Unknown Kentucky Waits for Tech

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BLACKSBURG—A lot of people around these parts thought their color televisions had gone on the blink Sunday night. Maybe they just needed an adjustment, but Charlie Coffey’s face kept coming up green.

It was no wonder, however. Tech had lost to William & Mary Saturday and Coffey was on television trying to explain a defeat which could not be understood by Tech fans.

And, ironically, Tech’s coaches are seeing green this week because they are watching films of last year’s green-uniformed University of Miami team. Why, you wonder, would Tech be studying Miami films? Simple. The Kentucky coach, Fran Curci, coached at Miami last season and since the Wildcats have not played a game under their new coach there is no film to watch.

“We know a lot less about Kentucky than we did about William & Mary,” says Dan Henning, Tech’s offensive coordinator. We just have to guess that Kentucky will try to do the same things Miami did last year since Curci and the defensive staff at Kentucky came from Miami.”

But if you think Tech has a problem — and it obviously does — Curci’s is just as serious. He doesn’t know what his team will look like either.

“I have no idea about our team,” Curci says. “None. I won’t know anything until we play. I just don’t have any idea what we’re going to do.”

The scouting report on Kentucky, if one can make a scouting report on a team nobody knows anything about, is that the Wildcats have two outstanding runningbacks and one superb defensive lineman. And Curci says his quarterback is a winner. Other than that, who knows?

The scouting report on Tech, however, is not as difficult to make.

“Tech is a fine football team,” Curci says. “Have you ever heard a coach who didn’t say his opponent was a fine football team? They made every mistake you can make Saturday and just lost by a touchdown. I hope they do the same thing against us, but I’m not counting on it. I know how they feel. I’ve been in games like that one and I don’t like them.”

Tech, of course, must improve its defense if it expects to beat anybody. The offense lost four fumbles against William & Mary, but the defense allowed three long touchdown drives.

“Our offense was better than their defense,” says Henning, “and our defense was better than their defense. But their offense was better than our defense. That and the four fumbles beat us.”

George McKinney, Tech’s defensive coordinator, agrees with Henning.

“They (W&M) blocked us more times than they didn’t,” McKinney said. “We made some mistakes, but more times than not they just whipped us.”

The disappointing thing to Tech fans is they thought the Hokies defenders were better than they showed.

“We weren’t Saturday, says McKinney. “All you had to do was watch and it was obvious.”

McKinney doesn’t know what to expect from Kentucky.

“When they (Curci and his coaches) were at Miami, they used everything— the wishbone, the veer, the I. In the spring game, they passed a lot.

“But after seeing us against William & Mary, they’ll probably try to do the same thing. They probably think they can whip us at the line of scrimmage. Their offensive line averages about 235 and they have two fine runningbacks. But I don’t think their quarterback is the type of runner William & Mary’s (Bill Deery) was.”

If that’s true, there’s a chance your color television set may work all right Sunday night.