

# Optimism reigns as Tech opens season

By EDDIE WOOTEN  
Staff Writer

Things are looking up at Georgia Tech. Tech is entering its last season as an outsider in the Atlantic Coast Conference. In 1983, the Ramblin' Wreck will be officially eligible for the ACC title.

After going 2-19-1 in the past two seasons, the Tech program could be in a state of depression. But it is far from that.

"Our practices have been really good, surprisingly good," said head coach Bill Curry. "The atmosphere is what it should be."

Instead of throwing their arms up in disgust, Tech alumni and fans have stuck with the football program. A four-story, \$7 million facility, the Edge Intercollegiate Athletic Center, is now complete. The building has 65,000 square feet of space and houses administrative offices, locker rooms, training room, weight room, dining hall and equipment room.

In addition to the new facilities, three new coaches will be on the sidelines this fall. Curry has added Dwain Painter, an offensive coordinator who'll work with quarterbacks and receivers; Rick Lantz, a defensive coordinator who will help the linebackers; and offensive line coach Dan Dorazio. They are expected to ease some of the organizational problems Tech had last season.

"Our program has improved incredibly," said Curry. "We've improved in basketball with Bobby Cremins, in baseball and in women's basketball. It's all because of the enormous things (Athletic Director) Homer Rice has done."

As for football, Curry is a man who knows of Tech's winning tradition. He played on Tech teams which went 21-9-1 in the sixties. As a professional, Curry played for Green Bay's NFL champions in 1965 and 1966 and two Baltimore teams which went to the Super Bowl. He played on pro teams which were 91-44-5.

"We have a good nucleus coming back," Curry said of his 1982 team. "We lost only three starters out of 22. But coming off the year we had, that doesn't necessarily mean that's good."

Senior Jim Bob Taylor will take over the reins as the starting quarterback. He replaces Tech's all-time leading passer, Mike Kelley.

Taylor played in eight games last season and he started twice. He was 25 of 58 for 297 yards and one touchdown before suffering a shoulder injury against Tulane.

"Jim Bob has looked good in practice," Curry said. "He had some erratic moments last year, but I think he's improved."

Competing with Taylor for the starting nod is lefthander Stu Rogers. Rogers saw action in four games, primarily after Kelley and Taylor were felled by injuries. Rogers missed much of spring practice while pitching for Tech's baseball team.

Talented Robert Lavette will be a key to the Tech offensive machine. The speedy

sophomore rushed for 866 yards and caught 45 passes last season on his way to being named a freshman All-American by *Blue Chips Magazine*.

Lavette led the ACC in kickoff returns, was third in rushing, third in receiving and first in all-purpose running.

"Lavette had his best games against North Carolina (168 yards) and Navy (197 yards)," Curry said. But we need depth at that position. We're searching for a backup tailback."

The leaders for the No. 2 tailback spot are a pair of freshmen. Cleve Pounds was all-state in Georgia, rushing for 1,150 yards and scoring 13 touchdowns. The other candidate is Marvin Carolina, a second-team all-state pick from Pittsburgh.

All-America candidate David Lutz, 6-foot-7 and 274 pounds, and Ellis Gardner anchor the offensive line at tackles. Center Dean

Waters and guards Ken Howell and Derek Gwinn also return. Depth will be provided by tackles Stan Sparks, Dale Negus and Brian Yates; guards Mark Morgan, Vince Garcia and Joe Montgomery; and centers Andy Hearn, Tony Blasetti and Greg Hillmeyer.

At the ends, junior Jeff Keisler and sophomore Darrell Norton return, but they are being pushed for starting jobs.

"Kris Kentera, who was academically ineligible last year, should be back," Curry said. "And junior college transfer Michael Harrington has been really outstanding."

The defense lost only two starters, end Mark Bradley and linebacker Lance Skeleton, but this year's unit does not have much depth.

Marvin Dyett and Bobby Hodge will start at the ends. Curry said Dyett was hurt much of last season, but played anyway. Curry has

moved Tony Kepano from offensive guard to nose guard on defense.

Robert Jaracz is a returning starter at outside linebacker. The fiery Jaracz was fourth on the team in tackles last season and improved enough during spring practice to make seven tackles in the spring game.

Leading tacklers Rob Horton and Duane Wood are also back, while freshman Ralph Malone should see considerable playing time.

All four starters in the defensive backfield return, but like at other positions, their starting jobs are not secure. Cornerbacks Ted Thurson and Paul Menegazzi and safeties Sammy Brown and Mark Sheffield are back, but recruits Mike Travis and Daryl Wise are being counted on to give the secondary much-needed depth.

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Georgia Tech's Jim Bob Taylor eludes UNC's Aaron Jackson ... Yellowjacket QB will lead Tech against Alabama in opener

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