Maybe Jaws, the biggest fish in the pond, is gone, but Virginia Tech basketball Coach Charlie Moir hasn’t quit fishing. He’s convinced there are other fish worth having.

Tech’s basketball recruiting received a setback Tuesday when James Ratiff announced he had signed with Tennessee. Moir and his staff had put long (very long) and hard hours in to get the big man from Washington, but failed.

“We were in the driver’s seat until just before the NIT and then Tennessee came out of nowhere. We had never heard Tennessee mentioned before that,” said Moir.

So Ratiff signed a conference letter of intent with the Volunteers. “We would have let off then,” Moir added, “but he called us and said he had changed his mind and wasn’t going to Tennessee. He said he wanted to come here.”

Apparently Ratiff changed his mind again. In the end, he went to Tennessee and the big man the Hokies wanted badly had slipped away.

But the Gobblers, in all probability, will sign one big man this weekend. John Hillenbrand of Jamestown, N.Y., has told Moir he’ll sign with Tech and assistant coach Don Brown is heading to New York to get the signature Saturday.

“He has sent in his application and everything,” Moir said of Hillenbrand, who is 6-8. “He attended Jamestown Community College this year because his father had a serious heart attack and he didn’t want to go away. He has a 4.0 grade average after a year. He’ll be able to play as a sophomore.”

The Gobblers’ only two signings have been guards. “We’re probably going to recruit a couple of forwards from here in. We had on kid in today and tomorrow (Friday) we have one visiting we’d really like to have. He is a 6-6 forward from New Jersey. We’ve known all along that we’ve wanted him. I believe he’ll chose between us, Providence, Rutgers and Villanova,” said Moir.

Ratiff might have changed some things for Moir and his staff. “We may re-evaluate our approach to recruiting Next year,” the head coach said. “We can’t work any harder as a staff, but we’re going to be damn sure we can get a player before we put so much time in him.”

Even had Tech gotten Ratiff, Moir isn’t certain things would have gone well. After signing the conference letter with Tennessee, Ratiff was quoted in Washington papers as saying Tech had never signed a blue chip player and he didn’t want to be the first one.

“He’s not a blue chipper in college until he proves it,” Moir said. “I think some of our guys would have welcomed a chance to see how good he really was after some of the things he said. We’ve got some pretty damn good ball players who didn’t appreciate that remark.”