Virginia Tech Loses Opener To Tribe 31-24

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fly down field. Three W&M defenders watched it sail, and Scales ran it down for an untouched 65-yards scoring play that cut the gap to 29-17 and provided some hope for the home folks.

But not for long. W&M rolled 76 yards for the clinching score, helped along by two Tech personal foul penalties. Tailback Doug Gerhart scored from the two and it was 31-17 with less than nine minutes to play.

"The kids showed a lot of courage on that drive," said Root. "They got hit by the bone, and the bone right back. This is a heck of a way to open a season, beating the turkeys on a dry field." (Last year's game in Richmond was played in a quagmire.)

Root discounted Tech's final touchdown. "We were playing a little soft then because we were up by 14. I didn't mind that score. But I thought our defense played a heck of a game."

The secret to W&M's success was developed in practice. Root calls it, "10 on 7 drills." Working without a quarterback, W&M practiced on straight-ahead power stuff against seven defenders.

"We stuck it to them," said Root. Indeed they did. Any time W&M had third and short yardage, it went to power football. Tech's defense couldn't stop that.

"They ran their offense better than we ran our offense," Coffey conceded.

Although Tech rolled up 438 yards in offense to W&M's 296, the Hokies were lacking in the big plays most of the afternoon. One consolation was derived by Barber, who bagged 134 yards and two TDs. The two scores gave him 24 for his career, tying the school record held by Terry Smooth.

But, as usual, statistics were for the losers. Tech must now regroup for three straight tough road tests before returning home.

"I would say," said one disgruntled man dragging a Tech banner, "that we might be in trouble."