Virginia Tech Hokies Have Fun, Offense Explodes Over VMI Keydets

By Bill Mason
Sports Editor

RICHMOND—It was fun, that’s what it was, as Virginia Tech overcame an early mistake to roll to a smoothly-done emphatic 37-7 win over arch-rival VMI in the 28th annual Tobacco Bowl football game, highlight of the National Tobaccon Festival.

Defensive leader Rick Razzano said, “I think we were more with it this week than at any time since Wake Forest (the opening win). We had a lot of fun... We were up all week.”

The turning point of the game came early and followed a fumble by Tech quarterback Mitch Barnes, recovered by VMI on the one yard line, ending a scoring threat.

The game had started with the Keydets, after winning the coin toss, electing to kick into the wind, giving Tech an advantage at the outset.

The Hokies staked out offensive drives, twice with Paul “Chile Bean” Engel missing a 51 yard field goal, only to connect on a yardier on the next series of downs to put Tech in front 3-0 with just under four minutes remaining in the quarter.

Tech’s most serious drive of the early going ended with the Barons fumble early in the second quarter, recovered by Keydet Steve Oddi.

On his next possession, Tech drove 45 yards in eight plays on the running of Rance Cole, Paul Adams and George Heath, capped by a fantastic power run to the left by Heath who carried several would-be tackles as he pushed his way into the end zone for the score.

The entire Tech bench emptied and the players leaped joyously onto the pileup with Heath at the bottom. The players noticed that it definitely was Tech’s day but the Keydets were far from out of it. Engel’s kick was good.

VMI missed back on its first play after the kickoff when sophomore quarterback Robbie Clark fumbled and Speedster Flanker Johnny Garnett who got behind Tech’s secondary raced up and recovered a touchdown on a 59-yard play. An illegal procedure penalty nullified the score.

Before Tech held a 10-0 lead at halftime, the Hokies got a 27-yd punt return from Greg Payne, a senior from Hampton and VMI’s freshman Craig Jones of Norfolk, who entered the game as the nation’s number four field goal kicker, missed from 37 yards.

Tech rolled up 152 yards in 42 rushes for 152 yards while the Hokies gained 199 yards on 22 carries for 84 and Heath, in his first starting assignment, carried 12 times for 67 yards in the first half and a total of 111 yards on 24 carries for the game.

Adams bruised the middle of the VMI line on 22 carries for 84 and Heath, in his first starting assignment, carried 12 times for 67 yards in the first half and a total of 111 yards on 24 carries for the game.

Adams scored one of the Hokies touchdowns, going airborne for the last yard of the journey to the goal line.

DIVE PLAY—Fullback Paul Adams dives over the center of the line for the Tech in its Tobacco Bowl win. Adams scored one of the Hokies touchdowns, going airborne for the last yard of the journey to the goal line.

Football This Week

Thursday, Oct. 14:
Auburn at Shawsville (7:00), 7 p.m.
Christiansburg at Blacksburg (Middle School & JV), 6 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 15:
Blacksburg at George Wythe (9:00)
Giles at Christiansburg
Shawsville at Fort Chiswell
Auburn at New Castle
Saturday, Oct. 16:
Virginia Tech visits Virginia Tech Sports Stadium, Charlottetown (times to be announced for the game.

“made up for the first one.”

Tech’s Highly Tightly and the VMI marching band provided music and cadets from both sides charged around the sidewalks on occasion as they have done since the beginning of the football rivalry in 1894.

The statistics:

Tech: First downs, 23; rushes-yards, 77-372; passing yards, 0; total yards, 372; return net yards, 108, punts, 4-27.5; fumbles 4 lost 1; penalties, 5-42.

VMI: First downs, 12; rushes-yards, 44-95; passing yards, 5-17, (183); total yards, 177; return net yards, 65, punts, 9-33.7; fumbles, 0; penalties, 5-55.

Score by quarters: 3-7-13-34

VMI: 0-0-7-0

DIVE PLAY—Fullback Paul Adams dives over the center of the line for the Tech in its Tobacco Bowl win. Adams scored one of the Hokies touchdowns, going airborne for the last yard of the journey to the goal line.