Houston Rally Ties Gobblers

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Coffey. "We knew it would take a miracle, but Dave has kicked them 61, 62 yards in practice. "Our kids have come out of the gutter. I don't like playing for the tie, but if they beat the ball out of losing."

Until the wild finish, this branch of the day belonged to the magnificent Don Strock.

The 6-5 senior simply punctured the Houston defense, punting for 201 yards in the first half alone. For the day, Strock hit 34 of 33 passes for 527 yards. Incredibly, he did not throw a touchdown pass. "We've never been attacked like that before," said Yeoman. "Strock was outstanding, and that's an understatement. I'm just grateful we were able to see that young man again."

Strock came out winging, and after two misses, hit four straight as Tech went 80 yards after the opening kickoff. Strock got the TD himself, running in from the five.

Minutes later, Tech had another TD after another weird play. Dave Strock tried a field goal from 96 yards which was partially blocked. But Houston was penalized for roughing Don Strock, the holder. The penalty estranged Yeoman, and the officials tacked a penalty on him after the 15-yard personal foul. That got the ball to the seven and two plays later Barber scored from two.

Dave Strock missed the point but it was 13-0.

Houston turned another of its own fumbles into a big play in a countering 95-yard march after Barber had fumbled away the ball at the Houston five.

Back to punt, Hal Roberts fumbled the snap, had to run and went 13 yards for the first down. The Cougars drove for the TD, with hard running Puddin' Jones going the final 20 yards. Jones had 162 yards for the day.

Instead of 29-6, had Barber not fumbled, it was 15-7.

Tech came right back to go 72 yards for a touchdown, with the drive highlighted by a pass interference call and two 14-yard beaves to Ricky Scales. Strock was 5 for 6 on the march, but Barber fumbled the ball from the one. Strock then ran for two points and it was 21-7 at the half.

Tech apparently put it out of reach with two field goals he did the first series of the third quarter. Each time, however, the Hokies failed to get a touchdown after getting inside the 10 and later that was to prove almost fatal.

Dave Strock kicked the fielders, 22 and 26 yards, to make it 27-7.

Then the breaks, which had gone for Tech all day, started going the other way. Freshman Don Testerman fumbled away the ball at the Tech 20 and six plays later Jones scored from the six. That made it 27-14.

Tech again had a chance to salt it away after Strock hit a 65-yard bomb to Craig Valentine early in the last quarter. But this time Barber fumbled the ball at the Houston one.

Midway in the quarter, the Cougars started from their 40 and went 50 yards to make it interesting. Nobles threw 10 times, completed seven, including a TD pass of six yards to wide open 5'11er Bassler. Terrell made it 27-21 with 7:23 left.

Two plays after the kickoff, Barber fumbled the ball away at the Tech 11. The Cougars marched to the 11, but three plays netted only three yards and on fourth down Nobles ran unwise and stepped out on the six.

That only served to set up the spine-tingling finish, with Willingham setting it up with his punt return and then completing it with his touchdown reception.

But Terrell's point try missed and Tech at least got the satisfaction of a deadlock.

Yeoman accepted the tie philosophically. "The way Tech is right now they have third and long yardage. He was just remarkable. I'd like to have pulled it out, but I guess it wasn't meant to be." "We'll be back," Coffey promised. "These boys know now they can play against a good team."

Houston's Randy Peacock Climbs Kit Utz' Back To Break Up Pass

Strock Revises Tech's Records In 27-27 Tie

BLACKSBURG — Virginia Tech and the Houston, the teams, and Don Strock, the passer, all but rewrite the record books here Saturday as they battled to a 27-27 tie.

Strock, missing the all-time NCAA record by a mere 17 yards, established new school records for the passes attempted (53), completed (34) and yards gained passing (327). He had a total offense bag of 615 yards, also a record.

Strock broke all of the records against a Houston defense, which never before had permitted such an assault.

The two teams ran an unbelievable 116 plays in the three-hour marathon (Tech 96, Houston 84).

The total offense for the day was a whopping 1,000 yards, with the Hokies gaining 605 and Houston 475.

The teams threw 94 passes, gaining 733 yards, and there were only 33 first downs, with Tech getting 29.

Perhaps it was fitting that neither won.

Times Photo by Howard Hammersley Jr.

Strock: We Should Have Won'

BLACKSBURG — "I think we should have won." With those comments, Don Strock shrugged aside one of the greatest individual passing efforts in college football history.

Despite the heroics by the Virginia Tech passer, an astounding 237 yards in the first half, Tech had to settle for a 27-27 tie Saturday with favored Houston.

"I guess the fumbles cost us," said Strock. "We were inside the five 15 times and fumbled. That's at least a field goal. If we had scored both times, that would have been 41 points."

Strock blamed one of J.B. Barber's bobbles on himself. "It was a very good hand-off," he said.

"The way we have played, I think we are better," said the Tech senior. "We should have beaten Virginia and Florida State. But that's the way it goes."

Strock said he didn't think Tech would have any trouble getting ready for Saturday's game with strong Oklahoma State. "We know we have a good team, we'll be ready," said Strock. "I think we had passing offense."

"It doesn't make any difference to me how we score, whether it's by running or passing. The only thing I mind is getting down there and not scoring at all."

The unfortunate Barber, who fumbled six times personally, said he had a sprained wrist that affected his play. "I hurt it in practice and I'm having trouble holding onto the ball," he said.

Was Barber upset about the outcome?

"I was at first," he said, "but I'm shaking it off. That's football. I've never had trouble fumbling before, not in high school, not as a freshman, not last year. Sure it bothers me, but I'll bounce back. I can't do anything about what has happened."

-- Bill Brill