Fitzgerald Is Versatile Player For Va. Tech Hokies

BLACKSBURG—Mickey Fitzgerald, 6-2, 251, sophomore tight end from Lynchburg would probably be the winner if Virginia Tech's football team gave out a prize for versatility.

In addition to playing tight end on offense, the E. C. Glass grad from Lynchburg has been used on the defensive line and played both ways against Texas A & M. When Tech takes the field Saturday in the Homecoming clash against nationally-ranked Florida State, Fitzgerald may be the starting fullback.

Fitzgerald, in his second year as a starter, is known for his total effort, devasting blocking strength and all-around hustle.

The sophomore made his debut at fullback against Kentucky with a few plays. Did the debut impress head coach Jimmy Sharpe? "So much that I'm working him full time at fullback," said Sharpe.

The coach's current plans call for Fitzgerald to share time at fullback with junior 5-11, 190 Dickie Holway of Westlake, O. who has started every game this season.

Fitzgerald's departure from the tight end position necessitated some reshuffling. Moved up to form the three deep at tight end were freshmen Jerry Onhaizer of Virginia Beach, John Drinkard of Fitzgerald's home town and Steve Wirt of Alexandria.

Playing the position always has been Drinkard's assignment but both Onhaizer and Wirt normally are fullbacks. Sharpe observed that available personnel at this point in the season are being made to make sure Tech does the best job that it can do for the rest of the campaign and the changes are not necessarily binding. Next spring both Onhaizer and Wirt likely will be back at their fullback spot.

Knupp, Fox Out

The Hokies, plagued with injuries all season, will be without injured starting defensive end Kent Knupp, hurt in the Kentucky game. Knupp has a bad ankle sprain. Freshman lineman Bill Fox of Clarksville, Va., was injured and has undergone surgery that will keep him out of football for the rest of the season.

"Sleepy" Johnson missed some practices due to a death in the family. Sharpe commented, "When it rains, it pours."

The coach said that Saturday's opponent, Florida State, has "real fine speed, but I won't say they're faster than Kentucky." While FSU is known as an excellent passing team, he said, they threw only one pass during the first half against Auburn.

He recalled that Tech gained over 400 yards against the Seminoles but lost on a bomb in the final seconds.

Sharpe said the play of freshman Chris Albrittain of Arlington has been a pleasant surprise and has aided the defense since senior Bill Housewright can be shifted out of his noseguard position and can play tackle.

In another change that will take effect with the Florida State game, the coach moved freshman fullback Lewis Stuart of Floyd to "abandoned end" described as an assignment similar to that of linemanbacker.

The coach continued, "We need help right now. We need to finish strong. We have four games left. If we win all four we'll finish strong. We have to stop the turnovers. We've had 38 fumbles this year and 12 turnovers in the past two weeks."

Three Quarterbacks

The Hokies, after using three quarterbacks against Kentucky, partly due to an injury last week to starter David Lamie, will do about the same this week.

Sharpe repeated, "I told all three quarterbacks, you're number one. I'll go with one and then if he isn't getting the job done, I'll go to the bullpen just like a manager in baseball and bring in another one."

Lamie, whose injured right thumb now is healed, presumably will start, to be followed if need by either of two redshirt sophomores, Mike Zouazik or Don LaRue.

The coach was gratified by the performance of strong side lineman Rick Razzano against the Wildcats. Razzano has 20 tackles, ten assists, an incredibly high-coaches rating of 156 points and won the team's Bulldog Award for the hardest hit of the game.

Tech returns to the wishbone formation Saturday after trying the I formation extensively against Kentucky. While not ruling out the use of some I-type plays, many of which had already been in use by the team, modified to its wishbone orientation, he said, "We're going back to what we know and believe in."