Switch by Gobblers Cheers Bill King

By DENNIS LATTAS
Sports writer

The big news coming out of Virginia Tech football this week has been the switch that moved George Heath from fullback back to his old halfback position.

Going unnoticed in the switch is the move that will have Bill King back in his old role as the No. 2 fullback for the Gobblers.

King, a senior from Radford, was lost in the earlier shuffle. He hasn’t played enough this year to have his uniform washed. That loud cheer heard from the Tech locker room when Heath moved back was made by King.

“I’d certainly like to play a little more,” King said in an understatement. “I played about a quarter and a half in the Wake (Forest) game (Tech’s season opener), but I’ve just been on the specialty teams since.”

With Heath going back to halfback, King will get a chance to play more, but won’t be starting. Paul Adams is Tech’s starting fullback.

In practice this week, George has played any fullback.

“I pretty much alternated with Paul last year. I hope that’s what I’ll be doing now, but George might be playing some halfback and some fullback,” King pointed out.

Heath was originally moved to fullback in spring practice when it looked like Adams would be signing a baseball contract. But the baseball offer didn’t come through. The coaches liked the idea of the Adams-Heath combination at fullback and left it that way.

But Tech’s offense has been ineffective this year. In an effort to find the right combination in the backfield, Tech coaches decided to go back to last year’s setup.

“Paul and George are the best two players we can put in there with Roscoe (Coles). We’ll be putting them both in there at the same time.”

The Gobblers will be playing VMI Saturday in Richmond in the Tobacco Bowl and King should be playing some. “I hadn’t taken a different approach all along, though I didn’t think I’d be playing. I’ve been practicing as if I would be starting.

The Gobblers are 2-2 after losing to William and Mary, 27-15, last Saturday. But King is confident the worst is over for the Gobblers and they will pick up offensively.

“A few little things have been going wrong with the wishbone,” he said. “All we have to do is correct a few mistakes. Our problem has been mental errors. It hasn’t been a matter of teams overpowering us. I don’t want to take anything away from William and Mary, but we didn’t play up to our capabilities, that’s for sure. I’m not saying we would have won if we had, but it would have been a different game.”

King can even see a good side to Saturday’s unexpected loss. “We’ve still got some games to go. It hasn’t affected us that much. It might help us more than hurt us. When you get beat, you’re always on your toes and ready to play. It helps us to realize we have a tough road ahead. Now, we’ve got to get out there and do it and prove it.

“Our offense will come out of it,” King continued. “It did last year and the year before. Our defense has had to win the first four or five games those years. I think we’ll come around this week.”

According to King, “The attitude and enthusiasm have been better this week. All week, everybody has been intent on doing the job.

“I think everyone was flat. Each person was waiting for someone else to make it happen. It’s not like that now. No one is waiting anymore.”

But the Tech fans will have to wait until Saturday to see if the Gobblers have solved their problems on offense by moving Heath back to halfback. King is just waiting to see if he will get a chance to play more.