Virginia Tech ‘Joins’ ACC — Just 1 Day

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Virginia Tech joins the Atlantic Coast Conference Saturday!

Not really, at least not from the Gobblers’ standpoint. Because the University of Virginia has only four ACC opponents (Duke, Wake Forest, North Carolina, Maryland) on this season’s schedule, conference athletic directors selected Virginia Tech to count as a conference opponent for the Cavaliers, who are winless (0-5) this year.

Also, this season offers an excellent chance for Virginia Tech (3-2) to break with tradition. In recent years, the two State rivals have managed to beat the other on their home fields but lose the away games.

That pattern appears to be coming to an end because Virginia Tech is a 19-point favorite for the afternoon meeting in Scott Stadium in Charlottesville, where only standing room tickets remain. A crowd of more than 31,000 is expected to jam the stadium which has a listed capacity of 25,000. The largest crowd at Scott, however, was 34,000 for the Duke game Oct. 25, 1952.

Among the changes for the Hokies is the switch this year of defensive back Tom Cooper. The senior from Stuart’s Draft is a tight end.

“I never had to block before and I like the change,” says Cooper, whose dad Jesse was a four-sport star for the Apprentice School in football, basketball, baseball and track.

As for Virginia, this week reveals a switch from defense (end) to offense (fullback) for Poquoson’s Greg McDaniel. The 5-foot-11 and 210-pound senior will be playing behind senior David Sloan and junior Skip Browning.

Browning, like McDaniel, has left the defensive unit as a linebacker for his spot in the backfield.

Besides the hard running of speedy

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junior Roscoe Coles, who is expected to give Virginia’s trouble-plagued corners a definite headache, the Gobblers are a definite threat when the Cavaliers have to resort to one of their strong points — punting.

Former Bethel High player Greg Payne has been devastating on punt and kickoff returns. His most recent exploit came last week in the Tobacco Bowl when he returned a Virginia Military Institute punt 70 yards for a touchdown in a 37-7 rout.

The 372 yards rushing was a Tobacco Bowl record for VPI, eclipsing the 366 set by Virginia 24 years ago. Also, Paul Ngle’s 47-yard field goal was a bowl record and the fact the Hokies didn’t attempt a pass in the game put them in the Tobacco Bowl record book.

In 1972 VPI set the passing yardage mark of 339 yards.

Virginia Tech leads the series against Virginia 28 wins to 25, while four of the meetings ended in ties. The State arch-rivals first met in 1895.

CLEAT MARKS — Coles needs only 14 yards rushing to pass Terry Smoot and become Virginia Tech’s second all-time runner. He’s 358 yards shy of Phil Rogers’ leading 2,461 yards.

Virginia tri-capteins this week are defensive tackle Mike Ozdowski, guard Dennis Kuczynski and placekicker Joe Jenkins, all seniors.