The football season for Virginia Tech doesn’t start next week and no one on the coaching staff wishes that it did, in view of some of the mistakes in the spring game Saturday, especially in the early going when many chances were fumbled or intercepted away.

But from the standpoint of the spring game, Tech is ahead--way ahead--of where it was at (sorry but I can’t resist the phrase) this point in time, compared to last year.

Tech’s running game will establish itself and very likely will come on stronger sooner than it did in ’74.

The passing game is a question mark, since the best passers, based on spring game are quarterbacks Mitcheal Barnes, and John Mason, probably the number two and three, quarterback candidates, but not necessarily in that order.

The search for a quarterback definitely continues with Phil Rogers still having the best chance, since he made the Mean Machine move and scored two touchdowns himself.

If Rogers can blossom into a better than average passer, the quarterback job likely would be his. If he doesn’t, the offensive engineer could be Barnes, Mason or Eddie Snell, providing he can recapture the ball handling agility, passing and running he showed in practice sessions before being sidelined more than a week before the spring game with a dislocated shoulder.

In any case, Jimmy Sharpe, who knows what a wishbone offense should look like when it is a winner, will make his decision shortly after the start of preseason practice in August.

Good solid running is an obvious must if Tech’s offense is to click. Rogers, George Heath, Bill King and literally about a dozen others will take care of that department.

Keith McCarter, Rick Razzano and Billy Hardee will anchor an improving defense and Tech still must learn to stop the big “gamebreaker” type of play, such as Greg Payne’s 74-yard punt return touchdown.

Some new faces in the crowd will help make things happen: runners Dick Holway and Chuck Nuttycombe and receiver Dale Babione to name a few.

If there are any incoming freshmen next fall who can step in immediately and help, you may be seeing them.

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“He came into my office one day and said, ‘Coach, I never missed a snap when I played high school ball.’” Sharpe was describing Chris “Boomer” Nicholas, who was a center snapper in the spring game and still is a member of the varsity cheerleading squad.

It all sounds like something out of a campus hero movie on the Early Show, but it isn’t.