

# Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

## Never Say Never

Goalkeeper Tyler Griffin takes 'em as they come.

By NELSON BRYAN

**I**F SERENDIPITY COULD BE ANTHROPOMORPHIZED, you might find it in the person of Tyler Griffin, the goalkeeper on the Vanderbilt women's soccer team. She is an affable young woman who laughs easily and often.

"I was one of those kids who was running around doing anything and everything," Griffin says of her early years in Charlotte, N.C. "My best friend in fourth grade played soccer, and her dad coached a club team. He wanted me to play, so that was pretty much it. He never let me go. It was soccer throughout." Truth be told, the die may have been cast even earlier than that. Griffin recalls a boy she liked in first grade. "He said he was going to play soccer, so I said, 'Me too.'"

This is Griffin's second season in goal as a Commodore. A transfer from the University of North Carolina, she is a junior in athletic eligibility and an academic senior. She played in 16 games last season, starting the final 15, and was named First-Team All-SEC. She logged a season-high 13 saves against then-No. 14-ranked Florida. She sat out the 2003 season as a redshirt before coming to Vanderbilt.

"Our high-school team in our junior year

was a lot of fun," she remembers. "We lost in the finals of the state championship. Our club team won that year, though. We went to regionals and did very well. Junior year was a good year, and that's when all the coaches were looking, so I was lucky."

Griffin received scholarship offers from numerous schools, including UNC, Penn State, Florida, Arizona and Miami (Fla.). She decided to stay close to home. Her family, after all, had close ties to the state of North Carolina. Her mother had been on the UNC swim team. Her grandmother had been a UNC cheerleader. Her grandfather had played football at Duke. "So I grew up a huge Duke fan, and swore I would never go to Carolina," she laughs. "Never say never, right?"

She attended Carolina. "Everyone who goes to Carolina loves Carolina," she says. "But I wasn't playing well. My coach sat me down and said, 'We have a

goalkeeper that we're going to play. If you'd like to look around, go for it.'"

Griffin looked at a few schools and had nearly decided to stay at Carolina. Then Vanderbilt came calling in the person of Ronnie Covelskie Hill.

Hill, now in her fifth year as head coach of the Vanderbilt women's soccer team, is a

graduate of Duke, where she was one of the top goalkeepers in that program's history. "Ronnie is from Charlotte," Griffin explains. "She was a club coach for the same club I played for. I was never coached by her, but I've known her since I was 12."

"It was a no-brainer," Griffin adds. "It was Vanderbilt. They didn't need a goalkeeper that year, but they would need one my junior year. So I was able to redshirt at Carolina for a year and then transfer here."

Hill was the only person Griffin knew when she arrived on campus to stay, but she found a ready-made family of teammates and friends. "One of the great things about athletics is that no matter what sport you play, or where you go to college, once you get there you have your group of friends."

Griffin won the starting goalkeeper spot after early season competition with a teammate. By season's end the Commodores had a 7-7-5 record, and Griffin had been named First-Team All-SEC. "It was unexpected," she says of the pick. "As we started getting into the conference games, I started playing more. I didn't feel like I played that great, but I guess the other coaches did."

Hill had a different take on Griffin's first season in the Commodore goal. "Tyler Griffin made an immediate impact on this program," she says. "She was the backbone of the defense throughout the season. Tyler's greatest strength as a goalkeeper is her ability to make the big save to keep her team in the

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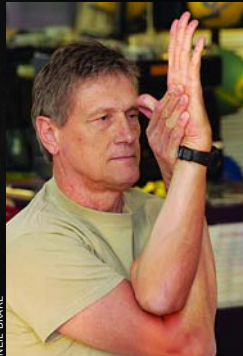


Tyler Griffin

## {Where Are They Now?}

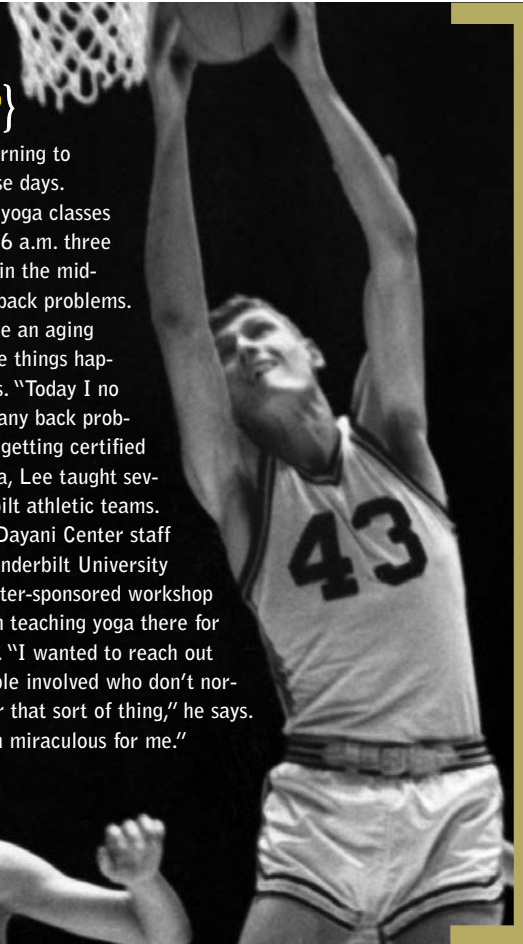
You have to get up pretty early in the morning to keep up with **Clyde Lee**, BA'70, these days.

The former All-American center teaches yoga classes at Vanderbilt's Dayani Center starting at 6 a.m. three days a week. He was introduced to yoga in the mid-'80s when he was suffering from severe back problems.



NEIL BRABE

"When you're an aging athlete, those things happen," he says. "Today I no longer have any back problems." After getting certified to teach yoga, Lee taught several Vanderbilt athletic teams. He met the Dayani Center staff through a Vanderbilt University Medical Center-sponsored workshop and has been teaching yoga there for about a year. "I wanted to reach out and get people involved who don't normally go for that sort of thing," he says. "It's been miraculous for me."



## Basketball Schedules Offer Challenging Foes

If you have to beat the best to be the best, then Vanderbilt's 2005–06 basketball schedule offers plenty of opportunity for both the men's and women's teams. The men are set to face 12 teams that advanced to postseason play last year. The women's schedule includes nine games against teams that advanced to last year's NCAA Tournament and three match-ups against 2005 NCAA Final Four participants.

**Men's Schedule:** In addition to the always-tough SEC race, Vanderbilt's non-conference schedule is highlighted by visits from Oregon and Cincinnati and includes trips to Georgetown, Dayton and Georgia Tech.

"It's as difficult a non-conference schedule as we've had since I've been here," says head coach Kevin Stallings, who enters his seventh season at Vanderbilt. "As we continue to elevate the status of our program, we need to elevate the quality of our schedule."

The Commodores finished last season with a 20-14 record that concluded in the quarterfinal round of the National Invitation Tournament. Vanderbilt set a school record with 17 home wins last year and rides a 24-game non-conference win streak into the 2005–06 season.

The regular season features 16 home games, beginning with Jacksonville State and ending with Tennessee. Other SEC foes invading Memorial Gym include the usual cast of SEC Eastern Division teams along with Auburn, Mississippi State and LSU from the West.

**Women's Schedule:** Vanderbilt hosts 14 home games this season. The first SEC home game has the Lady Bulldogs of Mississippi State traveling to Memorial Gym on Jan. 12. The Commodores bested Mississippi State last February in a double-overtime thriller that saw Vanderbilt rally twice late in the game to win 106-98 in Starkville, Miss.

Other home games include contests against Tennessee, Ole Miss, Georgia, Arkansas, Kentucky and South Carolina.

The women's team finished last season with a 24-8 record (10-4 in the SEC) and advanced to the Sweet Sixteen round of the NCAA Tournament.

## Conner Golf Facility Dedicated

Vanderbilt dedicated its new short-game golf practice facility in honor of Cleo and Lewis Conner Sr. during ceremonies at the Vanderbilt Legends Golf Club on Aug. 26.

Cleo and Lewis Conner Sr. are the late parents of alumnus Lew Conner, BA'60, JD'63, a prominent Nashville attorney who funded the facility's lead gift and was a member of the varsity golf team from 1957 to 1960.

"Vanderbilt has a strong foundation of support for its golf programs in the community and among our alumni," says men's

golf coach Press McPhaul. "No one has been more supportive than Lew Conner and his family. This new facility has already proven to be valuable to our programs as we strive to compete at the highest level of collegiate golf. We are very grateful to the Conner family."

The short-game practice facility opened in August 2004. Its variety of bunkers and greens has provided Vanderbilt's two varsity golf teams with a necessary addition in which to work and recruit.



**Lew Conner, BA'60, JD'63, dedicates Vanderbilt's new short-game golf facility with his family, golf coaches Martha Freitag and Press McPhaul, and Vice Chancellor David Williams.**

# {Sports Roundup}

## Men's Tennis: Duvenhage Named Head Coach

Ian Duvenhage was hired in June as the new men's tennis coach, replacing Ken Flach. He compiled a collegiate coaching record of 352-170 during 13 seasons as head men's coach at the University of Florida (1988-2001) and seven years at the University of Miami as the head women's coach (1982-1988). He coached on the professional level the past four years and was coach of the United States Tennis Association's National Collegiate Team three times, including 2004.

## Cross Country: Vandy Gets First Win at Commodore Classic

Sophomore Austin Williamson led the men's cross country team to a first-place finish in the Commodore Classic 8K at Percy Warner Park in September. Vanderbilt captured the Commodore Classic's title for the first time in



PAUL J. LEVY

school history. Williamson won the race by shattering the previously held team record for the event by two minutes. "We've never had a first-place finisher in this race," says Coach Don Bailey. "Austin did a great job. I'm really proud of the team effort. They are aggressive early on, and if we can continue to race that way, we'll be OK for the rest of the season. The endurance will come with practice." Sophomore Chris Noel finished ninth overall.

## Women's Golf: Trio Cited by Golfweek

*Golfweek* magazine recognized three members of the Vanderbilt women's golf team in its college preseason edition. Junior Chris Brady was named to the publication's second-team All-America squad, and freshmen Jacqui Concolino and Amber Lundskog were tabbed "Freshmen to Watch." Brady was a first-team All-SEC selection as a sophomore. Concolino was Florida's high-school runner-up last year, and Lundskog earned second-team prep All-America honors coming out of San Diego.



Brady

NEIL BRAKE

## Women's Tennis: Fish Earns ITA Top-20 Ranking

Junior Amanda Fish is ranked 17th in the nation in singles tennis by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association in its 2005 preseason list. She is joined on the Top 50 list by sophomore Taka Bertrand, who is ranked No. 41. The teammates also are rated at No. 20 in the ITA doubles ranking. During the summer, Fish and Bertrand teamed up to finish second in doubles play at the USTA Women's Satellite Tour of Baltimore. Fish also took second place in singles play at the event.



Fish

NEIL BRAKE

## Women's Soccer: Vandy Picked Third in SEC East

The women's soccer team was predicted to finish third in the SEC East Division in a poll of the SEC women's soccer coaches. The Commodores were ranked behind Tennessee and Florida and ahead of Georgia, South Carolina and Kentucky.



Molly Wilson

NEIL BRAKE



The Vanderbilt University Sailing Club hosted its inaugural intercollegiate regatta, The Vanderbilt Cup, on Sept. 24. The regatta is part of the South Atlantic Sailing Association's fall series for the Northern Division. The Vanderbilt club finished second in the event behind the College of Charleston.

DANIEL DUBOIS

**From the Reader** *continued from page 6*

### **Mighty Oaks from Little Acorns**

I READ THE ARTICLES IN THE SUMMER 2005 issue of *Vanderbilt Magazine* and appreciated your efforts to compile such an interesting array of subjects and photos. I was especially interested in the “Green Spaces” section [of the “Greetings from Vanderbilt” article, p. 51].

Since leaving Vanderbilt in 1966, I have enjoyed returning to campus just to walk around and view the lawn, shrubs, flowers and trees. Several years ago I purchased a seedling from the Bicentennial Oak on campus and planted it in my front yard. Each year I have taken a photo of the tree to track its growth. It is a source of pleasure to know a small part of the Vandy campus lives in my front yard.

DR. BILL ELIAS,  
BA’61, MD’65, HO’65  
Roanoke, Va.



**Dr. Bill Elias, in September, with his prized tree, grown from a seedling of the Bicentennial Oak on Vanderbilt’s campus.**

### **Consider Us Lashed**

FRIENDS, WE SPEND OUR WINTERS IN southern Arizona. To our knowledge, there is no town or city whose name is spelled “Tuscon” [Summer 2005 issue, “Scholarship Winner Globetrotts in Pursuit of Public Service,” p. 16]. The last time we checked, the

proper spelling is “Tucson.” A few lashes for your copy editor are in order.

CHARLES B. HOELZEL, PHD’60  
Livingston, Texas

### **Magazine Appreciation**

IN THE SPRING 2005 ISSUE OF *Vanderbilt Magazine*, you ran a photo of the Class of ’54 banner at the ’54 reunion [Homecoming and Reunion ad, p. 1]. I’m the fellow in the raincoat and sunglasses right behind the returning cheerleader in the black sweater. If I can have or purchase a copy of that shot, I’d appreciate it.

Thanks. You must be doing something right down there to keep the conservative contingent so upset all the time.

BOB SORRELLS, BA’56, MA’57  
Rochester, Minn.

I JUST WANTED TO WRITE AND tell you how much I enjoyed the summer issue! Thank you for all you do to keep the alumni informed.

LISA NEAL, MED’94  
Kennesaw, Ga.

**Letters are always welcome** in response to contents of the magazine. We reserve the right to edit for length, style and clarity. Send signed letters to the Editor, *VANDERBILT MAGAZINE*, VU Station B 357703, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37235-7703, or e-mail [vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:vanderbiltmagazine@vanderbilt.edu).

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game. Throughout the SEC season, she made that big save in tight games to keep us in the match. Sometimes they were saves so big, she ignited our team and our play instantly improved.”

In the classroom Griffin is an economics major with a minor in financial economics. Her summer internships have given her good insight into the world after college. She ran her own painting business for a summer in Charlotte—a good experience, but one she doesn’t plan to repeat any time soon. The hard-

est part was having charge of her own employees. “They never do what you say. I’m sure that’s what our coaches are saying right now: “These soccer players don’t ever do what we say.”

The city of Nashville also turned out to be a good fit for Griffin. A self-taught guitarist, she enjoys country music and has a particular fondness for Reba McEntire and The Judds. “It’s been fun living in Nashville. Any night you go out, there’s music downtown. Every now and then somebody big will be playing. It’s a great environment if you like any music.”

One might even say it’s serendipitous.

**S.P.O.V.** *continued from page 67*

ing resources and our common humanity. We come together because we love people and want to help them. We leave with a deeper understanding of people’s lives, experiences and circumstances.

Just as the Nashville high-school students really only need information they lack about standardized tests, applications, scholarships, financial aid and shower shoes, Shawn and the rest of us really only need firsthand information about how other people live in order to respect our mutual humanity and desire to improve each other’s life experience.

Two years after the founding of Synergy, I can tell you confidently that it has been a wild ride. I’ve laughed until I’ve cried. I’ve cried until I’ve laughed. I speak for all the mentors and individuals who helped make Synergy possible when I say that I love these youth. I worry about them, I feel happy for them, I feel sad with them. I want society to pay more attention to them, and I intend to spend my life reforming the systems that will increase their opportunities and improve their lives.

I would like to continue relaying the stories of “my children” and their mentors, but I have to go now. James has been skipping school. I need to call him and make sure he is planning to attend tomorrow. Shanika’s baby is turning 6 months old Tuesday, and I promised I would bring one of the Harry Potter books for her to read to him. And my paper for Public Policy about reforming the U.S. public education system is due in less than 24 hours. ...

**A.P.O.V.** *continued from page 69*

hope. That they will tell her something true about the suffering she will face in her life. But most of all, I want them to instill in her a belief that a happy ending isn’t a cheap convention of a dime-store novel. It’s the moment of affirmation life is always seeking, the movement toward unity with God. And even if it’s only between the covers of a book, I want her to believe that a happy ending is, in fact, always possible.

Without that possibility, life wouldn’t be worth living.