Big East team has 7 Hokies

Miami dominates all-conference club

From staff and Associated Press reports

A pulled hamstring may have kept Ken Brown from playing in Virginia Tech's regular-season finale against Virginia, but it didn't keep the Hokies linebacker from making the All-Big East Football Conference team announced Wednesday.

Brown, a senior, was joined on the first team by safety Torrian Gray and kicker Ryan Williams from Tech's Gator Bowl-bound team.

Antonio Freeman was voted to the second team as a wide receiver and return specialist, joining teammates Cornell Brown (defensive line), Antonio Banks (defensive back) and William Yarborough (defensive back).

Miami defensive tackle Warren Sapp and Pittsburgh running back Billy West won the top individual honors in voting by the conference's eight head coaches. Sapp was named defensive player of the year, and West won offensive honors.

Sapp, a junior, led a Miami unit ranked first nationally in pass defense, total defense and scoring defense. He finished the regular season with 82 tackles and 12 sacks.

West, a sophomore who became a starter only when teammate Curtis Martin suffered an ankle injury in Pitt's second game, rushed for a Big East-leading 1,358 yards on 252 carries.

Miami's Dennis Erickson was named coach of the year. Hurricanes defensive end Kenward Lang was rookie of the year and West Virginia punter Todd Sauerbrun was special teams player of the year.

Erickson won the award for the third time in the conference's four seasons.

Lang had 48 tackles and nine sacks as a freshman for the Hurricanes.

Sauerbrun led the nation with a 48.4-yard average on 72 punts.

Ken Brown finished third among Virginia Tech defenders in tackles with 93, trailing only fellow linebackers George Del Ricco and Brandon Semones.

Brown had six tackles for losses, as well as two sacks.

Gray, a sophomore, finished with 61 tackles and four interceptions from his rover spot.

Williams, a senior, will finish his career as the Hokies' all-time leading scorer. He has 254 points heading into the Gator Bowl matchup with Tennessee. His 78 points this year tied him for third overall and second among kickers on Tech's all-time list, trailing only Chris Kinzer (93) among the specialists.

Joining Williams and West on the first-team offense were quarterback Kevin Mason of Syracuse; running back Terrell Willis of Rutgers; wide receivers Chris T. Jones of Miami and Marvin Harrison of Syracuse; tight end Pete Mitchell of Boston College; tackles Reuben Brown of Pitt and Pete Kendall of Boston College; guards Tom Robsock of West Virginia and Greg Landry of Boston College; center K.C. Jones of Miami; and return specialist Jammi German of Miami.

In addition to Sapp, Ken Brown, Gray and Sauerbrun, the defense featured linemen Mike Mamula of Boston College and Barry Hawkins of West Virginia; linebackers Stephen Boyd of Boston College, Ray Lewis of Miami and Dan Conley of Syracuse; cornerbacks Aaron Beasley of West Virginia and Carlos Jones of Miami; and safety C.J. Richardson of Miami.

HOKIES AROUSED: Notre Dame quarterback Ron Powlus says he wrote more than 30 letters apologizing to Virginia Tech fans for his comments following the Fighting Irish's 30-11 loss to Boston College.

"I said, 'I was standing on the sideline and I remember thinking, how did Boston College lose to Virginia Tech?'" Powlus said. "I thought, 'how did they lose to anyone? But I didn't say, 'How did they lose to anyone.'"

Powlus said he even received messages from some Tech fans via E-mail and found some to be so nasty that he chose not to respond.

IN THE WEEKEND...