Defense stops Seminoles

By DAVE THORNTON

BLACKSBURG—The Virginia Tech football team still has one game left on its 1973 schedule but coach Charlie Coffey can't wait to start working on his 1974 squad.

After the Gobblers rolled to a relatively easy 36-13 triumph over Florida State at Lane Stadium here Saturday, Coffey talked about his plans for the team for another season.

"We aren't looking past VMI—we know they'll be ready for us," said Coffey of the Keydets who'll visit here Saturday in the final contest of the season for both clubs.

"We want to beat VMI, enjoy the holidays and then go to work this winter developing our young players in a winter program so that we'll go into spring practice in good shape," said Coffey, who can finish 3-8 with a win over the Keydets.

"It'll take us longer than ever before to recruit this year because we are at the point in our program where we must be very selective," he explained. "Of our 30 recruits, we'll go after 20 defensive players—especially outstanding defensive linemen."

"We'll throw our top jayvee players in with the 22 freshmen we've been using and there should be plenty of competition in spring practice at all positions. Youth and competition is how things develop."

Coffey pointed out that there will be a lot of competition for the quarterback job which is especially pleasing to him. He'll have Eddie Joyce, Steve Mathis and Billy Popp fighting for the job next season.

The Techmen, who had been giving up huge chunks of yardage on the ground, finally found a team they could stop when they held the Seminoles to just 100 yards rushing.

However, the losers, now 0-9, junked their running game when they fell behind 36-7 and started filling the air with passes.

Despite the fact that the Tech defense yielded 235 yards in the air, Coffey said, "It was the most impressive, secondary performance of the year."

Much of the FSU yardage came in the fourth quarter when Tech had its reserves playing.

The two key men on defense for the Gobblers were monster man, John Bell of Norfolk and linebacker Dennis Dodson. "Bell was in the right place at the right time quite often today and Dodson had a lot to do with the way our defense played," said Coffey.

Bell came up with three interceptions—going 33 yards for a TD on one and ran 36 yards with another to set up a one-yard TD plunge by James Barber.

Barber and Phil Rogers ran roughshod over the Seminole defense especially in the first half. With the Tech offensive line opening huge holes, Rogers reeled off 155 yards in 20 carries and Barber had 124 in 21 attempts.

With the running game going so well and the brisk wind being a deterrent to the passing game, Joyce threw just seven times in the first half. Tech quarterbacks threw just 15 passes for the entire game—easily the lowest total in any game this season.

Lynchburg's Stuart Patterson, a freshman, saw considerable action at linebacker in the second half. "My biggest problem all year has been taking on a big tackle or guard while I'm trying to read the backfield," said Patterson, who figures he just needs experience.

"We've got the ability here to have a good team and I think we'll show it next year," he said.

HEAVY TRAFFIC — Virginia Tech's freshman quarterback, Eddie Joyce, 12, couldn't find receiver open and had to scramble for yardage. Bringing him down was Florida State's John Thames. 63. Gobblers romped past Seminoles 36-13 Saturday at Blacksburg. (George Smith Photo)