Tech Mistakes, Indians “O” Down

Hokies: Gives Indians State Crown

By Bill Mason

SPORTS EDITOR

B L A C K B U R N — The fired-up, smooth-running William and Mary Indians continued to enjoy their best season in decades and handed flat, mistake-prone Virginia Tech a 27-15 thrashing Saturday, before 35,000 fans at Lane Stadium.

The win for the Indians, who have the inside track to win the Virginia major college football championship, was compounded about equally of their own well-executed offense which rode the passing arm of quarterback Tom Rozantz, and the quick legs of Paul Knuis and Keith Finiam, and Tech errors more costly than any made in the first four games.

Tech used three quarterbacks but only developed a consistently impressive offense too late in the fourth quarter to make a difference.

William and Mary’s first break came when Hokie quarterback Mitchell Barnes fumbled and the Indians’ senior linebacker Jeff Hommer pounced on the ball on the Tech 31. W&M scored seven plays later on a four-yard run by junior fullback Finiam following a 15-yard pass completion to sophomore Ken Cloud and runs by Finiam and Knuis.

Freshman kicker Steve Libbasi tacked on the point after and the Indians led 7-0 with 6:12 remaining in the quarter.

After Tech senior punter George Roberts of Lynchburg boomed a fourth down punt 65 yards into the W&M end zone, the Indians got cranked up again.

The running of Knuis and an illegal procedure penalty against the Hokies took the Indians into Tech territory where Rozantz hit Cloud with tosses of 10 and 14 yards and junior split end Gary Oliver of Richmond with an 18-yarder to bring the ball to the Tech four where a face masking call on the Hokies moved it to the two.

Finiam scored in two tries. The kick was good and Tech was in danger of being blown out of it, 14-0, with 6.62 left in the quarter.

Tech finally started to roll on a 55-yard drive, starting with a 12-yard punt return by safety Henry Bradley. The Hokies scored in five plays, getting the tally on an unintentional assist. Barnes tossed a 35-yard pass, off the mark, to wide receiver Moses Foster. Left cornerback Ken Smith, trying to knock the pass down, deflected it into the arms of Foster who scored.

Paul “Chili Bean” Eagle kicked the point and Tech was still within reaching distance at halftime, trailing 14-7.

An offensive burst in the opening minutes of the third quarter has become typical of Tech, but this time it failed to materialize.

Roberts punted to Indian sophomore Andy Banks who returned it 17 yards to the Indian 43. A drive to the Tech 17 featuring a nine-yard rollout by Rozantz and a 14-yard completion to Cloud, the Indians were stalled on the Tech 17, but Libbasi booted a field goal of 34 yards at the 6:29 mark.

Tech stalled out on its next possession and Roberts punted to soph free safety Mark Mullady who returned it 27 yards. A personal foul penalty took it another 15 to the Tech 42.

William and Mary, held in check on the ground, went to the air with a nine-yarder to Cloud and a 14-yard pass to Finiam to score in seven plays. The PAT was good and Tech was behind a hefty 24-7 edge as the quarter ended.

Eddie Snell had served some time at quarterback alternating with Barnes and soph David Lamie also got his chance but couldn’t generate enough offense for a score.

Tech held the Indians abort of a touchdown again, but again Libbasi booted a field goal, this one a 41-yard effort.

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BALL IS LOOSE—Virginia Tech defensive back Gary Smith hits Indian Keith Finiam (44) as the football (right) pops loose into the air. Finiam was awarded a touchdown was it?

TOUCHDOWN OR FUMBLE?—Seconds after William and Mary fullback Keith Finiam punched the ball across the goal line for a score the ball (just left of pileup) squirted loose and an Indian recovered. The play was ruled a touchdown. (Photo by Barbara Krutchkoff)

Tech Loses

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The Hokies’ comeback started on their own one-yard line where a Joe Agee kick was downed by the Indians. Ronnie Coles punched ahead for successive gains of 8 and 11 yards. Barnes (could not be in the middle for 21). Coles raced around the right side for 21 and a few plays later Tech completed a ten-play 99-yard drive with a four-yard smash through the middle by George Heath for the touchdown. Coles ran right for the two-point PAT making it 27-15 with 1:50 left in the game.

William and Mary now needs only a win over Richmond to be the best in the state. A combination of a W&M loss to Richmond and Tech victories over VMI (next week in Richmond), Virginia and the Spiders could produce a tie in the Big Five competition. Tech’s record dropped to 2-2.

The Indians held the advantage in first downs, 25-13 and safeties Scott Hays and Joe Agee covered Tech receivers closely, shutting out the Hokies’ most concerted use of the passing game this year.

Strong side linebacker Rick Razzano anchored the Tech defense.

The final statistics:

Rushing: W&M, Finiam 22-68, Knuis 20-58, Rozantz 7-22; Tech, Coles 25-113, 64 yards, 1 TD; Barnes 6-11, 51 yards, 2 TDs; Oliver 4-47, Olivar 2-33, Finiam 2-24, Foster 2-5, 9; Payne 1-6.

William & Mary: 7-7-3, 27 Virginia Tech, 0-7-0, 15 W&M-Finiam 1 run (Libbasack kick)

W&M-Finiam 1 run (Libbasack kick)

Tech-Foster 35 pass from Barnes (Dadick kick) W&M- FG Libbasack 34 W&M-Finiam 14 pass from Rozantz (Libbasack kick)

W&M- FG Libbasack 41 Tech-Heath 4 run (Coles run)