Tech Recruiters May Blitz Again

In another month, Dec. 9 exactly, college football recruiters will find out if those sleepless nights away from home, those hamburgers at the Chat-and-Chew, those miles and miles put on those cars donated by the local company, are worth it.

Dec. 9 is signing date for high school football seniors. It is the date when some colleges, some football programs, insure themselves of at least a year or two of prosperity, and others insure themselves of more of what they have been experiencing driving past years.

Virginia Tech, considered to have had the best recruiting year in the state last year and probably one of the best in some time, will apparently blitz the state schools again, although more trouble from out-of-staters is expected this time.

Helicopter Will Return

On Dec. 9, Tech will again scatter assistant coaches throughout the state, probably with head coach Charlie Coffey directing them by helicopter, and sign 25 or so prospects.

At first it appeared there were not as many senior football players in the state this year as there were last, but Tech head recruiter Chuck Rohe says now there are as many, maybe even more. Rohe believes there are at least 45 seniors in Virginia who can play major college football.

According to Rohe, Tech lost only three players in the state last year to whom it offered scholarships. It is unreasonable to believe, however, the Hokies can do that well this year, although Tech may possibly sign at least 35 of the 45. Signing only 30 would be a bad year, Rohe says.

You might think, because Tech lost to Virginia and William & Mary, two state schools the Hokies figured to beat, that recruiting state-wide would be hurt. Rohe says that is not so.

That is because, in reality, Tech is competing with Virginia and William & Mary on few players. It is doubtful Virginia will beat Tech on over three players. William & Mary and Tech are not crossing paths.

"The fact that we have been doing some of the things we have talked about doing on an intersectional basis, even without a lot of great athletes, is the encouraging thing about our program and this is the thing we are selling," Rohe says.

A Bowl Game Would Help

Rohe says what really hurt Tech in the Virginia and William & Mary losses were that they were losses instead of victories. Those losses represent the difference in 4-3-1 and 6-1-1; and staying at home and a bowl game.

"Unless a kid is considering Virginia or William & Mary it didn't mean anymore that they beat us than it would have if Southern Mississippi had beaten us," Rohe said.

Where Tech is finding its toughest competition is from North Carolina, which has always recruited Virginia well, and Johnny-come-lately North Carolina State.

Both North Carolina and State will finish with excellent records and probably go to a bowl game. "It would help us to be on the same footing with them but we could lose some kids because of this," Rohe says. "We think we are doing a good job selling the fact that we will be a big winner and it has helped us to beat SMU and Oklahoma State, teams that are better than what you find in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

"But there are going to be a certain number of the kids we are after who are going to say 'show me' because it looks like North Carolina and North Carolina State are already where we are going to be in another year or so."

Strock Has Helped

Rohe says the out-of-state recruiting will probably go better than it did last year. "Don's (Strock) national reputation has really helped us out of state," Rohe says.

Rohe says the encouraging thing to him is that "football in the state is definitely getting better. We have a lot of potential football players in the state and it's going to get better, not worse. We are going to get better, relative to other states like Tennessee. The state playoffs are helping, the all-star game is helping and the coaches' organization is helping. The fact that we are doing something is creating some interest.

"The state of Virginia has a great football future, both on the high school level and on our level."