Big 5 Grid Coaches Differ On Scholarship Limit Rule

BY CHUCK FRAINIE

A general tenor of cautious optimism characterized prepared remarks as football coaches from the State Big Five schools shared the podium at an unusual Friday meeting of the Peninsula Sports Club.

However, it was a spirited discussion among four of the five coaches on the NCAA's new 30-scholarship rule which produced the fireworks.

The subject was brought up by Virginia Tech's Charlie Coffey who closed his prepared remarks by calling the dictum "ridiculous."

Coffey, entering his third season at Blacksburg, was the last of the five to speak. Preceding him in order were Bob Thalman of Virginia Military Institute, Dick Lage, representing Frank Jones, of Richmond, Don Lawrence of Virginia and Jim Root of William and Mary.

Coffey took the "Lone Ranger" role against Root, Thalman and Lawrence in the informal debate over the "30 Rule." Lage kept out of the discussion.

Lawrence claimed the cutback makes coaching in accordance with ideals of collegiate sports much more of a challenge..."it makes a coach." He said such national football powers as Southern California, Notre Dame and others thrive on no more than 30 scholarships.

Root, who said he has not had more than 22 "free rides" with which to work since he came to Williamsburg, feels the rule would spread the talent around and emphasize quality rather than quantity in recruiting.

He also said it would partially eliminate the bad college experience for the younger who comes to college looking forward to a grid career and then is lost in the shuffle.

Thalman agreed with Root, using the balance of quality versus quantity as the basis for his remarks.

Coffey cited a survey he made:

Big Five Grid Chiefs Josh Compatriots About Season Openers

VMI's Bob Thalman (second from right) and Virginia's Don Lawrence (right) accept jibes from (left to right) William and Mary's Jim Root, Richmond aide Dick Lage and Virginia Tech's Charlie Coffey before Sports Club meeting. Coffey Root and Lawrence hosts Thalman in opening Sept. 8. The Spiders entertain Davidson at