Tech enjoys involvement of new pitcher

By BOB McLELAND
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BLACKSBURG—There was no rub-rash atmosphere there. There was no signs of last November sulks. It was a day to enjoy the sun and the practice of the football team.

"There was a noticeable air of hope, confidence and spirits," Jack Crews, the big junior linebacker from South Boston, said with a smile yesterday. "I believe the team's attitude has improved.

"It's all different, man," Crews said. "Everyone is in-volved. Players and coaches are in full swing. We just don't know what we might not be world beaters but we are in the right mood to play football.

"We have worked much harder this spring than ever before but I think we all have enjoyed it more...all because of the new atmosphere.

"Crews had just been judged the top defensive player in the Tech spring game. To bolster his claim Crews said his team had lost a clause 7:21 decision to the White.

"The defense was the main weakness of Tech teams for three years," Crews said as he sauntered back to the press box. "But we hope that might be a thing of the past.

"I don't claim we have made much improvement," Crews said. "Before we played mainly a constant defense. We didn't go after the ball. Now, things are different. We've got confidence. That's what any football player or likes. He doesn't like setting back and letting the offensive come at you. We like to go after them too."

Crews was far from the only excited and encouraged player. All around the field the unconcerned on the top defensive player for his three white touchdowns and numerous sensational defensive runs, was all smiles.

"I never liked to block," he said. "But now with the new wishbone offense, he realizes he and his fellow backs will be made heroes even if they don't run, or run for yardage."

"I didn't like it at first," Rogers said. "But now I don't mind it. Besides, I feel this new offense will enable us to make more of the long kicks into the end zone. Last year we missed a lot of scoring chances last year because we didn't know what to do with the kick off.""

There are many who feared Sharpe would have mainly a ground attack with the wishbone and let the air game be used only in desperation.

But Sharpe hasn't seen the case and the pass will become a definite part of the Tech offense. One of those who really en-joyed his team's development was football, wide-receiver who holds most of Tech's receiving records.

"Men, this offense is going to help me," said Sharpe. "I don't know if we will average 300 yards a game but I do know I'll average any more. I don't think any team can afford to give me dou-bl humanized or else they'll go down."

"I am really looking forward to next fall. I think we'll surprise a lot of people.

There were some notable wrinkles in Tech's tilting game. Sharpe has a formidable kicking game—something that will be a must if the Hokies are to enjoy any success.

But kicker Wayne Linder and punter Bruce McDaniels of Athens, Ga., have a bright future. Linder, Tech's holder in a remarkable five out of six field goals, said:

"I believe we have spent only two days on the kicking game and it sure showed today.

The Hokies had also trouble getting outside with the blockers around and it might be one of their defenses of the offense or a combination of a lack of timing and execution by the blocking that would make theTechs believe he could be expected to succeed in the spring practice and might be the cause of a great deal in fall prac-tise.

The two of the position switches by Sharpe seemed to have made with success. Billy Hardow, a former wide receiver, is now defensive back. Sharpe says "he's going to be a great one."" 

Mercer Bluff was a defensive back last year at a high school player. Now he's a Tech four-year and he loved in Bluff is the fastest of the Techmen.

Four of Tech's former greats—George Press, Carroll Dale, Charles Peacock and Francie Wren—were on a special committee to select the offensive and defensive player of the game.

All four took in top condition and Dale said he realized that going from Minnesota to the Chicago Bears "would be a great challenge."

Mike Hamer, the sophomore from Patrick Henry, played at Tech last year and said the team was ready for a new fall. Mike Poole, a receiver from Lord Botetourt, also could prove a help to the Hokies.

The hardback run of the game was Cave Spring's Doug Thacker. Thacker is already starting line-up. Doug Thacker injured his knee—the same one that sidelined him last year—this spring and Thacker expects to be able to play in the spring practice and might be the cause of a great deal in fall prac-tise.

"I don't know of any player more dedicated or who works harder than Doug Thacker," said Coach Louis Ripley of Holm- rese, who helps with the medical needs at Tech.

"He is completely obvious to pain. He never thinks he's hurt. Even when we went out there to get him, he still wanted to play. He's one tremendous competitor." 

The big payoff for the White victory came yesterday when the winners enjoyed a big meal of T-bone steaks and all the trimmings, including a white tuxedo while the White players wore their red and navy suits and ties.

Sharpe had to eat an orange meal since he lost a bicycle race yesterday in a match race against college officials.