

# Sports

A look at Vanderbilt athletics

## Sticks and Mouth Guards

A “late bloomer” to lacrosse, Michelle Allen is 2004’s Player of the Year.

By NELSON BRYAN

“WE REALLY WENT CRAZY,” recalls Michelle Allen. “There were sticks and mouth guards thrown all over the field. I had no idea where my stuff was when we were done.” It was a melee of merriment. Allen, a senior attack, and her teammates on the women’s lacrosse team had just defeated favored James Madison University 10-4 to advance to the NCAA Final Four.

“It’s so exciting,” she says. “The games are so much fun, especially the hard ones. That’s one reason we’re playing so well right now. We have nine seniors who love playing and don’t want to go home.”

Allen is one of three captains on the senior-laden team that won the 2004 American Lacrosse Conference championship. It’s serendipitous that she wears the number one on her jersey and also was named the ALC’s Player of the Year by a vote of the conference’s coaches. During regular-season play, she led the Commodores in scoring (59 points), draw controls (38) and caused turnovers (18).

The route to lacrosse success has been a circuitous one for Allen. “We traveled around

everywhere while I was growing up,” she says. Her father was a band director in the Army. “Sports in general was a good way to make friends.”

The family settled in Maryland during Allen’s high school career, where she became a three-sport star in basketball, soccer and lacrosse. “I had no idea what lacrosse was until I moved to Maryland. I was a late bloomer,” she says with a smile.

The late bloomer was named a lacrosse All-American in 2000, and the *Carroll County* (Md.) *Times* newspaper tabbed her as one of the county’s top 50 athletes of the century.



“It was very frustrating at first,” she says of her introduction to lacrosse. She had the athletic ability, but had to be schooled in technique and specific movements. “They actually started me out on defense. In my junior year, they switched me to attack. The hardest part to learn was the rules. In lacrosse there are some strange rules that you can only understand if you

watch a lot. My mom’s been watching for eight years now, and she still has some trouble understanding.”

After high school graduation, Allen’s rendezvous with Vanderbilt was still a year away. She spent her freshman year at Cornell. “I real-

ly liked Cornell,” she says. “I loved the team, and the school was great.” But several factors brought her south. Her parents moved to Kentucky, and she knew they wouldn’t be able to see her play at Cornell. She has a sister on the crew team at the University of Louisville and a brother in high school. In addition, her high school teammate and best friend, Jess Roguski, sang the praises of an up-and-coming Vanderbilt program. “I had been down here to visit her my freshman year and just loved Vanderbilt and Nashville. I met Cathy [Coach Swezey] and really liked her. It seemed like the right thing to do.”

The ensuing three years at Vanderbilt showed progress on the field and in the classroom. Allen majored in human and organizational development. “I really liked the hands-on, applications-style classes,” she says. “You learn how to relate to people, work with them, and make them as successful as they can be. Actually, a lot of that transfers over into sports, being captain and a leader on the team.

“This year has been amazing. We’ve improved every year, but this year, especially at the end of the year, we’ve been peaking at the right time.”

Commencement exercises may have signaled the end of another academic year, but Allen and her teammates still had work to do. “We play the best when we’re bonding off the field,” she says. “There’s no one else to hang out with other than our teammates, no more distractions. Being through with school is great; all we have to focus on is lacrosse.”

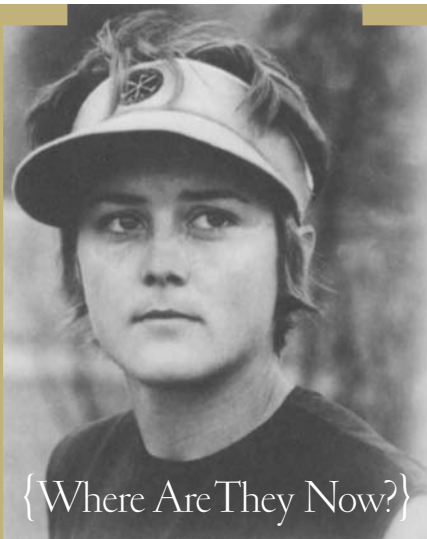


Michelle Allen

## Sweet!

It was a stellar year for Vanderbilt basketball as both the men's and women's teams advanced to the quarter-final "Sweet Sixteen" round of the NCAA basketball tournament and the women's team won the SEC Tournament championship. Following are some of the season's hoops highlights:

- The women's team won the SEC Tournament championship after coming back from an 18-point second-half deficit against



"You have reached the Brady foursome," said the voice on the answering machine. **Peggy Harmon Brady, BE'72,** wasn't home. She was on the golf course.

On a crisp, clear, beautiful spring morning, Vanderbilt's first two-time All-American women's golfer was playing golf near her home in central North Carolina. A computer science major at Vanderbilt, Brady has worked in computer programming and management while putting together a family foursome. "Both kids are playing golf, so when they come home, we have a group to play with," she says. She met her husband, Joe, during summer school at Purdue. They were married a year-and-a-half after graduation. Their daughter is following in her mother's cleats. Chris Brady is a freshman on the Vanderbilt women's golf team. She's the first freshman golfer in VU golf history to win two individual medalist honors in a single season. Completing the foursome is Scott, who hits the links as a freshman with East Lincoln High School.



Georgia. They advanced through the NCAA Tournament to the quarter-final round, losing to Stanford by two points in a heart-breaker.

- Senior Jenni Benningfield was drafted by the WNBA's Charlotte Sting at season's end. She and senior Hillary Hager were named co-recipients of the Commodore Award, given to the team's most valuable player at the annual awards banquet. Benningfield averaged 13.1 points per game, and Hager averaged 12 points per game while also ranking near the top of every other Vanderbilt statistical category. The team finished with a 26-8 overall record, 8-6 in the SEC.
- The men's team finished the season with a 23-10 overall record (8-8 SEC)—vastly improving on the previous season's 11-18 overall record (3-13 SEC)—and defeated Western Michigan and North Carolina State to advance to the NCAA Tournament quarter-final round, where they lost to the eventual national champion, the University of Connecticut.
- Senior forward Matt Freije broke Vanderbilt's all-time career scoring mark in a late-season game at Ole Miss. He passed Phil Cox (1981–85; 1,724 points) by scoring 599 points this season for a career total of 1,883.

## Athletics Committee Created

Chancellor Gordon Gee has appointed Professor of Pathology Virginia Shepherd to chair a new University Athletics Oversight Committee that will serve as the principal internal advisory group for Vanderbilt's sports programs. Shepherd is a national leader in the athletics reform movement. In addition to a number of faculty and staff, the committee consists of alumni Walter Overton, BA'74, and Bruce Elder, BA'92, MBA'93, and three students to be selected after consultation with the Student Government Association.

## Commodores Get New On-Air Home

The Vanderbilt ISP Sports Radio Network has a new flagship station, WGFX 104.5 FM. ISP Sports, the multimedia rights holder for Commodore athletics, reached an agreement with WGFX to broadcast all Vanderbilt foot-

ball games and men's basketball games as well as weekly call-in shows featuring head coaches Bobby Johnson and Kevin Stallings. In addition, 104.5 will carry daily "Commodore Update" features throughout the year.

"We are thrilled to be on what I think is the number-one sports station in town," says Vanderbilt play-by-play announcer Joe Fisher. "And it is exciting to be on a station with some Vanderbilt guys like George Plaster (BS'81) and Willy Daunic (BA'93), hosts of 'Sports Zone.'"

## Wallace Jersey Retired

An enthusiastic Memorial Gymnasium crowd cheered as, high in the rafters above, Vanderbilt jersey #25 was unveiled and officially retired. On the floor below, Perry Wallace, the recipient of this signal honor, once again basked in the adoration of thousands of Commodore basketball fans.

Commodorophiles know that Perry Wallace was the first African-American athlete



**Perry Wallace back in Memorial Gym**

to play in the Southeastern Conference, breaking the color barrier in the 1967–68 basketball season. Now a professor of law at American University in Washington, D.C., Wallace returned to campus for the retirement ceremony Feb. 21.

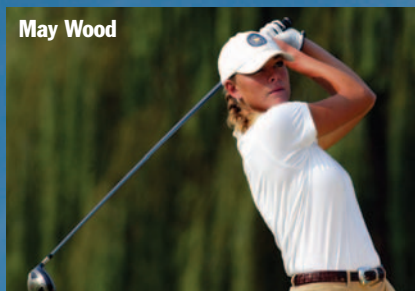
A prolific rebounder, Wallace led the team in rebounding each year during his three-season career. He is a member of the 1,000-point club with 1,010 points and led the team in scoring in the 1969–70 season with a 17.7 points-per-game average.

# {Sports Roundup}

## Women's Golf: Commodores Are SEC Champs

The Vanderbilt women's golf team won its first Southeastern Conference Championship on April 18, and sophomore May Wood was crowned the individual champion after winning a sudden-death playoff. The Commodores beat Auburn and host LSU by four shots to claim a school-record fourth tournament championship for the year.

May Wood



"It is an awesome feeling to actually win the championship," said Coach Martha Freitag. "All our preparation has been to play our best golf, and perhaps the good news is that we still have not played our best."

After winning the conference championship, the Commodores were ranked No. 3 in the country by [golfweek.com](http://golfweek.com).

## Football: 2004 Schedule

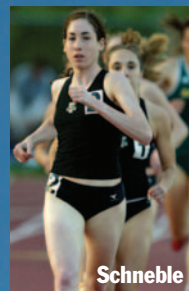
The 11-game schedule includes six home games at Vanderbilt Stadium. The Tennessee game returns to the Vanderbilt campus for the first time in six years.

- Sept. 4 South Carolina
- Sept. 18 at Ole Miss
- Sept. 25 at Navy
- Oct. 2 Mississippi State
- Oct. 9 Rutgers
- Oct. 16 at Georgia
- Oct. 23 Eastern Kentucky
- Oct. 30 at Louisiana State
- Nov. 6 Florida (Homecoming)
- Nov. 13 at Kentucky
- Nov. 20 Tennessee

## Men's Golf: Freshman Sets School Record

Freshman golfer Luke List set a new Vanderbilt 18-hole record in March with a 9-under-par 63 in the second round of the Hyatt/Dorado Beach Intercollegiate in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He tallied nine birdies and nine pars on the par-72, 6,980-yard course, tying the course record at the Dorado Beach Golf Club. List was named SEC Golfer of the Week for the effort. The previous school record of 65 was shared by List and former Vanderbilt All-American Brandt Snedeker.

Meanwhile, Snedeker played in his first Masters at the Augusta National Golf Club tournament this spring. The tournament is one of golf's four majors and, arguably, is the sport's most prestigious competition. He qualified by winning the 2003 U.S. Amateur Public Links tournament—one of only two amateurs to make the cut—and finished the week at 12-over-par. He also was only the second amateur in Masters history to make birdies on the Amen Corner (holes 11–13).



Schneble

## Track: Schneble, Hahn Claim SEC Titles

Vanderbilt track stand-outs Erika Schneble, a sophomore distance runner, and Josie Hahn, a junior heptathlete, won their respective events

at the Southeastern Conference Track and Field Championships held at the University of Mississippi in May.

Schneble won the 5,000-meter run with a time of 16:22.92. She ran cautiously through the first mile, then took the lead early in the second. She withstood a late rally by Auburn's Angela Homan, but finished nearly two seconds ahead.

Hahn sealed her SEC heptathlon victory with a team-record 147'2" javelin toss. Her 5,492-point performance was a school record, topping her 5,444-point effort from the NCAA Championships last year. It also gives Hahn a provisional standard for the U.S. Olympic Trials.



Brent Richard, a rising junior forward from Sugarland, Texas, gets some air under the ball for the men's soccer team.

PHOTOS BY NEIL BRANE