Houston Smothers Winless Tech 49-12

Blacksburg, Va. — Virginia Tech had a long, disappointing afternoon Saturday. The team that was supposed to be forming into a winner lost in a big way. The Gobbler's took it on the chin, 49-12, with Houston making the win look easy.

"The alumni sure as hell ain't got much to talk about now," said a dejected Jimmy Sharpe, Tech's winless coach. "We're not sure hoping to play a lot better than we did. We can't go anyway but up. We're 0-3 now, so things have got to get better."

Houston was bigger, stronger and better. The Cougars could move the ball on offense and stop Tech on defense. But the win just evened Houston's record at 2-2.

"I didn't think we would lose to anyone by a score like this this year," said Tech linemen back Rick Rizzano. "Now we're going to have to work our butts off and get better. We'll work hard."

Both the offense and defense will be working hard. Tech gave up 408 yards on offense and picked up only 217 on defense. Bryce Arians completed three of 17 passes while Houston connected on six of 10. Tech's leading rusher was Greg Toal with 35 yards. Phil Rogers had 14 yards on 14 carries.

"We had to establish our running game but we didn't do it," explained Gobbler quarterback Bruce Arians. "They had the best defense I've ever seen."

Ricky Scales is supposed to be a big scoring threat for the Hokies. The speedy split end was held to just one reception for a total of 18 yards.

"Our running game has to go to get before the pass will work," commented Scales. "They weren't even worried about the run. They were just sitting on the pass. This was definitely my worst game of the year and maybe since I've been here."

Scales was double covered all afternoon. "It was hard to get the ball to me," he said. "A lot of times, Bruce didn't have any protection. He often couldn't even see me. The way I feel, a great deal of our success depends on Bruce and me running the ball. I feel like I let the team down."

"Sharp expected a problem all the way from the start. I could have told you in June that they would take for granted they could stop the run and put two men on Ricky. That's why we threw on the first two plays. We wanted to make them conscious of the pass so we could get our running game going."

Arians failed to connect on the first two plays of the game and then Tech had to punt. Houston moved the ball but was stopped on the Tech 28. After and exchange of punts, the Cougars again moved the ball and this time scored. Just seven minutes into the game, Houston took a 7-0 lead on a 21-yard run by Donnie McGraw.

Houston scored again in the first quarter when a punt by Tech's Wayne McDaniel was blocked. It rolled into the end zone and the Cougars covered it for a TD.

David Haukman and John Housman scored for Houston in the second quarter as the Cougars took a 28-0 lead at halftime. Tech had three first downs in the first half. The Gobbler's had one passing, one rushing and one on penalties.

In the third quarter, Houston's Marshall Johnson fooled everyone with a halfback pass to Frank Scalise who was so alone that he almost walked into the end zone. Tech's Ken Lambert set up the Gobbler's first touchdown when he recovered a fumble at the three-yard line. George Heath went in on the first play and the Gobbler's went for two points but didn't make it.

Housman scored his third touchdown midway through the period before Tech put to- gether its only drive of the day. The Hokies started at their own 23 and, with help of a 27-yard pass from Arians to Coles, moved to the Houston three where Rogers scored. Again Tech went for two and again it didn't make it.

As an after thought, Houston scored again on a 66-yard pass.

"There's liable to get worse before they get better, but they will get better," Sharpe promised.