Hokies’ Baron finds his level

By SCOTT BLANCHARD

BLACKSBURG — "We wuz robbed," is a timeless sports quote. So, it seems, is, "I was under-recruited."

College football is well populated with players trying to prove they should have had higher-caliber recruiters after them in high school. Virginia Tech defensive tackle Jim Baron, chased mainly by Bail State and Northern Illinois as a high school senior, may have a case.

In two games as a Hokie back-up, the junior college transfer has 10 tackles and team highs in sacks (four) and quarterback hurries (seven).

"I really didn’t have to prove anything to myself," said Baron, who transferred one season from Triton Junior College in River Grove, Ill. "I think, without a doubt, if you looked at me in high school, you could see I had the potential to be what I am now."

The 6-foot-4, 258-pound native of Maywood, Ill., had to postpone his big-time debut because, he said, he was three or five credit hours short of the 48 transferrable hours necessary to enroll at Tech and be eligible to play in 1993.

After passing 12 hours at New River Community College — and after enduring a fall without football — Baron enrolled at Tech in January. The feeling kind of all by my lonesome," he said. "I just kind of stayed away. I went to one quarter of one game. I couldn’t bear it."

He didn’tiberate through his first Division I-A college game, getting three sacks against Arkansas State.

"I always envision myself before a game doing big things," he said.

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Baron

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[but I really don’t think about that much," Baron said. "Things work themselves out. It just sort of happened." Baron, a former Junior Olympics double-gold medalist in Greco-Roman wrestling, figures his mat work enhanced his football mobility. After attending four schools since leaving Donald E. Gavit High School, traveling across the line of scrimmage is about as far as he wants to go anymore.

"I’m happy where I am, and I wouldn’t change a thing," he said.

LINEUP CHANGES? Expect offensive line brothers T.J. and Todd Washington to play more against Boston College, said Tech coach Frank Beamer. One or both may even start.

Beamer praised true freshman Todd’s work at center against Southern Miss. Asked whether starting center Billy Conaty might be moved back to tackle (he started 12 games there last year) to allow Washington to start, Beamer said, "It’s not something we want to do right now. ... There’s always a chance."

Line coach J.B. Grimes said 18th-ranked Tech could move starting tackle Mike Bianchin to the left side to back up Hagood, who took 89 of 92 snaps against Southern Miss. T.J. Washington, a third-year sophomore behind Bianchin, might then get the call at right tackle.

Against the Old Dominion, Washington and Blanchin each played 46 snaps.

"T.J., physically, is what you’re looking for," Grimes said. "But T.J.’s a sophomore, and he has sophomoric tendencies at times mentally. That’s what we’ve got to overcome there."

Grimes said he wants to do a better job of resting his starters; guards Damien McMahon and Chris Malones, for example, played 52 and 87 snaps, respectively. The Hokies had planned to substitute early against Southern Miss, but their 14-point first-quarter deficit and the relatively mild weather (it was 78 degrees at game time) canceled that plan, Grimes said.

SCHOLARSHIPS: Beamer has awarded scholarships to holdover Joe Shields, defensive end Chris Peduzzi and rover Danny Osborne.

Osborne worked his way onto the two-deep roster; Shields and Peduzzi, Beamer said, "are seniors who have put a lot into our program." Tech has 83 players on scholarship, two fewer than the NCAA limit.

"I’d like to be at 85 if you feel like you’ve got 85 good investments," Beamer said.

BC LOSS: Joe Kamara, a fifth-year senior at cornerback, quit the team following Boston College’s opening-game loss to Michigan, coach Dan Henning said Monday. Kamara had 149 tackles (67 last year, sixth on the team) and his lone 1993 interception came against Virginia Tech.

"It didn’t seem like his heart was in it," Henning said.

Sophomore Daryl Porter, the only true freshman to play in BC’s secondary last year, probably will start in place of Kamara, Henning said.

PRESSURE: Tech sacked Boston College quarterback Glenn Foley once last year as Foley passed for 448 yards and three touchdowns in the Eagles’ 48-34 victory. Hokies defensive tackle J.C. Price says Tech needs a better performance Saturday against what he calls probably the Big East Football Conference’s best offensive line.

That line,guarded by tackles and left guard, scored for the Hokies (6-0) in the sixth minute on an assist from junior Michelle Todd. Radford is 2-2.

Virginia opened its fall football season with an eight-stroke victory over Virginia Tech in the Kiawah Intercollegiate tournament in Kiawah Island, S.C.

The Cavaliers finished with a 11-under-par 853 total on the par-72 Osprey Point Golf Course. The Hokies edged Coastal Carolina by a stroke for third.

Trey Sones of Central Florida was the medalist at 11-under 205, followed by Lewis Chitengwa (209) and Simon Cooke (210) of UVa.

Virginia Tech’s Brian Sharp tied for fifth at 212, and Curtis Deal was 10th at 213.

In other sports in the region:

The Virginia men’s soccer team brings a No. 1 national ranking to Blacksburg today to take on Virginia Tech. The Cavaliers, who never have lost to a Tech varsity team, meet the Hokies at 4 p.m.

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The Virginia Tech women’s soccer team won a school-record sixth consecutive game, beating Radford 1-0 in Blacksburg.

Freshman Rachel Hau scored for the Hokies (6-0) in the sixth minute on an assist from junior Michelle Todd. Radford is 2-2.

Etc.: Tech has sold 26,619 tickets for the Sept. 22 game against West Virginia and is holding about 20,000 for students, several dozen of whom already are camped near the ticket office in anticipation of student ticket pick-up Thursday and Friday. Another 1,853 tickets, plus whatever the students don’t take, will be available to the public. After losing about 800 seats to new handicapped seating and without bleachers to provide 3,000 extra seats. Lane Stadium’s capacity is about 49,000.

Boston College has sold out renovated 44,500 Alumni Stadium on a season-ticket basis, said Eagles assistant athletic director Jim O’Neill. ... Cornerback William Yarrow is questionable for the BC game with a sore shoulder.