Having lost five four-year starters to graduation, the Virginia Tech golf squad faces a rebuilding year in 1977.

"It's going to be a matter of survival, really," says coach Bill Matthews. "With our collective inexperience and the particularly difficult schedule that will match us against some of the top competition in the South, things won't be easy for us."

The Gobblers lost their top two golfers, John Bruce and Bob Holdstein.

Other four-year men who were graduated are Pat Healy, Greg Osborne and E.G. Willard. Willard will serve as assistant coach for the '77 linksmen.

Junior Archie Lemon has steadily improved and should challenge Phil Stewart as Tech's top man this spring.

Beyond the top two positions, competition is wide open for the four remaining spots. Bobby Friend, Scott Duncan and Bill Harris all are sophomores who have shown promise.

Freshman Brad Camic and Barry McCarty finished high in the Furman Two-Man Tourney in the fall and are expected to be in the middle of things, along with another freshman, Larry Deal.

Matthews expects keen competition from the remainder of the squad.

"Early in the year we'll just have to determine how some of our relatively inexperienced golfers can measure up to the competition," Matthews says.

In early April the Hokies will defend their state crown for the fourth consecutive year. Tech has won seven of the past eight state meets, and all but five since 1955.