By GARY CRAMER
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Charlie Coffey and the Virginia Tech Gobblers find themselves faced with a “must” win situation this Saturday in Blacksburg against state-rival Virginia. Tech has lost its first six starts and following Virginia must play second ranked Alabama and Memphis State on the road.

If Tech fails to beat Virginia, the Hokies could very likely be 0-9 heading into their final two home games against Florida State and VMI. A win Saturday will help shorten what is going to be a long winter in Tech Territory.

Asked how important the Virginia game was, Coffey responded with, “At this stage of the season, for us, beating anybody is important. The players and coaches need a win.”

The snake-bit Hokies’ biggest problems have been on defense where their six opponents have averaged 34 points a game and 434 yards of total offense. Each of Tech’s foes have scored at least 24 points and four of the six have scored over 30 with Houston putting 54 on the scoreboard last week.

“We just haven’t been able to stop our opponents,” said Coffey. The Tech mentor, in his third year as grid boss, doesn’t plan to change his defensive scheme for Virginia however. The Hokies use a five-man front with two linebackers, a monster man, and three deep backs. “I believe in that defense,” said Coffey.

On offense, Tech has been able to score on everybody it has played except SMU. The Hokies are averaging 19 points a game but a lot of those have come when they were already too far behind.

Unlike Virginia, Tech has been a second half football team. The Hokies have been outscored 124-49 in the first half, but only 80-68 in the final two quarters. Virginia has followed just the opposite pattern. The Cavaliers have scored 78 points in the first half to 74 for their opponents, but have only managed 24 points in the second half to 74 for their opponents.

“Virginia has had some of the same problems we have had,” said Coffey. “They have had high moments against every team they have played but have failed to be consistent for the whole game.”

Asked if he felt Virginia had a good offense, Coffey said, “I know they have a good offense. Their offensive statistics, number of yards running and passing are good.”