

**INSIDE THE
POCKET WITH ...**

"I was going to the library [Sunday] and somebody flipped me off. I was trying to go study. ... I turned to my girlfriend and said, 'That guy just flipped me off.' Amazing!" — UVa quarterback **DAN ELLIS**, the week following a 24-17 loss to Duke, The Roanoke Times, Oct. 13, 1999.

**BOSTON
COLLEGE**



COACH
Tom O'Brien
(66-42 in nine years).

2005 RECORD
9-3, 5-3 ACC

BOWL
Beat Boise State 27-21
in MPC Computers Bowl.

OF NOTE
With three victories, O'Brien can pass Joe Yukica to become BC's all-time winningest coach.

STARTERS RETURNING
6 on offense, 6 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
QB Matt Ryan, OL Josh Beekman, TB A.J. Brooks, TB L.V. Whitworth, DT B.J. Raji, FS Jamie Silva.

KEY LOSSES
DE Mathias Kiwanuka, WR Will Blackmon, DT Al Washington, T Jeremy Trueblood.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
Host Virginia Tech on Oct. 12.

OUTLOOK
Ryan split time with Quinton Porter last season but went 5-0 in games he started. Losing Kiwanuka and Blackmon is big, but the Eagles seem to have a way of staying in the mix. O'Brien, a former offensive coordinator at Virginia, is one of the nation's steadiest coaches. BC gets two of its three toughest games at home but probably doesn't have enough to knock Florida State and Clemson off the top of the Atlantic standings.

CLEMSON



COACH
Tommy Bowden
(52-33 in seven years;
70-37 in nine years overall).

2005 RECORD
9-3, 5-3 ACC

BOWL
Beat Colorado 19-10
in Champs Sports Bowl.

OF NOTE
The Tigers forced at least two turnovers in each of final eight regular-season games of 2005.

STARTERS RETURNING
9 on offense, 7 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
RB James Davis, DE Gaines Adams, WR Chansi Stuckey, LB Anthony Waters.

KEY LOSSES
QB Charlie Whitehurst, CB Tye Hill, S Jamaal Fudge, DE Charles Bennett.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
At Virginia Tech on Oct. 26.

OUTLOOK
Could this be the year of the Tiger? Clemson is a popular dark-horse pick for the ACC championship, and it's feasible with so much talent back in key positions. The offensive line is the most experienced in the league. But the conference schedule is daunting — with road trips to Boston College, Florida State and Virginia Tech — and quarterback Will Proctor, though a senior, is relatively untested.

DUKE



COACH
Ted Roof
(5-22 in three years)

2005 RECORD
1-10, 0-8 ACC

OF NOTE
The Blue Devils started seven true freshman last season.

STARTERS RETURNING
3 on offense,
7 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
CB John Talley,
TB Justin Boyle,
LB Michael Taulilli.

KEY LOSSES
QB Zack Asack, LB Brendan Dewan, DB Brian Greene, TE Andy Roland.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
At Virginia Tech on Sept. 16; host Virginia on Sept. 30.

OUTLOOK
Will they win a game? That's the main question facing the Blue Devils this season. Asack, one of the few offensive players with any kind of experience, didn't help matters this summer when he got himself suspended for the season for plagiarism. If you catch Duke on TV, keep your eye on Talley, an All-ACC first-teamer. The rest probably won't be pretty.

**FLORIDA
STATE**



COACH
Bobby Bowden
(286-75-4 in 30 years,
359-107-4 in 40 years overall).

2005 RECORD
8-5, 5-3 ACC

BOWL
Lost to Penn State 26-23 in triple overtime in Orange Bowl.

OF NOTE
In December, Bowden will join Penn State's Joe Paterno as a rare active coach inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

STARTERS RETURNING
5 on offense, 4 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
QB Drew Weatherford,
TB Lorenzo Booker, WR Greg Carr, OL Cory Niblock, LB Buster Davis, CB Tony Carter.

KEY LOSSES
NG Brodrick Bunkley, LB A.J. Nicholson, DE Kamerion Wimbley, WR Willie Reid, TB Leon Washington.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
Host Virginia on Nov. 4.

OUTLOOK
The Seminoles' offensive line was a mess last year following a rash of injuries. Look for that area to improve greatly, providing better protection for an emerging Weatherford and opening holes for Booker and Antone Smith. A defense that allowed 35 points to Clemson and 34 points to Florida late last season remains a question mark, but a forgiving schedule and another fresh influx of talent makes FSU the favorite in the Atlantic.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

You know about the Hokies and Cavaliers, but here are some other ACC players to keep your eyes on this season.

Buster Davis

**Florida State
linebacker**



The Seminoles have some question marks on defense, but they know what they're getting from this guy. A preseason All-American in numerous publications, Davis was second on the team last year with 91 tackles.

Gaines Adams

**Clemson
defensive end**



He's one of the guys everybody should be talking about next April before the NFL Draft. Size, strength, explosiveness — Adams has it all, and it helped him notch 9.5 sacks last season.

John Talley

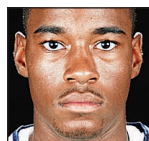
**Duke
cornerback**



Huh? The best cornerback in the league is playing at Duke? Yep. A first-team All-ACC choice from a year ago, Talley enters the season with 11 career interceptions, tied with Utah's Eric Weddle as college football's active leaders.

Calvin Johnson

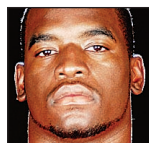
**Georgia Tech
wide receiver**



"So," Johnson was asked recently, "can a receiver win the Heisman?" Johnson just grinned. Johnson has been responsible for more than 40 percent of the Jackets' passing offense in 2004 and '05 (1,725 receiving yards and 13 TDs) and was the choice as preseason ACC player of the year.

Anthony Waters

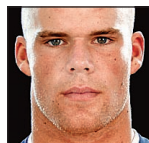
**Clemson
linebacker**



Here's a guy who lists his favorite hobby as "weightlifting." What fun! But hey, it's working. The powerful, athletic Waters is the ACC's leading returning tackler.

Greg Olsen

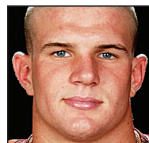
Miami tight end



Miami has produced Jeremy Shockey, Bubba Franks and Kellen Winslow Jr., but Miami coaches say Olsen may be the best yet. The younger brother of UVa QB Christian Olsen has compiled 726 receiving yards over the past two seasons.

Drew Weatherford

**Florida State
quarterback**



Weatherford led all freshmen nationally with 3,208 passing yards and 18 passing touchdowns and eclipsed N.C. State's Philip Rivers as the top freshman passer in ACC history. A tough dude who took plenty of licks last year, he should be even better now that the offensive line is more stable.

Brandon Meriweather

Miami strong safety



Meriweather garnered some headlines this summer when he fired a gun at an assailant who had shot his roommate in the buttocks. Police determined that he used his gun legally, so Meriweather will be back to making headlines with his play this fall.

**GEORGIA
TECH**



COACH
Chan Gailey
(28-22 in four years;
52-33 in seven years overall).

2005 RECORD
7-4, 5-3 ACC

BOWL
Lost to Utah 38-10
in Emerald Bowl.

OF NOTE
The Yellow Jackets have won at least seven games in each of the past nine seasons.

STARTERS RETURNING
8 on offense, 6 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
WR Calvin Johnson, QB Reggie Ball, LB KaMichael Hall, LB Philip Wheeler, CB Kenny Scott.

KEY LOSSES
TB P.J. Daniels, T Brad Honeycutt, DE Eric Henderson, LB Gerris Wilkinson, DB Dawan Landry.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
Host Virginia on Sept. 21; at Virginia Tech on Sept. 30.

OUTLOOK
If you believe veteran quarterback play is the key to success, then Georgia Tech is your team. Ball enters his fourth year as the starting signal-caller, and he has an awesome target in Johnson, the preseason choice for ACC player of the year. The Yellow Jackets play one of the more daunting nonconference schedules around, opening with Notre Dame and closing with Georgia. Another seven-win season seems about right.

N.C. STATE



COACH
Chuck Amato
(46-28 in six years).

2005 RECORD
7-5, 3-5 ACC

BOWL
Beat South Florida 14-0
in Meineke Car Care Bowl.

OF NOTE
Specialist Darrell Blackman enters his junior season as the Wolfpack's career leader in kickoff return average at 28.4.

STARTERS RETURNING
5 on offense, 6 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
QB Marcus Stone, TB Andre Brown, TB Toney Baker, LB LeRue Rumph, C Leroy Harris.

KEY LOSSES
DE Mario Williams, DE Manny Lawson, DT John McCargo, TE T.J. Williams, CB Marcus Hudson.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
at Virginia on Oct. 28.

OUTLOOK
No team in the league lost more star power than the Wolfpack, which had three defensive players (Williams, Lawson, McCargo) selected in the first round of the NFL Draft. Stone took over the QB job in midseason and led the team to a 5-1 record down the stretch. Amato has yet to come close to the impressive season of 2002, when the 'Pack won its first nine games and finished 12th in the AP poll. With struggles likely this year, dissension in Raleigh could reach a fever pitch.

MARYLAND



COACH
Ralph Friedgen
(41-20 in five years).

2005 RECORD
5-6, 3-5 ACC

OF NOTE
Maryland players have won the ACC Defensive Player of the Year awards in three of the past five seasons.

STARTERS RETURNING
7 on offense,
8 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
QB Sam Hollenbach,
TB Lance Ball, TB Josh Allen,
OT Jared Gaither, P Adam Podlesh, CB Josh Wilson.

KEY LOSSES
TE Vernon Davis, LB D'Qwell Jackson, WR Derrick Fenner, WR Jo Jo Walker.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
At Virginia on Oct. 14.

OUTLOOK
Is Friedgen really an offensive genius? We'll find out this season, as he takes over as offensive coordinator for the first time in his College Park tenure. Back-to-back 5-6 seasons have left a bad taste in the big man's mouth, and QB play has to improve for the Terps to return to a bowl game. Hollenbach has skills and experience, but he's thrown too many interceptions. Allen, who returns after missing 2005 with an injury, and Ball should alleviate some of the pressure.

**WAKE
FOREST**



COACH
Jim Grobe
(26-32 in five years;
59-65-1 in 11 years overall).

2005 RECORD
4-7, 3-5 ACC

OF NOTE
The Demon Deacons are one of five teams in the nation with 10 returning defensive starters.

STARTERS RETURNING
7 on offense,
10 on defense.

KEY PLAYERS
TB Micah Andrews, LB Jon Abbate, S Patrick Ghee, DE Matt Robinson, CB Alphonso Smith, T Steve Vallos.

KEY LOSSES
RB Chris Barclay, QB Cory Randolph, P Ryan Plackemeier.

WHEN YOU'LL SEE THEM
Host Virginia Tech on Nov. 18.

OUTLOOK
Andrews should fill in nicely for the departed Barclay, who led the ACC in rushing last season. Ben Mauk takes over the QB position full time after splitting snaps with Randolph. The Demon Deacons should be a better team than they were a year ago, but that won't necessarily translate into more wins. Most of the games in which they match up fairly well with their opponent will be on the road.