It's Been Long Time; I Couldn't Be Happier

BY BILL CAYE
Times Sports Writer

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"A hell of a lot better than 0-7," he replied. After six weeks of famine, there were a lot of "good old Charlie's" heard around Lane Stadium on this sunny Saturday afternoon after Virginia Tech won its first game of the season by victimizing Virginia Tech 27-15.

It was a game which meant nothing when one speaks of state supremacy, but it was a game which meant everything when the future of the opposing coaches is discussed. It had been a long fall for Cofey, now it will be longer for Lawrence, the Virginia coach, who is virtually certain to lose his job.

"It wasn't the Super Bowl," Cofey said, "and it's obvious we're not going to any bowl game. But I can't imagine anything feeling any better. It's been a long time coming. I couldn't be happier."

Tech was helped immeasurably by a running game which saw senior J.B. Barber gain 228 yards on 21 carries and sophomore Phil Rogers traveled 136 yards in 24 trips. The victory, aided by six major penalties by Virginia in the second half, was costly. Quarterback Rick Popp was lost for the season with ligament damage to his left knee. He was, and will be for the Alabama game, replaced by Eddie Joyce, the freshman quarterback from Andrew Lewis High School in Salem, who engineered (and scored) Tech's final touchdown.

Although there were only 33 points scored, it was a day for the offense. There were 576 yards on offense in the game.

Virginia may have been victimized by a questionable call in the first half when a potential touchdown pass from Scott Gardner to Harrison Davis was dropped in the end zone and ruled incomplete. Cavalier Coach Lawrence thought Davis had possession.

"I can't comment on the play," said Cofey. "One official ruled it a touchdown and the other said it was incomplete. I certainly accept the decision of the officials."
Virginia Tech Wins First Game of Season

Virginia got on the scoreboard when Joe Jenkins kicked a 49-yard field goal, a school record.

Down 7-3, Virginia quickly struck back. With the ball on the 37, the Cavs scored on a bomb when Gardner hit tight end Jim Colleran for a 63-yard pass play. Billy Maxwell missed the extra point and the Cavaliers were up 9-7.

Virginia had a great opportunity to at least stretch its lead to five after the controversial incompletion thrown to Davis. After the pass was ruled no good, Maxwell tried a field goal from 25 yards. It was wide.

That seemed to be what Tech needed. On the next drive, Tech moved 80 yards on eight plays and a penalty. Barber got the final 15 yards. He also had an 18-yard run in the drive. Latimer made it 14-9.

Barber, who had 116 yards in the first half, ran the ball sparingly in the last two periods. Rogers, however, got lots of work.

Tech made it 17-9 midway of the third quarter when Latimer kicked the 55-yard field goal.

Virginia, however, connected on the bomb again to put the Cavaliers back in the game. Fighting from a third down and 20, Gardner found Davis wide open on the 22 and the wide receiver galloped the rest of the way. UVA failed on the two-point try and still trailed 17-15.

Virginia had it going again early in the fourth period but Gardner, who had trouble pitching the ball all afternoon, pitched wide to Kent Merritt and Tech's Doug Thacker recovered on the 42.

Tech was forced to punt, then Virginia punter, and the Hokies started another drive which was culminated when Latimer kicked a 19-yard field goal. This drive was helped immensely when Virginia's left cornerback Carl Barle was tossed out of the game for questioning the ancestry of one of the officials. On that play, Pop played and was replaced by Joyce.

Tech recovered another fumble, this time when Davis fumbled a Gardner pitchout. Dennis Dodson jumped on this one and Tech, with Joyce at the controls, began a drive on its 32 which ended when Joyce ran it in from the three. The drive was aided by a personal foul, but it may have been Tech's finest drive of the season.

"When you lost your first six games," said Coffey, "a drive like that is the greatest thing you can experience."

It seemed that Tech could beat Virginia deep about any time it cared to try, but the Hokies only tried the long pass three times. Once was a touchdown — Rogers to Scales — another time Scales was wide open, but caught the ball out of bounds and the last time a Tech receiver was open, but the ball was underthrown.

"Our running game was going so well," said Coffey, "we didn't want to put it in the air very much."

Tech, now, must face powerful Alabama, 42-21 victor over Tennessee Saturday. "We'll blow them out of the stadium," Coffey laughed, for the first time in seven weeks.

"Our running game gets better every week."

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call, I've had my share go the other way."

Tech wasted no time getting on the scoreboard. Three plays after receiving the kickoff, Rogers found Ricky Scales deep on the halfback pass. Scales caught it on the Virginia 40 and galloped in untouched for an 80-yard counter. Wayne Latimer, who later kicked a 55-yard field goal, made it 7-0.

Virginia took the ensuing kickoff and moved briskly to the Tech 23 where Gardner lost nine yards trying to pass.

Virginia Tech

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