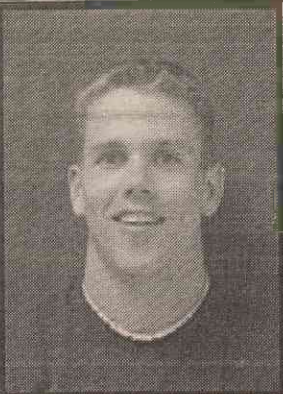


Athlete of the Week



Name: Robbie Smith
Sport: Baseball
Position: Second Base
Year: Sophomore

Recent athletic accomplishments: Hit the game-winning home run Saturday against Charleston Southern.
Favorite class: Physiology
Hardest class: Chemistry
Favorite professor: "Vick. Dr. Vick."
Plans after graduation: "I'd like to play baseball, but if not I'll probably be a personal trainer."
Favorite music group: Outkast
Favorite song: B.O.B.
Favorite movie: Forrest Gump
Favorite TV show: SportsCenter
Favorite book: The Mental

Game of Baseball:
Hobbies: "Eating ... I like to dance a little bit."
Favorite sports team: Atlanta Braves
Dream vacation destination: Spring Training in Florida
Most prized possession: "My autographed Mickey Mantle card."
Person you'd like to meet: Jesus
Pre-game rituals: "A quality dance in the locker room. We always have some good ones before games."

Vick is prize of NFL Draft

Justin Mazzola
Sports Editor

The NFL Draft takes place this week and everyone is talking about Michael Vick. The fleet-footed lefty quarterback has a powerful arm and jaw-dropping footwork.

The San Diego Chargers are poised to snatch the Virginia Tech legend with the first pick in the draft. But will it matter? Do first round quarterbacks always equal success for the team?

Since 1990, 19 quarterbacks have been selected in the first round. The four quarterbacks chosen first in their respective draft have all had solid careers, including the Browns' Tim Couch, who was drafted two years ago.

Four first round quarterbacks have led their teams to the Super Bowl and only two, Steve McNair and Drew Bledsoe, were with the team that originally drafted them.

Neither of them won the big game.

McNair's Tennessee Titans lost to Kurt Warner and the St. Louis Rams. In the 1997 Super Bowl Bledsoe's Patriots lost to

the Green Bay. Green Bay was quarterbacked by MVP Brett Favre.

Neither Favre nor Warner was a heralded prospect coming into the league. Favre spent years as a backup while Warner toiled away in the Arena Football League before getting his chance in the NFL.

There are many other successful quarterbacks who were passed over in the first round, but there are also many first round quarterbacks who have not lived up to expectations.

Heath Shuler, Rick Mirer and Andre Ware lead a crop of disappointing first round quarterbacks.

Other forgettable picks include Jim Druckenmiller (1997) and Ryan Leaf (1998). Druckenmiller is now employed by the XFL while Leaf is being fitted for a straight jacket.

It's obvious Vick is the best offensive player in this year's draft. Drafting the multi-talented quarterback will bring the Chargers plenty of excitement and media attention. Making Vick the No. 1 selection will not, however, guarantee San Diego a champion.

CALLING ALL WRITERS. THE SPORTS SECTION NEEDS YOUR INPUT. INTERESTED IN WRITING? UNLOCK YOUR JOURNALISTIC TALENT AND CALL THE PENDULUM AT EXT. 7247.

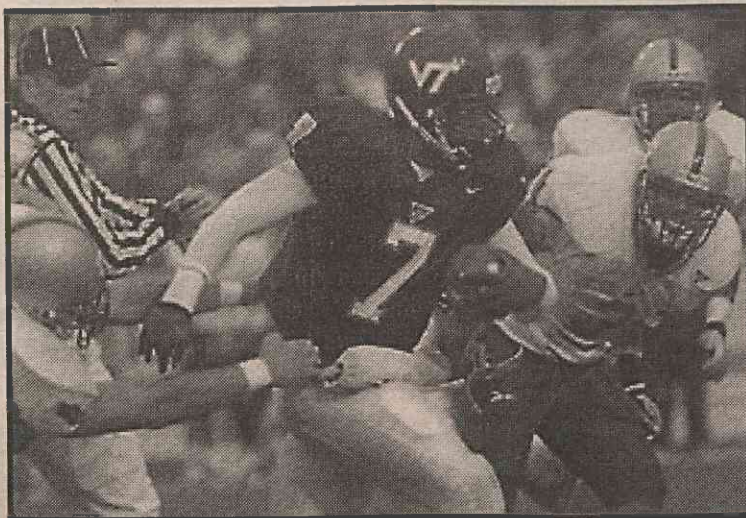
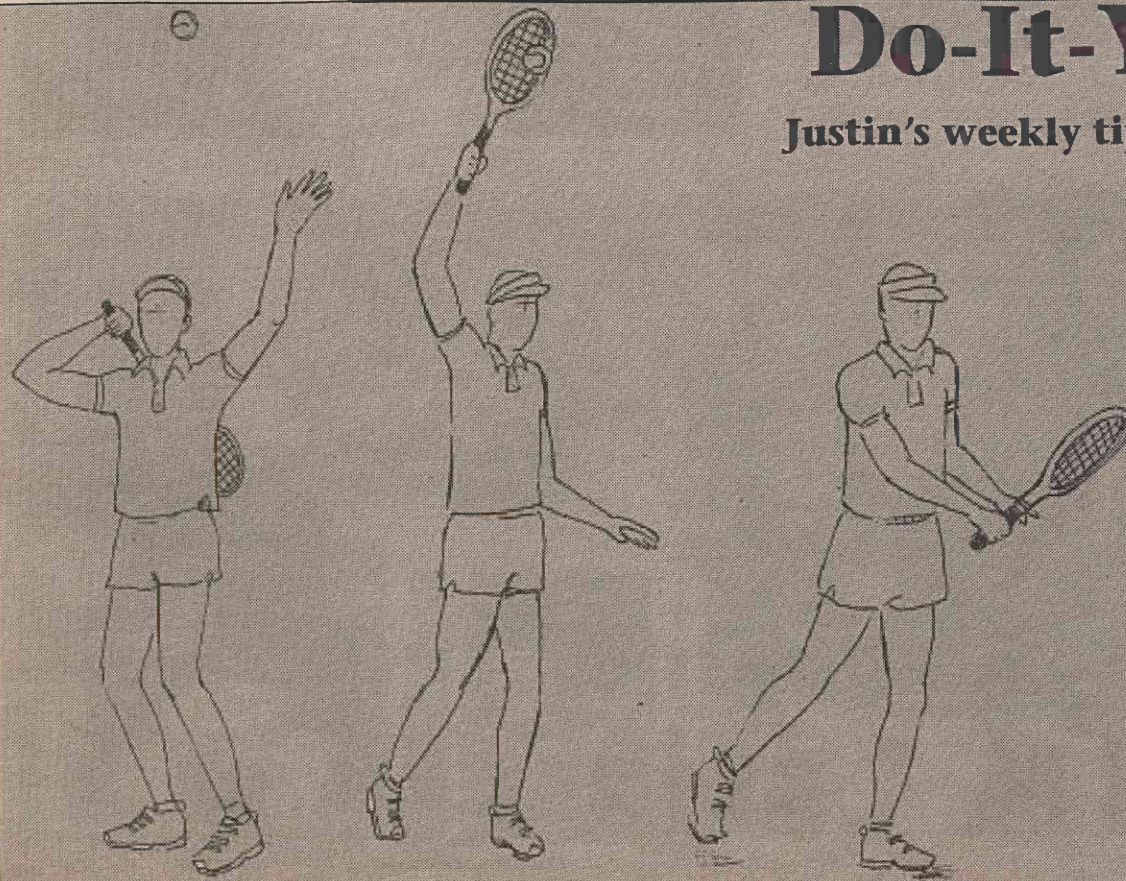


Photo courtesy of michaelvick.net
 Michael Vick can outrun defenders or step up and throw the deep ball.

Do-It-Yourself Sports

Justin's weekly tip so you can show off for your friends.



Coming to net is a crucial part of tennis. Pete Sampras, Boris Becker and John McEnroe all used their net skills to win Grand Slam events. But if you're going to come to net, you have to know how to handle the lob. The overhead is probably the most fun shot in tennis, but it's also one of the toughest. When the lob is above you, bend your knees slightly and pull your racquet back as if you're scratching the center of your back. Your racquet

should be upside down with the handle facing the sky. With your other hand, point at the ball to help your eyes follow its flight. You can also use your hand to shield your eyes from the sun. Ultraviolet rays can be a bitch, you know. When the ball is just above your extended hand, swing your right arm up while rotating at the hips. Follow through with your swing and yell menacingly. Staring down your opponent is also an option.

Brought to you by your friendly neighborhood sports editor -- Justin Mazzola