Respect WVU Aim Against Gobblers

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very limited work between games. Still, he performs well on Saturdays. If he's this good with injuries, you have to wonder how good he would be healthy.

To be sure, there are other Mountaineers who come in for their coach's praise.

One is senior free safety Tom Pridemore, who suffered a sprained knee in a 38-16 triumph over Temple. That was the Mountaineers' last taste of victory.

Despite his injury, Pridemore has five intercepted passes for 118 yards and in the latest NCAA statistics is tied for eighth in the country.

What Saturday's Mountaineer Day clash with the Gobblers gets down to is "that we're fighting to save our respect," says Cignetti.

"Every year against Tech it's a dogfight," he says. The reference most certainly is to last year's 24-7 loss in Blacksburg where seven WVU turnovers (five interceptions) proved disastrous.

While senior quarterback Dan Kendra is hitting nearly 55 per cent of his passes, he has also thrown 15 interceptions. "He has not played well the last couple of weeks... Turnovers have hurt us. We have to eliminate them."

Kendra, says the coach, "is throwing into coverage that's too tight." On the other hand, Cignetti points out that interceptions "are a combination of things — coverage, the rush, many little things."

Bad Knee No Bother To Cignetti

By BOB MOSKOWITZ
Daily Press Sports Writer

If the straits are dire in Blacksburg, they are virtually the same in Morgantown.

Indeed, while Virginia Tech suffers from a 1-6-1 ledger, the West Virginia University Mountaineers have spiraled from a red-hot start to a tailspin through four successive losses.

Understandably, Frank Cignetti, who coaches the Gobblers' hosts this Saturday, talks of injuries as much as anything else.

"We had a good team against Richmond and Maryland," he says of the two early-season triumphs. Now, of course, the ledger is 4-5 and through the last four outings the defense has been shredded for 162 points.

Still, when second-year coach Cignetti finishes the seemingly endless list of his striken ranks, it is from among the defenders that he singles out one player.

Middle guard Joe Jelich, raves Cignetti, "is one of the most courageous — if not the most courageous — athletes I've encountered."

A doubtful commodity even before the season began because of knee surgery, the bruising junior has played with pain almost throughout his career.

"There are very few kids who would play the way this one has," says his obviously impressed coach.

The nearest the 224-pounder out of Ravenswood, W.Va., ever came to considering giving up the game was this Summer. "He asked to be red-shirted because of the surgery."

Instead, Jelich found out he could play again — And how!

"He is in a class by himself, when it comes to courage." Although Jelich missed two games because of the knee, "he still plays extremely well."

"He's the only dominating player we have on defense. Yes, he's our security blanket," says Cignetti.

What draws a good deal of the plaudits is the fact that Jelich "does See Respect, Page 34, Columns 2-3