Root's Wounded Indians Face Well-Rested Hokies

Some of coach Jim Root's scrappiest Indians may be watching the action from the walking-wounded ranks Saturday, which means trouble when the Tribe is up against well-rested Virginia Tech.

"I just wish we had another week to get well," lamented Root, whose Indians trail in their series with Tech 30-17-1 and lost 24-7 last year as the Gobblers choked off W&M's ground attack at only 30 yards.

Among the key Indians licking their wounds after last week's heartbreaking one-point loss to East Carolina are free safety virtuoso Joe Agee, leading ground gainer Jim Kruis, cornerback Keith Potts and defensive end Bruno Schmalhofer.

With luck they may get in the game, but W&M receiver Joe Manderfield and defensive tackle Dave O'Neill will definitely be sidelined.

But Tech, which has the same 2-1 slate as W&M, will be roaring back fresh from last weekend's standoff.

In other Virginia "Big Five" football games, Richmond travels to West Virginia, winless Virginia Military takes on Furman in a Southern Conference game and Virginia goes to Georgia Tech.

Tech outgained the Tribe 315 yards to 229 in last year's contest, mostly on its running game, and the Gobblers continue to be strong in that department.

With George Heath and Paul Adams in the Tech wishbone, coach Jimmy Sharpe may be tempted to take its cue from East Carolina's modest success and stress his inside game against the Indians.

Last week's duel with ECU may have convinced Root to let his Indians take to the air more than they have been.

Quarterback Tom Rozantz completed 16 passes for 154 yards and two touchdowns, as the Indians outgained the Pirates passing and topped them in first downs.

"Until East Carolina I didn't know how well we could pass against a strong defensive team," said Root. "Maybe we underestimated Rozantz' ability to move the ball."

Virginia Military, 0-3, faces feisty Furman, 3-1, at Lexington and the Keydets could be in for a dreary homecoming Saturday.

VMI has given up 108 points in three unsuccessful outings this season, with each loss worse than the one before, culminating in last week's 43-0 drubbing by Richmond.

Coach Bob Thalman, who called last week's debacle a low point in his life, says he's still looking for a take-charge quarterback to turn his team around.

Neither Mark Lambert, Larry Hupertz nor Rob Clark were able to move the ball against Richmond and Thalman says "I won't know until Saturday who's going to start this week, but I hope one of them can really decide that position."

The Palladins rank 15th in the nation in total offense, averaging 411.5 yards a game, and in their one loss to The Citadel, they more than doubled the Bulldogs' yardage.

Richmond, 1-2, which turned its season around in a big way against the hapless Keydets last week, is probably an underdog against West Virginia, also 1-2, but not by much.

"We're 1-2, still under .500," said Spiders defender Mile Copeley. "There's only one way to go — up."

Copeley, who sparked the Spider defense in shutting out VMI, said you have to respect the Mountaineers, "they're good."

But the Spiders will have momentum going for them, while West Virginia dropped its second straight last week.

In other Virginia football action, Virginia Union hosts St. Paul's in the Tobacco Bowl, Liberty Baptist visits Gardner-Webb, Hampden-Sydney is at Bridgewater, Madison visits Shepherd and Norfolk State hosts Winston-Salem State. Randolph-Macon is at Washington & Lee, Virginia State hosts Livingstone, Hampton Institute is at Elizabeth City State and Emory & Henry hosts Catawba.