



**OPINION:** The graduating Hustler columnists offer advice to students at their departure. [SEE PAGE 6](#)

**VERSUS:** Check out Versus on Wednesday for an in-depth coverage of Rites of Spring. [SEE WEDNESDAY'S VERSUS](#)

## Rites of Spring

Confetti, rain and crowd surfing marked the end of Rites of Spring 2009. To read more about the performances, see Wednesday's Versus.



NIKKY OKORO / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Hip-hop artist T.I. gave one of his last performances Friday night before his one year and one day jail sentence begins in mid-May.



CHRIS PHARE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Pharrell Williams of Virginia Beach hip-hop group N.E.R.D. performed Saturday night, urging the audience to crowd surf.



OLIVER WOLFE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Lead singer Wayne Coyne of Saturday night headliner The Flaming Lips crowd surfs in his signature plastic bubble at the start of his set. The show featured confetti, streamers, giant balloons and the onstage engagement of two performers costumed as Teletubbies.



NIKKY OKORO / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Indie rock band Okkervil River of Austin, Texas, performed songs from their latest album "The Stage Names" Friday afternoon.



NICOLE MANDEL / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Sara Watkins of the band Nickel Creek performed several bluegrass songs with fellow band member and brother Shan Watkins Saturday afternoon.



NIKKY OKORO / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Brooklyn artist Santigold performed songs from her latest album "Friday the 13th" Friday night. Her music has been featured on shows like "Gossip Girl."

## **VANDY TABOOS** A complicated problem

**Cheating an important issue for Vanderbilt community to address according to professors, experts.**

by **SYDNEY WILMER**  
Editor-in-Chief

Brian Heuser, lecturer in international education and public policy, has spent the last five years monitoring the self-reported academic integrity habits of Vanderbilt students.

The results of his study are not unremarkable, but perhaps not what students looking for trends want to hear, he said.

"We have seen very little fluctuation in student reporting in personally witnessing incidences," he said. "In

some cases, we have seen a decline."

The study asked students about the cheating they have witnessed rather than what they have done. Heuser said he has found that students will often factor what they have done in the way they form their own perceptions.

In 2008, 15.6 percent of students reported witnessing plagiarism of some kind, 22 percent witnessed cheating of some kind and 36.6 percent of students witnessed unauthorized sharing of information of some kind. These numbers have not changed significantly in the past five years, Heuser explained.

Similarly, Director of Student Conduct Daniel Swinton, who advises the Honor Council, offered data on the number of cases heard by the student-led group. The information also showed no real increase in the last six years save an unexplained dip during the 2004-2005 school year, he said.

### Addressing a complex problem

But while the data shows no real increase or decrease, the numbers paired with statistics provided by the Honor Council, Swinton says, show cheating is an important issue on campus.

"If students are witnessing 10 or 15 percent of students cheating, then that is a problem," he said.

Heuser said the key to a strong academic Honor Code goes beyond the Honor Council and students.

Swinton agreed, saying the university should see low and consistent reports of cheating in the report as a positive, but any cheating is an issue that needs to be dealt with on campus.

"Cheating happens," said senior Matthew Specht, outgoing organizational vice president of the Honor Council. "I don't think there is rampant cheating across campus."

The question for a lot of students and faculty, though, is who is responsible

for enforcing the Honor Code.

According to the Honor Code, the system should work so that students and professors enforce and the Honor Council prosecutes.

Students may not be responsible for turning students into the Honor Council — though they are encouraged — but some action, perhaps in an expression of disapproval, is expected, he said.

### Need to work together

Research Assistant Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Tim Holman agreed, saying he thinks ideally the process should work so each factor works together.

"Students have a responsibility to read the Honor Code and abide by its rules," Holman said. "Professors have a responsibility to enforce the Honor Code by taking reasonable steps to prevent academic misconduct in their classes.

Please see **VANDY TABOO**, page 5

## Housing scrambles to assign students

by **KELLY JONES**  
News Reporter

Though it usually leaves some students unsatisfied, the housing selection process for the 2009-2010 academic year has left more than usual frustrated with their future housing assignments.

"I've had 379 scheduled meetings with students as well as a large number of walk-ins in regards to students who want to talk about their housing assignment," said Director of Housing Assignments Jason Jakubowski. "I want to help whenever possible."

Jakubowski said that during meetings with students he reiterates how the lottery is seniority-based and that all rooms on campus have been assigned through the lottery process.

"When all spaces are assigned, we don't have vacancies to work

Please see **HOUSING**, page 5



**SPORTS:** The Hustler sports staff looks back on the best in Commodore sports in the 2008-09 seasons. [SEE PAGE 8-9](#)



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# SNAPSHOTS

compiled by NORAH SCANLAN

## WEATHER

WEATHER.COM

### TODAY



HIGH **63**, LOW **44**  
Few showers

### TUESDAY



HIGH **62**, LOW **43**  
Partly cloudy

### WEDNESDAY



HIGH **69**, LOW **44**  
Partly cloudy

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## SERVICE GUIDE

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**BACK ISSUES**  
Back issues are available in Sarratt 130 during business hours.

With classes ending tomorrow and finals descending upon campus, we thought we would dedicate page 2 to helping you procrastinate and relax.

Check out the calendar to find out ways to unwind as classes end and how to gear up to study for finals.

And finally, instead of our usual news briefs, enjoy a couple extra Sudoku puzzles. No reason for you to do more reading than is necessary right now.

### EXTRA SUDOKU PUZZLES

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## CALENDAR

### THE WEEK AHEAD

#### TUESDAY, APRIL 21

##### • Last day of classes

Classes end in all undergraduate schools. So close to summer — just have to get through exams first.

##### • Desserts with Kirkland

Stop by Rand Terrace between 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. for free Las Paletas popsicles and other desserts and to talk with administrators and Vanderbilt Student Government executive board members in a causal atmosphere.

##### • International Stress Fest

An opportunity to relax with jewelry making, tie-dyeing, tile painting, henna tattoos and other activities will be provided from 3-6 p.m. at the Student Life Center Ballroom.

##### • Ben & Jerry's Free Cone Day

Venture off-campus to 21st Avenue for a free ice cream cone at Ben and Jerry's.

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 23 – FRIDAY, APRIL 24

##### • Coffee break

Forget about your finals for a few hours and unwind with free coffee from 8-11 p.m. in Sarratt Promenade.

## SNAPSHOT

### BATTLE OF THE BANDS



JUSTIN MENESTRINA / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Battle of the Bands took place Thursday night to kick off Rites of Spring weekend. The winner opened the concert festival Friday night.



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**The Vanderbilt Alumni Association would like to thank the Student Alumni Board for a wonderful year of building class community and meaningful alumni connections through:**

- Seniorfest
- Junior Networking Lunch
- Commons Carnival
- Junior's Focus on Your Future Series
- Senior "Almost Alumni" Lunch
- Sophomore Slam Dunk Tailgate
- Las Paletas Fall Popsicle Break
- Sophomore Feed the Children Event

**Thank you to all our class  
Student Alumni Boards!**

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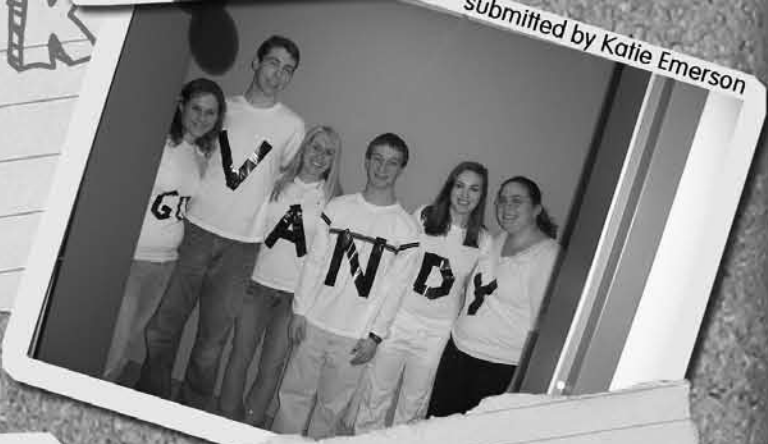
# WE WANT YOU IN THE YEARBOOK



submitted by Gustavo De Pena



submitted by Danielle Gantt



submitted by Katie Emerson

submitted by Lillian Lam



02/01/2009

submitted by Jeanette Lugo

Don't let your digital photos fade into oblivion. Submit your favorite photos from 2008-09 online at **VanderbiltCommodore.com**, and they could be published in the Scrapbook section of the Commodore yearbook. The Scrapbook section is a unique record of this year at Vandy, created entirely with photos submitted by students like you.

**SEND IN ...** pics of you and your friends, interesting shots capturing life on campus, team and organization group photos, images of parties and events



submitted by Laura Calabrese

**VanderbiltCommodore.com**

If you haven't already ordered your 2009 Commodore yearbook, order online today.





# Things you will lose at home over the summer

**FRANNIE BOYLE**  
Columnist

These past two semesters at Vanderbilt have gone by pretty fast, but you have probably gotten much more out of them than you really think. Summer at home will be beautiful after two hardcore weeks of exams, but just remember, after being intensely subjected to the Vandy way of life, there will be a lot to lose.

## Extra pounds

There aren't many who drink as much at home as they do here. It is also doubtful that there will be as many fourth meals, free Rand dinner rolls or Styrofoam cups of fro-yo. Most of us will be back in the routine of mom's good home cooking. And if not, meals still won't be easily accessible. Ten-minute drives to get some grub won't be nearly as enticing as a short walk to the Munchie Mart or the minute-long elevator ride down to Quiznos.

## Ability to get away with anything

It's the real world. There is no way you will be able to drink underage in the front yard, keep up that consistent drug habit, or even make loud, belligerent claims in the Qdoba line at 3 a.m. Most people will have to adhere to local laws and/or family rules from the beginning of May until mid-August, and that will take some getting used to.

## Sleep deprivation

This is definitely not a bad thing. A weekend of Rites followed by a week and a half of all-nighters and insufficient naps will pretty much kill that first week at home. If your parents aren't used to it by now, they will probably wonder what in the heck is wrong with you, but they will eventually get used to the weird sleeping patterns that

cause you to miss two meals a day and take showers at 3 a.m.

## Everything you learned

Cramming for all of those exams and the long all-nighters you pulled for those papers may have gotten you some A's, but you for sure will forget everything you learned by the time report cards come out.

## The tolerance of a champion

Rites of Spring weekend was a true test of strength for most students. Two full days of raging, the concert and going out after both nights ... it is a wonder the majority of Vanderbilt students survived. Most students won't be able to keep this up over the summer, and they definitely should not expect to manage a weekend like this when they get back. It will take a whole semester of tailgating in addition to a long spring break and a couple of formals to get back on the same pace.

## Being semi-cool

You are going back home to your nerdy friends and the lame way of life you led before college. As awesome as everyone thinks you are here, your old high school friends and enemies remember who the "real you" is. They remember the Pi contest you won in fifth grade, the geography bee you won in eighth and even the time you missed the prom after-party in order to study for the ACT. No matter how hard you try to erase that from their memories with crudely titled facebook albums and status updates about how awesome the Flaming Lips were last night, they will still remember.

—Frannie Boyle is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Science. She can be reached at [mary.f.boyle@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:mary.f.boyle@vanderbilt.edu).

# The silent and creepy majority

**CLAIRE COSTANTINO**  
Columnist

You have heard tour guides tell hilarious lies about them to prospective students and you have looked for the reassuring safety of a blue light phone after getting shifty looks from them at dusk: They are Vanderbilt's squirrels. These scampering devils have such a strong presence on campus that I think they deserve a senator in Vanderbilt Student Government and a slice in the pie charts profiling the student body in admissions fliers. Even if those outlandish squirrel-to-student ratios cited by tour guides are an exaggeration, they are still a force to be reckoned with.

Despite my certainty that there are squirrels in my hometown, I don't think I ever thought about (much less felt intimidated by) them until I arrived at Vanderbilt. They run around our campus like they run the place, and I'm beginning to think they do. To squirrels, we students are little more than food transporters and potential victims for their strange antics. They torment our hardworking groundskeepers as well, running through the flowerbeds and tearing up the lawns when they store food.

After living in terror for most of my freshman year, I decided to be brave. After all, when I change the fundamental habits of my life to accommodate my fear, the squirrels win. So I started my sophomore year off courageously: using the trashcans outside (even though I have seen a squirrel jump out of one and attack some poor guy's arm) and walking on paths on which more than one squirrel was running around.

I wanted to go beyond conquering my fear — I wanted to learn to appreciate the squirrels for all of their special quiriness. That may have been one

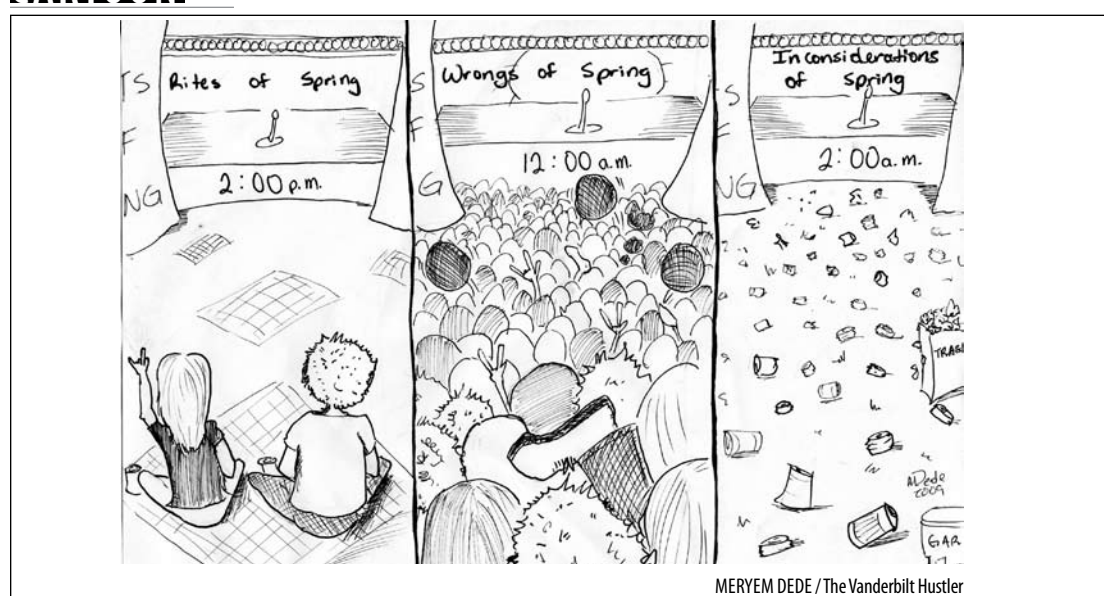
of the dumber ideas I've ever had. The closer you look at them, the scarier they are! From a distance they're eccentric and funny, but up close they are sort of horrifying. They don't just run, they scamper. Squirrels don't just associate in groups, they have freak-out conventions on sidewalks and in trees. They don't just dig holes to hide their food; they move so fast and frantically they must be burrowing halfway to China and hiding nuts in Earth's core.

The squirrels still terrify me. The way they hold eye contact with you as you pass them sends chills up my spine. Yet I think I have reached a delicate truce with them. We each respect the other's boundaries. Sometimes I have dreams of a career in diplomacy (Especially after this year's IMPACT Symposium because Madeleine Albright is such a badass. I just want to be her.), and I consider my experience with Vanderbilt's aggressive squirrels important practice in the art of negotiating with a hostile opponent.

Despite the allegations of some recent letters to the editor, I am no misanthrope. I consider myself a friend to humanity just as much as to ... squirreldom? To that end, I have found a new way to learn to relate to Vandy's squirrel population: Twitter. The crowded and instantaneous nature of Twitter's social network plays perfectly to squirrels' short and sweet communication style. One impressively tech-savvy squirrel has become the clever voice for Vanderbilt's squirrel community. If you would also like to learn more about our fellow campus residents, follow doresquirrel on Twitter. Seriously, it's a really account.

—Claire Costantino is a sophomore in the College of Arts and Science. She can be reached at [claire.v.costantino@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:claire.v.costantino@vanderbilt.edu).

## CARTOON



MERYEM DEEDE / The Vanderbilt Hustler

THE COMMONS

When classes end on April 21st, you're going to want to celebrate.

Class of 2012 Student Alumni Board

SAB

We're bringing live music, carnival food, and a forty-foot inflatable Slip and Slide to the doorstep of the Commons Center.

If that's not enough, we'll also have dunking booths, photo booths, an alternative talent show, and more!

4PM-8PM

COMMONS  
CARNIVAL

## SPORTS



## The year's best Commodores



We wrap up the school year with our picks for the tops in Vanderbilt sports in 2008-2009. Agree? Disagree? Go to InsideVandy, see our Honorable Mentions and voice your opinion.

## Men's and women's Teams of the Year

First bowl win in 53 years capped incredible season for football team.

by NICK GALLO  
Sports Reporter

The Commodore football team, our Vanderbilt men's Team of the Year, won the Music City Bowl.

That should in itself be enough reason to award the Vanderbilt Commodores with the crown, but many other factors are included.

In a way unlike any other on campus, the football team galvanized the spirit of the campus when they moved to 5-0 on the season with a home victory against then-13th ranked Auburn. In the days leading up to the game, ESPN's "College GameDay" came onto campus, broadcasting right outside The Commons Center. The "GameDay" crew was extremely complimentary of the Vanderbilt fans, saying the Friday turnout for the show was the best they had ever seen.

The win on that Saturday night catapulted the Commodores to a No. 13 ranking in the country. Although it took the Commodores five more games after Auburn to reach that ever-important sixth win, they eventually beat Kentucky, making the Commodores bowl eligible for the first time since 1982.

The Commodores managed a 4-4 conference record and a 6-6 overall record, which pitted them in a matchup with Boston College in the Music City Bowl. The game was held at LP



CHRIS CARROLL / The Vanderbilt Hustler  
Larry Smith (10), Bryant Hahnfeldt (8) and Chris Nickson (3) celebrate after Hahnfeldt put Vandy ahead in the Music City Bowl.

Field, just a few miles away from the Vanderbilt campus, where the Commodores won 16-14 in thrilling fashion.

Throughout the season, the Commodores had trouble scoring, but their defense played well throughout. Vanderbilt's on-field success has already produced visible dividends. The Commodores signed their best recruiting class ever this spring with 17 quality players.

Despite a few bumps in the road, the season as a whole was a great success, and this team set the foundation for Commodore teams in the years to come. ■

Women's basketball earned another SEC Championship, Sweet 16 berth.

by DAVID RUTZ  
Sports Editor

Quietly overshadowed by the giant to the east that is Pat Summitt and her Lady Volunteers, for years Vanderbilt women's basketball has succeeded but gone unnoticed.

This past season, the Commodores finally received recognition as a team to be reckoned with and lived up to the billing, and for that they are our Vanderbilt women's Team of the Year, winning the Southeastern Conference tournament championship and advancing to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

With a star-packed lineup led by All-American Christina Wirth and Defensive Player of the Year Jen Risper, Vanderbilt used Melanie Balcomb's well-coached combination of crisp shooting and stellar defense to roll to its best conference start ever under her tenure at 10-2.

Although Wirth and Risper led the team all year long, other players emerged as forces. Merideth Marsh, despite being just 5-foot-6, became the SEC's best 3-point threat, making nearly 50 percent of her shots from beyond the arc. Hannah Tuomi was among the nation's leaders in shooting percentage and led the team in rebounding.

Despite not having Tuomi for the postseason, Vanderbilt rolled to the SEC Tournament championship, with Wirth earning MVP honors



ZAC HARDY / The Vanderbilt Hustler

Vanderbilt women's basketball knocked off Tennessee for the first time in 16 tries and went on to make a deep run in the postseason.

and the team earning its 10th straight NCAA Tournament bid. The Commodores didn't stop their run there, defeating Western Carolina and Kansas State in the NCAA Tournament to advance to a second straight Sweet 16. Fourth-seeded Vanderbilt met top-seeded Maryland in the regional semifinal, losing a thriller 78-74 despite leading the first 38 minutes of the game.

It was a heartbreaking end but the season was still another major triumph for a very underrated program. ■

## Men's and women's Athletes of the Year

Dynamic, versatile Moore was a major spark for Commodore football.

by DAVID SHOCHAT  
Sports Reporter

D.J. Moore has been a starter since he stepped foot on campus three years ago, and he was one of the most critical components of Vanderbilt winning a bowl game for the first time in 53 years last season. For his versatility and star power while with the Black and Gold, he's our Vanderbilt men's Athlete of the Year.

As the Commodores were going for their sixth win against Kentucky, Moore had a huge game catching two touchdowns and picking off two passes, the second one to seal the game and make the team bowl eligible for the first time since 1982. Moore was named the Walter Camp Player of the Week.

He also was one of the most versatile players in the country last year as he was the only player in the SEC to play four different positions: quarterback, wide receiver, defensive back and punt returner.

Moore's versatility was on display against Miami (Ohio) and Rice as he had 91- and 67-yard punt returns, respectively; both returns led to touchdowns. Moore finished the season with five interceptions and 59 tackles and



FRANCIS SIMPSON / The Vanderbilt Hustler  
D.J. Moore (17) did it all this past year for the football team: cornerback, wide receiver, quarterback and punt and kick returner.

was named an SEC First Team All-American. In this coming weekend's NFL draft, Moore should be drafted in the first or second round, and throughout his career, he has helped to bring exposure to the football program as Vanderbilt was on national television five times last season.

Whoever gets Moore in the NFL will be getting a star; that much is for sure. ■

Wirth and Risper formed formidable tandem and were drafted by WNBA.

by MIKE KRANZLER  
Sports Reporter

Smash and Dash, Double Trouble or even the Dynamic Duo. No matter what you call seniors Christina Wirth and Jennifer Risper, the fact remains that they have done a fantastic job complementing each other for the past four years.

And now, they are our Vanderbilt women's Co-Athletes of the Year.

With Wirth leading the way on offense and Risper locking down opponents on defense, the Commodores have given opponents fits on the hardwood during these two stars' decorated careers.

Wirth came to Vanderbilt already a heralded player, as the McDonald's High School All-American was also named the Gatorade Arizona Player of the Year. She lived up to those expectations, being twice named to the All-Southeastern Conference First Team and leading the Commodores to two SEC Tournament Championships. She was also recently named to the All-Senior All-America Team by the Lowes Senior CLASS award committee.

Risper made a name for herself with her play on defense and was recently named the WBCA



JAKE SCHOELLKOPF / AP

Jen Risper (2) and Christina Wirth (34) were an outstanding pair yet again in 2008-09 for the Vanderbilt women's basketball team.

National Defensive Player of the Year for her efforts. She was also a two-time Second Team All-SEC Pick for the Commodores, and her efforts setting the tone on defense keyed some major victories for the team, as well as the near-upset of top-seeded Maryland in the Sweet 16 of the Women's NCAA Tournament.

Both were recently drafted into the WNBA, with Wirth going to the Indiana Fever and Risper going to the Chicago Sky.

Vanderbilt fans should be proud of what Christina Wirth and Jennifer Risper have accomplished in their four years in Nashville, because no matter where their games take them, they will always be Commodores at heart. ■

## Men's and women's Freshmen of the Year

Hard-throwing righty passed up the major leagues to play for Vanderbilt.

by MEGHAN ROSE  
Sports Reporter

Appearing in 14 games to date this season, Sonny Gray has become a vital part of the Commodore pitching rotation from the start and our Vanderbilt men's Freshman of the Year.

Gray recorded his first career win in game two of doubleheader action against Ole Miss in the middle of March, holding the Rebels to one run throughout three and two-thirds innings of work, securing a 7-6 win for Vanderbilt.

Despite earning his first loss of the season in a tough outing against Southeastern Conference foe Alabama on Friday night, Gray has shown a promising maturity and confidence while on the mound. While the Smyrna native (3-1) notched impressive wins against Florida and Middle Tennessee this season, Gray has made the most impact while in the relief role.

Transitioning from high school ball to collegiate and conference play is often an overwhelming process for pitchers. However, Gray has found success in working with Commodores' pitching coach Derek Johnson

to pinpoint the location of his fastball, change-up and curve.

While Gray's physical strength and arm speed has played a vital role in his successes, his mental game sets the freshman apart. Gray's determination, knowledge of the sport and desire to win has made the right-handed pitcher a volatile threat to opposing lineups.

In fact, winning is nothing new to Gray. In high school baseball play, the four-year starter and varsity letter winner helped the Smyrna Bulldogs to a No. 3 Tennessee state ranking during the 2007 season.

In the end, it was the combination of Gray's physical talent and intangible assets that got the pitcher noticed by major league scouts and made him a success for Vanderbilt.

With impressive pitching form, mental savvy and a competitive drive, Gray will be a crucial asset in the Commodores' pitching staff over the course of his collegiate career. ■



CHRIS PHARE / The Vanderbilt Hustler  
Pitcher Sonny Gray's strong arm and competitiveness have made him an instant success for Commodore baseball.

Highly touted Wu has starred for tennis team with a 25-9 record.

by BRIAN LINHARES  
Sports Reporter

The transition for many high school athletes to the college level is certain to be difficult. At the Division I level, the difference can be even more jarring.

Someone forgot to tell Jackie Wu, our Vanderbilt women's Freshman of the Year.

In her first year as a member of the Vanderbilt women's tennis team, Wu has notched an overall record of 25-9 (through April 16).

The New Jersey native has earned the 57th position in the national rankings. In addition, she joins doubles partner freshman Heather Steinbauer to form the 49th-ranked tandem.

Wu started the fall hot. She won in her first eight contests through mid-October, emerging from the Furman and Hoosier Classics unscathed.

After a three set victory in her second match of the June Stewart Invitational, over No. 94 Katarina Zoricic of William and Mary, Wu's initial defeat of her career came against a fellow Commodore in 40th-ranked Catherine Newman.

Following the loss, Wu reeled off three consecutive triumphs at the Intercollegiate Tennis Association Southeast Regional, the final over No. 23 Katrina Tsang of North Carolina.

In doubles, the Wu and Steinbauer partnership may not have matched (pun intended) her singles play, yet the two still have proven to be formidable foes.

The unit opened with three consecutive victories over Middle Tennessee State, Yale and South Carolina.

In the No. 1 slot, the twosome has faced considerable opposition. Despite struggles, Wu and Steinbauer have demonstrated their prowess, most notably in defeats of No. 26 Hilary Bartlett and Taylor Marable of Princeton, and No. 20 Noelle Hickey and Christy Stiplin of Georgia Tech.

The leader of a talented class of freshmen, Wu will figure to be a mainstay of the program for the next several years. ■



ABDULLAH RADZAI / The Hustler  
Jackie Wu started her freshman season on fire and hasn't let up, compiling a 25-9 record for the women's tennis team.



# Moment of the Year



OLIVER WOLFE / The Vanderbilt Hustler  
Vanderbilt students came out in droves for the live broadcast of ESPN's "College GameDay" on Oct. 4 at The Commons, the first time the popular college football show had ever come to Nashville.

"College GameDay" made its first ever visit to Vanderbilt's campus.

by MIKE KRANZLER  
Sports Reporter

Has Vanderbilt Stadium ever rocked as hard as it did on "College GameDay" against Auburn?

With a rare sell-out followed by an even rarer performance in a 14-13 victory over the visiting Tigers, Vanderbilt finally arrived on the national scene. No single event in years has energized the student body and the Vanderbilt community as a whole more than the "GameDay" performance. It was truly a watershed moment in the history of Vanderbilt athletics, and the Moment of the Year in Commodore sports.

The excitement all across campus was palpable in the week leading up to the game, and there was an electricity felt in the air that rarely remained this deep into the football season. The stadium was filled to the brim well before the opening kickoff, and for once, Vanderbilt Stadium seemed like it belonged with its Southeastern Conference brethren.

The performance on "College GameDay" gave the country a close look at a Vanderbilt program that had spent much of its time in the shadows previously, and Bobby Johnson's crew did not disappoint. The Cardiac Commodores made sure to provide the fans with an edge-of-your-seat game that kept fans in the stands long after the final whistle.

Not only that, but it also exposed Vanderbilt football to an extremely important demographic — the current high school stars looking to take their games to the next level. "College GameDay" made Vanderbilt relevant on the national stage for the first time in recent memory, and it was reflected in February by Johnson's best recruiting class since he came to Nashville.

The "College GameDay" experience set the stage for Vanderbilt to take the next step to becoming a consistent winner against the Goliaths of the college football world.

But perhaps nothing says it better than the thousands of Commodore fans in attendance, screaming in one unified voice: "Vanderbilt, all hail!" ■

# Head Coach of the Year

Bobby Johnson helmed Commodore football's best season in a generation.

by DAVID RUTZ  
Sports Editor

When you think of how great the 2008 Vanderbilt football season was, you have to compare it to the 2007 season, which ended in excruciating fashion.

The backbreaker wasn't the concluding rout by Wake Forest; it was the 25-24 loss at Tennessee when the Commodores blew a 15-point fourth-quarter lead. Bryant Hahnfeldt missed a 49-yard field goal just to the left at the end and everyone in Commodore Nation groaned.

Vanderbilt coach Bobby Johnson looked up as the kick missed and the collapse was complete. He calmly took off his headset and prepared to walk to the middle of the field and shake Phil Fulmer's hand, while the players and coaches around him looked despondent.

And Johnson went right back to work for next week. Disappointed, sure. But despairing? Never.

Bobby Johnson always gets up after he gets knocked down, and that's why he was an easy choice for our Vanderbilt Coach of the Year for 2008. Thirteen months after that debacle in Knoxville, Johnson and Hahnfeldt were heroes after winning the Music City Bowl, Vanderbilt's first bowl win since 1955, with Hahnfeldt drilling a 45-yard field goal for the winning points.

Johnson never stopped believing in himself and his coaching staff, and more importantly, he never stopped believing in his players. The end result was Vanderbilt's best football season in a generation.

It was supposed to be a rebuilding year. It turned out to be a monumental one instead.

Johnson is all about hard work, discipline and development. Vanderbilt doesn't get five-star recruits, but he and his staff turn their players into four or five-star talent. You have to if you want to win, let alone compete, in the Southeastern Conference.

Johnson has the respect of his players and staff because he respects them and puts them first. And in doing so, he has



MARK HUMPHREY / AP  
Vanderbilt coach Bobby Johnson looks on after the Commodores scored a touchdown against South Carolina on Sept. 4. The eventual 24-17 Vanderbilt victory marked the second straight year Johnson defeated legendary coach Steve Spurrier.

turned around a program long beset by failure. Nothing could make him happier than seeing his hard-working players rewarded by their success.

"This is what coaches live for," he said after the Commodores beat then-No. 13 Auburn on Oct. 4. "I live to walk into the locker room and see how happy our players are."

A team of defensive playmakers developed by Johnson's staff bullied South Carolina, Ole Miss, Auburn and Kentucky into 12 turnovers. In the national spotlight almost all season, Vanderbilt delivered; in all three games they played on ESPN, the Commodores took down ranked

opponents.

In every interview he did after Vanderbilt's big wins, Johnson said he was happy most of all for his players and staff. After winning the Music City Bowl, the man who had endured six seasons of consistent defeat didn't take a well-deserved moment to say it was a moment of personal vindication, because that's not how he operates.

At the same time, he's never satisfied either. To Johnson, success should beget more success; a 7-6 record shouldn't be the top of the mountain.

And with him at the helm of the Commodores, it won't be. ■

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4/17/09 SOLUTIONS

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## CROSSWORD

- ACROSS**  
 1 Little coronet  
 6 Gilbert, for one  
 10 Quarry  
 14 To the point: Lat.  
 15 "Moby Dick" character  
 16 Slugger Pete  
 17 Tranquility  
 18 Spanish title  
 19 Handle  
 20 "\_\_\_ Night Fever"  
 22 Like a good steak  
 24 Major disturbance  
 25 Guiding lights  
 26 Complete failure  
 29 No longer in vogue  
 30 Laila or her dad  
 31 Astrological ram  
 33 Bum  
 37 Church season  
 39 Blot  
 41 Murder  
 42 Approach midnight  
 44 Lab burners  
 46 Achy & feverish  
 47 Spacious  
 49 Change  
 51 Fears  
 54 Gambler's spot  
 55 Let go of  
 56 Minuteman II and Trident I  
 60 \_\_\_-a-brac  
 61 Send out  
 63 Upper crust  
 64 High rating  
 65 Leave the ground
- DOWN**  
 1 Evening song  
 2 Concept  
 3 Smell \_\_\_;  
 suspect trickery  
 4 Happens again  
 5 "My Country 'Tis of Thee"  
 6 Egyptian leader killed in 1981  
 7 Cookie: Chips  
 8 Raced  
 9 Ebbs  
 10 Lively horses  
 11 Musical composition  
 12 German city  
 13 Periods of time  
 21 Places for peepholes  
 23 Steinbeck's "\_\_\_ of Eden"  
 25 Sink  
 26 Collapse  
 27 Intestinal parts  
 28 Isn't badly  
 29 Like certain mosses  
 32 Knickknacks  
 34 Inter \_\_\_; among other things  
 35 \_\_\_ liquor  
 36 Nabors' role  
 38 Tiered
- 66 Seed covering  
 67 Toboggan  
 68 Retort rudely  
 69 Misses in Mexico: abbr.

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4/17/09 SOLUTIONS

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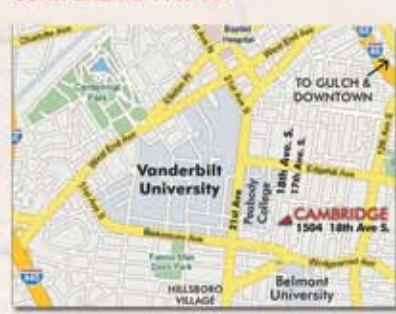
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