Blackburn - "The VMI loss was the worst hurt I've ever had in football." Virginia Tech administrative assistant for football Jack Prater told the Blacksburg Sports Club Monday. Prater, who was on the 1951 squad, the last team to do as poorly in wins at the 1973 squad, noted that the coaching staff then stuck to it and three years later "They were on top."

Prater said the Gobblers "didn't play as hard as the week before" when they defeated Florida State.

Films of the game, he said, showed that a disputed play on which an official ruled a low catch by Ricky Scales illegal should have gone the other way and the catch was legal. Films also showed Skip Creasey was on the line of scrimmage where he belonged when the ball was snapped on another controversial play on which a long gainer was nullified by an official's whistle.

Prater said that Coffey could not address the meeting because he was "out recruiting a defensive coordinator" to replace George M. Kinney, who resigned.

Coffey's assistant said Tech would miss James Barber, "one of the best athletes around here in some time." He said Barber, who may have had his best day ever in the Keydet clash was "the spark that kept us alive in the game."

Concerning tailback Phil Rogers, he said "there is no telling how great he can be."

Before leaving on his recruiting chores he remarked "There is some fine talent in Virginia, some of it here in the Roanoke Valley."

Prater, who helped as a player to bring back VPI's sagging football fortunes to respectability, said of next year's squad "We'll come back with the Tech spirit and we'll come up fighting."