RICHMOND (AP) — Virginia Tech's heavily favored Gobblers, behind 7-0, were at the Richmond three-yard line in the final minute of the first half when speedy Roscoe Coles headed off tackle for the goal.

Coles, who came into the game with 916 yards in nine games, was met head-on at the line of scrimmage by Orlandus Branch. Richmond's 6-3, 228-pound junior linebacker from Hampton, Va.

"It was more or less an outside dive," Branch recalled Tuesday. "Our defensive line had a very good surge and I was able to get the angle on him."

Time ran out before the Gobblers could score. Richmond went on to a 16-0 upset and, for his part in the first shutout of the Gobblers by a state team since the 1970 season opener, Branch was named Tuesday the national college Lineman of the Week by The Associated Press.

Branch was credited with 12 tackles and seven assists and caused one fumble as the Spiders bottled up Tech's explosive wishbone attack, especially in the second half.

On two other occasions, Branch caught Coles — a sprint star in track in high school — from behind on pitch-outs. Mainly because of Branch, Coles finished with just 41 yards on 16 carries.

Branch, despite his size, is no slowpoke. He's been timed in 4.7 for 40 yards and has very good lateral movement.

In high school, Branch was a two-way performer at offensive guard and tackle, although he occasionally was used on defense at either end or linebacker.

"It depended on the situation where I was used. They played me where I was needed," said Branch.

He began his career at Richmond as a defensive tackle but was moved to linebacker at the start of the 1975 season. He sat out the first game, was injured in the second, and had played only 11 games at the position going into the Tech encounter.

"As Orlandus gains more experience at linebacker, he will continue to improve. He has had a good year for us, but he hasn’t reached his potential yet," said Richmond Coach Jim Tait.

"The team's effort has always helped an individual achieve an honor of this sort, and I know that he appreciates it," Tait added.

In gaining Lineman of the Week honors, Branch beat out defensive end Ross Browner of Notre Dame, center Mark Cantrell of North Carolina, defensive tackle Greg Morton of Michigan, nose guards George Washington of Minnesota and Maynard Stensrud of Iowa State, Mississippi State linebacker Ray Costic and split end Billy Ryckman of Louisiana Tech.

Others considered:

Defensive tackles Chuck Smith, West Virginia; Ronnie Swoopes, Georgia; linebackers Andy Spiva, Tennessee; Jim Hughes, Rutgers, and tight end Ken MacAfee of Notre Dame.