Penalties Hurt WVU

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"It was such a weird game. It was like a damn quiz show."

These were the words of West Virginia Defensive Coach Greg Williams moments after his Mountaineers had been defeated by Virginia Tech, 24-7.

What apparently made the game weird was a series of questionable calls by the officials that came at key points in the game. Three in particular—an unsportsmanlike conduct call, a facemask penalty, and a flag for roughing the passer, had the Mountaineers understandably upset.

The unsportsmanlike conduct penalty centered around a "move" signal, which shifted the defense. Officials apparently thought the signal was an intentional attempt to jam Tech's signals and thus threw the flag. "The official said it was a flagrant violation," said West Virginia head coach Frank Cignetti.

Cignetti had reason to be upset at the call. "We met with the officials before the game and told them about the "move" call. They didn't say anything about it then. Then the first time we use it we get hit with a penalty. It was a terrible call."

This type of play is not new to the Mountaineers. "We've used it all season," said Williams. "We used it against Temple. We used it in the Peach Bowl. We've never been called for it."

That was not to be the only controversial call in the game. Later in the second quarter with Tech in possession, West Virginia was called for a facemask at the line of scrimmage. The play was a sweep, and a facemask call on a running play is somewhat of a rarity.

"The flag was thrown the minute the ball was snapped."

See PENALTIES, Page 6A