Hokie Ranks Depleted

Injuries Concern Sharpe

By DAVID J. BISSET
Sports Writer

Jimmy Sharpe believes his team can be nationally ranked, but before this year's Gobbler can be recognized as a "Top Twenty Team", they must win. That means win over Wake Forest in Saturday's season opener.

"We've never won a season opener since I've been here and that's one of the many goals that I hope we accomplish," declared Coach Jim Sharpe.

"I'm hoping that we'll be able to put on pads and get some work done today so that our kids will be ready on Saturday."

"Let's get off on the right foot!"
That's Sharpe's poignant message to the Virginia Tech football team this week.

The Gobbler have a winning tradition, but it certainly hasn't been built, at least in recent years, by playing efficiently in the opening game of the season, or in the month of September, for that matter.

So Saturday night's opener at Wake Forest is a season in itself for the Hokies.

"Our goal has been to make steady progress," Sharpe points out, "and an opening game win would meet that criterion."

"I'm kind of looking forward to the opener but I'm more concerned with the injury list."

"Besides that, our kids have been hit with the virus and we're trying desperately to get some twenty members healthy."

"I wish I could say that I'm looking forward to the game, but with the kids sick my thought is just getting them well. Then, we'll worry about the game."

"I'd like to go down there and whip 'em, but they'll be after us since we blew them out in the final game of the season."

"I know that Coach (Chuck) Mills was upset last season when we scored 23 points in the final period to romp over them 40-10, but bowl officials usually don't pick teams unless they score and play excellent defense."

"And no doubt, he'll use that 40-10 score as a psychological weapon to motivate his troops."

"I think that if I were him and had been beaten soundly and played that team in the season opener that I would use it as a weapon," he declared.

"But right now, I need a miracle man to get our boys well so that we can prepare our team for Saturday," he concluded.

TOM BEASLEY
MIKE STOLLINGS

"Of course that first "W" means a lot to the team and it gives us more self-confidence in what we do."

"Besides it's always great to win. Everybody is in a good mood and the season is then off to a good start."

"Our goal is to make steady progress and that includes winning over Wake," he declared.

"But we've been hurt with injuries which began a week ago and some of our key personnel are question marks right now."

"Tom (Beasley) injured his calf muscle last week and he's a doubtful starter. Then, there's Mike Stollings, who may miss the season entirely and from there it goes on and on."

"We haven't had a scrimmage practice in a long time because of all of these injuries," Sharpe remarked.

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Concerned Over Injuries