

2008-09 VMI Wrestling

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Quick Facts

About VMI

Location	Lexington, Va.
Nickname	Keydets
Founded	1839
Enrollment	1,400
Superintendent	General J.H. Binford Peay III '62
Athletic Director	Donny White '65

VMI Wrestling

Conference	Southern Conference
Arena	Cocke Hall (Capacity 1,200)
Head Coach	John Trudgeon
Alma Mater	William & Mary '75
Record at VMI	144-160-4/24th Season
Overall Record	144-160-4/24th Season
Email	trudgeonjs@vmi.edu
Office Phone	540-464-7513
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Alma Mater	Hofstra '05
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Athletic Trainer	Andrew Spadafora
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Strength & Conditioning Coach	Jimmy Whitten
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2007-08 Dual Record	6-8 (1-4 SoCon)
Starters Returning/Lost	7/6
Letterwinners Returning/Lost	7/8

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Credits

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John Trudgeon

William & Mary '75 ♦ 24th Season ♦ 144-160-4

2004 Virginia State Coach of the Year

Since taking the reins of the Keydet wrestling program in 1985, head coach John Trudgeon has progressively raised the benchmarks of success surrounding VMI wrestling. Southern Conference Championships, NCAA qualifiers, and All-Americans - all are now standard phrases used in connection with Trudgeon's wrestlers.

The success achieved in recent years by VMI wrestlers under Trudgeon's tutelage has been unprecedented. Among the achievements:

* At the completion of the 1995-96 season, VMI received votes in the Amateur Wrestling News Top 25 Coaches' Poll.

* Six Top 12 individual finishers in the NCAA Championships in recent years, including a fourth place finish by 142-pounder Charlie Branch in 1994 and a sixth place finish by heavyweight Leslie Apedoe in 1999 - earning both All-America honors. 157-pounder Adam Britt finished in the top 12 of the 157 lb. weight class in 2002.

* The Keydets won three Southern Conference Co-Champions in a span of five years - 1995, 1997, and 1999. In three of the last seven seasons, the Keydets finished just one match out of first place in the standings.

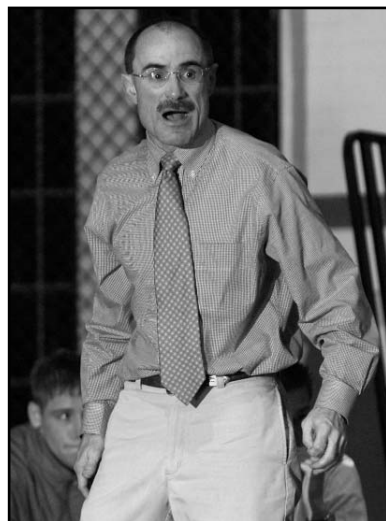
* A 12-1 dual record over Southern Conference opponents between 1995 and 1997, with the only defeat coming in 1997 at the hands of Appalachian State, 20-19 -- a loss which also ended a 14-match home winning streak. The Keydets returned to their SoCon success in 2002 and 2003, posting 4-1 records and finishing second in both the standings and the tournament in each year.

During his 23 seasons as head coach, Trudgeon has posted a dual record of 144-160-4. He is a four-time SoCon Coach of the Year - 1994, 1995, 1999 and 2000 - and he has three times been named Virginia Coach of the Year, in 1993, 1994 and 2004.

Trudgeon, a 1975 graduate of William & Mary with a B.S. in physical education, was a three-year starter for the Tribe and qualified for the NCAA Division I tournament his senior season.

He came to VMI after serving as head wrestling coach at Lafayette High School in Williamsburg, Va., for eight seasons. During his tenure, his squads won district titles in 1982 and 1983, and placed third in the Virginia AAA tournament in 1982. He was the Peninsula District Coach of the Year in 1982, and coached six AAA state champions.

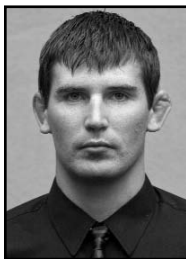
Trudgeon worked on his masters in education from East Stroudsburg University in 1985. He and his wife, Cathy, who is the staff education coordinator at Stonewall Jackson Hospital, are the parents of Joshua, age 15.



Year-by-Year with John Trudgeon

Year	Overall	SoCon
1985-86	10-2	3rd
1986-87	7-5	3rd
1987-88	6-11	3rd
1988-89	8-8-2	3rd
1989-90	4-9	3rd
1990-91	2-12	3rd
1991-92	4-8	3rd
1992-93	5-9	4th
1993-94	9-5	3rd
1994-95	8-2	T-1st
1995-96	11-3	2nd
1996-97	8-5	4-1
1997-98	1-13	1-4
1998-99	8-4	4-1
1999-00	6-7	4-1
2000-01	2-11	2-3
2001-02	11-4	4-1
2002-03	8-3	4-1
2003-04	7-7	2-3
2004-05	6-6-1	2-3
2005-06	1-10-1	0-4-1
2006-07	6-8	3-2
2007-08	6-8	1-4
Total	144-160-4	31-28-1





Chris Skretkowitz

- ◆ Assistant Coach
- ◆ Hofstra '05
- ◆ Third Season

Chris Skretkowitz, a three-time CAA champion while at Hofstra, enters his third season as an assistant coach with the Keydet Wrestling program.

"Chris has been a wonderful addition to the VMI wrestling family as he enters his third season as our assistant coach," said VMI head coach John Trudgeon. "It is not a coincidence that under his mentorship, the last two wrestlers to win Southern Conference titles and matches at the NCAA Championships were "pupils" under his tutelage (Corry Murray in 2007 and Josh Wine in 2008). His commitment to the young men in our wrestling program and to VMI in general, has been an inspiration to all who he has touched."

Skretkowitz certainly brings a prestigious wrestling background to the Institute, having twice been named as an All-American while wrestling at 197 pounds. His 140-24 career record was accompanied by a perfect 26-0 mark against CAA opponents in his four years in the league. He qualified for the NCAA Championships each of his four seasons, and will look to help train the Keydet wrestlers to do the same.

A 2005 graduate of Hofstra, Skretkowitz earned CAA Tournament Outstanding Wrestler honors as a senior, along with CAA Rookie of the Year honors as a freshman. Among individual tournaments, Skretkowitz was a three-time placewinner at The Midlands, while also capturing the 197 lb. championship at the 2004 Cliff Keen Las Vegas Invitational.

Following his graduation, Skretkowitz worked as an assistant coach at his former high school, Wallkill Valley Regional (N.J.). While competing there, Skretkowitz was a three-time State Placewinner, including a State Champion his junior year and a six-time Wrestling All-American, while competing in Greco, Freestyle and Folkstyle.

Skretkowitz resides in Lexington with his wife, Megan.



Andrew Spadafora

- ◆ Asst. Athletic Trainer
- ◆ BYU '05
- ◆ Third Season

Andrew Spadafora is in his third season at the Institute, where he works primarily with the basketball and wrestling programs.

Spadafora was a part of the VMI Athletic Training staff back in 2005-06 while he worked toward a Master's degree in Sports Medicine from the University of Virginia. Following that year, he returned to his alma mater, Brigham Young University, and worked with the baseball program before coming back to VMI in the summer of 2007.

A 2005 graduate of BYU with a degree in Exercise Science with an emphasis in Athletic Training, Spadafora worked with the Cougars' football, men's basketball and track & field teams. As a



Jimmy Whitten

- ◆ Strength & Conditioning Coach
- ◆ Virginia Tech '91
- ◆ Fifth Season

Jimmy Whitten is in his fifth year as VMI Associate Head Strength and Conditioning Coach, where he has made a positive impact on the program. Whitten works several of the varsity sports at VMI, including the Keydet wrestling, cross country, baseball, men's and women's soccer and swimming & diving teams.

Whitten came from East Carolina University in August 2004, where he was Director of Strength and Conditioning. While at ECU, Whitten implemented the strength and conditioning programs for Pirate Football and Men's Basketball for three years and headed up the strength programs for the Pirate Men's Basketball, Baseball, Softball, Men's Track, Men's and Women's Soccer, and Swimming teams.

Prior to his ECU tenure, Whitten was head strength and conditioning coach for UNC Charlotte from July, 1999, to February, 2001. He was also assistant strength and conditioning coach at his alma mater, Virginia Tech, for two years after serving as a graduate assistant in the program for two years.

He was a defensive end standout for the Hokies and was named the team's Co-MVP as well as most valuable defensive lineman in 1990. He also held the Captain's Award for Hokie Football in 1990.

Whitten earned a Bachelor of Science in Education at Virginia Tech in 1991 and earned a Masters of Arts in Counseling Education at Virginia Tech in 1996.

Whitten is a member of the Collegiate Strength and Conditioning Coaches Association and National Strength and Conditioning Association.

A native of Danville, Va., Whitten and his wife, Eileen, have two children - daughter Mandolin (6), and son Luke (5).

senior, he also worked at American Fork High School, where he provided athletic training services for the football, women's soccer, wrestling and softball programs.

While attending school, Spadafora was a member of the BYU Student Athletic Trainers' Association, serving as President of the organization as a senior. He also received the award for Outstanding Student Athletic Trainer of the Year his senior year.

A native of Provo, Utah, Spadafora spent two years as a missionary in Florianopolis, Brazil. Since coming on board at VMI Spadafora has worked with the Keydets' men's soccer, baseball, basketball, football and wrestling teams.



When some coaches talk about having to rely on youth for their upcoming season, they may be overstating their case a bit.

That is not the case for VMI head wrestling coach John Trudgeon as he enters the 2008-09 season.

With the addition of 18 newcomers to the 29-man squad, the fate of this year's VMI squad will legitimately rest upon several cadet-athletes that have never before competed in collegiate wrestling.

Fortunately, those 18 are a well-accomplished bunch. Among them are 10 state placewinners, four state finalists and even two state champions. Still, Trudgeon and assistant coach Chris Skretkowitz will have their hands full in the practice room this season.

"When you add that many wrestlers to the program, there's a lot of technical stuff to work on," said Trudgeon. "But we have some talented guys, we're seeing progress every day, and we're really excited about watching this team develop. They're a hard-working group that is dedicated to improving.

"With John Pope's and Leon Barrow's leadership, we're looking forward to the upcoming season. At certain weights, we have a lot of depth, which has been in short supply in our room for a long time. So we're expecting a lot of competition in practice, tournaments and duals."

While youth and depth are the buzzwords for this year's squad, neither are applicable at 125 lbs. After redshirting last season, third-year sophomore **John Pope** enters the season as the team's only real option among the light-weights.

"John is the only guy we have at 125, so we'll have our fingers crossed all year," said Trudgeon. "He redshirted under Jeremy Adams last year for a reason, he needed to get bigger and stronger. He matured a lot last season, and had some success when he did compete. The good news is that he has a lot of workout partners that are bigger than he is, and that should serve him well when he competes at 125 for us."

Several freshmen will vie for time at 133 for the Keydets, led by **Tyler Hutchens** and **Zack Bontrager**. Hutchens, a Virginia AAA State Placewinner at 125, was also a four-time state qualifier and will be looked to early on to set the pace at 133. Bontrager could push Hutchens, while **Michael Bowman**, who will begin the season at 141, may also move down to 133.

"We're really expecting 133 to be a solid weight class for us," said Trudgeon. "It's a young group, but there's a lot of talent there. We'll just see how things shake out for us and put our best out there."

Another set of accomplished freshmen will fight it out at 141. **David Yost**, who placed second in Virginia's AAA State Championships a season ago, may be the leader in the clubhouse to start at 141 in duals, but he will be tested by several talented rookies in the practice room. Included in the bunch are **Luke Todd**, a placewinner at the Virginia AA State Championships, **Jacob Barton** and Bowman, while sophomore **Richard Crozier** may move down from 149 at times as well.

Perhaps the deepest weight class for the Keydets comes at 149. No less than six grapplers are expected to compete there, with no clear-cut favorite yet emerging. **Joel Hutchens**, who spent last season redshirting at Virginia Tech, has transferred to VMI to join his brother, Tyler, on the team. Hutchens placed third at the Virginia AAA State Championships two years ago after going 57-4 as a senior, and should be a major contributor at 149.

Other options could include freshman **Joe Munno**, whose father, John, ranks seventh on VMI's career wins list. Munno is a two-time VISAA State Champion, winning titles at 135 and 145, and was named to the Richmond Times-Dispatch's All-Metro team after going 31-3 as a senior. Junior **Mike Long**, who wrestled two years ago as a freshman, has rejoined the team and could contribute, while freshmen **Jack Boswell** and **Jamie Hardey**, along with Crozier, could also push for time.

Sophomore **Jayme Gordon**, who experienced a measure of success a season ago at 165, will shift down to 157 this season. A "home run hitter", Gordon won six of his nine matches last season via pins, with four of those coming in the first period.

"Jayme lettered at 165 last season, and we'll see this year if, size-wise, 157 will be a better fit for him," said Trudgeon. "He needs to wrestle more consistently and improve upon his technique, but he has the talent to really help us. Last year, he didn't have a lot of guys pushing him, and that's a different story this year."

A pair of Virginia AAA State Placewinners will back up Gordon, as **Matt Brock** and **Eric Russo** each placed sixth last season at the Championships at 145 and 152, respectively.

"There's a lot of solid talent at 157, and I'm expecting a lot of give and take in the practice room there," said Trudgeon.

The return of **Kyle "Cubby" Elgert** is expected to steady the 165-pound weight class. A senior that has competed at 174, 184 and 197 throughout his career, Elgert will be given the opportunity to focus at 165 this season, giving the Keydets a legitimate threat there.

"Having Cubby back gives us a lot of stability in that position," said Trudgeon. "We've had to move him around so much that we're really excited about what he can bring to the table, given the opportunity to focus at 165 as a senior."

Also competing at 165 for the Keydets are junior **Jon Horne** and sophomore **Michael Frossard**, along with newcomers **Doug Nesmith**, **Vinnie Gallo** and **Nathan Iseman**, the reigning Virginia A State Champion at 171.

Despite the team's depth at the surrounding weights, only **Andrew Szymborski** will suit up at 174. A freshman



that placed fifth a season ago at 171 at the Indiana State Championships, Szymborski's health will be a key to the Keydets' success this season.

"Andrew has been impressive in the practice room for us, and he's the only guy there at 174 right now," said Trudgeon. He's really been getting after the 165 and 184 guys, and he's a tough, physical guy with a lot of potential out there on the mat. Obviously, we can move somebody up from 165 if necessary, but we're thinking Andrew can be our guy there."

Sophomore **Curtis Moore** is expected to return at 184 this season, where he started as a freshman. After gaining valuable experience there a season ago, he will be backed up by freshman **Tommy Kendzia**, a Virginia AAA State Placewinner at 189 last season.

"We're looking for Curtis to have a strong season for us at 184," said Trudgeon. "We're thinking that he can keep his weight there, that's where he certified at, and he has a lot of potential to help us there. We're also really excited about Tommy Kendzia. He has a lot of room to grow physically and technically, and he can step in and do the job should the need arise."

The story is much the same at 197, where sophomore **Ronnie Ellsworth** returns while freshman **Dion Mosley** will back-up. Just like at 165 and 184, a key to the team's success will depend on the ability of the Gordon, Moore and Ellsworth to convert last year's experiences as freshmen into wins this season as sophomores.

"Ronnie got better as the year went along last season, but it just didn't translate into wins for him," said Trudgeon. "He had a lot of technical work to do last year, and competing at 197 as a freshman is very demanding. But we're thinking that he can make that jump this season, and if so, we could really pack a serious punch at the end of duals."

That is because the Keydets return an impressive duo at heavyweight in reigning Southern Conference Champion **Josh Wine** and senior **Leon Barrow**. Wine, who doubles as a defensive tackle for the Keydet football team, became VMI's first heavyweight champion in nine seasons, capping an impressive freshman campaign. He then won his first match at the NCAA National Championships, before losing to eventual champion Dustin Fox of Northwestern. Wine entered the season ranked 15th nationally, and is expected to join the team following the conclusion of his gridiron campaign.

Until that time, Barrow will handle the heavyweight chores. A season ago, Barrow won the 285-lb. division of the Davidson Open and scored some big wins in duals for the team. This year, Barrow is focusing only on wrestling after also playing football the past couple of seasons.

"Leon has been doing impressive work with us this season, the first time that he's been with us for a full year," said Trudgeon. "He's been getting better technically, he's more in shape, and this year could be special for him. Then, what Josh did last season was remarkable. He came a long way that last month after coming over from football. Once he got healthy and was able to wrestle at full speed with Coach Skretkowitz and Leon pushing him, he improved technically and became much more proficient. He had a great run to make it out to Nationals, and he enters this year nationally ranked. So we're looking forward to getting him back once football ends. Pulling double duty with football and wrestling at VMI really says a lot about you as a person, and for Josh to excel like he has really shows you the potential that young man has."

SCHEDULE

An exciting home schedule awaits the team this season, including five home duals and the All-Academy Championships at the Thunderdome. It marks only the second time in the event's 15-year history that VMI will host the tournament, featuring eight military institutions from across the country competing against one another.

"We've got five solid duals at home this year, including Duke, George Mason, and our Southern Conference rivals," said Trudgeon. "It's always fun to wrestle duals at the Cocke Hall 'Thunderdome', the guys get really excited. The All-Academy Championships will be a great event for us. We haven't hosted it for a long time, and I think that having it here on post will be a special thing for our program."

In addition, the Keydets will travel to several early season tournaments, including The Midlands Open for the first time in several seasons.

"We had been going to the Southern Scuffle since its inception, and we felt like we're just seeing the same guys over and over again," said Trudgeon. "We felt like we needed to go out to The Midlands instead and wrestle some different guys. We get to take seven guys out there, and you just can't get more prestigious than that tournament. It's been going on for 50 or 60 years, and really, besides the NCAA's, it's as national of an event as you can get. We've had placewinners out there before, and we're hoping to continue that tradition this season."

The team's dual schedule features a few new names, mixed with a few annual rivals. Matches against Virginia Tech, Rutgers, Duke, Liberty and George Mason highlight the non-conference portion of the schedule, while home Southern Conference duals against UNC Greensboro, Appalachian State and arch-rivals The Citadel should have The Thunderdome rocking.

"It's going to be a fun year," said Trudgeon in conclusion. "We expect to win, but know that sometimes we'll have to temper that to see if our guys are getting better. All we're trying to do is to get better in practice every day, and know that that will pay off for us down the road."



Alphabetical Roster

Name	Weight Class	Class	Hometown/High School (Previous)	HS Coach
Leon Barrow	285	Sr.	Williamsburg, Va./Lafayette	Bruce Shumaker
Jake Barton	141	Fr.	Louisville, Ky./Trinity	Eddie Rudolph
Zack Bontrager	133	Fr.	Williamsburg, Va./Fort Campbell (Ky.)	Scott Lowe
Jack Boswell	149	Fr.	Canal Winchester, Ohio/Canal Winchester	Trent Brooks
Michael Bowman	133	Fr.	McLean, Va./Langley	John Belyea
Matt Brock	157	Fr.	Richmond, Va./Douglas Freeman	Mark Faglioni
Richard Crozier	141	So.	Roanoke, Va./Northside	Mark Agner
Kyle Elgert	165	Sr.	Glen Allen, Va./Hermitage	Kelly Guempel
Ronnie Ellsworth	197	So.	Newport News, Va./Menchville	Chris Wiatt
Michael Frossard	174	So.	Gurnee, Ill./Warren Township	Mark Tiffany
Vinnie Gallo	165	Fr.	Wantage, N.J./High Point	Johnny Gardner
Jayme Gordon	157	So.	Virginia Beach, Va./First Colonial	Willie Stravino
Jamie Hardey	149	Fr.	Hamilton, Va./Loudoun Valley	Troy Mezzatesta
Jon Horne	165	Jr.	Falls Church, Va./Hayfield	Roy Hill
Joel Hutchens	149	R-Fr.	Herndon, Va./Westfield (Virginia Tech)	Chuck Hoskins
Tyler Hutchens	133	Fr.	Herndon, Va./Westfield	Chuck Hoskins
Nathan Iseman	165	Fr.	Onancock, Va./Nandua	Kevin Haxter
Tommy Kendzia	184	Fr.	Ashland, Va./Patrick Henry	Robert Toney
Michael Long	149	Jr.	Jarrettsville, Md./Hartford Tech	Gary Siler
Curtis Moore	184	So.	Stafford, Va./Gar-Field	Rick Seipp
Dion Mosley	197	Fr.	Chesapeake, Va./Indian River	Mike Mercado
Joe Munno	149	Fr.	Glen Allen, Va./St. Christopher's	Frank Kiefer
Doug Nesmith	165	So.	Marco Island, Fla./Lely	Steve Pricer
John Pope	125	R-So.	Hoover, Ala./Hoover	C.T. Campbell
Eric Russo	157	Fr.	Linden, Va./Fauquier	Bryan Hurst
Andrew Szymborski	174	Fr.	Crown Point, Ind./Crown Point	Scott Vlink
Luke Todd	141	Fr.	New Kent, Va./New Kent	Mike Faus
Josh Wine	285	So.	Fredericksburg, Va./Massaponax	Rob Prebish
David Yost	141	Fr.	Broad Run, Va./Fauquier	Bryan Hurst

Head Coach: John Trudgeon (William & Mary '75); 24th season

Assistant Coaches: Chris Skretkovicz (Hofstra '05); Third season

Breakdown By State

Alabama: 1	John PopeHoover
Florida: 1	Doug NesmithMarco Island
Illinois: 1	Michael FrossardGurnee
Indiana: 1	Andrew SzymborskiCrown Point
Kentucky: 1	Jake BartonLouisville
Maryland: 1	Michael LongJarrettsville
New Jersey: 1	Vinnie GalloWantage
Ohio: 1	Jack BoswellCanal Winchester

Virginia: 21	Leon BarrowWilliamsburg
	Zack BontragerWilliamsburg
	Michael BowmanMcLean
	Matt BrockRichmond
	Richard CrozierRoanoke
	Kyle ElgertGlen Allen
	Ronnie EllsworthNewport News
	Jayme GordonVirginia Beach
	Jamie HardeyHamilton
	Jon HorneFalls Church
	Joel HutchensHerndon
	Tyler HutchensHerndon
	Nathan IsemanOnancock
	Tommy KendziaAshland
	Curtis MooreStafford
	Dion MosleyChesapeake
	Joe MunnoGlen Allen
	Eric RussoLinden
	Luke ToddNew Kent
	Josh WineFredericksburg
	David YostBroad Run

Breakdown By Class

First Classmen (Seniors): 2	Leon Barrow, Kyle Elgert
Second Classmen (Juniors): 2	Jon Horne, Michael Long
Third Classmen (Sophomores): 8	Richard Crozier, Ronnie Ellsworth, Michael Frossard, Jayme Gordon, Curtis Moore, Doug Nesmith, John Pope (RS), Josh Wine
Rats (Freshmen): 17	Jake Barton, Zack Bontrager, Jack Boswell, Michael Bowman, Matt Brock, Vinnie Gallo, Jamie Hardey, Joel Hutchens (RS), Tyler Hutchens, Nathan Iseman, Tommy Kendzia, Dion Mosley, Joe Munno, Eric Russo, Andrew Szymborski, Luke Todd, David Yost

(RS)- denotes redshirt

