Problems Galore for Area Coaches

By BILL BRILL
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So you wanta be a football coach? So you think you’ve got problems?

Consider, if you will, the day off.

You are Jimmy Sharpe, first year coach at Virginia Tech. Your team must play SMU in the Cotton Bowl at Dallas today. Last year when Tech played at SMU, it got wishboned for 50 yards and was beaten 37-6.

Your team lost its opener to Kentucky, 38-12, and the Wildcats rushed for better than 400 yards. You have to wonder if the much-maligned defense really has healed at all. Your team will be outweighed badly up front by an SMU team that features, among others, Louie Kelcher.

Big Louie, they call him. He stands 6-5, weighs 275, wears a size 50 extra long coat, a 16½ ring and 16EEEE shoes. There is a chance that Louie is as big as the whole Tech line.

But don’t feel lonely, Jimmy Sharpe. SMU Coach Dave Smith isn’t much happier. His team was supposed to breeze in its opener, and managed barely to beat North Texas State, 7-6. In Dallas, they are saying he got out-coached by Hayden Fry, who just happened to be the coach at SMU before Smith.

As if that wasn’t bad enough, Smith’s team is on two-year NCAA probation because players were allegedly paid money for good performances. Smith himself is on personal probation. SMU’s co-captain was ruled ineligible last week because he accepted some of the cash, and a promising freshman player died of meningitis last week on the day of the opener.

Or how about the irrepressible Sonny Randle, the Virginia coach? His team should be enjoying the day off, playing at home on the new artificial turf of Scott Stadium against William & Mary, a member of the lowly Southern Conference.

But consider that you, Sonny Randle, have been cut up by two student newspapers this week, with some of your former players insisting that you are placing football ahead of academics at a school where class work is certainly not a joke.

What’s more, your team will be without Billy Copeland, its best runner. And the opponent, W&M, already has beaten one ACC team, Wake Forest. What’s more, if you find the W&M coach, Jim Root, were locked in a room with a baseball bat, there is a good chance that there would be no survivors. It is a game you can’t lose, Sonny Randle, and you know it.

Or how about Bob Talman, the VMI coach? All week you, Bob Talman, have been basking in the glory of a shutout over Furman, and how many times has VMI posted shutouts recently?

But now you get back to reality. Your team must play at Vanderbilt, which is a dues paying member of the Southeastern Conference. The only resemblance between the football they play in the two contesting conferences is the fact that they each use the same number of men on the field.

You are seeking to bring VMI back from the doldrums, Coach Talman, but the way to do that is to stay in class, and Vandy is not in that bracket.

Elsewhere, football action is brisk and important on this, the second big weekend of the year. The only coach who will enjoy himself is sure is Richmond’s Jim Tait, whose 2-1 team has the day off.

In the ACC, the big game is at Raleigh, where 2-0 N.C. State takes on Clemson. The Wolfpack mauled Duke last week and will be facing a toothless Tiger, blanked in its opener at Texas A&M. Only overconfidence would seem to be a problem for the classy State attack.

North Carolina, on the road back after a bad ’73 campaign, should have little trouble winning at hapless Wake Forest. This is the beginning of a killer schedule for Wake, which already is 2-2 on the year. (The wins, both unofficial, came in Japan in January.) In the next three games, Wake will play Oklahoma, Penn State and Maryland. After that, Coach Chuck Mills may be heading to the nearest razor-blade counter for a little slitting time.

Duke and South Carolina, each a two-TD victim in equally disappointing openers, play at night in Columbia. At least somebody should win. Neither team demonstrated any defense last week in losses to State and Georgia Tech by almost identical scores of 35-21 and 35-20. Duke people wonder if quarterback Hal Spears and running back Tony Benjamin can play.

Maryland, which came close but still lost against Alabama, can’t let down against a good Florida team in a night game at Tampa. The Gators barely beat California in their opener, but they’ll have all the best of the psychological edge. Maryland is favored, but is not necessarily a good bet.

Among Southern Conference teams, there is only one league game, with Appalachian playing at Davidson. The Citadel tests college division power Delaware. East Carolina is home to East Tennessee and Presbyterian plays at Furman.

SMU’s Big Louie Kelcher

Washington & Lee has a home game against Madison, which is playing a full varsity schedule for the first time. Bridgewater is home to St. Paul’s, Emory & Henry is at Guilford, Shepherd plays at Randolph-Macon, Shaw is at Hampton Institute, Fayetteville at Norfolk State and Virginia State at Elizabeth City.

There is a very big junior college game at Ferrum, where the fifth-rated Panthers entertain No. 9 Wesley. Last year Wesley beat Ferrum, and the Panthers would like to reverse that outcome.