Gobblers Stomped 52-13

From Page C4

the Hokie punter, because freshman Bruce McDaniel suffered a broken ankle and possible ligament damage. Strock's first punt was good for 10 yards, his second for one. "I haven't punted in two years," he said. "I haven't even worked on it." But with regular Andy Bronyaik injured last week and then McDaniel going down, there was nobody else.

The second half was played only because it was required. Davis directed 'Bama 77 yards to the end zone in less than three minutes, with fullback Steve Blaseig going the last yard to make it 14-0. That was the end of the day for the first unit.

Tech got a gift score after recovering a fumbled punt at the 25, with J. B. Barber ramming it over from the one. Near the end, Strock passed 30 yards to Craig Valantine for the other TD.

In between those scores, Alabama used up 10½ minutes on a 21-play drive for a tally. "I never thought we'd get the ball back," Strock said. "We knew what they were going to do on the option." Coffey said. "But that's strictly one-on-one play. Their offense was better than our defense. We used the same game plan that we thought stopped them with pretty good, only we didn't have Tennessee's players."

Strock, who had been averaging better than 300 yards per game, had no chance. "They put a tremendous rush on us," he said. "That was definitely the best rush we've faced."

"They made a lot of great plays. That one interception by cornerback Chris Hargrave (Washington) was the best I've ever seen. He tipped the ball away from (Ricky) Scales and caught himself." Strock said the ball "fell like a duck pond near the end. They said they were changing balls on every play but it was slick and heavy. But we couldn't run the deep stuff. We had to go to quick outs."

"They played patterns, not open routes. That made it tough." Coffey knew what had happened. "They just played with us."

The only consolation for Tech, now 5-4-1, is that Wake Forest is 4-5-1 and the next trip to Tuscaloosa is nearly 12 months away. It will take time to strengthen the wounds to heal.

Virginia Tech Stomps
Virginia Tech 52-13

By BILL BRILL
Times Sports Editor

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — It is a long, tedious nine-hour drive from Blacksburg to Tuscaloosa, approximately the difference between the Virginia Tech and Alabama football teams.

Tech got a look at a real team here this dreary Saturday afternoon, when many of the 57,000 Denny Stadio ticketholders decided it was far wiser to stay at home near a bar and an icebox.

That's all Tech saw of 'Bama, too. A more plausible game. The Hokies never got close enough to the Tide for serious observation.

All save Don Strock. The nation's passing and total offense leader was badgered all afternoon by the boys in the devi's red, and if Strock wanted to find out what Hell was really like, he learned.

That is the worst regular season victory and into a Cotton Bowl meeting with Texas, hoping for Bear Bryant's fourth national title, with whipping up on totally outclassed Tech, 52-13.

That score is totally deceiving, because it could have been far worse. A merciful Bryant played everybody he dressed except one freshman, a total of 66 players.

Despite seven lost fumbles, one of which gave Tech a touchdown, it was strictly no contest. The Virginia Tech first team played no more than a quarter, running only 30 of 92 offensive plays, and with the superior defense Terry Davis and friends were finished for the day after the opening three minutes of the last half.

It did not matter at all what players 'Bama had in the game. They were all better than anything Tech could counter with.

Although the Tide rushed with only its front four, dropping seven men to defend against Strock's passes, the defense provided the Tide star with by far the worst day of his career.

Strock was limited a mere 50 yards in total offense. He completed just 13 of 35 attempts, most of them against the relatives in the fourth quarter. Those tosses were good for only 80 yards and 'Bama returned four first half interceptions for 84 yards. Strock was sacked four times for 48 yards and fumbled the ball away to set up the last Alabama touchdown.

Meanwhile, the Alabama wishbone ground out 461 rushing yards and 566 all told as the nation's No. 3 team toyed with the Hokies.

It was a slaughter, pure and simple, Tech's worst beating in 14 years, and Charlie Coffey admitted as much. "That's what you call an odd-fashioned, fancy whipping," said the Tech coach.

"Alabama is very physical. They have the team we'd like to have some day."

Although 'Bama is extremely anxious to be No. 1, and wisely chose the Cotton Bowl to avoid either Nebraska or Oklahoma, Bryant refused to pour it on. The final margin could have been astronomical if the Bear had so desired. "We had a lot more football players than Coffey and them folks," said Bryant.

Never were truer words spoken.

In the cold and rain, the only thing that saved Tech from total humiliation were the seven lost 'Bama fumbles. But even the Hokies couldn't save Tech for long.

The Hokies actually got the first break when halfback Joe LaButte fumbled the ball away at the Alabama 29 on the Tide's opening series.

But Tech's John Dobkins returned the favor on the next play, and just like that, Alabama scored.

Terry Davis rolled out right on the option, a play Tech never defended all day. Three yards past the scrimmage line, he pitched back to Will-Jon Jackson, a 207-pound junior with speed. Jackson was gone from the minute he grabbed the ball, with a fleet of blockers screening out the lone Tech defender.

The 77-yard play came with less than two minutes gone in the game.

Another fumble later, 'Bama scored again. This time it was a 77-yard drive in which Jackson contributed a 36-yard run. In only three carries, Jackson netted 113 yards and two TDs. The entire Tech team gained 112.

Davis got this TD on a sneak from the two to make it 14-0. Two more lost fumbles later, 'Bama scored again on a 36-yard field goal by Bill Davis, then intercepted Strock on the first play and scored again in two plays, with Jackson going the final nine.

After missing another TD when reserve quarterback Gary Rudge slipped at the Tech one on fourth down, 'Bama made it 31-0 at halftime on a two-yard rush by halfback Randy Billingsley.

By intermission, Tech had two first downs and Strock was minus nine in total offense. He had also become

Sunday, November 19, 1972

Sports

of THE TIMES

C-1

See Page C4, Col. 1