Al Coates, former T-D staffer now Department of Highways and Transportation's special assistant for public relations, writes:

"...enjoyed your piece on Virginia high school athletes who go out of state to attend colleges. It's a shame more of them don't stay home to attend and play for Virginia schools. How about a sequel on those who do remain here...?"

Okay, Al, you asked for it.

MEET MIKE BUDD. Freshman. University of Virginia. 6-1, 225. Defensive lineman.

The universities of Pittsburgh, Michigan and Alabama were among those who wanted Budd to play football. From Fauquier, Budd wanted U. Va.

No football factories for him. He wasn't ready for the assembly line. Budd is very much an individual. Very perceptive. Listen.

He was impressed by the Cavaliers' recruiting methods. Compared to others, they gave it the soft-sell treatment. "They were regular people," Budd recalled. "A lot of coaches only played up their schools' good points. Here they brought up the bad, too... but what really impressed me was coach (Dick) Bestwick.

"A lot of coaches are a little different each time you meet them. Coach Bestwick was always the same. Warm. Friendly."

Budd liked the idea of being close to home. He had friends in Charlottesville, and they seemed pleased. Budd envisions the day he can play professional football, "like my mothers says, I've talked about it ever since I could walk."

But he understands dreams don't necessarily become reality. He's planning to major in marketing management. "The academic requirements here are important," Budd said.

"People are not going to give you (good) grades. At a lot of schools athletes' grades are doctored... and it's not like that in the real world. Why put it off four years?"

Budd has a friend who plays football — on scholarship — for another major state institution. "He finished the first first quarter with a .9 (failing), and they hiked it up to a 2.0. The coaches went to the professors, and they changed it," Budd said.

"What's he going to be able to do when he gets out of school? He'll still expect people to give him things. Well, he's in for a de awakening."

Injuries have plagued Budd during his first collegiate season. Recovering from a cracked vertebrae suffered while wrestling late February, he received a pinched nerve on the first day of practice last August. He since has incurred a sprained ankle, andast last Saturday developed a hip pointer. The season ends Saturday at Maryland.

I did the right thing," said Budd who recalled advice given by a coach from another school. The subject was big-time football.

"He told me he didn't want to see success go to my head... where I'd lose my sense of reality."

At Virginia there presumably is no danger of that.