In The Pressbox with Mark Bullock

Bringing a newcomer to the Tech scene, Saturday was my first glimpse of winning Hokie backfield for post game comments and interviews. The transition of atmospheres was amazing. Players talked, joked at one another, and even laughed. In fact, everybody was laughing. That includes the coaches, trainers, managers, and ball boys.

If you look at the world’s biggest band it has been flat kicked off your shoulders. For Virginia Tech players and coaches, it probably had. The ice had been broken. Tech was a winner. Consciously now.

By the time reporters were admitted, the victory cigars were filling the clubhouse with smoke. The players were full of energy and none of them had run to the showers. They wanted to savour their first win of the season.

For those not freshmen, that was the first time in what we had spent a long time. They probably think it the most Senior Rich Mazzoni said and spoke freely about the win. He called it the "sweetest of all' moments of preparation." Quarterback David Lance, the game’s Most Valuable Player, and others, echoed the same sentiment. A game with the offensive, fielded questions alike and confidently. He said Saturday was "the kind of day we needed," and felt sure the victory would be "the turning point in the Tech season."

Defensive back Dennis Windmuller said the Hokies played "four great quarters instead of two good and two bad. We decided that this week we'd put it all together," Windmuller put it all together, he picked off two visiting William and Mary punts, both stopping scoring drives.

Linebacker Jerry Sheehan said "is positive approach" in taking up 31-indent cheer and playing one of the best defensive games I’ve ever seen.

But punter George Roberts summed up what everyone in the clubhouse was thinking at the time.

"Man this is nice." ***

Quarterback David Lance established himself as the regular signal-caller with his performance. He proved what some people have said all along, and most wanted to believe; that he can run the ball. After bunting with Don Lash for the nod in the first three games, it would seem that now he has the edge. Tech has needed to find one man and stick with him, but until Saturday neither had moved the offense with any consistency. Lance found the key Saturday, and bunting forwards as the one, one, and two, would have put at least nine more points on the board.

Since he was moving the team so well, it had to roe why Coach Sharpe didn't 'hime him in for Tech's last few series of plays. It would have been a tremendous confidence-booster, not just for Lance, but for the whole offensive unit. Considering their output against Clemson, they could have used all the confidence they could get.

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The Tech secondary "nailed the tag" on four from under Tom Rosanto, picking off four of his passes on the artificial surface. The return of Gary Smith bolstered the pass defense, as the somewhat porous secondary Xotics kicked to 16 against the pass for the first time in the season.

Rosanto was expected to give the Hokies fits, but didn't cover a thing for most of the first half. He's a fine punter, and you'll take more from him before the season ends. He keeps a cool head in the pocket, and is particularly good at spotting and handling punts.

Tech changed their come-out play for the William and Mary game, and even though they still finished four times, none of them was a mullerized play. Coach Jack White kept the corners and quadrants after practice last week and practiced the new technique. Apparently the change worked.

Now they need to keep the backs from coughing it up.

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The outside kick was expected to perfection, Chris Breen and the rest of the kicking team practiced the play at length Thursday, but nobody in the Tech camp expected to see it used as the Hokies get behind and needed a score.

Sharpe surprised everybody by opening the second half with it. More-likely than not, that's when it works. The ball bounded high in the air, and Barry Bradley looked like a 4-50 center going up for a rebound when he evened it. It didn't fend as an immediate score, but it did set the tempo for the second half when Tech scored both touchdowns.

The Full Classic is set to begin tonight. In a week it will be history. For the first time, ABC has the telecast rights, and what will we do without Bert Gowdy and "The Broadast World of the Gridgida?" Although not one of my favorite, Gowdy did add a certain flair to the World Series, and his big-name stats about his duck hunting trip with Thurman Munson or his mountain goat expedition with Stew Cooper will be missed.

ABC has yet to announce who will do the play by play and color, but anybody the fans would do some in the excitement of the competition. No matter who does it, the Full Classic is truly that. Classic.

My fearless forecast: I came out of the playoffs with a .500 average. If I could hit that good, I'd be playing.

I was surprised at the ease with which the Dodgers put away the (Continued on Page 40)

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Phil: Grant slams by Cey and Baker, the first in playoff history, powered them through the four games, and Dodger pitching was excellent. The Dodgers showed great comeback ability after being down close to the ninth in game three.

But not the Yanks. They won it in much the same fashion as they did in 76, pulling it out in the ninth inning of game five. Despite Lyle's value by pitching in the final four games and being effective in each. Ron Gullet might not be available for the Series, but if he can get out of the mound, they use him if they have to.

If the Yanks show it's controversy, then the Series' edge might go to them. Mickey Rivers has publicly stated that he wants to be traded. Manager Billy Martin marvelled everyone on the eve of the playoffs by saying he's "now a contract," Reggie Jackson has been tendered a game five in favor of Paul Blair. But they don't have the pitching.

The teams of '77 will belong to the men in Dodger blue, and they will win in six games. Tommy Lasorda will be Manager of the Yanks in post-season games, likely to go to Dodger players as well.

When it all over, one of the clubs will have the most relaxing off-seasons they've ever had. The other will have nightmares until February and the beginning of spring training.

For the fans, it will be "Wait until next season. The Reds will be back. The Cubs are great in '78." And so on. Until then, this is the old left-handing third baseman and Healing for honor.