

## SPORTS

## FOOTBALL

# Career day for Nickson as Dores keep Duke winless

By Pete Madden  
ASST SPORTS EDITOR

The Commodores defeated the Blue Devils of Duke University on Saturday, surviving a late fourth quarter rally to secure a 45-28 victory, and in doing so, won their sixth consecutive "SAT Bowl."

Sophomore quarterback Chris Nickson led the offensive onslaught, generating 400 yards of total offense en route to career bests in both passing and rushing. He completed 14 of 24 passes for 250 yards and two touchdowns and rushed for another 150 yards and three scores as the Dores improved to 4-5 (1-4 Southeastern Conference).

"We were executing extremely well," said coach Bobby Johnson. "Chris (Nickson) was doing a great job, making plays that sometimes only Chris can make. He pulls it out and runs it. Sometimes they were designed runs, but we had it rolling pretty good."

Nickson's performance was particularly impressive considering his outing last weekend in the Dores' 31-13 loss to South Carolina, one in which he completed just four of 15 passes and threw two interceptions. Against the winless Blue Devils, who now own the longest active losing streak in Division 1-A, Nickson excelled in all areas.

"We still had confidence in him," Johnson said. "He had a great week of practice. He made some great throws and some great runs and some great decisions."

Sophomore wide receiver Earl Bennett also turned his best performance of the season, reeling in nine passes for 184 yards and a touchdown, including a 77-yard strike that put the Commodores ahead 14-0 at the end of the first quarter.

Bennett has 54 receptions for 755 yards and four touchdowns this season. He is currently sixth on the all-time Commodore receptions list with 133.

Nickson extended the lead on the Commodores' next possession with a 5-yard touchdown run, and following an interception by Darlron Spead, Nickson found George Smith in the end zone from 41 yards away, making the score 28-0 with over six minutes left in the half.

Duke running back Justin Boyle put the Blue Devils (0-8, 0-5 Atlantic Coast Conference) on the

scoreboard as time was winding down in the first half, capping an 11-play, 80-yard drive with a 2-yard touchdown run to bring his team within three touchdowns at intermission.

After the break, a 3-yard touchdown run by sophomore running back Cassen Jackson-Garrison increased the Commodores' lead to 35-7. A few minutes later, as Nickson rested on the sidelines, redshirt freshman Mackenzi Adams led a 14-play drive that resulted in a Bryant Hahnfeldt 44-yard field goal.

Injuries to the Commodore defense, however, left the door open for the Blue Devils in the fourth quarter. Following Boyle's second touchdown of the day, the Blue Devils recovered a fumble and Boyle ran the ball in for the score. An onside kick gave the ball back to Duke, and Boyle promptly sprinted into the end zone from 32 yards out to put his team within 10 points, 38-28.

"We got a bunch of people hurt in the first half," Johnson said. "Curtis Gatewood was hurt, Reshard (Langford) was banged up. Marcus Buggs was banged up. Brandon Bryant, Marcus' backup was banged up. So we were holding on there for dear life at the end, but our guys responded and came back."

Boyle's four-touchdown performance matches Duke's single-game record.

"You are talking about a guy who gets a lot of yardage after contact," said Duke coach Ted Roof. "Boyle is a guy we have to keep on the field. He is being more patient and when he is signaling it, he is hitting it."

The deficit proved too great for the Blue Devils to overcome, however. Nickson returned late in the fourth quarter and ran for a 1-yard touchdown run.

"The momentum wasn't in our favor; we needed a big play," Nickson told *The Tennessean* following the game. "I just wanted to carry my team on my shoulders and make a big play, whether it was dragging someone 5 yards or what."

"I don't think too many people can stop me running the football one-on-one. It's probably a cocky thing to say, but I really think it's the truth."

Freshman D. J. Moore sealed the victory for the Commodores when he intercepted his first career pass with less than two minutes remaining. ■



WEIYN TAN/The Duke Chronicle



WEIYN TAN/The Duke Chronicle

Quarterback Chris Nickson (above) drags a Duke defender with him, while wide receiver Earl Bennett (below) looks to run after the catch. Nickson connected with Bennett for a 77-yard touchdown in the first half of the Dores' 45-28 victory over the Blue Devils. Bennett caught 9 passes for 184 yards, while Nickson was 14-for-24 for 250 yards and two touchdowns.

## SEC East Standings

Team	Conf. Record	Overall	Next Opp.
FLORIDA	5-1	7-1	@ VANDY
TENNESSEE	3-1	7-1	LSU
GEORGIA	3-3	6-3	@ KENTUCKY
SOUTH CAROLINA	3-3	5-3	SOUTH CAROLINA
KENTUCKY	2-3	4-4	GEORGIA
VANDY	1-4	4-5	FLORIDA

## GAME BREAKDOWN

### Player of the game

The recipient of this award should come as no surprise. Redshirt sophomore Chris Nickson had a career day, throwing for 250 yards and two touchdowns, while rushing for 150 yards and three scores. Nickson finished just 17 yards short of the single-game rushing record by a Vanderbilt quarterback, which was set in 1979 by Van Heflin. As Duke coach Ted Roof said, "At time we had guys free and (Nickson) made them miss. He got them out of some jams and he was just better than us today." With Florida coming to Nashville next weekend, the Dores would love to have a similar performance from Nickson, especially since they need to win two of their next three games to become bowl eligible.

**Stat of the game**  
9.0

Number of consecutive losses for Duke. Because of Temple's victory this weekend, the Blue Devils now hold the nation's longest active losing streak. They are 0-8 this season.

## Quote of the game

"I don't think the world has seen the real Chris Nickson yet. I don't think I've reached the optimal level."

-Vanderbilt quarterback Chris Nickson on his breakout performance Saturday in the Commodores 45-28 victory over Duke, as told to *The Tennessean*.

## Hoops season just around the corner

*Stallings discusses season at SEC annual media day.*

By Jambu Palaniappan  
ASST SPORTS EDITOR

With basketball season fast approaching, Vanderbilt men's coach Kevin Stallings, junior swingman Shan Foster and senior forward Derrick Byars traveled to Birmingham for the SEC's annual media day. Below is some of what the trio said about the upcoming season.

### COACH KEVIN STALLINGS

#### On DeMarre Carroll's departure and who will step up:

You never want to see a guy like Carroll leave, someone who you help to grow and develop. We have good players like Ross (Neltner) and (JeJuan) Brown who have good productivity and strength.

#### On the highly competitive SEC:

All of the teams in this league are good and all of the teams have great players. There are a lot of hard environments to play in. At times, the crowd affects decision-making and shooting and that's when a team has a home court advantage. Every team in our division could be much more talented than a year ago. We've got a great league so it doesn't matter what we do at the end of the season because they know we are good. This year our league is as good as it ever has been so everybody better strap it on and be serious every night.

#### On who controls the Commodores' fate:

Derrick (Byars) is Mr. Versatility for us. He does anything that we need



NEIL BRAKE/VU Media Relations

Junior Shan Foster is a preseason All-SEC selection.

him to. I hope that he becomes more assertive on the court, particularly on offense. (Dan) Cage is a favorite of mine. His attitude, work ethic and leadership would make any coach feel like that. Any guy that breaks his nose in three places, runs to the bench to get it gauzed and finishes practice is a coach's dream. He is one of our top five players.

### SENIOR DERRICK BYARS

#### On his expectations:

We are going to be a lot better this year. We are working on playing at a new level and we have had a great off season. We are maximizing what we can do and we have a new confidence level. We can get the job done and we can depend on our teammates.

#### On last season's shortcomings:

We lacked some chemistry last year and that was a problem because it is

important for our team's success. We are hanging out more as a team and our chemistry this year will translate into success.

#### On the Dores' new additions:

Our newcomers are very physical and they will be an important piece of the puzzle this year. It all begins with working in the weight room and picking up your play in the summer. It is survival of the fittest.

### JUNIOR SHAN FOSTER

#### On team chemistry:

LSU, Florida and George Mason were all better teams because of their team chemistry. You have to have it to be successful especially in the SEC because it is the toughest conference. It is tough to win in the SEC and even tougher to win on the road. When you know you are out there with your family and your brothers then you feel more comfortable out there...We have definitely worked on our chemistry this off season. We are hanging out more and getting to know each other more. You have to work on your team chemistry and value that team chemistry because it doesn't happen by itself.

#### On his off-season improvements:

I have been working on my ball handling and getting to the basket this off season. I am trying to expand my game.

#### On the Commodores' versatility and balance:

Every position on our team can produce this year and we are a very balanced team. I have to go out and be one of the hardest workers every time I am out there. I have to lead by example and make sure that I play every play like it is my last.

## BOWLING

## Bowlers begin season with bang

### No. 4 Dores defeat No. 5 Alabama A&M.

STAFF REPORT

A deeper and more balanced Vanderbilt bowling team started its season in impressive style, blanking defending NCAA runner-up Alabama A & M on its home lanes Saturday.

The Commodores, ranked fourth in the year's first poll, swept all three team games in which total pin fall was the criteria for the point. Vanderbilt racked up advantages of 1,006-919 in the first game, 1,025-1,022 in the second and 1,036-922 in the last game to total a hefty 3,067-2,870 edge.

In the Baker games, a best four out of seven, Vanderbilt won the first two, dropped the second two and then powered away in the fifth and sixth games to win that point and clinch the team victory.

"I thought it was a good first outing," coach John Williamson said. "The highlight of our day was our ability to regain our composure after we had lost a tough third game in the Baker event and come back aggressively at the end. That was nice, and it is a step in the direction we want to see this year. I thought the maturity of our sophomores made a difference."

Vanderbilt demonstrated its depth in a number of ways during the day. Freshman Josie Earnest, making her college debut, served as leadoff and responded with scores of 246, 224 and 202 in the team games.

Tara Kane led the way in the second team game with a 234 and again in game three with a 237 with sophomore classmate Michelle Peloquin

tallying a 224 in the last game.

Kaitlin Reynolds did not bowl in the first game but was inserted in the lineup in the second game and responded with a 206. Another freshman making her debut was Ashley Belden, who went into the lineup in the third game and had a 179.

"I had a lot of fun out there," said Earnest, a two-time United State Junior Team member. "I maybe was a little nervous on my first ball, but I quickly settled down. Other than practice, I had never bowled Baker games competitively, and they are exciting because you only have two frames to make a contribution."

Peloquin, a first-team All-American and national freshman of the year last season, had a workman-like day and noted one difference with this year's team.

"We're quite a bit different this year; our dynamic is different," Peloquin said. "I think we showed that our big efforts this year will come from a variety of people. When we lost our momentum in the Baker games, we didn't back off—we want a mindset of pushing the envelope, and we did that today."

Peloquin also noted the significance of the win.

"We didn't put much emphasis on this match because it is so early in the year, but we have a lot of respect for Alabama A & M, especially on their home lanes," she said. "Last year, we came down here as freshmen with expectations, and they bowled lights out and beat us. Then we saw what they did at the NAAs, so we have plenty of respect for their ability." ■



NEIL BRAKE/VU Media Relations

Vanderbilt's women's bowling team, ranked No. 4, defeated No. 5 Alabama A&M in its first match of the season on Saturday.

## SOCCER

## Wildcats win, move up in standings

By Max Franklin  
SPORTS REPORTER

The Vanderbilt women's soccer team had a chance to clinch second place in the Southeastern Conference and a No. 2 seed in the upcoming SEC tournament with a win at Kentucky on Friday night. After a disappointing 1-0 loss, the Commodores needed to wait for the result of the Arkansas-Kentucky game, rescheduled from earlier in the season, before they found out their seeding for the tournament.

Kentucky defeated Arkansas, 1-0, to clinch the No. 3 seed in the tournament and drop the Dores down to the No. 4 seed. Florida won the SEC outright with a tie against South Carolina, and Tennessee jumped into second place with a win over Georgia. Vanderbilt (10-4-5, 6-3-2 SEC) faces South Carolina, whom they beat earlier 3-0 in Nashville. The teams will face off in Orange Beach, Ala., on Wednesday night.

At the Wildcats' senior night, Kentucky junior Meghan Jones scored the only goal of the contest with just over 12 minutes remaining in the second half, leading Kentucky to a 1-0 victory. Jones was able to find some space in the defense on the left side just outside the box and fired a shot over the head of Vanderbilt senior goalkeeper Tyler Griffin for the game-winning goal. Despite eight second-half shots by the Dores, including four by senior forward Lea Lafield, Vandy was unable to find the net and equalize the game.

Vanderbilt's best chance to score came when senior defender Kari Boersma lofted a pass down the field into the Kentucky defense. Junior midfielder Amy Baumann, the Dores' leading scorer this season, managed to put a header on the ball, but it went just wide of the goal, ending the threat. On a wet field, the Commodores committed eleven fouls to the Wildcats' eight, and two yellow cards were given out late in the fourth quarter, one to junior defender Audrey Nonemaker.

For the game, Griffin made four saves, while Lafield's four shots led the Dores. Baumann and junior midfielder Meredith Kohn each had two shots,



NEIL BRAKE/VU Media Relations

Amy Baumann and the rest of the Commodores prepare for the SEC Tournament after losing to Kentucky 1-0 in the regular season finale.

and junior forward Sarah Dennis and sophomore midfielder Katie Schulz each had a shot on goal.

Vandy leaves Tuesday morning to head down to the SEC tournament, where it looks to add to its win total and compete for the SEC crown before the NCAA tournament selection. ■

## CLUBS

## Club baseball arrives

*Finding place to play a challenge.*

By Robert Wynkoop  
SPORTS REPORTER

There is a new club sport available on campus for the coming year. In accordance with the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association and the National Club Baseball Association, University officials approved the forming of a club baseball team here.

The self-coached team was co-created by two sophomores, Brian Flaherty and Andrew de Stadler, but they said it has been in the works for a few years. Previous students have tried to start a club baseball team, but there always seemed to be something to stop it from getting off the ground.

"A lot of people have tried to start this before," de Stadler said. "The biggest problem is finding a place to practice."

Currently the team, which consists of about 30-35 former collegiate and high school level baseball players, practices on the recreational fields at Vanderbilt. These fields, however, aren't as big as where they will play their games. The team hopes to be able to utilize some Nashville Metro Parks facilities in the future.

The club team was started with a small financial allotment from the University, but the majority of money needed to keep the team going will go through fundraising efforts throughout the year, de Stadler said.

This team is more than an intramural team; it will actually travel to compete

against teams in its division. On the schedule for next year are 18 games, and among them are Middle Tennessee State University, Wake Forest, University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Davidson College.

"We're going to have some growing pains, but we're trying to make it a fairly serious team. We'll be playing tournaments and trying to be competitive in our division," de Stadler said.

According to de Stadler, they wanted to give baseball players a chance to play competitively even if they weren't able to make the varsity team or don't have the time to devote to varsity.

"I've always loved baseball for the technical skill ... (and) the camaraderie from the guys on your team. Living here in the South and playing baseball in the spring ... it's just awesome," de Stadler said.

In addition, de Stadler said that Vanderbilt baseball coach Tim Corbin plans to donate equipment and allow the team to play on Hawkins Field in the spring.

The team practices one to two times per week and will continue throughout the fall and spring. The season begins near the last week in February. Practice is open to anyone who desires to play, and as the season nears the roster will be finalized and a coach will possibly be added.

The team plays Wednesdays at 5 p.m. on the sports club field behind the recreation center. ■

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