Lamie Could Be Hokies' 'Main Man'

By JACK BOGACZYK  
Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — Just 24 hours before beginning his final football season at Virginia Tech, quarterback David Lamie is practicing less but enjoying it more.

Lamie, the subject of occasional boos last year as punchless Tech went 3-7-1 in Coach Jimmy Sharpe's swansong, claims he's "finding" himself in the "I" formation installed by new Coach Bill Dooley.

He's also discovering himself in the head coach's office more often as the Gobblers prepare to open Saturday afternoon at Lane Stadium against Tulsa.

"Practices are shorter now," admitted Lamie, recalling his junior season as a comparison. "But while we spend less time on the field, we do just as much . . . no, make that even more, mentally.

"Every day, all the quarterbacks meet with Coach Dooley in his office. We've discussed the game plan, and we'll keep doing it every week. When classes start (Sept. 20), we just have to find a time everyone can get together.

"I never talked with Coach Sharpe much about the game plan. I did most of my talking with Coach (Nelson) Stokley (Sharpe's offensive coordinator). This way, I feel I'm talking to the main man.

Lamie, a Bristol, Tenn., native and former quarterback in split back veer offense similar to the University of Houston's while at Tennessee High, could be the Gobblers' main man himself.

While fans, writers, coaches and linebackers are watching fullback Mickey Fitzgerald, Lamie will have more opportunity to display his abilities in the "I" than he did in the wishbone employed by Sharpe.

"It's all because of blocking schemes and the thrust of the triple-option wishbone attack. The son of a missiles systems plant executive also claims he'll more readily throw the 'I' because of the sprint-out characteristics prevalent in a properly operated "I."

"I like our new offense. I think it fits my ability better," said Lamie. "It's also important that this is the last time (season) for me. Every day I go out there and practice, I realize the end is getting close.

"I think I'll probably do more running now than I did in the wishbone (Lamie ran 122 times for 288 yards last year) and I think I'll be more productive, too. The "I" gets me out on the corner and I can throw sprint out passes. I've never been a drop-back passer.

"The wishbone offense gives you three options, but you're running right off the corner. There's a lot of confusion there, with linebackers stunting. The wishbone is good if the fullback makes it go. That's why I think we were better in the second half of last season once Mickey was back there.

"Now, if we get by the defensive end, we'll make some yardage. And we've got some good runners back there in Kenny (Lewis, tailback) and Mickey."

Lamie, a business major, has been impressed with Dooley's organizational methods. "It's unbelievable," said the 21-year-old quarterback. "In his 12 years of coaching, it's easy to see that he's been organized to the minute and even the second.

"The other day at the end of the quarterback meeting, Coach Dooley took out these books and in there he had the practice schedule for every day of his 11 years as head coach. He could go back and trace what his teams did at a certain time on a certain day."

Lamie says his final football season is most important now, but he's looking forward to Christmas time and his family's vacation to Florida. "I'm going to get in some golf down there," said Lamie, a two-handicap golfer who turned down college scholarships in that sport to play Tech football. "Then, I'm going to come back in the spring and try out for the golf team. I hope I can make it.

Lamie hopes he can make it happen this fall, too. "I've never been rejected because I've always kept trying," he noted. "I was disappointed about last season, but I never got down on myself because I did the best I could.

"A lot of stuff that happened wasn't my fault, even though I took the blame. Playing quarterback is a tough job, tougher than most. You expect the beat and you have to be ready to take it."

GOBBLER GOSSIP: Tech Ticket Manager Tom McNeer said a crowd in the neighborhood of 20,000 is expected for Saturday's opener with Tulsa, which opened last weekend by squeezing past Arkansas State, 21-20. He added that between 800 and 1,000 students are expected for the game. "If the students were back, we'd have 2,000 or 3,000," said McNeer. . . . "Tech will start 12 seniors, six juniors and six sophomores in its top 24 (including kicking specialists) Saturday. One spot sure to be tested by the Golden Hurricane will be linebacker, where Floyd County's Lewis Stuart and New Jersey native Ron Luraschi are the only sophomores on the defensive unit"

Tulsa has beaten Tech in two of three meetings to date, including a 46-39 decision in 1971. In that game, Tech's Don Stock and the Hurricane's Todd Starks combined for these passing statistics: 38 of 56 for 567 yards and three touchdowns. That type of offensive fireworks should not be expected Saturday. Tulsa threw just 11 times last week.