Houston's Power Big Test
For VPI Defensive Team

By STAN SHALETT
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Virginia Tech Coach Charlie Coffey, battling the flu, was hard at work Tuesday preparing his minions for Saturday's second straight intersectional battle against Houston at Lane Stadium in Blacksburg.

The Gobblers have little time to savor their upset victory over Southern Methodist, because the Cougars, despite a 1-2 record, have an impressive offensive team.

"Our defense did a great job Saturday against SMU and will have to do the same thing again Saturday.

Before the season I said our defense would be all right, but that the test would come under fire. The team would have to make the goal-line stand with the game on the line and they did this Saturday," Coach Coffey said.

"We got a great performance from our senior tackle, Bill Ellenbogen. He graded out as good as any defense lineman we've had at Tech since I've been here.

"In fact, our entire front seven defensively graded very well. Jerry Schunn also had another good performance. He's doing very well."

Coffey noted that the offense which was to highlight the team, nicknamed "Explosion '72," has not lived up to its potential.

"We haven't established ourselves offensively. We haven't found a favorite play, one that we can use when we need a few yards.

"Of course, we've been able to move the ball, but we hurt ourselves with turnovers. Between interceptions and lost fumbles, we've made it tough on ourselves."

In three games, Tech has fumbled eight times and lost six and had seven passes intercepted.

Coffey added that some of the interceptions may be the fault of the system. "I've seen Don Strock throw a few passes I wish he hadn't, but we've also had some busted pass routes. Maybe our system is too complex."

Coffey expressed confidence in the Tech offense. "I still think we're going to break open one of these days and put it all together.

"Our big problem is inconsistency. We've had good statistics. We've just turned the ball over too many times.

In its three games, Tech has gained 1,016 yards while the opposition had totalled one yard fewer. Strock has completed 33 of 105 passes for 623 yards and three touchdowns.

James (Jaybee) Barber is the leading rusher with 173 yards. He has caught 13 passes for 102 yards to lead in that department.

The offense that Coffey is looking forward to seeing will have its chance, because high-powered Houston is followed into Lane Stadium by Oklahoma State a week hence.