More Work, Less Golf Ahead for Moir

In these warm, dry summer days, Charles Moir has spent a lot of time on the golf course.

"I guess I've played more this year than I have for the last three years," said Virginia Tech's new basketball coach. "But I'm just about finished for the year. I've got to find some players."

Find some players.

That is the never-ending quest for the college coach. Without them, no coach can expect to last very long. And in the dog-eat-dog, hit-the-road life of the coach in the big-time, recruiting is the real game. The only finish comes when you retire—or are fired.

Moir's first few months back at Tech, where he once labored as an assistant, have been pleasant enough. His first recruiting campaign probably went better than expected, especially if a couple of recruits blossom early.

The house high on the hill behind the 17th green at Blacksburg Country Club is under roof, and soon it will be easy for the real golfer in the family, bronzed Betsy, to begin her daily chores at No. 1.

Moir was in Roanoke last week for the Virginia High School League clinic and all-star game. He did not see a whole lot of talent in the game, and none of it is headed toward Tech anyway.

Actually, Charlie was supposed to play in the pro-am before the State Open last Thursday, but he scratched. "I've got to get to Wheeling for the Five-Star game," he said. The Wheeling camp is run by Howie Garfinkel, he of the recruiting service, and Moir had heard that there were some players around.

"Next year we've got to have a good recruiting year," he said. "We'll only have two seniors, and we have to get some people who will play."

Actually, Moir inherits a team that is pretty well decimated by graduation. Three starters and two top subs have departed. But Tech can survive this season, if there are a few surprises and Ernest Wansley arrives as a scorer.

Wansley is the hulking junior college center who started every game last year. He played adequately, even well at times, but did not figure heavily in the point-making.

"From what I've seen of the films," Moir said, "Ernest didn't look to shoot last year. But he can score. He's been scoring well this summer in pickup games against some good people. He's got to score for us, and I don't mean 10 points a game."

Several of Tech's veterans are in summer school, and Moir says they work out every day.

Joining Wansley are Duke Thorpe and Phil Thiene-man. All three will be seniors this fall, and they will be the heart of Moir's first Tech team.

"If everybody works as hard as those three," Moir said, "we aren't going to have any problems. Thiene-man is amazing. He's there every morning, lifting weights. Then he practices a while, and in the afternoon he's back again. He punishes his body."

A coach, obviously, enjoys viewing the punishment. That is dedication.

Moir is no dummy. He realizes that the task at Tech will be difficult. There always will be those who will judge him against Don DeVoe, and the new Wyoming coach left a glossy record, if some unhappy feelings, as a legacy.

"Some of the freshmen coming in will have to play well if we're going to be a good team," Moir said. While it is expected that Chris Scott and Dexter Reid, this year's all-state guards, will strengthen the backcourt, the main hope for the future is Wayne Robinson.

Robinson is from Greensboro, and a rarity. He's a black who attended an exclusive day school. Robinson's parents both have good jobs, and their towering son benefitted by being given a superior education. However, the level of basketball was, Moir concedes, "awful."

Robinson is nearly 6-9, and a genuine blue-chip prospect. Picture such a player at North Cross and you get the idea. "He just never had to do a whole lot," Moir said. "He was so much taller and better than anybody else."

Thus it might be expecting too much of Robinson to anticipate any early help for the varsity. "He's going to be good," Moir said, "but I don't know how quickly."

Moir also bemoaned the fate of Roanoke College, where he coached so successfully, including a national championship one year and a trip back to the finals the last season he was in Salem before going to Tulane.

"I took a look at their schedule," he said. "It's going to be tough. It reminded me of the first year I was at Roanoke. We made that trip north to start the season and lost four games. That was the last time we did that."

"I don't mind playing some good teams, but I don't want to open the season looking at a bunch of losses. That tears your team up and you might not recover.

So, while Roanoke is opening its year in a tournament with three NCAA teams, Virginia, VMI and Madison, Virginia Tech will be playing not-so-naughty Marietta.

There's a lesson in that some place.