Tech Tops U Va 27-15

By GARY Cramer of The Progress Staff
BLACKSBURG—Losing a football game is never a cause for jubilation. Losing to one’s arch-rival makes things that much worse; and when that rival has an 04 record entering the game—loss is a cause for outright frustration.
A bunch of dejected Virginia Cavaliers found themselves in this position late Saturday afternoon in the Lane Stadium lockerroom after dropping a 27-13 decision to state rival Virginia Tech. It was the first win of the season for the Hokies after six defeats.
Virginia, dropping to 2-5 on the season with its third loss in a row, outgained Tech 407-349, but made too many mistakes to beat even a winless Hokie squad. The Cavaliers fumbled seven times, lost four, and were guilty of eight penalties totaling 107 yards.
Tech used a good running game, led by James Barber and Phil Rogers, plus two field goals by Mike Bennett, plus a 54-yarder, to gain revenge of last year’s loss to Virginia in Scott Stadium. The 27 points scored by the Hokies makes a total of 98 points given up by Virginia in its last three games.
Tech rushed for 295 yards with Barber gaining 138 on 21 carries and Rogers 136 on 24 carries. The Hokies added 114 yards in the air, including an 89-yard halfback pass from Rogers to Ricky Scales with only 1:24 gone in the game that gave Tech a 2-0 lead before many of the 38,360 fans, second largest in Virginia's history, had taken their seats.
“This is a very hard loss to take,” said a sulking Don Lawrence. “We had the opportunities but we didn’t take advantage of them. The effort was there but it was evident that mistakes—hurt us. But Lawrence added, “to be a winner you have to overcome any problems. VPI just beat us. They deserved the win.”
Scales touchdown came on a third and 20 play. The speedy Hokie got one step behind two Cavalier defenders, hauled in Rogers’ pass at the Virginia 45-yard line, and easily raced into the endzone.
Virginia came back to score the next five points, with the first three coming on a school record 49-yard field goal by freshman Joe Jenkins. The boot into the wind was set up by a 49-yard keeper by Cavalier quarterback Scott Gardner.
After forcing VPI to punt, Virginia took over on its own 27-yard line and four plays later Gardner hit Jim Colleran with a quick pass over the middle and the Cavalier tight end cut out to the sideline and ran it into the end zone with the aid of a Harrison Davis block for an 83-yard scoring play. Colleran dragged two Hokie defenders with him for the final five yards. Billy Maxwell’s point after was wide.
Midway through the second quarter Virginia drove from its own 14 to Tech’s eight yard line in 10 plays only to have Maxwell miss a short 25-yard field goal.
Tech grabbed the momentum back, taking the ball and driving 89 yards in eight plays for the go-ahead touchdown. Barber took the final 13 yards around the left side for the score. Lattimer’s PAT made it 14-9 at the half.
Lattimer added three more field points—five minutes into the third period on his 35-yard field goal. The three-pointer was set up by a Mike Bennett fumble recovered by Tech at its own 49-yard line.
Virginia came back on its next possession with an 89-yard scoring drive in nine plays. The final 82 yards was covered by Gardner to Harrison Davis goal. Gardner tried to hit Davis for the tying two-point conversion, but it failed.
Virginia got another drive going late in the third quarter but it was ended by a bad Gardner pitch that Tech recovered at its own 42-yard line.
Midway through the quarter, a 35-yard punt return by Tech’s Billy Hardee gave the Hokies the ball at the Virginia 25-yard line. Tech could not move and Lattimer came in to add his second field goal, a 19-yarder, to give the home team a 12-12 advantage with 6:24 to go in the game.
Virginia then got an excellent scoring opportunity as Bennett raced back 61 yards with the ensuing kickoff before being bumped out of bounds on Tech’s 27-yard line. On a second and seven, a Gardner pass fell in-complete.

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VIRGINIA TECH’S JAMES BARBER (RIGHT) SCORES FROM 44 YARDS OUT
Barber, Who Gained 138 Yards, Gave Gobblers 14-9 2nd Quarter Lead
complete and the Cavaliers were guilty of holding on the play, setting the ball back at the 42. Two plays later another Gardner errant pitch was recovered by Tech and a golden opportunity had gone by the board for Virginia.

Tech took over and proceeded to run the clock down on a long drive that ended with an Eddie Joyce touchdown with just over a minute left. Lattimer booted the extra point and the Hokies finally had victory number one of the 1973 season.

Virginia lost one apparent TD in the second quarter on the same drive that Maxwell missed his 25-yard field goal. Gardner hit Davis in the endzone and after holding the ball for a second it was knocked out by a Tech defender. Two officials signaled touchdown but a discussion followed and the score was disallowed.

Davis had a very good day. He caught eight Gardner aerials for 107 yards and the one touchdown. He now has 34 receptions for the season.

Gardner finished the day with 244 yards passing on 14 of 30 and another 53 on the ground for 297 yards of total offense. The 297 represents the eighth best single game effort every by a Cavalier and also pushed the UVa sophomore’s season total to 1,508. That is already the fourth best Cavalier season mark ever with four games to go.

Kent Merritt gained 61 yards on 13 carries rushing and now stands fourth on the all-time Virginia rushing list with 1,892 yards.

Virginia returns to Scott Stadium Saturday to face Wake Forest. If the Cavaliers fail to win this one, Wahoo fans may well begin counting down the days for the basketball opener with Washington & Lee Dec. 1.