Tech Gobblers Are Going To Have To Make Something Happen Against W&M

BLACKSBURG—"They made something happen; we didn’t."

That statement from Virginia Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe sums up precisely the nitty gritty of Clemson’s 31-13 win over the Gobblers.

To be more precise, the most telling “happenings” were two punt returns by the Tigers in the first 8:30 of the game. Each put Clemson on offense in Tech territory, and each time the Tigers scored.

Even at that, you might say that the game “slipped away” from the Hokies who fumbled seven times. They didn’t lose any of the bobbles, but they still were very costly.

The most telling figures, aside from the score, were 278 to 111 yards rushing and 111 to nine in return yardage (punts and interceptions).

“I’ve been here before: we’ve been here before,” Sharpe pointed out. In his first season at Tech, 1974, the Gobblers lost the first four before getting untracked. In fact, you might say that they lost the first four and a half before a “make something happen” tackle by Tony Houff on the second half-kickoff return by South Carolina got the Hokies rolling.

For the third straight week, the Gobblers offensive line graded well enough to have won, but the Hokies obviously didn’t have 11 together often enough to stay in solid contention, and the defensive unit just as clearly didn’t match its performances of the previous two weeks.

Now Tech must face a quarterback, Wm. and Mary’s Tom Rozantz, who has given the Gobblers a pluperfect fit for the last two years. In fact, the Indians prevailed last year, 27-15, mostly because of Rozantz’ gutsy execution in clutch third-down situations.

The Gobblers will need to “make something happen” against the Indians who won the only previous Tobacco Bowl meeting between the two teams, 17-16, in 1972—in a contest that could more appropriately have been dubbed the Mud Bowl. That was three years before Richmond City’s Stadium was refurbished with an artificial rug.

In last year’s Tobacco Festival contest the Hokies were in intense struggle with VMI when late in the third period Tech’s Greg Payne “made something happen” with a 70-yard punt return that gave the Gobblers breathing room for a not as easy as-the-score-looked 37-7 win.

Wm. and Mary, 3-2, has made more happen in its first five games of this season than the 0-3 Hokies, and Sharpe and company are still working and hoping to get on the positive side of the happenings ledger.