Virginia Tech First To Offer All Sports Camp for Girls

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Basketball and football camps, during the past several years, have played an important part in many college's summer athletic curriculums.

You can name a coach, then bet he's involved with his own camp or, if not, spends part of the summer working in another coach's camp.

Virginia Tech plunged into the camp scene last year with its boys' all-sports camp and business must have been good. This year Tech is expanding, offering what may be an innovation, an all-sports camp for girls.

"I believe this is the first girls' camp of this type," said Tech summer camp director and head football recruiter Chuck Robe. "A girls' all-sports camp is a natural. There's no competition."

"When I was at Tennessee, I always felt we should have a camp for girls, but we never did. We would have, however, if I had stayed another year."

"Just what is a girls' all-sports camp?"

At Tech, it is two two-week sessions for girls from ages 8 to 16. It will offer instruction in cheerleading, baton twirling, dance and rhythms, swimming, tennis, gymnastics, golf, track, horseback riding and girls' team sports (basketball, softball and volleyball).

Instructors will include the Tech varsity cheerleaders, majorettes from Atlantic Coast Conference and Southeastern Conference schools, and the Tech varsity coaches.

The cost for the two-week girls session is $135. For boys, it will be $295 for three weeks.

Apparently, the girls' camp will be a success. Some 100 girls have already applied and Robe expects at least 200.

The Tech camp system is unique insofar as it offers much more than sports. There is extensive evening entertainment, trips to the Barter Theater, Dixie Caverns, Peaks of Otter, and water skiing on Claytor Lake.

Robe expects at least 300 campers, girls and boys, for the sessions this summer and he predicts that within three more years to total enrollment will be over 1,000.

Why have a summer camp?

Besides the profit motive, which should pump several dollars into the Tech athletic department cash register, Robe says the camp is a great public relations device.

"It has its advantages in recruiting athletes," said Robe. "Although we may not have many super athletes attending the camp, word of mouth about Tech and our facilities has to help us."

The camp also provides Tech's coaches and athletes (many of whom will serve as counselors) with summer employment. It also keeps the facilities in use and provides summer work for the cooks, dorm supervisors and maintenance people.

"We think the camp provides a service," said Robe. "We could make a lot more money, but we're spending more than any camp I know of."

For example, one of the outside programs Robe is bringing in this summer is Ross Allen from the Reptile Institute in Florida. Anyone who is interested will learn how not to handle snakes.

Although the girls and boys will be housed in separate dorms, eat in different parts of the dining hall and basically attend separate camps, there will be some social functions.

Last year, when Tech had only a boys' camp, the social aspect was definitely lacking. Some arrangements were made, however, with a Girl Scout camp in Shawsville.

However, when the Tech campers visited said camp, they found the road ended abruptly and a nifty two-mile hike was required to locate the Girl Scouts.