Midway through the second quarter, Tech backed the Seminoles up to their own four and again seemed to have them in the hole. But FSU moved on to the 25-yard line in four plays and quarterback Jimmy Black hit Mike Barnes on a 75-yard TD pass from there. FSU led, 14-6 at halftime.

Roscoe Coles set up a touchdown for Tech in the third period when he scampered 50 yards and then went in from the one. Mitchael Barnes rolled out to his right, found a hole and gave Tech a two-point conversion to tie the score.

The Gobblers went ahead, 21-14, with a controlled 79-yard drive in 16 plays and Coles scoring from the one with a minute gone in the last period. Engle’s kick was good this time and Tech led, 21-14.

But FSU was waiting with another surprise. In a third-and-nine situation, quarterback Jimmy Jordan threw a pass to Jackie Flowers and Tech’s Gene Bunn slipped on the wet turf, allowing Flowers to score on a 33-yard play.

The Seminoles went for the two-point PAT to take the lead, but Rick Razzano blocked the pass and Tech had a 21-20 lead.

A sigh of relief came up from the Tech bench as the Gobblers started waltzing down the field again, eating up yardage and the clock. Twice the Hokies were faced with fourth-and-short-yardage decisions and both times Sharpe opted to go for it. He was successful on each attempt.

“I wanted to punt, but the players felt like they could do it. They said ‘let’s go coach,’ so we did,” Sharpe explained.

With Barnes, Coles and Adams doing the work, the Gobblers moved to FSU’s four as the clock got down to six minutes. But Coles fumbled on a first-down play and Florida State recovered on its own four.

Still, Tech was in seemingly good shape with the Seminoles deep in their own end of the field. But on the first play, Jordan found Kirk Unglaub open and the result was a 96-yard touchdown pass. For the extra point, Black threw to Ed Beckman for two points and a 28-21 lead.

With two minutes left in the game, Tech had another chance. FSU was forced to punt and the Gobblers blocked it. But the Hokies were called for offsides on the play and instead of Tech having the ball, the Seminoles had a first down.

“Several times we had them in the hole and we didn’t capitalize,” said Sharpe. “That’s when you’ve got to keep them in the hole and get great field position.”

FSU got the ball inside its own five three times and scored all three times.

“I believe this was the first time we’ve had the bomb thrown against us,” said Tech secondary coach Buddy Bennett. “Anytime, it’s wet, the receiver has the advantage. I know that cost us one touchdown. But it was just poor coverage, I guess. They did a better job than we did.”

While Sharpe was disappointed with the loss, the way his team played pleased him. “Our kids showed a lot of character. It was nothing fancy, just jaw-to-jaw football. I’m really pleased with the way we came back and played with great emotion.”

But it just wasn’t quite enough, ending a winning but disappointing season. “I guess it just wasn’t meant to be,” said Sharpe. “We’ve learned a lot of things this year.”