Tech's Holway Adjusts to Fullback

By JACK BOGACZYZK
Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — Dickie Holway will never forget the day he was informed about his future as Virginia Tech's next fullback.

"I really didn't like the idea," said Holway, who has his three-year-old son, Paul, Adams in the Gobblers' backfield. "I figured a fullback was just a guy who's always running into the line in the wishbone and getting up beat."

Luckily for Holway, his first two games as Tech’s fullback haven’t been a fulfillment of his nightmares. He’s gained 119 yards in 28 carries entering Saturday’s Lane Stadium contest against Clemson.

"I think we’ve always been a fairly decent runner," said Holway, a junior who was a halfback until 1977 spring drills. "I waited for my turn to play, and it’s finally come. I feel good physically and that makes things easier."

Holway, a native of Westlake, Ohio (a Cleveland suburb), carried just 19 times for 54 yards a year ago. He was 15 pounds lighter then and was just one of several backs who spelled Roscoe Colies.

"When I came here as a freshman, I wasn’t much on blocking," said Holway, who now does more than his share of assisting Coles into opponents’ backfields.

"Coach (Nelson) Stokley spent a lot of time with me working on my blocking. Then last spring, Coach (Jimmy) Sharpee came to me and told me I was going to be the fullback and I should stay the weight I was."

"But I figured that I’d better gain some weight. So, I went home this summer and ate me mom’s cooking and worked out in a new Neumusium center. I also worked at busting up concrete. I came back at 260."

As a freshman, Holway played mostly on the specialty teams. Now, after a year as Coles’ caddy, he’s the Virginia Beach speedster’s sidekick.

"I’ve been surprised I’ve gotten the ball as much as I have," said Holway. "But I know Roscoe has a lot to do with that. People are looking for him, and that gives me a chance. The defense are usually leaning his way."

"Really, what I do depends on what the defensive tackle does. It’s that way for the wishbone fullback. If he (the tackle) goes out, I get the ball inside. If not, I go inside anyway. At first, it bothered me. In the spring, I had a lot of trouble."

Holway says he feels fortunate to be playing in Tech’s wishbone philosophy, which he says “isn’t like Texas’ (former) wishbone—three yards and a cloud of dust. We open up the wishbone by flanking the backs and it’s a lot more flexibility.”

Holway says the toughest part about his switch to fullback comes when he mixes it up at the line of scrimmage.

"As a running back, you’re trying to dodge people," said the 5-11 back who celebrated his 22nd birthday two weeks ago. "At fullback, you have to stay on a certain path so the play can go. Running into a defensive tackle isn’t easy to do. Your natural instinct is to try to jump out of the way."

Holway is one of the many Tech performers who were around when Clemson Coach Charlie Pell and his aide, Danny Ford, worked on Sharpee’s staff.

"It will just count as another game for us," said Holway. "But to be truthful, it’ll be kind of special for everyone. Those guys (Pell and Ford) are coming back here to prove that they’re better than us and to show us why they left Virginia Tech."

When Pell and Ford look out on the field, they’ll probably remember Adams at fullback. But they and the Tigers’ defensive tackle will instead be seeing lots of Holway.

DICKIE HOLLOWAY
Tech Fullback