U.Va. Gave Right Side On Rush, Tech Took It

By John Packett
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BLACKSBURG — For those persons filling Lane Stadium with the expectations of viewing an offensive show between Virginia and Virginia Tech Saturday, there was no disappointment.

Not when you consider both teams combined for 876 yards, 467 of which were registered by the losing team.

Since the Hokies were able to hold off the Cavaliers, 27-15, for their first triumph of the season, somebody had to be playing a little defense for Virginia Tech.

One of the most prominent was sophomore linebacker Doug Thacker, who recovered two fumbles, made four initial tackles and sacked U.Va. quarterback Scott Gardner once.

In all, the Cavaliers fumbled the ball seven times, losing four, and Thacker, a six-foot, 186-pounder felt this had more than a little to do with the final outcome.

"We've caused a lot of turnovers this season," Thacker observed, "like in the first half against Houston (six) last week. In this game, we wanted to play the quarterback tight. . . to try and make him pitch the ball quick. That might have caused him to make bad pitchouts."

Gardner, who was three yards shy of having 300 yards of total offense, was guilty on several occasions of not getting the ball to his back before it hit the ground and skipped a couple of times.

"All through the game, nobody lost faith," Thacker added. "Everybody was giving 100 per cent. A lot of people think we give up, but we don't."

SPARKING THE Tech offensive output, which amounted to 409 yards, were running backs J.B. Barber and Phil Rogers, a pair of speedsters who accounted for 274 yards on the ground between them.

Barber had 138 yards and his 13-yard touchdown scamper late in the second quarter allowed the Hokies, now 1-6, to take a 14-9 advantage into halftime.

Tech didn't have any particular running plan in mind, Barber noted, adding, "We just wanted to see what they would give us. They gave us the right side all day, and we took it."

In addition to him running statistics, Rogers increased his passing credentials for the season to two-for-two by heaving an 80-yard TD pass to flanker Ricky Scales after taking a lateral from QB Ricky Popp on the third play of the game.

"Coach (Dan) Henning (offensive coordinator) asked me before the game if my arm was warmed up," Rogers said with a grin. "But I didn't think we'd use the play that quick."

Scales, who scored his fifth touchdown of the season, said, "It was a perfect pass. He (Rogers) just laid it right in there for me."

WAYNE LATIMER, the sophomore placekicker from Meadowbrook, contributed two field goals, one of which travelled 55 yards with the wind, and two extra points.

"We really thought we could win this game all week," said Latimer, who connected on a 51-yarder against Houston. "Everybody hung in there on defense real good. We played together very well today."

Perhaps if the Hokies had played Virginia earlier in the year, mused Thacker, "We might have a better record now. This will really help us. This is what we needed."

Virginia Tech will need much more against Alabama next Saturday night.