“The Virginia Tech Sports Network is on the air!” Well, maybe?
Each broadcast of one of Virginia Tech’s football or basketball shows begins with the above sentence (leaving out the “maybe” of course). But in bringing alumni and friends across the Old Dominion the fate of Hokie competition, some problems have arisen.

Tech announcers Ken Haines and Don Lloyd offer Hokie listeners much more than a simple sports broadcast. After three years, the crew has developed not only a sound play-by-play, but also good color commentary, humor, anecdote, and once and a while confusion, exaggeration, and some technical difficulties.

Take Wednesday night’s game in Hampton. Tech listeners were treated to technical difficulties, which allowed memorization of the Tech fight song. It turns out the song was better than the game, and should have continued. While the clock ticked off almost ten minutes of the first half, the two teams were playing their hearts out to the tune of 7-4.

If it seemed like it took a long time to correct the problem, let it be known that the engineering crew of Connie Blackwood and Jim Jenkins was doing everything possible. “We had phone problems, and there was no emergency phone to get in touch with us,” Haines explained. Connie had to call Hampton information, get a number to call the ticket booth, and have someone signal us.”

But technical problems are not unusual for any network, much less, one the size of the Virginia Tech Sports Network. The network is composed of 64 stations taking football and 25 with basketball. “You can’t go anywhere in the state without hearing one or both of the teams playing,” Haines noted.

Problems, however, are the exception rather than the rule with the network. In three years, all the trouble has been minor, and Wednesday’s broadcast was the first to lose play-by-play. Despite all the modern machinery, none of the problems have been because of Tech equipment failure. It’s always been either some freak press box accident or telephone company failure.

(Note: Occasionally WSLG which relays the broadcast in its area has line problems that cause blackouts. These do not affect the network as a whole. An example was in Saturday night’s game in Jacksonville during the second half.)

The crew had its first problems of the year at Florida St., the last football game of the season. A problem which is used to broadcast the shows was off the hook. The problem, however, was not the fact that the phone was off the hook, but that someone hung it up.

Anytime one is broadcasting over the air, there are going to be some things said that slip out unintentionally or that didn’t come out quite right. Record companies have made millions on these so called “bloopers”. The Tech announcers have had their share, though they don’t wish to divulge them. The following comes under the “almost blooper” category.

In last week’s Texas Wesleyan game, it was mentioned that St. Bonaventure’s (Tech’s next opponent at the time) was playing at DePaul. Last year when Tech played at DePaul, the announcers were drowned out by a tremendously loud organ. Lloyd started to say that the Bonny announcers might have trouble with that organ. However, the sentence came out, “They might have an organ- (when Haines interrupted with an astonished expression that cracked both of them up.) It seems that Haines thought that Lloyd was going to say “orgasm”. The pair was never the same after that.

Despite the problems and slip-ups, the network is a class operation. The football network is the largest in the state and one of the largest on the East Coast. For Hokie fans wanting to keep things that way, call your favorite radio station and tell them you appreciate them broadcasting the Tech exploits.