Food Likes of Fimian Pale at Talk of Tech

By Jerry Lindquist

For Keith Fimian, William and Mary fullback, there is more to Saturday's Tobacco Festival meeting with Virginia Tech at City Stadium than just another football game. It isn't that Fimian wants to win; he has to win.

"I hate Virginia Tech," Fimian, a senior from Virginia Beach, said yesterday prior to W&M's weekly press luncheon. He said it slowly, accenting every syllable.

For additional emphasis, Fimian ignored — for the moment — the plate of meat chunks and noodles smothered in gravy. The salad and rolls would have to wait, too, and everyone who knows anything about the Indians knows about Fimian's appetite.

"His father estimates their food bill goes up $50 a week when Keith and his brother come home from school," said Barry Fratkin, executive director of the William and Mary Athletic Education Foundation.

FIMIAN'S POSTURE towards Tech originated while he was still a senior at Norfolk Catholic. Because of a banner final season, Fimian became a prize catch. He was heavily recruited. Among those very interested were William and Mary, the University of Georgia, Notre Dame and Virginia Tech.

He recalled a visit to Blacksburg, being picked up in a private plane and flown across the state. "I was very impressed," Fimian admitted.

Roscoe Coles, from Bayside High School in Virginia Beach, was Tech-bound. He and Fimian had finished 1-2 in rushing among Tidewater schoolboys that season. "I knew him well... and they (Tech people) were saying, 'Come on. Come on,'" Fimian continued.

"They talked about going to a bowl in two years... that they were going to be unstoppable. They talked about all the money they had. No one else in the state had the facilities they had."

"I really thought about going there."

Admiration turned to dislike, Fimian explained, because of a situation he asked to keep off the record. Generally speaking, it involved a Hokie assistant no longer on coach Jimmy Sharpe's staff and a case of negligence.

So, come Saturday, Fimian will be running tackle to tackle and instead of orange and maroon, he'll be wearing green and gold. While the Indians will be trying to stop Coles, with 3,000-plus yards already to his credit, Tech will be assigned the task of handling Fimian.

LAST YEAR, THE Hokies failed. Fimian scored three touchdowns, and the Indians ambushed the home team, 27-15. It was sweet revenge, part one. "They think they're the state power, with lots of money behind them. They have a budget twice the rest of us, I guess... and they're getting all the so-called, blue-chip state athletes while we have to go outside the state for ours," he said. "They're always talking about getting into the ACC (Atlantic Coast Conference) and going to a bowl."

It is, Fimian suggested, an attitude, "something I want to shut down," he said.

Curiously, it was an impassioned effort against Tech in the 1975 Oyster Bowl game in Norfolk that ultimately pointed William and Mary to a 7-4 record a year ago and earned Jim Root Southern Conference Coach of the Year honors. The Indians lost, 24-7, but it was close for three quarters. The following week the Indians snapped a seven-game losing streak and wound up claiming two of their last three, including a season-ending, 31-21 upset of Richmond.

Against Tech, "We learned we could move the ball, and we could hold them. The week after that (vs VMI) we knew we could win. We had the taste," Fimian said. "Tech definitely was the turning point for us."

W&M CURRENTLY IS 3-2, with a two-game winning streak. Tech is 0-3. Still, one rating service lists the Hokies to win by six points. "We're always underdogs to them," Fimian said.

Root said he preferred such odds. "It's relaxing," he said. Nobody doubts it's an important test for both teams. "It's a big game for us," Fimian said. "It means being 4-2 instead of 3-3, with a week off to get ready for Navy. That explains it right there."

He's determined to be at his absolute best for the Hokies. "Of all the teams we play, if we didn't win another game, I want to beat Tech," Fimian said.