Gobblers Invade Den Of Deacons; Spiders At Tulsa

By ED RICHARDS
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Virginia Tech's Roscoe Coles loved last year's game against Wake Forest and he hopes to come away with the same fond feelings after tonight's 1976 grid opener against the Deacons.

The No. 2-numbered Virginia Beach product was just too much for the Deacons to handle in a 40-10 rout in Blacksburg last November...and he could make the difference after tonight's 7:30 kickoff in Winston-Salem.

Tech Head Coach Jimmy Sharpe calls the 5-foot-9 and 168-pounder "the little Magic Man." The Deacons weren't denying that after Coles went into a Houdini act and exploded for three touchdowns and 143 yards rushing in the 1975 season finale.

The Deacons have had 10 months to devise a special defense to stop the elusive speedster, but that remains to be seen.

Another member of the "Big Five" breaking into action tonight is the University of Richmond, set for a 7:30 (EST) date against pass-happy Tulsa of the Missouri Valley Conference.

In games involving Southern Conference squads, Furman ventures to North Carolina State, Appalachian State journeys to South Carolina and Western Carolina hosts Presbyterian in night combat while Marshall entertains Morehead State in the afternoon.

The Gobblers aren't going into their opener with a controversy at quarterback. Former Southampton standout Mitch Barnes is definitely the man they're looking to for leadership.

Last year there was considerable debate whether the now-departed Phil Rogers or Barnes was the most effective at running the show. Sharpe went with Rogers nearly all season, but he came under fire on several occasions for such a choice.

Barnes, the Most Valuable Performer in last year's Oyster Bowl victory over William and Mary, is considered an adept passer but not a breakaway threat in running the Gobblers' wishbone attack.

However, the Courtland, Va., native fooled everybody by scampering 43 yards to break the Indians' back in last year's Oyster Bowl.

The Spiders are counting on their defense to silence the big guns for Tulsa.

Part of that job belongs to Denbigh graduate Billy Cheshire, a 6-3 and 250-pound sophomore.