Imposter Beware:
Sandy Hill's Back

By JACK BOGACZYK

BLACKSBURG — Will the real Sandy Hill please stand up? Certainly, the guy playing centerfield for Virginia Tech must be an imposter. He's left-handed the Hill, and like the former Glemar High star he doesn't strike out much. He even wears uniform No. 11, but this guy can't be Sandy Hill.

Hill is a hitter—a 206 hitter a year ago when as a junior his bat paved the Gobblers into the NCAA Tournament. So, where this .266 hitter Coach Bob Humphreys has in the middle of his outfield?

It's Hill. And Thurday, the senior from Skiatook showed some of his old form as he posted a two-run homer to lift the Gobblers to their 10th straight win—a 2-1 decision over High Point College.

It has been a long season at the plate for Hill, who was drafted in the 51st round of this June's free agent draft by the Milwaukee Brewers. But it could have been bigger.

"The team has made me look a lot better than I've really done," said Hill, who tagged a 2-sold-offering from Panthers reliever Kevin Keene in the ninth to lift Tech from a 1-3 deficit. "I have several different feelings on what has happened to me, but it doesn't do any good to dwell on them. I've had a bad season, but I've been lucky. It's fortunate for the team and myself that other people have come along and picked up some of my slack from last year.

Besides Hill's second homer of the year, the Gobblers also got a round-tripper from freshman first baseman Harold Williams. A smash high off the back of Tech Columnist in the seventh was Williams' seventh homer of the year and an insurance run for Tech.

While Hill and Williams provided the power, Tech got superb relief pitching from sophomore right-hander Peter Dickerson, who came on in the second and hurled 7.1 scoreless innings without walking a batter. It was Dickerson's fifth win in six decisions, and his first work out of the bullpen this year.

Hill’s homer surprised the Tech centerfielder, the only left-handed hitter in Humphreys' starting lineup. The veteran centerfielder appeared a potential ready to be stuffed out on catch- Webster Shelton was caught in a rundown and tagged out. That changed the situation from first and third with one out to a man on third and two out.

Hill is philosophical about his demotion at the plate this season, a year when he should be impressing the scouts as he wants to enter pro baseball.

"I feel like I still have a chance to go pro this year," he said. "I think the biggest weakness wouldn't be the way they see me in one of my throwing arm. But I know I can throw. As for hitting, they know I can hit."

"You're never going to see me six to eight years in a row now. I wasn't even sure about the majors already. They know what they can do. I know I can hit and throw."

Tech is now 16-7 and Thursday's win awarded the Gobblers' only loss in their last 18 games. A year ago, Tech took a 2-3 record into the NCAA Southeast Atlantic Regional. To reach that win figure again, Humphreys and Co. will have to win all but one of their remaining 18 games.

"We have to win now," said Hill, when asked Thursday's 6-inning deficit in the second inning was a sign that the pressure of a win streak is getting to the team. "I'm not going say we'll lose these games, but if we lose less than 10 we should still go to the tournament."

"I think I know college baseball teams in this part of the country. And considering what we've done lately, they have to notice us even though we had a terrible start."

Tech, which has won seven of its last eight games at home, gets a chance to increase its school-record win streak Saturday at Tech Park in a doubleheader against Old Dominion. Remaining pre-game plans to start right-hander Jimmy Peugh (5-2) and left-hander Mike Rhodes (2-1) against the Monarchs.

Virginia Tech 1, High Point 0

High Point 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Virginia Tech 2 0 0 0 2 0 0


Sandy Hill Runs Safely Into Third Base Against High Point

Staff Photo by Oddie Askew

Virginia Tech 1, High Point 0