

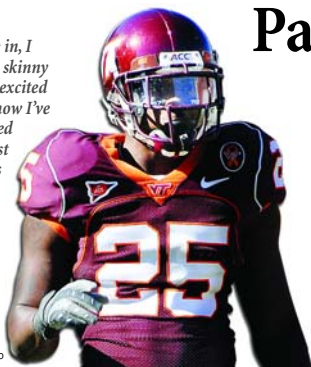


INSIDE:
Pittsburgh Steelers QB
Ben Roethlisberger has a
big night against the Rams
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'When I came in, I was a little skinny freshman ... I was excited to be here. To see how I've grown and matured and started the last three years, it feels pretty good.'

D.J. Parker,
Tech senior safety



Virginia Tech photo

Parker shines despite anonymity

The Hokies' senior is perfectly fine being outside of the spotlight

By **Nathan Warters**
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BLACKSBURG — D.J. Parker probably deserved better. He's been the starting free safety on one of the nation's best defenses for three years, yet all he could muster from a bunch of knucklehead sportswriters was honorable mention all-ACC.

Parker holds that honor very dearly, though. How could a guy who's made a living off of being an anonymous playmaker his entire college career explain taking home bigger postsea-

Virginia Tech vs. Kansas



Jan. 3, 2008
8 p.m., FOX

son hardware? Fortunately for him, he doesn't have to.

He's still one of the most overlooked members of Virginia Tech's vaunted defense.

"I like being the low-key guy," said the 6-foot, 198-pound senior. "I don't like being in the spotlight. That's not my style. I'm glad that Xavier Adibi and

Vince Hall and Brandon Flowers, all those guys get the recognition, because those guys are great players. All I want to do is when I leave here, I want people to say he is a hard worker, he's a team player, he cared about his team a lot and he just wanted to win ballgames."

Parker has nothing to worry about. His shelf might not be lined with awards, but he's done his job better than anybody could have expected when he first arrived in Blacksburg in 2004.

An undersized and unheralded recruit — he was 5-11, 165 pounds and Tech provided Please see **PARKER**, Page D8

HIGH SCHOOL SWIMMING | Minutemen standouts



Staff photo by Kim Raff

THE BIG FISH

Liberty High's trio is making a big splash

By **Ted Allen** / tallen@newsadvance.com / (434) 385-5527

BEDFORD — John Fisher grew up on the James River, but never swam competitively until his freshman year at Liberty High.

"Living in Big Island, the only place you could really swim was in the river," said Fisher, who took up canoeing and other outdoors sports on that

stretch of the James, which is treacherous for swimmers.

Fisher, now a senior, multiple-event standout for the Minutemen, found a safe harbor for swimming at the Bedford Area YMCA, and has rapidly developed into the fastest fish in his school.

Please see **FISH**, Page D5

WATTS BURKS

JOHN FISHER

ELI WHITE

Boys Basketball Liberty 56, Heritage 54, OT Late buckets from Harmon lift Minutemen

By **Chris Humphreys**
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The first 20 minutes of Liberty's and Heritage's Seminole District boys basketball matchup may not have been action-packed. But the final three minutes of regulation and four minutes of overtime were well worth the wait.

Liberty (4-2, 2-0 Seminole) outscored the Pioneers 25-14 over the

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last 13 minutes and Chris Harmon sank a pair of free throws with 1.6 seconds left in overtime to propel the Minutemen to a 56-54 victory at Heritage on Thursday.

"It was a good high school basket-

ball game," Liberty coach Jeff Monroe said. "Both teams played really hard to the end. We just got the breaks.

"Winning tonight puts Heritage two games behind and that's big because we know they are going to be there at the end."

Harmon was the focal point of the Pioneers' defense as the Minutemen were still without 6-foot-6 center Carlton Payne.

Please see **LIBERTY**, Page D4



Heritage's Mike Petty defends the ball against Liberty's (left) Chris Harmon and Martey Stevens on Thursday night.

Staff photo by Kim Raff

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College Basketball



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