Tech Tackles Problem Of Defusing Houston

By BILL BRILL
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There is a movie playing in Roanoke called "Juggernaut." The star of the movie is Richard Harris, and it's his task to defuse a bomb that will blow up a ship.

If Richard Harris was in Blacksburg today, he could play the part of Jimmy Sharpe. It is Virginia Tech Coach Sharpe's task to defuse visiting Houston, which already is suffering from a couple of unexpected blowups.

This is virtually the same Houston team that mauled Tech 54-27 last year, won 10 of 11 and then crushed Tulane in the Bluebonnet Bowl, 47-7. Just about the same team—except for D.C. Nobles. Without quarterback Nobles, Houston has been like a high-powered racing boat without a rudder. The Cougars have been caged by Arizona State and Miami.

Tech, however, is not fast like ASU, or massive like Miami. In fact, the Gobbler are basically little and slow. They also haven't won, although last week's 28-25 defeat at SMU was a vast improvement.

Tech figures to have enough troubles with 20-point favorite Houston no matter what the Cougars do. What the Hokies must hope is that quarterback David Husmann, playing for the first time without a knee brace, doesn't suddenly gain maturity.

"If guarantee you've learned plenty in the past couple of weeks," said Husmann. "I'm the quarterback and it's my responsibility to take the team in for a touchdown. I haven't done a very good job of it."

Husmann was sacked six times last week by Miami, but Tech doesn't have Miami's defensive line. at the Hokies do have is a good passer in Bruce Arians, a fine receiver in Ricky Scales, a lot of enthusiasm and plenty of hope. The latter two may be needed in excess quantities before today's game, which is expected to draw a crowd in excess of 30,000, is over.

The two leading scorers in the nation, Virginia receiver Ken Shelton and Duke tailback Larry Martinez, will be on opposite sides at Durham in a vital ACC clash. Each has scored six TDs in two games, and in Martinez' case, that's all of Duke's touchdowns.

They perfectly represent the contrasting offenses. UVA's Mike Strickland, the nation's leading passer, Scott Gardner, keying an attack that ranks fourth in the country.

Duke, far less explosive but sounder overall, will try and rush the ball down UVa's throat. Martinez, who started the year as the No. 5 tailback, will get help from Tony Benjam