Mason On Sports

Fourteen-and-six isn’t bad but it doesn’t tell the story of the last 20 meetings between Virginia Tech and traditional rival Virginia.

That’s the modern day scorecard between the Hokies and the Wahoos and the slate stretches back to 1952, since there is a three year period (1967 through ’69) during which no games were scheduled.

There are six shutouts in the period and four authentic runaways, evenly divided: Virginia in 1952, 42-0 and in 1957, 38-7, and Tech in 1959 and ’60 by scores of 40-14 and 40-6.

The rivalry has been even since 1970, 3-3, Virginia won in 1970, 7-0; in 1972, 24-20 and in 1974, 28-27. Tech won by 6-0 in ’71; 27-15 in ’73 and 24-17 last year.

If you believe in cycles, it’s the Wahoos’ turn, but Sharpe and Company don’t believe in cycles.

One of the oldest gridiron rivalries in the nation, it dates back to 1895 (the year after the start of the VMI rivalry) and Tech’s first victory was an 11-0 affair in 1905.

The series was an on-off thing with a game this year, no game that year until it became practically an annual thing in 1922.

Tech-Virginia games are attended by a lot of good-natured joshing and displays at the game of catchy signs like “Culture and Agriculture” and similar gems. A university whose Cavalier mascot for years (until the coming of the artificial surface to Scott Stadium) rode his horse onto the playing field and whose president is named Hereford called the other university a “cow college.”

The stadium is not large but cozy and one of the few places remaining where a fan can watch a football game through piney boughs. To breathe deeply in the stands is to know that it is a festive occasion.

For Virginia fans, beating Tech makes any season successful. For Tech fans no season, however successful, is really complete without defeating the Cavs.

The rivalry has made some contributions to culture. The Virginia pep band is believed to be the first in this area to play the Mouseketeers March at football games although there were no known Mouseketeer “graduates” on U.Va. football teams.

Virginia fans dust off the old Aggie jokes, remodeled into Hokie jokes for occasion and Tech fans delight in asking needling questions like “How long has it been since Virginia had a winning football season?” This, then, is war.

One aspect of the rivalry hasn’t died since its beginning. Defensive end Keith McCarter’s reply (at the Blacksburg Sports Club meeting Monday) to the question “How do you get up for the Virginia game?” was typical. Said McCarter: “It isn’t hard.”

There are football games and there are Virginia Tech-Virginia games. It may not be Harvard-Yale, Army-Navy or Auburn-Alabama but for football fans around here, it’s plenty.

Quickies:

Tonight’s Middle School-JV doubleheader at Blacksburg between teams from Blacksburg and Christiansburg will show off a lot of the younger football talent in the area.

Both Middle School teams are undefeated but fans already are speculating on how much the young athletes will contribute to the future JV and varsity teams. Regardless of the future both teams have “done their thing” in excellent fashion this year and deserve a large turnout at 6 o’clock.

Madison College’s soccer team looks in on Virginia Tech at 3 p.m. as the Hokie booters try to get it together after an unimpressive season start.