Coffey Handling Recruiting Differently

Recruiting the high school football player, the star of the future, is the most sensitive area in which a college coach finds himself involved.

At Virginia Tech, Charlie Coffey will tell you, "you can criticize my program, you can complain about my team, or you can knock me as a coach, but leave my recruiting alone."

Of course, that is never going to happen because where a high school player chooses to further his football career is of extreme importance. There has been as much talk about recruiting this year as there has been about the actual games. Everyone wants to know which college is going to sign which players.

But because there are a countless recruiters running around the state with newspaper clippings and other information which could hamper Coffey's recruiting, he has chosen to handle the situation this year much differently than he did last year.

Announcement Held Up

Therefore it is difficult to tell how many players Tech has signed. Last year, the signees were announced as quickly as they signed because Coffey felt he needed to prove Tech could sign a great number of prospects early. This year, he doesn't feel he needs to prove anything and he doesn't intend to announce anything that could possibly keep him from signing another player.

In other words, we are not likely to find out how many backs or how many defensive tackles Tech has signed until the recruiting is over.

Obviously, Tech is going for numbers this year. And it should. When you analyze the Virginia Tech-Alabama game you realize just how far Coffey's program is from where he wants it to be.

There is no question that Tech has much young talent. There are probably 20 to 25 players on this year's Hokie freshman team (including those freshmen who played on the varsity) who are potentially good college football players.

Sophomores Scarce

But Coffey's first recruiting year—this year's sophomore class—was not a particularly good one, especially when you consider that he brought in only about 25 football players.

There were some good players in that group—Tommy Shirley, Ricky Scales and others—but there weren't nearly enough. What this means is that next year's junior and senior classes are not loaded with outstanding players.

This means that those players Tech signs this year will not have to compete with a great deal of experience. On most teams, good teams, the better players are juniors and seniors. At Tech, the best players are freshmen and sophomores.

Tech is operating basically within the guidelines of the Southeastern Conference which allows its schools to bring in 80 players in each two-year period. Last year, the Hokies brought in 43 freshmen and they could exceed that this year because Coffey is trying to make up for his lean sophomore class. (Juniors next year.)

After this year, Tech expects to average 40 recruits each year.

Coffey says his squad number next year will not be any higher than most of the schools with which he competes. At North Carolina, for example, Bill Dooley has brought around 35 players every year. Tech would like to bring in 40. There's not a great deal of difference.