Cavaliers Closing
VPI Series Gap

By STAN SHALET
Daily Press Sports Writer
There's a lot more on the line than meets the eye Saturday when 0-6 Virginia Tech hosts 2-4 Virginia at Blackburn's Lane Stadium.

Certainly neither team is going to claim either the State title or a berth in the Top 20, but the Gobblers need to win or see Virginia move to within one game of tying the venerable series which stands 26-24-4.

"We'll take a win any way we can get it," Gobbler Coach Charlie Coffey quipped Thursday in a telephone interview. "Twelve men on the field, deflated football, anything."

Coffey added that the Gobblers "have waited long enough" for a victory.

"I believe our team will be ready. Players today usually go about their business in a calm way. You don't see the players getting 'sky-high' today."

The Gobblers will be at full-strength for the game. Phil Rogers will play. He has already gained 498 yards on 77 carries. Senior James Barber has 433 yards on 88 attempts.

Sophomore Rick Popp has owned the starting quarterback role. His passing is accurate (63-117) but his high number of interceptions.

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'Soft' Defenses
Major Problems

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(eight) has hurt the potent Gobbler defense.

"When you have to play catch-up football, you're going to have the interceptions. There's no question that he has come on strong in the last two games."

The Virginia Tech defense has not been able to stop anybody for an entire game, giving up 201 points so far this year.

Only in their winning efforts against VMI and Duke, have the Cavaliers shown a consistent defensive unit, blanking the Keydets and holding the Blue Devils to a field goal. For the rest of the time, Virginia's foes have scored an average of 36 points a game.

Thus, it should shape up as an all-out offensive battle, but in the long history of the contest, the most the losing team has ever scored has been 20 points and that was last year when Virginia won, 24-20. The last three games in the series have been close. The Gobblers winning in 1971, 6-0, and Virginia taking the '70 contest, 7-0.

Whatever is lacking in skill and technical brilliance should be made up for in desire and enthusiasm in this long-time rivalry.