Virginia Tech To Play Duke in Football in '80s

The matter of football scheduling has been discussed lately, mainly because the schedule makers for the Big Five deemed last Saturday the proper time to shoot for the moon.

The moon shot never got off the ground.

Today, we are announcing a schedule that does make sense. Virginia Tech and Duke will play football, against each other, in 1981, 1982 and 1983.

Despite their close proximity, the two schools have met only seven times previously, the last in 1969, when the Hokies won an Oyster Bowl crusher, 48-12. That is Tech's lone win. It is somewhat surprising that these two haven't played more often since both used to be members of the Southern Conference.

The games will be played Oct. 10, 1981, in Durham; Oct. 9, 1982, also in Durham; and Oct. 8, 1983, in Blacksburg. A fourth game will be played, presumably in Blacksburg, but that has not been settled yet.

Tech was hopeful of replacing Penn State on Duke's 1979 schedule, but that date already has been filled, although no announcement has been made of the opponent.

Duke and Penn State canceled a four-year series this summer and the Blue Devils picked up East Carolina for '77 and Tennessee, away, for '78. East Carolina has been trying to get on the Duke schedule for years. The Pirates welcomed this year's game so much that they spoiled Duke's party, 17-16.

But the bottom line always deals with money, and in this case, ECU sold 9,300 tickets. The crowd was announced as 38,200, largest home opening crowd in Duke history. The paid crowd was greater than 30,000, which means the Blue Devils turned a tidy profit. It would be a big surprise if they didn't give ECU the 1979 open date.

Virginia also is trying to do something about its future schedules. Ever since he's become the Cavalier coach, Dick Bestwick has campaigned to eliminate from UVa schedules games with national powers, especially those that have rather dubious entrance requirements.

Bestwick feared the worst before last week's game with Texas. Then the worst, and more, happened—68-0.

Bestwick's next target is 1979, when UVa is scheduled to play Georgia and Florida on successive weeks. That also happens to be a year when Virginia doesn't have Wake Forest on the schedule, although all future ACC slates are supposed to include a round-robin against conference foes.

Bestwick would like to see Virginia drop Florida and pick up Wake Forest. Athletic Director Gene Corrigan is doing his best to accommodate his coach.

Many of the recent UVa schedules have not shown proper planning. The Cavaliers are playing N.C. State and Clemson this year for the first time in three seasons. Virginia should have been playing all ACC teams every season.

In a basketball note, Virginia got a good break in the Sugar Bowl Classic. The Cavs drew Temple for the first round, while Auburn and Southern California will meet in the other opener. Temple looms as the weakest team in a strong field.

A UVa charter plane to New Orleans already is a sellout. The fans are staying for the Jan. 2 Sugar Bowl game. With the football game being moved to Jan. 2, a Monday, to avoid competing with the NFL playoffs on Sunday, the basketball tournament is now Dec. 29-30 instead of Dec. 28-29.

Saturday night's game with Memphis State figures to hold the key to Virginia Tech's football season. The Hokies were better than a lot of people expected against Texas A&M, but it still goes into the record book as 0-1.

Tech badly needs a win over the Tigers, who have won the previous two meetings between the schools. The Hokies certainly don't want to go into a game against Charlie Pell, Danny Ford and the Clemson Tigers with an 0-2 mark.