

By **JIM MERRIOTT**
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 The 2008 FedEx Orange Bowl will kick off at Dolphin Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla., at 7 p.m. Thursday.

The University of Kansas Jayhawkers (11-1) representing the Big 12 Conference will be pitted against the Virginia Polytechnic Institute Hokies (11-2) of the Atlantic Coast Conference Coastal Division, which includes Virginia, Georgia Tech, North Carolina, Miami, and Duke.

This will be the first meeting of the two schools on the gridiron, and the third Big 12 Bowl Championship Series opponent that the Hokies have played in its five championship series appearances. This will be the Hokies' second appearance in the FedEx Orange Bowl.

Virginia Tech has a 145-120-19 record in football games played at neutral sites.

Whoever wins, it will be the first time that school has won 12 football games in a season.

Since Coach Frank Beamer took over the Hokie program in 1987, Virginia Tech has been ranked in 149 of the last 166 Associated Press polls.

Beamer is 3-2 against Big 12 schools. His record at Virginia Tech is 167-84-2. His overall record is 206-107-4.

Key players to look for are American Football Coaches Association first team All-American senior linebacker Xavier Adibi from Hampton, Va., also a third team Associated Press All-American, and junior cornerback Brandon Flowers, Delray Beach, Fla., who won second team Walter Camp Football Foundation honors and second team Associated Press honors.

Virginia Tech ranks third in victories in their conference with 156 trailing only the University of Miami, 165, and Florida State, 179.

This will be the team's 15th straight year to play in a bowl game.

The University of Kansas is led by 2007 Associated Press National Coach of the Year Mark Mangino. In his six years as head coach, Kansas has gone 36-36.

Mangino took over a Kansas program that was on the rocks. He finished 2-10 his first year, then followed with a 6-7, 4-7, 7-5 and 6-6 record before this season.

The Jayhawkers have an 11-1 record,

'Hokie' started out as part of cheer

So what's a Hokie, anyway? University of Kansas football fans have been asking this question.

As the Kansas Jayhawks invade the beaches of Miami, they will play the Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Virginia Tech) Hokies in the Orange Bowl on Thursday.

The college changed its name from Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College in 1896, shorting the initials to VPI, now Virginia Tech or VT.

A former alum, O.M. Stull (class of 1896), coined the word "Hoki" when he created the school fight song for a competition, according to the college's official web page.

Stull created the attention-grabbing cheer using a word that people used to express an exciting, surprised feeling. The word stuck and so did the cheer. Stull won the top prize of \$5, close to an average

man's wages for a week at the time.

So Hokie means "hooray," or "yeah," or "rah."

The school also became associated with the term "Gobblers," which has been disputed over the years. In 1913 a local resident chosen by the student body, named Fred Meade, had a large turkey pull him in a cart at a football game.

The school president stopped the new tradition because he thought it was cruelty to the turkey. Meade continued to parade his mascot, which he had trained to gobble.

Sports writers and enthusiastic fans adopted the "Gobbler" as the school mascot, which is now recognized as the "Hokie Bird."

It is so popular that it landed an appearance on Animal Planet's "Turkey Secrets" television show.

a second-place national ranking late in the season, and the school's first championship series bowl game.

Mangino joins Kansas State's Bill Snyder and Oklahoma's Bill Stoops in receiving national coach of the year honors.

The Hokies have played Kansas State, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, and Texas A&M in the past.

The Jayhawks placed three players on the Associated Press All-American teams. Aqib Talib and Anthony Collins made first team and James McClinton, second team.

The Jayhawks last appeared in the Orange Bowl on Jan. 1, 1969, in the famous 15-14 loss to Penn State. Kansas' only other appearance at the Orange Bowl was Jan. 1, 1949, when they lost to Georgia Tech 20-14.

This will be the school's tenth bowl appearance.

In their last bowl appearance the Jayhawks defeated University of Houston 42-13 in the Fort Worth Bowl on Dec. 23, 2005.

Kansas lost to North Carolina State University 56-26 in the Tangerine Bowl on Dec. 22, 2003, before that.

Experts say the game will depend on Virginia Tech's offensive line and Kansas' defensive line.

Statistics show the Hokies gained just 3.4 yards per carry and allowed 43 sacks during the regular season. Kansas gained 5 yards per carry and allowed 21 sacks.

Duane Brown, Virginia Tech's left tackle, earned all-conference



collar, lunch-toting, down and dirty defense.

Other matchups to watch include Kansas running back Brandon McAnderson, who averages 87.5 yards on the ground each game. He rushed for 1,050 yards and 16 touchdowns.

Tech's rush defense is ranked fifth in the country, allowing just 86 yards per game.

KU quarterback Todd Reesing is ranked 11th in the country in passing efficiency, averaging 152.41 yards per game.

Tech's pass efficiency defense is ranked fourth, allowing an average 97.9 yards per game.

Jayhawk receiver Marcus Henry is 29th in the country averaging 82.8 yards per game. He has 994 yards and nine touchdowns this season.

Tech is 27th in passing yards allowed per game, relinquishing some 207.3 yards per game.

Kansas ranked second in the country offensively, averaging 44.3 points per game and scoring 40 or more points in eight out of 12 games, and topped the 50-point barrier five times including 76 points against Nebraska.

Tech's defense allowed 20 or more points just four times this season. The Hokies held their opponents to 10 points or less five times in 12 games. They are also second in scoring defense, allowing just 15.46 points per game.

The game will be broadcast on Fox Television, and the radio on KLOE-AM 730 out of Goodland and KKAN-AM 1490 in Phillipsburg.

quick which could pose a problem for the slower Jayhawk defensive linemen. Brown will match his strength against 6-3, 250-pound Academic All-American defensive end John Larson.

Left guard junior Nick Marshman, 357 pounds, will pit his skills against McClinton.

Hokie center 6-3, 314-pound Ryan will be the other thorn in the side of McClinton on the double-team block for Tech's ground game.

Tech right guard Sergio Render, 6-4, 314 pounds, will face off against Kansas defensive tackle Caleb Blakesley, 6-5, 290 pounds.

Hokie right tackle is Ed Wang, a 315-pound converted tight end who is coming off a broken fibula during early team workouts last summer. He started the last seven games, taking over 500 snaps from scrimmage. He will face Academic All-American, 6-4, 240-pound defensive end Russell Brorsen who was the Jayhawks' pass rusher this season.

The Hokies will drag the famed "Lunch Pail" to the Orange Bowl, a symbol of the 1995 record-setting defense which travels to each game as an inspiration that Tech is a blue-

Coaches followed different paths

A lot of water has gone under the bridge since I last saw Dennis Franchione.

When I first met him he was one of few students at Kansas State College of Pittsburg, now Pittsburg State University, who was enrolled in coaching football.

About 98 percent of the class were members of the Gorilla football team and taking the class because it was required. Franchione was in the other 2 percent.

Prior to the class, we both tried out for the soon-to-be defunct Gorilla varsity baseball team. The program was on the skids.

Head Athletic Trainer Al Ortolani, former head coach of the baseball team, had handed the program over to an assistant graduate coach, Charlie Broyles, who had played football at the college and had a short stint in the National Football League with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

I never was sure just how much Broyles knew about baseball, but I did know that he wanted athletes who wanted to win.

Former major league manager of the Chicago White Sox Don Gutteridge, who lived in Pittsburg, helped Broyles with the team for a month before the athletic department pulled the plug.

On the first day of the coaching class, Head Coach Tom Lester assigned each of us to create a complete football program including scouting opponents, setting up a 52-week conditioning program and season practice schedules, game preparations, game plans and play book. All from scratch, no help.

Under Coach Lester students were taught the Ohio State Woody Hayes offense and defense since Pittsburg ran a similar program to Hayes'.

The offense, two yards and a cloud of dust out of the slot formation, is a 5-2-4.

Each class, Franchione sat next to me and never spoke a word. At the time I found it strange, but now I realize he had the wheels turning in his brain all the time.

I remember Franchione as soft-spoken and well-groomed. He didn't dress like we did in the '70s or wear his hair long.

I never ran around with him, but I knew he was a great competitor. He dressed like a coach, leaving



The Jayhawker
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the impression that he wanted to be successful.

The following summer, Franchione and Coach Broyles played on a semi-pro baseball team out of the small town of Mulberry, where both had grown up.

I played for a team called the Arma As.

Most members of each team were either college students or players whose eligibility had run out.

One Saturday afternoon Arma traveled to Mulberry for a game. It pitted Franchione and myself, both on the mound, against each other.

He's probably forgotten that day, but for five innings Dennis and I threw against each other with neither team scoring.

I was pulled after the fifth because they wanted me to be a reliever for the second game of the double-header.

Mulberry and Franchione went on to win the game 3-0.

That was 1973 and I learned that day Franchione was a winner.

He started coaching at Miller, Mo., and moved on to Mulvane, then Peabody.

I got my first teaching job coaching junior high football, basketball,

and track at Colgan's Elementary/Middle School, St. Mary's, then moved on to coach in the Cherry Creek High School district in Englewood, Colo.

I heard that Franchione had taken over the football program at Pittsburg State and overhauled it from the ground up, building it into a national powerhouse in Division II.

He would finish his career at Pittsburg with a 53-6 record and then go on to become one of the winningest coaches in National College Athletic Association Division II competition.

He would move on to Southwest Texas State where he developed Denver Bronco running back Reggie Rivers. Then he stepped up to the University of New Mexico.

That's when I wrote him about my training program at Loveland High in Colorado, and about two athletes who might fit into his program.

Over the years, "Coach Fran" and I conversed by mail.

His next step would be Texas Christian University, where he developed LaDainian Tomlinson.

Then on to the University of Alabama and Texas A&M, where he developed junior quarterback

Stephen McGhee and from where he was forced to resign after the football season.

Hopefully, Franchione will land on his feet after this season's turmoil.

The last time we saw each other he was an assistant coach at Kansas State. At the time, I was teaching at St. Mary's/Colgan in Pittsburg. That was 1978.

Franchione epitomizes the slogan "Be all you can be," and I am proud to say that our paths crossed somewhere down the line. My only regret is that I hadn't sat in Franchione's seat instead of next to him.

Maybe things would have turned out differently for both of us.

When I retired from coaching in 2001, Coach Lester's class had helped me help my teams capture over 400 victories and have a 43-game winning streak in basketball.

I am proud to say that in 27 years of coaching junior high and high school sports, Coach Lester taught me to be a winner.

My hat goes off to "Turkey" Tom Lester, and Dennis Franchione and Pittsburg State University.

Basketball tournament planned

The 14th annual Holdrege, Neb., Becton Dickinson basketball tournament will be held Friday and Saturday, Feb. 29 and March 1, for boys and girls in grades 5 and 6.

The seventh- and eighth-grade tournament will be held Friday and Saturday, March 14 and 15.

The entry fee is \$80, with three games guaranteed. Medals will be awarded for the first three places.

For tournament information contact Rod Ridenour, 1107 Maberly St., Holdrege, Neb., 68949 or call (308) 955-6620.

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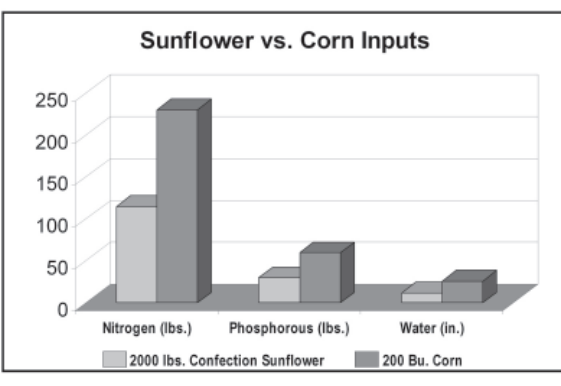


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