Tech Has Reasons To Be Up

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Virginia Tech entertains Southern Mississippi tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 in Lane Stadium and the game might well boil down to a battle of arms and legs.

The arms in the clash belong to Tech's Don Strock, the nation's top passer, and Southern Miss' Buddy Palazzo, who knows what to do with a football, himself.

The legs belong to Ray Guy of Southern Miss, who leads the nation in punting with a lofty 46.2 average, and to Tech's Andy Hromyak, who is kicking at a 41.2 clip.

Guy also could have a lot to say about any success Strock might have in the air. The Southern Miss star ranks with the top defensive backs in the nation and has averaged almost one interception per game.

There is little reason to review Strock's passing credentials. Let it suffice to say he's the very best and stands in a good position to capture the all-time NCAA one season total offensive record.

One thing should be certain—Tech should be mentally ready for the visitors for at least two reasons.

The Gobblers well remember that surprising 17-8 licking they took here last year. It was Strock's poorest passing game of the season.

Then the Techmen will be out to regain some lost glory from last week's stunning 17-16 upset loss to William and Mary in Richmond.

"If we are ever going to be mentally ready for a game, we should be tomorrow," said Mike Burnop, senior tight end. "They are big and strong and have some good players. They'd better be because we are going after them. We seniors, especially, want all the wins we can get this year and we are fast running out of games."

Tech goes into the game with a 3-3-1 record and is favored by some two touchdowns over the visitors, who stand 3-4 for the season.

Two of the visitors' losses were to mighty Alabama and Mississippi.

Palazzo and Guy aren't the only stars for Southern Miss. There is Mike Dennery, a tough middle linebacker; Fred Cook, a bruising defensive lineman; and Doyle Orange, a darting running back who is hard to handle.

Tech has added defensive back Chuck Perdue to its growing injured list. Perdue had a knee operation this week for an injury suffered against W&M and will be lost for the season.

Junior letterman Randy McCann will replace Perdue.

One thing coach Charlie Coffey would like to see his Gobblers do is to run the football. While Strock has been setting records in the air, the Tech ground game has been averaging just over 100 yards per game.

James Barber has 422 yards in 131 carries for a 3.2 average and freshman Paul Adams has gained 163. But no other runner is much over the 100 mark.

J. B. Barber, Tech running threat

Andy Hromyak, Gobbler punter