By BOB MOSKOWITZ
Daily Press Sports Writer

As the closing minutes ticked away Saturday afternoon, one press box wag looked ahead to this coming weekend. "Super Bowl 59 coming up," he quipped. "It can be the biggest crowd in state history and both teams could have been wipers."

Instead, Virginia Tech ended a two-season, six-game losing streak by dumping William and Mary 17-8 in Richmond's Tobbaco Bowl.

This Saturday, the I-3 Gobblers host 0-3 Virginia before a sellout (no more tickets are available) throng of some 41,000. The crowd will be second only to the 42,000 who watched Alabama in Blacksburg in 1969.

The meeting will be the 59th between the two schools. Unfortunately for the visitors, the contest finds Virginia Tech apparently a much-improved team on the way up. The Cavaliers are simply a team that has scored the fewest points in the Atlantic Coast Conference (seven) and yielded the most (157).

It is no wonder that steller Tech running back Roscoe Coles insisted late Saturday "we'll be ready." One of the more comforting developments from a Tech point of view was that the Gobblers fared well with Coles out of action virtually all of the second half.

Actually, he carried only 10 times the entire contest (for a paltry 22 yards). Insisting that his sprained ankle would not sideline him against UVA, Coles also emphasized that "we can run either side, not just mine."

For a while, it didn't appear to be true, but eventually, the Tech offense did contribute more than token gains. One of the game's ironies unfolded when a handful of running backs lined up to take the final kickoff of the contest.

Earlier, Tech had stung the Indians with a perfectly executed onsides kick that ultimately turned the game's momentum the Gobblers' way.

Then, in the waning moments, William and Mary had scored to produce what turned into the final count. Tech was prepared for an onsides kick.

Its lineup was without any interior linemen. Backup quarterbacks Mike Zouzalik and Jeff Marry were inserted along with running backs Mark Steadman and Eddie Lewis.

Lewis had been the Gobblers' leading rusher, except for quarterback David Lamie, who picked up 121 yards, 77 of which came on a long scoring run. Lewis gained 54 yards in 10 carries.

The precautionary move paid off and Steadman took the kick.

Mostly, the Gobblers were overjoyed at their ability to erase the sting of those season-opening losses to Texas A&M, Memphis State and Clemson.

"We overcame our mistakes this week," babbled tackle Greg Birtisch, at 6-5 and 240, the biggest Tech player on offense.

Birtisch also insisted that most of the players "didn't know" that the Gobblers would use that onsides kick to start the second half.

He also maintains "we knew we could run on them." It's too late to debate that now.

DAVID LAMIE
Helped Spark Gobblers