Coffey's 'Aches' Believed Curable

By BILL MILLSAPS

College football odds 'n ends:

Charlie Coffey has lost 11 pounds, and he's getting about three hours sleep every night. "Every afternoon about 2, I get to feeling pretty lousy," said the Virginia Tech football coach.

These symptoms are not uncommon for men in Coffey's position. No lab tests or physical examinations are necessary to diagnose the ailment. Tech is 0-2 after its first two games. Enough said.

Coffey believes, however, the Hokies are improving. He doesn't know whether they'll progress to the point where they can beat Southern Methodist (2-0) Saturday in the home opener, but he is heartened by several developments in the Florida State game last Saturday.

"For the first time since I've been here (two seasons)," said the Tech boss, "I feel like we out-toughed a team. We dominated the game in hitting. We left their receivers laying on the field, and we knocked Gary) Huff out of there one time and almost made him leave the field another time.

"Our pass rush was 100 percent better than it was in the Virginia game (a 24-20 loss), and our defense won eight of 12 third-down situations against Huff."

The FSU quarterback, however, hit enough crucial passes to lead the Seminoles to a 27-15 victory. And while it was productive in terms of Yardage gained, Tech's offensive unit got only two touchdowns out of six penetrations of the FSU 20-yard-line.

The return of Richmonder Rich Easterling has also been a boost for the Tech defense. A week before the Hokies' season-opener with Virginia, Easterling, a 6-2, 214-pounder from Collegiate School, decided to quit the team. He had also wanted to bid good-by to football last spring, but Coffey talked him out of it.

A few hours before the Virginia game in Charlottesville, Coffey talked to Easterling. "I asked him to come back," said Coffey, "and he said, 'My question is, do you want me back?' The two talked again in Coffey's office the next afternoon, and Easterling rejoined the team.

"It's been a real struggle with Rich," said Coffey, "but I believe he's now with the program all the way." Easterling was a linebacker when he left. When he came back, the Hokies moved him to defensive end, where he distinguished himself in the Florida State game. "When Rich rushes the passer," said Coffey, "he really blasts the people who are protecting."