Tech crowds may drop

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When it comes to figuring up the final tally at Blacksburg for Saturday’s Virginia Tech-Florida State game, the score may not be the only interesting set of numbers.

Before the season it was figured that Florida State, Virginia and South Carolina would be Tech’s big home attractions for drawing crowds. But with Tech carrying a 1-8 record and the Seminoles winless in eight tries, this week’s crowd could be drastically reduced.

“I’d say we’ll get rid of 25,000 tickets,” said Tech ticket manager Tom McNeer. This doesn’t sound like a bad crowd when compared to other turnouts in the Old Dominion for college football. But in the last three years Tech crowds, including the students, have zoomed up so that attendance now comes closer to the 35,000 mark for most home games.

McNeer says that from 9,000 to 11,000 student tickets will be sold this week. There are 9,000 season tickets, which means that around 6,000 other single game ducats have been sold.

This crowd will be similar to the one a year ago for the game with Southern Mississippi when 26,000 turned out. So it is too early to say if the losing record has caused the drop.

What may be more significant are the sales for the VMI game a week after this. It could be the smallest Tech home crowd since Charlie Coffey became the Gobblers’ coach three years ago.

It depends on the student pickup next week. But McNeer says that only 9,800 tickets have been sold. If there is bad weather, a loss to Florida State or student apathy, the crowd might well be under 20,000.

The draw for the William and Mary game this year was announced at slightly more than 18,000. But McNeer says the final count came to a little more than 20,000. No matter, the students weren’t in school and these tickets were all sold.

“This won’t be one of the better attended Florida State games,” McNeer said. And VMI’s crowd will be very, very small.”