VPI's Capps Dreams Of Score On Fumble

By BOB MOSKOWITZ
Daily Press Sports Writer

Larry Capps has this dream, see. Well, really he has two dreams.

For one, time is running out. For the other, well, you better believe the young man has a chance, a good chance.

Okay. Larry Capps, is a senior guard on offense for the Virginia Tech football team. A starter last year, he suffered a knee injury on the last play of the last game and has been battling back ever since.

Indeed, the former Ferguson High standout two-way tackle may be back in at the outset of Saturday's clash in Charlottesville with wireless (0-5) archrival Virginia.

Either way, his is an interesting story — with or without the dreams.

As for the visions of things that might have been, "I always had a dream that as a lineman I was picking up a fumble and running it back into the end zone."

It nearly happened at Ferguson in his senior year when the Mustangs went 9-1. They were en route to defeating Hampton and Capps was stationed next to his good friend, Jimmy Reading, a linebacker and team captain.

Suddenly, with Hampton in possession, the ball was snapped and shot into the air.

"Jimmy caught it and he scored (from about 30 yards out). I feel if I had caught it — and I almost did — I would have scored instead."

It is no wonder Capps concedes that "sometimes when things aren't going right, I have thought about moving to another position. Actually, I missed playing defensive tackle. I really enjoyed it."

One thing Capps apparently hasn't missed is the weight he lost this year.

Reporting carrying 250 pounds he voluntarily trimmed the suet down to its current 215. "I've been watching my appetite," says the still strapping 6-foot-2 former Hargrave Military Academy athlete.

"After the season's over, you have the tendency to keep on eating although you're not playing and then you gain too much weight. This is my last year and I don't want that to happen."

He also points out "we've been working hard," something that seemed to pay off in Saturday's 37-7 whipping of Virginia Military Institute in Richmond to make the Gobblers 3-2.

In that game, the Gobblers stuck entirely to the ground and didn't throw a pass.

"It doesn't matter to me. We were moving the ball well (for 369 yards). "We have a warm-up chant: '500 Offense,' we shout while exercising. It means we're trying to get 500 yards. This is what we believe in."

Add 106 yards in return yardage to the ground-gaining total and the Gobblers virtually accomplished their mission.

Capps has a reason to believe in numbers. In that last game a year ago, the incident on which Capps was hurt capped a 22-play scoring march. "There were 22 seconds left, I was 22 and the date was Nov. 22."

The pattern was spoiled during the operation on his knee. "The doctor only made 19 stitches," Capps says wistfully.

Then there's that other dream.

A major in industrial arts and education, Capps is the son of a subcontractor, who was recently forced into retirement by a stroke.

"I've always helped Dad with his work. This Summer I did carpentry work here in Blacksburg," he said the other day over the telephone.

"Want I want is to be able to build homes. That's my dream."

That, of course, and defeating the Cavaliers on Saturday.