W&M Upsets Gamble, Tech, 17-16

By BILL MILLSAPS
The 24th annual Tobacco Bowl football game yesterday afternoon came down to a final moment, all-or-nothing play, and nothing was exactly what Virginia Tech got as the Hokies became a 17-16 upset victim of William and Mary.

The Hokies scored a touchdown with 13 seconds left and went for a two-point conversion which would have won it before a screaming City Stadium crowd of 22,000.

Tech quarterback Don Strock rolled to his left and fired a pass to wide receiver Don Galloway in the end zone. An offside penalty called towards its target, W&M defensive back John Hostetler tipped it into the air. Galloway got his hands on the ball but couldn't gain control as he was smothered to the ground by safety Mike Stewart.

When the officials signaled the attempt was no good, a celebration erupted along the W&M sideline. And the victory was certainly worthy of it.

The Indians walked onto the 300 of City Stadium's atrocious playing surface 14-point underdogs. They weathered the best that Strock could throw at them, and that was very good indeed. They played generally excellent defense when their goal was threatened. And they got offensive heroics from quarterback Bill Deery and receivers Mark Smith and David Knight.

Deery hit 13 of 20 passes for 175 yards and the 32-yard scoring toss to Smith which put W&M ahead by 16-10 with 2:29 remaining. Terry Regan's extra point, his 18th without a miss this season, followed and proved to be the winning edge.

In the few next moments, Strock showed everyone why he leads the nation in passing and total offense. Starting on the Tech 16-yard line with 2:18 left, Strock led the Hokies' relentlessly down the field.

- Beating both the clock and the W&M defense, Strock put the ball in the air 12 straight times and completed six. Because of a 22-yard holding penalty which nullified a 17-yard completion, Strock actually had to throw for 10 yards to get the Hokies their last touchdown.

With fourth-and-24 on the Tech 21, Strock fired a 35-yard completion to Galloway. Then on third-and-10 on the Indians' 44, he threw 24 yards to Don Reel. On second-and-10 at the 20, W&M was charged with pass interference on defensive back Phil Elmasian's six, and one play later, Strock connected for the touchdown to Ricky Scales.

"We knew they'd try a roll-out pass on our two-man end," said Hostetler in the uprooted Indians dressing room. "Their wide receiver (Galloway) came off the line of scrimmage and did a curl. I saw he had nowhere to go in the crowd, then he went for the sideline. I just went with him, and when Strock threw the ball..." I didn't know he didn't catch it until I saw our guys jumping up and down.

Despite missing on the pass he most wanted to hit, Strock was 24 of 43 through the air for 399 yards. Yet it was not enough to prevent the Hokies from dropping to 3-3-1. Oddly enough, coach Charlie Coffey's team is 2-0 against representatives of the South's West and Big Eight conferences (downed SMU and Oklahoma State, tied Houston) but 0-2 against the two so-called Big Five teams they have met, the Indians and Virginia.

The Indians, in squaring their record at 4-4, "could not have played any better," according to their coach, Jim Root. "We had a little luck and one helluva football effort."

It showed, particularly on defense in the first half. Tech had four excellent scoring opportunities, reaching the W&M 30, 9, 19, and 36. All the Hokies got for their trouble was Dave Strock's 36-yard field goal (good for a 3-4 half-time lead) after their third scoring chance.

The others ended when the kicking Strock missed a 47-yard field goal, W&M held on a fourth-and-one running play at its nine and Elmasian intercepted a Don Strock pass at the Indians' 11. As it turned out, they were opportunities the Hokies could afford to blow. William and Mary took the lead late in the third period, going 66 yards on nine plays for a touchdown.

The key play of the drive was a circus catch by Knight (he had six catches for 91 yards) to complete a 15-yard pass at the Tech three-yard line. On the next play, Doug Gerhardt, who finished the day with 88 yards rushing, punched through for the touchdown. Regan kicked the extra point.

On Tech's next possession, linebacker Randy Revesi intercepted a Strock pass at the Tech 22 and returned it to the 17. Techn held for three downs, and on fourth down, Regan came on to kick a 34-yard field goal, his sixth in eight attempts.

Then a 57-yard punt return by Jerry Scharms put the Hokies in business at W&M 22. On second-and-nine, Strock passed 18 yards to Scales at the Indians' three. J.B. Barber got two yards, then Strock sneaked in for the touchdown with 9:20 left.

Tech took a timeout as Strock and Coffey discussed the possibility of a two-point conversion. Which, if it worked, would have put the Hokies on top by 11-10. "I figured we'd have our chances later," said Coffey, "and what we needed was to do at that point was tie the game up. Which is exactly what Dave Strock did.

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After Tech tied the score, W&M failed to move the football and was forced to punt. Scharms promptly broke another long return, this one going 43 yards to the W&M 13. Again, the Indians' defense rose to the occasion.

They stopped two running plays and were the beneficiaries of a 15-yard dead-ball penalty (chipping), which which moved the ball back to the W&M 25. On third down, Strock passed 11 yards to Valentine, but it was 11 yards short of the first down.

Again, Coffey sent Dave Strock into the game to kick a field goal which would have put the Hokies in front. It was a 31-yarder from a decent angle, and he missed it.

Given that break, the Indians promptly mounted their drive for the winning points. Taking over at their 30, the Indians moved the ball to a fourth-and-one situation at their 46. They went for it, with Regan getting seven yards around right end.

On the next play, Deery hit Don Pavlewicki for 11 yards at the Tech 36. Deery then optioned for four yards, and on second down, he fired the boot which touched off quite a few parties in Williamsburg last night. The 5-10 sophomore quarterback faded and shot a long pass in the direction of Smith, who was closely covered by Tech's Bobby Dabbs. Smith and Dabbs fought for possession, and the Indians' big tight end was the winner. Dabbs fell into the mud and could only watch as Smith lumbered across the goal line to complete a 32-yard touchdown play.

"This was a big setback," said Coffey, "but we've had some before. It hurts now and it will hurt a helluva lot worse in the morning and worse than that Monday morning."

It can be reliably predicted that there will be no pain in Williamsburg for quite a few days.

Virginia Tech-W&M

First downs...
12 10
Rushing-yards...
329 375
Passing yards...
299 357
Return yards...
128 48
Passes...
24 24
Punts...
34 5
Penalties-lost...
4 4
Penalties-yards...
56 49

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