Gobblers Continue Streak Behind Duff's Hot Hitting

By JACK BOGACZYK
Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — Pitching, drinking and sunbathing—although not necessarily in that order—were the dominant issues on a breezy afternoon Saturday at Tech Park.

Meanwhile, Dennis Duff continued to wield a bat hotter than the recent weather as Virginia Tech added two more games to its baseball winning streak with a doubleheader sweep over Old Dominion.

The 4-0 and 5-1 Tech triumphs carried the Gobblers' winning streak to 15 games entering what Coach Bob Humphreys calls "the biggest part of the year"—a five-game road swing next week.

Freshman lefthander Mike Rhodes hurled a two-hitter in the opening game and survived nine walks as the Gobblers posted their first shutout win of the year. In the nightcap, Jim Puglisi earned the mound win with relief help from Harold Berkey. Puglisi left with a 2-0 lead after three pitches in the top of the sixth inning, complaining of stiffness in his right wrist.

Duff started the Gobblers to both their wins as he continued to hit opposing pitching as if it was batting practice. The junior leftfielder homered in the second inning of the opener for Tech's first run. Then in the nightcap, his fifth-inning single broke up ODU righthander Brian Campbell's no-hitter with a single to start a two-run rally.

In his last eight games, Duff is 16-for-24 at the plate and has raised his batting average from a meager .226 to a team-leading .353. He was 5-for-6 in the doubleheader, which dropped the Monarchs to an 11-14 record.

But while Duff was in leftfield, clearly the preferred place for most Tech students was rightfield. There, on the hill behind the outfield fence, the fans played their own doubleheader. There apparently were no losers.

A sunfield for outfielders, the "over the hill" gang came equipped for more than fly balls. Oh, there were lots of sunglasses—and bathing suits, halter tops, cut-off jeans, and blankets.

And probably more beer than the Clydesdales could deliver in one run with the wagon.

"I'll tell ya, they really come prepared," said Humphreys of the rightfield contingent. "And they don't seem to care whether we win or lose. They always have a good time."

Although the Gobblers needed Duff to get them started, the rightfield hill was filled before the opener. The overlap went either to the hill in centerfield or over the lip of the cup and onto the ground—depending on what kind of overflow you're talking about.

And while many spectators climbed the hill with six packs, cases or coolers, two guys showed they had efficiency to match their baseball team's 18-7 record. They also received the loudest cheer of the day when they marched up the hill as the opener started carrying a garbage can—with a half-barrel discreetly cooled inside.

"It's a little distracting sometimes," said Duff of the rightfield fun which also includes a heavy dose of frisbee throwing. "But we have other things to worry about.

"I don't think we're getting tight at all about the winning streak. When you play and win, it's got to be fun. And when you're having fun, you have to be loose."

One guy who certainly didn't enjoy the afternoon was ODU centerfielder Del Ward. After Duff had homered to right-center in the first game and singled there in the nightcap, Ward failed to move towards right when Duff came to bat in the sixth.

Seconds later, Duff tripled to right-center. And a couple minutes after that Monarchs' Coach Bud Metheny—who once proudly wore the pinstripes of the New York Yankees as an outfielder—took Ward into the bathroom in the ODU dugout for what must not have been a friendly discussion.

The Gobblers have today off, a situation Tech pitcher Duke Dickerson enjoyed Saturday. As the rightfield fans filed in, Dickerson—who pitched Thursday and was not dressed for the game—checked out the female portion of the crowd with binoculars.

Oh, and about that keg. It was finished in the sixth inning of the nightcap—just before Tech went to the showers and Ward went to the bathroom.

**FIRST GAME**

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<tr>
<th>Old Dominion</th>
<th>Virginia Tech</th>
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<tr>
<td>Blows and Breeden; Rhodes and Shelton</td>
<td>HR — Duff (VT), 2nd, none on.</td>
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**SECOND GAME**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Dominion</th>
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<td>Campbell and Crain; J. Puglisi, Berkey (6) and Shelton.</td>
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