VIRGINIA TECH OPENS SEASON

Defense-Minded Aggies Furnish Opposition

By BOB MOSKOWITZ
Daily Press Sports Writer

It is difficult to imagine "hiding" someone standing 6-foot-6 and weighing 262 pounds, especially right out in the middle of a football field.

That's pretty much what the Texas A&M team did a year ago when Johnnie Donahue won a letter on defense.

The seventh-ranked Aggies, who help Virginia Tech open its season at home Saturday, have been No. 1 and No. 2 nationally in defense against the run the past two seasons.

Donahue, for instance, actually turned in more statistical points than any other A&M defender. With 6 tackles, 7 assists and 2 quarterback sacks, he led the squad.

Only other player in on as many total tackles was junior free safety Carl Gualrich, one of the three returning starters. The others are inside linebacker Kevin Monk, who was also in on two sacks (and six unassisted tackles), and cornerback Mike Williams, both seniors.

The A&M defense actually has a letter winner at every position but strong safety, where Ken Taylor is a junior college transfer.

Last year, Texas felt the Gobblers had an advantage when they came to College Station with a game under their belt. This year, the situation is reversed, since the Gobblers were idle last week.

Bellard's top concern, other than the Gobblers themselves, is point coverage. At least it produced negative results against the Jayhawks.

Texas punter David Appleby, a sophomore, did average 46.5 yards on six punts, but the Aggies could accumulate only minus four yards on three punt returns compared to a 14 average for Kansas on five run backs.

As for the Techmen, Bellard certainly sees no reason to take the Gobblers lightly after last year's 18-6 triumph.

If nothing else, the A&M coach is one of linebacker Rick Forrant's top boosters. Last year, Bellard made a point of walking across the field after the game to shake hands with the Gobbler star.

It is no wonder the visitors' coach expects "another good game."