W&M Hoping To Harness VPI's Strock

By ED RICHARDS
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Another offense shootout between William and Mary and Virginia Tech is expected Saturday in Richmond.

For Coach Jim Root's Tribe, "It's THE game of the year." That stems from the heated rivalry between the two schools.

The setting for Saturday's anticipated fireworks is Richmond's City Stadium where a full house is expected for the Tobacco Bowl clash.

The two teams produced a classic last year in Blacksburg. The Indians set all sorts of offense records, but the Gobblers capitalized on four Tribe fumbles to escape with a 41-30 victory and a ninth consecutive victory over their rivals.

Tribe records carved out in the thriller included most first downs (34), most plays (100), most passes completed (22) and most total offense (545).

All of last year's starting backfield in the Virginia Tech game has graduated, but the Indians still have plenty of punch to square off against the Gobblers. Coach Root's charges are averaging 397.9 yards a game in total offense while the Techmen boast 417.7 yards an outing.

Obviously, the Tribe's biggest task is trying to put a damper on sensational Don Strock, who leads the nation in passing and total offense.

"Strock is just a great one. His size, strong arm and ability to read defenses will make him almost unstoppable," said Root. "They're a good football team. By record, they appear to be better than any team we've faced."

The Tribe mentor feels Strock and the Gobblers are "a far cry" better than at the start of the season when they dropped their first two games to Virginia and Florida State.

Since then Coach Charlie Coffey's bunch has knocked off Southern Methodist, Oklahoma State and Ohio University and tied Houston.

"Tech's offense front line has done an excellent job protecting Strock," said Root. "We'll just have to find some way to put the heat on him and it's going to be a tough challenge for our

Full House Expected For Tobacco Bowl

Continued From Page 13 defensive line," noted Root. "I don't think Strock has gotten his pants dirty in the last three games."

What has the Indians' coaching staff worried is the fact that the Tribe secondary has been vulnerable all season. The Indians have yielded an average of 176.9 yards a game in the air, but only West Virginia could come close to comparing with the Gobblers' aerial assault.

Oddly, the Tribe won the battle of passing statistics last year, 399 yards to 198. Strock connected on a pair of touchdowns to wide receiver Donnie Reel and one to tight end Mike Burns in that one, and both have been among his favorite targets this season.

"I think the real difference in this year's Tech team over last year is it's defense. That has really impressed me. I think the goal-line stand against SMU turned their season around," explained Root. "They've got excellent overall speed on defense and could give us trouble on the option.

The Indians probably will be at least a two-touchdown underdog, but that matters little to them.

"We feel we can beat them. Virginia did it," says Tribe tailback Doug Gerhart, who along with fullback Todd Buschell rushed for over 100 yards last week against Virginia Military Institute.

Root feels his club can move the ball and put points on the boards. "We believe we have a great option quarterback (Bill Deery) and a solid passing threat."