Ace Passer Gone

Va. Tech To Run More This Fall

BLACKSBURG, Va. (AP)—Virginia Tech averaged more than 300 yards per game passing last year on the arm of quarterback Don Strock, but there'll be a new look to the Gobblers' football offense this season.

Strock, essentially a drop-back thrower who led the nation in passing and total offense, has graduated, and Coach Charlie Coffey will replace him with two youngsters who'll throw more on the run.

Battling for the starting spot are Bruce Arians, a 190-pound junior who saw some backup action last year, and Rick Popp, a 175-pound redshirt sophomore.

"Either gives us more running threat than we've had during the last two years," says Coffey.

James Barber, a 190-pound senior who led the Gobblers on the ground with 624 yards, returns. So does the No. 2 ground gainer, Paul Adams, a 215-pound sophomore.

But the boy to watch is Phil Rogers, a 180-pound sophomore who's a breakout threat every time he gets his hands on the ball. Another top prospect is junior college transfer Alex Hill.

With Strock gone, plus five of last year's top seven receivers, "and a question mark for an offensive line, we've worked hard to rebuild our offensive line," says Coffey.

"Wide receiver Ricky Scales should rate in the super category, and with Scales and Steve Galloway we are all right for skill at the wide spots," Coffey adds.

After a 4-7 record in his first year, Coffey upped Tech's mark to 6-4-1 in his second season, but he's not predicting that much improvement recordwise this year. But Coffey adds that "I won't say that it couldn't happen."

The schedule:
Sept. 8, William and Mary; 15, at Kentucky; 22, at West Virginia; 29, at Southern Methodist.

Oct. 6, South Carolina; 12, at Houston, night; 20, Virginia; 27, at Alabama, night.

Nov. 3, at Mémphis State, night; 10, Florida State; 17, Virginia Military.