VPI Rediscovering Winning, 17-8

By JIM SPENCER
Virginia Pilot Sports Writer

RICHMOND—It was hard to tell the tears from the sweat on Jimmy Sharpe's face. He tried to light a cigarette. The match quivered in his hand.

"You look a little shaky and nervous," someone offered.

"If I have to be shakey and nervous to win, then I hope I stay that way," said Sharpe, choking on the emotion that came with Virginia Tech's 17-8 victory over William and Mary in the Tobacco Bowl Saturday. "I almost forgot what it feels like."

Until Saturday, his winless team seemed to have forgotten, too. But four interceptions and four recovered fumbles jostled their memories, and in the steamy Gobbler locker room they passed out cigars and vowed never to forget again.

"The sky's the limit now," chortled Henry Bradley, who recovered an onsided kick at the beginning of the second half. "The upper classmen on the team had a meeting with coach Sharpe this week. It lasted two and a half hours. He told us not to worry about anything but William and Mary. He said he'd do the rest of the worrying."

Bradley didn't look worried on the kickoff that opened the second half. Tech led, 3-0, at the time and was hoping to the Indians.

Placekicker Paul (Chile Bean) Engle bunted the ball just over the William and Mary forward wall, and Bradley raced downfield to snatch it at the William and Mary 42. Tech drove to the Indian seven but fumbled. Two plays later, however, Gary Smith picked off a Tommy Rozantz pass at the Tech 49 and the Gobbler went 51 yards for their first touchdown.

It took Tech five plays to go the last 10 yards, but after the Gobbler picked up a first down inside the William and Mary one, quarterback David Lamie fell in for the score.

William and Mary took the ensuing kickoff and drove to the Virginia Tech four where on second and goal free safety Dennis Windmuller intercepted Rozantz's pass in the end zone. "We knew we were going to see that particular pass at least five times in the game," said Windmuller.

"If I had just one thing I could have over in this ball game, it would have been that call," said Indian coach Jim Root.

But at the time there was no room for hindsight, and two plays later Lamie ran an option to left, cut back across the field and raced 77 yards for Tech's final score with 14:12 remaining in the game.

"Up to now I had almost minus yards rushing," said Lamie, a junior from Bristol, Tenn. "When I came here running was supposed to be my strength."

Running was certainly his strength on the touchdown. "We were supposed to seal inside and pitch out," Lamie said. "But nobody took me so I just turned it upfield and cut back against the grain."

That left time for some fourth quarter heroics by Rozantz and two more Tech interceptions. First, Gene Bunn stopped a William and Mary drive at the Gobbler's 25. Then, Rozantz ran 59 yards to set up the Indians' only score, a one-yard plunge

(See TECH, Page E8)

Continued from Page E1

by Keith Firmian. Finally, Windmuller tied a Tobacco Bowl record with his second interception of the day in the Tech end zone.

"I thought we were in until then," said Root.

William and Mary set a Tobacco Bowl record with 26 first downs as Rozantz passed for 184 yards and rushed for 83 more on a sore knee.

"I struggled with a decision whether to start Tommy," said Root. "He had fluid drained from his knee Thursday, and I don't know what that takes out of you, but it takes something."

The William and Mary coach agreed that the onside kick was one of the game's most important plays. "It was a great call," Root said. "The only thing better than the call was the execution."

Sharpe made the decision to use the onside kick after watching what William and Mary did the first time Tech kicked off.

"We felt like it was important to get something going in the first five minutes of the second half," he said.

So he went with a play that Bradley had practiced only once.

"I watched Paul kick the ball four or five times in practice and noticed that it jumped 10 or 15 yards down the field," Bradley said. "They let me try the play once and I caught the ball, then I went off to catch punts."