Strock: At Worst, Still Best

Down at Virginia Tech, they judge their extraordinary quarterback, Don Strock, by the most exacting standards.

Saturday afternoon in the Tobacco Festival game at City Stadium, the 6-5 senior who leads the nation in passing and total offense completed 24 of 43 passes for 339 yards and one touchdown as Tech lost to William and Mary, 17-16.

"It was," said Tech coach Charlie Coffey yesterday afternoon, "the worst performance he’s had this season." William and Mary would certainly hate to see him much better.

With Tech trailing, 17-10, the goal line 84 yards away, and only 2:18 remaining, Strock led the Hokies straight down the field with nothing but passes. The Indians knew what was coming, but couldn’t stop it. Once, on fourth-and-24 at the Tech 21, Strock fired a 35-yard completion. "Fourth-and-24 to Strock means nothing," said W&M coach Jim Root. "It’s like first and 10 to any other quarterback."

Still, when the Tech coaches reviewed and graded the movies of their third loss this season, Strock did not come off well. "As far as total game performance is concerned, he had a lot more minuses than he did plusses," said Coffey. He misread some coverages and missed seeing some receivers."

Not that Coffey is about to put a permanent knock on Strock, for he knows that without the Warwick, Pa., native Tech would be in dire straits. "If we ran the football off tackle, we wouldn’t be getting one touchdown a game. Don makes us a very good offensive football team."

"And he’s a Heisman Trophy candidate if there ever was one. He’s like a coach on the field. He reacts instantly to certain situations, and I might have to run the film back three or four times to see how he did it."

Despite his "worst" Strock was good enough to win The Times-Dispatch Offensive Player of the Week award for an unprecedented third time this season.