Quarterback, Coach Agree
Gobblers Need Ball Control

By STAN SHALETT
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Virginia Tech’s football team can be certain of one thing Saturday afternoon when it meets Southern Methodist University at Texas Stadium in Dallas.

The Mustangs won’t say ‘Virginia what?’ The Gobblers nipped SMU by 13-10 last season, knocking the Mustangs’ out of a possible bowl bid.

The Mustangs’ first-year coach, Dave Smith, lost to the Gobblers last season when he was ‘head man’ at Oklahoma State.

The Mustangs are emotionally ready, but the Gobblers are going into the game seeking their first victory.

“I’ve looked at more film this week than I have all year,” Rick Popp, the Gobblers’ starting quarterback, said Thursday afternoon.

“Nobody around here is interested in losing. The people I’m associated with are thinking about winning. I’ve always been a winner... a player on winning teams. That's the way I think and feel.

“We know that SMU has a big, fast defensive line, but they can be run on outside. Their defensive tackle Louie Kelcher is very good, at least he looks good on film. Their strong-side line backer Ernie Knox also is very good, but we feel we can move the ball.

“Oregon State took it to ‘em in the first half and led, 10-0, before getting lackadaisical, Popp noted.

“The biggest change around here is the start of classes today. I’ve felt like a professional football player for the past few weeks. It was very strange spending all your time on football.”

Gobbler’s coach Charlie Coffey agrees with his quarterback. “Ball control will be the secret in this game. We have to have the ball a lot more of the time than they do in order to win.

“Our defense isn’t as bad as most people think. We’re just inconsistent. We shut out both Kentucky and West Virginia in the second half... without a single technical adjustment. The players just played harder.

“Everybody here knows what has to be done, players and coaches. All we have to do is be consistent.”

Coffey reported that the squad was in good health. The only change in the starting lineups was at defensive tackle where 6-foot-5½, 215-pound freshman Tom Beasley has moved in, replacing Charlie Martin.