'Make or Break Approach'

Is Coffey Wrong?
Coaches Divided

By DAN SMITH
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Most of the high school football coaches in the Roanoke area are taking the attitude that Charley Coffey's problems at Virginia Tech are none of their business, but several voiced rather strong opinions Tuesday.

After Tech lost 31-26 to Kentucky Saturday, Coffey said he would take strong measures this week to get the Gobblers back on the winning track.

He said, "I'm going to start coaching like I did when I was an assistant. When a player made a mistake, I either kicked him in the rear or slapped him across the face. I'm getting rid of those who don't believe football is everything. I can't take their scholarships away, but I can fire them from the football team."

If there was a consensus among the six coaches The Times talked to (all but one of whom have players on Coffey's team), it was that results, or lack of them, will be more important to Tech's recruiting than the new "get tough" policy.

"Our kids are not afraid of tough football practices or tough football coaches," said a Western District coach. "They will go along with almost anything if they think it is fair."

A coach in the Valley District said, "I don't see that it will make that much difference. What Tech does the rest of the season will tell more. There is a problem of good boys not producing down there. Maybe they have too many good players and there is some dissatisfaction. The kids were used to being stars in high school and their importance has been reduced. Sometimes too much talent gets in each other's way."

A Roanoke Valley District coach said, "I agree with him (Coffey) if he can get his team on the move. The tough approach never hurt anybody. I think that all philosophies in coaching are valid because different things work for different people. I still think Tech has a fine football team and a fine program. They have been hurt by bad breaks.

"Our kids apparently haven't thought too much about the situation. I haven't heard a single opinion voiced."

Another Roanoke Valley coach said, "I don't think the tailkicking and face-slapping will help if Coffey is really serious about it. I don't think it will scare many of the players off, but it is not conducive to team harmony and that appears to be what is lacking."

The Western District coach said, "I think the kids have to play for the coach as well as for themselves and that ap-

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