VPI Defense Given Praise
For Job In 28-25 Setback

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Tech's 35 and was awarded to SMU on a call Sharpe jokingly labelled "western hospitality." SMU ran out the clock from there.

"Aren't there any little teams around," said Sharpe, who has called next week's opponent the biggest team in the country and compared SMU's forward wall to a runaway freight train.

"Still, I'm proud of the youngsters. Just as I promised last week, we're a lot better football team. This thing's a lot like life -- you battle uphill against the odds (bigger opponents) and, if you keep at it and work hard enough, you'll succeed no matter what the odds."

Probably the brightest spot for Sharpe and his young team, however, was the defense.

"They executed well," he said. "They were facing a very strong, talented line with a 20-pound weight advantage across the board. Still, they made the big plays -- a lot of big plays. Randy Vey (the center, who blocked 270-pound Louis Kelcher all day) didn't come up to Kelcher's belt buckle. Kelcher is the reason we couldn't get our fullbacks going."

Probably the biggest play, at least at the time, and the one which kept Tech in the ball game, was stopping SMU on a fourth-and-one play early in the fourth quarter. Four plays later, however, Wesson broke away down the right sideline for what eventually proved to be the key score.

The Gobblers, who did not get a first down until three minutes into the second quarter, jumped to the lead, but found themselves in the hole at 14-7 at intermission.

After being pretty well pushed around for most of the first 20 minutes, Tech got its break when Chuck Perdue made a sliding interception at his 42.

Runs by Bruce Arians and Bethel High's Morris Blueford gave the Gobblers a first down at SMU's 44. Then Arians connected with scales for 31 yards to Tech's third first down at the 13.

Two plays later, Greg Toal forced his way seven yards into the end zone. Latimer added the extra point.

The much bigger Mustangs, who fumbled seven times in the first 30 minutes, losing the ball, scored both their touchdowns in the last three minutes, one on a blooper pass to All-American candidate tight end Oscar Roan and the other by fumble-prone quarterback Wesson.

That the Gobblers came out of the first quarter unsullied may be one of the miracles of modern football.