

NCCU's Peterson drafted in NFL's fifth round

Defensive end becomes first Eagle drafted in almost 20 years

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

North Carolina Central University defensive lineman Greg Peterson was selected in the fifth round (No.141), by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, of the 2007 NFL Draft. The Criminal Justice major is the first NCCU player selected since Robert Massey, who roamed the Eagles' secondary from 1985-88, was the 46th player taken in the 1989 draft.

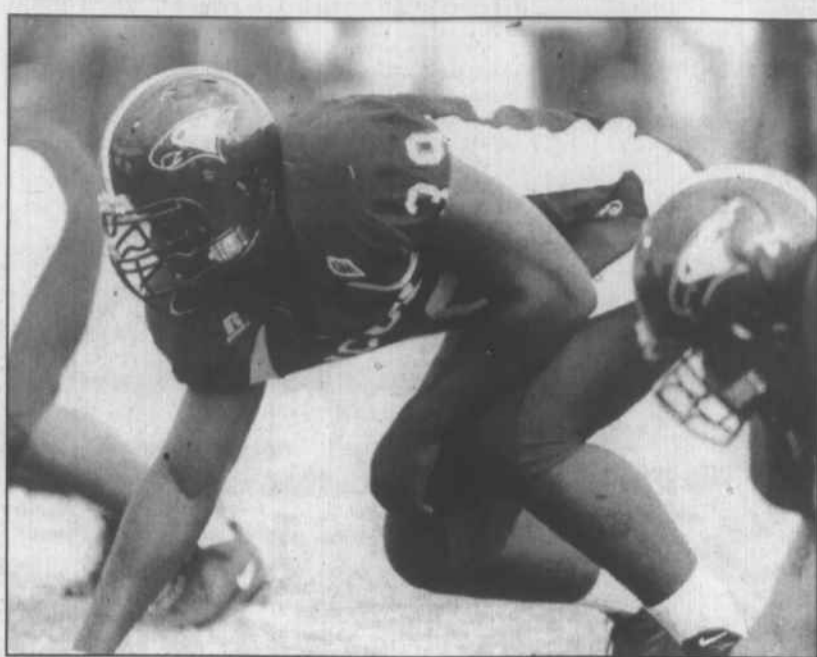
Peterson was not even watching the television coverage of the NFL Draft when he became the school's first draft pick in 18 years.

Projected as a sixth or seventh round selection, Peterson had just taken a shower and was hanging out with his grandmother, Betty Pickett, at her home in Techey, N.C. when his phone rang.

On the other end was Tampa Bay Buccaneers head coach Jon Gruden, who asked Peterson what he promised him when the two met earlier this year. "I told him that I would lead the team in effort," Peterson recalled.

Then Gruden said, "Congratulations."

After receiving more congratulatory wishes from the



NCCU's Greg Peterson was drafted by Tampa Bay in the fifth round of the NFL Draft.

Buccaneers defensive line coach and defensive coordinator, Peterson spoke with some reporters from the Tampa Bay area who asked him about being drafted from a Division II school.

"It doesn't matter where you play," Peterson said. "I gave everything I had on the field and stayed out of trouble. I wasn't looking to get drafted, I just wanted a chance. Now I

have that chance." Peterson then gave praise to NCCU, where he earned all-conference, all-region and Black College All-America honors and played on two CIAA Championship teams.

"It was an honor to play at North Carolina Central, and I am thankful to coach Broadway (former NCCU head coach Rod Broadway) and coach Yoshida

(former NCCU defensive coordinator/defensive line coach Clifford Yoshida). They taught me a lot. They are a big reason I am where I am today."

A 6-5, 286-pound native of Beulaville, N.C., Peterson had a monster 2006 season for NCCU, ranking 13th in the NCAA with 19.5 tackles for a loss (1.6 TFL per game), while adding a team-high two fum-

ble recoveries. Peterson utilized brute strength, solid technique and distinct quickness to amass 7.5 sacks, another team-high, from his defensive tackle position in the Eagles' 4-3 defensive alignment.

During the 2006 season, Peterson, a graduate of East Duplin High School and transfer from Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi, received a myriad of conference, regional and national awards.

He was voted All-Conference (Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association) First Team, Daktronics NCAA Division II All-Southeast Region Second Team and SBN Sports Black College All-America Team, as NCCU finished its perfect regular season en route to a No. 1 seed in the Division II playoffs.

With the aid of Peterson dominating the interior line, the Eagles were crowned Sheridan Broadcasting Network Black College Football National Champions for the first time in the 33-year history of the poll.

Massey, who ranks third on NCCU's all-time interceptions list, was drafted in the second round by the New Orleans Saints and was selected to the Pro Bowl in 1992.

As of the 145th pick in the draft, Peterson is the lone CIAA player taken.

Wake assistant leaves program

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

Wake Forest's Fred Applin has accepted a position at the University of Washington after serving as the Demon Deacons' associate head coach for the past three seasons.

Applin will join the staff of Tia Jackson, the former Duke assistant who was appointed as the Huskies' new head coach earlier this month.

A 1985 graduate of Elon and a native of Roseboro, N.C., Applin was the associate head coach under Mike Petersen each of the past three seasons.

"We're grateful for the work Fred did while he was here," said Petersen. "He certainly did a great job of helping us with our recruiting effort and was an important part of our first staff we put together. I'm just happy for him that he has an opportunity that he's excited about. I'm sure he'll serve the University of Washington really well."

Applin also served as the Deacons' recruiting coordinator. His first two recruiting classes at Wake were ranked No. 5 and No. 19 in the country respectively.

In his first season at Wake Forest, Applin helped the Demon Deacons post their first winning season in 14 years and reach the postseason WNIT.

"I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked at Wake Forest," said Applin. "I enjoyed my time here with Coach Petersen and the team. I am excited about this opportunity to join the women's basketball program at the University of Washington."



Applin

Aggies

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Bland Bland, who broke the school's single-season scoring record as a sophomore, was named the department's Female Athlete of the Year. Bland led the conference in scoring and the Aggies to a second-place finish in the MEAC.

The department's other senior award went to baseball player Charlie Gamble. Gamble's season has not ended, but he is batting .397 with seven home runs and 47 RBI. He has 33 career home runs, 183 career RBI and 281 career hits, all school records.

The rookie awards from the department went to



Charlie Gamble

women's basketball player Ta'Wuana "Tweet" Cook and former Glenn baseball player C.J. Beatty. In March, Cook became the

first N.C. A&T women's basketball player to be named MEAC Rookie of the Year. Her year also included a MEAC Player of the Week recognition as a freshman and second-team All-MEAC honors. Cook also led the MEAC in assists.

After a slow start, Beatty has lived up to the hype he had coming into Aggieland. Beatty leads the MEAC in home runs with nine and is hitting an impressive .333 on the season. In less than a month, he has increased his batting average by 109 points.

Baseball and outdoor men's and women's track and field chose not to hand out individual awards because their respective seasons are not over.



A&T's Rush impressed with his shooting all season



Here, McGriff winds up during a shot put attempt at the Appalachian State Invitational.

McGriff

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perform effectively in December after months away from action. McGriff will still admit that she's not where she wants to be, but well on the right path. After taking the entire indoor season off, McGriff has exploded back onto the scene for North Forsyth's track and field team in the shot put and discus throw in eight different meets. During the annual city/county track and field meet, McGriff easily won both the shot put and discus event.

This past weekend, McGriff also had a good outing at her conference meet. She threw a distance of 35-6 in the shot put. She tossed the discus 108-3 over the weekend, which was the furthest she's thrown the discus since the her injury. McGriff's best discus distance was 125.8 feet.

"Last weekend let me know that I'm on the right track," McGriff said. "That let me know that I can still get there. I can get back to the level I was once performing on. My dad/ coach/ trainer,

has really helped me get through this. He's pumped me up from the start. He made sure that I knew that I still had it. I've had a great support group through all of this."

Travis McGriff added: "This has definitely been a long process for all of us. We're still paying the surgery bills, the rehab bills and aquatic rehabilitation. We've got stacks of bills on the table. Michaela has put in a lot of work to get back to where she needs to be. She's worked all summer to get her legs strong. She's almost where she needs to be."

With only two meets (regional and state meets) remaining in her prep career, McGriff hopes to improve even more. She's set personal goals that she's ready to reach in her events. She said that she's not even worried about where she places. McGriff is confident that if she reaches her goals then that will take care of itself.

"I just want to get back to where I was," McGriff said. "We only have two meets and I want to make the best of them. It's going to be competitive. I'm not worried about placing because if I reach my

goals then that will take care of itself."

McGriff to sign with App. State

McGriff's top concern was not being able to generate enough interest from colleges to earn an athletic scholarship after the ACL tear last year.

McGriff had hopes of gaining the interest of Winston-Salem State University before she was injured, but never heard anything back after submitting material.

"I tried to recruit Winston-Salem State, but I never heard anything back from them," McGriff said. "I was worried because I initially didn't know if I had enough time to get back to where I was to be able to present myself to different schools."

McGriff didn't realize that she was already on Appalachian State's athletic radar, though. The university wanted McGriff on what she's already accomplished in shot put and discus. On Friday, McGriff will sign a national letter of intent to attend ASU. A signing ceremony will take place at 4 p.m.

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