

HEAD COACH TRIPP MERRITT

Guy "Tripp" Merritt, now in his fourth season as Davidson's head football coach, never expected life would be easy. His experience in facing adversity head-on colors his outlook on everything, including his current job with all of its daunting challenges, which he views as opportunities rather than obstacles.

Merritt was born with spina bifida occulta, which resulted in deformities in his lower spine and nerve damage in his left leg. To this day he has no reflexes in his left leg and back pain surfaces when he tires, sometimes causing a slight limp. His doctors didn't have an optimistic outlook, certainly not for an infant who one day would dream of playing athletics at a high level. "He'll never be able to run," they told his parents.

Merritt's father was an assistant high school football coach and not one to give up hope easily. He worked with his young son, helped him improve his mobility and stamina. That and sheer determination allowed young Tripp to make his way onto the playing field as early as second grade – football, basketball, baseball. He played and loved them all. His athletic career continued at Burns High School in Shelby, N.C., where he lettered three times in football and baseball. He now runs three or four miles a day.

Don't tell him he can't do something. Merritt will accept a dare, that's for certain.

A trend developed early in his athletic career. Never big enough or fast enough to challenge the best of the athletes he played with or against, his teammates nevertheless saw something in him that influenced them to elect him captain of every team he played on from middle school through his career at Burns High. He was a team guy, a leader, a young man who made his teammates want to get the most out of their ability.

"At 5-7 and 152 pounds in high



school, I didn't run very well," Merritt said. "I wasn't fast and not very good. My role was to lead, and my goal was simple. I wanted our team to win. I tried to make sure that every man on the team got his job done."

Even though he loved athletics and spent much of his childhood hanging around football fields where his father coached, Merritt thought his own career in athletics was over when he graduated from Burns in 1986. Time for the real world, he figured.

He went to UNC Charlotte to pursue a business degree. His father pushed him in that direction, feeling it was in his son's best interests. Tripp's father didn't find the pot of gold at the end of the coaching rainbow and eventually exited the profession to take a better paying job in textiles in Laurinburg, N.C. The elder Merritt wanted better things for his son, as all good fathers do.

Tripp was in pursuit of a degree that would set him up in business. His head, and his father, told him that was the correct decision. His heart, however, wouldn't turn loose of his longtime dream to teach high school history and coach. After fall classes at UNCC, Tripp spent afternoons at area high schools watching football practice. One of those

trips took him to Charlotte's Garinger High School, where the head coach was Jimmy Teague. Teague was impressed with Merritt's tenacity and presented an irresistible offer. "Come over and help us coach, but we can't pay you anything."

It's a deal.

Merritt showed up at Garinger after his own college classes and went to the football offices in the field house. He watched tapes, immersed himself in football strategy, got ready for practice, and learned all he could from Teague and his assistants. Then he went to practice and worked with the players. The smell of the grass on an autumn afternoon, the popping of the pads, the beauty of watching good things happen when all members of the team were on the same page validated what he already knew.

Goodbye business world, hello coaching. Merritt's father was not happy, not initially. But that would change.

Will Holthouser, an assistant football coach at Western Carolina who recruited the Charlotte area, met Merritt in 1990 and was impressed. The meeting resulted in Merritt joining the Western Carolina staff as a graduate assistant. How could Merritt possibly turn it down? A chance to live in beautiful Cullowhee, nestled deep and secluded in the North Carolina mountains. Not exactly the brightest stage for a young single guy. But if you want to coach, *really* want to coach, you'll go where the jobs are. Even if the job description includes baby sitting, washing cars, teaching two physical education classes, going to school and coaching, all for the grand prize of \$6,000 a year. That was Merritt's deal at Western Carolina. He knew even then that young coaches who are picky end up selling insurance.

Merritt did work towards his master's degree at Western Carolina and found out for certain something that was even more important. "I knew I wanted to coach football."

He was in bed asleep in his dorm room at Western Carolina in May 1993 when the telephone rang. It was 5:30 in the morning. Dave Fagg, the head football coach at Davidson, thought everybody got up before the milkman. "I





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have a job opening and I want to talk to you about it. Can you be here tomorrow?" Before Merritt could say he needed more time, which was on the tip of his tongue, Fagg said, "Good. I'll see you tomorrow."

Merritt spent the next day with Fagg in Davidson. Fagg could sell day-old, dry and crusty biscuits to a man dying of thirst. He put the fullcourt press on Merritt. At precisely 5:30 the next morning, Fagg called again. "I'm offering you the job but I need you here in two days." Whoa! Merritt would have to close things out at Western Carolina, tell everybody he was leaving, find a place to live in Davidson, move all of his stuff, and attend to a hundred other details. He needed more time, but he needed a job more. He rushed his goodbyes, threw everything he owned — which wasn't much — into the back of his car and headed down the mountain to Davidson. He knew virtually nobody, had no place to stay, but he had a job, even if he wasn't exactly sure what it entailed.

Davidson put him in the Hampton Inn in Cornelius, room 204. Temporary lodging. In this case "temporarily" totaled six months. Three weeks after making this big move, Merritt was told to meet Fagg in the hotel lobby. "I'm moving on," Fagg informed him and defensive coordinator Tim Landis. Fagg gave up football for a job with the Davidson Athletic Foundation. Merritt worked for him for exactly three weeks.

"I had no idea what was going to happen next," Merritt recalls.

Serendipity intervened. In the three weeks that Merritt had been at Davidson, he developed a close relationship with Landis. They talked football constantly. When Landis was named to succeed Fagg, it was an easy decision for him to keep Merritt on his staff. In the seven years they worked together at Davidson, Landis gave Merritt the chance to do things often reserved for the head coach. Merritt wore many hats: secondary coach, linebackers coach, defensive coordinator, recruiting coordinator. His defense was ranked among the best in the nation. The program produced eight victories in 1998 and again in 1999 while recruit-

THE MERRITT FILE

Full Name: Guy William Merritt III
Experience: 4th season
Date of Birth: March 5, 1968
Hometown: Shelby, N.C.
High School: Burns '86
College: Charlotte '90
Coaching Assignments:
 Garinger (N.C.) High School, 1990
 Western Carolina Grad. Assistant, 1991-92
 Davidson College Assistant, 1993-99
 St. Mary's (Calif.) Assistant, 2000-02
 Bucknell Associate Head Coach, 2003-04
 Davidson College Head Coach, 2005-Pres

Head Coaching Record

Year	School	W	L	Pct.	Place
2005	Davidson	4	6	.400	3rd, South
2006	Davidson	6	4	.600	3rd
2007	Davidson	6	4	.600	4th
Total		16	14	.533	

ing the athletes and building the team that would eventually go 10-0 in 2000.

Merritt followed Landis to St. Mary's in California after the 1999 season. He served there for three seasons as recruiting coordinator, linebackers coach, and then assistant head coach and offensive line coach. Merritt went with Landis to Bucknell in 2003 and worked as associate head coach, defensive coordinator and recruiting coordinator. Bucknell went 7-4 in 2004 and ranked in the top 25 of the Football Championship series in scoring defense.

Landis and Merritt were together for 12 seasons. They were successful at

three tough venues.

When Mike Toop left the Davidson football job after the 2004 season, Davidson athletics director Jim Murphy wanted a coach who would be a good leader and flourish in the Davidson culture. He chose Merritt. While hating to lose Merritt from his staff, Landis wasn't surprised that his friend was getting a chance to run his own program.

"Tripp is an outstanding football coach who relates equally well to student-athletes, administrators and alumni," Landis said. "His players enjoy going out and competing for him, and the success his program is having is evidence of that. Davidson has been a force to be dealt with each and every week in the very competitive Pioneer Football League, and I think 2008 will be no different."

Merritt says that his role model at Davidson is basketball coach Bob McKillop.

"He has perfected the way to coach at Davidson," Merritt says of the highly successful McKillop. "He has been extremely generous with his time in talking to me and letting me pick his brain. I've talked to him at length about his early experiences coaching at Davidson. I've learned a lot from him. I also watch as many of his practices as I can."

Merritt's coaching philosophy was also shaped by reading and studying. He read a book by Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy and "The Carolina Way" by former North Carolina basketball coach Dean Smith, whose summer camp Merritt used to attend. Smith's mantra for 36 years as head coach was, "Play Hard, Play Smart, Play Together," which Merritt has posted on his locker room wall.

Merritt wants Davidson football to win, of course. But he also wants it to be fun for his players and assistant coaches. "I



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believe that if we take care of all the little things on and off the field, and do the right things mentally, physically, socially and spiritually, winning will take care of itself," Merritt says.

He finds value in each of his players, even those – or maybe especially those – who will probably never play in an important situation. He finds a way to praise those players, to let them know how important they are to the team's success. They are very much a part of the team, as Merritt sees it, and he wants them to stick it out and enjoy the experience. Such positive reinforcement and sense of caring has increased Davidson's roster size from 69 when Merritt took the job to the 83 that showed up for August practice this year.

Even though Merritt has 18 years of college coaching experience, he just turned 40. His enthusiasm has no boundaries, his humility keeps him grounded. Run DNA on him and arrogance would not register. He knows that he still has much to learn, so he utilizes his coaching staff to the fullest. They plan together, coach together, even get up early on Saturday mornings on home games to put the field together, arranging the benches and the sideline yardage markers before heading off to the pre-game meal.

"It's a tradition here," Merritt said, not resenting the menial tasks one whit.

Merritt figures that as an assistant coach 80 percent of his time was devoted to football. Now that he's head coach, he finds that reversed: 80 percent of his time is spent on administrative matters, putting out fires, speaking, alumni relations, dealing with the media. He coaches Davidson's special teams, calling that part of his job his "football outlet."

He gives much freedom to his offensive and defensive coordinators and tells them that the X's and O's are their art form. They have the green light to coach and take risks. He's not reluctant to make tough decisions, but he's also secure enough in his own skin to delegate important tasks to his staff.



Merritt and his wife, Sara.

"I came back to Davidson because I love this place," Merritt said. "I think it's unlike any other place in the country. I like the way we do things here and why we do them. I enjoy it so much that I'm not

looking for the next job. The grass is not always greener on the other side. I learned that from Coach McKillop. The trick is to make our own grass as green as we possibly can.

"There's a distinct challenge in coaching football at Davidson. There's no doubt about it, but it also has its advantages in that we get young men who have a great work ethic, are smart and of strong character, are highly motivated and will find a way to win."

Unlike some coaches, Merritt doesn't get wrapped up in statistics. A large portion of his coaching is by feel. After all, the goal is to win, and that takes great preparation, dedication, good players, a heaping portion of good luck – and somebody stepping up to make a play when things are on the line. He wants each of his teams to earn their own identify. Last year's team was known in inner circles as the "Junkyard

Cats," because somehow, some way they'd find a way to win.

Merritt has been named Pioneer League co-coach of the year once. His Davidson teams have produced records of 4-6, 6-4 and 6-4. He sees his program getting better and closer to challenging for a Pioneer League championship.

"We've closed the gap on the best teams in the conference," Merritt said. "We've beaten Drake and Dayton and Morehead State, and were real close last year (52-49) against San Diego. We have plenty of work to do, but we're getting there. We have a chance to be an improved team this year, and expect to be. Our kids think they can beat anybody."

With eight starters returning on offense and the same number on defense, there is reason for such a bright forecast.

Merritt and wife Sara are expecting their first child on Sept. 21. They make their home about five minutes from the Davidson campus.

Merritt's father died in May 2004. It was before Tripp became Davidson's head coach, an accomplishment that would have pleased his father greatly. But he lived long enough to see his son progress rapidly through the college coaching ranks and become successful and happy in the profession. His initial disappointment of his son choosing coaching over business had long been replaced by pride in the achievement.

From an infant whose doctors said he would never run to a head coach in college who is in a full sprint to make Davidson football competitive for Pioneer League Football championships.

That's Tripp Merritt, who's living his dream and never takes anything for granted. He's grateful for his lot in life and in turn tries to make his football program fun and a positive experience for all who join him on the journey.

Written by John Kilgo





COACHING HISTORY



Tripp Merritt became the second Davidson coach to win conference Coach of the Year honors, earning the accolade from the Pioneer Football League in 2006.



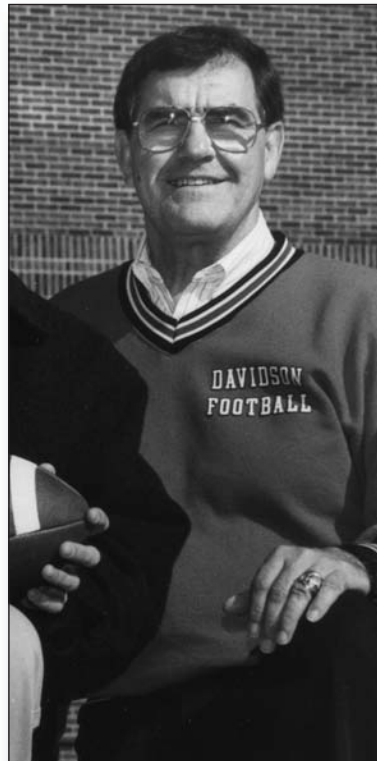
Homer Smith led Davidson to its only Southern Conference title in 1969. He went on to serve as the offensive coordinator at UCLA, Alabama and Arizona. He was named the Sporting News Offensive Coach of the Year in 1990.

ALL-TIME COACHING RECORDS

Coach	Years	W	L	T	Pct	
No Coach	1897-99	(3)	3	5	1	.389
J.A. Brewin	1900-03	(4)	13	11	1	.540
C.R. Williams	1904-05	(2)	8	6	1	.567
R.S. Graham, J.B. Pollard	1906-07	(2)	7	3	3	.654
J.H. (Dutch) Levine	1908	(1)	5	2	2	.667
F.M. Simmons	1909-10	(2)	9	6	2	.588
Dr. E.W. Holladay	1911	(1)	5	3	0	.625
W.T. Cook	1912-13	(2)	5	9	0	.357
R.A. Fetzter	1914	(1)	5	1	1	.786
W.H. Fetzter	1915-18	(4)	17	11	3	.597
L.B. (Pete) Crayton	1919	(1)	4	6	1	.409
H.M. (Wooly) Grey	1920-22	(3)	10	15	5	.417
William L. (Monk) Younger	1923-31	(9)	44	38	7	.534
Doc Newton	1932-35	(4)	18	13	5	.569
E.T. (Gene) McEver	1936-43	(8)	21	47	4	.319
William J. Story, Jr.	1946-47	(2)	10	8	1	.553
Charlie Jamerson	1948-49	(2)	5	13	1	.289
Crowell Little	1950-51	(2)	4	14	0	.222
William E. Dole	1952-64	(13)	43	66	4	.398
Homer Smith	1965-69	(5)	24	24	0	.500
Dave Fagg	1970-73	(4)	8	32	1	.207
Ed Farrell	1974-84	(11)	36	70	1	.341
Vic Gatto	1985-89	(5)	4	47	0	.078
Dave Fagg	1990-92	(3)	14	13	0	.519
<i>Fagg Total</i>		(7)	22	45	1	.331
Tim Landis	1993-99	(7)	35	36	1	.493
Joe Susan	2000	(1)	10	0	0	1.000
Mike Toop	2001-04	(4)	17	22	0	.436
Tripp Merritt	2005-Pres.	(3)	16	14	0	.533
Totals	1897-1943, 1946-2007	(109)	400	535	45	.431

ALL-TIME COACHING RECORDS BY WINS

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1. William L. (Monk) Younger	1923-31	(9)	44	38	7	.534
2. William E. Dole	1952-64	(13)	43	66	4	.398
3. Ed Farrell	1974-84	(11)	36	70	1	.341
4. Tim Landis	1993-99	(7)	35	36	1	.493
5. Homer Smith	1965-69	(5)	24	24	0	.500
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Dave Fagg (right) led the Wildcats in two decades, the beginning of the 1970s and the 1990s. He is the associate director of the Davidson Athletic Foundation.



Tim Landis, who was 35-36-1 from 1993-99, is in his sixth season as the head coach at Bucknell.



Joe Susan led Davidson to its only undefeated record in school history. He is in his eighth season as an assistant coach at Rutgers, where he helped the Scarlet Knights to an 11-2 record in 2006.



BRETT HAYFORD



Associate Head Coach
Defensive Line
16th Year
Davidson '93

Brett Hayford returns for his 16th season as a Wildcat coach and 19th on the Davidson campus. This is also his fourth campaign as the assistant head coach, a title he earned when colleague Tripp Merritt was hired as the head coach in 2005. Along with the assistant head coaching

duties, he is responsible for the defensive line.

Hayford coached the Wildcats to the PFL lead in sacks in 2005 with 24, and the 2006 squad tied for second with 22. He coached the conference's individual sack leader in 2002 and 2003 in Ryan Tennis '03 and Darryl Childers '04, respectively. Davidson led the league in sacks as a team in 2002 as well, averaging 3.3 per game, while no other squad had more than 2.5 an outing.



Hayford was instrumental in the emergence of All-PFL South performers Kyle Kinsell and Will Funderburg in 2005. Kinsell, a two-time Academic All-American, had all of 12 tackles in his first two seasons, while Funderburg was just a rookie. An honorable mention All-PFL selection in 2007, Funderburg enters his senior season having started every game of his career and recording 18.5 tackles for loss.

"Brett knows how to get the most out of the defensive line," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "He has an excellent understanding of blocking schemes and how to attack them. Having spent his playing days on the defensive side of the ball, he is well suited to work with the linemen."

Hayford graduated in 1993 from Davidson, where he played two seasons as a defensive lineman and as an outfielder for the baseball team. At Shorecrest Prep in St. Petersburg, Fla.,

his father, Phil, coached his high school football team.

He is married to the former Beth Snowden, who is the head athletic trainer at Davidson. They live in Huntersville with their 9-year-old son Thad.



MEADE CLENDANIEL



Defensive Coordinator
Defensive Backs
9th Year
Westchester '97

As the Wildcats' defensive coordinator for the past eight seasons, Meade Clendaniel has led Davidson to numerous top national statistical rankings. Three times in Davidson's seven years as a member of the Pioneer Football League, the Wildcats have ranked among the top three in the

league in total defense.

In 2000, his first season, Clendaniel oversaw a defense that ranked third in FCS in scoring defense, fifth in pass efficiency defense and eighth in rush defense. The Wildcats finished the 2005 season with the fifth-most interceptions in FCS and was ranked in the top-15 nationally in turnovers gained and turnover margin that season. The 2006 Wildcat defense ranked fourth in the PFL in total defense and tied for second with 22 sacks.

"Meade really knows his stuff when it comes to a defensive game plan," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "He preaches an opportunistic approach and does a tremendous job of putting the players in position to succeed."

Clendaniel graduated from West Chester University in 1997 with a degree in biology and spent his senior year as a student assistant coach for the football squad. He also was a fullback for West

Chester for three seasons.

In August of 1998, he joined the staff at Princeton, working with former head coach Joe Susan and former assistant coach Mike Clark. Among his duties as an assistant at both schools were recruiting, developing the defensive game plan, scouting reports and all phases of special teams. He joined the Davidson staff in 2000.

Clendaniel is married to the former Meredith Tarpley, and the couple lives in Cornelius with their daughter, Marin, who will celebrate her first birthday Oct. 17.



RYAN HEASLEY



Offensive Coordinator
Offensive Line
1st Year
Bethany College '99

Ryan Heasley joins the Davidson coaching staff for his first season. He serves as the Wildcats' offensive coordinator and offensive line coach.

The 33-year-old Heasley comes to Davidson from Washington University in St. Louis, where he spent the last five seasons. He started there as the offensive line coach in 2003 and earned the offensive coordinator title in 2005.

The Bears won the University Athletic Association championship in 2003 and 2004, and the Washington coaching staff was named the league's Staff of the Year both seasons.

The Bears posted a 31-19 during Heasley's tenure, including a 7-3 mark in 2007, and 12 offensive linemen were named all-conference during that time frame. Washington is one of 15 schools at any NCAA level to post 15 consecutive winning seasons.





"Ryan is a young, enthusiastic coach with a wealth of knowledge and experience," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "He is a great fit for Davidson College and our football program."

Prior to joining the staff at Washington, Heasley was the offensive line coach at Marietta College in Ohio from 2001-03. After graduating from Bethany College with a degree in physical education in 1999, he taught at Penn Hills High School in Pittsburgh from 1999-2001. He served as a graduate assistant football coach at his alma mater from 1999-2000 and was an assistant coach at Penn Hill from 2000-01.

Heasley starred on the offensive line for Bethany from 1995-97, earning all-conference honors as a junior and senior. A co-captain, he won the Bison Award, given by the coaches to the senior who displays the most enthusiasm, loyalty and effort to the program.

Heasley is currently working towards a master's degree in education. He and his wife, Nicole, reside in Davidson with their 2-year-old daughter, Emma.



AMISH PATEL



Assistant Coach
Quarterbacks
3rd Year
Michigan State '03

Amish Patel is in his third campaign as the quarterbacks coach and brings extensive first-hand experience as a quarterback from his playing days at Ranger Community College and Michigan State University.

At Michigan State, Patel played with All-Big Ten performers Jeff Smoker

and Drew Stanton, who both rank in the school's top 10 in career passing. Prior to joining the Spartans, Patel received

All-American honors from PrepStar magazine at Ranger in 2000.

His expertise paid huge dividends for the Davidson signal callers in 2006 as the Wildcats ranked seventh in the NCAA FCS in passing offense, 13th in total offense and 15th in scoring offense. In addition, starting quarterback Ryan Alexander ranked fifth in the nation in passing, sixth in total offense and 35th in pass efficiency en route to earning second-team All-PFL honors. He set school records for single-season passing (2,581) and total yards (2,766).

The 'Cats continued that success in 2007, ranking 10th in FCS in passing offense (279.75 ypg), eighth in completions per game (21.88) and 25th in both total offense (290.3 ypg) and scoring offense (31.2 ppg). Alexander became Davidson's career leader in passing yards, total yards and touchdown passes and set single-game records for completion percentage and touchdown passes.

Patel began his coaching career as an intern at the Philadelphia Eagles' training camp in 2005 before joining the Davidson staff in 2006. His knowledge of and success at the position allows him to help the Wildcat quarterbacks get the most from their abilities.

"Amish has great experience with a terrific football program at Michigan State, which gives him instant credibility with our players," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "He has been instrumental in the development of our quarterbacks."

Patel earned an associate degree from Ranger before graduating from Michigan State in 2003 with a degree in psychology. The native of Austin, Texas, is single and lives in Davidson.



TROY STUBBS



Assistant Coach
Wide Receivers
1st Year
Alabama '02

Troy Stubbs joins the Davidson football staff for his first season and will coach the wide receivers.

Stubbs comes to Davidson from the University of Louisville, where he served as an offensive graduate assistant last season. His responsibilities included working with the tight ends,

opponent film breakdown, opponent and self scouting reports and evaluating recruiting film.

The Cardinals ranked sixth in Division I FBS in total offense in 2007 and fourth in passing offense and placed first in the Big East in both categories.

"Troy is very enthusiastic and passionate about the game of football," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "Having been around one of the most potent offenses in recent NCAA history, he will bring some creative and innovative ideas to the table. Based on his work and playing experience, Troy is going to make a wonderful addition to our program."

Stubbs began his playing career as a wide receiver at the Air Force Academy in 1996-97 before serving a two-year church mission. He transferred to Alabama where he received a bachelor of science in commerce and business administration in December 2002 with a double major in international finance and Russian.

He worked four years at an investment firm in Memphis, Tenn., before getting into coaching at Louisville. He will earn his master's degree in sports administration from Louisville in the summer of 2008. He and his wife, Jenny, reside in Davidson with their three children, Isaac (7), Elsa (3) and newborn Lucas.



CURT WILLIAMS



Curt Williams is in his 13th season on the Davidson staff and works with the inside linebackers.

In 2006, Williams helped coach a defense that tied for second in the PFL in sacks with 22, and inside linebacker Chris Castillo ranked eighth in the league with 67 tackles. In 2007, Peter Bakke

ranked eighth in the PFL in tackles and posted 20 stops at Butler, which tied for the seventh-most in an FCS game that season. Bakke went on to earn second-team All-PFL honors.

In his first eight years with

Davidson, Williams coached a variety of positions on the defensive side of the ball and coached the linebackers in 1998 on one of the Wildcats' best defensive teams ever. That squad finished second in FCS in scoring defense at 10.4 points per game and fourth in total defense, allowing just 231.9 yards per contest.



In 1999, the defense led FCS in interceptions with 28 and was 13th in rushing defense, allowing 101 yards per game.

"This is my second stint with Curt," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "His presence gives me a comfort level in that I know what I've got with him. He has a special bond with the players and is an excellent communicator."

A 1978 graduate of Charlotte, Williams lives in Indian Trail with his wife, Deborah.

Assistant Coach
Inside Linebackers
13th Year
Charlotte '78

JIMMY MEANS



Jimmy Means returns to the Davidson coaching staff for his third season and will coach the outside linebackers in 2008.

His expertise helped Niel Andrews and Bud Crawford emerge as defensive forces in the Pioneer Football League over the last two seasons.

Assistant Coach
Outside Linebackers
3rd Year
Union College '91

Andrews was named first-team All-PFL in 2006, while Crawford earned second-team all-conference accolades in 2007.

Means has a wealth of experience coaching at the high school level. He has served as an assistant coach at North Mecklenburg since 2000, most recently as the defensive coordinator.

"Jimmy is a good defensive mind and a very hard worker with a lot of enthusiasm," said head coach Tripp Merritt.

The 1991 graduate of Union College also spent two years as an assistant at Mooresville High School (1999-2000). From 1996-98, Means was the head coach at Trimble County High School in Bedford, Ky.

Means lives in Charlotte with his wife Diane, daughter, Makayla (9), and son Holden (1).

PATRICK FITZGERALD



Fresh off finishing his collegiate career, Patrick Fitzgerald makes the transition from player to coach, joining the Davidson staff for his first season. He will serve as a defensive assistant and work closely with the secondary.

Assistant Coach
Defensive Assistant
1st Year
Davidson '08

A four-year letterman for the Wildcats, Fitzgerald played in 39 career games and started the last 30 contests. He finished his career as a corner back with 11 interceptions, 201 tackles and 18 pass break-ups.

He earned first-team FCS Mid-Major All-America and first-team All-

Pioneer Football League honors in 2006, and was named second-team FCS Mid-Major All-America in 2005.

"As a former captain at Davidson, it's great to have someone with Patrick's leadership skills and working knowledge of our defense join the staff," said head coach Tripp Merritt.



FitzGerald was a star in the classroom as well, earning CoSIDA Academic All-District honors and Academic All-PFL accolades in his junior and senior seasons. He was also a two-time selection to the Athletic Directors Association FCS

Academic All-Star team.

He graduated from Davidson in 2008 with a degree in history.

BRAD SMITH



Brad Smith makes his return to Davidson and joins the coaching staff as a kicking coach.

Smith completed his undergraduate degree in philosophy at Davidson in 2007, but with a year of eligibility remaining, walked on the football team at Southern California in 2008 while beginning work on his master's

Assistant Coach
Kicking Coach
1st Year
Davidson '07

degree.

At Davidson, Smith had one of the most accurate legs in school history and was named an FCS Mid-Major All-American by Football Gazette and The Sports Network in 2006 to go along with first-team All-Pioneer Football League honors.

He ranks eighth on the Davidson career scoring chart with 133 points on 24 field goals and 61 extra points. Smith was good on 72.7 percent of his field goal attempts and drilled 61-of-66 point after tries.

"After finishing his career at USC, Brad can use his experience at a variety of levels to tutor our young kicking corps," said head coach Tripp Merritt.



STAFF ASSISTANT



Kristen Foss
Football Staff Assistant

Kristen Foss joined the staff as an assistant last spring and is in her first full season as a member of the Wildcat football program.

In her role as staff assistant, Foss handles a variety of logistics behind the scenes and is invaluable to the coaching staff, allowing them to focus more on evaluating opponents and recruits rather than administrative details.

"Kristen's daily presence helps keep things running smoothly," said head coach Tripp Merritt. "She's very motivated to make us the best we can be."

Foss lives in Mooresville with her sons, Stephen (13) and Michael (10).

SPORTS MEDICINE



Beth Hayford
Head Athletic Trainer

Head athletic trainer Beth Hayford, a 1993 graduate of Wingate, oversees Davidson's five other full-time, fully-certified licensed athletic trainers as well student athletic trainers from UNC Charlotte, who cover the school's 21 intercollegiate sports.

Hayford came to Davidson as an intern in August of 1994 and was promoted to assistant athletic trainer in 1996, working with the football, lacrosse, soccer and volleyball teams.

In 2002, Hayford was named the head athletic trainer. In addition to her responsibilities overseeing all medical aspects of the athletic program, she supervises the strength and conditioning department and the equipment room.

Beth and her husband, Brett, who is the assistant head coach of the Davidson football team, live in Huntersville with their 9-year-old son, Thad.

Assisting Hayford will be assistant ath-



Gerry Waddle
Assistant Athletic Trainer

letic trainer Gerry Waddle, who will be in his first season working with the Davidson football team.

The Davidson College Sports Medicine facilities are among the best in the region. In the training room, there are many of the modern, technological machines that aid in the recovery from injuries, including ultrasound and electric stimulation. There are also three whirlpool tubs, a hydroculator and a paraffin bath.

OrthoCarolina in Charlotte serves as Davidson's primary orthopedic consultant, and Dr. Don D'Alessandro is the Wildcats' team physician. Dr. Skip Barkley, a general practitioner at University Family Physicians, also acts as one of the department's primary physicians.

EQUIPMENT



Brian Barmes
Equipment Manager

When it comes right down to it, the equipment room keeps all the athletic teams prepared to play.

Brian Barmes begins his third year as the head equipment manager. Prior to coming to Davidson, Barmes was a sales representative for Riddell as well as served a pair of one-year stints with the Florida Bobcats and Georgia Force of the AFL, respectively.

Joining Barmes in the equipment room is faithful assistant Will DuBose, who attended Fayetteville Tech for two years prior to joining the Davidson staff in the fall of 1983. Now in his 26th year, only one coach has been with the department longer.

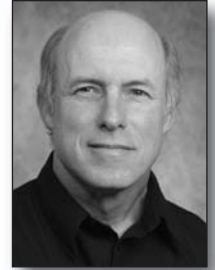
Returning for his fourth year on staff is Jeff Koontz. He is a 2005 graduate of Winthrop and completed an internship with the Carolina Panthers. He will take care of the football equipment needs for the 2008 season.



Jeff Koontz
Asst. Equipment Manager

Also back helping out on the sidelines is Shaw Smith, an art history professor at Davidson with an affinity for Wildcat football.

Barnes, Koontz and Smith work every practice and home game and travel with the team on the road.



Shaw Smith
Asst. Equipment Manager

RADIO NETWORK



Mark Plemmons
Play-By-Play Voice

For a third straight season, Mark Plemmons is the voice of Davidson Wildcats football on the radio.

"I hope folks enjoy listening to the games as much as I enjoy calling them," Plemmons said.

"Since I was four or five years old, I've wanted to call college football on the radio so I'm living the dream."

The 1981 graduate of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill holds a bachelor's degree in radio, television and motion pictures. He brings many years experience as a newspaper reporter and editor and won several state press awards for both news and sports stories.

Since 2001, he has been the news and sports director for WEGO-AM 1410 in Concord, co-hosting the Bob and Mark Morning Show and calling hundreds of high school football and basketball games, including four state championship contests, and American Legion baseball.

A native of Asheville, N.C., Plemmons is married to Kimberly Banks Plemmons, who is a registered nurse and an assistant professor of nursing at the Cabarrus College of Health Sciences in Concord. They have two children, Jordan, a senior chemistry major at UNC-Wilmington, and Dayne, a freshman at N.C. State University.

