Tigers Rout Hokies, 31-13

By Mike Bevans
Times-Dispatch Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — The expected knock-down, drag-out, grudge match between Clemson and Virginia Tech boiled down to a mismatch in no time Saturday. Both teams may have been breathing fire, but only the visiting Tigers were able to back up their intentions.

Presented with very fine field position by a heretofore unspectacular punt return specialist, Clemson punched across the goal line on its first two possessions and moved onward to a 31-13 victory.

The Tigers made the return to Blacksburg for Charlie Pell and Danny Ford a successful one. Pell and Ford, former Virginia Tech assistant coaches, currently mastermind the fortunes of Clemson as head coach and chief aide, respectively.

The victory made Clemson (3-1) a winner on the road three straight weeks for the first time in 20 years. The loss left Virginia Tech 0-3 on the season and extended its string of defeats to six, dating back to last season.

"Coach Pell always tells us the first five minutes of a game are the most important," said Clemson defensive tackle Jim Stuckey. "He says, if you control the first five minutes, you can control the tempo the rest of the half."

That bit of gospel proved correct this day when Clemson moved to a 7-0 lead 4:40 into the game, upped it to 14-0 less than four minutes later and trotted into the locker room at interimmission in command, 28-7.

Tech had 19 yards of total offense and no first downs to show for its first five possessions. A steady downpour combined with the Hokies' poor showing sent a Lane Stadium crowd of 34,000 heading for the exits before first quarter's end.

The rain, which did not quit until midway of the fourth quarter, rolled right off Tiger backs. The Clemson offense was unencumbered by the elements as it piled up 260 yards of total offense in the first half to Tech's 82.

"It was amazing that we only turned the ball over once," marveled Clemson quarter-

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Clemson .......... 14 14 0 3 - 31
Va. Tech .......... 0 7 0 6 - 13
C — Fuller, 1, run (Ariri kick).
C — Weddington, 9, pass from Fuller (Ariri kick).
C — Ratchford, 68, run (Ariri kick).
VT — Scott, 1, run (Engle kick).
C — Clark, 29, pass from Fuller (Ariri kick).
C — FG Ariri, 36.
VT — Coles, 3, run (pass failed).
A — 34,000

STATISTICS

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<th>Clem.</th>
<th>Tech</th>
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<tr>
<td>First downs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rushes-yards</td>
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<td>Passing yards</td>
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