



josh HYMAN
eddie ROYAL

ONE LAST CATCH

justin HARPER
josh MORGAN



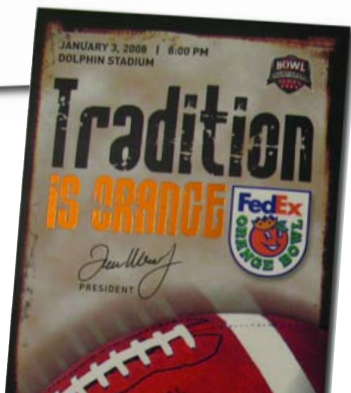
Four years spent together culminates in Miami

By Nathan Warters / twarters@newsadvance.com / (434) 385-5540



BLACKSBURG — They became friends before playing time ever became an issue. They had playbooks to memorize. Virginia Tech wide receivers Justin Harper, Josh Hyman, Josh Morgan and Eddie Royal were all precocious freshmen when they arrived for preseason practice in August of 2004. They weren't jealous of each other. There was no time. Harper, Morgan and Royal were trying to get used to college life (Hyman red shirted in 2003). They spent most of their time together in meetings and at practice. Soon, they were sharing meals at Buffalo Wild Wings and playing marathon sessions of college football on PlayStation2.

Please see **CATCH**, Page D3



Virginia Tech photos

College Football Cook and Simpson not on trip

By Jay Jenkins
Media General News Service

CHARLOTTESVILLE — Apparently, Virginia's traveling party to Florida was light in numbers.

According to multiple sources, starting cornerback Chris Cook and starting tailback Mikell Simpson were not a part of the group headed to the Gator Bowl.

What that means, however, remains unseen.

Virginia coach Al Groh was unavailable for a previously scheduled teleconference on Wednesday, and a school representative, media relations assistant Mike Colley, declined to answer questions.

"Coach Groh would be the one to speak with about personnel matters," Colley said from Jacksonville, Fla., the site of Tuesday's contest against Texas Tech (8-4).

On Wednesday, WCAV (CBS-19) reported that Cook, with luggage in tow, did not board the team bus outside the McCue Center on Christmas Day.

It remains unclear at this time if either player has been ruled out of the contest against the Red Raiders. As is often the case, appeals or late academic work complicate the matter. In 2005, Virginia's last bowl appearance, former defensive end Kwakou Robinson did not learn that he was ineligible to play in the Music City Bowl against Minnesota until the day prior to the contest.

"There was a question throughout the preparation about his eligibility," Groh said following the Cavaliers' win over the Golden Gophers. "We were well aware of it, but we had until five o'clock for it to be solved. Were it not solved by five o'clock (on Thursday), by NCAA rules, he would have been ineligible to participate, which was the case."

Groh is scheduled to meet with reporters today.



Cook



Simpson

NFL

Game to be seen on CBS, NBC

New England's attempt at a perfect record will be simulcast on three different TV channels

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — After weeks of insisting they wouldn't cave in, NFL officials did just that Wednesday.

Now all of America can see the Patriots' shot at history.

Saturday night's game between New England and the New York Giants on the NFL Network, which is available in fewer than 40 percent of the nation's homes with TVs, will be simulcast on CBS and NBC.

The Patriots could become the first NFL team to go 16-0 in the regular season.

Please see **HISTORY**, Page D6



Patriots vs. Giants Saturday, 8 p.m.



WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION

College Football



Purdue needs a last-second field goal to win the Motor City Bowl in Detroit
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In Friday's paper

Get ready for the all-area athletes of the fall



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NBA: Celtics @ Sonics
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