

# the spirit of the game >>

## THE MASCOTS

**1921** — The sports teams of North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts had been at different times called the “Farmers and Mechanics,” the “Red Terrors” and the “Aggies.” In 1920, coach Harry Hartsell’s football team, called the “Techs,” was criticized for their up-and-down play.

Before the season-opening football game on Sept. 25, 1921, against the Randolph-Macon Yellow Jackets, an anonymous fan wrote in to the Technician bemoaning the off-field antics of some of the players. He compared those players to “a pack of wolves,” and the student body found it hilarious. The football team then became known as the Wolfpack.

**1946** — Harrelson objected to the moniker, reminding veterans and civilians on campus that the name “Wolfpack” had been assigned to Nazi U-boats. He proposed a contest, with football tickets as the prize, to see who could create a new mascot. Some of the submissions included the Cardinals, Cultivators, Cotton-pickers, Auctioneers, Calumets and Pine-rooters, which is a term related to pigs. However, an overwhelming majority maintained that the “Wolfpack” was special to them, and the title remained.

“The wolf is a scrappy, tough animal — the spittin’ image of our team,” one writer insisted.

**1946** — Ira Helms, a student in mechanical engineering, took it upon himself to create a mascot for the cheerleading squad to use

during games. After initially abandoning the project due to high production costs, Helms welded, painted and constructed his robot wolf, finishing his metal monster the morning of the football season opener against Wake Forest. The paint was reportedly still wet when the new mascot took the field.

Helms’ robot was affectionately named “Hell” for its creator, but was also called “The Wolf Monster” and “The Trojan Wolf.” It stood seven feet tall and was 10 feet across at the chest. Helms climbed inside the contraption and employed another student to operate a fake control box, leading spectators to believe that Hell was an actual robot.

“With a body similar to Frankenstein’s monster and the ferocious head of a wolf, it is expected to create a sensation in the game and spur the team on to another victory,” the Technician proclaimed on Oct. 18, 1946.

Cheerleaders operated the machine for the rest of the season, one of NC State’s best to date. The team went 8-2 and made its first bowl game, the 1946 Gator Bowl. After the bowl, cheerleaders and the band retired Hell and held a wake for him.

**1947** — The rest of the athletic teams, still called the “Red Terrors,” opted to change their names to the “Wolfpack” as well.

**1966** — The student body purchased “Lobo III,” a 4-month-old pup, for \$125 to commemorate the opening of Carter Stadium. Lobo III

was preceded by two wolf mascots. The first died, and the other escaped under suspicious circumstances.

**1967** — A zoology professor noticed that “Lobo III” was not a Timberwolf, as the students who bought him had believed; he was a coyote. Students embraced the mistake, rallying around the “Kool Koyote.” They spray painted the slogan on the Free Expression Tunnel and wrote it in chalk around campus.

**1950s** — Cheerleaders begin to dress up as wolves.

**1975** — The future Ms. Wuf was unveiled to coincide with the introduction of women’s athletics. The wolf mascots were married on the basketball court in 1981 as part of the season finale festivities. Wake Forest University’s mascot, the Demon Deacon, presided over the faux ceremony.

**1983** — Scott Joseph, the man behind the mask from 1981 to 1984, was instrumental in helping the Wolfpack mascot “evolve.” He was also the one who coined the title “Mr. Wuf.” In an interview with The Wolfpacker, Joseph said he and his mother came up with the now-famous name.

“The only thing that was provided was the head; the rest you had to come up with on your own,” Joseph said. “My mom sewed a suit out of fur and gave me a jersey. So we sat down and

decided to call him ‘Mr. Wuf’ and she sewed that on my jersey.”

**2009** — Different costumes have been phased in and out over the last couple decades, as Mr. and Ms. Wufs’ heads have become less elongated and coyote-esque and more humanized and kid-friendly.

## A NEW MASCOT

**2010-2011** — Tuffy, the live mascot, was introduced during the 2010-2011 football season as a revival of State’s history of living mascots.

When Tuffy, a Tamaskan dog, isn’t prowling the sidelines of Wolfpack football games at Carter-Finley Stadium, he is cared for by a family in Salisbury, N.C.

The Tamaskan dog originates from Finland and is known to excel in agility and obedience. The Tamaskan is also capable of pulling sleds, an ability inherited from its Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute ancestors.



Photo by Luis Zapata.