Mason On Sports

RICHMOND—Virginia Tech, starting the game winless but not discouraged, put on its best second half show to date to derail William and Mary’s Roosevelt Express and win the victory cigars in Saturday’s Tobacco Bowl game.

The loose-as-a-goose Gobblers swung into the game with the idea that they were going to win but couldn’t really put the point across to W&M until the second half.

The Tech offense perked up considerably, starting with the recovered onside kick but still had trouble cracking the Indians goal-line defense.

David Lame’s big play, a 77-yard touchdown run, given a big assist by an Ellis Savage block (and a Savage block can be a savage block) did more for the Hokies than add six points to the board. It pumped life into an offense that has lagged behind the play of the defense since the season began.

Tech gave itself the confidence that comes with delivery of a major blow to an opponent, a big play of the type that was thrown its way in some of the earlier games by its opponents.

The most dramatic moment of the afternoon came not from Lame’s barn-rummin run nor his overall performance at quarterback which apparently stamped him as definitely Tech’s number one at that position.

It didn’t come from Tech’s four pass interceptions, gamesavers though they were, from the surprise onside kick and recovery or the times when the Hokie defense caught the Indians behind the line or recovered a fumble deep in W&M territory.

The most dramatic moment was when the International Tobacco Festival’s Tobacco Bowl trophy was presented to coach Jimmy Sharpe and some of his players. It was an emotional moment and the end of a drought. For the team it was time for some spirited “hooping” and “hollering.” For the Tech faithful it was a time for rejoicing at the season’s first win and hoping that it was the start of a major winning streak.

For Sharpe, who had stuck to his guns, it was more than a little gratifying to see them fire.

Richmond Report

It was enough to make one apprehensive, driving along West Broad Street in Capital City a few moments before the start of the Tobacco Festival parade. The crowds were three to five deep along much of the length of the street, waiting to see a winner.

A winner is something that offers a showy display, music, beauty (the festival princesses) and has that most appealing quality of all, namely it’s free.

One must avoid at all times the possibility of being whisked mistakenly into the line of march and becoming part of a festival parade. There would be no graceful way to get out of the line of march and the noise of the bands would drown out the description of the baseball playoff on the car radio.

Wahoo Time

Tech’s next opponent has scored only one touchdown so far in its 0-5 season. It’s best, if that is the word, showing so far has been in its loss by only 13 to powerful West Virginia, which had been expected to propel them from Scott Stadium to the summit of Afton Mountain or thereabouts.

The Virginia Cavaliers, first in the hearts of Wahoo faithful but almost always last in the ACC, will play the Hokies before a sellout crowd.

At Virginia a successful season has come to mean a win over Virginia Tech, no matter what happens in the other games.

Tech is aware of this and chances of a letdown after the W&M win would seem slight. If there is life in the Cavs (and there is) it will surface next Saturday or forever languish.

Anyone not having a ticket for the Virginia game at this late date would probably have to rent a balloon and hover Lane Stadium to see it.

City Stadium remains as inadequate and a little older than on the last football trip there. The artificial turf, better known as the Richmond Rug, is a big improvement over the old-fashioned mud that used to greet teams playing there in the rain.

Compared with the previous Saturday in Blacksburg, the weather in Richmond was almost sunshine. The rain was more of a drizzle than a downpour.

The argument continues to be batted about here on whether to build a new stadium or to improve the old one. No one asked, but it would seem to be a total waste of money to try to renovate the existing stadium. There is little room for expansion to allow construction of a facility of 30-35,000 and parking is almost nonexistent. The stadium also is out of character with the residential neighborhood where it is located.

Saturday’s crowd of nearly 19,000 under threatening skies and a drizzling rain seems to prove the point that a much larger facility is needed. Anyone who walked from three to ten blocks to the stadium after parking their car along a residential street can testify to the need for parking facilities.

When a new stadium is built, let’s hope that its press box doesn’t look like the current one which resembles a trolley car from an old Judy Garland movie.

College Quickies

College football over the weekend continues on its thumping, bumping way with a surprise or two.

Ohio State, regardless of the narrow loss to Oklahoma, may be another powerful team as evidenced by the fierce passing of Purdue. Clemson continued to time Virginia.

INTERCEPTION—Free safety Dennis Windmuller (left) stops in the football just after taking a kickoff and tries for return yardage. Windmuller also intercepted two passes in the game.

INCHES SHORT—Kenny Lewis of the Hokies (at bottom of pile) is only inches short of a touchdown as Tech and William & Mary players strain at the goal line.

Quarterback David Lame (13), who is watching the play, scored the TD himself on the next play.

HIT BY HILL—Defensive tackle Danny Hill of Virginia Beach (left) is about to put a tackle on William and Mary freshman tailback Tom Franco in the Tobacco Bowl game. Franco gained 82 yards for the Indians and Hill had seven solo tackles and four assists for the Hokies.