 53 ... An outstanding football player ... Coaches want to make sure he is completely healthy before he returns.

Jack Tyler (r-Jr.) – Took over the starting duties for the final six games last season ... Played extremely well ... Has great vision and instincts ... Will handle the top spot again this spring ... A good football player.

Brian Laiti (r-So.) – Needs to make the most of his opportunities this spring ... Has size and good football instincts ... Will get a lot of reps ... The time has come for him to take the next step and become a factor at the position.

D.J. Ward (r-Fr.) – A walk-on with potential ... Has put on 20 pounds ... Is smart and works hard ... Showed power and explosiveness during middle drill and Monday scrimmages in the fall.

BACKER

Tariq Edwards (r-Jr.) – Brought back the productivity at the backer spot, while starting every game last fall ... Will miss the spring after surgery to repair a stress fracture in his left leg ... Was third on the team in tackles (71) and tackles for loss (11.5) in 2011.

Chase Williams (r-So.) – Will move into the starting spot for spring practice ... Has tremendous football IQ ... Has been hampered by injuries ... Was originally scheduled to work at the mike spot

after spending last season at backer ... Has size and toughness ... Just needs more snaps in game situations to get him playing a little faster.

Derek DiNardo (r-So.) – Is being moved from whip to backer to provide needed depth ... Has also worked at the safety positions ... Picked up a good knowledge of the defense during his moves.

Josh Trimble (r-Fr.) – Will move to backer for the spring after working as a safety last fall ... A tough, athletic player ... Moving closer to the line may suit him better ... Will get some reps.

Jonathan Halfhide (r-So.) – An important spring ... Will get an opportunity to show that he can be consistent ... A smart player who works hard.

Coach Foster on the inside linebackers: “Right now, with Bruce Taylor and Tariq Edwards out with injuries, Jack Tyler is going to get the work inside at mike and Chase Williams is the next guy we will put at backer. Jack did a great job stepping in for Bruce last season, and Chase is a valuable guy who has played backer. With the injury situation, Brian Laiti will move up to second team at mike, followed by DJ Ward, and we will take a look at Derek DiNardo and Josh Trimble at backer. We are hoping those guys can learn and help give us some depth.”

WHIP

Jeron Gouveia-Winslow (r-Sr.) – Started five games and played in six before missing the last half of the 2011 season with a foot injury ... Will be held out of contact work in the spring ... Coaches felt he was a valuable factor last season prior to his injury ... Started

HEADLINES

Key Loss: mike linebacker **Barquell Rivers**

Key Returnees: mike linebacker **Bruce Taylor**; mike linebacker **Jack Tyler**; backer **Tariq Edwards**; whip linebacker **Jeron Gouveia-Winslow**

All three returning starters – Taylor, Edwards and Gouveia-Winslow – will miss spring practice due to injuries, leaving the Hokies depth-shy at the mike and backer positions.

Battle to Watch: With starter Jeron Gouveia-Winslow limited, it will be interesting to see if senior **Wiley Brown** or youngsters **Nick Dew** and **Ronny Vandyke** can pressure veteran Alonzo Tweedy at the whip position.

Player to Watch: Redshirt sophomore **Chase Williams** was slated to move inside to the mike spot this spring but with the absence of Tariq Edwards due to injury, Williams will remain at the backer position where he will get a ton of reps. That’s just what the coaches ordered. Now that he’s healthy, snaps in game situations are the main thing standing between Williams and playing time.

seven games in 2010 ... Should be ready when practice resumes in August.

Alonzo Tweedy (r-Sr.) – Will be number one in the spring ... Has all the intangibles you want from someone playing the position ... Big and fast ... A player who can attack ... Played well in the bowl game ... Coaches want him to take ownership of the position during the spring.

Ronny Vandyke (r-Fr.) – Has the body type that you look for at whip ... Worked at rover in the fall ... A long guy who is physical and can run ... The main focus will be on his coverage skills.

Nick Dew (r-So.) – Isn’t experienced as the top two, but improved throughout the season by being in the film room and also by being thrown into some tough situations ... Continued to progress during bowl practices ... Has good football knowledge ... Coaches like the direction he is headed in.

Wiley Brown (r-Sr.) – Moved over from backer last spring ... Has a chance to be a factor if he is consistent in his responsibilities ... A real hitter ... Excels on special teams.

Coach Brown on the whip linebackers: “I’m really excited about the spring and the guys we have coming back. We should have some depth at the position, as well as stiff competition. We have the body types and athletic, physical players who are able to do the things we want at the position. I think the biggest thing is overall confidence. The more confident we get, the better we’ll get. The main focus is going to be on coverage and the ability to not only cover receivers, but also tight ends and running backs. There will be more emphasis placed on that than in the past.”

DEFENSIVE SECONDARY



HEADLINES

Key Losses: cornerback **Jayron Hosley**; cornerback **Cris Hill**; free safety **Eddie Whitley**

Key Returnees: cornerback **Kyle Fuller**; safety **Antone Exum**

Many feel Fuller was the Hokies' top defensive player last season. He led the team in tackles for loss with 14.5 and was fourth in total tackles. Exum was the team's leading tackler with 89, while starting every game at safety.

Battle to Watch: The competition for the No. 4 cornerback spot will be important but watching the musical chairs in the secondary may be more fun. Several players are slated to try new positions, including **Antone Exum** at cornerback and previous corners **Detrick Bonner** and **Kyshoen Jarrett** at safety.

Players to Watch: Building a two-deep in the secondary is going to rely on some young players stepping up. **Kyshoen Jarrett**, **Michael Cole**, **Boye Aromire** and **Donaldven Manning** will all be challenged to answer the call.

CORNERBACK

Kyle Fuller (Jr.) – Tech's best defensive player last season ... Has a skill set to do almost anything you ask for in the secondary ... A good tackler who is smart and can play man coverage ... Has been outstanding as the nickel back the past two seasons and will likely play there at times ... Coaches are hoping he can be a lockdown corner.

Antone Exum (r-Jr.) – Has started 18 games at safety over the past two seasons ... Will be tried at corner this spring to see if he can take away one side of the field ... Has the tools to do anything he wants from a speed standpoint, a physicality standpoint and a tackling standpoint ... Coaches want to turn him loose and let him play.

Donaldven Manning (Fr.) – Joined the team in January straight out of Miami Central High School ... Was a highly rated prep player ... Will benefit from the strength and conditioning program ... Will get a lot of attention and reps ... Needs to take advantage of the opportunities he gets in the spring.

FREE SAFETY

Kyshoen Jarrett (So.) – Saw some action at cornerback and on special teams last fall as a true freshman ... Has a corner skill set, but also is physical

enough to play safety ... Will be tried as a safety during the spring ... Has some physicality in the run game ... A smart player who will need to become more assertive and loud as a safety.

Michael Cole (r-Fr.) – Coaches are hoping he can help them feel better about the safety spots or challenge for a starting spot before spring is over ... Was slowed by a neck stinger during the fall ... An extremely hard worker who runs well and exhibits toughness ... Will see his share of reps.

ROVER

Detrick Bonner (r-So.) – Got a lot of "in the fire" reps last season at cornerback ... Will be tried at safety this spring ... An intelligent player with a great skill set ... Likes to communicate, likes the cerebral part of the game, which helps if he stays at safety ... Can run with receivers.

Boye Aromire (So.) – A young player who is still a little raw ... Played a limited roll on special teams and in the secondary during the 2011 season ... Has the tools to play defensive back ... Can be physical and run with receivers ... Is still adjusting to the speed of the game mentally ... Entered Tech in January 2011 after finishing up his senior season at H.D. Woodson High in Washington, D.C.

Theron Norman (r-So.) – A smart player who is tall and athletic ... Has seen his progress slowed by injuries ... Needs to show he is physical enough and fast enough for the safety position ... Will get a chance to do that.

Coach Gray on the secondary: "Going into the spring we've got a lot of question marks. We have two starters back in Kyle Fuller and Antone Exum and after that we've got a lot of guys who haven't played a lot of snaps. Kyshoen Jarrett and Detrick Bonner will begin spring drills as our other two starters at the secondary spots. At least with the four guys we are going to start out with I think we've got a chance to be very good and athletic. We will start off spring possibly looking at Antone at corner and start Kyshoen and Detrick at the safety spots and go from there. That means we have no experience at the safety spots, no communication experience. Physical ability-wise, athletically, I think we will be fine. We just need to be a communicative group. We've also got to get the young guys to come along because the backup spots are a huge concern. There are some holes to fill and that will be our challenge."