

Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

Christmas Gift

For Jay Cutler, the road to Vanderbilt went through Santa Claus.

By NELSON BRYAN

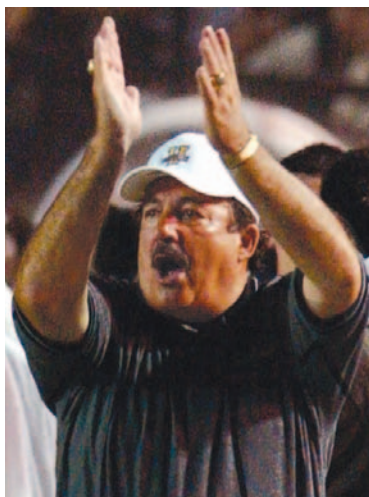
IT WAS JUST AFTER CHRISTMAS WHEN the jolly man with the round belly visited Jay Cutler at his home in Santa Claus, Ind. His costume was different, though. He wasn't wearing the customary red trimmed in white. Instead he was dressed in black and gold and had big, shiny gold rings on his thick fingers. In place of a silky white beard, he sported a thick black mustache and, on his head, black hair combed from front to back. He came bearing a gift.

"Woody recruited me," recalls Cutler, Vanderbilt's junior quarterback. "We were on Christmas break. I was going to stay up north. I had just about committed to Illinois, but it didn't work out and we had started up the recruiting process again. Coach Zingler, another coach here at the time, called me. Coach Woody [Widenhofer] just walked in the door. They put my tape in and called me about two hours later and offered me a scholarship. It was a pretty quick deal."

It turned out to be a good deal for Vanderbilt. At Heritage Hills High School, Cutler was a two-way starter in football and team captain as a senior. He led his team to a 15-0 record and the first state title in the school's history. He was named to the All-State team

and as Offensive Player of the Year by S&L Publishing Group.

The rural Indiana town was a good place for Cutler to grow up with his parents and two younger sisters. "Everyone knows everyone," he says. "I graduated [from high school] with about 150 kids. Every year around Christmas time, they have a festival of lights. Everyone puts up enormous amounts of Christmas lights on the houses and decorations through-



"Coach Woody" knew he had a prize package when he gifted Jay Cutler with a scholarship.

out the subdivisions. People come in on buses and in caravans to see it. It's just a huge deal there."

Cutler was such a good all-around athlete — he was first-team All-State in basketball and honorable-mention All-State in baseball — that Vanderbilt coaches weren't sure where to use him at first.

"When I got here, we still had freshman camp," he says. "I was at safety for most of that camp." After meeting with Widenhofer about the prospect of playing defensive back, Cutler decided to redshirt a year, get physically stronger, and concentrate on the quarterback position. Then there was a coaching change. The man with the thick black mustache was gone, replaced by the man with the snowy white hair. "Coach

[Bobby] Johnson came in here and Coach [Jimmy] Kiser as quarterbacks coach. They gave me an opportunity my redshirt year, and I haven't looked back since."

Cutler posted one of the finest seasons ever by a Commodore freshman quarterback. He was named the Associated Press and Coaches' All-SEC first-team quarterback and third-team All-American quarterback by the *Sporting News*. In his sophomore year he set Vanderbilt sophomore passing records in completions (187), attempts (327), yards (2,347) and touchdowns (18).

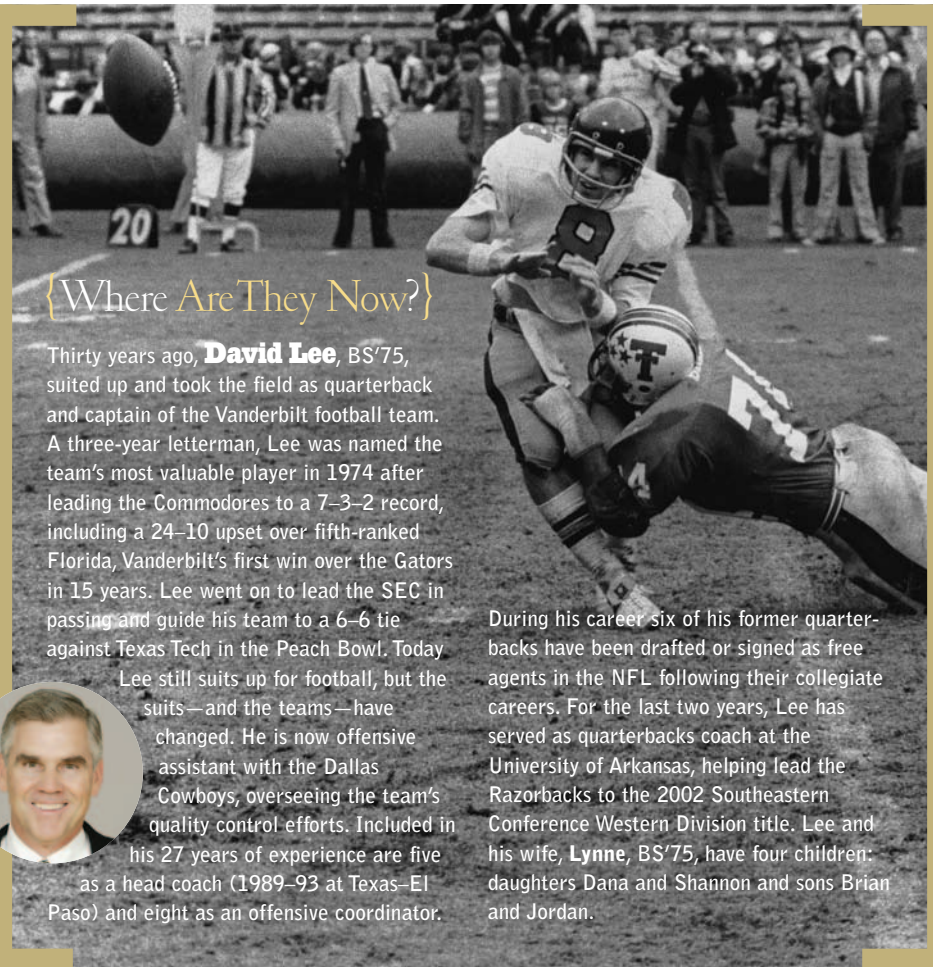
"Coach Johnson is a player's coach," says Cutler. "He's here to make our jobs easier, and is trying to get a winning attitude going at Vanderbilt. He's won in the past, and he knows what it takes."

Preseason pundits were bold enough to predict a winning season and postseason bowl game for the Commodores. Cutler smiles at the thought. "We're anxious. We're ready to get rolling this year. We have 20 to 25 guys who probably could play anywhere in the SEC. The coaches have been working on getting some quality guys in here to fill some key positions. We're definitely improving."

"We worked extremely hard this summer," adds the 6-4, 225-pounder. "We were here six days a week working on running, throwing and the little things. It's tough to win in the SEC. Each game is a battle, no matter where you play. It's going to be a tough road, but we look forward to it."

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{Where Are They Now?}

Thirty years ago, **David Lee**, BS'75, suited up and took the field as quarterback and captain of the Vanderbilt football team. A three-year letterman, Lee was named the team's most valuable player in 1974 after leading the Commodores to a 7-3-2 record, including a 24-10 upset over fifth-ranked Florida, Vanderbilt's first win over the Gators in 15 years. Lee went on to lead the SEC in passing and guide his team to a 6-6 tie against Texas Tech in the Peach Bowl. Today Lee still suits up for football, but the suits—and the teams—have changed. He is now offensive assistant with the Dallas Cowboys, overseeing the team's quality control efforts. Included in his 27 years of experience are five as a head coach (1989-93 at Texas-El Paso) and eight as an offensive coordinator.

During his career six of his former quarterbacks have been drafted or signed as free agents in the NFL following their collegiate careers. For the last two years, Lee has served as quarterbacks coach at the University of Arkansas, helping lead the Razorbacks to the 2002 Southeastern Conference Western Division title. Lee and his wife, **Lynne**, BS'75, have four children: daughters Dana and Shannon and sons Brian and Jordan.



Women's Tennis Ranked No. 2

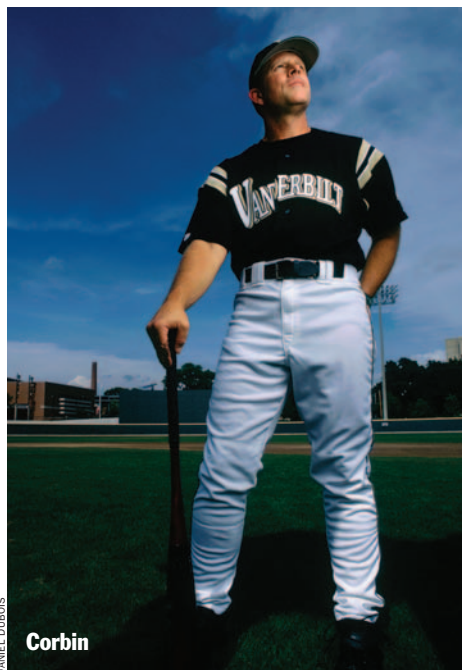
The Intercollegiate Tennis Association awarded the Vanderbilt women's tennis team a No. 2 national ranking in its postseason poll, behind national champion Stanford. The doubles team of seniors Kelly Schmandt and Aleke Tsubanos also was ranked second in the nation. "What these two women have done at Vanderbilt is just remarkable," said Coach Geoff Macdonald at season's end. "They have brought this program to a new level during their four years. You probably will not find a pair of student-athletes with more heart than Kelly and Aleke, and I could not be prouder of them."

Baseball Superlatives

The 2004 edition of Vanderbilt baseball concluded the season with the best record in University history. The Commodores logged a 45-19 overall record (16-14 SEC) on the way to the program's first-ever appearance in the NCAA Super Regional.

The Commodores set the school record for most victories in a season with 45.

Head Coach Tim Corbin inked a new contract that should keep him at the Vanderbilt helm for the foreseeable future.



DANIEL DUBOIS

Corbin

Freitag Named Coach of the Year

Coach Martha Freitag has been selected National Coach of the Year by *Golfweek* magazine. In her fourth year as Vanderbilt women's golf coach, she directed the team to its finest season in program history. The Commodores won five tournaments, including the SEC championship and NCAA central region tournament, and finished fifth at the NCAA championship. Earlier she had been selected SEC Coach of the Year for the second consecutive year.

Postseason Play Lifts Vandy in All-Sports Ranking

All things considered, Vanderbilt proved to have the 28th best sports program in the nation last year. Say that again? Vanderbilt what? Vanderbilt University completed the 2003-04 sports year in 28th place nationally among 278 institutions. This top-10-percent national finish resulted from a compilation of points scored by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) Director's Cup, the official all-sports measurement of success in NCAA postseason play. The ranking is twice as high as the previous year's 54th-place finish, the program's former high.

Points are earned as individual teams qualify and advance in each varsity sport's postseason NCAA Tournament. Consider this: Vanderbilt does not field teams in sports such as volleyball, swimming, softball and gymnastics, for which other SEC institutions register major point totals. Yet, the Commodores amassed 585 points for the year on the basis of nine teams reaching postseason competition.

No fall teams earned points, but Sweet 16 finishes by the men's and women's basketball teams and success in women's track and field during the winter set the stage for a strong spring showing.

The Commodores scored significantly with women's lacrosse (NCAA Final Four), men's tennis (Elite Eight), women's tennis (Final Four), women's golf (fifth/NCAA), baseball (Super Regional-16th), and men's golf (qualified for NCAA finals).

{Sports Roundup}

Lacrosse: Top Four Finish

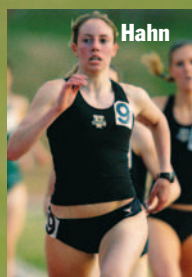
Vanderbilt advanced to the semifinal round of the NCAA tournament, completing the most successful season in the program's nine-year history. The 11-3 Commodore loss capped a 12-6 record and the American Lacrosse Conference championship. The Commodores had upset No. 4 seed



Loyola and James Madison, both on the road, to reach the national semifinals in just their second NCAA tournament. "We had an amazing run, and what we did in the tournament to get here was pretty incredible," says Coach Cathy Swezey. "We're really proud of our players. They can hold their heads very high." Three members of the Vanderbilt squad were named All-Americans by *Inside Lacrosse* magazine. Seniors Michelle Allen and Bridget Morris were recognized on the first team, and senior Jess Roguski was named to the second team.

Track: Hahn in Olympic Trials

Josie Hahn participated in the Olympic Trials in a quest to represent the United States in the 2004 Olympics. She finished 20th overall in the heptathlon competition. A senior from Clinton, Tenn., the trials completed an outstanding year. She established five new Vanderbilt team records, won the SEC heptathlon individual title, and was named an NCAA All-American in both the indoor and outdoor seasons. She was just the second Vanderbilt student to compete at



Hahn

the U.S. Track and Field Olympic Trials, following on the heels of Ryan Tolbert-Jackson, whose specialty is the 400-meter hurdles.

Football: Preseason Honors

Several Vanderbilt veterans received preseason All-SEC honors. Senior offensive tackle Justin Geisinger, junior wide receiver Erik Davis, and junior defensive end Jovan Haye were named to the 2004 Media Days All-SEC team by beat writers and reporters covering the Southeastern Conference. Haye, junior quarterback Jay Cutler, and tailback/return specialist Kwane Doster were named to the coaches inaugural preseason All-SEC team. *Athlon Sports' 2004*

College Football Preseason edition named Geisinger and Haye to the All-SEC first team and to their All-America third team.

Men's Basketball: Freije Goes to NBA

Former Commodore Matt Freije was selected by the Miami Heat in the second round (53rd pick overall) of the 2004 National Basketball Association draft last June. He becomes the 31st Vanderbilt player to be selected in the draft. Freije ended his Vanderbilt career as the University's all-time leading scorer with 1,891 points, and he ranked second in the SEC in scoring with an 18.4 points-per-game average. He was a unanimous All-SEC first-team selection by the league's coaches and was named an Honorable Mention All-American by the Associated Press.



Jason Rapaport, a sophomore from Du Bois, Pa., works out with the Vanderbilt fencing team.

PHOTOS BY NEIL BRADKE

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I finished my 12-hour shift ashamed and disgusted with myself for letting my professional mask slip. Never again, I promised. What must they have thought of me? A poor excuse for a nurse, I berated myself. As I was finishing up my charting and getting ready to go home, I was surprised to see the Collins family come back into the ER. Mrs. Collins' eyes sparked with recognition when she saw me, and the family walked purposefully across the room toward me. Dread iced my mind

and my heart. What could they want with me?

Mrs. Collins took both my hands and held them. She wanted me to know how much she appreciated seeing the tears in my eyes when I had talked about her husband. He never made it out of the OR, of course. She said her sons had waited for a couple of hours before the doctors had admitted defeat, and then there were phone calls and arrangements to be made, so six or eight hours had passed since she'd seen me. But she had been com-

forted during that time by knowing that he was being cared for by real people, people who cared, people who cried. I was deeply touched that she went so far out of her way on this horrible day, to come back and look me up, to thank me for caring for her husband. "For not being a robot," she said.

Mrs. Collins taught me my first and best lesson on How to Be a Nurse. She taught me that nurses do cry.

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Off the field, Cutler is majoring in human and organizational development through Peabody College. "It's been a positive experience," he says. "It leaves so many doors open because you can do just about anything with it." He can graduate in May if he chooses, or stay around for his final year of eligibility. "A lot depends on how this year goes. I'm not sure what I want to do with my career yet. Right now I'm just worried about this football season, and I'll take it step by step."

In his first intercollegiate game, the job of starting quarterback was a unique experience. Vanderbilt had to rely on a number of freshmen and sophomores to carry the game. "It was crazy," he recalls of his first start at Georgia Tech. "There was so much stuff going on. You're so anxious, and before you know it the game is on. A lot of young guys were playing in that game, and it was a mess. We got pounded pretty good (3-45). But it was something we could learn from. We've only

gotten better since that day."

As one of the team's captains, Cutler leaves the locker room early during a game for the coin toss. "We give our parting words as we're leaving," he says. "They start getting amped up and a little rowdy in there." After the coin toss, it's all business. "It's time to go. We throw some balls and get warm again. The butterflies start hitting me about then. You get the kickoff, the first play, and we're off."

In Class *continued from page 26*

solid electrolysis cell for more breakdown, and the carbon monoxide is removed and stored. The oxygen can be used for fuel or breathing, while the carbon monoxide can be used for fuel or in the production of hydrocarbons and plastics.

This process to transform Martian atmosphere into oxygen for breathing and carbon monoxide for fuel has been the result of a research collaboration involving LeVan and his Ph.D. graduate student Krista Walton, the University of Arizona, and NASA's Ames Research Center in California. Vanderbilt's part of the work is the third stage, where carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide are separated using a process called "adsorption." In adsorption, the molecules of a gas or liquid are made to stick to the surface of a solid but porous material, causing a filtering effect. Using a crystalline aluminosilicate known as zeolite, LeVan and Walton have been able

to adsorb CO₂, allowing CO to pass through.

"We've been looking at a few different zeolites," he says. "They all work pretty well. But what we want is one that adsorbs CO₂ strongly and doesn't adsorb CO."

The Martian atmosphere work is only part of LeVan's ongoing research. For NASA he's also working on improving trace-contaminant control systems and carbon dioxide removal. "This is what keeps spacecraft-cabin air clean," he says. "If you saw the movie 'Apollo 13,' that was the problem those astronauts were having: CO₂ levels were getting too high in the Apollo capsule."

Currently, NASA funds about half of LeVan's research to the tune of about \$150,000 annually. In addition, he is doing basic research funded by the U.S. Department of Defense on adsorption of toxic industrial chemicals and trace-contaminant control for military and nonmilitary uses.

LeVan's research on adsorption processes began in graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley. Early in his career he focused on removing petroleum-based dry-cleaning solvents from the air with activated carbon. His work with NASA began in 1993 when he was still with the University of Virginia. "NASA found me," says LeVan. "I think they recognized that I knew a lot about what they were interested in, which was removing trace contaminants with carbon and humidity effects on those materials."

Hired as chair of the chemical engineering department, LeVan came to Vanderbilt with the idea of building on the department's strengths to create a department of truly national stature. It appears he has made substantial progress. Research funding for the department is now 14 times what it was before LeVan took over as chair. New faculty and increased numbers of graduate students have