Mason On Sports

CHARLOTTESVILLE—A chattering, cheering bunch of Hokies whooped it up in the locker room after the narrow win over fired-up Virginia which had looked like anything but the team with the longest losing streak among the major colleges.

The oddsmakers had made Tech a moderate to heavy favorite over the Cavaliers, always unsure in a rivalry like this one. The Hokie "O" had been shaky, especially in the first half, but came back strong to put on a late, late show that provided the winning points.

Virginia's go-ahead touchdown provided Tech with the spark that it needed to save itself from another in-state loss and a revision of its plans for a strong winning year.

The Cavs played a much more forceful brand of ball than they had exhibited in their earlier shutout loss to William and Mary. Defensively they came on with a run-don't walk approach and on several occasions got to Tech's quarterback Mitchell Barnes before he could throw a pass.

The game had drama but it was all blown up into the last seven minutes of the fourth quarter. It was Tech's final, determined drive, a crucial first down achieved when the Hokies had fourth and two on the Virginia 16 and the touchdown itself, both by Renoe Coles. The inevitable comparison was made between this conversion and another crucial try last year at West Virginia when Coles was stopped an inch or so short of the first down. This time there was no stopping Coles, who converted on fourth down.

Tech's emerging passing game, born of necessity, continued to emerge. It provided four of the 21 first downs and 58 net yards.

The defense had to come through and it did, just as the defense slammed the door on Andy Hitt Passing Machine in the final minute. A few minutes previously defensive end Stuart Patterson and Keith McCarther had taken turns sacking the quarterback on successive downs.

Hitt had impressive accuracy, enjoyed considerable pass protection most of the time and was cool under fire. His passing and Billy Copeland's running are about the whole story of the Wahoo offense. Copeland was hurt in Saturday's game and if he is out for more than a few days, the offense will have to make a chance to end the losing streak against anyone other than Lehigh. It might not happen then.

As Tech's happy players sang "Happy Birthday" to Paul Adams (whose birthday was the following day), who had celebrated by gaining 86 yards and scoring a touchdown, the Cavaliers returned to their usual quiet locker room and words of consolation.

The victory had not been sensational or sweeping. It didn't explode but it did have enough fire to singe U.Va. It was like a lot of Tech's 7-6 or 64 wins of the sixties.

They don't give "Emmys" for football games but they do give "W"s and that's what it was.

As the steam cleared in the locker room a Washington area sports reporter asked coach Jimmy Sharpe if he had ever been associated with (Maryland coach) Jerry Claiborne. Sharpe replied, yes, that he had played under Claiborne, then an assistant during Sharpe's playing days at Alabama.

It was that kind of a day in Charlottesville: a good day for a win, a birthday or both--a day when "W" stood for win, not Wahoo.

Tee-Vee Time

Virginia Tech's football team, already scheduled to be seen on the Big Five television network (on the educational channels) for the Richmond game at City Stadium Nov. 13, also may be on the net for the West Virginia game Oct. 30 at Lane Stadium.

So said Big Five play by play men and former Virginia coach Sonny Randle before getting the Tech-Virginia telecast in gear in Wahooeland. Randle said that the game originally scheduled for that date is Virginia vs. VMI in the Oyster Bowl at Norfolk's Foreman Field.

The network is getting some static in regard to telecasting the game and may switch to the Hokies-Mountaineers clash instead. Randall added: "I think the people of Virginia will be more interested in that game."

A Flashy Homecoming:

The Golden Flashes of Kent State, Tech's Homecoming opponent next Saturday, still are in the running for the championship of their league, the Mid-American Conference.

K-State, also known as the "Fitz Kids" in deference to head coach Dennis Fitzgerald and their own youth, had a 2-1 conference record and was 3-2 overall going into last Saturday's game against Bowling Green of the MAC.

Tech faces another talented passer. Kent quarterback in Mark Miller pulled his team to a come-from-behind victory over Toledo two games ago when he hit for nine out of 16 passes for 143 yards, including the winning touchdown with 14 seconds on the clock.

Tech should need no added incentive to beat Kent State, which snatched a victory away from the Hokies last season at Kent, 0-6.

No Surprise:

When Monday (or Tuesday) quarterbacks get together some will marvel at the fact that Tech threw exactly no passes against VMI the previous Saturday but tossed a comparative flood of seven against Virginia.

The Hokies were slowed or halted in their ground advance at times, the Cavs and went to the air to keep drives going.

VMI didn't show enough defense to warrant a pass. It wouldn't cause with the suddenness of a tidal wave, but look for Tech to indulge in more air travel in the future.

FUMBLE—Tech fullback Paul Adams (right) continues to drive ahead but is without the football which came loose or was fumbled on this play in the third quarter of the Virginia game.

BARNES KEEPS IT—Virginia Tech quarterback Mitchell Barnes (left) keeps the ball and runs as senior defensive end Butch Powers of the Virginia Cavaliers (right) speeds after him.

GOT THE QUARTERBACK—Senior defensive end Stuart Patterson of Lynchburg raises both arms in a winner's salute just after sacking Virginia quarterback Andy Hitt who was sacked on the next play by the other defensive end, Keith McCarther.