Tech Is Criticized
By 'Minor' Coaches

By DENNIS LATTI
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There's a small storm brewing in the Virginia Tech athletic program and the only reason it is small is because it hasn't been publicized up until now.

Virginia Tech's track coach has resigned. Its soccer coach is planning to resign and the other coaches in the non-income minor sports aren't sure of what they're doing.

"I've been getting the same old story about minor sports for 10 years down here," said Marty Pushkin, track coach. "I just couldn't continue in good conscience under present circumstances. I think it is the same way with the other minor sports as well."

Pushkin actually realized last Friday, but word of it had been kept silent. When he asked the Tech administration for more money for his program, he received just a third of his request. It was the straw that broke the camel's back.

Soccer coach George (Skip) Snead is leaving for the same reason - money. He gets no money for scholarships and can't compete with a team that can compete with anyone.

"This situation should be opened up," Pushkin said. "It's way overdue that people should know about things around here. If my resignation stirs up a little something, then it's worth it."

According to Snead, "I don't think I'll be back next year but I've made so many enemies and done so many things around here that a lot of people will be glad to see me go. It would be a tremendous service to our sports program to have all 17 offices."

The problem is that the two major sports of football and basketball are apparently getting most of the money while the minor sports are receiving just a trickle.

Pushkin explained, "I know the money could be available if anyone in the administration had any interest in the minor sports, but they don't. It is discouraging to see how the minor sports have been surpressed."

They keep trying to tell me that as soon as the football gets going, it'll pay for the other sports. It just hasn't happened," Pushkin said.

In track Tech gives Pushkin $16,000 to use for scholarships. "I spread that around 14 people. I have just two freshmen on full scholarships. The other 12 get partial help. The NCAA recommends that track get more than 25 full scholarships. Most of the teams I compete against do that. I just can't use a small nucleus like I have and expect walk-ons (nonscholarship athletes) to do the rest."

"We can no longer compete with teams like Tennessee and Maryland that are putting money into their minor sports programs. They have all grown in football and basketball without stifling their minor sports and we should be able to do it too," Pushkin continued.

Snead gets less cooperation in soccer. "I raised $2,700 myself this year, but before that I had nothing. They have no interest in a full-time soccer coach."

"If they students hadn't pushed it, they would have paid. He finished and went out to get a job."

"We even had a graduate student who said he would serve as coach. We would have just one of the strongest teams in the state, if we had one," Matyko said.

Brian Damont, president of Tech's monogram club, is upset that the tech team is not happy with the treatment he gets.

"We don't get any breaks in classes and scheduling like the football players," Damont said. "We have to do everything on our own. When we go out for practice, sometimes we have to wait two or three hours. Do you think they would make a football player wait like that?"

But the minor sports at Tech have done well in spite of the lack of help. The track team has won 23 out of its last 33 dual meets.

"This is by far the best track team we have ever had," Pushkin said. This is his 10th year as coach. "But other schools are going first class and we're not. We're just getting a lot of mileage out of what we have. I need 30 or 40 good people because there are 17 events in a dual meet."

"It is discouraging to see smaller schools like Madison soccer is flourishing. Madison definitely gets more support and is able to get things done because people are working together," Snead claimed.

"Here people are apathetic. If a team does well, that's great. But there is no commitment to insure success," he added.

"Tech proposes to be an all-around athletic school but it just isn't," Pushkin said. "It hasn't been and it won't be unless things are changed."