W&M Shocks Gobblers

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BLACKSBURG — Slow-starting Virginia Tech's Gobblers beat themselves in the first half and fired-up William & Mary beat Charlie Coffey's forces in the second as Jim Root's Indians scored a 31-24 victory in the 1973 collegiate opener for both clubs here Saturday afternoon.

A sun-splashed crowd of 18,500 sat in amazement as Tech fell behind 7-0 in the first quarter and never led. Despite 223 yards rushing — 134 by James Barber — and 215 yards passing by quarterbacks Bruce Arians and Rick Popp and running back Phil Rogers, the Gobblers bit the dust.

William & Mary, making no costly mistakes, got a solid performance from veer quarterback Bill Deery and a host of running backs — especially workhorse Frank Prochilo, who gained 83 yards in 22 attempts.

The Indians, although behind 21-19 in first downs and outgained in total offense by 438 to 296, capitalized on four Tech fumbles in the first half and 92 yards in penalties against the Hokies to prevail.

Five different players scored for William & Mary with all of the touchdowns coming on the ground. The Indians threw only six times and completed three for 40 yards.

Popp completed 12 of 15 passes for Tech while Arians hit six of 11. Rogers threw only once and it was for a 65-yard TD. Rogers, a promising sophomore, also rushed for 88 yards.

Speedster Ricky Soales caught five passes for 117 yards and a touchdown.

There was no individual star for the Indians — just a steady stream of bullish blasts, sweeps and option plays that put 31 points on the scoreboard.

The Indians ran 66 running plays to 45 for Tech and Deery got 64 yards on the ground and another 40 through the air for 106 yards.

Linebacker Tom Shirley made 17 stops for the Gobblers while tackle Rick Hodsdon had 13 tackles for the Indians.

The Indians, forced to punt the first two times they had the football, staged a torrid ground-eating 95-yard drive for the first touchdown of the game.

See TECH, Page B6