Virginia Tech Picks On Seminoles 36-13 For Second Hokie Victory

By Bill Mason
Sports Editor
BLACKSBURG—Runners Phil Rogers and James Barber shared the spotlight with defensive opportunist John Bell and a reawakened defensive line as Virginia Tech took out its frustrations on winless (0-9) Florida State in a Governors’ Day 36-13 rout.

Rogers, who is certain next Saturday to tie Terry Snoop’s all-time single season rushing record for Tech (he needs only two yards) also has an excellent chance to crack the 1,000 yard mark for single season rushing. Against FSU he got 155 yards in 20 attempts.

Barber, having his most explosive year as a senior, carried 21 times for 124 yards.

Bell, a junior defensive back from Norfolk, fed on the passing of the Seminoles’ Mark Orlando, intercepting three to tie the Tech single-game record shared by safety Lenny Smith against Wake Forest in 1968 and halfback Ron Davidson in 1969 against Florida State. Bell ran one of his efforts back for a 33-yard touchdown and another back 36 yards to he FSU one to set up a scoring plunge by Barber.

Coach Charlie Coffey, happily flashing only his second victory grin of the season, had words of praise for his defense, saying: “Our defense got after them, I’ll give them credit for getting ready for them. It was the best pursuit of the year, and the best secondary performance of the year.”

The weather was an obvious factor, with the temperature at 31 degrees and the wind gusting 15-20 MPH at game time, but was only partly to blame for the game’s 12 fumbles, some of which came on bad pitches. Tech had hand warmers and heaters on the sideline for the use of everyone handling the ball, but Coffey felt that the wind was more of a problem. (Eddie Joyce was 6 for 14 with 2 interceptions for an unimpressive 84 yards.) He commented: “The wind affects the passing game. It really gusts from the middle of the field to the open end.”

Florida State got 232 yards passing, 122 from Orlando and the rest from impressive freshman Billy Prescott. FSU’s rushing attack was almost nonexistent, with 100 yards on 34 carries compared to the Gobbler traveling show of 346 yards on 60 carries, all but 19 yards of it by Rogers and Barber.

Tech got three field goals from the automatic toe of Wayne Latimer (30, 27 and 28 yards) and a near miss (Continued on Page 7)

TD FROM MIDFIELD—Speedy Ricky Scales, wide receiver, scoots past Florida State’s James Malkiewicz (70) and a host of Seminoles, blazing down the sidelines on a 47-yard touchdown run, in Tech’s win over FSU in below-freezing temperatures at Lane Stadium. (NEWS MESSENGER Photos by Carol Atwater)

Mason on

SPORTS

Quickies from Lane Stadium, Ice Bowl of the South.

One hour before game time Saturday, almost no one was in the stands and it was reminiscent of the Tech-Wake Forest game of 1977, which answered the question, “What would happen if they held a football game and nobody showed up?”

This time they did show up, 25,000 of them, in below freezing temperatures with a wind that made the flag stand as straight as a pennant tacked to a wall.

Charlie Coffey was amazed at the fan support in that kind of weather for “two teams that had won only one game between them,” and he wasn’t the only one amazed.

Tech football fans are loyal, long-suffering and possessed of iron constitution, to say nothing of thermal underwear.

One of our favorite “not in the game plan” happenings was Eddie Joyce’s 42-yard unscheduled run in which he played his blockers like a hand of cards.

Barber’s 19-yard scoring run in which he ran over about seven Seminoles was something to see as was Ricky Scales’ latest tightrope act, Billy Hardie’s 45-yard kickoff runback, and John Bell’s three interceptions, probably Tech’s best individual defensive backfield performance in the past five years.

Florida State has at least one good passerreceiver combination but will have to work on everything else.