Tech, hoping for a big season and a possible post season game, needs a win as the Gobbler come back after an open date last week.

This is the first of three games in a row for Tech against competition from the Old Dominion. The Gobblers lose to William and Mary with games against VMI and Virginia.

Though the latter two are winless, state games have a way of being difficult for the Gobblers.

"Anytime we play a state team," said Tech quarterback Mitch Barnes, "it's a tough game. Everyone guns for us." Tech doesn't have an effect on me. One game to me is just like the next. But you have to be prepared when the team is gazing for you and you can't take any game easily.

Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe agrees with his signal caller about state teams making it a goal to beat Tech.

"We look at it as a compliment," said Sharpe. "I'm just hoping our folks get aroused. But our approach to this game is that it's the next one on the schedule against a good team." Sharpe says he's hoping his team is worried mostly about itself and correcting the mistakes it made in racking up a 2-1 record before last week's break.

William and Mary fullback Keith Fimml puts the game into its proper perspective.

"Last week was in 20-19 loss to East Carolina. We were up at the start of the game. After the game got going, we realized we were as good as they are. Now we know we're as good as Tech." At Duke, the Blue Devils suddenly have a national audience on their hand. Tickets didn't start moving until this week and now they've been going at a fast rate for most of the No. 2 ranked Gobblers. Pitt Coach Johnny Majors is also on the spot. He's been rumored as the No. 1 replacement for the embattled Bill Battle at Tennessee. But he's trying to keep talk at a minimum.

"Really," he said, "there haven't been a word about it in the Pittsburgh papers and the fans don't know that my name has been mentioned for that job." If you can believe that, you can also believe his story about Darrent's injury that he sustained last week against Temple.

"He hasn't practiced all week," said Majors, who paused for the longest time when asked about his star player.

Then he quickly added, "But he'll be alright." He also says, "This team has great leadership and will keep its mind on business." Majors brings his home run plays for Duke hoping his Panthers don't become a major upset victim in this year of surprises. He says Darrent is "as good a player as ever played the game." "He can run and block. He's got talent. He's a winner. He's smart," added Majors.

"I didn't know he'd be this good when I recruited him. If I did, I probably would have had a heart attack." Majors came to Pittsburgh when the Panthers averaged 10-0-9 a home game. Now they average 45,000 and Duke will reap the benefits since the Blue Devils are the only North Carolina team at home today.

Georgia Tech has a little welcome planned for Bestwick called the split-back veer offense. It's a passing offense and is probably designed to test Virginia's young secondary. Tech had always run the straight veer offense until changing this week.

Asker what Tech would like to do differently on offense, Bestwick answered, "Score." Tech is 6-1-3 and most people figure the Jackets would be in the nation's top 10.

"With the kind of problems we've had to date," said Bestwick, "I'm worried that Pepper (Rodgers, Tech coach) might try and kill us." Virginia quarterback Andy Bitt doesn't seem to be as pessimistic.

"I feel better about this game than any other all season," he said. "Perhaps, part of the reason I feel that way is that two years ago, we went down there and should have won (Tech won in the 17 seconds 27-24)." I really like to play in that stadium (Grant Field). Even when I was on the sidelines, I really got psyched.

Furman is 3-1 coming into the VMI game and has knocked off North Carolina State. Furman, with a veur option, is averaging 415 yards a game which means VMI's defense is in for a stiff lift.

On the other hand, VMI hasn't scored a touchdown in the last eight quarters.