Tech Not Enthused

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RICHMOND—It wasn’t what Jimmy Sharpe had expected. He couldn’t hide it in his facial expression.

The wounds of losing, especially to a team that his Hokies were heavy favorites against, showed through. Tech was coming off what Sharpe had earlier termed "perhaps the greatest game in Tech history," but it was a lack of enthusiasm that figured into Tech's bid for a second consecutive 8-3 season Saturday as much as anything.

"I thought we were ready to play, but evidently I didn’t have them ready. Richmond did a super job. They made something happen."

Whether last week's cliffhanger loss to nationally ranked Tulsa had anything to do with it goes unanswered. "It's hard to say," noted Sharpe. "You can second guess and say a lot of things. Wednesday night at our meeting I felt the players were excited about today's game.

"I was hoping and praying that down deep that looseness they had the day before the game was confidence. Maybe it was over so."

There weren't any excuses. Richmond wanted it more than Tech. The Spiders were still stinging over a 41-7 loss to Tech two season ago. The timing was right, handing Tech its second worst loss in the two teams' series.

The Hokies blew two scoring opportunities early, and didn't get another chance. Richmond's fired up defense made sure of it.

Tech's offense was surprisingly unspectacular. Injured quarterback Mitchel Barnes completed only three passes. "Mitchell didn't practice all week and he wasn't as sharp with his passes as he has been," said the Tech coach.

Wide receiver Moses Foster didn't feel that Barnes or sophomore quarterback David Lamie's performances were bad. "They didn't have enough time to throw it. Richmond's secondary wasn't all that tough, our quarterbacks just didn't have enough time. Tech had only 53 yards passing.

Barnes wouldn't comment after the game, but Lamie didn't have any opinion on whether he or Barnes did a better job. "I'm just doing a job. He's (Barnes) a proven starter. I'm just taking up the slack. I don't think that it mattered who the quarterback was. That's not what made us lose here today."

Lamie didn't feel the loss last week to Tulsa deflated the Hokies hopes. Coles, Tech's all-time rusher, did. "I think losing last week had something to do with it. At halftime, we knew we could come back since we were only 14 points down. But we just didn't."

Tech star linebacker Rick Razzano played only the first series of downs. The linebacker suffered a severely bruised thigh in practice this week and was unable to play.

"There's no question that Razzano not being in there hurt us," said Sharpe. "He's an outstanding player and a leader. I can't help but think he would have made something happen."

Sharpe didn't blame the loss on Tech's offense or defense.

"It was a lack of enthusiasm. Anything you do well in life you have to be enthusiastic about."

"I don't think anybody can tell if a team is going to have a letdown like this. You gotta be excited about what you're doing."

"We've still got a winning season. Hopefully, we'll get excited for one more game, next week."

The Hokies will have their work cut out for them after two consecutive losses. It will definitely be a challenge to win on the road in a season finale against Florida State, a team looking for a victory over an old time rival.