Who would have ever figured that after two full weeks of the season, William and Mary would be the only unbeaten Virginia Big Five football team?

Probably no one. Not even Jim Root, W&M’s defensive coach who has enjoyed as many wins in two weeks as the Indians compiled all of last season.

"I would have hedged a good bit," said Root when asked what his pre-season projection might have been if he expected his team to win its first two outings. "It was hard to expect much of anything because of our defense. That was the crucial item.

Root’s worries were soothed Saturday at Charlottesville when the Indians blanked Virginia, 14-0. It was W&M’s first shutout since the 1968 opener against East Carolina.

But it’s certainly a different ECU team W&M will entertain Saturday in Williamsburg. The Pirates’ Darrell Walker, currently third in the Southern Conference for scoring, will be coming off an open date searching for its first win against just-unswept (0-2) VMI. It will be Virginia Tech that gets a breather next weekend, while Virginia continues to look for its first win under Coach Dick Bestwick in an Atlantic Coast Conference opener against Duke at Charlotteville.

"We’ve had some success and it’s nice to think about it," said Root, whose team now owns two intransigent (both at VMI and UVA.). "But it’s kinda muddy down the road. So, when you win a game, you tend to savor it for a while—like one day. Then you worry about next week."

Tech lies ahead

After ECU visits, the Indians must face Tech in Blacksburg—the Gobblers’ coming off next weekend’s open date hoping for more offense after Saturday’s 167 triumph over Southern Miss. W&M must also face Navy, Ohio University, small-college biggie Delaware, Richmond and Appalachian, Furman and The Citadel in 5 SC encounters.

Root was not only enthused about W&M’s shutout, but he has some quips about his defense. He was impressed.

"It was the best defensive performance we’ve ever had (in Root’s five years at W&M)," he said. "We have a possession every 11:45 minute. It’s all objectives on that chart. The best we’ve done previously is nine.

Root called East Carolina “one of the very top teams in the Southeast,” with "great speed and scoring ability." "But Virginia Tech has just 263 yards total offense in its win Saturday over USM, but Coach Jimmy Sharpe has almost two weeks to try and make the Gobblers believe in themselves—something running back Roscoe Colley says the team has needed since losing to Texas A&M.

"Tech stayed very basic in its offense during the second half of the win, and so I’m not sure that getting Colles loose outside is the key to stopping him. But an occasional lack of speed showed several times on option keepers and the senior signal caller threw only six passes.

But a defense keyed by the usual stellar performances of tackle Tom Boyd and end Paul Coleman and linebacker Rick Razzano, along with some crucial stops by ends Keith McCarthy and Stewart Patterson, were enough to put the Gobblers on the long end of the score.

"I’m glad that one’s over," said Saturday’s technical analyst and technical aide Rick Sharp. "I’ll talk it up like that. It’s one we have to have."

Sharp’s right—if the Gobblers want to go bowling at the end of the season.