Tech, Virginia receive football commitments

By DOUG DOUGHTY and BLAIR KERKHOFF
SPORTSWRITERS

Sean Thompson has become the third member of the Roanoke Times & World-News Top 25 to commit to Virginia, and Virginia Tech has returned to familiar recruiting turf for two of its latest three football commitments.

Tech received commitments from Kirk Alexander, an all-purpose performer for DeMatha High in Hyattsville, Md., and Pat Murphy, a fullback from Bladensburg (Md.) High.

The Hokies also landed Harold Banks, an All-Group AAA defensive back from Highland Springs outside Richmond.

Thompson, a tight end and defensive end for George Washington High in Danville, has gained more than 20 pounds since the end of the season. At 6-foot-4½, 250 pounds, he is a candidate to play a number of positions.

Thompson picked the Cavaliers after visiting UVa, Virginia Tech, North Carolina, Wake Forest and Oregon State.

“He’d been to camp at Virginia, so that was probably in the back of his mind,” said GW coach Ed Martin. “He hasn’t played very much, so I think his football is all in front of him.”

Thompson became the fourth player to commit to UVa, joining Top 25 choices Jim Reid of Newport News and Gene Toliver of Troutville. Tech has five known commitments, including Top 25 choice Bernard Basham of Patrick Henry High in Roanoke, who announced his decision Tuesday.

Alexander, a 5-foot-11, 188-pounder, comes from a program that has sent 10 players to Tech in the past decade, including five on the current roster.

Murphy once played in the same backfield as Tony Kennedy, who signed with the Hokies in 1988 and was redshirted this past season.

Both Alexander and Murphy missed part of the 1988 season with injuries, and Murphy will undergo surgery Friday to correct a back problem.

Alexander was kicked in one of his legs in practice, but continued to play with the injury until it was diagnosed as a stress fracture. He played in seven games and rushed for 318 yards. He also had 17 receptions for 231 yards and scored five touchdowns.

Alexander’s only visit was to Tech. Murphy took trips to Illinois, North Carolina, Rutgers and Georgia Tech. Banks, who had attracted interest from North Carolina and James Madison, made up his mind after visiting only Tech.

Banks, a 6-foot-2, 185-pounder, had 10 interceptions the past two seasons but may be even stronger against the run. He is projected as an outside linebacker or strong safety for the Hokies.