Good, Live Indians

BLACKSBURG — The only good Indians are dead Indians? Maybe in the Old West, but not in the Old Dominion, for William and Mary’s Indians were very much alive and a very, very good football team Saturday as they outclassed Virginia Tech’s Hokies to run their State record to 3-0 and their over-all record to 3-1.

Someone said, after the Tribe’s one-point loss to East Carolina last Saturday, “One of these Saturdays the Indians are going to hold their mistakes to a minimum. And when they do, they’re going to beat the whey out of some team.”

The Hokies, coming off an open date last week, were the team that took the beating. The Indians changed the script of their first three games and, for a change, let the opposition make the early-game mistakes.

For three straight Saturdays, W&M had won the toss, elected to receive, committed turnovers and drawn costly penalties. Against Virginia Tech, the Indian captains failed to call correctly the referee’s coin toss. The Hokies received and early on were the team doing itself injury after injury.

The Indian’s only mishap of any consequence came just before the half and after their big fullback, Keith Fimian, had twice crashed into the end zone for touchdowns and a 14-0 W&M lead. With little more than a minute to play before the intermission, Tech quarterback Mitchell Barnes threw a long pass. Interception was printed all over the ball and defensive back Ken Smith apparently had the interception made. Somehow the ball bounced off his hands and smack dab into the hands of wide receiver Moses Foster for a touchdown.

Instead of a 14-point bulge at the half, the Tribe was only one touchdown ahead, and the Hokies seemingly had their collective adrenaline going strong. Could the Indians stay with the Hokies in the second half?

In Re Quarterback Rozantz

THE INDIANS DIDN’T stay with the Hokies; they left the Techmen far behind as they increased their lead to 27-7 before Tech’s George Heath completed a 99-yard drive with a touchdown with less than two minutes remaining on the Lane Stadium scoreboard clock.

W&M coach Jim Root, who’d vowed after the East Carolina defeat his Indians would come back, was ecstatic after the Tribe’s 27-15 victory over favored-by-nine-points Tech.

“Boy, I’ll tell you this was the biggest, best damn win ever for us,” Root said. “Someone asked if I thought we could stay with VPI. I never doubted we couldn’t, but I never thought we could dominate play the way we did. VPI is an outstanding team, but some folks have got to start believing we are pretty good ourselves.”

“There was no one individual star out there today, but I have to say something about (Tom) Rozantz. He called a great game and executed just like we draw it on the board. You’re damn right — he is one of the best quarterbacks around.”

Tech coach Jimmy Sharpe echoed Root’s estimation of his sophomore. “We knew he could throw well,” Sharpe said of Rozantz, “and we thought before the game that he would be as good as we will face . . . and he is. I hope we don’t have to play against one like him every week.”

The Indians dominated play in the third quarter to such an extent Rozantz didn’t play at all in the fourth quarter. He wasn’t hurt. He wasn’t tired. It was just that the Indians had their “best damn win ever” in the bank and Root wanted his back-up qb, junior Preston Green, to get in some playing time.