Bestwick Feels UVa Blew Chances

By DENNIS LATTA
Sports Writer

CHARLOTTESVILLE — University of Virginia fans have stopped wondering when their team will win again. They’re beginning to wonder if it will ever win again.

William and Mary overpowered, outplayed and beat UVa, 14-0, Saturday in one of the few games the Cavaliers were given a chance to win this year. Virginia made costly mistakes and didn’t look like the improved team the home crowd hoped to see.

The Indians surprised people last week with their offensive line controlling VMI, but they had an instant replay against the Cavaliers. W&M didn’t beat Virginia since 1969, and they did it three and four years at a time this year.

The Indians’ Keith Fimian ground out a bruising 164 yards with 34 carries. He didn’t have a gain of over 10, but he was never thrown for a loss either. Jim Krusz had little trouble getting into UVa’s secondary. He finished with 133 yards in 22 carries.

“Overall, we have as good a football team, maybe a better one, than William and Mary,” said UVa coach Dick Bestwick. “But sometimes, it takes more than that. I would say we lost this game instead of William and Mary winning it, not to take anything away from them. They played an excellent game.”

While the Indians were knocking heads for 335 yards rushing, Virginia had only 167 yards on the ground. W&M doubled the Cavaliers’ total offense.

But UVa blew a couple of early chances to put the ball in the end zone. The Indians lost two fumbles and had two pass interceptions, but as soon as they gave the ball to the Cavaliers in good field position, Virginia gave it right back.

“Our two interceptions came at crucial spots,” said Bestwick. One of them was in the end zone when UVa needed something on the scoreboard desperately in the third quarter. “We had a chance to make the score 7-7 just before halftime, but fumbled.”

W&M took the opening kickoff and paraded down to the five-yard line but Krusz lost the ball on a fumble. An interception gave the ball back to Virginia the next time the Indians got their hands on it and things appeared to be going UVa’s way, even though it hadn’t scored.

With five minutes left in the first quarter, Joe Jenkins missed a 48-yard field goal that would have put the Cavaliers ahead.

The Indians took the ball at that point and drove 80 yards for a touchdown with only one pass. Krusz scored on a five-yard run.

UVa mounted its only true drive of the day at the end of the first half and quarterback Andy Hitt threw a pass to Jim Wicks at the Indians’ 38, but Wicks fumbled there to end the half.

To start the second half, W&M had a 79-yard drive that covered 14 plays and six minutes for a 14-0 lead.

Another pass interception killed the Cavaliers’ only other hope to score in the second half.

“We just didn’t execute well,” said UVa’s Joe Sroba. “I think we’re a better football team, but we didn’t deserve to win today the way we played. Last week, we proved we have a good offense and this week we proved we have a good defense. We just have to put it together.”

“They played in five or six times, we had the opportunity to score,” observed Bill Copeland of UVa. “It’s very frustrating. They have a good football team, but they’re no better than we are.”

William and Mary coach Jim Root was bubbling over with happiness after the game. He has felt some pressure for his job after going 5-9 last year. “A victory like this does more for our program than anything else can do. If they don’t get excited about this team on the Peninsula now, I just don’t know.”

Root pointed out that it wasn’t happenstance that Fimian was working so hard. “We planned for him to run 30 or 35 times because of the defensive scheme they were in.”

Bestwick had a few words for Root. “William and Mary did a fine job out there today. They were well prepared. I would say that possibly we might have thought it would be easier than it was.”

This Joust was the 11th in a row for the Cavaliers. They haven’t won since the second game of last year when they beat VMI by a point.

“I told the players before last week’s game that we should lose it, but we could win this. This week I said we would win it but we could lose it. I don’t want to take anything away from William and Mary, but we lost this game.”

“You win some and you lose some. Tomorrow we have to get ready to go against Duke and just forget this game. It’s behind us now,” Bestwick said.