Hokies Did It When It Counted

CHARLOTTESVILLE — For most this football season, Virginia Tech's shbone has been merely a wish. But th time their enemy, the Gobblers me through in the clutch Saturday d broke a lot of Virginia hearts.

Only three times on this pleasant ternoon, with the largest crowd to ever see Tech play its ancient rival in ott Stadium in attendance, did the okies move the ball.

Once, Paul "Chili Bean" Engle as short with a 49-yard field goal. The other times, the Hokies scored.

They cut it close, however. There were just 68 ticks left on the stadium clock when Roscoe Coles rolled over ten inches away for the touchdown that gave Tech a 14-10 victory.

Inside the Tech dressing room, the Hokies were celebrating as if they had won the Super Bowl, rather than being the 15th consecutive team to beat UVa.

With Coach Jimmy Sharpe leading the way, the Gobblers sang a happy birthday to Paul Adams—big "Clang"—who was the key man in both touchdown drives.

Yet the guy who saved Tech from an embarassing setback, one that surely would have ruined the season, was sitting in the trainer's room, being attended by tender hands.

Statistically, this was not the greatest day ever for Roscoe Coles, the tough little junior running back. Coles gained 86 yards in 18 carries, and on many of them he was punished. Twice he left the field limping, but he always came back.

Technically, it was Coles' short TD run at the end of a well-executed, 70-yard drive that produced for Tech its fourth win in six games.

However, the biggest play of the bitterly-fought contest was a defensive move in the first quarter by Coles, whose speed saved the Hokies.

Tech had moved to the UVa 32—on the ground as usual. Then quarterback Mitch Barnes heaved Tech's first pass in two games. At the time, it was easy to see why the Hokies prefer the ground. The Barnes toss was directly to Cavaliers' linebacker Joe Turner, who started down the sideline in the company of his teammates.

By the time Turner had crossed midfield, it was virtually a convoy, good buddy. Turner had at least four blockers as he closed in on the goal line.

The only Tech player even remotely close was Coles. "I knew it was seven (points) if I didn't get him," said Roscoe, who in high school played defensive back "until they moved me to running back."

And when was that move made? "When they ran out of running backs."

But back to the play. Coles knifed between all of the blockers to tackle Turner at the Tech 18. Two plays later, Raymond Keys fumbled the ball away and Tech drove 87 yards for the only touchdown of the first three quarters.

Instead of UVa leading, the Gobblers were ahead.

The difference was Coles' speed. "I was in position so that if they had blocked me it would have been clipping," said Coles. Nobody did block, and Roscoe made what would later prove to be a game-saving tackle.

Although Tech was fortunate to survive against the 14-point underdog Cavaliers, Coles felt the Gobblers played well.

"We moved the ball when we had to," he said. "I knew it would be tough. It's always tough when we play Virginia. All of the state games are tough. Those teams really want to beat us."

Coles took particular delight in beating UVa, which he termed a "society school."

"They got no class," he said. "They run around talking after they tackle you. That stuff's no good. It only gets you in trouble."

Meanwhile, talking calmly outside the UVa dressing room, Cavalier Coach Dick Bestwick was amazingly calm. This is by far the closest that Bestwick has come to his first head coaching victory, but he accepted the defeat without an outward display of emotion.

"I've been in this business a long time," said Bestwick. "I've learned to live with frustration. I plan on being here a while, until I'm 65, I hope."

"What is frustrating is to see those kids in there crying their hearts out, especially the seniors like (Jim) Wicks and (Billy) Copeland. I've got a lot of time left, but they only have five games."

Virginia entered the game a battered team, and left in much worse condition. Copeland got kayoed again. Mike Ozdowski, Derrick Glasper and Kevin Bowie were all wounded. Many of the freshmen were showing signs of wear.

"Our problem is that when we have to substitute for a young player, we have to bring in another young player," said Bestwick. "At this time of year, the tendency is for young players to start to get beat up a bit."

"They haven't muscled up. They haven't got that extra cushion to fall back on because they haven't learned to drink beer yet."

Bestwick felt the loss settled on three big plays. "We fumbled right after the interception, Tom Fadden dropped a pass (for a first down at the Tech 25), and that rag (flag) when we were driving in the third quarter. That was the only flag thrown all day and we got it. It seems we always get it, but that's what happens to a losing team."

Although Tech was heavily favored, the Cavaliers had been confident all week.

"This was a game I thought we would win," said Bestwick. "And when we scored (midway in the fourth quarter for a 10-7 lead), I knew we would win, but..."

In the Tech locker room, the attitude was different. The Hokies finally put some meat on that wishbone, and Roscoe Coles delivered the crusher.

"When Virginia got ahead, we didn't panic," said Sharpe.