Defensive Tactics Do Wonders For VPI, Keydets

By MIKE KEECH
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A pair of astute defensive decisions rendered especially sweet ‘Big Five’ victories for Virginia Tech and Virginia Military Institute Saturday. The Hokies wisely chose “to defend rather than try to rush” William and Mary quarterback Tom Rozantz en route to four interceptions and a 17-8 Tobacco Bowl victory, their first of the campaign.

In Lexington, Bob Thalan’s Keydet defenders swarmed all over Richmond to the tune of 25-6, ending a 10-year losing hex at the hands of the Spiders.

“I’ve got to credit the coaches a lot,” said senior VMI defensive tackle Dutch Goddard, a native Richmonder. “They came up with a defense that was effective (limited Spiders to 178 yards total offense) We seemed to be in the right place at the right time. It was a heluva effort by everybody.”

Smith, the same point malaise as Richmond, including 310 at Clemson.

Smith, 183-pound junior, was making his first 1977 appearance after a preseason shoulder injury and made the most of it plugging the holes of susceptibility in the secondary that had opened in previous three losses.

“IT seemed like (Rozantz) looked a long time at where he was going to throw,” said Smith explaining the victor’s interception success.

Windmuller’s two thiefs both came in his own end zone during the ferocious fourth quarter. His first interception, on a second-and-goal situation for the Tribe at the 4, is the one W& M Coach Jim Root will remember for a long time.

“If I had one call to make over again I’d call that one. Rozantz just threw behind the receiver. I’d just want that one over. Their defensive folks made some damn big plays in the second half,” said Root.

Linebacker Rick Razzano revealed that a team meeting last Monday did wonders for the Hokies. “The seniors called a team meeting and were airin’ our problems. We weren’t having any in practice. We had so many injuries the players were getting timid. We were lacking confidence.”

VIPI Coach Jimmy Sharpe did his best to make things better for his troops in preparing for William and Mary.

He understood everything we said,” said Root.

The Hokies hung up 172 yards total offense and the game’s MVP award on VPI.

Both teams were hampered by injuries to their leading rushers. VPI’s Ronco Coles managed only 22 yards suffering a sprained left ankle in the second quarter, while W&M’s Jim Kruis sustained a hip pointer.

Root has high praise for his defensive unit. Junior linebacker Jim Ryan led the strong effort with 10 tackles and 10 assists.

Linebacker Glen Jones and end Tim Cox paced VMI’s defensive master-piece. Jones recorded six tackles, two assists and a fumble recovery, while Cox checked in with seven tackles.

The Keydet attack did its share, particularly tailback Andre Gibson and quarterback Robby Clark of Pougoson. Gibson rambled for 178 yards on the first half, including a 69-yard touchdown that broke the Spiders’ backs.

Clark completed 7 of 14 passes for 127 yards despite the rain and saved his heroics afterwards his team is for real.

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