Rogers, Latimer Draw Raves as Orange Rout White

By BILL CATE
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BLACKSBURG — The annual Virginia Tech-Orange White affair was a typical spring game. When it’s spring against friend-Orange against White—you always have wondering.

But the Orange’s 49-0 victory Saturday made several aspects of Virginia Tech’s football team obvious.

First, the Holde quarterback situation is still up in the air. Rising junior Bruce Arrians, who connected on 14 of 25 passes (he started for the Orange and played the second half for the White), is considered to be the heir-apparent to departed Don Strock. Head coach Charlie Coffey isn’t so sure.

“We don’t have a starting quarterback yet,” said Coffey. “It may be a week before we find our first game before we do.”

Arrians is being pushed hard by sophomore Ricky Popp, who played with an injured left shoulder and finally had to leave the game with an injured knee (not serious). Popp completed eight of 14 passes.

Another obvious spring-game fact is that freshman runningback Phil Rogers is what Coffey has been looking for. Rogers had 74 yards in 11 carries, plus 124 in punt return yardage and another 43 on one kickoff return. Rogers scored once on a 66-yard punt return.

Another positive factor which was obvious to the 7,200 who watched is that Tech has much better athletes than it has had in the past. The defense, especially the defensive secondary, is vastly improved. So is the offensive line. And the kicking game, featuring Wayne Latimer (who kicked seven field goals on this windy day) and punter Bruce McDaniels, has potential.

No question, Coffey was pleased.

“I saw a lot of good things out there today,” he said. “About the only thing lacking was consistency. But you have to remember this was the first game for a lot of our kids.”

The first half looked like a football game. The second half was rather sleepy.

“I was really disappointed in our execution on offense,” said offensive coordinator Dan Henning, “but it was in direct proportion to the age of our football team. The players who have been out here for a couple of years executed well. Some of the others didn’t.”

Rogers, of course, was brilliant. Freshman Anthony Hamilton had 54 yards on five carries. Freshman Billy Harden (five receptions for 57 yards) and Kevin Bick (three receptions for 20 yards) are obvious football players.

And Ricky Scales, the wide receiver for the Orange, played his usual game, getting 122 yards out of five receptions, one for a touchdown.

There was no Don Strock on the field.

“We didn’t expect there would be,” said Henning. “Remember, however, what Don Strock looked like two years ago... about what you saw today.”

George McKinney, the defensive coordinator, was pleased.

“We’re better,” said McKinney, “much better. We got some great play from the defensive secondary. We didn’t get beat deep once all day. The last two years we got beat deep in almost every game. We’ve got some players out there now and they are going to get better.”

Latimer attempted 11 field goals. He made everything he tried within 40 yards and a 45-yarder got caught in the wind and went slightly left.

“We know our kicking game can be sound,” said Coffey. “All it needs is a little more work.”

These who saw the game saw little of what Tech will be using next fall. The Hokies used only 40 per cent of their offensive plays and maybe 15 per cent of their defense.

“We weren’t trying to show a lot,” Coffey said. “We were still looking for football players. And I think we found some.”

Phil Rogers Takes Off On Another Long Run for Orange Team