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Coles finds advantage in blocking

Tech's Roscoe Coles

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Roscoe Coles might have found the secret in the whirring of a camera projector this past summer.

Certainly he failed to find the right spot to run for a first down last year when West Virginia held off Virginia Tech at the end for a 10-7 win.

Had the Hokies won that game, they likely would have gone to a post season bowl. But Coles, on a fourth and one situation in West Virginia territory, was hit almost immediately when he went for the first down.

Tech might have rolled to a game winning touchdown if Coles had made the first down. That is speculation. What isn't speculation is the reason Coles, who rushed for 1,045 yards, was unable to pick up the 36 inches required against the Mounties.

"I think they overshifted in the West Virginia game," said Coles. "If I had been a better blocker, they would have had to play balanced and I might have made it."

Coles discovered the secret this summer watching game films. "I noticed it first and then Coach (Jimmy) Sharpe said something to me about it," Coles recalled.

Now Coles is set on being the complete player. He wants to be a good blocker in addition to being Tech's top offensive threat this year.

"I've stressed blocking to myself," said Coles. "It helps the other running back and our offense won't be going one way.

"Last year a lot of teams over pursued me to the right side.

"This year they won't be able to guess as much. The guy on the other side will be doing (gaining yards) what I was doing last year if they do overshift."

Last year Coles' yardage was a new Tech rushing record. It makes one wonder what will happen this year if the opponents can't keep the Virginia Beach junior under control.

"I think I can improve on it," said Coles of his 1,045 yards from last year.

"But it's not necessary for me to do so. I'd like to gain over 1,000 yards, but if the defense pursues me, it's O.K. as long as our backs pick up over 3,000 yards for the season."

Coles made honorable mention on some All-American teams last year. This season he could wind up with just a bit more mention like some second and third team All-American squads. This is providing his running is as good as it was last year.

All this brought up the opener Saturday night at Wake Forest. The Gobblers crushed Wake 40-10 last year in the season finale and the Deacons accused Tech of pouring it on in the last quarter.

"I'm sure Wake will be playing this game like it was for the world's championship," said Coles.

"But we'll play it like it was the world's championship too. We want them (Wake) to be good because we can't improve unless they are."

Coles says 11-0 is the goal of Tech. Last year the Hokies put a 9-2 goal on their season after two losses and only the West Virgina Virginia failure kept Tech from achieving that mark.

"No coach has really said this is our goal," said Coles of the 11-0 season. "But I'm sure that sometime before Friday one of the coaches will put it on the board.

"But we (the players) have stressed 11-0 and we can't do that without beating Wake Forest," he added.

Coles is certainly a threat to make that come true.