Gobblers Show Promise, But Tough Kentucky Looms Ahead

BLACKSBURG—“We’ve got plenty of reason to keep our dobbers up and our stingers out,” Coach Charlie Coffey declared after analyzing Virginia Tech’s opening loss. “Both of our quarterbacks, Ricky Popp and Bruce Arians, did a good job, and either is capable of handling the total offense which certainly has better balance than ever before. If the rest of the team executes as well as our quarterbacks did Saturday. We’ll have a good football team.

“Except for a couple of critical mistakes, our offensive line did a good job. Tackle Bruce Lemmert had the highest grade. And guard Steve Philbrick was among the more impressive young players.

“Of course, James Barber had an outstanding game, and young Phil Rogers played well too. And Ricky Scales (five receptions for 117 yards) again demonstrated that he’s one of the blue chip wide receivers in the country.

“Except for punt coverage, I was satisfied with our kicking game—especially our sophomore specialists, Bruce McDaniel (averaged 42 yards on four punts) and Wayne Latimer.

“We also got some outstanding defensive performances. Tommy Shirley played extremely well. So did Jerry Scharnus. Sophomore Morris Blueford did well, and another sophomore, Doug Thacker, made some big plays.

“Despite the loss, we have young talent with more potential than we’ve put on the field since I’ve been here. And we certainly have the capability of improving week by week.”

The Fighting Gobblers now must hit the road for three straight weeks, starting Saturday at Kentucky, whose new head coach, Fran Curci, and four assistants were on hand for Tech’s opener.