Virginia Tech Stockpiles With 59 Players

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The world of college football has its own mystifying jargon, a language all its own featuring wideouts, monstertackles, and weak tackles. Now, add to that language a new word.

Stockpiling

Legislation which came out of the NCAA meeting in January decreed that — beginning next season — no school could recruit more than 25 football players a year, and that upperclassmen couldn't carry more than 75 men four years hence.

There was a sense of acceptance among some of the nation's major college coaches, a feeling of outrage expressed by others who claimed it would ruin the game. Many coaches firmly believe the rule will be changed soon, perhaps before it ever goes into effect. But, until that happens, the 30-limit is the NCAA law.

Placed with that limit, many coaches around the nation decided to beat the clock to recruit additional players this year as a safeguard against the 30-rule. In effect, they stockpiled extra talent. A survey by The Roanoke Times of the nation's major football conferences and leading independents reveals that quite a few schools gave more scholarships than usual.

One conference, the Southeastern, permitted each of its 10 institutions to recruit five more players than normal. The Big Ten, operating under a total scholarship limit rather than one-year maximum, generally saw its schools bringing in more players.

The independents, however, were the ones that really took up stockpiling.

Four schools stood out.

South Carolina, criticized by a Columbia newspaper for a move of “desperation,” set what is believed to be an all-time NCAA record by recruiting at least 76 players.

“Taylors recruiting,” said one critic, “they are holding a tryout camp.

Florida State, under second-year coach Larry Jones, stood second with 69 recruits.

Virginia Tech and third-year Coach Charlie Coffey signed 59 freshmen, the third largest total, while Pitt and rookie Coach Johnny Majors signed approximately 50 freshmen and 6-8 junior college transfers.

Those four schools were the only ones among the nation's 121 major colleges to recruit more than 45 players. All except one major conference have limitations which prohibited stockpiling.

The Big Eight, now the premier football league, placed a limit of 130 total scholarships on its member schools a year ago and limited the freshman grants to 45 a year instead of 50.

“All of our schools are under 130 scholarships and half are around the 165,” said Big Eight publicist Butch Henry.

Former Clemson Coach Woogie Ingram, who now works in the Southeastern Conference office, said the SEC “added five players this year because the independents in this area were stockpiling.”

Ingram said that, because of 1972 totals, the maximum any SEC school could recruit this year was 44.

Ingram was highly critical of South Carolina’s move.

“They are just signing bodies. Anybody can do that.”

Ingram was among those who felt the 30-rule would be

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Virginia Tech Stockpiles With 59 Football Recruits

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modified, especially if the NCAA reorganizes into three groups in a special August meeting.

“I doubt if they will permit more than 35 a year,” Ingram said. “I think we’ll always have a limit from now on."

Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner Bob James said he believes the maximum jump in the 30-rule will be to 40 freshmen a year with a 115 squad total.

“That was proposed by the Big Eight at the NCAA meeting,” said James, “and if the Big Eight can live with that, anybody can.”

Some of the nation's top football powers, however, will bring in the usual number of recruits.

Notre Dame, which had only 97 on grants last year, has signed 116 this year,滇 through average between 90 and 100.

Penn State, which never has had 100 scholarships, signed its regular number of 30 players. Penn State recruiter Sever Treboli said, “we don’t give any one-year scholarship. We feel we have a four-year commitment to anybody we sign.”

Georgia Tech, which once awarded 60-odd grants under Coach Bud Carr, gave 40 this year under Coach Bill Fulcher. Ohio State and Southern California did no stockpiling, while Texas gave fewer scholarships than in past years.

cause the Southwest Conference lowered its limit from 40 to 48.

Pitt’s move was perhaps the biggest surprise. The Panthers have been in the unofficial “Big Four” with Penn State, West Virginia and Syracuse. Those schools prohibited redshirting and did not allow more than 100 total scholarships.

With Majors at the helm, Pitt will bring in more players this year than in any two previous seasons.

Pitt publicist Dean Billick said the move had been announced, and that it was strictly a one-year plan “even before the NCAA changed the rules.

“We have been big losers for the last 10 years,” Billick said. “We play one of the toughest schedules in the country. We had only 60 men for the spring game and 70-75 on scholarship. The NCAA rule played right into our hands. We intend to drop back to 30 after this year anyway.”

The four coaches who led the stockpiling movement all have close ties.

Coffey and Majors played at Tennessee. Coffey and Jones coached at Tennessee. Jones played at LSU under Coach Paul Dietz, now at Southern California, and later coached under Dietz.

Virginia Tech plays both South Carolina and FSU.

(Next week: The area football recruiting scene.)