Sharpe Notes UVa

Saturday's Game
'Most Important'

By JERRY VERNON
Sports Writer

Coach Jimmy Sharpe expects to confront a troop of rabid-like Cavaliers this Saturday when his Virginia Tech squad travels to the University of Virginia (UVa) in Charlottesville.

"We know this is the most important game in the history of the game as far as I’m concerned," said Sharpe over the telephone Monday. 'They’ll (UVa) be so wild they’ll have to have rabies shots.'

Whether the wireless Cavs get any shots before or during this game remains to be seen. If you ask an addidemaker he’d probably lay his book on the Gobblers to issue any medications during this encounter.

After all the Cavs go into this game with the longest losing streak in the nation—13. At the opposite extreme Virginia Tech blows into Charlottesville on the wings of a 37-1 rout of Virginia Military Institute.

"For the first time this year we didn’t beat ourselves with little mistakes," said Sharpe on the VMi game. "I think the big thing was the genuine, sincere feeling after the game. We had more hooping and hollering after the game in the dressing room than we have had in a long time. That can give you a big lift."

Perhaps the highest rise for Tech last Saturday came in the category of punt returns. Wide receiver Greg Payne, who replaced injured Danny Bradley, returned one punt 70 yards for a score and ran another boot back for 43 yards. The 167-lb, senior, according to Sharpe, has earned a new Hokie rule for himself.

Although the Gobblers fell to 1-7 on the season, coach Sharpe expects last Saturday’s winning momentum to carry over into the UVA contest, but isn’t exactly sure how the Cavs will attack Tech.

"They’ve changed all year. They’ve used everything," said the Gobblers mentor. "It’s the same defensively. They have used different things every game. We don’t know what to expect."

Sharpe showed respect for the UVA backfield despite the Cavs wireless record.

Senior Andy Hint will hold down the signal-calling slot for Coach Dick Bedewick’s squad. The Cavs Most Valuable Player last year, 6-0, 205-lb, David Sloan, remains at the fullback slot while another 200-lb, senior, Bill Copeland, sets at running back. Senior flanker Joe Scrobos, 174-lbs, can run, receive and punt and should get a lot of concentration from Tech.

"They’ve got two fine runners in Sloan and Copeland, I don’t care what their record indicates," warned Sharpe. "The Hokie head doesn’t anticipate meeting an indifferent group of Cavs Saturday because, in his words, "if we hadn’t won a game, I’m sure we would hold a lot of importance if the shoe was turned around."

The last time the Gobblers traveled to Charlottesville, the game ended in controversy. With less than ten seconds remaining in the contest two years ago, Tech trailed by seven. The Hokies pushed in a touchdown and then added what official signalled as a two point conversion. Only he wasn’t the senior official. The top level referee ruled no conversion and Tech lost 26-27.

That was Sharpe’s first season as head Gobbler. During 1974 Tech and UVa posted equally dismal records — 6-7. A lot has changed since then with the Hokies looking better while the Cavs appear less than superlative — perhaps meek is a more just term.

One advantage for Tech going into the two schools’ initial meeting is the Hokie running game. Last Saturday running backs Roscoe Cole, George Heath and Paul Adams and quarterback Mitchell Barnes accounted for most of Tech’s 372 offensive yards. The Gobblers didn’t throw a single pass against VMI.

"We work on passing an hour and a half a day," explained Sharpe. "We’ve got the pass and we intend to throw the ball.

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SHARPE AT TOBACCO BOWL
Shows His Allegiance

★ Important

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We just run better than we throw.

The only negative clause carrying over into this week’s game (last week’s relentless running control was an injury to Cole), Tech’s top runner suffered a turned ankle, but should, in Sharpe’s words, “be able to play this week.”

Whether Cole starts depends upon this week’s practices.