Sharpe Hopes for Happy Ending to a Wild Week

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"Before Virginia Tech went out to prac-
tice Monday morning, Coach Jimmy Sharpe said he hoped his team’s would “leave it on the practice field this week.”

As things turned out, Sharpe’s Hokies almost left Tann on the practice field in preparation for their Tobacco Bowl date in Richmond this afternoon with William and Mary.

"It’s been a wild week here this week," said Sharpe, whose club has lost its first two games, with the most recent setback coming to Clemson, 11-3. "All I know is, I almost got trampled to death by my players two days in a row.

"We were having three-on-three drills Wednesday and I got kicked in the leg and then the same thing happened Thursday. I didn’t have any gear on and they ripped all the skin off my shin.

"After three players had collided in practice and remained at less than full strength to meet the Tigers, Sharpe was concerned about further injuries in prac-
tice. It was good he was concerned—not only did the Hokies emerge without a scratch, but lineman Rick Razzano and defensive back Gary Smith have been cleared for a return to action.

Razzano suffered a deep cut bruise in the back of his hand against Texas A&M and was in on only one play the next week against Memphis State. In the Clemson game, he was in for all 51, playing about half the game on defense.

Smith injured his shoulder before the season and there was some question whether he would be back by mid-season. If he is, "This doesn’t necessarily mean we can’t redshirt him," said Sharpe. "If anything happens to him physically the next two games, we can ask for a hardship ruling. If he’s fit, though, we want to use him.

A recurring theme as Sharpe talked to his team this week was last year’s 27-15 set-

back in Blacksburg. "I think William and Mary might be on an emotional down," he said. "We’re not going to let the same thing happen this time around. We’re approach-
ing the game like they (the Indians) are the No. 1 team in the country.

"A lot of things have happened this season, not all of them good, but we still have a couple of goals in mind. When we started the year, we wanted to be state champion and we wanted to have a win-
ing season. We can still reach both those goals.

A couple other teams with designs on the top spot in the state will be meeting in Lexington this afternoon at 1:30. VMI, which has beaten William and Mary since 1966, will be entertaining the Spiders—and for once—the Keydets will be going into the game as the favorite.

"I’m really bad on keeping up with that sort of thing, who the favorite is and all," said Thalman. "It is nice to have somebody else believing in our team, though. After a week off, I really think we’ll be ready to play.

Helped the most by VMI’s open date last week, quarterback Robby Clark, who suffered a hip pointer in the first half against Army three weeks ago and then did not play at all the following Thursday night against East Carolina. Clark will receive the call today, as substitute Larry Hupertz will go back to manning the phones.

"First of all, I’d have to say that we’ve never had a situation like this with so much depth at the quarterback position," said Thalman. "I couldn’t take Robby’s job away, though, just because he was hurt.

Richmond has had a battle for its start-
ing quarterback job, but the Spiders haven’t been able to move the ball with the consisteny of VMI. Sophomore Greg Greg-

gori is still a question, as is Travis High got the call the last two weeks, but Sophomore Johnnie Talt said Friday he has yet to make a decision about this week.

Last year’s signal caller, David Taylor and Larry Shaw, are both suffering from back injuries and Talt says an announce-
ment could be made next week that Shaw is out for the year. Jeff Smith, a sophomore from Turner Ashby who has played in ev-

ery game is currently No. 2.

Also, Talt has reinstated five spiders for the squad who were suspended two weeks ago. Among that quintet is all-American safety Jeff Nixon.

"I see where we’re the underdog," said Talt, whose club won last year, 45-0, "but I’ve never been one much to believe the odds. We’ve played some good people. Vir-

ginia Tech played Texas A&M and Virginia saw Texas, but what people don’t realize is that North Texas State only lost to Texas by three and A&M by six last year.

Now 1-3, Richmond’s most recent loss came at the hands of North Texas, 47-14. VMI is 14-2, having beaten William and Mary and lost to Army and East Carolina.

Virginia, which has yet to play any state teams, will be traveling to Clemson before taking on Virginia Tech next Satur-
day. The Cavaliers, 0-4, are prohibitive under-
dogs against the Tigers, 3-1, who return home after three impressive victories on the road.

Coach Dick Bostwick said his team will have to play error free at Clem in to have any chance of staying in the game. "So far we haven’t been able to do that," he said. "The rest is, we’re young. We’re even younger than last year.

There will be only one other game this weekend matching ACC foes, as North Caro-

lina plays host to Wake Forest. The Tar Heels (6-0) join N.C. State, which visits Aub-

urn, as the only undefeated teams in conference competition.

At College Park, Maryland will attempt to get back on the winning track against Syracuse after losing three straight games for the first time under Jerry Claiborne.

Among the state’s smaller colleges and universities, Liberty Baptist will be at Harrisburg, Pa. against Harrisburg and Henry and Central, Madison at Mars Hill, Randolph-

McMacon at Madison and Maryville at Wash-

ington and Lee.

Virginia Union will play host to Eliza-

t City, Shaw visits Virginia State and Blu-

field State goes to Bridgewater. St. Paul’s travels to Fayetteville, Bowie State at Hampton Institute and North Carolina A&M journeys to Norfolk State.

Ferrum, dropping to No. 9 in the jun-
ior college poll after a 16-14 loss to Grand Rapids, enters a heavily-chosen homecoming contest.