FSU, Hokies Meet in 'Creampuff Contest'

By BILL CATE
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They have a lot of names for the college football game which is scheduled to take place in Blacksburg Saturday.

Some call this meeting between 1-8 Virginia Tech and 0-8 Florida State the "Toilet Bowl." Others say it's the "Creampuff Contest." What really is, however, is a meeting between two of the youngest (and two of the worst) teams in the nation. The average age of these opponents is slightly above the sandlots. Larry Jones, the beleaguered Florida State coach, will bring more than 20 freshmen to Blacksburg. Tech coach Charlie Coffey will probably dress out that many.

Florida State is one of five teams in the nation which hasn't emerged victorious. It is an even pick Saturday.

Jones and Coffey have similar problems. Not only are they not winning any games, they are playing with sophomores and freshmen who are either not experienced or not proficient enough to win.

How do once-respectable football programs get in the condition which FSU and Tech currently find themselves in?

"We knew what we were in for," says Jones. "I am not really surprised at our record. I thought we might win a game or two by now, but no more than a game or two.

"We started the year with one letterman in the offensive backfield and one receiver who lettered. And we didn't have a quarterback who had ever played in our system.

"We have nine players left over in our junior and senior class. We came in here three years ago when the recruiting was already done—it was only half-way done—and there is nothing left of that year (juniors) at all. And the year before (seniors now), they did not have a good year recruiting.

"We carried 20 freshmen to Houston (last week) and when you do that, you are going to get beat. It was a mismatch. We didn't belong on the same field.

What concerns Jones is that Tech scored 27 points against Houston and "we were lucky to get a first down.

Jones says, "we're having trouble offensively and defensively." With Tech's lack of defense, however, FSU's offense should pick up considerably Saturday.

As for Tech, "We'll move the football," says offensive coordinator Dan Henning. "But don't ask me if we'll win, because I don't know."

"When you play with freshmen," says Jones, "you are asking an awful lot of them. You hear about teams like Alabama playing freshmen, but they are playing freshmen with a lot of mature players. We're playing freshmen with a lot of freshmen. So is Tech, and when you are forced into that situation you better have some alumni and fans who understand what's going on. Fortunately, my people understand the situation."

Jones says he has some good young players in his program, "but nobody like Eddie Joyce Jr. We tried to recruit him and he is definitely a player you can build your program around."

Jones says he has come good people in certain positions, "but we haven't come up with a quarterback. We have Billy Sexton, a transfer from Alabama."