Tech tries to shore up defense

By BOB McLELLAND
Sports Editor

"Tell it what you like," said Coffey, "but we just got together and reviewed our entire defensive scheme, especially as to how it would relate to our game plan for Houston tonight.

"We tried to show each player how his individual role fits into the overall scheme of things. We have to make them believe in themselves - but probably more importantly, believe in their teammates."

Coffey believes much of the defensive problems at Tech might be due to some players trying to do too much - their job and someone else's. This might look good on one play or two. But in the overall pattern, it is a weakness and could be the major fault in the defense that has drawn critical comments from many Tech fans.

It's no secret that Coffey is a's disappointed as anyone over the play of his defensive unit. And he realizes that unbeaten Houston will offer the toughest offensive opposition of the season. Thus, it is most important for the Tech to get a maximum effort on defense starting at 8:30 EDT tonight in the Astrodome.

Tech has allowed an average of 30 points to five opponents. The team has given up an average of more than 400 yards per game in total offense.

Except for the fumbles and other lost possessions, Coffey has been rather pleased with the defense. But he knows you can't win games with the defensive results he has been receiving.

"It's no doubt about it," Coffey said. "Houston has the best all around team we have faced - especially offensively. D.C. Nobles is an outstanding quarterback for their triple option, but he has three very fine running backs and an offensive line that is one of the best around."

Coffey has studied game films for hours and he has yet to see where any defense, stunt or trick has hampered the Houston attack.

"Their line picks up any stunt," Coffey said. "And their backs know just when to make their cuts. It's quite an effective offense."

Linebacker Kent Henry is recovered from injuries and ready for full-time duty. Lynn McCoy will share a corner back spot with Morris Blueford but there have been no other major defensive personnel changes.

It's been a matter of getting the defense to regain it's confidence - especially in their teammates.

Tech's offense will be hampered with the loss of running back Phil Rogers, who likely is out with a shoulder injury. Rogers was the Gobblers' top runner with an average of 100 yards per game.

Two freshmen will share the position - George Heath, 6-0, 200 from Bristol, Tenn., and Danny Ludd, 5-8, 155 from Baltimore via Massan-ten Military Academy.

"You haven't heard much of Ludd," Coffey said. "But he sparked our offensive practice this week. The others recognized what he can do and they got all excited. He's just a freshman but a lot like Rogers. I don't know what he'll do in game conditions but I think he has a great future with us."

Tech flew here yesterday and held a brief workout in the Astrodome. The Gobblers have lost to William and Mary, Kentucky, West Virginia, SMU and South Carolina.

The unbeaten Cougars have beaten Rice, South Carolina, Memphis State and San Diego State.

Coach Bill Yeoman said his team has improved with every game. Coffey just hopes his little talk with his defense will do the job and the Gobblers can respond with their best effort tonight.

They'll need it, and then some, if they hope to knock off the nationally-ranked Cougars.