Virginia Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe is building an irresistible force with a low-key pitch.

Sharpe intentionally refused to allow the Gobblers to “leave it on the practice field” in getting ready for last Saturday’s opening game at Wake Forest.

And after the Hokies had soundly trounced the Demon Deacons, Sharpe said matter-of-factly, “We’re not yet what we’re going to be. We’ve got high goals, but we’ve still got a lot of things to correct. We’re just going to continue to work at improving each day.”

He expects that, and the Gobblers very likely will go with more poise and confidence and make fewer mistakes at Texas A&M in game number two, next Saturday.

Although the score on the board was rather modest, 23-6, it was a solid win, with several noteworthy aspects: the Gobblers unabashedly overcame an early mistake that could have been crucial; the ground defense, which was supposed to be very good, was even better than expected; the kicking game, an Achilles’ heel two years ago, was solid and unveiled three young, unproven performers: punter George Roberts and placement specialists Paul (Chile Bean) Engle and Eric King; the offense demonstrated the kind of fundamental running game that wins; and for the first time in many moons the Hokies exhibited good depth in all but a few positions.

For good measure, Mitch Barnes, senior quarterback with allegedly limited physical ability, and Moses Foster, another senior playing his first game as a wide receiver, hooked up on as classical a TD pass as Hokie-land ever has seen.

The play of the night, however, might have been Tech’s first td. It wasn’t spectacular, but it was important in more ways than one, not the least of which was that it put Tech firmly in command.

In what many fans would consider a passing situation (third and goal at the six), Barnes ran an option, executing a perfectly timed pitch to Roscoe (Two, too) Coles, who, half limping, scooted just inside the goal marker.

“That’s what he’s supposed to do when his number is called,” a smiling Sharpe remarked calmly, inferring that Coles’ determination to score obviously was paramount to pain at that moment.

Aside from Barnes’ execution and Coles’ utter determination, the play succeeded because the Gobblers had plied a time-tested axiom: make them respect you up the middle, and the outside will open up. Fullbacks Paul Adams, George Heath and Billy King pounded the middle 29 times for 129 yards, and the outside play was there when it was most needed.

Defensively, what’s to be said? The Hokie “D”, a sieve-like figment of imagination three years ago, simply gets stingier with every ounce of added experience. And three of Tech’s best, tackle Tom Beasley, noseguard Bill Housewright and cornerback Henry Bradley, didn’t start. In fact, the latter two didn’t play, period.

Beasley, after watching freshman Doug McDougald acquit himself exceptionally well, entered the fray and again proved that he’s a big-play man.

Now the Gobblers’ relentlessly building, irresistible force is slated to collide with Texas A&M’s immovable object, major college football’s number one defense in 1975.

One thing appears certain: Sharpe will have the Hokies poised and confident with a low-key, high-goal objective of winning.