Tech to break Alabama's streak (for sellouts)

By BOB TEITLEBAUM
TUSCALOOSA, Ala.—The natives of this state aren't too excited about the bloodletting that is scheduled here Saturday.
The mere privilege of seeing second-ranked Alabama play just anyone isn't acceptable anymore to their faithful fans.

Sadly, but truly, Alabama announced this week, "After 11 straight sellouts, there ARE TICKETS AVAILABLE for the Virginia Tech game."

It's almost un-American, to think people wouldn't shell out $7 to see their favorite football team when it's one of the nation's best. But evidently the good people from Alabama are saving their money for either the basketball season or some other form of entertainment.
The story of tonight's game, starting here at 8:30 (EDT), is that the Crimson Tide is the favorite by anything from 40 to 70 points. Whatever "Bama Coach Bear Bryant wants, he is sure to get.
The Bear is very gracious. "You know me," he said. "I'm always scared to death." Evidently the fans don't share his pessimism and prefer to wait for more of a contest.

Coach Charlie Coffey of Tech is inclined to agree with most experts. He admits to his team's being an underdog. And he is quite properly impressed with Alabama.

"I've watched five films on them," said Coffey, who showed no traces of bloodshot eyes or salivary pooling.

"It's like this. We're quite an underdog. Thirty, thirty-five or more points. They are a nationally-ranked team that they deserve to be No. 1.

"But we have nothing to lose. If we lose we won't surprise anyone. If we win (hush your mouth) it will make us famous by people anywhere. Since the beginning of football there have been many, many upsets.

"That's the encouraging part of what Coffey has to say. He feels Alabama is "the best college football team I've ever seen."

He also says that Alabama is better than Houston, a team which wound up drubbing Tech 54-27 earlier this month.

"They're better than Houston in the offensive line, defensive secondary and have more depth. Both running games are potent. But Alabama's more so," Coffey offered.

But Alabama's big edge is in sailing the Tech players even if it does leave Coffey a bit nervous. Take punter Bruce McDaniel, for example.

Last year McDaniel was in on one play here at Alabama and received a broken leg as he tried to recover the football on a bad snap while he was punting.

"I don't believe in lightning striking twice. At least I hope not," said McDaniel.

He said Bryant should remember him from last year—and not just because of the broken leg.

"He'll have stop watches on me in the pregame warmups," the Beckley, W. Va., sophomore surmised.

"More people from Alabama had stop watches on me last year in pregame drills. At least two or three."

But McDaniel says they won't get that much of a chance to see him this season. "I won't kick as many in pregame warmups, but not because of those stop watches. I don't do as well when I kick too many before a game," he explained.

The Tech punter says last year's game was the first he had ever played on artificial turf and that his foot stuck when he tried to recover the ball. "I still like artificial turf," he said. "It's good for specialists. It has nice spring.

Well, that's the view of tonight's Tech-Alabama fracaso from all sides. Would you pay $7 with prospects like this for a good game?