Wake’s Mills: ‘I’m Too Old To Carry Grudge’

By JERRY RATCLIFFE  Senior Sports Editor

The last time Wake Forest stepped on a football field it was destroyed 40-10 by Virginia Tech.

After the game, Demon Deacons Coach Chuck Mills was upset over the fact that Tech had scored 23 points in the fourth quarter in order to attract attention from Tangerine Bowl officials. "That's okay," said an angry Mills, "they have to come down to our place to open the season next year."

Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe feels that Mills will use last year's to motivate his players this season.

But if those are Mills' plans, he won't admit it.

"After a game when you lose, you get upset at losing, upset at yourself and you say things that at the moment you don't have much control over," the Deacon coach said late Tuesday. "I'm not too much on revenge. It doesn't pay to be vengeful unless you know you're gonna win."

"Heck, I'm getting too old to carry grudges."

Mills begins his fourth season with perhaps the most talent to wear the black and gold in over half a decade. Wake is always tough in the early season and the victory over bowl team N.C. State last year proves that.

The Deacons last three games by a shocking total of only eight points.

And the Deacons lost two others by a mere touchdown. So combined with tech's opening game jinx and Wake's talent, it will be no easy rime for the Gobblers.

Tech's physical philosophy on football and the wishbone itself poses special problems for Wake Forest and Mills will be the first to admit it.

"Tech is an experienced team, but what's more, they are a successful, experienced team. We're concerned with their physical prowess. They are just a physical football team."

Mills notes that the wishbone is a problem in itself since "it forces you to break your normal pattern of preparation for your defensive game play. They're just like any team off the beaten path in their style of play and it takes adjustments and adjustments take time."

Since Wake faces the veer offense more than anything else, adjustments have to be made.

"After last year's game plan to stop Tech's wishbone, I think we had better revise our defensive plans completely," Mills jested.

"Tech is going to be big and tough," he speculates. "Then, with tongue-in-cheek he adds, "We're going to take a vote the day before the game to see who wants to play."

One key to the game for Wake Forest will be to try and stop Tech's awesome running game with the front line which is experienced and has depth. The team as a whole, though, has a lack of speed which could hurt them against the Hokies.

"From seasons in the past, a team that does not have a lot of depth," adds Mills.

The kicking game could be important and neither team has much experience back in that department.

Tech's offense could be more explosive this season since quarterback Mitchel Barnes can throw the football well. I'd say that if the kid throws the ball well and would want to establish a passing game, then we would be a good team to experience on," says Mills, almost forgetting that he has Bill Armstrong in his secondary.

Armstrong is an All-American candidate who has become a near-unanimous choice by pre-season publications as the best free safety in the country.

"The key for us will probably be, that if we are able to match with them physically we'll be able to do a pretty good job. We're not very physical, but we can't avoid their physicalness—and we can't let it intimidate us."

The key offensive question for Wake is the fullback slot. Chuck Gaines, owner of 829 yards last season, is now with the New York Jets and his departure left a sizeable void.

Jim Mach, a senior who started two years ago, will not be able to play, Mills told us Tuesday. "He's out and won't play," noted Mills.

That leaves sophomore Stan Rolark, coming off knee surgery.