Tech hopes offense ready for Memphis State

MEMPHIS—It is apparent now that Virginia Tech won’t win any football games with its defense.

Therefore, the Hokies’ offense is now of utmost importance if Tech is to put together three wins for a fast finish.

Tech plays Memphis State tonight at 8:30 (EST) and hopes to bounce back from a 7-24 drubbing by Alabama last week. If so, it figures that Tech will have to score a lot of points and that means the running of Phil Rogers will have to be as good as or better than it was last week.

“That’s right. Last week in the first half Rogers drew the oohs and aahs of an Alabama crowd that hardly had time to tame its excommunications between Crimson touchdowns.”

Rogers picked up 81 yards rushing in the first half and Tech, as a team, gained more yards than any other squad had against second-ranked Alabama.

But the Tide made halftime adjustments, And a slight injury to Farris kept him running attempts down to just four after the half.

Tech hesitated to use Rogers more, feeling the game was lost at halftime (the Gobblers trailed 24-0) and that the Gate City sophomore could be used to better advantage in the Hokies’ final three games.

“The Alabama game was better than I expected,” said Rogers, who also threw and received passes at a fast clip, “I’m having a good year overall. As far as Memphis, we’ve got to look ahead.”

Dean Henning, Tech’s head offensive coach, feels the Alabama game was one of the best for Rogers.

“He’s the most versatile back I’ve ever coached,” said Henning, “He’s playing at his potential right now. He lacks great size, but he’s extremely quick. He’s able to throw the ball well and he’s an excellent receiver in that he has fine hands and can run with the tail after he gets it.”

Still, Rogers isn’t the whole show for Tech. Henning feels the Hokies have a number of people who can help move the ball, such as Ricky Scales, J. B. Barber and Billy Hardie.

Memphis State is no Alabama on defense, but Henning says the Tigers can be tough on the Hokies.

“Our offense is just starting to come together,” Henning pointed out. “But one week Rogers is out and (Danny) Ludd is in. Now Rogers is in and Ludd is out—do an injury.”

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If Rogers’ return makes Tech’s offense stronger, it also means that Tech will face a much stronger team.

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If Rogers is ready to go, Tech will have a chance to win. If he isn’t, Tech will have to rely on its defense to hold the Hokies in check.

“Tiger defense is excellent. It’s comparable to some of the teams we’ve played like SMU and West Virginia,” said the Gobblers’ assistant. Tech scored only 16 points in those two games.”

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