SPORTVIEW
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For Openers

VIRGINIA TECH HASN'T won an opening game of any season since 1967 when a right fair squad of Hokies, quarter-tackled by Al Kincaid and boasting an All-American defensive back in ill-fated Frank Loria, opened the season with a 13-8 victory over Maryland.

Since then, it's been nothing but second best on the scoreboard for Tech in opening games. Coaches tend to become sensitive about it and insisted, there was no malice in the Deacons' victories over N.C. State and North Carolina last season.

Chuck Mills, a cigar-chomping fellow with a quick delivery of one-liners, won a lot of games in his first two years as the coach of the Deacons. So last year's 3-4 record was a giant step forward for Mills and the Deacons.

The fact is the Deacons came close to being a good team last year — until injuries, lack of speed and lack of depth caught up with Wake Forest. After the first five games the Deacons were 1-4, but the four defeats were by margins of seven points, two, one and two points.

This year, the Deacons return nine starters from the offensive unit and nine starters from the defensive unit. Wake has two real good "uns" in safety Bill Armstrong and 245-pound offensive tackle Jackie Robinson. What's more, Mills says Wake Forest recruited its best crop of freshmen. Mills talks in terms of the Deacons being "respectable" (Meaning winners) this season.

Early September 'Bowl' Game

MILL IS PLACING as much emphasis on tomorrow night's game as Sharpe. In the final game of the '75 season, Tech, after spotting the Deacons 10 points early in the first quarter, rolled to a 40-19 victory over the Deacons at Lane Stadium.

With less than a half-minute remaining on the scoreboard clock, and the Tech second-stringers on the march, the Hokies called time out to steal the ball and then scored a touchdown. Mills' hucksters were exposed to view. The Wake coach thought that last Tech TD was guilty of unnecessary injury; that Sharpe had committed coughedly lese majeste in deliberately "rubbing it up" on the badly beaten Deacons.

Now Wake Forest had beaten Virginia's defenseless Cavaliers, 66-21, and, in the doing, had a total offense of 588 yards. But Sharpe's men, who were running over Virginia. For one thing, the NCAA's limiting traveling squads to 48 players last year made it impossible for him to put third-stringers on the field, and his second-stringers were so much better than the Cavaliers. Then, too, the Deacons, after leading 50-7 at the half, scored only 16 points (to Virginia's 14) in the second half.

Sharpe said he wasn't intentionally running up the score on Wake Forest. It was just that his second-stringers, who d marched from their 22, deserved an opportunity to score.

It seems of little difference, however, whether a team is beaten, 34-7, or 46-10. Or why a team, with a lead, should pass up a scoring opportunity. But losing coaches sometimes think otherwise.

The Wake Forest coaches expressed the belief Tech, being considered along with Wake Tech for the Peach Bowl, was hopeful of impressing bowl officials with a top-heavy score over the Deacons.

A Wake Forest assistant coach, on route from his sperrer's berth in the press box to the Wake Forest dressing room, said, "We'll give 'em a bowl game next September."

Well, "bowl" time's here — early — and it would behoove the Hokies to be on their best Wishbone behavior.