Tech on ACC push

Last week's Virginia Tech Carousel differed from its nine predecessors.

The annual midsummer get-together for golf, swimming and tennis more nearly resembled a party such as the ones held each year at the Atlantic Coast Conference basketball tournament.

There were more ACC officials at the Carousel than players picketing the pro football camps these days.

In years past the ACC schools have not been represented at the shindig, with the exception of a few friends from the University of Virginia, Tech's neighbor school.

One Tech official denied that the crowd of ACC guests has anything to do with the school's hopes of becoming the conference's eighth member. "We also invited representatives from major Southern independents," he pointed out. But no one from the Southern Conference was asked.

However, Tech basketball Coach Don DeVoe only smiled and nodded in agreement when it was noted that the large number of ACC guests might be the start of a Tech push to gain conference membership.

Virginia officials, who were in more abundance than past years, said that a higher number of their people had been invited. Besides athletic directors from every ACC member school being invited, Marvin "Skeeter" Francis, assistant commissioner from the conference, was present. It's almost a sure bet that ACC head man Bob James also was asked to come.

Some sources have been quoted as saying that Tech will be an ACC member in less than two years.

No one knows the ACC's thinking now, for things are moving rapidly within the conference. But it figures that if the conference does expand, Tech will be the next school asked to join.

The ACC now consists of seven teams—not a good number with which to run conference tournaments and round robin schedules. A conference with eight members is regarded as perfect.

There are other troubles. The Washington Post reported that Clemson will lose its membership because of irregularities in running its program. It is too premature to speculate whether this is true, but certainly if it happens it will affect ACC thinking on new member schools.

Wake Forest also presents the ACC some problems. Reportedly, some conference institutions are concerned that the Deacons do not have enough programs to fully participate in the Carmichael Cup standings. In other words, Wake Forest simply doesn't have a well enough rounded program because it doesn't invest in minor sports participation.

Tech, on the other hand, seems to be beefing up its minor sports programs. Bob Humphreys has baseball scholarships and new coaches have been hired in other areas.

The only problem of Tech's entrance to the ACC would be in football scheduling. It could take several years to get the football schedule adjusted since Tech has most of its games for the next 10 years.

Basketball is a year-to-year thing. Anyway, DeVoe is so anxious for ACC membership that he could probably do any schedule adjusting necessary if the conference should accept Tech.

Last week's Carousel might have been the most important one yet—from the standpoint of Tech's athletic future. It wasn't all fun and play as is usually the case.