Tech's Quarterback Job Finally Pops Into Focus

BLACKSBURG, Va. --- Virginia Tech's quarterback situation finally appears to be coming into focus.

With sophomore Rick Popp starting to act and perform like a take-charge guy and freshman Eddie Joyce making obvious strides as the backup man, the Hokies' offense is starting to move with considerably more consistency.

'Popp has thrown some interceptions because we've been faced practically all season with having to play catch-up football,' Coffey notes, 'but there's no question that he has come on strong in the last two games.

'And there's also no doubt about Joyce's progress since we elevated him to the varsity two weeks ago. He got his baptism under intense fire in the South Carolina game, and he still has a long way to go, but he certainly has the tools to become an outstanding performer.'

Meanwhile, back at the sideline, sophomore Greg Mullinax is getting a 'tax-free' education in offense.

Because South Carolina assistant Billy Clay, until recently had been a member of Tech's staff, who might be capable of deciphering at least part of Tech's signal system, Coffey decided before the South Carolina game to go to the messenger system to relay play calling.

'I think it has helped our total operation,' Coffey says, 'and I think it also will help Mullinax's development.'

Most important at the moment, however, is Popp's daily progress. 'As he performs with increasing confidence, the entire offensive unit in turn shows progressive confidence in