Coffey Resigns Duties, Committee Seeks Coach

By Bill Mason
Sports Editor
BLACKSBURG-Virginia
Tech head football coach Charlie Coffey handed his resignation to University president T. Marshall Hahn Friday, ending three years of high visibility, higher hopes and embarrassing disappointment for VPI football.

Coffey's resignation followed on the heels of an announcement that Bill Clay, hired only weeks ago as defensive coordinator replacing the dismissed George McKinney had changed his mind and returned to the staff of coach Paul Dietzel of South Carolina.

The apparent defection of promising freshman quarterback Eddie Joyce, Jr. of Salem and Keith Shirley of Roanoke, a freshman who signed with, but played no football for Tech--both to the University of Tennessee--also preceded Coffey's decision, not unexpected in view of a 2-9 season featuring a monumental defensive collapse and mounting alumni pressure.

Coffey foreshadowed his resignation when he remarked to reporters after the season's second loss in September that if the time came when he realized he couldn't do the job of winning for Tech, "I will remove myself."

The former coach said he would return to his farm home in Tennessee and manage a trucking firm that he owns. Coffey is not expected to return to football coaching soon, perhaps not ever.

A committee chaired by athletic director Frank Moseley and including vice president for administration Stuart Cassell, director of development and Athletic Council chairman Dr. Wilson B. Bell, and assistant athletic director Bill Mathews has been formed and is seeking a new head coach, Hahn reported.

First word of Coffey's resignation reportedly came from a story in the Bristol Herald Courier, one of only two dailies in Virginia for which the former coach ever expressed praise publicly.

The abrupt timing of Coffey's resignation caused a minor shock wave in Tech athletic circles and left two major athletic positions to be filled. Veteran athletic director and former football coach Moseley recently announced that he will retire this year.

COFFEY LEAVES--Head football coach Charlie Coffey ended a three-year era of Virginia Tech football when he handed his resignation to University president T. Marshall Hahn Friday morning. Coffey returned to Shelbyville, Tenn. to manage a business that he owns. No successor has been named.