Duff's Hitting Leads Hokies To 9-7 Win Over Virginia

By BOB TETTLERBAUM
Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — When Virginia Tech's Dennis Duff had finished a day that included a pair of triples, a homer and three RBIs, he was given a place on the punishment detail.

Duff was joined by winning pitcher Duke Dickerson and infielder Danny Griel in dragging the field after a 9-7 win over Virginia.

The victory was the 10th straight for the Hokies over the Gobbbers and it ties a school record. The mark will probably be eclipsed today when Tech is home to Buffalo State.

What Tech Coach Bob Humphreys couldn't get over was some of the shaky play that surrounded hitting like Duff exhibited. So he established his new after-dinner-game exercise.

"I guess mine was for a dropped fly ball in the first inning," said Duff. "This is the first time I've heard of this, but Coach Humphreys just told us to stay out here and drag the field." Duff wasn't concerned about his fate.

"I guess that's what you have to do. You have to play defense," he said.

Duff didn't realize when he tripled, homered and tripled his first three times up that it gave him five straight hits dating back to Thursday's game against Canisius when he homered in his only two appearances.

"I didn't realize I had the streak because I didn't play that much against Canisius," said Duff.

To listen to Humphreys, though, it was questionable when Tech did play anything but offense. The Gobbbers had 14 hits and should have won in a breeze.

Five errors and some questionable base running, that saw Griel picked off and Duff not sliding at the plate, left the Tech coach steaming.

Dickerson's pitching didn't soothe his nerves. The ace of the Gobbbers staff was belted out of the game in the seventh. He won the game, but not before he and reliever John Power gave up four hits and a walk to Virginia's David Duff.

"There are things happening out there which players who have been around for awhile are committing," said Humphreys.

Like Danny getting picked off second. I don't know what's going through his mind. I wish I could look into it.

After the play, Humphreys turned his back on Griel. He yelled at first baseman Harold Williams for muttering an infield pop that he ran the pitcher off of to get.

"You don't make a diving, spread-eagle catch to call off the pitcher," said Humphreys. "I'd told them that..."

Asked why Williams and Skip Doffmyer (two errors) weren't out with the others, Humphreys replied:

"I ought to have Williams out here. He'll be out here tomorrow. I didn't have enough drags to keep them all out." Dickerson admitted he didn't have his stuff, but Humphreys still couldn't understand the stand that Virginia's David Duff had.

"I never had a guy get five hits (it was four) off me in a month, much less a day," said Humphreys, a former major league pitcher.

Then he steamed some more about Dickerson not brushing back Virginia hitters who pounded out 13 singles and three doubles.

I do know (David) Duff didn't get dasted out of there unless one of their guys hit him on the way back to the dugout," Humphreys said.

The next time Duce loses 2-1, I better not hear him complaining about the way he won today. They say it all even out.

Still, in spite of his hasting, Humphreys admitted his charges are hitting the ball well. He frets over the little things because he is trying to push Tech into another NCAA tournament bid.

"It's just going to catch up to us. We can't keep playing that way and expect to stay in contention. We've only had one day (last Sunday against Richmond) where we didn't make an error," he said.

Virginia grabbed a 3-1 lead in the third when David Duff doubled in a run and scored on Duke Duncan's single.

But Tech rallied starting in the fourth. Dennis Duff led off with a homer and an error by Virginia gave the Gobbbers an unearned run.

The roof fell in on Cavalier starter Robbie Anderson in the inning. Dennis Duff tripled in run and scored on Mike Preister's single. Then Williams belted a long homer over the center field fence.

David Duff shrugged off his big day for the Cavaliers. He had had two home runs and two singles in a 12-9 loss to Tech at Charlottesville earlier this spring.

"We lost to them before and we lost to Virginia close game," he said. "I imagine we'll always have close games between these two schools. Even if we were shooting marbles."

The Virginia catcher's only consolation was that he didn't have to drag the field.

Virginia Tech Teammates Congratulate Dennis Duff After Homer Against Cavaliers

Staff Photo by Bob Phillips