A Day Of ‘Roses’ For Don

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.—Here are Don Strock’s season and career records:

- Season passing: 228 completions, 427 attempts, 3,243 yards, 16 touchdowns, 27 interceptions. Strock wound up third in the all-time list in passing yardage and completions.

- Season total offense: 3,170 yards, first in the country. Strock becomes the fifth man to pass the 3,000-yard mark and wound up fourth on the all-time list behind Bill Anderson of Tulsa, Greg Cook of Cincinnati and Dennis Shaw of San Diego State.

- Career passing: 440 completions, 829 attempts, 6,127 yards, 29 TDs, 47 interceptions. Strock finished seventh in all-time completions, sixth in total passing yards.

- Career total offense: 5,671 yards. Strock winds up ninth in all-time total offense.

Sports of THE TIMES

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National Champ Don Strock: ‘I Almost Quit’

Neither the Rain nor the Rush Could Stop Don Strock on This TD Pass to Ricky Scales

Times Photo by Jack Gobbing

Strock Wins Titles as Gobblers Roll 44-9

BY BILL BRILL
Times Sports Editor

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — The weather was more appropriate for a funeral procession, a bitter, bone-chilling rain that never stopped.

If you were Wake Forest Coach Tom Harper, fired after only 10 months on the job, the scene was completely fitting.

An empty stadium, your team losing to Virginia Tech, 44-9.

But the Saturday afternoon gloom was shattered in the Tech dressing room, where the Hokies exulted after completing a 6-4-1 campaign.

Happiest of all was Don Strock, the wondrous quarterback, who completed his run-to-richer college career by winning the national passing and total offense crowns.

Ignoring the miserable conditions, Strock passed for 265 yards, completing 25 of 47 attempts including a pair of touchdowns. The fact that Strock lost a fumble and had five interceptions, one returned 52 yards by Donna Brown for the lone Deac touchdown, couldn’t spoil the day.

Strock thus became the fifth player in NCAA history to pass the magic 3,000-yard figure, winding up with 3,243. For the season, he hit on 228 of 427 passes for 3,243 yards and 16 scores. He passed Tulsa’s Jerry Hulme on the all-time total offense list for a single season and also wound up with a career figure of 6,127 passing yards.

“It’s been a long haul, five years,” Strock said. “For three years nobody wanted to talk to me. It’s been nothing to roses overnight.”

Strock, who was red-shirted by Coach Jerry Claiborne and then relegated to the bench the next year, is the original Turnabout Kid.

“I’m certainly glad they (Tech) hired Coach (Charlie) Coffey,” he said.

Strock said there were many moments of doubt during his career. “There were 1,000 times when I wanted to quit. I don’t know why I didn’t. I guess I just wanted to play too much.”

Strock said the confidence he now exudes came in the Wake Forest game a year ago. “That’s when I knew we were committed to a throwing game.”

The 6-5 senior will now take it easy for a while. “I haven’t even had any (Thanksgiving) turkey yet, and I have a birthday coming on Monday.” Hell be 22.

Academically, Strock is about finished. He has two core courses of electives, but no exams. “Then I’ll go home for a while,” he said.

But after that, it was all Wake. The Deacs kept Tech bottled up and except for a fumble by freshman fullback Frank Harsh at the two, the game had been tied at the half.

Strock had 113 yards at interception, but came out throwing in the third quarter and finally Wake Forest just gave up the ghost and quit.

Strock marched his team to a field goal by brother Dave, his 19th of the year, that made it 10-0.

After Chuck Ramsey countered with a Wake fielder, thedeluge really hit.

Strock passed 42 yards to Scales at the Wake three, from where J. B. Barber scored with 35 seconds left in the period. Then it became a runaway, with Wake fumbling the ball away. Tech got five TDs in less than 14 minutes.

After Donnie Reel scored on a reverse with 5:39 left to make it 31-7, Strock retired from the game. But the Hokies recovered two straight fumbled kickoffs, which were turned into TDs by reserve quarterback Bruce Arias.

Arias ran 22 yards for one score, passed 23 yards to ex-basketballer Tommy Trice for another.

All told, Tech totalled 589 yards in offense, getting 399 in the second half against the give-up Deacs.

“We didn’t try to pour it on,” said Strock. “We just put some guys in there who were hungry.”

Coffey, who said he was “satisfied” with the year, will now concentrate on recruiting.

“We have quite a few commitments,” he said. Tech is expected to sign a whopping number of recruits, perhaps as many as 40 or 70.

As for Wake, all the Deacs want to do is sign up a new coach.

Virginia Tech

Wake Forest

Kicks

K—Strock 19, 17, 24, 30; Arias 17; Reel 1.

Punts—Tech 15, 43, 39, 30; Arias 4, 43, 7; Wake 4, 9, 39; Strock 1.

Blocked kicks—Arias. 1. 1. 1.

Penalties—Tech 8; Wake 7; Arias 2; Strock 2.

Losses—Tech: 11, 3, 3; Wake: 10, 2, 1.