Hokies Rebound, Use Defensive Pressure In Throttling Wake Forest Passing Game

By Bill Mason
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WINSTON-SALEM, N.C.—An explosive first quarter, an improved defense and the ineffectiveness of the Wake Forest passing game spelled win no. 1 for the Virginia Tech Hokies and new coach Bill Dooley Saturday night in a 28-6 thrashing of Wake Forest.

The Hokies, still smarting from having lost to Tulsa by two points the previous week after letting a 20-point lead slip away, stalled in the early going but came on with a roar when junior tailback Kenny Lewis, on his first outside run of the day, skirted the left side and tighthooped his way down the sidelines for a 52-yard touchdown that left the tail of his jersey waving in the breeze andWake defenders yards behind. Paul "Chile Bean" Engle booted the first of a string of successful points after touchdown and the tone of the game had been set.

Tech's defense flexed its muscles as first Mike Faulkner and next Doug MacDougald and Danny Hill caught Wake quarterback Ken Dely for consecutive sacks and a loss to the Deacs of 17 yards. Freshman punter Steve Schomert, who was to have a lackluster night, punted and Tech rolled again, from the Wake 43.

The hot Hokies scored in a four-play drive that included a 14-yard pass from Tech quarterback David Lamie to Paul Watkins, a 12-yard run by Lamie, a short run by Lewis and a pass to fullback Mickey Fitzgerald for a touchdown, the first six-pointer by passing in 17 games. Tech moved to a 14-0 lead and the Deacons pulled out the stops on their passing game.

Daily got 35 yards in consecutive completions and with Tech's defense poised for a pass, Mac Dougald punched through the middle for nine and a first down at Tech's 36. Wake passed and ran to the Hokie 10 where an illegal procedure penalty and a Hokie defense with its back up stalled the drive. The Deacs' drive ended with a missed field goal while Tech continued to own the game's momentum. A series of slashing runs gave Wake its second wind and coach John Mackovic's team gave the Groves Stadium partisans something to cheer about as they penetrated to the Tech 17 and seemed not to be denied. Junior transfer Nate Parker intercepted a Daily pass and ran it back 34 yards to the Hokie 37 to break the back of the Wake drive.

The Hokies were literally off and running as Fitzgerald basted his way through the right side of the line for 45 yards to the Wake 18. Two plays later Lewis boomed 17 yards for another touchdown to end a lightning drive of 63 yards in three plays and 33 seconds elapsed time. With 2:31 left before halftime Tech had rolled up what was to be an unbeatable lead and had the Deacons on the ropes at the break, 21-0.

Tech produced one more touchdown in the third quarter when Lamie got a drive started and was relieved by his backup, freshman Steve Casey who kept the drive in gear. The Hokies stormed goalward on the running of Lewis and Fitzgerald and pass completions to Ellis Savage and Paul Watkins.

After Tech made it to the Wake 16, Fitzgerald dove to the five and Lewis scored on a run to the right. Engle's boot made it 28-0 with 6:18 left in the third quarter.

The reserves took over for Tech which coasted the rest of the way.

Wake managed to avoid a shutdown by mounting an eight play 80-yard drive ending in a two yard touchdown run by sophomore tailback Ronchie Johnson with 3:06 remaining, the only touchdown yielded by the reserves. The PAT attempt failed.

Coaches' Comment

Tech coach Dooley said: "We came back and proved that we could play winning football. The team did well on offense and defense. Kenny Lewis had a good night running and so did Mickey Fitzgerald. David Lamie directed the offense well."

Dooley said he felt that Parker's interception which stopped Wake short of a touchdown in the first half was "A great break in the ball game that kept our momentum going. It was a good play for us."

"Our defense did a heck of a job, I was proud of them."

As ked by a report er in the dressing room whether the victory over the Deacons of the ACC was a good win he replied: "I've never had a win that wasn't good. I've never had a win that I didn't like." When asked if he was disappointed when Wake scored, spoiling a possible shutout for Tech he stated: "I'm not a greedy person. I just like to win."

Wake Forest coach Mackovic admitted that Tech's defense hampered Daily's passing game, and changed the intended play rotation. He said: "Rather than build from play one to play two, sometimes we have to jump to the third play."

Mackovic said that he didn't think the game had any particular turning point but observed that Tech's first quarter scoring made it tough for the team he had just coached in his second game.

The Deacon coach felt that the key to his team's frustration and eventual loss was poor execution on offense. "We dropped a lot of passes. If you are a passing team and you can't catch the ball, you've got trouble."

Wake takes on tough LSU of the Southeastern Conference next Saturday while Tech entertains another SEC member, Auburn.