Strocks Make Dad Happy

BLACKSBURG—Papa Strock was one proud fellow.

Coach Paul Dietzel was impressed and mentioned something about being a victim of “pouring it on.”

And the excited Virginia Tech football fans were wondering why Don and Dave Strock, themselves, aren’t enough of an attraction to merit the Gobblers at least a look-see from the bowl scouts.

This was the way it looked here Saturday afternoon as Don Strock closed out the home portion of his sensational career as the quarterback of the Gobblers and got a big boot from older brother Dave.

It was probably Tech’s finest game of the season—this impressive 45-20 romp over Dietzel’s South Carolina Gamecocks. And all it had Dave James Strock Sr. smiling affectionately in the Tech dressing quarters.

Papa Strock is really a big daddy—he stands 6-2 and weighs 245 pounds. He looks as if he could play end for the Washington Redskins.

“Aren’t they something,” he said as he draped his arms around his two sons.

Although he never played football, Papa Strock realized early his sons had great natural football talent and had great potential. He offered only one bit of advice.

“I told ’em if they were going to play, to play as hard as they could on every play. They would be taking up space on the bench if they did anything else,” he said.

He Spreads the Word

He likely isn’t doing much work today at his job as a brickmason for Bethlehem Steel near his home in Elverson, Pa.

He’ll be telling his fellow workers all about how Don completed 29 of 44 passes for 349 yards to lead the nation in total offense and in passing and how Dave booted three field goals for a career record of 14 and added four extra points to run his kicking total to 68.

“All my friends come around every Monday morning to hear how the boys did,” he said. “And man do I enjoy telling ’em.”

One of the things that makes Don such an effective quarterback is the fact he keeps his cool under fire. He controls his emotions, too.

“He gets that from me,” said Mr. Strock. “I get excited but I keep my emotions inside me. Now, Dave is more like his mother. He gets excited. His mother is something at the games. She keeps yelling, jumping up and down and beating me on the back.”

Don begged to disagree somewhat with his dad. “Don’t let him kid you,” Don said with a smile. “He’s got a temper and he shows it. I know.”

Dave said one of the reasons he is enjoying a record season in kicking is the fact he is talking to himself more and taking his own advice.

“I start getting ready on Friday before the game,” Dave said. “I must tell myself, 1,000 times ‘keep your head down and follow through’. I even wake myself up talking. I just wish I had started this last year.”

There Are No Favorites

A factor that makes Don so effective as a passer is his utter lack of a favorite receiver. Eleven players caught his passes here Saturday and 13 receivers have made catches this season.

Ricky Scales, the twinkled-toed sophomore wide receiver from Martinsville, grabbed seven for 111 yards and now leads all Tech receivers with 31 catches for 577 yards.

Strock continues to disregard any personal glory. As he looked ahead to this Saturday and a big game against powerful, unbeaten Alabama, he could think only in terms of team—not individual.

“I don’t care if I don’t complete a pass,” he said. “In fact I don’t care if I never throw one. I’d be satisfied to run on every down if we could win. I know beating Alabama would be my greatest sports thrill.”

Dietzel Has His Say

Things weren’t so happy in the South Carolina dressing room. Dietzel, however, had many kind words for Strock.

“He is a lot better than I thought and I thought he was pretty darn good,” said Dietzel. “He doesn’t get rattled. We rang his bell several times and it never bothered him. He was hitting his receivers when we were hitting him. Several times he even released the ball after we hit him.

“Talk about him in the pros. Well, he looks like a pro to me now.”

Then some Carolina writer asked Dietzel if he thought Tech tried to pour it on.

“What did it look like?” Dietzel said. “They were ahead 31-7 and still going for the bomb. But that doesn’t concern me. This is a long world and things have a way of coming back to you.”

What Dietzel didn’t admit was that coach Charlie Coffey played everything that wore an orange jersey. There were Gobblers in action who weren’t even listed in the program.

And the bomb that Dietzel was talking about was from reserve quarterback Bruce Arians to reserve receiver Steve Galloway. And it was Arians who ran the final touchdown.

And it was against the Tech scrubs, with Coffey making no move to insert his regulars, that South Carolina scored its final two touchdowns.

Yes, it could have been much worse for Dietzel and his Gamecocks but it couldn’t have been much better for the Strock-dominated Gobblers.

And big daddy Strock was busy today telling ’em all about it up at Bethlehem Steel.