Gobblers Want No Bobblers Tomorrow

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You have to keep your hands on the football to score a touchdown and this has proven a drawback to the offensive efforts of Virginia Tech this season.

"We have been having trouble retaining the football," said Tech offensive coach Walley English. "Fumbles have hurt us all season. Some have been by our young backs. We have to keep control if we hope to establish any kind of a consistent offense.

English will be hoping his offensive unit will become friends with itself tomorrow afternoon at 3 p.m. when Tech entertains the Bear-minded Cougars of Houston.

The big battle is expected to draw some 30,000 fans into Lane Stadium as each team tries to reach the 500 mark for the first time this season. Each lost its opening two games and has won its last encounter. Houston is rated a six to eight point favorite.

Tech has bobbled the ball 14 times this season and has lost possession nine times—many of the totes have killed scoring drives or have allowed the enemy to gain possession in touchdown territory.

The Gobblers also have lost the ball seven times on pass interceptions. This means the team has been averaging more than five giveaways a game.

Houston has been a little less generous with only two interceptions and seven of 10 fumbles lost. But coach Bill Yeoman is quick to say he hasn't been overly pleased with the operation of his team.

The Cougars have ranked among the nation's scoring leaders in recent years and this has always proven an interesting team to watch. But Kit Utz...Tech wide receiver

Yeoman hasn't smiled as much as usual this season.

"Our defense has been good but our offense hasn't gotten together," Yeoman said. "I hope our quarterback (D.C. Nobles) will be able to react to any defensive situation tomorrow."

Another drawback for Tech this season has been its lack of consistent scoring patterns. The Gobblers have yet to score a point in the first quarter of any game. And 34 of the team's 49 points have come in the second period, nine in the third and only six in the fourth.

"Something always seems to happen to us," English said. "We'll fumble a kick or fumble and get ourselves in a hole. We'll have to become friends with each other tomorrow if we hope to get anything going.

"Houston might well be as tough a team on defense as we'll face. They have a well balanced team and two outstanding linemen in Bubble Broussard (6-4, 210 and wears 60 on his jersey) and Harold Evan (6-6, 220)."

"If they have a weakness it might be in their inexperience. They start only one senior on defense. There are six sophomores and four juniors. But the potential is tremendous... that's what has us concerned."

But Tech's offensive team isn't overly loaded with experience. Freshman Paul Adams will again open at fullback while Don Yesterman, another freshman, is a backup to junior J. B. Barber at running back.

There will be one offensive starter sidelined for Tech—senior guard John Schneider with a knee injury. His place will be taken by Charles Martin, a convert from defensive end.

Don Strock will certainly give Tech a big advantage at quarterback and in the aerial competition. Strock, who is firmly among the best in the nation at this profession, has hit on 63 of 106 passes for 633 yards and three touchdowns. He has a stable full of quick and able receivers. English rates Donnie Reel as one of the best in the business. Reel caught five in the win over SMU. The other starting wide receiver will be Kit Utz, who two years ago was the manager for the Gobblers.

Tight end Mike Bucek, who holds the school record for receptions, has caught only six passes this season and considers him self long overdue for a big game.

"Tomorrow will be a great time to catch a few," said the burly senior from Roanoke.

Nobles has hit on 23 of 35 passes for Houston for 474 yards. "Pedro" Jones, a stately 5-8, 265 halfback, is the Cougars' top runner with 383 net yards in 49 carries for a 5.4 average.

Barber leads Tech with 478 yards and Adams has 142. English is satisfied with the progress of his offense as the Gobblers strive to establish a consistent running game. He believes the passing department is a proven commodity.

"If we don't drop the ball I feel we will have a big game," English said.

George McKinney, who handles the Tech defense, is looking for another big afternoon from his young warriors. The defense got on a mighty display last week in stopping SMU.

"I'll take an even better record against Houston," McKinney said. "We'll have to be more alert and tackle better. But I believe we will."