Sharpe Era Begins Saturday In Blacksburg

Tech Opens At Home With Kentucky

The countdown to the Jimmy Sharpe era has reached its final stages and all systems are definitely go.

Saturday afternoon in Lane Stadium the Gobbles will take on a tough Kentucky team which will give Tech a stiff test for its new offensive and defensive systems.

The Gobbler's, of course, will be using the popular wishbone for the first time and will exhibit a new odd man front on defense, both major changes from the previous three years.

The much-talked-about wishbone should truly showcase the running abilities of junior Phil Rogers who became the first Tech back in history to gain over 1,000 yards last year. Bruce Arians, back for a rejuvenated senior season at quarterback, after slippin from starter to obscurity last year, has looked very strong in pre-season practices including throwing two TD passes and running for two other touchdowns in the first intra-squad scrimmage.

Defensively, Hokie fans will probably quickly get to know senior transfer Ken Lambert. The 6-3, 205-pound defensive end came to Tech from Tennessee where, in his sophomore year, he earned all SEC honors and was selected to the sophomore All-America team.

It will be another SEC team, Kentucky, which will give Tech its first test under the new staff.

The Wildcats came on strong last year under new head coach Fran Curci to finish with a 5-6 record and are looking to even bigger things this year.

The biggest share of the hopes for 1974, at least on offense, will be held by running back Sonny Collins who gained 1,215 yards last season.

Another good runner is quarterback Mike Fanuzi but he must establish himself as a passing threat to make the Wildcats a well-rounded team on offense.

How well Curci is able to rebuild the defensive line will also be a major factor, as that unit was hit hard by graduation. So was the defensive line.

But the folks in Lexington, Ky., believe in Curci and saw first hand the progress he made last year.

Now it is Jimmy Sharpe's turn to try to pull a football program back to its feet and he is looking for the same type of progress that was evidenced by Kentucky last year.

The Hokies themselves would like nothing better than to start off the season on the right note and knock off the team that was barely able to hold them off, 31-26, a year ago.

Frank Curci

Sonny Collins

Getting The Scoreboard Ready For Action

Virginia Tech's department of Building and Grounds and Athletic Association have been working for the past two weeks to prepare Lane Stadium for the home opener Saturday with Kentucky. In this picture Alvin Williams just got done putting the "Kentucky" up on the scoreboard. The name of the Tech opponent is changed with each home game. (Journal photo by Don Todora)