Bill Brill

Hokies' Record Follows the Figures

Making statistical comparisons between different football teams is normally a good way to prove nothing. Figures do have a tendency to deceive, if not to lie.

But in the case of Virginia Tech's beleaguered football team, the figures tell a cold, hard story of what has happened to the Hokies.

To wit:

In 1974, Coach Jimmy Sharpe inherited the remnants of the worst defensive team in all of college football. Yet Sharpe’s first team, after permitting 115 points in the first three games, became respectable on defense on the way to winning four of the last seven.

That ’74 team permitted opponents an average of 363 yards per game. The present 1-6-1 Hokies are giving up more yards per outing, 369.

Sharpe brought in the wishbone attack in that first year. With Bruce Arians brought back from oblivion to play quarterback, Tech scored 278 points. Only two Tech teams, one of them way back in 1905, ever scored more.

That Tech team averaged 368 yards per game. Since then, even with 8-3 and 6-5 records the next two years, the Hokies have been less productive offensively.

Here are the offensive trends on a per game basis, in each case starting with 1974 and going through this season:

**RUSHING:** 266 yards per game, 279, 251, 188.

**PASSING:** 102, 62, 59, 84.

**TOTAL OFFENSE:** 368, 341, 309, 272.

There is another key offensive figure—turnovers. In each of Sharpe’s first three seasons, Tech had fewer turnovers than it forced from the opponents.