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Homecoming finally gets back to reality

After last year's virtual Homecoming, BWE 2021 brings relief and joy

By Jessica Saintil

After a year of virtual homecoming events, Saint Augustine's University finally transitioned back to a traditional homecoming in 2021. Last year, all events were held online and some students felt that they were not exactly getting their Homecoming experience.

The university is still undergoing COVID-19 precautions and a mask mandate was in place for all events. But having events in-person was enough for most students.

"I am excited to finally have fun with my friends and get a chance to finally experience college," said Bryan Monroe, a sophomore communications major.

The Blue & White experience began Sunday, Sept. 19, with the Homecoming Gospel Explosion Brunch where students, faculty and alumni gathered to listen and enjoy gospel music.

The event was held outside the cafeteria from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday was also the Homecoming kickoff in the George Williams Athletics Complex.

On Monday, Sept. 20, in the Seby B. Jones Auditorium, Darren Brand and Emmanuel Hudson kicked off the Falcon N' Out comedy show. Students got to laugh, and enjoy each other's company, while listening to some comedic skits.

Following the comedy show, the Aux Cord Wars, a competition among

students, was held in the Seby B. Jones Auditorium.

The 1867 Break is a SAU tradition and this year it was held in the Quad on Wednesday from noon to 2 p.m. This event allowed students to mingle, play games and get to know each other.

Following the 1867 Break, students gathered in the Julia Chester Emery Gymnasium at 7 p.m. for the Mister & Miss SAU Coronation. After 1 1/2 years of mostly online classes, students were thrilled to be able to meet their classmates and enjoy these events together.

The BWE homecoming concert on Thursday featured Rapper Lil Boosie and KCAMP as the main acts.

Homecoming activities came to a climax on Friday with the Falcon Fest and the BWE Homecoming step show. Both were held in the Julia Chester Emery Gymnasium.

After a year of virtual homecoming and events, students and alumni had an opportunity to enjoy all that the BWE had put together.

Tia Jones, a senior communications major, thought the event was a success. "Last year when COVID-19 caused classes to go remote, many students opted to have that option and very few students were left on campus," Jones said. "However, in 2021 we have adapted to COVID-19 and its restrictions and have moved on to our normal lives again."

Inside (Page 2):

- * Photos
- * Q&A with Jalen Baker

Football team off to rough start

COVID takes its toll but coaches expect team to improve as season goes on

By Brenton Chapple

The Falcons are looking to turn around their season after four tough losses to open the football season.

With a new coaching staff and many newcomers, the Falcons have suffered some lopsided losses. In Chowan University, for instance, the Falcons faced an unbeaten team averaging 41.67 points and 422.7 yards per game while only allowing opponents 27 points a game.

Chowan won 59-12, ruining the Falcons' Homecoming on Sept. 25.

In Tusculum University, the Falcons went up against a team that returned many players from its South Atlantic Conference title run in the spring. Tusculum handed the Falcons a 58-14 whipping on Sept. 4.

Some of the Falcons' problems can be traced to the team dealing with COVID, coaches said. COVID benched many of the team's players including many starters.

"COVID is starting to become the new normal and we have to prepare accordingly -- who's going to be available," Head Coach David Bowser said. But he said the COVID precautions were necessary: "It was just a procedure of being cautious. I keep and continue to keep our children safe."

The Falcons also lost 33-9 to Virginia State University in Oct. 2, and 21-7 to Livingstone College on Oct. 9.

But the team has showed promise. Defensive Coordinator Stephen Tate is

optimistic about the defense. The team forced four turnovers in the Chowan game, he pointed out. "If we are able to force turnovers and keep their offense on the sidelines we'll be perfectly fine on the defensive side," he said.

The team also showed some fight. In the Chowan game, Quarterback D'Ontre Gilliard (So./Holly Hill, SC) found Deandre Proctor (Fr./Elizabeth City, NC) on a short pass, and Proctor outraced Chowan defenders to the end zone for a 92-yard score, thrilling the Homecoming crowd and pulling the Falcons within 14-6. When the Hawks fumbled a punt in the end zone and Joseph Harris (Jr./Jacksonville, FL) fell on the ball for a touchdown, the Falcons were back in the game, trailing 14-12 in the first quarter.

But that was as close as they got. Chowan senior quarterback Bryce Witt, who is averaging 183 total yards, took over and the Hawks dominated the rest of the game. The senior threw for four touchdowns and ran for four more.

The Virginia State University game was closer than the final score indicated. In an away game played in Ettrick, VA, the Falcons hung in with their opponent. The was tied 9-9 in the second quarter and Virginia State led only 16-9 in the fourth quarter before scoring the final 17 points.

The Livingstone game saw strong performances from wide receiver Kasean Williams (Fr./Clinton, NC), who caught five passes for 112 yards and a score; and from quarterback Donovan

See FOOTBALL, Page 4



Deandre Proctor's 92-Yard Score thrilled the Homecoming crowd but the Falcons, with a depleted squad, were no match for unbeaten Chowan University.

'Devoted, authentic and intelligent'

SAU community remembers Eric Deese II, who was fatally shot in Charlotte

By Jessica Saintil and Alyssa Berry

Eric Deese II, a 19-year-old freshman at Saint Augustine's University, tragically passed away due to gun violence on Oct. 6.

The fatal shooting took place in Charlotte, N.C., where Deese was from. According to an Oct. 10 press release from the City of Charlotte, detectives with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's Homicide Unit have charged Damion Lamont McDonald, 20, for his involvement in this incident.

McDonald was charged with Robbery with a Dangerous Weapon and Conspiracy to Commit Robbery with a Dangerous Weapon, the press release stated. The release stated that the investigation is "active and ongoing"

An earlier press release stated that police charged Brian Adam Monroy, 19, with murder on Oct. 8. A 17-year-old juvenile male has also been charged for his involvement in this incident, that press release said.

Deese's homegoing service was held on Oct. 12 at the church he attended, St. Paul Baptist Church located in Charlotte.

James Benton, a recruiter for the Saint Augustine's Office of Admissions, spoke at the service. Benton recalled how Deese had a lot of support from his family.

His mother and grandmother "stayed on me about him," Benton said at the service. He joked that he got so many calls that he knew he had to check up on Deese regularly.

"I made sure he went to school, I

made sure he stayed prayed up," Benton said. "...He tried so hard but trouble kept pulling him."

Lashanti McGriff, a sophomore psychology major, met Deese on the second day after moving onto campus when both were freshmen and they became close friends. "He opened up to me on a lot of personal things," McGriff said. "No one really would know who he really was if you never had a deep conversation with him. I am grateful I got the chance to meet such a beautiful soul."

McGriff added: "His mother wanted better for him because where he grew up was really rough. Every thing he did was to please his mother, so he came to college to better himself for her."

McGriff said Deese was undecided what to major in but he wanted to do



Eric Deese II

something involving sports. Deese was "devoted, authentic, and intelligent," McGriff said. Shappelle Marshall contributed to this report