Tech's NCAA Odds
25-1—Humphreys

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The way Bob Humphreys has it figured, the future of Virginia Tech's baseball season is riding on one game.

And that contest comes Sunday, when Howard University visits Blacksburg as the Gobblers try to extend a 28-game winning streak and keep their slim hopes alive for an NCAA Tournament berth.

"I figure if we win, the chances are still there," said Humphreys Tuesday, one day after Tech was bypassed for berths in the Atlantic or South regionals of the NCAA's 34-team bracket. "If we lose, we can probably forget it."

Humphreys, recruiting in Tennessee Monday when it was learned that the Gobblers must wait at least a week if they are going to get a post-season bid, took the news surrounding his team somewhat philosophically.

"I would have liked for us to play, because I think we could do a good job," said Humphreys of his NCAA hopes. "But I wouldn't say I was disappointed. There's nothing I can do about it. They (the NCAA's Baseball Committee) made the decision, and that part of it's out of our hands. Again, I'd like to play, but it doesn't do any good to get all worked up about it."

Upon his return to Blacksburg Tuesday, Humphreys called Chal Port, the Citadel baseball coach who chairs the NCAA Baseball Committee and also heads up the Southeastern advisory committee to the national group.

"I asked him (Port) exactly how much our last two games mean now," said Humphreys, referring to the Gobblers' final contests (Sunday and Monday) against Howard. "He said, 'They don't mean any more now than they did in April.' Then he told me, 'A win is a win.'"

If the Gobblers are still to receive a bid, NCAA Controller Lou Spry expects it to come in the Mideast or Midwest, where four at-large berths remain open.

"I'd guess our chances are about 25-to-1, or less than that," said Humphreys. "I would say it depends on how many teams they decide to take in those sections of the country. I hear Oral Roberts (35-17) and Hawaii (48-11) are in consideration, too. Maybe our chances are 10-to-1. It's difficult to say."

South Carolina and South Alabama received at-large berths in the Atlantic Regional, while Miami of Florida and Atlantic Coast Conference runner-up Clemson got the at-large spots in the South. According to Spry, the selection committee is also considering five other conference runner-up in addition to the Tigers.

"That (choosing conference runners-up like the NCAA has made a practice in Division I basketball) definitely hurts the independents," said Humphreys. "I thought the at-large berths were set up for the independents."

"But again, they're running the tournament and they can do things the way they want to. But this gives the conference people two shots instead of just one like the rest of us have."

Some people were surprised at Clemson's inclusion in the South field, but there are several reasons the Tigers had to be considered. First, they are nationally ranked in the top 10 and own a 38-7 record. It also didn't hurt that Clemson Coach Bill Wilhelm was among the five-man advisory committee for the Division I schools in the Southeastern portion of the country.

"They figure we have a weak schedule," said Humphreys, referring to the NCAA committee. "Well, I'm not defending our schedule and I'm not saying anyone else plays a weak schedule either."

"Look, we'll play anyone that will play us home-and-home. That's why we're not playing teams like Clemson, North Carolina, Wake Forest and Florida State. They won't come up here to play us in Blacksburg."