Turnovers A Key

Tait Won't Sell His Spiders Short

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The who-ever-wants-it-the-most bowl is coming Saturday in the state's capital when Coach Jim Sharpe's Hokies return to City Stadium in Richmond to face Jim Tait's Richmond Spiders.

Last week both teams lost by similar routes. The Hokies stumbled on the Tulsa six after leading by a 10-point margin. Meanwhile at Richmond's homecoming, the Spiders took a 10-7 lead over powerful and physical East Carolina, but UR was guilty of five fumbles and three interceptions which cost them the game.

Coach Jim Tait, who believes that athletics is what it's all about and that an athlete is a better person for having participated, hopes that the Spiders can overcome their mistakes.

"We've simply got to stop the turnovers that make our offense look so bad," Tait declared.

Besides playing better on offense, Tait who is often seen as a colorless almost bland personality because he refuses to join other-coaches' who seek attention, hopes that his team will not lose any more starters.

RICHMOND COACH JIM TAIT
Looking For Improvement

"Last week it was Dickie (Childress) who was injured on the next to last play of the game. The week before we lost Mike Copley one of our best defensive ends," remarked Tait. "Virginia Tech is a lot like East Carolina, they both play physical football and our kids won't back down to hard-nosed football."

Along with the loss of Childress the Spiders lost their quarterback Larry Shaw, who is expected to miss this week's contest with Va. Tech. Shaw had completed 56 of 146 passes for 765 yards and four touchdowns prior to his elbow injury.

"Dave Taylor will probably get the nod," declared Tait. He played the last three quarters for us last week and did a remarkable job considering the number of fumbles we had.

"Our offensive line did a creditable job against ECU considering that our team was going against the nation's second best defensive unit," added Tait.

This offensive unit includes: seniors Rex Kipps of Blacksburg and Doug McGee. A pair of juniors Cubby Pritchard and Lou Bonato are at guards, with Dick Adams a sophomore handling the snapping.

The split end is senior John Call, who has latched on to 17 times for 289 yards, and has caught two touchdowns. At flanker is another senior Rickey Brown, 6-3, 200, who leads the team in receptions with 22 and yardage with 307 but has not caught a touchdown pass this season.

At tight end is another season veteran Tim Wandering, who is a 6-4, 225 pounder. And has been rated as an excellent blocker by the Richmond coaches. Also seeing action as a receiver is sophomore Harry Jones who has caught ten passes for 129 yards.

Along with Taylor at the quarterback spot is running back Ed Kreidis. The 6-1, 190, senior is the Spiders top rusher with 677 yards in 169 carries for a 4.2 average. Joining this workhorse is Milt Ruffin at fullback. Ruffin a 210, sophomore has averaged 3.8 yards a clip in 135 carries.

Junior Buster Jackson will also be on hand on Saturday. Jackson has rushed for 247 yards in 49 attempts for a five yard average.

"We match up fairly well with Tech, declared the Spider boss. Our offensive line averages 6-2 and 232, while Tech's may be a little bigger but not that much. "I think what will be a determining factor depends on who is mentally prepared and wants it more."

"I've been an assistant offensive coach here (Richmond) for seven years and now that I'm a head coach I think getting the team up for a big in-state rival will be no problem."

"On defense sophomores dominate the team. They've come a long way with our coaches. But I still believe there's room for improvement," he added.

At left end is senior Rick Sowieta with sophomore Billy Cheshire at tackle. Middle guard will probably be Ken Gilliam who will replace Childress at right tackle is senior Gary Edwards and at right end is sophomore Ray Chase. Linebackers include sophomore Bay Kelly and junior Orland Branch. Spider cornerbacks are sophomores Dave Haynie and Ricky Crawford. At free safety is Jeff Nixon and at strong safety is Mike Andrus.

"I think we'll get Tech a good ball game and our people will be thinking about last year's 21-6 lost to them in Blacksburg."

"Our kids have blown leads and have lost two straight, but I've got faith in them and wouldn't sell my soul for anything."