Hahn Resists Tech Alumni

By Bill Millsaps

A large group of Virginia Tech alumni met with Tech president Dr. T. Marshall Hahn last week and demanded that full-time coach Charlie Coffey be paid off $120,000 and released, according to an influential Richmond area Tech alumnus.

"Dr. Hahn absolutely would not bend in this matter," said the alumnus, who wished to remain nameless. "The result is that Dr. Hahn is now getting as much heat as Coffey. But Hahn is the absolute boss, and what he says apparently goes.

COFFEY AND HAHN had a meeting last weekend in Blacksburg, and the alumnus said, "It is our understanding that Coffey was given one more year to see it around and if he didn’t he’d resign. Last December, Coffey received an unusual five-year contract which is automatically renewable for one extra year at the end of each season. He is paid roughly $30,000 per year, and therefore it would cost Tech $120,000 to fire him now, $120,000 to fire him next year, etc.

Hahn is on route to Antarctica on a scientific mission and was unavailable for comment on the results of either the meeting with the alumni or Coffey.

BUT COFFEY, reached in Blacksburg, said that "at no time" did Hahn indicate that he had a time limit for Tech to become a winner. The Hokies finished 2-9 this season, winding up their campaign with a particularly shocking loss to Virginia Military Institute.

"Dr. Hahn knows what our problems are," said Coffey. "He doesn’t miss a game. And he’s doing everything he can do to help us now in recruiting."

Coffey said the harsh criticism that is now his lot is "new to the game or to the profession. Last year (the Hokies were 6-4-1), we had a lot of back-patting. This year, it’s just the reverse."

Coffey said he was not going to resign, yet he did not flatly indicate he would remain past the 1974 season. "I’m sure there is a limit to how much adversity the Hokies can take, but I haven’t yet reached my limit. I am concerned that I didn’t get enough going to satisfy myself and those who employ me, and by that I mean Dr. Hahn, the alumni, the students, the players and the fans."

ASKED ABOUT the progress of his recruiting, Coffey said, "You would expect me to say it was lousy, but it isn’t." Coffey said the Hokies had "nine firm commitments" from high school seniors. The first day of the signing season is Dec. 8.

Coffey said that he had not yet hired a defensive coordinator, to replace George McKinney, who resigned at the end of the season. "I’m talking to some people who are involved in bowl games," he said, "but I’m honor bound not to mention their names. It has been learned, however, that Coffey has offered the job to Doug Parcells, Vanderbilt’s defensive coordinator."