Tucker Builds Program

By Charlie Aschmann

“Hey, Herbie,” rings out a female voice at a women’s track meet, “What can I do...?” “Who’s going to run the .....?” “How are we doing?”

A blond haired guy with a clipboard comes running over and talks to the questioning girl, then hurriedly checks the scorer’s table or reminds someone about her face, or any one of a dozen other things.

That is W. Herbert Tucker, Tech’s women’s track coach. What is so special about that? Well to begin with, he is a student and does the job for free.

Tucker is a senior this year and will be coaching his last meet this Thursday and Friday. He is going to Los Angeles Ca. with Irene Spieler and Gail Kelley who qualified for the nationals that are being held there.

When Tucker first came to Tech from Newport News he worked as an assistant to Tony Fleshman, a graduate student who was coaching Tech’s women runners. That year they had three outdoor track meets.

Tucker took over as head coach his sophomore year and has built a full program. This year Tech’s women runners had a full cross country season, several indoor meets, and a full outdoor season.

Under Tucker Tech’s seasons have not only grown but the team has also turned in quality performances. Tech has won the state championship for the past two years; the only two years it has been held.

Five of Tucker’s athletes have gone to nationals in the past three years. Mary Gallagher went twice, B.J. Lester, once and Michele Daugherty, once. This will be Kelley’s second time and Spieler’s fourth.

“Herbie is my old age retirement plan, comments Robert Brinlee, the team sponsor, “By the time teaching plays out Herbie will be rich and will be able to support me. He’s really bright and has absolute dedication.”

Brinlee says that Tucker’s track work has involved “a great deal of personal sacrifice” and that he will be successful at whatever he does.

With all of that, it’s hard to believe that Tucker has time for anything else. He must, though, because he is graduating with a computer science degree this year and has a job “doing programming work” in Silver Spring, Md.