Looks To Future Games

VMI Faces Up To Defeat

By JIM MCDONALD
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The atmosphere in the VMI locker room after it was defeated by the Virginia Tech Hokies 37-7 Saturday in the Tobacco Bowl at Richmond City Stadium was down but determined.

Down because the Keydets had just lost to one of their biggest rivals in a game they thought they could win. Determined because they weren’t going to dwell on the loss, but were already getting themselves mentally prepared to take on East Carolina next Saturday in Lexington.

Keydet coach Bob Thalman said after the game, “We can line up and play against Tech, but you can’t win when you have breakdowns. We won’t let this get us down though—no way. We’ll come back harder than ever next week against ECU.”

The breakdowns had a considerable effect on the final outcome, Thalman said. VMI had a touchdown pass from Robbies Clark to John Garnett called back because of an illegal procedure penalty against the Keydets.

Again after VMI closed to 10-7 at 9:17 in the third quarter on Steve Oddi’s two-yard run, the Keydets were unable to maintain their momentum.

Less than two minutes after the Hokies had upped their lead to 17-7, Greg Payne broke VMI’s back with a 70 yard touchdown run on a punt return to increase the margin to 23-7.

From then on it was just a matter of how many points Tech would finish with.

VMI’s players seemed to agree the loss would have no ill effects on the rest of their season.

Offensive guard Joe Arnold said, “I’m going to forget about this game and go on. We still have five more games left to play, and we definitely won’t have any trouble getting ready for ECU.”

Defensive back Bobby McQueen added, “The rest of our games are going to be tough, but well be alright.”

Thalman didn’t hesitate to give Tech credit for its win.

“Congratulations to Tech. They were ready to play and got after us pretty good,” he said. “We knew we would have to play a great game to beat them.”

What seemed to sum up Thalman’s real feelings about the contest was revealed when he was asked if he saw any bright spots in the loss.

His response, “I think you’ve asked me enough questions—OK.”