The Gobbler Barber Is a Woman, Nancy Edwards

BLACKSBURG—If it's true that "only your hairdresser knows for sure," then Nancy Edwards can tell you what kind ofsecret the Virginia Tech football team will have and who's going to play quarterback.

Maybe she can tell you which high school players the Tech football coaches will try and recruit this year, who's going to be the star in basketball and how many tackles Tom Shirley expects to make.

Not only that, she may be able to tell you who Tech President Dr. T. Marshall Hahn plans to hire as his associate chemistry professor.

You see, Nancy cuts Dr. Hahn's hair. And George McKinney's. And Dan Henning's. And Don Devoe's. She probably knows as much about X's and O's as any body.

"No," she says, "we don't talk about sports. We talk about hair."

That may be true, but Nancy, pretty proprietor of Nancy's Beauty Lounge, is definitely sports oriented. In fact, Sunday afternoon she and several of her employees will set up shop in the Tech Coliseum and cut the football team's hair— for free.

"Why for free?"

"It's good business," she says. "After I cut (actually: Nancy is a stylist) it once, they usually come back."

It does not mean, however, that Coach Charlie Coffey is ordering his team to get its hair cut. But the players who think they need it will be ready by 2 p.m.

Nancy, you understand, is no dummy. She has been wanting to get Coffey into her shop but he had been doing business elsewhere. Until he ran into a problem. She hired Coach Coffey's hairdresser.

Nancy's Beauty Lounge is a big-cit ytype operation. It's like those family billiard parlors. Nancy's does everybody's hair—men, women and children.

"I don't know how many gumes the football team has," she says, "but I can promise you they're going to look good." Nancy figures she styles about half the football team's hair, more than half of the coaches and almost all of their wives.

In fact, Nancy got in with the football coaches through the wives. George McKinney was the first coach to have his hair done at Nancy's. Nancy's wife, Lyndell, convinced him it was the thing to do.

And it was. Nancy's was able to convince Dr. Hahn he should get rid of his crewcut and go modern. You know: modern university, modern hair. Dr. Hahn is now a regular customer.

Many men probably prefer having their hair done by men, but that attitude hasn't affected Nancy's business.

"We do as many men's hair as we do women's," she says. "It's becoming more and more important to look nice. I think that's what they want. They don't care who makes them look that way."

No question, Nancy has it going. She's smart. She's hired as an assistant professor. "We keep it professional," she says. "You must."

It is amazing, however, to see how Nancy's business is growing in time when barbers are going out of business every day.

"A lot of them don't want to cut long hair," she says. "And a lot of people don't believe just because a man has long hair that he doesn't get it cut. That just isn't true. Women have long hair and I see a lot of them in my Nancy's every week."

"What you have to do is keep up with the times."

And the football team.