V.P.I., CLEMSON COACHES SPLIT

A good side-bet for the Clemson-Virginia Tech embroglio in Blacksburg tomorrow might be on whether rival coaches Jimmy Sharpe and the Tigers' Charlie Pell talk to each other afterwards, no matter who wins. . . . More interesting might be a wager that Sharpe "breaks the ice" if he loses, but Pell won't, or vice versa. . . .

Anyway, there's been a widening hostility gap between the two former teammates at Alabama, supposedly due to some misunderstandings since Pell left Sharpe's staff after 1975. . . . Later, Charlie lured aide Danny Ford from Tech when he was moved up as Clemson's head mentor, and in some quarters that's what is blamed for the rift.

Elsewhere, it's strongly suggested that something Sharpe said was interpreted (erroneously?) to indicate Pell accepted an assistant's job to get a shot at the head Tigermaster's job because Red Parker was on the way out. . . . Pell vehemently denies the charge, and others have voiced them, yet only the victories over Georgia Tech and Georgia have assuaged the critics.

COLES PUT ON THE FIRE

As if that isn't enough to heat up the rival squads, some publicity blurs disseminated from Clemson have brought to light again a challenging quotation attributed to the Gobblers' record-making runner, Roscoe Coles of Virginia Beach. . . . It was made by Coles before the season opened and there's no doubt it'll bring the Tigers in roarin' . . .

Following the departure of Ford to hook up with Pell at Clemson, Coles is supposed to have said, "We'll want to show Pell and Ford that they made a mistake leaving here (Tech)." . . . Ironically, Coles was one of his prize recruits when Pell was making the rounds regularly in charge of recruitment of Tidewater athletes for Sharpe.

This much is certain. . . . Pell has made a soundly auspicious debut in head-coaching, enough to have his Tigers established favorites by three to 12 points, but the angry overtones circulating now make the game more of a toss-up and open to upset possibilities . . . . Who'd have dreamed of anything like this when this game was first scheduled?