Tech Recruiting 'Scares' Coffey

Wednesday was national letter of intent day for college football signees. What that day meant, of course, was that most high school football recruits decided officially and finally which college they would attend.

Apparently, Virginia Tech and Virginia did very well on national letter day. Tech lost one signee to Indiana. According to sketchy reports from Charlottesville, Virginia didn’t lose anyone, but that cannot be confirmed because head coach Don Lawrence is out of town recruiting.

Tech is hopeful of bringing in 60 prospects, including walk-ons. Virginia has signed 38.

“We did so well it scares me,” said Tech head coach Charlie Coffey. “Last year we had 11 prospects we thought we might lose and ended up losing five of them. This year we lost only one and he is the one we expected to lose.”

Tech’s loss is Robert Roberts, the lineman of the year in Kentucky, who went to Indiana. Roberts had signed with six schools.

Wednesday’s signing ended the speculation that George Heath, the player of the year in Tennessee (from Tennessee High in Bristol) would go elsewhere. He signed the national letter with Tech.

“We had a few trouble spots,” Coffey says, “but, fortunately, we only lost the one player. Two kids in Kentucky were really difficult to sign because a great number of schools closed in on them at the last minute. But we got them.”

Coffey says that some of Tech’s signing success can be attributed to the Hokie basketball team winning the National Invitational Tournament.

“That national exposure—something we need a lot more of—really helped,” Coffey says. “It made signing these kids a lot easier.”

Tech obviously did not have the year in Virginia that it enjoyed last year.

“We lost five boys we really wanted and this hurt,” Coffey says. “I’m not saying these five are all we offered scholarships and didn’t get, but they are five we wanted badly and thought we’d get.”

“In retrospect, what really hurt us was the fine year North Carolina had and our two losses to in-state opponents (Virginia and William & Mary). We also lost a couple of quarterbacks when we signed Eddie Jaycee Jr. early. Quarterbacks don’t particularly like competition. It usually hurts you with some others when you sign a great one.”

Although Coffey acknowledges the fact that he would have liked to have done better in the state, he says Tech’s out-of-state recruiting was almost fantastic.

“We signed eight players in West Virginia and 11 in East Tennessee,” Coffey says. “Last year we signed five players in West Virginia and ended up losing four of them on national letter day. This year we signed eight and kept eight.”

Tech has also signed two players again whom it signed last year but couldn’t quality. Moses Foster and Curt Lowery, who played last season at Massanutton; are back in the Tech fold.

“A lot of people were openly critical of our policy last season (signing players who could not qualify), but it is beginning to help us now,” Coffey said.

Tech’s spring practice begins Tuesday.