

2008 VMI FOOTBALL MEDIA GUIDE

# LOOKING AT 2008

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# 2008 VMI Preview

INTRO

VMI Football fans may want to keep a roster by their side at all times when following the Keydets this fall.

THIS IS VMI

With just four senior players and two-thirds of the roster listed as freshmen or sophomores eligibility-wise, there will be plenty of new faces to track on the Foster Stadium gridiron.

PREVIEW

The Keydets will also feature plenty of experience, however, with 29 letterwinners and 16 starters returning on both sides of the ball.

First-year head coach Sparky Woods will be charged with assembling the new pieces together with the veteran components to improve and solidify VMI Football's fortunes in the Big South Conference.

COACHES

The Woods Era got its official hands-on start in April when the Keydets took to the practice field with improved roster numbers during spring drills.

The new VMI coach was pleased with the progress the team showed, and how it came together as a hard-working group during spring practice.

PLAYER BIOS

"Overall, we've probably made more progress than I thought we would at this time, so I'm encouraged by that," said Woods after the last scrimmage of spring practice. "We have to continue to battle every day to make sure we get better."

OPPOSITION



**Junior Howard Abegesah was the second straight Keydet to lead the Big South in rushing with 1,121 yards in 2007.**

STAFF

RECORDS

MEDIA

The new Keydet coaching staff faces the challenge of maintaining the offensive momentum shown the last two years by the yard-churning and point-producing spread option attack, while recharging the Keydet defense that has been looking for consistency and identity.

The Keydet offense averaged 402.2 total yards per game in 2007 which was the highest such number in school history, surpassing the 390.0 mark established in 2003. In addition, the 283.2 rushing yards per game last season was a Big South record and ranked fourth in the FCS. VMI also produced four games of 500 yards or more of total offense in 2007, the most such performances in Keydet history. The impressive efforts came against Robert Morris, Presbyterian, Coastal Carolina and Charleston Southern. VMI has also produced back-to-back Big South Conference leading rushers the last two seasons. Howard Abegesah finished with 1,121 yards in 2007, the fourth-highest total in league history after Sean Mizzer ran up 1,022 yards in 2006. VMI also led the Big South in rushing for the second consecutive season.

Headlining this year's offensive returnees are a trio of juniors who will be counted on to keep the offensive machine rolling - slotback Tim Maypray (Madisonville, Ky.), running back Howard Abegesah (Beltsville, Md.) and quarterback Kyle Hughes (Williamsburg, Va.).

Maypray has developed into one of the most dynamic performers to wear a VMI uniform and was named by Lindy's Magazine as the Big South Offensive Preseason Player of the Year. Maypray followed his 2006 Big South Freshman of the Year season by earning All-Big South honors as both a receiver and kick return specialist in 2007. The 5-8 slotback produced five games of 200+ all-purpose yards, including a school- and conference-record 346 yards against Charleston Southern. The versatile Keydet standout also returned two kicks for touchdowns in 2007, the first time a Big South player had accomplished that feat.

Abegesah will again spearhead the VMI ground attack after leading the Keydets in rushing in ten of 11 games last year. He produced five 100-yard rushing games in 2007, the second-highest total in league history, and his 1,121 yards rushing was the eighth-best single-season output in school history. Abegesah worked hard in the spring



**Junior Tim Maypray was voted All-Big South last season at receiver and kick returner.**

improving his blocking technique and ball control, and the Maryland native will look to repeat as an all-conference pick, as well as take aim at another rushing title.

For the fifth-consecutive year, the Keydets will have an experienced signal caller to run the offense as junior Kyle Hughes returns for his third season of play at quarterback. Hughes has shown great poise and presence in his first two years, and had a solid spring practice before a thumb injury sidelined him for the last scrimmage. Hughes is expected back healthy in August camp, and will look to add to his Second Team All-Big South season of a year ago, a campaign during which he piled up over 1,500 yards of total offense.

Behind the three leaders at the skill positions, the Keydets will look to develop several youngsters. At quarterback, redshirt-freshman Cameron Jones and Justin Hickman will vie for the back-up role behind Hughes. Maypray will be backed up by fellow junior Zach Collins (Universal City, Texas) and sophomores Gabe Itoka (Reston, Va.) and Michael Rainey-Wiles (Pittsburgh, Pa.). At the "B" back position, Chaz Jones (Cleveland, Ohio) will vie for playing time behind Abegesah.

The offensive line, despite injuries, was unquestionably a key to VMI's offensive successes last season, and the group returns three starters and another letterman who saw considerable playing time last season. Returning to work in the trenches in front of Maypray,



**Sophomore Josh Wine was the only true freshman to start every game on defense last season.**

Abegesah and Hughes are center James Boatright (Grayson, Ga.), guard George Handler (Quinton, Va.) and guard Bo Wren (Gainesville, Ga.). The trio combined for a combined 31 starts last year and will form a core of experience. Redshirt junior tackle Frank Ellis (Reva, Va.) battled back from injury to gain valuable starting experience last year, and is projected in a starting role at right tackle.

The offensive line received a boost in spring practice when redshirt sophomore Ben Brandt (Forest, Va.) was moved to the O-line during the last two weeks of workouts. Brandt immediately made an impact at left tackle and could develop into a force there with his strength, speed and athleticism.

Three-year letterman Travis Ludden (Fredericksburg, Va.), who has also played interior line, returns to the tight end position and will be backed up by letterman Josh Favaro (Suwanee, Ga.). The receiving corps returns Commonwealth natives Bryan Barnson and Mario Scott. Barnson was one of the offense's biggest surprises of 2007, as the Chesapeake native was second on the team in receiving yardage (292) and catches (13). Barnson helped stretch defenses as a deep threat, as did Staunton native Scott, who averaged 13.4 yards per catch with 10 receptions in 2007.

The defense will employ a new 3-4 alignment, transformed from a four-man front that was used the last two seasons. Thirteen letterwinners and eight starters return from a unit looking to rebound from a long 2007 campaign.

The defensive front returns three starters in senior left end Andy Viola (Broadway, Va.), sophomore nose tackle Josh Wine (Fredericksburg, Va.), and redshirt sophomore Damiso Alexander (Richmond, Va.).

Viola will provide leadership on the defensive line as a returning two-year starter. Wine played and started all 11 games at nose tackle last season, and was the only true freshman to start every game on defense last year. He led the Keydet down linemen in tackles and fumble recoveries while also posting six tackles-for-loss. Alexander showed promise at defensive end last season and is looking to establish himself as a full-time starter this fall.

The line could also have its best depth in years with a trio of red-shirt freshmen - ends Aaron Blue (Suwanee, Ga.), Emilio Calvin (Woodbridge, Va.) and tackle Sam Palmer (Smyrna, Ga.) all appear to be ready to contribute after sitting out last year.

Redshirt junior linebacker Patrick McKinney (Big Stone Gap, Va.) will move from inside to outside linebacker and will line up opposite redshirt sophomore Kyle Nikmard (Katy, Texas). McKinney

is a proven performer who has emerged as a leader on the team and has led the team in tackles for two consecutive years. Last year, McKinney's total of 78 tackles ranked seventh in the Big South Conference. Nikmard will be looking to expand his role as a full-time starter after earning three mid-season starts last year.

Projected as possible starters at inside linebacker are senior Jacob Rochester (Dallas, Texas) and redshirt freshman A.J. Gross (Waldorf, Md.). Rochester, a two-time FCS Academic All-Star, should see plenty of playing time at inside linebacker, while Gross could be an impact player with his quickness and play-making ability. Also looking to get into the mix at inside linebacker will be redshirt sophomores Jack Curtis (Fairfax, Va.), Mike Hutchings (Lexington, Va.) and redshirt freshman Alex Ray (Roanoke, Va.).

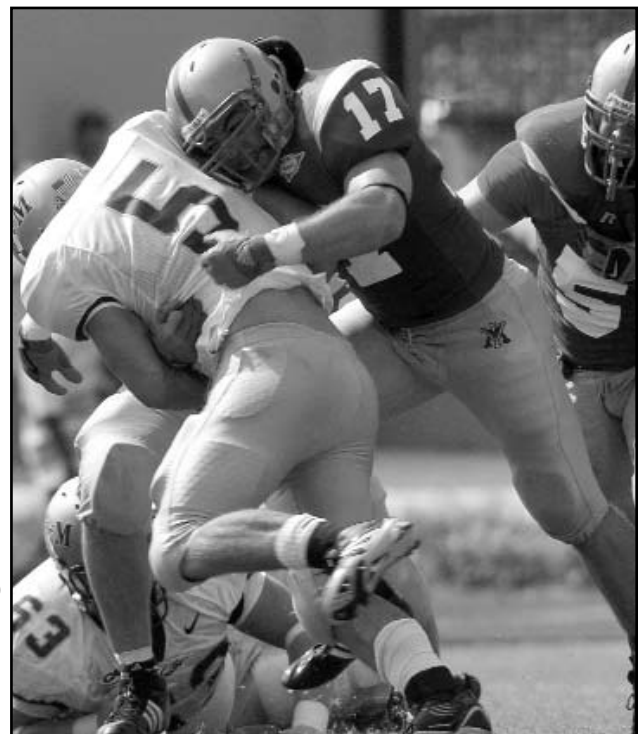
The secondary two-deep will feature a combination of the familiar and new faces, as four lettermen will combine with a quartet of players who will be getting their first taste of action this year. Veteran Levi Swindell (Elk Grove, Calif.) and redshirt freshman Byron Allen (Massaponax, Va.) are leading candidates to start at cornerback, but two-year letterman Bryant Youngblood (Youngstown, Ohio) will also push for playing time.

Swindell has 16 career starts and can also play strong safety, while Youngblood moved into the starting role at free safety at the mid-season mark in '07, and remained in that role for the remainder of the year.

The strong safety slot appears solid with red-shirt sophomore Kris Ware (Chesapeake, Va.) returning to the field after a year's absence. Ware emerged from spring drills as a projected starter, but three-year letterman Keith Taylor (Mechanicsville, Va.) will push for playing time as well. The pair will combine to account for the deepest and most experienced position in the defensive backfield. The free safety position will feature two speedsters who will be seeing their first collegiate action this season. Tyler Reedy (Canton, Ga.) and Tracy Hairston (Martinsville, Va.) have both demonstrated they are capable of handling the responsibility of this crucial position, and the duo is expected to give the Keydet secondary some of its best athleticism in years.

Sophomore Patrick Sweeney (Richmond, Va.) who handled placekicking and kickoff chores last season, will concentrate on punting this fall as quarterback Kyle Hughes relinquishes his punting duties to focus on QB. The place-kicker role remains a question mark entering August camp and will have to be resolved prior to the opener.

If the Keydets can continue their offensive success and match it with improved defensive play, VMI could see a turnaround in its football fortunes faster than some would expect. No doubt, the experience and veteran leadership at key positions throughout the squad bodes well for the future of the young, new-look VMI football squad.



**Junior linebacker Patrick McKinney has led VMI in tackles each of the last two seasons.**

# 2008 VMI Roster

No.	Name	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/Previous School
1	Trae Watkins	DB	Fr.	5-11	180	Lynchburg, Va./Virginia Episcopal
2	Bryan Barnson*	WR	So.	5-11	175	Chesapeake, Va./Western Branch
3	Mario Scott*	WR	So.	5-11	170	Staunton, Va./Randolph-Macon Academy
4	Tracy Hairston	DB	R-Fr.	6-1	185	Martinsville, Va./Martinsville
5	Bryant Youngblood**	CB	Jr.	5-10	180	Youngstown, Ohio/Youngstown Ursuline
6	Gabe Itoka*	SB	So.	5-6	180	Reston, Va./South Lakes
7	A.J. Gross	LB	R-Fr.	5-10	220	Waldorf, Md./Westlake
8	Kyle Nikmard*	LB	R-So.	5-10	215	Katy, Texas/Taylor
9	Michael Rainey-Wiles*	SB	So.	5-9	170	Pittsburgh, Pa./North Hills
11	T.J. Guthrie	DT	R-So.	6-2	245	Pittsburgh, Pa./North Allegheny
12	Cameron Jones	QB	R-Fr.	6-0	200	Austin, Texas/Stephen F. Austin
13	Geoff Dinneen	DB	R-Fr.	5-10	185	Boulder Creek, Calif./San Lorenzo Valley
14	Kyle Hughes**	QB	Jr.	6-3	190	Williamsburg, Va./Lafayette
15	Chris Otersen	WR	R-Fr.	6-3	200	Springfield, Va./Robert E. Lee
16	Justin Hickman	QB	R-Fr.	6-0	185	Brandon, Fla./Armwood
17	Patrick McKinney**	LB	R-Jr.	6-3	245	Big Stone Gap, Va./Powell Valley
19	Levi Swindell**	SS	Jr.	6-0	190	Elk Grove, Calif./Franklin/FUMA
20	Joe Taylor**	LB	R-Jr.	5-11	200	Richmond, Va./Benedictine
21	Keith Taylor***	S	Sr.	6-2	190	Mechanicsville, Va./Lee-Davis
22	Byron Allen	DB	R-Fr.	5-10	185	Massaponax, Va./Massaponax/FUMA
23	Chaz Jones	RB	R-Fr.	5-11	220	Cleveland, Ohio/Glenville
24	Zach Collins**	SB	Jr.	5-10	200	Universal City, Texas/Randolph
25	Rajah Jenkins	SB	Fr.	5-8	165	Staunton, Va./ R.E. Lee
26	Kris Ware*	SS	R-So.	5-11	211	Chesapeake, Va./Deep Creek
27	Drew Luxhoj	SB	R-Fr.	5-9	170	Glen Allen, Va./Deep Run
28	Tim Maypray**	SB	Jr.	5-8	165	Madisonville, Ky./Randolph-Macon Academy
29	Greg Walker	CB	Fr.	5-9	165	Waldorf, Md./ Westlake
30	Chris Conte	WR	R-Fr.	5-9	170	Tampa, Fla./Plant
31	Howard Abegeah**	RB	Jr.	6-0	220	Beltsville, Md./High Point
32	Julian Bowers	LB	R-Fr.	5-10	225	Richmond, Va./Clover Hill
34	Juan Thrasher	FS	Fr.	5-10	170	Carrollton, Tex./Creekview
35	Jacob Rochester***	LB	Sr.	5-10	213	Dallas, Texas/Bishop Lynch
36	Mike Louthan	LB	R-So.	6-0	210	Richmond, Va./Douglas Freeman
37	Tyler Reedy	FS	R-Fr.	5-10	175	Canton, Ga./Sequoyah
38	Bobby Epps	RB	Fr.	6-1	210	Gainesville, Ga./North Hall
40	Patrick Sweeney*	P	So.	6-3	190	Richmond, Va./Mills Godwin
41	T.J. Talley	SB	Fr.	5-10	190	South Hill, Va./Parkview
42	Richard Luck	LB	Fr.	5-10	195	Richmond, Va./St. Christopher's
44	Andy Viola***	DE	R-Sr.	6-0	230	Broadway, Va./Moorefield (W. Va.)
45	Jack Curtis*	LB	R-So.	6-0	215	Fairfax, Va./Robinson
46	Zach Webb	SB	Fr.	5-9	175	Bedford, Va./FUMA/Liberty
47	Eric Church	LB	R-Fr.	6-3	240	Louisa, Va./Louisa County
48	Mike Hutchings*	LB	R-So.	6-0	230	Lexington, Va./Randolph-Macon Academy
49	Greg Stevens	K	Fr.	5-11	175	Duluth, Ga./Peachtree Ridge
50	Josh Wine*	DT	So.	6-0	265	Fredericksburg, Va./Massaponax
51	Ben Brandt*	OL	R-So.	6-2	260	Forest, Va./Jefferson Forest
52	Alex Ray	LB	R-Fr.	5-11	225	Roanoke, Va./Hidden Valley
54	Josh Sneed	LB	Fr.	6-2	230	Lawrenceville, Ga./Collins Hill
55	George Handler**	OL	R-Jr.	6-3	255	Quinton, Va./New Kent
56	Corey Reuzenaar	LB	Fr.	6-1	232	Radford, Va./Fork Union
57	Butch Kaczmarzewski	LB	Fr.	6-2	200	Winchester, Va./Millbrook
58	James Hummer	LB	R-Fr.	5-11	230	Bluemont, Va./Clarke County
60	James Boatright*	C	So.	6-0	270	Grayson, Ga./Grayson
61	Alex Miller	NT	Fr.	5-11	265	Dunedin, Fla./Countryside
62	Chris Leach	C	R-Jr.	6-3	273	Raphine, Va./Rockbridge County
63	Bo Wren*	OL	So.	6-0	260	Gainesville, Ga./Gainesville

No.	Name	Pos.	Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown/Previous School
64	Mark Tomlin	OL	R-Fr.	6-4	258	Madison Heights, Va./Amherst County
65	James Handler	OL	R-Fr.	6-4	300	Quinton, Va./New Kent
66	D'Angelo Smith	OL	Fr.	6-1	255	Ellenwood, Ga./Stockbridge
67	Jeff Kulat	OL	R-So.	6-3	311	Shrewsbury, N.J./Red Bank
69	Justin Tench	OL	R-So.	6-3	295	West Point, Va./West Point
70	Dave Stradford	OL/DL	Fr.	5-10	270	Fort Washington, Md./Friendly
74	Kyle Johnson**	OL	R-Jr.	6-4	285	Purcellville, Va./Loudoun Valley
75	Nick Mims**	OL	R-Jr.	6-3	250	Newport News, Va./Tallwood
76	Derek McKnight	OL	R-Fr.	6-4	265	Richlands, Va./Richlands
77	Steven Hite	OL	R-Fr.	6-4	250	Smyrna, Ga./Campbell
78	Rob Bailey	OL	Fr.	6-4	330	Bonaire, Ga./Warner Robbins
79	Frank Ellis*	OL	R-Jr.	6-7	260	Reva, Va./Madison County
81	Daud Semalulu	WR	R-Fr.	6-3	190	Aylmer, Quebec/Champlain College Lennoxville
82	Luke Holloran	WR	Fr.	6-4	195	Broadway, Va./Broadway
84	Damiso Alexander*	DE	R-So.	6-3	245	Richmond, Va./Hermitage
85	Edwin Cruz	WR	Fr.	5-10	165	Chester, Va./Thomas Dale
86	Kyle Marston	WR	Fr.	6-1	190	Bagdad, Ky./Shelby
87	Eric Scott	WR	R-Fr.	5-9	160	Richmond, Va./Mills Godwin
88	Aaron Lewis	WR	Fr.	6-3	195	Richmond, Va./Meadowbrook
89	Josh Favaro*	TE	R-So.	6-3	230	Suwanee, Ga./North Gwinnett
90	Travis Ludden***	TE	R-Sr.	6-3	240	Fredericksburg, Va./Massaponax
92	Terrell Lynch	DE	Fr.	6-2	230	Richmond, Va./Hermitage
93	Aaron Blue	DE	R-Fr.	6-3	250	Suwanee, Ga./Peachtree Ridge
96	Sam Palmer	DT	R-Fr.	6-0	300	Smyrna, Ga./Campbell
97	Grant Martin	DT	R-Fr.	6-0	250	Martinsville, Va./Martinsville
98	Aaron Trent	LB	Fr.	6-4	240	Johnson City Tenn./Science Hill
99	Emilio Calvin	DE	R-Fr.	6-3	240	Woodbridge, Va./Freedom

All class designations refer to ATHLETIC eligibility for the 2008-09 academic year

## Alphabetical Roster

31	Howard Abegesah**	RB	58	James Hummer	LB	37	Tyler Reedy	FS
84	Damiso Alexander*	DE	48	Mike Hutchings*	LB	56	Corey Reuzenaar	LB
22	Byron Allen	DB	6	Gabe Itoka*	SB	35	Jacob Rochester***	LB
78	Rob Bailey	OL	25	Rajah Jenkins	SB	87	Eric Scott	WR
2	Bryan Barnson*	WR	74	Kyle Johnson**	OL	3	Mario Scott*	WR
93	Aaron Blue	DE	12	Cameron Jones	QB	81	Daud Semalulu	WR
60	James Boatright*	C	23	Chaz Jones	RB	66	D'Angelo Smith	OL
32	Julian Bowers	LB	57	Butch Kaczmarzewski	LB	54	Josh Sneed	LB
51	Ben Brandt*	OL	67	Jeff Kulat	OL	49	Greg Stevens	K
99	Emilio Calvin	DE	62	Chris Leach	C	70	Dave Stradford	OL/DL
47	Eric Church	LB	88	Aaron Lewis	WR	40	Patrick Sweeney*	P
24	Zach Collins**	SB	36	Mike Louthan	LB	19	Levi Swindell**	SS
30	Chris Conte	WR	42	Richard Luck	LB	41	T.J. Talley	SB
85	Edwin Cruz	WR	90	Travis Ludden***	TE	20	Joe Taylor**	LB
45	Jack Curtis*	LB	27	Drew Luxhoj	SB	21	Keith Taylor***	S
13	Geoff Dinneen	DB	92	Terrell Lynch	DE	69	Justin Tench	OL
79	Frank Ellis*	OL	86	Kyle Marston	WR	34	Juan Thrasher	FS
38	Bobby Epps	RB	97	Grant Martin	DT	64	Mark Tomlin	OL
89	Josh Favaro*	TE	28	Tim Maypray**	SB	98	Aaron Trent	LB
7	A.J. Gross	LB	17	Patrick McKinney**	LB	44	Andy Viola***	DE
11	T.J. Guthrie	DT	76	Derek McKnight	OL	29	Greg Walker	CB
4	Tracy Hairston	DB	61	Alex Miller	NT	26	Kris Ware*	SS
55	George Handler**	OL	75	Nick Mims**	OL	1	Trae Watkins	DB
65	James Handler	OL	8	Kyle Nikmard*	LB	46	Zach Webb	SB
16	Justin Hickman	QB	15	Chris Otersen	WR	50	Josh Wine*	DT
77	Steven Hite	OL	96	Sam Palmer	DT	63	Bo Wren*	OL
82	Luke Holloran	WR	9	Michael Rainey-Wiles*	SB	5	Bryant Youngblood**	CB
14	Kyle Hughes**	QB	52	Alex Ray	LB			

INTRO

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# 2008 VMI Roster Breakdown

INTRO  
 THIS IS VMI  
 PREVIEW  
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## Roster by State/Province:

### California: 2

Geoff Dinneen .....Boulder Creek  
 Levi Swindell .....Elk Grove

### Florida: 3

Chris Conte .....Tampa  
 Justin Hickman .....Brandon  
 Alex Miller .....Dunedin

### Georgia: 12

Rob Bailey .....Bonaire  
 Aaron Blue .....Suwanee  
 James Boatright .....Grayson  
 Bobby Epps .....Gainesville  
 Josh Favaro .....Suwanee  
 Steven Hite .....Smyrna  
 Sam Palmer .....Smyrna  
 Tyler Reedy .....Canton  
 D'Angelo Smith .....Ellenwood  
 Josh Sneed .....Lawrenceville  
 Greg Stevens .....Duluth  
 Bo Wren .....Gainesville

### Kentucky: 2

Kyle Marston .....Bagdad  
 Tim Maypray .....Madisonville

### Maryland: 4

Howard Abegesah .....Beltsville  
 A.J. Gross .....Waldorf  
 Dave Stradford .....Fort Washington  
 Greg Walker .....Waldorf

### New Jersey: 1

Jeff Kulat .....Shrewsbury

### Ohio: 2

Chaz Jones .....Cleveland  
 Bryant Youngblood .....Youngstown

### Pennsylvania: 2

T.J. Guthrie .....Pittsburgh  
 Michael Rainey-Wiles .....Pittsburgh

### Quebec (Canada): 1

Daud Semalulu .....Aylmer

### Tennessee: 1

Aaron Trent .....Johnson City

### Texas: 5

Zach Collins .....Universal City  
 Cameron Jones .....Austin  
 Kyle Nikmard .....Katy  
 Jacob Rochester .....Dallas  
 Juan Thrasher .....Carrollton

### Virginia: 48

Damiso Alexander .....Richmond  
 Byron Allen .....Massaponax  
 Bryan Barnson .....Chesapeake  
 Julian Bowers .....Richmond  
 Ben Brandt .....Forest  
 Emilio Calvin .....Woodbridge  
 Eric Church .....Louisa  
 Edwin Cruz .....Chester  
 Jack Curtis .....Fairfax  
 Frank Ellis .....Reva  
 Tracy Hairston .....Martinsville  
 George Handler .....Quinton  
 James Handler .....Quinton  
 Luke Holloran .....Broadway  
 Kyle Hughes .....Williamsburg  
 James Hummer .....Bluemont



Mike Hutchings .....Lexington  
 Gabe Itoka .....Reston  
 Rajah Jenkins .....Staunton  
 Kyle Johnson .....Purcellville  
 Butch Kaczmarzewski .....Winchester  
 Chris Leach .....Raphine  
 Aaron Lewis .....Richmond  
 Mike Louthan .....Richmond  
 Richard Luck .....Richmond  
 Travis Ludden .....Fredericksburg  
 Drew Luxhoj .....Glen Allen  
 Terrell Lynch .....Richmond  
 Grant Martin .....Martinsville  
 Patrick McKinney .....Big Stone Gap  
 Derek McKnight .....Richlands  
 Nick Mims .....Newport News  
 Chris Otersen .....Springfield  
 Alex Ray .....Roanoke  
 Corey Reuzenaar .....Radford

Eric Scott .....Richmond  
 Mario Scott .....Staunton  
 Patrick Sweeney .....Richmond  
 T.J. Talley .....South Hill  
 Joe Taylor .....Richmond  
 Keith Taylor .....Mechanicsville  
 Justin Tench .....West Point  
 Mark Tomlin .....Madison Heights  
 Andy Viola .....Broadway  
 Kris Ware .....Chesapeake  
 Trae Watkins .....Lynchburg  
 Zach Webb .....Bedford  
 Josh Wine .....Fredericksburg

## Letterwinners & Starters Returning/Lost:

### Starters Returning (16):

**Offense (7):** FB Howard Abegesah, WR Bryan Barnson, OL James Boatright, OL George Handler, QB Kyle Hughes, SB Tim Maypray, OL Bo Wren

**Defense (8):** DL Ben Brandt, LB Patrick McKinney, LB Jacob Rochester, SS Levi Swindell, LB Joe Taylor, FS Keith Taylor, DL Andy Viola, DL Josh Wine

**Specialists (1):** K Patrick Sweeney

### Starters Lost (7):

**Offense (4):** OL Robert Brown, WR Rick Goodwin, OL Jeff Marcey, SB Joey Robinson

**Defense (3):** CB Marcus Brown, CB Christian Kelly, DL Tommy Lloyd

**Specialists:** None

### Letterwinners Returning (29):

**Offense (16):** FB Howard Abegesah, WR Bryan Barnson, OL James Boatright, SB Zach Collins, OL Frank Ellis, TE Josh Favaro, OL George Handler, QB Kyle Hughes, SB Gabe Itoka, OL Kyle Johnson, OL/TE Travis Ludden, SB Tim Maypray, OL Nick Mims, SB Michael Rainey-Wiles, WR Mario Scott, OL Bo Wren

**Defense (12):** DE Damiso Alexander, DL Ben Brandt, LB Jack Curtis, LB Patrick McKinney, LB Kyle Nikmard, LB Jacob Rochester, SS Levi Swindell, LB Joe Taylor, FS Keith Taylor, DL Andy Viola, DL Josh Wine, CB Bryant Youngblood

**Specialists (1):** K Patrick Sweeney

### Letterwinners Lost (18):

**Offense (9):** OL Robert Brown, WR Rick Goodwin, OL Andrew Gore, SB Nat Jackson, OL Jeff Marcey, WR Ryan Mingus, OL Gerard Payne, SB Joey Robinson, OL Mike Watson

**Defense (9):** LB Keashawn Artis, DL Leon Barrow, CB Marcus Brown, SS Lucas Combs, FS Chi Chi Ezekwe, DL Frank Keeney, FS John Keilty, CB Christian Kelly, DL Tommy Lloyd

**Specialists:** None

## Pronunciation Guide:

Howard Abegesah -- Howard ab-GAY-ah  
 Damiso Alexander -- dah-ME-so Alexander  
 Josh Favaro -- Josh fah-VAR-o  
 Gabe Itoka -- Gabe eye-TOKE-ah  
 Butch Kaczmarzewski -- kaz-mar-ZOO-ski  
 Jeff Kulat -- Jeff KOO-laht  
 Travis Ludden -- Travis LUH-den  
 Drew Luxhoj -- Drew LUX-hoy  
 Chris Otersen -- Chris OTT-er-sen  
 Corey Reuzenaar -- Corey ROO-zuh-nar  
 Daud Semalulu -- DAH-ood Semalulu

## Breakdown by Class:

**Fourth Classmen (Frosh):** 47 (T-22; R-25)  
**Third Classmen (Sophs):** 19 (T-8; R-11)  
**Second Classmen (Jrs):** 13 (T-6; R-7)  
**First Classmen (Srs):** 4 (T-2; R-2)

(T- True; R- Redshirt)

# 2008 VMI Two-Deep

## Offense

			Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Notes
WR	3	Mario Scott	So.	5-11	170	84 receiving yards vs. CCU, including 36-yard TD
	15	Chris Otersen	r-Fr.	6-3	200	Converted quarterback, moved to WR in off-season
LT	51	Ben Brandt	r-So.	6-2	260	Former DL moves to Offensive Line this season; Will be an impact player
	75	Nick Mims	r-Jr.	6-3	250	One of the most athletic linemen on this year's team
LG	55	George Handler	r-Jr.	6-3	255	Started all 11 games in '07, playing four different positions
	74	Kyle Johnson	r-Jr.	6-4	285	Suffered through injury-shortened 2007; Will provide depth to offensive line
C	60	James Boatright	So.	6-0	270	Nine starts as true freshman in 2007 at center
	62	Chris Leach	r-Jr.	6-3	273	One of two Rockbridge Co. residents on 2008 VMI squad
RG	63	Bo Wren	So.	6-0	260	Started all 11 games a year ago as a true freshman
	65	James Handler	r-Fr.	6-4	300	Younger brother of starting left guard George Handler; Redshirted last year
RT	79	Frank Ellis	r-Jr.	6-7	260	Became a starter late in the 2007 season
	77	Steven Hite	r-Fr.	6-4	250	Recovering from an injury suffered in spring drills; should be healthy for opener
TE	90	Travis Ludden	r-Sr.	6-3	240	Started games at tight end and left tackle last season
	89	Josh Favaro	r-So.	6-3	230	Valued member of the special teams unit that should see time at TE
SB	24	Zach Collins	Jr.	5-10	200	Returns to slotback position after playing all 11 games last season at fullback
	6	Gabe Itoka	So.	5-6	180	Averaged 7.5 yards per carry in 2007 (44 attempts)
SB	28	Tim Maypray	Jr.	5-8	165	Lindy's Magazine Big South Conference Preseason Offensive Player of the Year
	9	Michael Rainey-Wiles	So.	5-9	170	Had VMI's longest run from scrimmage last season (83)
RB	31	Howard Abegesah	Jr.	6-0	220	Leader of 2007 record-setting rushing attack (1,121 yards-Led Big South)
	23	Chaz Jones	r-Fr.	5-11	220	Redshirted last season
QB	14	Kyle Hughes	Jr.	6-3	190	2007 Second Team All-Big South Honoree; (1,541 yards total offense)
	12	Cameron Jones	r-Fr.	6-0	200	Saw great deal of time during spring practice
WR	2	Bryan Barnson	So.	5-11	175	Second on 2007 Keydets in receptions as a true freshman
	81	Daud Semalulu	r-Fr.	6-3	190	One of the fastest players on VMI's squad

## Defense

			Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Notes
LE	44	Andy Viola	r-Sr.	6-0	230	One of four seniors on 2008 squad; Will serve as team captain
	93	Aaron Blue	r-Fr.	6-3	250	Missed spring practice due to injury
NT	50	Josh Wine	So.	6-0	265	Qualified for NCAA National Wrestling Championships as a freshman in 07-08
	96	Sam Palmer	r-Fr.	6-0	300	Redshirted last season
RE	84	Damiso Alexander	r-So.	6-3	245	Started five games in '07, 29 tackles, three sacks
	99	Emilio Calvin	r-Fr.	6-3	240	Did not see game action in '07, impressed during spring drills
OLB	8	Kyle Nikmar	r-So.	5-10	215	Six tackles versus The Citadel late in '07 season
	20	Joe Taylor	r-Jr.	5-11	200	Excelled after transitioning from safety to linebacker last season
OLB	17	Patrick McKinney	r-Jr.	6-3	245	Led team in tackles for second-consecutive season
	47	Eric Church	r-Fr.	6-3	240	Impressive HS resume backed up by strong spring practice
ILB	7	A.J. Gross	r-Fr.	5-10	220	Eight tackles and one for loss vs. JMU (9/15)
	52	Alex Ray	r-Fr.	5-11	225	Only 2008 Keydet from the Roanoke Valley
ILB	35	Jacob Rochester	Sr.	5-10	213	Two-time Academic All-District & FCS Academic All-Star; 112 career tackles
	45	Jack Curtis	r-So.	6-0	215	12 tackles during '07 campaign; contributed mostly on special teams
LCB	22	Byron Allen	r-Fr.	5-10	185	Redshirted last season; Emerged as projected starter in spring practice
	5	Bryant Youngblood	Jr.	5-10	180	Started final seven games of 2007 at free safety
SS	26	Kris Ware	r-So.	5-10	211	Expected to have breakthrough season after redshirting 2007 season
	21	Keith Taylor	Sr.	6-2	190	Ranked second on 2007 squad with 70 tackles
FS	37	Tyler Reedy	r-Fr.	5-10	175	One of the fastest players on this year's team
	4	Tracy Hairston	r-Fr.	6-1	185	Redshirted last season and moved from quarterback to defensive backfield
RCB	19	Levi Swindell	Jr.	6-0	190	Started at both strong safety and nickelback a season ago, making 59 tackles
	13	Geoff Dinneen	r-Fr.	5-10	185	Moved from running back to DB this spring, has impressed staff

## Special Teams

			Yr.	Ht.	Wt.	Notes
P	40	Patrick Sweeney	So.	6-3	190	Was kicker last season, focusing on punting during '08 campaign
K		TBA				
LS	90	Travis Ludden	r-Sr.	6-3	240	All-conference nominee at long snapper
KOR	28	Tim Maypray	Jr.	5-8	165	Returned two kickoffs for touchdowns in '07, setting a new Big South record
	24	Zach Collins	Jr.	5-10	200	Averaged over 17 yards per kick return last season
	9	Michael Rainey-Wiles	So.	5-9	170	Returned ten kickoffs in '07 with a long of 23 yards against Presbyterian
PR	28	Tim Maypray	Jr.	5-8	165	Accounted for all but one of VMI's punt returns a year ago
	9	Michael Rainey-Wiles	So.	5-9	170	Limited in his freshman season by an early season leg injury

INTRO

THIS IS VMI

PREVIEW

COACHES

PLAYER BIOS

OPPOSITION

STAFF

RECORDS

MEDIA



# Players To Watch In 2008

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*Redshirt sophomore Kris Ware (26) is expected to make a major impact in the secondary in 2008.*



*Sophomore James Boatright stepped in last season as a true freshman and started the final nine games at center.*



*Redshirt sophomore Ben Brandt will make the move across the line from nose tackle to offensive tackle this season.*