Tech hopes home fans help

By BOB McLELLAND
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As far as Coach Charlie Coffey is concerned, his Virginia Tech football team has been playing on Mars the past three weeks and its opening game four weeks ago was like playing at home without any home court advantage.

Now, the Tech coach feels, the time has come for his Gobblers to erupt with all their potential and to become real friends with one another.

"It's been a nightmare," Coffey said as he looked back painfully, over four straight losses for his Technics. "But tomorrow, I'm very optimistic that our homecoming crowd and our students will do a whole lot of whooping and yelling and it will really light a fire under our tails."

Tech entertains South Carolina tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 in Lane Stadium and the action is expected to attract a crowd of about 42,000. The Gobblers played at home early last month against William and Mary but school had not opened and there was no large gathering of student fans.

Then came consecutive road losses at Kentucky, West Virginia and SMU. The results—besides the defeats—were only 66 points scored to 123 for the enemy and, more importantly, some low morale among the players and some dissatisfaction among the alumni.

"We have been our own worst enemy," Coffey said. "Fumbles, penalties and mistakes have killed our chances and sapped our spirits. If we can cut down on our errors, we'll be a pretty good football team."

South Carolina comes to Blacksburg with only a 1-2 record but some impressive play in the three games. The Gamecocks opened with a big 41-28 win over Georgia Tech then lost 27-19 at Houston and 13-11 at home to Miami of Ohio.

Sophomore quarterback Jeff Grantz is the offensive leader. He was outstanding in the Georgia Tech win and won back of the week honors from Sports Illustrated.

But the Gamecock offense wasn't as potent against Miami, a 24-19 winner over Purdue.

It was against Miami that the Virginia Tech defense played its best. Bill Clay, linebacker coach at Carolina and a former aide at Tech, is especially proud of sophomore linebacker Gary Mott (6-0, 205) and defensive end Bob Rowe (6-2, 208).

"They have an aggressive defense that does a lot of slanting, stunting and jumping around," said Coffey. "They go for the big play. It will be something of a feast or famine with us. They may toss us for a loss or two but we hope to break a few on them."

At least three and maybe four freshmen will open the game for Tech—Danny Patterson (6-3, 270 offensive right tackle), Tom Bensley (6-3, 215 defensive right tackle) and Stuart Patterson (6-1, 190 linebacker).

Defensive end Bill Housewright (6-2, 225) could start if he recovers from a slight injury.

Eddie Joyce Jr., a promising freshman quarterback from Salem, has been worked hard this week and likely will see action, especially in passing situations.

Defensive end Larry Blunt and return specialist George Heath are two other freshmen expected to play.

Dietzel out; 2 starters are missing

The South Carolina football team will have to win one for Paul tomorrow afternoon when the Gamecocks meet Virginia Tech in Lane Stadium in Blacksburg.

Paul Dietzel, the coach of the Gamecocks, is still in a Columbia, S.C., hospital receiving treatment for diverticulitis. His place will be taken by offensive line coach Pride Ratterree.

The Gamecocks' hopes were dampened with the news that two starters would not be in uniform. Wide receiver Jimmy Collins dropped off the team due to personal reasons and running back Russ Jackson missed practice sessions Wednesday and Thursday. Ratterree said he didn't know reason for Jackson's absence.