BLACKSBURG—When a team has won 21 in a row—23 of the last 24—something big is happening, but in the case of Virginia Tech baseball that “something” isn’t all that obvious.

In fact, you have to go back to a six-game losing streak at the start of the season to pinpoint the turnaround: inner defense.

Four of those six losses were by one run, and all four were directly attributable to infield boots and miscues that turned victory into defeat.

Since then, the Gobbler infield defense has improved considerably, especially in turning double plays.

“When we catch the ball we can play with anyone,” analyzes Coach Bob Humphreys. “We’ve scored enough runs to win if we get any kind of pitching—and the pitching has been good enough when it needed to be.”

The Hokies also have developed a great deal of confidence in winning, without any undue pressure on winning.

Tech played five games on the road last week, “and we played as well in doubleheaders at Richmond and at ODU as we’ve played all year,” Humphreys said.

The Gobblers have even survived injuries—something they weren’t able to do as well last year. And Humphreys will have to make another adjustment for this week as Mike Rhodes, freshman lefthander who had just worked his way into the starting rotation, has come up with a sore arm.

Lefty Dean Powell pitched and won against Milligan on Tuesday, and righthanders Duke Dickerson and Jim Puglisi will go in today’s doubleheader here against West Virginia.

Humphreys will then let the rotation take care of itself if and when the winning streak ends, Hum figures the Hokies won’t need any “defense.” They’ve been an awful lot of pride since the string began on Mar. 15 in a return game at Murray State on Saturday night and Sunday doubleheader against Morris Harvey.