Ex-Hokie Should Go in NFL Draft

Dennis Latta

If the NFL draft is held this year, a former Virginia Tech player will probably be drafted. He'll undoubtedly go late in the draft, but he'll still go.

Few Tech fans remember a quarterback named Steve Mathieson. He spent one year at Tech before transferring. Mathieson was recruited at Tech by Dan Henning, Charlie Coffey's offensive coordinator. When Henning left, Mathieson went with him. Both went to Florida State.

But Mathieson has played very little for the Seminoles. FSU Coach Bob Bowden had a talk with Mathieson before the year started and told him he wouldn't be on the varsity squad. The Seminoles had an experienced senior coming back and two good-looking freshmen Bowden wanted to play.

So Mathieson has been on FSU's JV squad all season. But he is 6-4, 210 and is a basic drop-back passer. The pros like those kind of quarterbacks.

The main reason Mathieson will be drafted, however, is his old friend Henning. Henning is now with the Jets and will push for his team to give Mathieson a try. If Joe Namath does retire, and he probably will, the Jets will be giving a lot of quarterbacks a look because they need someone to back up Richard Todd.

Wade Williams, VMI's track coach, has done a good job of building a respectable program at VMI, but it hasn't quite reached the level people thought it had earlier this week.

Monday night, VMI had an invitational track meet. Supposedly, no team scores were to be kept, so the schools involved didn't have to worry about sending their best competitors. The Keydets won the thing, but no one at the meet paid much attention. Only individual scores were supposed to be kept.

But Williams forgot to tell VMI Sports Information Director Tom Shupe that it was strictly an individual meet. Shupe kept team scores and after the meet sent out releases to papers around the state.

Tuesday morning, the Charlottesville Daily Progress contacted Shupe and wanted all the results. It ran a big story about VMI beating Virginia in track.

Now Williams is trying to explain what happened to the schools that participated. Whether or not VMI could actually beat Virginia in an all-out meet is still unknown. But it is doubtful that UVa would go back to VMI for a meet without all of its best competitors.

Roanoke has passed another test with a sellout for Saturday's Tech-North Carolina game at the Roanoke Civic Center. There is speculation is that there will be as many or more Tar Heel fans as Hokie fans but regardless, that makes Roanoke two for two in the last two years.

The Tech-Virginia game will also be a sellout.

In early February, a doubleheader with Roanoke College playing Mt. St. Mary's and VMI playing Marshall will be held. It will be lucky to draw 4,000.

The Maroons certainly won't draw many the way they're playing. Marshall is an unknown team and it isn't a big game for VMI.

But it will give VMI a chance to play on the Civic Center court. The Southern Conference Tournament will be held here March 1 and 2. The Keydets want to be familiar with the building, so they're not really playing in Roanoke to draw 1,000 fans but regardless, that makes Roanoke two for two in the last two years.

Dave Cowens surprised the world a few weeks ago when he took a leave of absence from the Boston Celtics and went home to his farm in Kentucky. He was the heart of Boston's playoff hopes.

But Cowens' college coach was not at all surprised. Hugh Durham coached Cowens at Florida State and understood the move completely.

"He didn't take a day off this summer," Durham explained. "He spoke at one time, sometimes two, camps or clinics a day. He spent his whole summer travelling and speaking. He didn't get any rest.

"But Dave is a team player," Durham claimed. "I don't think he can let his team down all year. He'll be back."