Improved Kicking Game Is Early Aim Of Tech Gobblers

BLACKSBURG - All phases of the kicking game will come in for early attention when Virginia Tech opens football practice next week. The Gobblers return to campus tomorrow night, have a picture day scheduled for Saturday.

Three-a-day workouts in shorts begin Monday and the team dons the pads and the hitting of two-a-days begins Thursday, Sept. 1.

Practice times will be at 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

A period of an hour and 15 minutes for each of the first three days will be devoted to the kicking game, punting, place kicking, punt and kickoff coverage, punt and kickoff returns, protecting the kicker and blocking kicks.

Tech's top punter is returnee George Roberts, a senior from Lynchburg. Backing Roberts up will be freshman recruits Sidney Snell of Blacksburg and Mike Romagnoli of Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Paul (Chile Bean) Engle will handle point-after-touchdown kicks, field goal attempts and kickoffs, backed up by sophomore Eric King of Cherryville, N.C., and possibly by a walk-on.

Coach Jimmy Sharpe said that he was aware that both Snell and Romagnoli, better known as runners, also had considerable punting ability and could be used in backup roles if needed.

It's expected that both will get a chance during their first season to display their running ability as well.

Commenting on the increased emphasis on the kicking game, Sharpe said, "We lost two games last year because our kicking game didn't come through."