Gobblers' Heads On Coffey's 'Block'

By JENNINGS CULLEY

Records aren't kept on such things, but it just might have been the longest and loudest tongue-lashing in college football history.

Charlie Coffey, admittedly embarrassed by the Virginia Tech Gobblers' poor play in Saturday's 31-26 loss to Kentucky, berated his squad for 45 minutes before letting them into the showers.

And when the lockerroom trade was over, Coffey fumed: "I've been too easy on this football team ... not demanded a tough approach. I've waited for maturity to develop ... not forced players to be men."

CHANGES TODAY

Changes will start with today's practice in preparation for West Virginia. "I'm in a fight, not for my livelihood, but my coaching career," Coffey said. "I've been in coaching 16 years and I'm at the crossroads right now, not near the end of the season."

"I'm taking a long look at myself, my staff and my squad. I'm inviting all the players who want to make football the only thing in their life to join me."

"I'm closing practice to managers, trainers, everybody because I'm going to insist and demand a lot of tough things."

"I've never been a loser. I've lost, but I've overcome it. If I can't do it now, I'll remove myself from the situation."

Before outlining his get-tough policy, Coffey chastised the squad for its dispirited play in the first half when the Wildcats blitzed to a 31-6 lead. For 45 minutes, he kept the players locked in the unfinished dressing room under Kentucky's new Commonwealth Stadium.

NOBODY ESCAPED

Nobody -- player, trainer or assistant coach escaped his blistering verbal attack and at times, his charges were so loud his words were easily overheard by fans on the outside.

"You're losers ... losers," Coffey screamed at one point. "I'm a loser ... you're a loser."

"But I've been embarrassed by you guys for the last three months."

"I'm going to treat you like a big brother. As a kid, you do something wrong, you have to come home to big brother. Well, if you don't respond to me, I'm going to be a big brother ... I'm going to take you over the coals."

To the Hokies' credit, they made a face-saving comeback in the second half. The defense, lackadaisical at the start, became aggressive and check-

The turns around left Coffey bewildered.

"It was just like in practice. You run a play and you run it wrong, so you run it again and you run it right."

"RAN IT RIGHT"

"That's all we did. We ran the defense over again in the second half and we ran it right. We didn't change one thing. We just ran it right."

Coffey was especially undone by the pass-yielding way of the offense.

"The offense was real fine in the finestene stuff. But we didn't blow anybody back. I have the biggest offensive line I've ever had anywhere and we didn't move anybody."

"I've been at the goaline the last time with some of you people."

Coffey was referring to a third period sag when the Hokies were unable to score after getting a first down on the Ken-

down after intermission. The offense, cutting down on the errors, had consistency in the air and on the ground in the se-
tucky one.

The game, if nothing else, ap-

palled the left Ricky Popp as the No. 1 Tech quarterback. Bruce Arians started, but it was Popp who came on to generate most of the offense. He hit nine of 21 passes for two touchdowns. But at the end, he was limping and holding a sore elbow.

But Coffey promised more bumps and bruises this week.

"We're going to start the tough things today. We'll work on the rough stuff Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and the finest stuff Thursday."

"People with me after today will take a mean, nasty approach to football."

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