Hokies Searching For a Quarterback

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that Don had no experience with our system. Bruce has been here, watching if not playing, for three years. That has to help.”

It is a very similar situation to Henning’s (and head coach Charlie Coffey’s) first year.

“We weren’t sure of what Don could do,” Henning said, “That’s what you have spring practice for—you try to find out. If a kid gets fired up over this offense and has the ability, he can do a hell of a job. But you can’t assume he will. It has to come from the boy. It seems, however, that our quarterbacks are getting fired up.

“Arians is doing the best job right now and he has the tools to be an outstanding quarterback in our offense. Rick Popp is pushing him for the same reason.

“Based on the way Arians has played in five days of the spring, he’ll be difficult to beat out for the starting position next year. But based on the way Popp has performed in the spring, he will not allow any letdown on the part of Arians. It’s a healthy situation and a close race.”

Henning says that Strock, during the first week of spring practice under the new regime, was not as consistent as Arians has been this spring. That, however, is probably because the new system was foreign to Strock and Arians is familiar with it.

“Arians can do some things better than Strock,” Henning says. “One of them is run. He isn’t as tall so his passing potential isn’t as great as Strock’s. But Strock’s size hampered his running ability. Frankly, I wouldn’t want to compare them right now.”

Will Arians’ running potential change the Tech offense?

“Yes, I think it will,” says Henning. “It isn’t because Don didn’t have running potential, but Don and Bob German were very similar. Both were outstanding passers, therefore we knew we had to rely on the pass. Arians and Popp can both run, therefore we will probably rely on the run more than we have. Our offensive line is bigger and faster, too. That always makes you more effective running the football.”

Freshman Mathieson has been wearing No. 15, Strock’s number, in practice.

“Looking at him,” Henning says,” you might mistake him for Strock. He is tall, has a great arm and some of the same movements. He has some potential. Mullinax hasn’t looked particularly well throwing the ball, but he is improving. I think he’ll be able to help.”

Henning says that it is not likely an incoming freshman, like Joyce, can start next year. “But it is possible,” he says. “If we had him now (during spring practice), his chances would be a lot better.”