VPI, Strock Pose Woes For Deacons

By MIKE KEECH
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Tom Harper, Wake Forest’s lame duck coach, would like nothing better than to end his brief tenure at the Atlantic Coast Conference school with an upset of Virginia Tech.

Harper’s Deacons are for Saturday’s season finale against the visiting Gobblers (5-4-1).

Possibly the 40-year-old Harper will continue his coaching career at his alma mater, the University of Kentucky. In the meantime, he must find a way to stop the nation’s leading passer, Tech’s Don Strock.

The Deacon mentor was wary of Virginia’s passing attack prior to last week’s 15-12 loss to the Cavaliers. So in Saturday’s encounter that concern is multiplied twofold.

Strock, a 6-foot-5 senior, is averaging better than 20 completions per game and stands No. 2 in the country in total offense with 2,784 yards.

Seniors Sammy Rothrock and Junior Moore lead the Deacon secondary with cornerbacks Felix Glasco and James Hargrove rounding out the unit.

2-8 and a definite underdog

“I hope we can get the kind of performance we did against Duke two weeks ago. Kit Basler means a great deal to our offense (quarterback) and we would like to control the football. We have concentrated on pass defense this week in practice because Virginia Tech has an outstanding passing attack with Strock,” Harper said.

Basler, a 180-pound sophomore, has gained the starting berth after being sidelined most of the campaign with a shoulder injury. Running backs Frank Harsh (freshman) and Ken Garrett are the other keys to the Deacons’ ground-minded attack.

The Gobblers hold a 12-8 edge in the series, but Wake Forest won the last meeting in 1971, 20-9.

Should Wake Forest lose, it would mark its worst season record since 1963’s 1-9 performance.

A Deacon athletic department official says that interviews with candidates for the head coaching post should start next week.