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North Carolina’s largest historically black college wins $18M science grant

From 1997 to 2006, North Carolina A&T State University produced 89 black graduates with doctorate degrees in science, the sixth highest of any university in the United States.

BY NATASHA ROBINSON
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — North Carolina A&T State University has become the first historically black college in the country to lead a multimillion-dollar National Science Foundation project to develop a research center on its campus. The school in Greensboro will receive more than $18 million from the foundation over the next five years to fund the Engineering Research Center for Revolutionizing Metallic Biomaterials. The center will do research in biomedical engineering, including implants that could help children with birth defects and minimize invasive procedures.

"It is a great opportunity for us to show that even as a HBCU (historically black colleges and universities), the quality of our research and quality of our teaching is on par with other universities," Shena Crittendon, assistant vice chancellor for communications and operations at North Carolina A&T, said Monday.

The school’s proposal was chosen from 143 submissions and announced late last week. Researchers will work with the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Cincinnati, along with eight companies in the market of nanobiotechnology.

Their focus will be on biodegradable implants that could reduce complications for patients with conditions such as cleft palate, bone fractures and coronary heart disease.

The devices will be designed to adapt to physical changes and dissolve once patients have healed, reducing the number of follow-up surgeries and potential complications of major procedures.

The center’s director, Jag Sankar, has been an engineering professor at the university for 24 years and said it’s "phenomenal" to have the center based at A&T.

"Big universities have won things, but this sends a strong message at the national level the importance of every human being getting involved," Sankar said.

North Carolina A&T is among the nation’s 110 HBCUs founded before 1964 to serve the black community. A&T has built a foundation for biomedical engineer-

ing and the funding will help with building and human infrastructure, Sankar said. The school also will establish a Department of Bioengineering.

"That will open a field up to minority students that hasn’t always been available unless you go to a majority (non-HBCU) institution," Crittendon said.

Foundation data show the number of blacks earning master’s degrees in science and engineering grew from 4.5 percent in 1995 to 6.3 percent in 2004, the most recent available. From 1997 to 2006, North Carolina A&T produced 89 black science PhDs, the sixth highest of any U.S. university, according to the data.

Leon Esterowitz, a National Science Foundation program director, said the selection process took nearly two years. He said foundation officials narrowed their search to eight schools, and visited each campus.

Esterowitz said this wasn’t the first time a smaller university was chosen.

“We wanted this process done purely on the technical merit,” he said. "I’m very excited about it myself, and if they’re very successful, I think they’ll do a great benefit to society.”

The university was among five schools the National Science Foundation chose for research center funding.
Victories over ranked teams attract national attention

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University's football team is drawing attention from all over the country.

By opening the season with wins against two ranked teams and reaching the rank of 14 in the AP Top 25 poll, the team has members of the media clamoring to talk about ECU and Greenville.

ECU football head coach Skip Holtz said the team's successful beginning this year has led to more interview requests from national media, and he welcomes the attention as great exposure for the Pirates.

"I keep calling it a circus — I'm not saying it negative — but that is what surrounds big-time college football," Holtz said.

Big time, indeed.

ECU was named the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl National Team-of-the-Week for games on the weekend of Sept. 6, the Football Writers Association of America announced Monday. Coverage of the win against West Virginia could be found in the country's largest newspapers and on their Web sites, including The New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and USA Today.

"I'm just glad that our players have had an opportunity to expe-

See PIRATES, A7
The media coverage in every major U.S. market is the best it has ever been for East Carolina University," Bass said.

Mentioning excitement over men's and women's basketball and baseball at ECU, Bass said the sports program at the university is doing better than ever.

"This is probably as high a point that this Pirate athletic program has ever experienced," Bass said.

Bass said contributions to the Pirate Club are at an all-time high, and the club will likely reach 13,000 members by December — another all-time high.

Ticket sales are "excellent," Bass said. West Virginia fans took advantage of all 4,100 tickets allotted to the team this past weekend and ECU students picked up 12,000 students tickets for the game.

McClellan said responding to so much media attention can be tough, but it is well worth it.

"The requests and the demands on everyone's time is a great problem to have," McClellan said. "I wish we had more."
Music and dance, comedy and juggling take the stage beginning next month as East Carolina University launches its annual Family Fare series. This year's series, which kicks off next month, features four live productions. All performances will be held at 7 p.m. Fridays in ECU's Wright Auditorium. Here's a look at what's scheduled this season:

The Jungle Book

Oct. 24
This musical, based on the Mowgli stories of Rudyard Kipling, tells the story of a boy raised by wolves in the Indian jungle. Follow the hijinks as Mowgli makes his way to a human village to escape the ruthless tiger Shere Khan. The production will feature favorite characters including Bagheera the panther, Rann the elephant, the hypnotic snake Kaa and the happy-go-lucky bear Baloo, who teaches Mowgli the bare necessities — the true meaning of friendship. Produced by special arrangement with The Dramatic Publishing Co. of Woodstock, Ill., "The Jungle Book" will be performed by ECU's Storybook Theatre. The group, which features theater art students, uses performing arts to introduce young audiences to various works of literature.

Three Fat Frogs

Nov. 14
North Carolina author Willa Brigham narrates an eventful day at the pond for three fat frogs. When Livingston the Alien's spaceship interrupts the frog's respite, the three frogs work together to find the materials their space friend needs to get on his way. Three Fat Frogs is a story about teamwork and friendship. Rocky Mount's Signature Dance Company illustrates variety of dance styles. The company features eastern North Carolina natives Terence Battles and Anna Godwin.

The Gizmo Guys

Jan. 30
The Gizmo Guys, Allan Jacobs and Barrett Felker, have entertained audiences around the world, from theaters to cruise ships. The comedy jugglers have made numerous television appearances, won international juggling competitions and taught at circus schools. But the rapid-fire act is as well known for its jokes as its juggling.

Willy Wonka

April 17
ECU's Storybook Theatre takes the stage for the season-ending performance, based on the book "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," by Roald Dahl. The musical tells the story of Charlie, who didn't need much from life, as long as he had his family. But his normal life was turned upside-down when he found a single golden ticket in his favorite chocolate bar. Music and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley. Adapted for the stage by Leslie Bricusse and Tim McDonald.
ECU CHIEF of Police Scott Shelton talks Monday on the investigation of complaints of police brutality during Saturday’s ECU game.

Jenni Farrow/The Daily Reflector

ECU chief lays out timeline, police investigation continues

BY KATHRYN KENNEDY
The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University Police continue interviewing witnesses and viewing video that may indicate excessive force was used by officers at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium following the ECU football team’s win over West Virginia University.

Did police overreact at the ECU game? Take our poll at reflector.com

CITY COUNCIL requests training information. A7

Chief Scott Shelton announced at a press conference Monday afternoon that while

See POLICE, A7

www.reflector.com

POLICE
Continued from A1

they hope to conclude investigating major incidents in the next day or two, the overall assessment may continue into next week.

“We can’t be quick to judgment at times,” he said. “We have to make sure we understand the full implication of the incident that took place and that involves a lot of police work — investigation, interviews and trying to determine what actually took place and why the actions were taken.”

Accounts have alleged that some students were punched and thrown to the ground as hundreds stormed the field.

Video recorded by ESPN, now on YouTube, has drawn more than 9,000 views since it was posted. The bottom-right hand corner of the footage shows a male officer in a brown uniform repeatedly hitting someone on the ground with a closed fist.

Shelton said they have identified that officer, but would not disclose the law enforcement agency for which he works.

Later, however, Shelton expressed a reluctance to use officers from outside of Pitt County again. His officers train closely and work most often with the Greenville Police Department, Winterville police and the Pitt County Sheriff’s Office, he said.

“That’s what we have to look at...who we’re using,” Shelton explained. “Who are the best people? Other jurisdictions have other problems and are not familiar with the problems and issues we may have here at East Carolina University at large events, celebrations. They make take a different point of view, they may have been trained differently, they may react differently.”

Other agencies providing assistance to ECU police at Saturday’s game were Kinston police and the Lenoir County Sheriff’s Office. If any officers from agencies outside ECU are found to have used excessive force, Shelton said, discipline will be left to their supervisors.

The chancellor and athlet-
ics director at East Carolina University each responded to accounts of officers using excessive force on fans following Saturday's home football game.

"The performance on the field and in the stands was truly outstanding and captured the attention of the nation," said Director of Athletics Terry Holland on the Pirates' Web site. "However, what happened after the game ended ruined a perfect day for many who witnessed several isolated instances of those in charge of security over-reacting when fans stormed the field."

Holland, like Shelton, also noted the importance of ensuring safe celebrations.

"While 'storming the field' looks like a lot of fun on television, I can tell you from first hand experience that there are too many incidents that result in sometimes serious injury for anyone to believe that storming the field is 'just good fun' for college students," he said. "Such actions jeopardize the safety of many people, including our own coaches and players."

Shelton noted that all officers were told before the game that, if fans tried to get onto the field after a win, officers should try to deter them by making themselves visible. If that failed, the release continued, they were to "step back and focus on making sure those on the field stayed safe."

An announcement was made from the booth that anyone who took the field risked arrest, he added at the press conference. There were only three arrests made during the game, he said, and only one on the field.

Chancellor Steve Ballard did not issue a release, but did comment on the situation.

"These incidents are the most disappointing and shocking I've witnessed in more than four years here," Ballard said Monday afternoon. "I promise we will get to the bottom of this and the officers responsible will be held accountable."

Greenville Chief of Police William Anderson is helping Shelton with the investigation. He was present at the press conference, but did not address reporters.

People wishing to report witnessing or experiencing excessive use of force were asked to contact ECU Police Lt. Curtis Hayes by e-mail, or on his direct line at 328-6266.

City Council votes to support request for training information

BY GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Reflector

The Greenville City Council Monday joined the public outcry against reported incidents of abuse involving security at Saturday's East Carolina University home game.

The City Council unanimously voted in support of City Councilman Max Joyner Jr.'s request that ECU respond to questions about the conduct of security officers.

Joyner wanted an explanation of the type of training given to individuals who provide game security as well as lists of the people arrested and injured after Saturday's win over West Virginia.

Joyner said while ECU is an entity separate from the city of Greenville, the two work closely together.

"Anybody that comes to town is a guest of the city of Greenville," Joyner said later. "(They) should expect to be treated with respect."

Councilwoman Mildred Council said she also wanted to know what the university does to explain the rules of conduct to game attendees.
Holtz eyes how to handle hoopla

By A.J. Carr
Staff Writer

GREENVILLE — In the midst of East Carolina’s sudden rise to a No. 14 national ranking, football coach Skip Holtz wants to make sure the Pirates don’t experience a demise.

Already this weekend, in the euphoric aftermath of Saturday’s “near-perfect game” that resulted in a 24-3 victory over then-No. 8 West Virginia, Holtz got on the phone and talked with other coaches who have previously upended the Bowl Championship Series hierarchy.

ECU, with its two wins to open the season over ranked opponents, plays in the non-BCS Conference USA, which has no automatic tie-in with a marquee end-of-season bowl game. The Pirates essentially need to finish in the top 12 to get an invitation, say, the Orange, Sugar or Fiesta bowls.

Holtz said in an interview Monday that he has reached out to coaches Chris Petersen at Boise State, Pat Hill at Fresno State and SMU’s June Jones, formerly of Hawaii. He also talked with Florida’s Urban Meyer about his days at Utah.

Each of those coaches has been

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in a situation similar to what Holtz is experiencing now.

Holtz said he was picking their brains to find how they handled winning and the surrounding hoopla, and what "key phrases" they used in talking to their players to keep them focused.

With the 2-0 start against heavyweights, the Pirates were quickly featured in national publications such as The New York Times and USA Today.

After Saturday’s game, Holtz had 107 text messages. By noon Monday, there were 218 e-mails on his computer. His voice mail was full.

All with congratulations.

“Fresno State was 8-0 (one year), fell off at the end and didn’t win their conference championship,” Holtz said.

He said he wanted to know: “What would you do differently? What did you learn from it?”

“I’m trying to learn from their success ... get different ideas,” Holtz said.

Holtz wouldn’t reveal what the others told him, but he said he will study their suggestions and select what is best suited for his Pirates.

He also spoke with his famous father and coaching icon, Lou Holtz, who told him it is what East Carolina does moving forward that matters now.

The Pirates are scheduled to open Conference USA action Saturday at Tulane, though Hurricane Ike could force a change in venue.

Wherever the game is held, the Pirates will be in a role reversal after beating Virginia Tech and WVU. Now they are the team wearing the big target.

Holtz described the excitement here as a “circus” atmosphere — which is what he wants and what he wants for his team.

“I embrace it, I love it and it’s a great experience for our players,” Holtz said. “Welcome to big-time college football.”

On Monday, he praised his offense, defense, special teams and the fans for becoming a “12th man” that created an electrifying game atmosphere.

But Holtz stressed his team must play at the same emotional level as in the first two games, noting that Tulane held Alabama to 172 yards total offense in a 20-6 loss.

If the Pirates do maintain their intensity and concentration, they could remain high in the polls, maybe go to a big bowl, do something extraordinary.

And if that do all that, other coaches might be calling Holtz for advice.

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Questions mar Pirates' post-game

Excessive force is 'unacceptable'

BY A.J. CARR
STAFF WRITER

After East Carolina's big football win Saturday over then-No. 8 West Virginia, the scene on the field turned ugly as a host of fans stormed on the field in celebration.

Investigations are under way into questions about whether on-field security used excessive force on some students. Video has shown apparent punches thrown by an officer against one fan. ECU uses officers from numerous agencies in eastern North Carolina for on-field security.

Athletic director Terry Holland issued a statement, saying the post-game scrum "ruined a perfect day for many who witnessed several isolated instances of those in charge of security overreacting."

ECU Police Chief Scott Shelton said in a statement that university officers are interviewing witnesses and analyzing photos and videotapes. Shelton said in the statement, "Preliminary investigation indicates excessive force was used in an incident."

Shelton said all officers had been told that if ECU won the game and fans attempted to go onto the field, officers should try to deter them by making themselves visible. But if that failed, Shelton said in the statement, officers were instructed to step back and focus on making sure that those on the field stayed safe. "It is simply unacceptable that anyone at a game is the victim of excessive force," Shelton said in the statement.

Holland and coach Skip Holtz were disappointed the team didn't have a chance to perform its post-game ritual of singing the fight song in front of the band and then thanking the 43,610 fans for vociferous support.
N.C. A&T gets $18 million to develop research center

BY NATASHA ROBINSON  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — N.C. A&T State University has become the first historically black college in the country to lead a multimillion-dollar National Science Foundation project to develop a research center on its campus.

The school in Greensboro will receive more than $18 million from the foundation over the next five years to support the Engineering Research Center for Revolutionizing Metallic Biomaterials. The center will do research in biomedical engineering, including implants that could help children with birth defects and minimize invasive procedures.

"It is a great opportunity for us to show that even as a HBCU (historically black college or university), the quality of our research and quality of our teaching is on par with other universities," Shena Crittendon, assistant vice chancellor for communications and operations at North Carolina A&T, said Monday.

The school's proposal was chosen from 143 submissions. N.C. A&T was among five schools the foundation chose for research center funding. Researchers will work with the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Cincinnati, along with eight companies in the market of nanobiotechnology.

They will focus on biodegradable implants that could reduce complications for patients with conditions such as cleft palate, bone fractures and coronary heart disease.

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The center's director, Jag Sankar, has been an engineering professor at the university for 24 years and said it's "phenomenal" to have the center based at A&T. A&T has built a foundation for biomedical engineering and the funding will help with building and human infrastructure, Sankar said. The school will also establish a Department of Bioengineering.
Sportsline

East Carolina swaggers into top 25

East Carolina entered the USA TODAY Coaches’ Poll for the first time since 1999, landing at No. 20 after Saturday’s trouncing of then-No. 8 West Virginia. The Pirates beat then-No. 15 Virginia Tech in the opener. Southern California strengthened its hold on No. 1 despite being off, picking up 11 more first-place votes. Many of those came at the expense of Ohio State, which lost all 10 of its first-place votes from last week and fell from third to fifth after a lackluster victory against Ohio. Ohio State travels to Southern California on Saturday.

Blimey! The Pirates are for real

Can East Carolina become this year’s Boise State or Hawaii, an unsung program that crashes the Bowl Championship Series postseason party by going undefeated? The Pirates of Conference USA have opened 2-0 by upsetting then-15th-ranked Virginia Tech 27-24 and thumping then-No. 8 West Virginia 24-3 on Saturday. A visit to Tulane is up this weekend as ECU opens league play. USA TODAY’s Andy Gardner breaks down the Pirates:

The coach

Skip Holtz, son of Hall of Fame coach Lou Holtz, inherited a 2-9 team in 2004 when he went to Greenville, N.C., after five years as head man at Connecticut and six as an assistant under his father at South Carolina. He has gone 5-6, 7-6 and 8-5 and is riding a streak of three consecutive victories against ranked teams.

“When I left the office last night I had 107 text messages on my phone and 96 e-mails when I got to the office this morning,” Holtz said Sunday. “But we’re going to bury our head in the sand and approach this one week at a time.”

The quarterback

Although fifth-year senior Patrick Pinkney expected to share time with Rob Kass, Pinkney has been the early-season catalyst. The son of a former ECU defensive back, he has completed 41 of 51 passes for 447 yards (that’s 86.4%) and two touchdowns while running for a third score.

“Why not go out with a bang? Why not try to be the best quarterback in the country?” Pinkney said. “Guys are making plays for me. I just need to read my keys and make good decisions.”

The roster

East Carolina placed only three players on the 29-man C-USA preseason all-conference team, and its lone returning all-league performer was defensive lineman Zach Slate. But the Pirates returned 18 starters and 50 letterwinners and they have 10 seniors and nine juniors in their first 22.

“We don’t have any superstars, but we have senior leadership,” Pinkney said. “It all starts with our seniors.”

The history

ECU’s high-water mark came under coach Bill Lewis when it went 11-1 in 1991 and beat North Carolina State in the Peach Bowl. Since then the Pirates have ended above .500 eight of 16 seasons and played in seven non-BCS bowl games.

“People talk about 1991 a lot around here,” Holtz said. “But we thought, let’s have them look back and talk about 2007 and 2008. We’re tired of being average, and we want to do something special.”

The schedule

None of ECU’s 10 remaining opponents figures to be ranked as high as Virginia Tech or West Virginia, teams that are scuffling this year but beat the Pirates by a combined 64-14 last season. East Carolina was picked to finish second in the East Division of C-USA and has never won the league title. Biggest potential roadblocks: Nov. 2 at Central Florida and Nov. 15 at Southern Mississippi.

“We’re not thinking about any of that, because going 2-0 doesn’t make our season,” Pinkney said. “We’ve never won the conference, and that’s our No. 1 goal. If we take care of that, the other things will take care of themselves.”

The numbers

9
Highest ranking for ECU in coaches’ poll, coming at end of 1991 season

9
Highest spot any coach voted them in this week’s poll

1
Coach who left ECU completely of his ballot this week

5
Winning seasons in last decade
Investigation into allegations of excessive use of force against ECU students ongoing

Vanessa C. Shortley and Jon Dawson
September 8, 2008 - 10:02PM

GREENVILLE - East Carolina University's police chief said Monday he couldn't say whether officers from the Kinston Department of Public Safety and the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office were involved in Saturday's altercation after ECU's victory over West Virginia.

However, he couldn't say they weren't involved either.

"It is a personnel matter at this time, so I would prefer to wait," ECU Police Chief Scott Shelton said.

In addition to KDPS and LCSO, the Greenville Police Department, Pitt County Sheriff's Office and the Winterville Police Department had officers on the ground to assist campus police at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Shelton said he was "impressed" with Winterville and named Greenville PD and Pitt County deputies as some of the best.

He made very few comments about Lenoir County and Kinston officers at Monday's press conference, though Shelton did say ECU will reassess which departments to use at future football games.

"Other police departments are in our town," Shelton said. "They're part of the collegiate atmosphere. ... That's not to disparage other jurisdictions. ... Other jurisdictions have other problems and they're not familiar with the issues we have here at ECU at large events."

Though ECU police - led by Lt. Curtis Hayes - is investigating the incident, Shelton said any disciplinary action would come from the officers' own departments.

Despite that fact, Shelton came down hard on those officers who may have used excessive force to try to prevent students and fans from rushing the field after the surprise win.

"Let me first say that celebration is not a crime... at East Carolina University, the city of Greenville or the state of North Carolina," he said. "Certainly any inappropriate or excessive use of force... will not be tolerated."

Videos circulating on the internet and on ESPN, the network that covered the game, show what appears to be two separate incidents of police officers manhandling students. In one, an officer picks a student up and slams him or her to the ground. In another, it appears a police officer punches a fan.

Shelton said around 114 officers were on duty that day, with about 60 on the field at the end of the game.

WITN is reporting that both Kinston and Lenoir County officers were involved in these incidents. A victim told the TV network they were assaulted by a Lenoir County deputy. From what is visible on the tape, it appears to be a Kinston officer pushing the fan to the ground, according to WITN.

Mac Manning, Pitt County Sheriff, told WITN, "That's not my officer" involved in these altercations.
Maj. Chris Hill of the Lenoir County Sheriff's Office said Monday that the department was waiting for the outcome of the investigation before deciding what - if any - statement he would make.

"We had people over there that were contracted by ECU to support ECU police," he said.

Assistant Chief Annette Boyd of the KDPS Law Enforcement Division said there were 13 officers at the event and they are being investigated by Internal Affairs Cmdr. Frankie Howard.

"If an officer is disciplined by the department, the officer's name will not be made public since it's a personnel issue," she said. "If charges are brought against any officer, then the name of that officer will be made public."

Shelton said three arrests were made at Saturday's game, though only one was related to fans rushing the field. That one, a male, was brought to the hospital and treated for abrasions to the face.

"It took three of our officers to detain him and get him handcuffed," Shelton said of the man whom he called "belligerent" and "intoxicated."

Shelton denied any of his officers used unnecessary force.

According to Shelton, police held two briefings before the game on Saturday to discuss the possibility of fans trying to get onto the field if the Pirates upset the Mountaineers.

"Our briefing consisted of advising the officers that they were to make a physical presence... and then deter fans from going over the fences," he said.

Some of the fences separating the field and the fans are quite low, Shelton said, and that's how many fans got in. Others simply got in through an open gate.

Shelton said he has fielded "at least a dozen" complaints regarding the altercation and more people have stepped forward since the chief released a statement Sunday.

The videos in circulation from both fans and media are a part of ECU's investigation, Shelton said.

He said he plans on talking with the athletic department as well as other police chiefs and those involved in Student Life to make sure something like this doesn't happen again.

"Do the defenses need to be changed?" Shelton said was one question that needed to be asked. "Do we need to do something with the stadium?"

Shelton said the investigation could take as long as the beginning of next week and that people need to be patient and not rush to judgment.

Still, the chief said he knew people were upset by what they had seen in videos and they had every right to be.

"There's no denying what you saw on film is sickening in nature," he said.

Vanessa C. Shortley can be reached at vshortley@freedomenc.com. Jon Dawson can be reached at jdawson@freedomenc.com. Check out the Free Press crime blog at http://freepresscrime.encblogs.com.
East Carolina investigating fan, police confrontation after game

By Andy Gardiner, USA TODAY

GREENVILLE, N.C. — As East Carolina University investigates allegations that police officers used excessive force with fans Saturday following the Pirates' upset of West Virginia, university police chief Scott Shelton said Monday that poor communication between law enforcement agencies might have contributed to the incidents.

"We have five other jurisdictions who assist us at football games, and we will have a reassessment of what jurisdictions we use (in the future)," Shelton said at an on-campus news conference. "We will look at who we have trained with, who we know the best, who we're most comfortable with."

The ECU force is augmented at football games by members of the Greenville Police Department, Pitt County Sheriff's office, Winterville Police Department, Kinston Police Department and Lenoir County Sheriff's office. In addition, North Carolina state police officers assist in traffic control and on-field security for coach Skip Holtz.

"Celebration is not a crime at ECU, the city of Greenville or the state of North Carolina," Shelton said. "We're proud of the team, and we want to see our people celebrate. We're not out to manhandle fans and spectators. But the safety of the students, fans and athletes at the game is our first concern."

ECU is reviewing complaints that some fans in the sellout crowd of 43,610 were struck or thrown to the ground by officers. Investigators are interviewing witnesses and reviewing "several videos from several sources," Shelton said. He would not comment on which officers, if any, had been implicated, but said he hopes to address the most serious allegations in the next two days.

"There is no denying what you saw on film is sickening in nature," Shelton said of videos he has reviewed. "Any undue or excessive use of force will not be tolerated. You must treat people with dignity and respect. That is the attitude and demeanor our officers must have toward our fans."

Shelton said officers working Saturday's game discussed the possibility of a chaotic ending during pregame briefings.

"We fully expected this would be a probable outcome (if ECU won)," he said. "Our stance coming into this game was we knew West Virginia was highly ranked and we could expect an on-rush of students. We wanted to make a visible presence at the gates, at the fences (surrounding the field) and on the field.

"If one or two individuals tried to get on the field, we would try to detain those individuals to send a message. If we still got a large number of people, we would back off, watch the goal posts and observe the crowd."

Drew Griffin, president of the student government association, was at the fences following the game.
"Everyone felt they were being taunted by the officers," Griffin said. "It was like if you come over this fence you will be taken down. Maybe they were taking (the instruction to detain individuals as a message) a little too literally.

"None of us was being confrontational. We just wanted to be on the field and celebrate what might have been the biggest win in school history. In the end, I just walked around to an open gate and walked onto the field and nobody bothered me."

Find this article at:
http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/football/2008-09-08-eastcarolina_N.htm

--- Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

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When the Little Guy Starts to Play Better Than the Big Guys

With Two Stirring Wins, East Carolina Becomes an Unlikely B.C.S. Contender

By PETE THAMEL

In three of the last four college football seasons, teams from outside Bowl Championship Series conferences have crashed college football's hierarchy. Utah, Boise State and Hawaii each ran through their regular seasons undefeated, reached a B.C.S. bowl and provided compelling underdog story lines.

But in those surprising runs, none of the teams had a pair of wins better than East Carolina has already this season. None really came close.

With its one-two knockout punches of Virginia Tech, the defending Atlantic Coast Conference champion, and West Virginia, the Big East champion, East Carolina has positioned itself to become the season's small-school darling.

"It's the biggest story of the year," said Tulsa Coach Todd Graham, whose team plays in Conference USA with East Carolina.

East Carolina Coach Skip Holtz has built a program so stout that any faint claims of favoritism because of his famous father, the former Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz, have become laughable. Holtz's Pirates have an athletic and efficient quarterback in Patrick Pinkney, who ranks second nationally with a 80.4 percent completion rate. They have a physical front seven on defense that rendered the Mountain Eers' offense impotent and damaged the Heisman Trophy prospects of quarterback Patrick White in a 24-3 victory on Saturday.

The Pirates have enough depth and athleticism that if there had been no logos on the uniforms the last two weekends, one could not tell which team came from the power conference.

That jump seemed to justify the firing of Thompson. "It was how that 3-20 transpired," Floyd said. "We'd gotten to a point where often times we weren't competing. In this business, you have to compete every day."

After this season, E.C.U. will face serious competition to keep Holtz. He has emerged, like Urban Meyer at Utah in 2004, as this season's hottest young head coach. Rest assured, he will not come cheap. Holtz, 44, is on the books to make $1.2 million this season and recently agreed to a five-year extension, the terms of which have not been released because they have not been approved by the board of trustees.

While the flirtations and rumors will begin in earnest in the coming months as it becomes apparent which coaches are about to be fired, Holtz is locked in on navigating the travel and the varying styles of Conference USA opponents.

"The tough thing about this conference is that the average margin of victory is less than a touchdown," Graham said. "No one has gone through this league since we've been a part of it the last three years and been undefeated. We wind up beating each other up, and therefore it hurts you nationally because you don't have that team that goes undefeated."

While E.C.U. is a long way from 12-0, its résumé is already flush with potential.

Holtz, who inherited his father's gift for larding opponents and playing down expectations, realizes that crashing the B.C.S. requires navigating a grueling 11-game gauntlet.

"It is very difficult to go undefeated," Holtz said. "I don't think you try to go undefeated; it's not something that as football team we address. We're finding a way to go 1-0 every week."

Still, the schedule falls well for the Pirates for the rest of the season. They avoid playing the Conference USA power Tulsa in the regular season because of a scheduling quirk. They will also remain in the spotlight, with games against the A.C.C.'s North Carolina State and Virginia. If they win those games convincingly, they could make an argument that a Conference USA team deserves a spot in the A.C.C.'s championship game. The A.C.C.'s dismal season continued Saturday with Middle Tennessee's upset of Maryland.

Credit Terry Holland, the athletic director, and Nick Floyd, the executive associate director of athletics, who have made the Pirates one of just three non-B.C.S. programs, along with Hawaii and Middle Tennessee, to schedule four opponents from B.C.S. conferences.

"We want to line up and compete with some of the better programs on East Coast," Holtz said. "Is it a gam-

Thayer Evans contributed reporting.