Warning Issued; Hurricanes Real

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He'd heard of Tulsa's high-powered offense and knew all about the Hurricane's "golden" tradition, but Virginia Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe wasn't convinced until he polled fellow members of the coaching fraternity.

"I called Frank Broyles at Arkansas Monday and he said Tulsa was better than Texas A&M," reported Sharpe, whose Hokies were blanked, 19-0, by the Aggies in the second game of the season.

"And, when I checked with Vince Gibson at Louisville, he said Tulsa was at least as good as Alabama." Armed with that kind of scouting report, Sharpe used a little reverse psychology in preparing for today's opponent. We didn't mention Tulsa until Thursday," he said, "but I'm sure our players are aware of how Tulsa is.

It is a crucial game for both teams, as a chance for post-season play could be at stake. Tech is 6-2, with losses to Texas A&M and William and Mary, while Tulsa's 5-3 slate has been tarnished by Oklahoma State and Cincinnati.

Although it is a prime topic of conversation among the players, Sharpe says he has steered clear of bowl discussions. "All I'm thinking about is our chance to go 9-2. Did you know it's been 71 years since the last time a Virginia Tech team won nine games?"

To keep that opportunity alive, the Hokies must not only contain Hurricane quarterback Ron Hickerson, who is fifth in the nation in total offense, but be able to score against a defense that keyed a 9-3 victory over Arkansas and a 16-14 decision of Memphis State.

For Tech's players, the game is more significant than, perhaps, Sharpe is making it. "If we can get by this team," observed center Blair Buskirk, "we'll end up 9-2 and go to a bowl."

It appears that Tech's best chances of a post-season bid are the new Southlands Bowl in Shreveport, La., and the Tangerine Bowl. While the Hokies have been brought up before the Peach Bowl committee, a spokesman for the Liberty Bowl said the school is not on his list as of the present time.

While VMi is not entertaining any bowl hopes, Keydet Coach Bob Thalman has looked forward to his team's trip to Charleston, S.C., to face the Citadel.

Although both teams have been eliminated from the Southern Conference title race, Thalman feels his club has shown vast improvement after a horrendous 1-5 start.

One of the reasons for Thalman's enthusiasm is the play of tailback Kim Glidewell. Glidewell picked up 115 yards in a 10-6 victory over Delaware two weeks ago and 97 more as the Cavaliers whipped Virginia, 13-7.

"He's running as well as he did two years ago (when VMi won the SC championship)," observed Thalman. "Kim is a money player, a tough kid."

The Citadel, 5-3 despite a sound thrashing by Appalachian State boasts powerful fullback Andy Johnson and the conference's premier passer in Marty Crosby.

"It'll be tough playing in their backyard," concluded Thalman, "but we've played down there before and won."

While the Keydets went a long way toward salvaging their season by beating Virginia, the Cavaliers are still in search of victory No. 2 as they host Lehigh.

Coached by John Whitehead, a nemesis of UVa's Dick Bestwick in the Pennsylvania high-school ranks, the Engineers boast a 5-3 record and a quarterback, Mike Rieker, whose statistics are much more impressive than those of the Cavaliers' Andy Hitt, who owns the best marks in the ACC.

Although Lehigh crushed Gettysburg last week, 56-15, Bestwick feels the outcome will be determined by how well the Cavaliers move the ball, not by their success at stopping the Engineers.

"They're comparable with a couple teams we've played in the state, VMi and William & Mary, with probably not as much depth as Virginia Tech," said Bestwick. "They've got a couple guys who could play for us, especially in the backfield."

Secondly, by the loss of pre-season ACC pick Mike Ozdowski and center Rich Switalski, the Cavaliers' two-deep has undergone a dramatic face-lift in recent weeks.

Moving in at Ozdowski's spot is freshman Grant Hudson, while junior Kenny Fulp becomes the Cavaliers' center. Salem's Mike Brancati, benched a week ago, is back in the starting lineup while Covington's Gary Crossland could see some time in support of Lee Browning at defensive tackle.

Probably the biggest game in the ACC will pit unbeaten Maryland and independent powerhouse Cincinnati, while N.C. State will visit its upset victim of a year ago, Penn State.

Wake Forest travels to Duke at the same time as North Carolina (6-2) seeks to keep its Peach Bowl hopes alive at Clemson.

In the Southern Conference, East Carolina invades independent Richmond and Appalachian State the only team left with a shot at the Pirates, will play William & Mary at Williamsburg. Furman is idle.

In games involving state teams, Madison visits Salisbury St., Randolph-Macon plays at traditional rival Hampden Sydney, Emory and Henry is on the road at Maryville, Bridgewater travels to Newport News Apprentice, and Washington and Lee attempts to make it three wins in a row at home against Millersville.

Tulsa QB Ron Hickerson Poses a Big Threat to Tech Today