No Losing Season For Gobblers

By Wendell Wendel

In the records everywhere, but not one will compare with the simple fact that Virginia Tech doesn't have to worry about having another losing season! Even the prospect of facing awesome Alabama and its "Redwood forest" doesn't dim the Tidewater October sails that break gently on Tech's horizon.

Visiting Alabama this Saturday for the Crimson Tide's sellout (59,000) homecoming at Denny Stadium is a "(from the) cricket over the nation's east coast" says Tech coach Charlie Coffey. "It's a privilege just to compete against the very best, and obviously Alabama again this season deserves its national ranking."

Aside from the task of facing some of the nation's very best, Tech is concerned with its out-of-action department.

Senior punter Andy Hrymak, one of the nation's leading punters and therefore an unusually important cog in a top-flight team, is injured. While making a tackle on a punt return last Saturday, he sustained fractures of both bones in his left forearm.

He'll be replaced by freshman Bruce McDaniel, from Beckley, W. Va., whose total varsity career consists of one punt in the fourth quarter last Saturday.

Senior linebacker Tommy Shirley and defensive back Chuck Perdue, both of whom are fired up, will play.

Coffey early in the week was playing shuffleboard with the personnel roster, and somehow the Techmen will get ready.

Alabama has been an imperturbable, relentless dragon-on-the-ground, in the air and on the scoreboard. The Crimson Tide so far has had almost as many interceptions, 11, as Tech has had pass receivers, 13.

It's evident that the Fighting Gobblers, leading the nation in pass defense, must try to go with its best suit against the intimidating "Redwood forest."

Tech's best suit starts with quarterback Don Strock, tenously leading college football in passing and total offense, and becomes broad cloth with seven pass catchers who are in double figures.

Don Strock

Dave Strock

Strock keeps having "average" days, but the Tide has been in the habit of scuttling averages. Average or not, Strock does figure to keep Alabama guessing if only because of his aerial displacement.

Sophomore wide receiver Ricky Scales, who has been shutout once this season, once taken over the lead with 31 receptions. Tight end Mike Burnop, also whitewashed one time, has 30. And the targets go on down the line: wide receiver Donnie Reel (26), running back James Barber (27), wide receivers Craig Valentine and Kit Ute (19 each) and tight end Nick Colobro (12).

Rule Don continues to set new Tech records every time he takes a snap, brother Dave Strock, Tech's placement specialist and one of the nation's leaders in returning, says he expects another section of the same book. He has booted 14 field goals so far this season, and with one more he would have a Tech career record 22.

The Gobblers' steady, improving defense get a heavy dose of the wishbone attack by Alabama's tailback, and one expects a much more acid test. "We haven't stopped the wishbone yet, and that's just total execution is much more perfect than was Oklahoma's," Coffey says. "I'm not pleading poor mouth; that's simply a statement of fact. We are preparing to play against one of the toughest atta...k in college football."

We were prepared last year to play Houston, and we played very well for the first..." (Continued On Page 6-A)