Rogers Rolls in Tech Spring Game

By DAVESPARKS
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BLACKSBURG, Va. — "Phantom Phil" Rogers, the fleet junior scatback from Gate City, dashed 22 yards for his second touchdown early in the fourth quarter to break a 21-21 deadlock and spark the White to a 27-21 victory over the Orange in Virginia Tech's first spring football game under new head coach Jimmy Sharpe here Saturday.

A small crowd of 6,300 saw the two clubs battle to ties of 7-7, 14-14 and 21-21 before Rogers' dash, one of those sweep-right-and-cut-back-left jaunts through traffic.

The Orange team fumbled away an opportunity to tie or win the game at the White one late in the fourth quarter.

ROGERS, also scoring on a 13-yard gallop and a one-yard blast and gaining 85 yards on 17 attempts, was named the Most Outstanding Offensive Player in the game. Jack Crews, junior linebacker for the Orange, was chosen the top defensive player. A panel of ex-Tech stars Carroll Tate, Tommy Francisco, George Proas and Frank Webster made the selections.

Tech, operating offensively from the Wishbone triple option, used a host of running backs and quarterbacks during the afternoon session labeled "a pleasing one" by Sharpe. "We've got a long way to go and we need 150 more practice sessions," he said, "but I'm real pleased with the enthusiasm and the way they went after each other."

The game may have produced a couple of new blue chip players for Sharpe, who feels the most critical spots facing the Tech coaching staff are, linebacker and the line. Freshman quarterback Eddie Snell, a brash runner from Snellville, Georgia, who just enrolled at Tech this quarter, reeked off a 24-yard run and picked up 48 yards in eight attempts while walk-on fullback Tony Houff earned a scholarship with 83 yards including a 39-yard blast in a dozen carries. Houff is a 215-pound sophomore from Waynesboro.

THE ORANGE team scored on the first offensive play it attempted after recovering an early fumble at the White 42. Soph quarterback Rusty Bailey of Knoxville uncorked a 42-yard scoring strike to Steve Galloway and Wayne Latimer's extra point kick made it 7-0.

After Billy Hardee intercepted a White aerial and returned it to the White 43, the White squad marched goalward with Rogers going the final yard to paydirt. Latimer, kicking for both sides, tied the count at 7-7 with another placement.

The running of Rogers, George Heath and Glenn Cornor and short passes from Bruce Arians to Kevin Dick moved the White team 57 yards for a second TD. Rogers dashed the final 13 yards for six points and Latimer's boot made it 14-7.

The Orange marched 73 yards for its second score with quarterback Mike Barnes setting it up with a 20-yard pass to Norris Rutherford. Houff bulled over from the three and Latimer's kick deadlocked the score at 14-14 at halftime.

GREG PAYNE, a sophomore with speed, thundered 80 yards on a punt return to tie the score for the White at 21-21 after Houff scored an early third period touchdown for the Orange on a six-yard jaunt.

Rogers, Greg Teal (52 yards) and Snell led the rushing for the White squad while Arians, a senior quarterback trying to fight off young Snell for the job, hit 7-11 passes for 54 yards. Speedster Rick Scales caught four passes for 40 yards.

Houff, Morris Blueford (31 yards) and Galloway (21) led the rushing for the Orange and Rutherford hauled in four passes for 50 yards.

Bristol area players who fared well in the scrimmage included Chuck Perdue, Keith Gibson, Charley Martin, Brent Bledsoe and Luke Marsingill of the Orange squad and Rogers.