

Wake's Sam Swank was named to the Sports Illustrated and ESPN All-America team.

## Deacons make All-America cut

*Sports Illustrated names Swank, Vallos first team*

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Wake Forest sophomore placekicker Sam Swank and senior offensive tackle Steve Vallos were named first team All-Americans by Sports Illustrated, the publication announced recently. Last Friday, Swank was also named a first team All-American by ESPN.

Junior linebacker Jon Abbate and senior safety Josh Gattis were honorable mention selections.

Swank, the most valuable player of the ACC Championship Game two weeks ago, was a first team All-ACC selection and a first team All-American by Rivals.com. Swank is 11-of-28 on field goals this season and a perfect 32-of-32 on extra points. The native of Jacksonville Beach, Fla., is 5-of-7 from beyond 40 yards in 2006.

Vallos, a native of Boardman, Ohio, was a first team All-ACC selection. He has played 781 snaps this season with only three missed assignments and a season grade of 90 percent. Vallos easily leads all Wake Forest linemen with 90.5 knockdowns. A four-year starter, Vallos has started 47 games in his career.

Abbate, who had a season-high 15 tackles

in the ACC Championship Game, ranks fourth in the ACC with 105 stops. The native of Powder Springs, Ga., will become only the third player in ACC history to lead his team in tackles for three straight years. Abbate has posted five 10-tackle games this season and has done it 11 times in 34 career games. Abbate was a first team All-ACC pick.

Gattis, another first team All-ACC selection, is the only player in the league to have five interceptions and 70 tackles this season. The native of Durham, was the top vote-getter among all ACC defensive backs. He ranks third in the league with five interceptions. Gattis, who has become known as one of the top playmakers in the ACC, has 12 career interceptions, six fumble recoveries and five forced fumbles.



Vallos

In other Wake football news: Wake Forest redshirt freshmen Jeff Griffin and Riley Skinner were named The Sporting News' Freshman All-America teams last week. Skinner was chosen to the second team and Griffin was a third-team pick.

Both players are Jacksonville, Fla., natives. Griffin is an offensive tackle out of Bartrum Trail High School while Skinner is a quarterback who attended The Bolles School.

The Demon Deacons (11-2) take on fifth-ranked Louisville (11-1) in the 2007 FedEx Orange Bowl in Miami's Dolphin Stadium on Jan. 2.

## Holcomb-Faye

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bunch." Holcomb-Faye said. "We have 12 sophomores and three freshmen. We have a little bit of experience. But they didn't have that many wins. This team shows a lot of heart, though. My freshmen really have a lot of heart. These guys can shoot too. My shooting guard can shoot better than anyone I played with in college. We have a lot of shooters on this team. We can score on anybody."

"We're not the most athletic team around here, but we're scrappy," Holcomb-Faye continued. "We've got to take care of business on defense. With other teams being more athletic than we are, we've definitely got to handle our business on the defensive end."

Holcomb-Faye said he tries to instill his attitude in his players. He was a fiery player with an abundance of

passion on display during games during his days at Reynolds and ECU. He said that he's mixed the styles of his father, coach West and his former ECU coach with his personality to come up with his style. He's so wired during games that he rarely sits on the bench most nights.

"I haven't sat down yet," Holcomb-Faye said. "I sat down once. I got a tech (technical foul) during the Carver game. They sat me down. I stay on the refs, making sure they see what's going on out there. I'm also constantly coaching. I make sure my guys stay aggressive. I don't want for anyone to play scared. Everybody has the green light to shoot. But I've got a smart group of guys that don't take bad shots. So that works out well for us."

Holcomb-Faye, who's also a teaching assistant at Reagan, thinks his welcoming approach and younger age has

helped his players warm up to him sooner than expected.

"I have a great relationship with the guys," Holcomb-Faye said. "I dap them up in the hallways and everything. I even joke around with them a lot to keep them at ease. I want to keep everyone's confidence high. I really think this could be a very good team. I hope to finish strong this year."

"I'm enjoying the ride so far," Holcomb-Faye continued. "I love coaching this group. This is really a dream-come-true for me. Right now, it's all about player development for guys this age. I'm trying to help develop these guys into great, young men — not just great players."

Note: Holcomb-Faye left East Carolina University as the school's all-time leader in assists with 408 and ranked fifth on the ECU career steals list with 105. He's also a former Frank Spencer MVP.

# Four NCCU players earn All-America honors

*Two Winston-Salem performers make Daktronics' list*

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

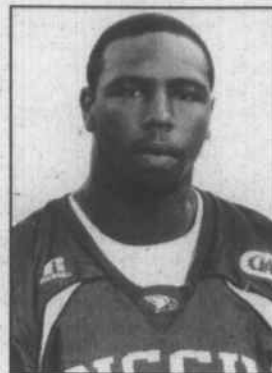
Three North Carolina Central University Eagles have been voted to the 2006 Daktronics, Inc. NCAA Division II All-America Football Team, selected by members of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA). Two Eagles picked up Associated Press honors.

Senior center Robert Duncan (Winston-Salem), junior kicker Brandon Gilbert (Graham, NC) and junior corner back Craig Amos (Winston-Salem) all claimed All-America Second Team honors. Duncan and Sam Funches, also made the 2006 Associated Press Little All-America Football Team.

Duncan, a former standout at Parkland High, earned AP Little All-America First Team honors, while Funches, a senior left tackle from Lawnside, N.J. claimed Second Team recognition.

"Their (Duncan and Funches) contributions to this football program have been huge," said NCCU offensive line coach James Spady. "Their leadership was so valuable — as coaches on the field and mentors to the younger guys behind them. They have been an enormous amount of pleasure to coach."

Duncan was a repeat selection on the All-CIAA First Team and All-Region First Team, and was named CIAA Offensive Lineman of the Week three times during his senior campaign. As the Eagles' starting center and team captain, his average grade was 92.4 percent and averaged four pancake blocks and less than 1 missed assignment per game, while not allowing a sack all season. Duncan was selected to Street & Smith's 2006 Division II Preseason All-America Team, one of only four offensive



Amos



Duncan

linemen in the country to earn the honor. He is also a national finalist for the 2006 Gene Upshaw Lineman of the Year Award.

Brandon Gilbert was a repeat selection on the All-CIAA First Team and All-Region First Team, and was chosen CIAA Special Teams Player of the Week four times in 2006. He made a game-winning, career-long 51-yard field goal as time expired to provide NCCU with a 17-14 win in the CIAA Championship Game (Nov. 11). Gilbert, who led the CIAA in scoring with 81 points (48-48 PATs, 11-16 FGs), set an NCCU single-season record with 48 extra-point kicks, ranks second in career-scoring at NCCU (225 points), and has made more extra point kicks (123) in his three seasons than any other kicker in Eagles history, including 80 in-a-row. Gilbert also punted 59 times for 2,068 yards (35.1 avg.), placing 23 attempts inside the 20-yard line with only two touchbacks.

Former Mt. Tabor standout Craig Amos, an All-CIAA First Team and three-time CIAA Defensive Back of the Week honoree, tied for the conference lead with seven interceptions (16th in NCAA) and 16 passes defended (18th

in NCAA). He is one of only eight Eagles in the 83-year football tradition of NCCU to intercept seven passes or more in a single season, and his 178 interception return yards are the second-most in school history (222 return yards by Tony Lindsey in 1988). Amos returned two interceptions for touchdowns, including a 96-yard score at Southern University (Sept. 23), the fourth-longest in school history. Amos ends his junior campaign tied for 10th on the school's all-time interceptions list with 12 career picks.

NCCU tied with Northwest Missouri State University for the second-highest total number of All-America honorees with three. Grand Valley State University, who will play Northwest Missouri State in the Division II national championship game on Dec. 16, topped the list with six honorees.

NCCU repeated as CIAA Champions, posted a perfect regular season for the first time in the school's 83-year gridiron history, won 11 games for the first time in school history, earned the No. 1 ranking in the Southeast Region, finished as the No. 4 ranked team in the NCAA Division II (AFCA), and is currently the top-ranked team in black college football.

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Holcomb-Faye drives past a Louisville player during his playing days at ECU.

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