Strock's Kick Lifts Hokies, 34-32

BY BILL BILLINGS
Times Sports Editor
BLACKSBURG — The third time was the charm for the other Strock.

Dave Strock, who had missed two field goal tries on consecutive plays in a desperation finish, calmly redeemed himself Saturday afternoon when a 30-yard kick put the Hokies' fortieth ranked Oklahoma State, the leader of the awesome Big Eight.

Strock got his chance after he thought he had lost the wild game, the third in as many weeks here.

Let's set the scene for the finale.

With just 6:35 left, Eddie Garrett kicked a 33-yard field goal that gave the Cowboys a 17-16 lead.

Back came the Hokies behind the golden arm of Don Strock, the younger but infinitely more famous brother.

Three completions and a string of yardage by J.B. Barber carried the ball to the OSU 15, but on third down Strock fumbled and fell on the ball for a loss of eight yards.

On fourth down it was Dave Strock to try to win it. His boot from a short distance was short of the field goal, but OSU was offside.

That, as it turned out, was a big, big play, because otherwise the Cowboys would have taken the ball at the 32. That gave Dave Strock another chance from the 17, a chip shot from a man who earlier had booted his longest ever from 33 yards. But OSU's Darryl Stewart got a hand on the kick and it was downed at the Cowboys' 22.

"I was really let down," said the kicking Strock. "I didn't think I'd get another chance. I thought I'd lost it for the team."

There was 1:15 left to play and all the Cowboys had to do was hold the football.

On the first play, however, strong safety George Palmer, until then the OSU hero, fumbled the ball and it was recovered by Tech's Donnie Strock at the three. The crowd went positively berserk. Now it was Don Strock's turn. "We didn't care if we got a touchdown or not. We just wanted to get the ball in the middle of the field. I knew Dave could do it."

OSU, which earlier had trimmed powerful Colorado 21-14, didn't concede easily. Three times Barber cracked the most Cowboy line and all he got was a yard. But it scarcely mattered, because the ball was squared in front of the uprights.

Dave Strock treated on, got a good hold from Don, and booted the Cowboys out of the national ranking and Tech into great position for a wonderful comeback season.

"Was your heart pounding?" Tech assistant coach Wally English asked Dave.

"It was after I missed the first two," said Strock.

"I think the coaches showed a great deal of confidence," Strock said. "If it had been me, I think I would have been hesitant about putting it in a guy who had just missed a couple."

But Strock didn't miss, and now Tech has secured its spot at 2-2-1 with its third straight pulsating finish.

It was Strock after an adverentious, a battle of the pass and the run.

Don Strock, who beamed for a week ago to take the national passing and total offense leads, connected on 29 of 49 passes for 353 yards and two TDs.

Oklahoma State, even with clever quarterback Brett Blackman limited to handoffs and occasional 6-10-yard passes, did not hurt its status as the nation's No. 2 rushing team by using its pounding Wisconsin for 346 yards.

Just like last week's Tech vs. Bear game, this was an offensive show. OSU netted 447 yards and Tech bagged 421.

Unlike last week, however, Tech did not lose a fumble. The only two fumbles were by Don Strock and he recovered them both. OSU lost three fumbles, including the one that cost the Cowboys the game.

It did not start well for Tech.

With the Cowboys dropping both ends and rushing only three men, Strock had his second pass intercepted by Stewart, who ran back 27 yards to the Tech 11. Two plays later James Nunns scored from the five and quickly it was 7-0.

On Tech's next series, a pass was stolen by Centreforves at the OSU four and returned 10 yards. The Cowboys quickly went 80 yards to take a 14-0 lead.

With the big play a 4-yard run by Fountain Smith to the Tech 11.

At the five, Blackman was sacked and reserve quarterback Jeff Trouil scored in two plays.

But it didn't take long for Tech to get back in the game. Smith fumbled at his 23 and Bill Ellenberger recovered for the Hokies.

A Strock to Kluft pass got the ball to the 14 and three plays later Barber scored from the seven. That made it 7-7 at halftime.

The third OSU interception of the first quarter (there were no more after that) gave the Cowboys the ball at the OSU 10, but on first play, Palmer fumbled the snap to John Spenkel.

Strock completed passes of 12, 14, and 22 yards to the OSU five, and then Barber scored in two plays. Dave Strock tied it at 14.

The next time Tech got the ball, Strock did his thing in a hurry. He hit tailback Rick Silver for 22 yards, then 45 for a TD, with the receiver breaking two tackles on a great run. Dave Strock made it 21-7, and there was still 10:18 left in the half.

OSU was not dismayed. Thanks to a 45-yard pass from Blackman to Rehan Gant, OSU moved 60 yards in a hurry. Palmer, who rushed for 128 yards in 29 carries, rambled the final 11. But Garrett's point after hit the right upright and it stayed 21-7. That, as it turned out later, was a vital miss.

Tech came immediately back to get the 3-yard field goal.


Sports of THE TIMES

Sunday, October 15, 1972

Other Features in This Section

J.B. Barber, who fumbled everything in sight a week ago against Houston, holds on for dear life as he scores another touchdown for Virginia Tech Saturday. In a remarkable turnaround from last week, Virginia Tech did not lose a fumble against nationally ranked Oklahoma State.

'Twas This Way, I Think'

Charrie Coffey, Officials Discuss Tech's Ondises Kick

Oh Kansas State, 32-7

By Dave Fassa

Blackman Limited To Passes, And Oklahoma State Loses

On the evening Tech football fans thought they were seeing the game of the year. But, after a scoreless first quarter, the Tech offense ran wild in the second half and scored 28 unanswered points.

Tech, which had scored 21 unanswered points the previous week at Oklahoma, scored 7 in the third quarter and 21 points in the fourth. The Cowboys had done little except to gain yardage on Tech's defense.

Top plays in the second half included a 38-yard pass from Blackman to Rehan Gant, a Tech touchdown with 5:20 left in the third quarter, and a 3-yard TD run by Rehan Gant.

But Tech's defense was the foundation of this game.

Tech's defense forced OSU to punt in the first quarter and 3 yards in the second. OSU's only scoring threat of the night was a 22-yard pass from Blackman to Rehan Gant.

But Tech's defense was the foundation of this game. It had 12 tackles for loss and two sacks. Tech did not allow OSU to break a run of more than 10 yards.

OSU, which was ranked 18th in the nation, gained only 140 yards rushing.

Tech held OSU to 346 yards.

Tech quarterback J.B. Barber threw for 250 yards, completing 24 of 37 passes.

The Cowboys were led by Blackman, who was limited to handoffs and occasional 6-10-yard passes. He completed 8 of 24 passes for 86 yards.

Tech's defense was led by linebacker Donnie Strock, who had 10 tackles for loss and two sacks.

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