By ED RICHARDS

BLACKSBURG — Lane Stadium seemed more like the North Pole Saturday afternoon, but Virginia Tech took to the weather like Eelkims.

The Gobblers, despite a chilly factor which at one time dipped to 30 degrees below zero, didn't need any fires to light up their lives as they romped to a surprisingly easy 27-7 victory over rival Virginia Military Institute.

It took over one hour before gametime for workers to clear the field of ice, but once they did the Gobblers were ready to work.

The Techmen, a disappointing 2-7-1 coming into the game, put the game virtually out of reach in the first half by racing to a 21-0 lead. Several hundred patrons from the crowd of some 10,000 felt the same way and started heading home. Besides the freezing temperatures, winds whipping up to 85 miles an hour made it a miserable day in the stands.

The Gobblers had a lot to play for, most importantly to dedicate the game to reserve fullback Bob Vorhies, who died of an apparent heart attack Monday night.

The Gobblers also wanted to show that they're better than their record indicates, and whipping the Big Five champions handily was a convincing argument in that matter.

The Keydets had come into the game with two championships under their belts and an impressive 7-3 record. Besides having already wrapped up the State title with victories over William and Mary, Richmond and Virginia, the Lexington outfit had earned a share of the Southern Conference crown.

It wasn't to be their day, however. A tenacious Tech defense and another 100-yard rushing effort by freshman fullback Mickey Fitzgerald saw to that.

Tech's defense, led by 245-pound senior tackle Bill Housewright and 241-pound junior end James Johnson, kept the normally high-scoring Keydets in a deep freeze almost the entire game, yielding a mere 256 yards in total offense.

The Gobbler defenders yielded only once, allowing VMI to go 80 yards for a touchdown on a 15-play drive to start the third quarter.

Reserve freshman fullback Butch See VPI's D-3, Columns 5-6.

Virginia Tech

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Mickey Fitzgerald twists way into end zone
Gobbler Fullback Wades Through VMI Tacklers In 27-7 Victory

Continued From D-1:
Hostetter picked up 58 yards during the march, but fullback Stevie Oddie took it in from the 1. Craig Jones' kick narrowed the count to 21-7 with 8:02 left in the third quarter and it appeared the Keydets might be on their way to a comeback.

Tech's defensive line, however, stymied their bitter rivals thereafter.

Fitzgerald, a 251-pounder, must have seemed more like an ice cream truck when it came to trying to stop him. He didn't need any anti-freeze to keep going at full throttle, either, as he gained 104 yards on 32 carries and scored three times from a yard out.

It marked the fourth straight game that Fitzgerald has gone over the 100-yard mark.

Quarterback David Lammie guided the Gobbler passing masterfully, picking up 40 yards rushing and keeping the Keydets off balance with some nifty fakes in running the Wishbone attack. The junior field general gave his mates a 14-0 lead with 11:03 left in the second quarter by sweeping right end for an eight-yard tally.

"Everybody thought it was cold, but it didn't make that much difference. We knew what we had to do," said Lammie.

"VMI was supposed to have a tough defense against the rush, but when you've got 'The Hulk,' (Fitzgerald) you don't have to worry too much about him." Promised proving crucial in the game. Despite the front-line weather, the Gobblers held on to the ball like glue and didn't cough up the ball once, a first this year.

The Keydets weren't that fortunate, turning over the ball three times in the first half. Tabby High walk-on Tommy Windmuller intercepted the first pass of the game by Popovici High product Bobby Clark on VMI's first possession.

The Gobblers didn't capitalize on that miss, but a fumble recovery at the VMI 42 by Housewright on the Keydets' second seven set up stage for their first touchdown, a bullhorn one-yard plunge by Fitzgerald with 2:31 left in the first period.

A fumble recovery by Johnson at the VMI 14 midway in the second quarter also put the hosts in great field position for their third TD.

Tech's defense showed its dominance early, stopping VMI on a fourth-and-one at the Tech 31 with the score 7-0. The Gobblers wound up throwing the Keydets' Andre Gibson for an eight-yard loss.

The defensive gem by Johnson also fired up the offense, which then proceeded to go 57 yards for Tech's second tally. A 36-yard pass from Lammie to halfback Larry Pullen triggered the march.

The seven points was the lowest number the Gobblers have surrendered this season, but Windmuller wasn't convinced it was their best performance.

"We were shooting for a shutout," said the stellar junior defensive back.

"It's been a long year for us, but we never quit. I'm hoping what we have done the past two weeks will carry over to next year. I know I'll be able to come back with a smile on my face."