VA. Tech Soccer Team To Open Season Saturday

BLACKSBURG—Coach Jerry Cheynet’s Virginia Tech soccer team, with a big emphasis on improvement, opens its ’76 campaign Saturday at home against West Virginia Tech at the soccer pitch on the Intramural sports complex. Game time is 1 p.m.

With 15 lettermen returning, including last year’s top two scorers and four players who participated in the Virginia Intercollegiate All-Star Game, the Virginia Tech soccer team appears to be in a good position to improve on last season’s 4-5-1 record.

“Our primary goal is to establish a winning record this year,” points out third-year coach Jerry Cheynet, “Then, depending upon our success, the post-season play will take care of itself.

Seniors Chris Burkett and Wayne Chechila, along with juniors Jim Johnson and Ken Shorts, and sophomore Don Graves, give Cheynet a solid nucleus to build from.

Burkett and Chechila were the Gobblers’ leading goal scorer and overall high point man, respectively, during the ’75 campaign. Burkett, a second team all-state choice, finished the year with six goals and one assist from his forward position, while Chechila contributed four goals and nine assists as a wingman.

Johnson, a good team leader, was an all-division choice last year, as were Shorts and Graves. All three were chosen to participate in the All-Star game.

The main task facing Cheynet, plugging gaps at halfback and goalie.

The answer may come in the form of a good group of incoming freshmen, including goalie Eric Hughes, wingman Bill Jewell and fullback Karl Gretten.

A total of 35 newcomers are expected to be on hand to vie for positions on the squad.

Position By Position

FRONT LINE—The starting front line from ’75 returns intact with Johnson, Chechila, Burkett and senior Dennis Cunningham all solid players. Others returning with varsity experience include Allen Shick, Bobby Clay, Kevin Gogge, Randy Hommas and Sam Vitas. Without a doubt the strongest area for the Gobblers.

MIDFIELD—Ken Shorts had an outstanding season a year ago and will be the key to Tech’s midfield play. Seniors Bill Almond and Craig Divizio give the Hokies added experience, while Barry Bender and George Awwad are also expected to contribute. An area with experience, but little depth.

DEFENSE—Kramer and aggressive three-year letterman Tom Doyle return, as does Don Graves, who was outstanding last year as a freshman. Rich Randa and Greg Bange both lettered in ’75 and should contribute, but Doyle is counted on as the anchorman. Depth is questionable.

GOALIE—Sophomores Ken Nelson and Dave McCollum both showed improvement last year, but have only limited playing experience. The ranks will be thin, and finding a solid starter will be a must.