



Three floors of Squires Student Center were covered with banners, flags, and posters from other universities and organizations.

They are clashing colors, maroon and orange. As they say, it's a combination only a Hokie could love. But on [April 17], maroon and orange came together in a moving display of sympathy, support, and pride. Watching Virginia Tech students in school colors grieve together at the convocation in Cassell Coliseum got me choked up. When they concluded the afternoon by yelling "Let's go, Hokies!" I lost it. It was such a familiar expression of unity, but this time, it was summoned for an infinitely more profound occasion.

You don't arrive at Virginia Tech accidentally. You have to work to get there, journeying into the Blue Ridge Mountains. It's lovely, picturesque, and seems very far away from the dangers of the outside world. There is a collective strength of spirit there that feels quite different from other campuses we visit. It's a big school ... but it feels like a tight community. That spirit seems to endure long after students leave Blacksburg—once a Hokie, always a Hokie.

To the community of Virginia Tech and to the families of the victims, our thoughts will remain with you during the long, difficult healing process. Your sense of unity has never been more needed. It was touching that under the weight of so many other emotions, Tech students seemed saddened that the school they love could forever be branded as the site of an historic massacre.

To those of us who have spent time there, Tech will always be recognized for much more than the hours of tragedy on April 16, 2007. We look forward to our next chance to experience Virginia Tech pride firsthand.

— by ESPN "College GameDay" host Chris Fowler, originally published on *ESPN.com* on April 19, 2007, under the title "Campus tragedy will only bring tight community closer." Excerpted with permission.



JASON YORK AT GOPSPUSPORTS.COM

It would have been easy to mistake the annual Penn State Blue-White spring football scrimmage for a Virginia Tech game. The majority of the approximately 71,000 fans in attendance donned orange and maroon to show their support of Tech.

