TechACC Chances Look Good

By JERRY VERNON
Sports Writer

While no one can actually say, it looks like Virginia Tech could become the Atlantic Coast Conference's eighth member by as early as this fall.

An eight man ACC committee formed to study the league's possible expansion toured the Blacksburg school's athletic facilities Thursday and Friday.

"No, This wouldn't be routine," said ACC Commissioner Bob James as he examined Tech's Lane Stadium, "We've never done it before. These procedures were just developed at the main meeting last year."

The league's new proceedings require at least three conference schools to sponsor a prospective member before considering its admission into the ACC.

"The first step was the sponsors," said James, "and I guess this would be the second step. The next step would be to submit our report to the other members in the institutions."

The commissioner refrained from naming those schools which support Tech membership, but at least one commissioner admitted his school strongly favors the admission of the now independent Hokies.

"We sponsored them," said Clemson Athletic Director Bill McElhan, "All I know is that we were willing to go with them."

The ACC requires only five of its seven schools to approve the admission of new members, meaning only two more votes are needed if Tech wishes to join the league. Hokie Athletic Director Frank Moseley left no question about Tech's plans if offered membership.

"Personally, I would like to belong to it," he said. "We've gotten along fairly well as an independent, but I still like to be a member of a conference and I think the ACC is a good conference."

Tech has been independent since it withdrew from the Southern Conference after the 1965 athletic season. "Even then when we got out I would have liked to have stayed in a conference," said Moseley.

At this point, the Hokies lead a pack of schools which have expressed interest in joining the ACC. Former member South Carolina which withdrew from the ACC in the early seventies, along with East Carolina, Georgia Tech and Richmond, have shown hopes in the past of aligning with the league.

"At this point we have no plans of considering any other schools," said Commissioner James who refused to theorize when a decision on Tech's admission would be made. "You can't possibly establish a timetable. We're going to take enough time to make a fair, just decision. It seems this merits that consideration."

McElhan implied that Clemson would like to see Tech join the conference as quickly as possible.

"We know what it's like to have an eight member league," said the athletic director. "Frankly, I think it's better because Clemson would not be sponsoring Tech if we didn't think so."

News of the visiting ACC committee caught the Tech campus by surprise. Several Hokie fans speculated any admission into the league would be years in coming because of scheduling problems. Others argued Tech, if approved, could become a member by this fall.

"There's nothing impossible or infeasible about that (fall)," agreed Moseley, "It depends on when you're eligible for championships and your scheduling."

Tech already plans to play four ACC schools next year — Duke, Wake Forest, Clemson and Virginia — according to Moseley who added, "We're working with the others directly or indirectly. Whether or not we become a member we will be playing all those schools."

If admitted the major problem for Tech would come in football scheduling which is planned several years in advance. Moseley speculated this difficult area could be adjusted.

"Basketball would possibly even take less time because basketball hasn't gotten into the future type scheduling," he said. "It's not as prevalent as in football. The other sports would be no problem."

Currently Tech fields 11 men's intercollegiate athletic teams and three women's varsity sports. Moseley said the athletic department plans to form two more women's varsity squads this fall. Even without the additional teams the Hokies surpass a prime ACC demand.

"Our major concern is that they sponsor 13 intercollegiate sports," said Commissioner James. "They have that here and excellent facilities also."

Tech already adheres to the ACC recruitment signing dates and utilizes the league's officials in football and basketball.

"I don't know any (ACC) regulation we're not conforming to," said Moseley, "whether we're bound to it or not."

The ACC committee's next step in considering Tech's membership will begin in debate at the league's spring meeting.

"This report will go out to the member schools," said Commissioner James. "This will naturally become a discussion at our athletic meetings."

Moseley declined to speculate on the committee's findings.

"We didn't ask that type of question," he said, "and we didn't feel they were interested. I don't know there is anything way you can determine optimism or pessimism or anything else. It wasn't that type of visitation. Naturally, I hope they were impressed."