Which One, Doc? Orange? Sugar? Cotton?

Bill Craig

Passat, Doc. There are some guys behind you with a net. Seriously, Doc, what did you do with that straightjacket? I hope it isn’t true, but I heard your wife was filling out the papers. Don’t worry, Doc, they say it’s nice down there this time of year. The bars won’t obstruct your vision if you’ll close one eye. And everytime you mention something about a bowl game the nurse will give you a blackboard and a piece of chalk and you can write 100 times: “I will never mention Virginia Tech being in a bowl game again.”

Come on now, Doctor Hahn. What is this stuff about Virginia Tech being in a bowl game this year? Oh, you didn’t say it? Really? But, Doc, I read it. Oh, misquoted? No? Oh, just misunderstood? That’s good, Doc. I’ll radio the guys in the sunny wagon and tell them to stop. The guys with the net can take the day off.

I get it now, Doc. You were talking about the facilities at Virginia Tech and you mentioned that the new indoor fieldhouse would be the perfect place to practice in case of a bowl bid. But this December, it might be a good place to get the cows out of the snow. Or a good place to store the remains of “Explosion ’72.”

I talked to an astrologer about it and he said Tech had a chance this year for a bowl bid. He also thinks astrology is the study of girl’s backsides; constellation is Connie Stevens’ real name; zodiac is a deranged person who steals zodes; and Mercury is a fine car, but it will never work in a thermometer. So much for the astrologer’s predictions.

I talked to Charlie Coffey about it, too. He said, “well, er, I talked to Dr. Hahn about it yesterday. I’m pretty hot about it. And so is he, because he certainly wasn’t predicting a bowl bid for us this year. And I’m not either.”

Talking about bowl bids tends to get one in trouble. It was only three years ago when Virginia Tech, under Jerry Claiborne, was going to beat Alabama, go on to a 9-1 season and a bowl. The Hokies lost to Alabama, lost the next four, lost confidence, alumni support, and a year later Jerry Claiborne lost his job.

It’s one thing to get excited and get caught up in “Explosion ’72,” but you better hope they don’t have to rope off a fire-fool of that new fieldhouse in December and light a few firecrackers just to have an explosion.

Anybody who is talking about a bowl bid now just isn’t making sense. Virginia might as well be talking about one. Or YMI. Or Richmond, the last team in the state to be in a bowl.

“Explosion ‘72” is designed to sell tickets. And it is working. But just don’t let your mind leave your body. A bowl bid is simply too far off.

Certainly, Don Strock had a great season. But Tech was still 4-7. Certainly, Strock was second in the nation in passing. But he also completed many of those passes when the game was over, when Tech was out of it. Strock is almost a cinch to have another great year, but the only bowl game he’ll be in is the North-South or the Hall Bowl.

Even Charlie Coffey, mastermind of “Explosion ‘72” will quickly admit that.

“If I knock on wood, hold my breath and hope and pray that we could go to a bowl,” Coffey says, “but it’s damn unrealistic to even dream that.”

What would have to happen for Tech to have a chance to go to a bowl game? Tennessee, Georgia, LSU, Alabama, Texas, Penn State, Mississippi, Nebraska declared ineligible?

“There’s no set formula on going to a bowl,” Coffey says. “It helps to have the tradition like Tennessee and Alabama. Translated, that means Tennessee and Alabama would go to bowls with 6-5 or 7-4 records where it might take a 9-2 or a 10-1 for Tech to be invited. ‘I can remember,’ Coffey says. ‘When Texas A&M went to the Cotton Bowl with a 6-4 record.’

“It’s Damn Unrealistic”

For Tech to have a record good enough for a bowl invitation, Coffey says “we’d have to be awfully lucky early. Then we’d gain some confidence and that’s what we don’t have, confidence and experience.”

“Until you’ve been there and been successful there is no way you can imagine yourself being experienced and confident. I don’t care who you are, who is doing the playing, who is doing the coaching.

“Anybody who is lining up for this year has never been anything but a loser. We’ve got to overcome that first. We can talk about bowls later.”

Hear that, Dr. Hahn?”