Over the last 125 years, Virginia and Virginia Tech — schools separated by less than 150 miles — have faced each other on the football field 101 times. The in-state rivalry has been full of dramatic games, thrilling storylines and plenty of animosity on both sides.

While most college football fans are well aware of the longstanding rivalry between Virginia and Virginia Tech, they may not be as familiar with the freud's deep and controversial roots. As the Cavaliers and the Hokies meet for the round time Saturday, let's take a look at how the over-a-century-old rivalry first started.

Even off the football field, relations between the Virginia and Virginia Tech communities have been tense since the late 1800s. There was a clear divide that existed between the two schools. Virginia was a state university — a historic institution of higher learning — while Virginia Tech — then known as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College — was a land-grant university that emphasized practical agricultural and engineering education.

"I broke it down into class war," said Roland Lazenby, bestselling sportswriter and co-author of "Hoos 'N Hokies, the Rivalry: 100 Years of Virginia Tech-Virginia Football." "The U.Va. crowd tended to be a lot of sons of bankers and the Virginia Tech crowd tended to be a lot of sons of farmers, and bankers and farmers have never gotten along all that well."

Lazenby added that the tension between the two institutions also had a geographic component. He explained that those who grew up in the western part of Virginia — in cities like Blacksburg — have "always had an inferiority complex regarding the lowlanders," including those from Charlottesville. "Nowhere did a state university have its nose so far in the air, as in Charlottesville," Lazenby said. "It was Mr. Jefferson's University ... In truth, it's just silly stereotypes, but that's the kind of stuff that feeds a fan base, one side looking down at the other."

But Virginia and Virginia Tech's football teams are more closely connected than one might think. The two teams were established within four years of each other — Virginia played its first intercollegiate game in 1888, while Virginia Tech took the field for the first time in 1892.

Interestingly, many University graduates, including W.E. Anderson, Joseph Massie and Arlie Jones, played significant roles in the emergence of college football in Blacksburg. Anderson — who was simultaneously a professor and player for Virginia Tech — helped start the Hokies' football program, while Massie and Jones both coached the team in the mid-1890s. According to Kevin Edds, writer and director of "Wahoowa: The History of Virginia Cavalier Football," "the birth of Hokie Nation was started by Wahoos."

For years, there was little animosity between the two teams. Virginia — the most dominant football team in the South at the time — comfortably won its first eight games against Virginia Tech from 1895 to 1904, by a combined score of 175-5. However, the rivalry quickly heated up largely due to one driver — Virginia Tech player — Hunter Carpenter.

Carpenter was an iconic college football backwall who was named to the All-Southern team three times and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1927. To say Carpenter's career was unique would be an understatement. Carpenter enrolled at Virginia Tech in 1898 and competed on the football team from 1899 to 1903 — three seasons as an undergraduate, one as a graduate and one more as a faculty member.

Despite his talent and the fact that he played five seasons in six years in Blacksburg, Carpenter was not able to defeat Virginia. Desperate for a win against the Cavaliers, Carpenter enrolled at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill as a student and joined the school's successful football team. At the time of the move, Carpenter said, "I just want to beat the University of Virginia," according to the Associated Press. In spite of his best efforts, Carpenter once again failed to beat Virginia in 1904 — this time as a Tar Heel.

"After losing again, when a U.Va. extra point ricocheted off a player's head up through the goalpost for an apparent win over North Carolina, Carpenter was devastated," Edds said. "U.Va. was his white whale. So [Captain] Ahab went back to his original ship for one more hunting season."

At this point, it appeared Carpenter's dreams of taking down Virginia were crushed. However, in an unprecedented fashion, Carpenter decided to return to Virginia Tech in 1905 for his seventh season as a college football player. Carpenter's controversial homecoming was not well-received by Virginia. The University's students, administrators and supporters were becoming increasingly frustrated with their opponents' disregard for the sanctity of student-athlete eligibility. In Virginia's eyes, Carpenter — on the verge of playing for nearly a decade — epitomized an issue plaguing amateur sports.

Soon enough, in the leadup to the 1905 Virginia-Virginia Tech game, relations between the two sides turned ugly. College Topics, the original name of The Cavalier Daily — alleged that Carpenter was being paid to play, and Carpenter responded by threatening to sue the student newspaper for libel.

University students, who ran the athletics department, even considered canceling the game altogether. But, after the University's entire student body convened at Madison Hall and voted on the matter, Virginia decided to play Virginia Tech so as to not disgrace the faith. "To put it bluntly, [the catalyst for the rivalry] was Virginia Tech's reluctance to play by established eligibility rules," Edds said.

After going as far as signing an affidavit, denying accusations of being compensated, Carpenter was allowed to compete in the game, which was held at Lambeth Field in Charlottesville Nov. 4, 1905. Unfortunately, Virginia fans at the time not only witnessed Carpenter take the field for the seventh time against them, but also saw him lead Virginia Tech to a historic victory over its in-state rival. The game, which only ended due to darkness, finished with a scoreline of 11-0 in Virginia Tech's favor.

"Virginia Tech won the game, even though Carpenter was ejected for punching a U.Va. player — perhaps in retaliation — and then threw the football into the stands at Lambeth Field," Edds said. "The uproar in Blacksburg over Tech's first-ever win in the series was enough for U.Va. to discontinue the rivalry for 17 seasons."

In addition to the Carpenter situation, Edds said Virginia Tech added insult to injury when its student yearbook, The Bugle, printed a caricature of U.Va. Athletics Director William Lambeth preening "Pure Athletics" while handing a $100 bill to a football player behind his back.

"That insult to Lambeth's honor, after Virginia Tech was the team guilty of having an ineligible player, was most likely the final straw," Edds added.

Virginia and Virginia Tech would not play again until 1923. It was by far the longest intermission ever between the two football teams. The almost two-decade gap in the rivalry was a direct result of Virginia's anger towards Virginia Tech finally boiling over after years of tension.

"It went on so long, people forget why they didn't like each other," Lazenby said. "They didn't even remember what happened, but they just knew they weren't going to play." In many ways, Carpenter may just be the most influential character in the Cavaliers and Hokies' long, interconnected story. His actions drove a permanent wedge between Virginia and Virginia Tech, one that still exists in the present day — more than a century later. While Carpenter's name may not be universally known today, generations of Virginia and Virginia Tech fans learned to dislike each other because of beliefs that originated from that fateful 1905 game.

Since the rivalry resumed in 1923, Virginia and Virginia Tech have played 92 times. During this stretch of history, countless coaches, players and fans have come and gone. However, one element of the rivalry remains constant — each side's unwavering desire to beat the other, an emotion originally felt by Carpenter 120 years ago.

"There's no shortage of insults the two sides could toss back and forth," Lazenby said. "Fortunately, it's not like politics. In politics today, we're really arguing to the point of genuine hate. With U.Va. and Tech, they still love each other."
As the final whistle blew on a 10-0 defeat, the full-capacity crowd at Scott Stadium dispersed and only pockets of maroon and orange-covered Hokie fans remained celebrating in Charlottesville. That November 2017 evening, Micah Kiser should have been distraught with having ended his legendary career at Virginia without ever beating in-state rival Virginia Tech.

The decorated linebacker, however, scanned the locker room while holding his #53 jersey for the very last time and cradled a subtle smile as he watched the team's freshmen and sophomores break down the game only minutes after it had ended — it was then that Kiser knew the streak of losing to Virginia Tech wouldn't last much longer.

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Virginia legend Micah Kiser reflects on the rivalry

THE RIVALRY ISSUE

Muhammad Amjad and Chad Whyc | Sports Writers

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Breaking down the Virginia offense

Following his return from a concussion suffered in the Cavaliers’ third game of the season against NC State, sophomore quarterback Brennan Armstrong has been electric, leading Virginia on a four-game winning streak headlined by a nail-biting 44-41 win over then-No. 15 North Carolina. While he struggled to connect with his receivers early in the season, the Shelby, Ohio native has progressed immensely, finding wide receivers freshman Lavel Davis Jr. and senior RaShawn Henry to be trusted and trusted targets. On the ground, Armstrong has caused problems for defenses, totaling over 300 yards across his last four games.

Out wide, the spotlight has now been on Davis Jr., who is a contenter for the freshman All-American team despite missing a couple games due to injury. Davis Jr.’s 6-foot-5, 210-pound frame has allowed him to tower over opposing defenders with ease and his safe hands have made him a prime deep threat for Armstrong, tallying 440 receiving yards and five touchdowns. The Dorchester, S.C. native should be a challenge for the smaller Hokie cornerbacks, including juniors Armani Chatman and Brion Murray.

Beyond the receivers, running backs junior Wayne Taulapapa and senior Shane Simpson have been solid in the backfield. The two will face an experienced Virginia Tech front seven that includes senior linebacker Rayshard Ashby and junior linebacker Dax Hollifield. Notably, in the past two games, the Virginia backfield has been quiet, totaling just 53 rushing yards between Simpson and Taulapapa with Armstrong dominating the running and passing game. With the strength of Ashby and Hollifield at the line, expect Coach Bronco Mendenhall to only feature his running backs more if Armstrong is unable to make headway at the start.

Beyond the skill positions, Virginia’s offensive line has markedly improved from last year, allowing just 1.78 sacks per game compared to 2.93 just a season ago. Giving Armstrong time to find his favorite targets. However, with Virginia Tech averaging 3.2 sacks per game this season in part to the ever-present duo of Ashby and Hollifield, the battle at the line of scrimmage will be one to watch all Saturday night.

Previewing Virginia and Virginia Tech football’s 102nd battle for the Commonwealth Cup

The Cavaliers look to win at Lane Stadium for the first time since 1998

Kushal Patel and Aashish Redekulpalli | Sports Writers

Following a tumultuous season that saw the battle for the Commonwealth Cup initially moved from November to September, Virginia (5-4, 4-4 ACC) and Virginia Tech (4-6, 4-5 ACC) now find themselves facing off in December for the first time in history following the game’s postponement due to COVID-19 issues. Nonetheless, the stakes for the upcoming meeting between the storied rivals remain high, with the Commonwealth Cup — and the bragging rights that come with it — up for grabs and the Cup-holding Cavaliers looking to repeat as champions for the first time since 1998.

Virginia’s keys to the game

Neutralize Virginia Tech’s running game

The Hokies come into the Commonwealth Cup with a lot of questions on offense. The top two quarterbacks on the roster — Hooker and Burmeister — left Commonwealth Stadium with injuries, and both their statuses remain in the air for Saturday’s matchup. Should the Hooker and Burmeister injuries keep them out of the clash, Virginia Tech would turn to freshman Knox Kadum, who has never started a game at the collegiate level.

Should an unseasoned Kadum get the nod, the reliance on the running game will grow in an attempt to ease the young quarterback into the game. The Hokies have the weapons to make noise on the ground, however. First, all three quarterbacks have dual-threat abilities, so regardless of who gets the start, the quarterback running game will be implemented. Additionally, Herbert, who some early on believed could make a run at a Heisman trophy this season, has been impressive in pass protection.

Be aggressive against a struggling secondary

After an already-thin Hokie secondary lost projected first round pick Caleb Farley before the season due to COVID-19 concerns, Virginia Tech has seen opposing offenses perform well against them. The unit has allowed 265.9 passing yards per game, which is good for 102nd out of 127 eligible teams in the NCAA database. To make matters worse for the defensive coordinator Justin Hamilton, Armstrong and the Cavaliers offense has been firing on all cylinders against the Hokies, the offensive line has spearheaded by junior offensive lineman Christian Darrisaw, who is a projected first round pick in the upcoming draft, the unit has also been impressive in pass protection and also in the run game for Herbert. Against Boston College, following the loss of Snowden, Virginia did a good job mixing in blitz packages, leading to a four-sack performance from the unit. The Cavaliers will have to replicate that defensive mindset against Virginia Tech. The Hokies do not usually run deep passes and rely on their run game to open up a lot of their options on offense. Thus, packing the box more and sending extra defensive backs and linebackers should not result in many defensive breakdowns. Especially with uncertainty at the quarterback position, expect Virginia to make the Hokie backfield uncomfortable early and often.

The battle for the Commonwealth Cup is slated to kick-off Saturday at 8 p.m. in Blacksburg. The game will be televised on the ACC Network.

Breaking down the Virginia defense

Defensively, the Cavaliers have taken a step back from last year, notably allowing 250 passing yards to Boston College junior back-up quarterback Dennis Grosel in their previous game. The run defense, however, has been solid despite the loss of sophomore nose tackle Jowon Briggs to the transfer portal, as the Cavaliers have allowed just 125.9 rushing yards per game.

Following senior outside linebacker Charles Snowden’s injury in the Ableni Christian contest, junior outside linebacker Noah Taylor will be tasked with keeping the Virginia Tech starting quarterback — which depends on the status of junior quarterbacks Hendon Hooker and Braxton Burmeister — in the pocket and using his length to tip balls and disrupt the Hokies’ passing game. Furthermore, although Hooker — the starter in last year’s game — had his only career game with 300-plus passing yards against Virginia in 2019, Snowden and Taylor helped limit his effectiveness on the ground, holding him to just 44 rushing yards on 21 attempts. With Snowden out, Taylor will have to carry the load Saturday — something that the Maryland native is more than capable of accomplishing.

At inside linebacker, sophomore Nick Jackson and senior Zone Zandier are a formidable duo, with Jackson leading the team with 96 tackles and Zandier right behind him at 74, Zandier, Jackson and defensive lineman seniors Matt Gahn, Adeb Aziariwa and Mandly Alonso, will line up against a dynamic threat in Khalil Herbert. Virginia Tech graduate transfer running back Herbert is a true athletic specimen, boasting the ability to shed tackles with ease and sprint away from defenders with blinding speed. Overall, with any of the dynamic Virginia Tech quarterbacks and Herbert in the backfield, the Virginia front seven will have to stay on their toes.

Finally, the Cavaliers’ secondary has arguably been the weakest link on the team, despite returning seniors in 2019 third-team All-ACC safety Joey Blount and cornerback Nick Grant. Grant covered Hokie leading receiver Tré Turner during the 2019 rendition of the Commonwealth Cup and struggled at times, with Turner posting seven receptions for 14 receiving yards and one touchdown. With Grant having struggled with quick receivers like Turner this season, Blount and the Cavaliers will have to communicate well in order to combat Turner’s strong play-making abilities.

Do not hesitate to send blitzes

In an otherwise down year for the Hokies, the offensive line has been relatively productive, allowing just 22 sacks in nine games. Spearheaded by junior offensive lineman Christian Darrisaw, who is a projected first round pick in the upcoming draft, the unit has been impressive in pass protection and also in the run game for Herbert. Against Boston College, following the loss of Snowden, Virginia did a good job mixing in blitz packages, leading to a four-sack performance from the unit. The Cavaliers will have to replicate that defensive mindset against Virginia Tech. The Hokies do not usually run deep passes and rely on their run game to open up a lot of their options on offense. Thus, packing the box more and sending extra defensive backs and linebackers should not result in many defensive breakdowns. Especially with uncertainty at the quarterback position, expect Virginia to make the Hokie backfield uncomfortable early and often.

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An ex-Hokie compares U.Va. and VT gameday traditions

While the two teams share the same state, their gameday traditions are part of what sets them apart

Andrew Cho | Associate Writer

THE HILL

A staple of beautiful Scott Stadium is the grassy hill on the northwest side of the complex. Known for being full of families on early fall noon kickoffs, or being full of rowdy college students on a Saturday night primetime game on ESPN, the hill is the place to be on gameday. While not quite as well known as Clemson’s Death Valley Hill, where the Clemson players run down right before kickoff, the Scott Stadium Hill is definitely a prime spot to catch a football game. The close proximity to the field also gives students perfect easy access to rush the field after big wins, such as last year’s Commonwealth Clash.

CAVMAN ON HIS HORSE

While the costumed CavMan roams the sidelines during Virginia football games, the actual Cavalier riding his horse during halftime is a sight to behold. Many schools have live mascots, such as Uga the Bulldog at Georgia, Mike the Tiger from LSU and the War Eagle from Auburn, but we actually have two — the Cavalier himself and his trusty steed. I still remember the first time I saw him riding on the field as a child and was startled by the fact that they actually let this guy ride a horse on the football field. And of course, who can forget that game against TCU in 2009 where the Cavalier fell off of the horse.

CENTER STREET

This is the place to be on Saturdays. On any given Saturday in Blacksburg, the entire town feels like a ghost town. Dining halls are empty, nobody is walking around the campus, and it just feels eerie. However, as you cross Washington Street towards Center Street, you quickly realize where everyone is. Simply put, Center Street is the location of the biggest tailgate in the state of Virginia. Right next to Lane Stadium, the street gives fans easy access to the game after a wild day of tailgating. Virginia Tech students live for these tailgates in the fall, and cannot be left off of a list of gameday traditions.

SKIPPER THE CANNON

As a university with considerable military background, Virginia Tech is one of six universities in America with an active corp of cadets on campus. With this in mind, it is not a surprise that after every score for the Hokies in Lane Stadium, cadet members shoot the Skipper the Cannon from their practice facility. The loud boom is quite a startling noise, but with a stadium that owns four earthquakes. However, as you cross Washington Street towards Center Street, you quickly realize where everyone is. Simply put, Center Street is the location of the biggest tailgate in the state of Virginia. Right next to Lane Stadium, the street gives fans easy access to the game after a wild day of tailgating. Virginia Tech students live for these tailgates in the fall, and cannot be left off of a list of gameday traditions.

THE GOOD OL’ SONG

While this may not be as rocking and raucous as “Enter Sandman,” the Good Ol’ Song reflects the traditions and ideals of the University. Every true Cavalier fan knows the words, similarly to the Hokie fans and Enter Sandman, but this is definitely a different type of energy. While “Enter Sandman” is only played prior to kickoff, the Good Ol’ Song is played after every score. There is nothing that beats the feeling of connecting with your friends, family and even strangers around you and singing the lyrics to Virginia’s song. While the ad libs to the song reflect a more harsh opinion about Virginia Tech, these two schools have a rivalry that is strong, full of competition and most importantly, here to last.

ENTER SANDMAN

The most energetic and loud entrance in college football has to be “Enter Sandman” at Lane Stadium. Simply put, there is nothing more crazy and exciting than an entire stadium of fans singing the song by Metallica. Every true Hokie fan knows the words to the rock song, and even Metallica themselves have embraced being the figurehead of Virginia Tech football. The Virginia Tech athletic department was recently able to gain rights to the phrase “exit light, enter night” — lyrics from the chorus of the song. The entire stadium jumps up and down during the song’s build up, and when the team runs out of the tunnel during the beat drop, it literally shakes the earth.
In any normal year, Virginia football fans would likely be bickering with their Virginia Tech friends and family about this year’s football game, or wagering friendly bets. This would have been the best year for it in a long time, as the Cavaliers won the rivalry’s game last year after losing in the previous 15 meetings.

Fans of both teams would normally be unwinding after a food-filled Thanksgiving, getting ready to watch the annual Commonwealth Clash the last weekend of November. Well, as you might have noticed, Thanksgiving has passed yet this year's game is set to take place Saturday — in mid-December.

Many aspects of this game are different this season, and it is something we all need to acknowledge. The COVID-19 pandemic has sent shockwaves throughout the college football community and the entire world. During the summer and early fall, the consensus was that a college football season may not even be possible. Most conferences persisted, and a season went on, but that is not without games being canceled, players opting out and everyone having to adjust on the fly.

When the ACC announced Virginia and Virginia Tech's modified schedules before the 2020 season, this game was slated to be both teams' season opener Sept. 19. However, due to COVID-19 issues in the Virginia Tech program, the game was postponed to Dec. 12. Since then, Virginia's schedule has only been disrupted a couple of times. First, its game at Louisville was delayed by one week from Nov. 7 to Nov. 14 and then its game at Florida State Nov. 28 was postponed, and most likely will not be rescheduled. Notably, all three of the Cavaliers' schedules changes this season have been due to COVID-19 concerns with the opposing teams.

While the Hokies have had to deal with their own coronavirus issues, Virginia Tech's football schedule has remained largely undisturbed with no postponements since mid-September. However, Virginia Tech did have around 20 players and coaches unavailable for competition due to positive COVID-19 test results or contact tracing throughout the first five weeks of the season.

When taking a glance around the country, the impact COVID-19 has had on other teams is very apparent. Overall, 122 games in all of college football have been affected by the pandemic throughout the entire season. This includes major programs like Florida State and Wisconsin which have postponed or canceled three games each so far. Some schools — like Michigan and Ohio State — have even had to go on one step further and completely shut down their football programs for days or weeks to control internal COVID-19 outbreaks.

Compared to other teams, the Cavaliers and the Hokies have done phenomenally well in controlling the virus and continuing on with their respective schedules. Between the two, just one game total has been impacted by COVID-19 problems within either program. Putting any extreme outbreaks aside, Saturday’s game should go on as scheduled and it is sure to be a good one.

Both teams are entering the game with similar records — Virginia at 5-4 and Virginia Tech at 4-6. Virginia was expected to take a step back this season — coming off an ACC Coastal Division title and a trip to the Orange Bowl — due to the loss of several key players. Virginia Tech on the other hand began its season ranked No. 20 in the AP Poll and climbed as high as No. 19 before beginning to stumble. However, as every fan of the rivalry knows, records will be tossed out the window once the ball is kicked off at Lane Stadium.

Fans should expect a tight game similar to years past with both quarterbacks leading the way for their teams. Sophomore quarterback Brennan Armstrong has led the Cavaliers to four consecutive victories and has been solid this season with 1,858 yards and 16 touchdowns through the air as well as 529 rushing yards and five scores on the ground. Although the Hokies have dropped four straight games, junior quarterback Hendon Hooker has been mostly effective, passing for 1,339 yards, rushing for 620 yards and five scores on the ground. Alabama has led the Cavaliers to four consecutive victories and has been solid this season with 1,858 yards and 16 touchdowns through the air as well as 529 rushing yards and five scores on the ground.

When you are watching Virginia battle Virginia Tech Saturday, think about everything these teams — and even you — have been through and overcome the last few months. On top of that, celebrate the end of another exciting college football season and, hopefully soon, the end of the pandemic. That being said, I certainly wouldn’t mind celebrating a Virginia win too.
Virginia Tech closes out the COVID football season with rivalry game

CLAIRE CASTAGNO
sports editor

In this bizarre 2020 season, Rivalry Week means a little more than usual this year, especially for Virginia Tech and UVA. After the chaos of COVID-19 postponed the season opener rivalry game to Dec. 12, it was uncertain whether college football as a whole would even make it this far. Both programs have struggled with COVID-19 complications, but the rivalry game is set for this Saturday at 8 p.m. Numerous other teams have had to cancel their rivalry games for this weekend.

This season held many great highlights for both teams, but in the future, the 2020 football season will be most remembered by the fact that college football was able to have a season in the midst of a global pandemic. Coaches, managers and medical staff had to reinvent the way they go about doing their jobs to save the college football season, and players had to be cautious knowing that their football season could be taken away at any moment.

Virginia Tech opened up the season with a win against N.C. State while having 23 players and defensive coordinator Justin Hamilton out due to the virus. Having to make these last minute adjustments on and off the field and still coming away with a victory, the Hokies should feel confident going into the UVA game and that despite their hardships with the virus, COVID-19 is a global pandemic, and the playing field is leveled. The rivalry matchup will be a contest between two football teams, not a contest to see which school handled the pandemic better.

“You’ve got to find a way to adjust,” said head coach Justin Fuente back in September. “If you can’t adjust, then you’re not going to give your kids a chance to have success.”

As sad as it will be that the football season is concluding, I think everyone involved will be letting out a sigh of relief that life can return to somewhat normalcy. No more Zoom press conferences, frequent COVID tests and bad news. But right now, Virginia Tech only has one goal: to win its last game of the season and bring the Commonwealth Cup home again.

Which team are you rooting for?

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2020 Edition of the Commonwealth Clash TBD

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<td>1995</td>
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Hokies’ Best Wins

By CT Sports Staff
PLAYERS TO WATCH: VT vs. UVA

Here are some players to keep an eye on heading into the Commonwealth Cup.

**Virginia Tech**

**RB Raheem Blackshear**
Blackshear was recently granted immediate eligibility by the NCAA, and it couldn’t come at a better time for the Hokies. By all reports, Blackshear has been one of the best players on offense in camp with his versatility and explosiveness. He should start at running back but should also see a lot of action in the slot. Look for him to go over 100 yards from scrimmage and likely find the endzone once or twice.

**OT Christian Darrisaw**
Darrisaw is the leader of the Virginia Tech offensive line, and he will be key to Virginia Tech’s offense if they are to retake the Commonwealth Cup. The Cavaliers have two dangerous pass rushers in Noah Taylor and Charles Snowden. Darrisaw is the most important part of a talented but young offensive line, and his ability to create security both in the run and the passing game will be crucial to the team’s success.

**CB Jermaine Waller**
Waller was expected to be one of the Hokies’ top players even before Caleb Farley opted out of the season. Now he will have to push for All-American honors to recoup for the production lost in Farley’s exit. He’ll have to stand out Saturday in order to slow down talented UVA wide receiver Terrell Jana. If Waller is up to the challenge, there’s hope for the Hokies.

**UVA**

**WR Terrell Jana**
Jana was the Cavaliers’ second leading receiver last season on a roster that included 1,000 yard receiver Hasise Dubois and now NFL-receiver Joe Reed. Jana is adept at making catches in traffic and creating yards after the catch, which could create problems for the Virginia Tech secondary if they aren’t fully prepared for him. Look for young quarterback Brennan Armstrong to throw to him often, especially in the slot.

**OLB Noah Taylor**
Taylor got to Hendon Hooker early in last year’s matchup with a sack in the first quarter. His speed off the edge will be a real challenge for the Hokies, and the running backs and tight ends will need to be ready to pick him up in pass protection. The junior had 7.5 sacks last season, and he’ll be looking to continue that production this year.

**OLB Charles Snowden**
Snowden is one of UVA’s leaders and Taylor’s terrifying twin coming off the opposite edge. He also had a sack in last year’s matchup, but he brings more value setting the edge in the run game. He may be tough for tackle Silas Dzansi to handle, so be ready to hear his name called in the matchup.
The greatest rivalries in history include the Hatfields and the McCoys, Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton, and Virginia Tech and UVA. On Dec. 12 another sequel in the ongoing duel will take place, this time without fans in Lane to cheer on the Hokies. However, the heart of every person in Hokie Nation will be there.

Logan MacDonald, a current Virginia Tech student, recounts what the atmosphere on campus is usually like in anticipation of the big game.

"It’s electric and buzzing. In the dorms that’s all anybody was prepping for," MacDonald said.

Haley Galliher, a junior at Tech, highlights the same energetic feeling within the streets of Blacksburg.

"[There’s] lots of Hokie pride because all we want to do is win, especially when it comes to UVA," Galliher said.

This year will be different with the absence of students and fans attending the game, but that same spirit will still be felt throughout Blacksburg because this is more than a game — it’s an event that will further bring the Hokie community together amidst this often uncertain and isolating time.

Morgan Martin, a Hokie alumna, sees this vicious competition as the opposite of what most people would; she sees it as a unifying game.

“It brings people together. (It’s part of) becoming a Hokie,” Martin said.

This rivalry runs deeper than just a game. It is ingrained into the lives, relationships and families of many. Nikki Kohl, a sophomore at Tech, has a sister who went to UVA, and the rivalry has become a part of their life and traditions.

"We try to get (our) dad to wear our (schools’) merchandise and whoever can get (him) to wear their merchandise wins," Kohl said.

Galliher has the opposite experience since her entire family consists of Hokie fans.

“Growing up, having a family that is entirely made up of Virginia Tech fans … we always take this very seriously, and we always want to be number one, especially when you dedicate as much time and effort to a university as we have over generations,” Galliher said.

MacDonald reiterates this same dedication to the school and the rivalry.

“We want Virginia Tech to win (every game), but even if we lose people still have a good time,” MacDonald said. “With UVA it’s a more emotional investment. You can feel the whole stadium clenching their fist. Just a lot of bad blood.”

This year that feeling of tense excitement from fans will only be felt from outside the walls of Lane and will instead be present in the homes of every fan and student. The empty seats will be an eerie sight compared to the usually packed stadium.

Virginia Tech football games are best known for their iconic “Enter Sandman” entrance and the electrifying energy from the fans as they cheer on the players. The lack of this momentum and support will undoubtedly be felt by the team.

Martin stated that she believes this will have a huge impact on the game, citing that the fans undoubtedly motivate the players.

Kohl agreed that this energy is instrumental in the game.

“The hype is definitely helpful in the game,” Kohl said. “They always tell the players to forget about the crowd, but it has an impact.”

MacDonald also feels that the absence of fans will leave a noticeable mark on this matchup due to the usual atmosphere of Virginia Tech games.

“Virginia Tech is known to have one of the best homefield advantages . . . We’ve registered on the Richter scale,” MacDonald said.

He continued saying this is nothing to worry about in terms of performance of Virginia Tech players.

“Players still know what’s on the line. It won’t affect their playing and skill,” MacDonald said.

Fans or no fans, the game will go on; the rivalry will continue. It will continue to bring people together, create memories, build traditions and make Hokie Nation a stronger family. The eyes of every Virginia Tech fan will be glued to a screen this Saturday as they chant “Let’s Go Hokies” in their maroon and orange and celebrate every touchdown with friends and family, whether that be virtually, through social media or with 6-feet apart air high fives. Hokie Nation will remain united in the fight to defeat UVA.
Love is surprisingly in the air

Get to know these Hokie and Cavalier couples.

EMILY CARTER
lifestyles editor

It’s no secret that Hokies and Cavaliers are rivals. There have been years of wins, losses, fights and Commonwealth Cups. Even though the competition between the schools are strong, it didn’t get in the way of these four couples finding love.

Deepa Gajulapalli is a junior at Virginia Tech studying human development and David Ahmadi is a third year attending UVA studying political science. They both plan to graduate in 2022.

Collegiate Times: How did you meet?

Deepa Gajulapalli: We actually met in Elementary school, but we didn’t start dating until high school. We lived really close to each other and we were both friends growing up. During our senior year, we had one of those cliché love stories. I was going to date someone else and then (David) said he liked me so we started dating.

CT: What is your favorite memory visiting your boyfriend at UVA?

DG: We sat on the Lawn. It’s not as great as the Drillfield, but their Rotunda is really nice and we (would just sit) there. I had been to UVA before and it was nice going with him. It was a nice picnic-y area and we just walked around. I had just gotten into my a cappella group at the time and a UVA a cappella group was singing outside so I got to see how that worked at a different school.

CT: Does your boyfriend have a favorite memory of him visiting you at Virginia Tech?

DG: It was my birthday during freshman year and there was a football game at Tech (again) against William and Mary and we went with a couple of my friends. It was really fun. I got thrown up in the air… and it was really cool because (David) was cheering for Virginia Tech.

CT: Is there a big rivalry between you and your boyfriend when it comes to Virginia Tech and UVA?

DG: When it comes to football, even though I’m not a big sports fan, I (just love) the atmosphere at Tech. (But, there) was a bit of a rivalry this year. This past year was very very disappointing. I’m always rooting for Tech. When he came to my house last year (to watch the game) two of my cousins that went to UVA were there staying with us and that kind of sucked because there was one against three.

Zayan Chowdhary is a Hokie studying political science and his girlfriend, Emma Spence is a Cavaliers studying media studies. Chowdhary plans to graduate in 2022 and Spence plans to graduate in 2023.

Collegiate Times: How did you meet?

Zayan Chowdhary: At the gym. Me and my best friend always worked out together. We had another friend that was kind of close to us, and she would work out at the same time as us and then she started bringing her friend, (who was my future) girlfriend. So we started hanging out and doing our own thing.

CT: Do you have any traditions when you visit each other at UVA or Virginia Tech?

Emma Spence: We usually try to find somewhere new to eat when he comes to (UVA) and we do the same thing (at Tech). This is his first year at Tech so we’ve been trying to explore and not eat at the same place twice. I really like the Mexican restaurant on the main strip, El Rodeo and at Tech there’s a dumpling place we really like and we just found a new restaurant and a new spot that’s also become one of our favorites.

CT: Is there a big rivalry between you two when Virginia Tech and UVA play?

ZC: She’s not as competitive as I am about (the rivalry) but (it was big) when UVA won the national championship in basketball a few years ago. But everyone knows Tech is better in football, so in a week or two I’m hoping they win (against UVA).

CT: Do you have any plans for the future?

ES: We both kind of have broad job spectrums so I think we really want to travel a lot. I’m not too keen on settling down right away and we want to see a lot of different places. We want to go to a lot of cool resorts and places like Thailand.

Austin and Katelyn Kaminski have been together for nine years. Austin went to Virginia Tech and Katelyn attended UVA. They both graduated in 2016.

Collegiate Times: How did you meet?

Austin Kaminski: We met at a Relay for Life (in 2011, in high school), and we kind of had mutual friends in common and that was the first time we really hung out. She’ll claim she made the first move over Facebook, but she messaged me on Facebook Messenger after the event and we started hanging out, and then it went from there.

CT: Do you have a favorite memory visiting your now wife at UVA?

AK: We would try to see each other twice a month. I would go up there every weekend, and she would go the next. But I used to go to a lot of UVA games even if Tech wasn’t playing. It was really nice getting to know (my wife’s) friends when I would visit.

CT: Does your wife have a favorite memory visiting you at Virginia Tech?

AK: She’s going to hate me for saying this, but she likes the atmosphere better at Virginia Tech than at UVA and also the food. The first thing we would always do, whenever she would come up, is to go to the dining hall and go to Owens. There was a place in Owens she really liked.

CT: Since you met your now wife in high school, did you have difficulty deciding where to go to college?

AK: Not really. I’ve always wanted to go to Virginia Tech since I was a little kid and she always wanted to go to UVA since she was little. Her dad went to UVA. I think she was born when her dad was still at UVA so she literally grew up in Charlottesville. I think we always understood it was not a huge deal for us.

Scott Bennett went to Virginia Tech and graduated in 1991, and his wife Julie attended UVA and graduated in 1994. They got married in June 1994. They have two children, Sierra who is a sophomore at Virginia Tech, and Caleb, a senior in high school.

CT: How did you two meet?

Julie Bennett: My (high school) boyfriend at the time was a freshman on the varsity wrestling team, and my boyfriend’s sister was the same age as Scott… and my boyfriend’s sister had a crush on Scott… And she kept wanting to go to school functions, school, social functions, and whatever, to try to interact with Scott more and kind of get to know him and possibly try to date him, but she was nervous and scared, so she kept asking me to go with her, and then, (at) one of the functions she got called into work and she couldn’t go, but I still went with some friends and whatever, and so Scott and I, you know, talked some and this and that. And I came home from that and called (my boyfriend’s) sister and I said, um, I can’t be your go between anymore because I think he’s getting the wrong messages. I think he’s starting to like me because I’m the one communicating all this and it’s missing the whole factor of you like him instead of me. And she was like, ‘Hey, it didn’t work. If you want to go out with him, (then) go out with him…and so we (didn’t go) out until the day of his graduation.

CT: Do you have a favorite memory visiting your wife at UVA?

AK: We were going to date someone else and then we decided to go to a new sandwich spot that’s also a UVA a cappella group was singing outside so I got to see how that worked at a different school.

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Scott Bennett: We had both graduated... and I think that was like '99 or 2000. Michael Vick touchdown against West Virginia. We actually watched that on the jumbotron at Scott stadium, because we had gone there for the UVA and Georgia Tech game. The Tech and West Virginia game was just finishing up, Tech was losing. So they put it up on the jumbotron for all the UVA fans to root against Tech then Michael Vick scurries down the sideline and gets into the field goal position. And we win the game and like the last second played it. And it was so awesome being one guy there, cheering that on. Everybody else was just so dejected.

CT: Do you have a favorite memory visiting your husband at Virginia Tech?

JB: (I'd) visit Scott and his friends during the day and one day he, I guess, had gone to class or something. So I was hanging out with his friends. So, you know, it’s nice out and they’re all out, like throw the football or baseball or something around like in the, the kind of grass area around the dorm. And, um, and

SB: All of my friends would give our kids tech stuff. None of her friends would get any of our kids UVA stuff.

Where you go to college doesn’t matter to these students and alumni. Long distance can be hard but these stories are proof that love conquers all — even if you’re dating a Cavalier.
Many Hokies would be surprised to learn that Metallica’s eponymous fifth album, with its trademark black background and snake motif, was their least heavy album up to that point. As one of thrash metal’s Big Four, along with Megadeth, Slayer, and Anthrax, Metallica made a name for themselves in the late eighties for metal music that was fast, hard, and brutal. But the album that boasts “Enter Sandman” as its opening track was Metallica’s break into the mainstream. And like any previously niche act that goes mainstream, there was a backlash, the all too familiar accusations of selling out, of pandering, etc., etc.

That doesn’t stop Hokies from registering on the Richter scale, of course. According to “Sports Illustrated”, the Hokies first began using “Enter Sandman” as its opening track was Metallica’s break into the mainstream. According to “Sports Illustrated”, the Hokies first began using “Enter Sandman” as its opening track was Metallica’s break into the mainstream. According to a WRAL interview of Dr. Martin Chapman, at the time an associate geoscience professor at Virginia Tech, due to the ground underneath Lane Stadium and Cassell Coliseum being mostly solid rock, any sizable vibration on top is going to travel significantly and possibly get picked up by a nearby seismograph. Since earthquakes are technically just any kind of noticeable vibration of the crust’s topmost layers, it stands to reason that the sheer force of an entire stadium of jumping Hokies would register as one.

This has occurred a handful of times over the course of the last decade or so, with seismic activity registering both during the entrance itself as well as game changing moments during play. Since Seismographs measure the time at which activity is detected, it is relatively easy to match up certain disturbances with activity in Lane Stadium. The seismic activity caused by tens of thousands of jumping fans doesn’t ultimately result in anything that can be felt or cause serious alterations to the local topography, but the mere fact that human activity can register on a device designed to alert people to the presence of a natural disaster is a testament to the Hokies’ intense and exuberant fanbase.

“Enter Sandman” is one of the most emblematic sports anthems in American history, being instantly recognizable as Virginia Tech’s battle song. It rather goes without saying that the adoption of this song had a significant impact on the Virginia Tech community over the course of the last decade and change, and the fact that Hokie Nation has literally rocked the Earth time and again for their team to the tune of this hunk of heavy metal will stand as one of the benchmarks of sports fandom for generations to come.
How a high school friendship laid the groundwork for the Virginia Tech vs. UVA rivalry challenge

The editors-in-chief of The Cavalier Daily and the Collegiate Times have been friends for almost eight years.

CAREY OAKES
lifestyles staff writer

Nik Popli, the editor-in-chief of The Cavalier Daily and Ashley Long, the editor-in-chief of The Collegiate Times, not only have the same title at their respective collegiate newspapers, but the pair also coincidentally has a long friendship that dates back to 9th grade in the halls of Langley High School. Only this year, did the two students reconnect to develop a fundraising competition and a joint print issue between the two newspapers. Had it not been for the duo's history, this new installment in the Hokie vs. Hoo rivalry would not have come to fruition.

Nik and Ashley sat in Langley's journalism classroom when they were assigned their first article together. Nik recalls, “We didn’t know how to do an interview or anything. So we just walked around the school to try to find teachers and students to interview, and we walked into the teachers lounge…We acted like we owned the place.”

The pair of aspiring journalists, who left the room only after the resident chemistry teacher yelled “Read the sign on the door,” she said, “It says ‘teachers only.’”

Despite the pair’s gruff introduction to the journalism field, Nik and Ashley remained in journalism courses together until they both served on the leadership team their senior year of high school. The two reminisce fondly about late nights spent working in the classroom after school hours while their teacher ordered them Chinese food.

The media industry has always held a special place in their hearts. Nik’s promposal to Ashley even incorporated Langley magazine’s website. “I was sitting at the front of the room just on my laptop, and he came over. He said, ‘Oh the website’s down. Can you look at it?’” I pulled it up, and every single story on the front page of the website was a picture of the two of us…It said, ‘Ashley, let’s make headlines at Prom!’” Ashley said.

As all good things do, high school came to an end. Nik departed for Charlottesville to study media studies, while Ashley made the trek down to Blacksburg to study public relations. Like many high school friendships, the pair fell slightly out of touch. So much so, that they were unaware that they held the editor-in-chief positions at their rival collegiate newspapers.

Nik discovered Ashley’s involvement at the CT through a professor. Nik said, “He was telling me about good reporting done by other colleges and how we can model ourselves in a similar way. He mentioned an article that Ashley wrote on sexual assault at VT… I was thinking to myself, ‘I know an Ashley. I’m pretty sure she’s involved with the student newspaper there. So that’s when I first got the hunch that Ashley was highly involved in the CT’”

Likewise, Ashley didn’t realize Nik was the editor-in-chief of The Cavalier Daily until she began researching ways to formulate a rivalry week between the two media organizations.

The contending newspapers are independent and therefore exempt from school funding. In the wake of COVID-19, the newspapers have seen a sharp decrease in advertising dollars. This unique fundraising campaign is all the more important to generate revenue. Beyond the monetary aspect, however, the editors-in-chief are excited to reproduce more excitement for the Commonwealth Clash considering the fact that the game will take place in a relatively empty Lane Stadium.

Nik and Ashley have had their fair share of competition, but above all else this challenge has unexpectedly reignited their friendship. Ashley said, “I wanted to find a way to make it known that it was all in fun…People don’t need something else to be divided over, right?”

Media, and local media at that, is a platform that binds us together. In a day and age when a health crisis and the economy threaten that facet of our lives, it’s community and teamwork that foster the relationship between the media and an audience. Nik said, “We are, right now, navigating college life during a global health pandemic. It’s more important than ever for us to stay connected, listen to each other, tell important stories, and hold our leaders accountable. In order to do that, we really need to work together, and I think this rivalry competition really helps us to do that.”

Together, Nik and Ashley aroused a familiar fervor throughout the student bodies during this semester when excitement and school spirit feel like memories from a bygone era. After all, 2020 continues to have surprises in store; even high school friendships are rekindled in the midst of an entrenching collegiate feud.