Tech wants most out of bad year

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Virginia Tech doesn't have many battles left to win on the football field.

The Gobblers have only two more chances in what has turned out to be a dismal season. But before it's over, Coach Charlie Coffey hopes that a couple of victories could lead to some positive results during the recruiting season which will be starting in earnest in less than two weeks.

Tech plays host to winless Florida State tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 in Blacksburg and then winds up against VMI the next week.

Tech, 1-3, is an even choice against the Seminoles and will be a favorite against the Keydets. The question is, can two victories this late help the Gobblers in the recruiting battles?

"Certainly any win can make a difference," said Coffey. "Yes, two wins could wipe out some negative results. But a football coach can look only to win those games approaching—not the ones that have gone by."

Coffey adds that records don't always mean everything in wooing high school prospects. "You have to sell what we have to sell," said the Hokies' coach. "And certainly we don't have any record to sell.

"With a combination of the youth movement and a freshman team with a lot of enthusiasm, all of these are building stones for us.

"But anytime you're recruiting, whatever you do you have to be honest. Don't try to create fantasies or stretch the imagination of recruits, their friends and coaches. We've had some problems. It's nothing we've tried to hide."

Then Coffey recalled last year. "Our opponents (in recruiting) said we had so many players here that the incoming people wouldn't get to play. We've now played 18 freshmen and 20 sophomores. We are young and people do get a chance to play. What hurt us last year will help this season."

Still, personal satisfaction from getting a win also is an important factor for Coffey and his team tomorrow. The Hokies still have a lot of players out on defense and Coffey says now there will be 22 freshmen dressed for the game.

"Florida State is like us," Coffey remarked. "They have their problems. They've gone through more than one quarterback (Tech has used four). They have a tough schedule, injuries and lost an opening game they expected to win.

"Anybody we've played we've had trouble with on defense. We haven't improved. We've worsened in some cases."

What about the Florida State view? Jon Conlin, a graduate assistant at Florida State who played at Tech three years ago, scouted the Hokies.

"It boils down to how much our defense holds Tech down because they have such a good offense and then how well our offense can do," Conlin said.

State's offense hasn't produced this year. The once potent Seminoles haven't scored more than 17 points in any one game. Why did Florida State, once a national power, break down so fast?

"Coach (Bill) Peterson didn't recruit well (three years ago). He saw the light that he was going to quit (Peterson went to Rice)," Conlin explained.

The only thing left tomorrow is a bit of honor and possibly a few recruits. That's what two losers wind up playing for in November.