Gobblers Still Looking For First Win Tonight

By GENE THOMPSON
H-C Executive Sports Editor

It doesn't get any easier for Charlie Coffey's Virginia Techmen.

Still looking for that first victory, the Gobblers are in the Astrodome tonight to meet the powerful Houston Cougars.

Naturally, Tech faces an undefeated team. The Cougars, who are stronger this season than had been figured, are 4-0-0. They beat Rice 24-6, rushed past South Carolina 27-19, bumped off Memphis State 35-21 and clawed out a close one (14-9) over San Diego State last week.

For the third straight week Tech will be looking at the veer or triple - option attack. This time it belongs to the man who invented it, Houston coach Bill Yoeman.

D.C. NOBLES, a senior, runs the veer attack and set Houston passing records last season by completing 101 of 209 for 1351 yards. He gained an additional 289 on the ground.

Reggie Cherry. Marshall Johnson and Leonard Parker led the Houston running attack. Each gained more than 100 yards against San Diego State.

Defensive standouts for Houston include tackle Steve George, end Mack Mitchell, middle linebacker Deryl McGallion and corner back Robert Giblin.

Houston is a four - touchdown favorite, but Coffey figures Tech will make it closer.

HE IS UPSET over Tech's 0-5-0 record, but he says "I'm even more upset over the lack of progress on our defense."

"Our offense still lacks consistency, but at least it has shown improvement," said the Virginia Tech boss man. "The offensive line had done a fairly consistent job. Sophomore quarterback Rick Popp has shown that his command of the offense, both mentally and mechanically, is much better. And we've gotten some super efforts from individuals, like running backs James Barber and Phil Rogers and wide receiver Billy Hardee, who is also a kick return specialist."

"Sophomore punter Bruce McDaniel," Coffey continued, "with few exceptions, has done his job. But the defensive unit simply hasn't made the progress it should."

Defensively, the Gobblers are swinging toward younger players. Freshmen Bill Houseright, an end, and Tommy Beasley, tackle, are scheduled to start against Houston, with two sophomores, end Doug Thacker and tackle Larry Herndon, completing a youthful front four.

GEORGE HEATH, a freshman running back from Tennessee High of Bristol, will be on the Tech receiving team. He ran one kickoff back for 72 yards against South Carolina and almost got away.

The Astrodome kickoff is scheduled for 8:30 (EST) tonight.