Tech Quarterback
Situation Uncertain

BLACKSBURG— Spring football drills at Virginia Tech open April 22 with three new quarterbacks to choose from as had been anticipated at the end of last season. Since the Tech attack is certain Tuesday that redshirt soph Rick Popp of Akron, Ohio has resigned from the squad after a broken leg he suffered in a game last season failed to heal completely.

The reports are that Bruce Arians, whom Popp beat out for the starting position last season, will try out for the position under new coach Jimmy Sharpe, formerly an assistant at Alabama. Arians did not report from the varsity and later the JV squad last season.

Soph Steve Mathieson of Rickville, Md., who succeeded Popp until he, too, was injured, has dropped out of school. Late last year the departure of promising quarterback Eddie Joyce of Salem was announced. A check with the Virginia Tech admissions office quieted a rumor that Joyce had re-enrolled.

The source confirmed a report that junior defensive end Jim Heizer of Rosnoke and freshman tackle Paul Heizer of Richpond also have resigned from the squad.

Ten other Tech players, whose names were not immediately learned, also have resigned, most for academic reasons.

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Pete Horoszko
Gobbler John WFL

The guessing game of Virginia Tech football: What's ahead for next season—began officially with the opening of spring football drills Monday morning.

A turnout of between 90 and 100 candidates was expected, including more than a dozen walk-ons.

The numbers may be encouraging but the first educated guess about next season will come with the Orange and White Spring game May 18.

If Coach Jimmy Sharpe can put together the rudiments of a defense by that time, it could be a good omen for the future.

Tech hit an all-time low on defense last season, squeezing out only one victory and giving up Virginia’s down that week) and wireless Florida State.

The nitty is gritty anywhere you look. The key to the offense-quarterback—is the biggest of question marks, with last season’s top three quarterbacks—Eddie Joyce, Jr., Rick Popp and Steve Mathieson—all out of the picture.

Virginia Tech has four able-bodied quarterbacks, Sharpe reports, and may have another before the end of spring football drills which began Monday.

Bruce Arians, Greg Mullinax, Mitch Barnes and Rusty Bailey are ready, but Mitchell Thomas will likely work due to a shoulder injury for which he has had surgery.

Sharpe says it’s hard to evaluate players on the basis of last season’s films and he rated all players the same until practice opened.

A lineman who is a newcomer to the squad likely will create some excitement provided he recovers from shoulder surgery in time to be ready for action in the Spring game May 18. He is Ken Lambert, a former redshirt.

Lambert, who played as a sophomore for the Tennessee Volunteers two years ago, is now eligible at Tech.

Sharpe commented “If you haven’t heard about Lambert, you will.”