'Safety' Roscoe Coles Healthy for UVa-Tech Game

By DOUG DOUGHTY

If Virginia had sent a spy to Virginia-Tech's football practice field Friday, he would have come back with enough information to keep Cavaliers Coach Dick Bestwick awake half the night.

Playing quarterback for the Hokies was defensive back Gene Bunn, while 4,000-yard career gainer Roscoe Coles could be seen running down plays at safety.

"No joke," said Coach Jimmy Sharpe. "We were having a touch football game - the offense against the defense. We wanted to get all that non-contact stuff out of our system before the hitting starts tomorrow."

What was most remarkable was the presence of Coles at the practice. Two days ago, Sharpe said that if "the Virginia game were today, Roscoe wouldn't play." After the Hokies' back sprained an ankle against William and Mary, Coles worked Thursday and should see plenty of action if he doesn't make today's 1:20 start.

"I think the fact we're playing UVa helped me get better," said Coles, who made a game-saving tackle on an interception in last year's 14-10 Hokie win. "The truth be known, I can't afford to miss any game. I want to reach my goal of 1,200 yards."

So far, Coles has 233 yards rushing in four games and is suffering through his least-productive year since his freshmen season. The team, itself, has had a rocky start, losing its first three games before breaking through with a 17-8 victory last week over W&M.

Virginia's Bestwick, who probably wishes he had Gene Bunn at quarterback, will bring a punchless, 0-5 aggregation into Lane Stadium. While the two clubs, between them, have won just one of their last 14 games, today's clash has been declared a sellout, with 41,000 fans expected.

Something of a surprise is the 20-point odds favoring Tech. Realizing his team's offensive problems, Bestwick keeps insisting that Virginia is underrated defensively, although it has been outscored, 137-7.

"We've knocked 30 or 40 yards off our average (down to 386 yards a game) from last year," Bestwick reported, "and you can see that, as our defense on the field 25 more plays a game than most."

"I hate to dwell on this, but I was looking at my copy of 'Rickeff' (a national football rating publication) the other day and I see where Virginia is undefeated (and ranked 16th). Their opponents are a combined 4-22; ours are a combined 20-5."

It's no secret that Virginia has problems at quarterback, where freshman Bryan Shumock has been a big disappointment. "With (North Carolina State's) Johny Evans or (Duke's) Mike Dunn at quarterback — somebody who could make something happen by himself," said Bestwick, "I think we might be 3-2." (The questions about Tech's quarterback that hounded Sharpe when the Hokies were 6-3 virtually disappeared in wake of David Lamey's 77-yard touchdown run against William and Mary. Quarterback Lamey finished with 125 yards for the season and was named the Tobacco Festival's most valuable player.)

"Everybody needs to experience success and I think that's what happened to David," said Sharpe. "It's like when you go fishing, if you keep going and going and never catch any fish, sooner or later you won't want to go back."

There has been so much hub-bub over the Virginia-Virginia Tech game that VMi has almost been overlooked this week, although the Keydets have survived the crupper part of their schedule with a 2-2 record.

Now, the Keydets could be favored in their next six games, starting this afternoon against the Citadel in Lexington.

"There's no way we don't respect everybody we play," said VMi Coach Bob Thalman, who remembers how things were back in the dark ages at the Institute. "It's a great rivalry between two military schools — there aren't many of us left."

At one time, the game was billed as "The Military Classic of the South" and the winner still gets to keep the prestigious Silver Shake Trophy.

"At 3-2, the Citadel actually has a better record than VMi, with wins over Wofford, Western Carolina and Presbyterian sandwiched between a loss to Navy and last week's 23-7 setback at Delaware. The Bull-dogs do have the Southern Conference's leading passer, Marty Crosby, although Thalman said the Citadel may go with running back Wells this week.

"We're in the middle of the conference stats for passing defense," said Thalman, "but the 123 yards we've given up per game doesn't bother me that much, not when we've been up against quarterbacks like (William and Mary's) Tom Rozanza and Army's John Hannon."

Thanks to the win over Western Carolina, the Keydets are tied with Furman at 1-0 for the conference lead. WMi, whose only other conference game is with Furman, has counted wins against William and Mary and Richmond and a loss to East Carolina in the SC standings.

The true conference race is taking place in the Atlantic Coast Conference, with no less than five teams still claiming a legitimate shot at the title. N.C. State, a 5-1 overall and 5-0 in the conference, could take a giant step if it could get past North Carolina, 3-2 and 1-0, in Raleigh this afternoon, while Clemson travels to Duke in another key league game.

Duke is the third undefeated team in conference play at 1-0, while Clemson is 9-0-1, Maryland, which beat Clemson but lost to State, will visit Wake Forest.

In Virginia, Richmond appears to be mismatched against East Carolina in a Sat- urday night game, while William and Mary will take a much-needed week off.

Smaller games include Liberty Baptist at Bridgewater, Salisbury State at Madison- Emory and Henry at Randolph-Macon, Virginia State at Howard, Washington and Lee at Hampden-Sydney and Hampton Institu- tute at Norfolk State.

Ferrum College, fifth-ranked in the junior-college poll, left Thursday night by bus for an afternoon game at Hudson Val- ley.

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