Three days and counting toward the kickoff of Texas A&M’s football season. What is there about it that stirs excitement inside almost everyone? Perhaps it’s the expectancy of being in on what might become something big or which might become a bust. Whatever, it’s the thing in this part of the country which excites more people than anything else each year.

Coach Emory Bellard had his first press conference of the year dealing with this football season Tuesday. The thoughts he left me with were that if A&M and Saturday’s opponent, Virginia Tech, each held up a mirror it simply would reflect each other. They are very similar football teams.

LEST YOU THINK this is not a good football team, let us remind you that the head coach, Jim Sharpe, is an Alabama and Bear Bryant protege. Under him, five of Sharpe’s eight assistants are former Alabama players and one each from LSU, Arkansas and South Carolina.

And Virginia Tech, if not favored, does have one advantage. The Gobblers played Wake Forest last weekend and won easily, 23-6. Coach Sharpe took 70 players and played most of them.

Virginia Tech’s forte is defense, like the Aggies. The Gobblers held Wake Forest to only 95 yards rushing and 46 of that came on the one scoring play near the end of the game with the reserves in action. They gave up 101 air yards for a total of 196 for the game.

Meanwhile, on the offensive end, Va. Tech racked up 350 total yards of offense, hit five of seven passes for about 70 yards and one touchdown, and had the kicking game together with three field goals, the longest 39, by Paul Engle.

The Gobblers appeared to have the whole game plan together.

“VIRGINIA TECH WAS 8-3 a year ago and almost all the team is back. They played reserves a great deal of the time Saturday against Wake Forest, had complete control of the game and are very good on defense. The best thing they do is come after you,” Bellard said.

“Coach Sharpe has said he thinks they’ve got a chance to finish in the top 10 nationally on defense. And I believe if they beat us they’ll have a great chance to go undefeated. The Gobblers also think this so they’ll really be after us. They have the advantage in that they’ve already played a game.

“Virginia Tech runs the wishbone with options, passes effectively although not much and counts on the passing making big plays for them. They beat Auburn and Houston last year, plus six others. Roscoe Coles is a very dangerous runner and they have a good fullback in Paul Adams,” Bellard concluded.

Coles, a slythry, winsy runner who weighs only 188 pounds, ran last year for 1,045 yards and 10 touchdowns. He carried the ball 194 times, a lot for such a small player. Adams added another 788 on 176 tries. The new quarterback is Mitchell Barnes. He probably is a better passer than runner. He hit 14-28 last year in a subbing role. Coles was the leading rusher last week with 68 yards. But Virginia