Host Indians Sat. at Blacksburg

Gobblers to have rushing threat at quarterback spot

BLACKSBURG (AP)—Charlie Coffey, beginning his third season as football coach at Virginia Tech, says that “when you lose the No. 1 quarterback in the nation, you obviously have some rebuilding to do.”

Coffey is referring, of course, to Don Strock, who led the country last fall in passing with 228 completions in 427 attempts for 3,342 yards and 19 touchdowns and in total offense with 3,170 yards.

Gone, too, are his placekicking brother, Dave Strock, who had 28 of 30 extra point tries and 15 of 25 field goal attempts, and punter Andy Hromyak, who had a 41.4-yard average on 42 kicks.

“Our quarterback will be either Bruce Ariens, an unproven junior, or Rick Popp, a redshirt sophomore,” says Coffey. “Either gives us more running threat than we’ve had during the last two years.”

It helps, too, to have on hand the best running backs in the country last fall in James Barber, a 190-pound senior who gained 624 yards, and Paul Adams, a 215-pound sophomore who picked up 187 yards.

Both could be upstaged by Phil Rogers, a swift 180-pound sophomore who started in the spring game, and junior college transfer Alex Hill.

Five of last year’s top seven receivers are gone, but the Gobblers still have one of the nation’s best in Ricky Scales, a 178-pound junior who caught 45 passes last year for 326 yards and is a threat to go all the way every time he grabs the ball.

Barber ranked second to Scales with 35 catches, so Coffey actually has his two top pass-grabbers returning.

“Defensively we showed some improvement in 1972, and we have the nucleus for a good secondary and a good line backing corps,” says Coffey.