Long-Term Friends Turn Rivals at Memphis Tonight

By DOUG DOUGHTY

When it was reported that Bear Bryant might be retiring at Alabama in the early 1970s, speculation centered around aides Jimmy Sharpe and Richard Williamson as possible successors.

Bryant, of course, still rules the roost in Tuscaloosa, but the long-time friends will be rivals once again tonight at Sharpe's Virginia Tech team visits Williamson and Memphis State at 6:30 p.m.

Back in 1962, Sharpe played both ways for Alabama at guard while Williamson was a safety and wide receiver. "Like I told the Memphian paper," said Sharpe, "we were friends, but it wasn't a 'buddy' deal. We were on the Alabama coaching staff together that our families became really close.

"Lloyd Patterson," said Sharpe, "their quarterback, threw the ball like a burning dart." Memphis State dropped its opener, 7-3, to Mississippi but has rallied to defeat Tulane and Utah State.

Considering that leading rusher Mike Bates is injured, the Tigers might be throwing the ball more than usual... if that's possible.

If last week's game against Texas A&M is any indication, Tech could be susceptible in that area, as the Aggies' David Walker completed 8 of 11 passes.

"People have been asking me whether I was surprised that Walker threw that much," said Sharpe. "No, not really. The only thing that surprised me was the way the Southwest Conference referees called pass interference five times.

"I don't believe our secondary is suspect. The linebackers and defensive ends are the key to our coverage; their area is where the high percentage passes are completed.

"Shreve's greatest concern is the condition of linebacker Rick Razzano, who was kicked in the jaw and had it blemorhage in the A&M game.

"I don't know whether he'll start," said Sharpe, "but I'll tell you this, I'm not going to Memphis without my main man - even if I have to massage his knee to get the whole way out there."

Injuries are also a problem for VMI-1, which meets unbeaten East Carolina, 16-0 in Greenville at 7 p.m. tonight. Regular quarterback Robby Clark suffered a hip pointer against Army, with Larry Hubert coming on to direct the Keydet's two-tight backfield.

"We'll wait until game time before making a decision," said VMI Coach Bob Thalman, whose team has played the Pirates close the last three years, winning in 1974, and losing by 28-12 and 17-8 in 1975 and 1976.

"Last year, it wasn't a 17-3 game," said Thalman. "We were driving when they intercepted a pass and ran it into the end zone. We've got a lot of respect for them, though. I hear where Mike McGuire of Duke said they're faster and quicker than Michigan.

"Impressive on defense, with linebacker Harold Randolph high on many scouting lists, the Pirates alternate two quarterbacks, senior Jimmy Southland and sopho-
momore Leonard Green.

However, East Carolina hardly has used running back Eddie Hicks, who topped for nearly 90 yards last year, but who has carried the ball just 17 times this season. "VMI is not going to let him do the football," said ECU Coach Pat Dye, to whom Thalman replied, "Ooooh, I'd hoped he hadn't noticed that."

Staying home this week will be a couple of teams still looking for their first wins of 1977, Virginia and Richmond. The Cavaliers open their home schedule against Duke at 1:30, while the Spiders enter Appalachian State.

UVa Coach Dick Bessenwiek continues to move players around, with Sam Plabe going to nose guard, his third position in as many games, and back-up center Jeff Mor-
row becoming UVA's starting left guard. "They've learned to walk gingerly around me," Bessenwiek laughed.

Virginia is hoping to stop up an offen-
sive line that was porous as Kneehog

sweeping through the washer in a 30-0 drub-
bng by Texas. "Our quarterbacks have tak-
en a lot of heat," said Bessenwiek, "and
quarterback will continue to be a problem for a long time they fade back. Brian
(Shumock) and Ted (Manly) have to fire for their lives."

According to the UVa coach, Virginia must stop Duke quarterback Mike Dunn to have any chance of winning. "He's the best of the quarterbacks we've faced and we've faced some pretty good ones in Johnny Evans at State and both (Mark McClure and John) Aune at Texas."

The big game in the East, which will
be shown in this area by WSET-TV (Chan-\nnel 13, Lynchburg), pits Maryland against Penn State. The Terrapins have beaten the Nittany Lions only once in 22 games, 21-17 in 1961. Maryland has never won at Penn State.

Other ACC games include Wake Forest at N.C. State, North Carolina at Northwestern and Clemson at Georgia Tech.

Matchups involving Virginia teams in-
clude William and Mary at Louisville to-
ight, Liberty Baptist, Hampden-Sydney at Madison, Towson State at Randolph-Macon, Elizabeth City at Norfolk State, Winston-Salem at Virginia Union and Guilford at Emory and Henry.

Washington and Lee, wireless to date, will be looking for its sixth victory in the last 29 years against Centre, while Austin College and Ferrum, meanwhile, seek to enhance its No. 4 ranking in the junior college polls at seventh-ranked Wesley.

Wesley, riding a 12-game winning streak, won last year, 13-12.

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