There's More To Strock Than Just Passing

Ask a football fan about Don Strock and you will get a lot of glowing replies about the superb young man who set the Virginia Tech passing records and this year became the NCAA winner in passing and total offense.

His team is a group of young boys and girls at a Headstart day care center in Christiansburg and you will get an entirely different picture of the 6'5 young man from Warwick, Va.

Those young people have nothing of Strock the athlete and Strock the super passer.

To them Strock is simply that friendly man with the long hair who comes over every Tuesday and Thursday to read stories to them. He's that big man who plays games and shares a little love and compassion to those underprivileged kids.

He's a hero to them just as much as he is to the thousands of Virginia Tech fans throughout the nation. But most important of all, he is their friend. And to those five-year-olds, that's a mighty important thing.

Strock wrote the final chapter of his sensational college career Saturday afternoon in the rain and wind with a big 44-6 romp over hapless Wake Forest.

His 25 completions for 385 yards and two touchdowns were enough to give him both the NCAA passing and total offense records for 1972.

**Evil Spirits No Bother**

Strock, a truly unusual athlete, doesn't like to talk about his personal record or anything more than he likes to accept any special praise for his work in the day care center.

"I've just been very fortunate," Strock said of his sensational two seasons at Tech. "The records... well, they are nice, I reckon. And winning the passing and total offense titles are good. But records are made to be broken."

And if you ask him about his work in Christiansburg, you'll get only a smile in reply as though it was something personal, with him... just a little thing between him and his young boys and girls.

There are probably many reasons Strock enjoyed such success this season. But his best gift, Pam Cvetnik, a pretty blonde Tech coed from Arlington, likes to think her hard work had something to do with it.

Pam made him a leather wrist band and gave it to him last summer. The band is worn and battered but still adorns his left wrist.

"It's supposed to keep away the evil spirits and keep me from harm," Don smiles. "It sure did the job this season. I guess I'll wear it until it falls off and then I'll get Pam to fix me another one."

**Toot Has Early Start**

Don isn't the only Strock who wrapped up the records this season at Tech. Older brother Dave wrote his name in the Tech record book with his foot.

He booted a field goal and five extra points against Wake and set the following kicking records: most field goals in a career (22), most field goals in a season (15); most kicking points in a game (13 against South Carolina); most field goals in a game (2 against Ohio University); most kicking points in a season (72).

Dave's No. 1 fan is his three-year-old son, Dave III—who goes by the name of "Toot."

"He's already kicking a little football around the house," said Dave. "He knows his dad is kicking the hick's uncle does the passing. He sits in the stands and claps at everything.

"He also knows all the players who come over to the house. He brings out his little football and wants to get up a game. I don't know if he'll be a passer or a kicker but I hope he plays."

Mike Burnop, who might well have been the most underrated of all the Groddlers, completed an outstanding career at tight end. He caught three passes for 63 yards and one touchdown.

Burnop holds the Tech record of 46 passes in a season (1971) and with 90 career catches.

Burnop, Don Strock and wide receiver Craig Valentine are expected to play in the Blue-Grey game Dec. 27 in Montgomery, Ala. Don Strock also has an invitation for the Hula Bowl in Hawaii.

**Scales Will Miss Him**

Big Town Trice probably was the happiest of the Groddlers—Strocks included.

Trice came to Tech on a basketball scholarship despite the defense and offensive titles are good. But records are made to be broken?

After 10 games of special team duty and little service at tight end, Trice finally made his debut in the fourth quarter on Saturday. He grabbed his first pass of his college career and turned it into a touchdown. He pranced around in the end zone like he had just scored the winning touchdown in the Rose Bowl.

Despite his inexperience in college, Trice is expected to get plenty of pro offers as a free agent. He is 6-5, weighs 235 and can catch the ball. He is undecided about whether he will make the stab at the pro ranks.

Probably the player who hates to see Don Strock graduate more than anyone else is Ricky Scales, the fancy fanker from Roanoke Valley Scales, a sophomore, started the season as a third-team player.

But he finished it with record statistics. Among his school records are seven touchdowns passes this season, 126 yards in receptions, nine in his closing game at Wake for 213 yards and three TD catches in a game at Ohio U.

"Man, was I lucky to have a passer like Strock throwing to me," Scales said. "He's the greatest. I certainly never expected any seasons like this but he deserves all the credit. He made it easy for me.

"I guess we'll still be passing next season. Bruce (Arizona) can throw it. But we'll just have to wait and see."

Then a teammate passed by, tapped Scales on the shoulders and said, "Ricky old fellow, you had better learn how to block. We're going to be running it next year."

It is certainly too early to tell just what will be the major Tech offensive weapons next season. But one thing is certain—Don Strock has made it an aerial circus the past two seasons.

He has put fans in the stands, has given Tech faithful plenty to talk about and he also has given a lot of little youngsters in Christiansburg a big helping of love and compassion.