Bob McLelland
Sports Editor

Humphreys was surprised
It was a pleasant surprise to Bobby Humphreys in his first season as head baseball coach at Virginia Tech.

"I always worry when I meet a new group of students," Humphreys said. "They say they were a bunch of individualists and each wanted to do his own thing. But our kids were just great. And we had a real cross section of America."

"We had blacks and whites and we had them from New York on down. But I didn't have any discipline problems. I couldn't have asked for a better group of kids to start my college coaching career."

But there were some things Humphreys would like to improve next season with the 15-15 record being No. 1 on the list. The Gobblers got off to a slow start and once stood only 3-9. Humphreys said this had a lot to do with not knowing his personnel as well as he would have liked.

Pitching, catching and defense all came in for some troubled times and as a result Tech lost seven games by one run and three others by two and in each the Gobblers were ahead after five innings.

"Everything just broke down at the wrong times," Humphreys said. "We didn't have the pitcher who could stop the other team in a tough situation and it looked like we always made the big error at the wrong time."

Humphreys would also have an entirely All-Virginia squad at Tech. But he feels the average high school player in the state doesn't have the opportunity to play as much as the players in other states.

"There are a number of excellent scholastic players in the state who play American Legion ball in the summer—and there are many who play none at all.—will play only two or three games a week over a relatively short period of time."

Humphreys would like to have summer leagues organized for high school players along the lines of the Valley League for college players.

"I think it would be great if there were leagues that would extend the present high school seasons into the summer," Humphreys said. "Take the schools in Roanoke. William Fleming, Patrick Henry and the rest could form a team of their players who would return and add the boys from the junior high schools who would attend there next year."

"Then you could have a really fine, competitive league which would be of pretty interest and it would help develop players. They could play three or four times a week and the competition should be interesting for the fans."

Busy times ahead
Humphreys has been scanning the state for top prospects to improve the program next season. But he realizes a top pitcher or catcher might cost him a full scholarship and there aren't too many of them to throw around.

"But I believe if we build our program strong enough, we'll attract the top players," he said. "I feel if we have a good schedule and play interesting ball, we'll get a lot of kids coming here just to be a part of the program."

Humphreys, who pitched in the major leagues for eight seasons, knows his baseball. He loves it at the college level.

"I know I learned a lot this season," Humphreys said. "I realize you can't play for the one run all the time like you can in the majors. The pitching and defense over the season isn't that strong. But college base ball is fast improving and the brand of ball at the better schools is certainly leveling with major league ball."

Humphreys plans to play some 30 or 40 intersquad games next fall with a possible game or two with nearby college opponents. He has plans for a 50-game spring season but he has been spiced with some top opponents.

He feels his experience will serve him well in his move for an improved program at Tech.

"I feel we can be more representative next season and I see no reason why we can't have a program here that will stir up the interest of the university and the sporting public."

"I know I'm optimistic and I am excited. I wish the season was starting right now."