

WEEK SEVEN
RHODE ISLAND at VIRGINIA TECH

Hooker's 3 TD passes lead Hokies past Rhode Island, 34-17

BLACKSBURG, Va. -- Three weeks and a quarterback change appear to have made a significant impact for Virginia Tech.

The Hokies had a bye week after their 45-10 loss to Duke three weeks ago, but came back from the break with a new quarterback in Hendon Hooker and the results have followed. They won 42-35 in Miami last weekend, and beat Rhode Island 34-17 on Saturday.

"It feels like right now we have some momentum and our mentality has gotten way better," linebacker Rayshard Ashby said.

Hooker threw three touchdown passes for the second straight game without trying to do too much.

"Whatever they're giving us, that's what we're going to take," he said after completing 16 of 27 passes for 261 yards. He also ran 15 times for 43 yards and led an offense that scored on all five of its trips inside the Rhode Island 20-yard line.

Hooker hit Damon Hazleton from nine and 37 yards in the first half and Dalton Keene from three yards after the Rams pulled to within 17-14 in the third quarter. The Hooker-to-Hazleton connection almost teamed up for a third first-half score, but Hazleton dropped what looked like a sure 71-yard scoring pass before halftime. His scoring toss to Keene was his fourth to the tight end in the past two games.

"The biggest thing is that he's taken care of the football in both starts," coach Justin Fuente said.

Virginia Tech (4-2) won its second in a row, but without showing the firepower that marked the victory at Miami a week ago.

The Hokies were stopped on three consecutive runs after having a first down at the Rams' 5 yard-line on their opening possession, having to settle for a field goal, and needed a 75-yard scoring drive early in the final quarter to get some insurance points.

The Rams (1-5) fell to 1-18 against Football Bowl Subdivision schools, but not before putting a scare into the crowd at Lane Stadium.

"We came out and did exactly what we needed to do," Rams coach Jim Fleming said.

"They needed just 2:34 after taking the second-half kickoff to drive for their lone touchdown, a 9-yard pass from Vito Priore to Ahmere Dorsey. A 2-point conversion made it a three-point game, but Hooker drove the Hokies 93 yards for Keene's touchdown on the next series.

"It's not like we learned something tremendous about ourselves because we were able to stay close to Virginia Tech," Fleming said.

A scoring run by Deshawn McCleave pushed the margin to 14 points. Brian Johnson kicked a pair of 22-yard field goals.

THE TAKEAWAY

Rhode Island: Rams coach Jim Fleming admitted this week the game was as much about a payday for his program as anything, but they did some things that suggest things may improve when they go back to playing competition at their level. In Aaron Parker and Isaiah Coulter, they have two top quality receivers, and Priore was solid against the Hokies, completing 26 of 47 for 286 yards.

Virginia Tech: The Hokies were more impressive on offense at Miami last week, but Hooker had as many completions -- 100 -- by half-time as he had all game against the Hurricanes, and he did it in five fewer attempts. The return of Hazleton to form will continue to provide a huge boost to the Hokies' passing game, but he had a moment late in the first half he'd like to have back: he dropped a nicely thrown ball from Hooker that likely would have been a 71-yard scoring play.

TARGETING

The Hokies will be without rover Reggie Floyd for the first half of next weekend's game against North Carolina after the senior was called for targeting for a hit on Coulter early in the fourth quarter.

HE SAID IT

Rhode Island was added to Virginia Tech's schedule after the Hokies canceled a series with East Carolina and needed a replacement, even if a victory -- Virginia Tech's second against an FCS-level school -- meant it wouldn't count toward bowl eligibility.

The Rams got their first real look at the Hokies after topping Brown 31-28 last weekend.

"We went home and watched Miami-Virginia Tech and said, 'What the hell are we getting into,'" Fleming said.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
URI	0	6	11	0	17
VT	10	7	7	10	34

Scoring Summary -----

	URI	VT
FIRST QUARTER		
VT FG 8:44 Brian Johnson 22 Yd Field Goal		3
13 plays, 81 yards, 6:16	0	
VT TD 1:17 Damon Hazelton 9 Yd pass from Hendon Hooker (Brian Johnson Kick)		10
9 plays, 86 yards, 2:59	0	
SECOND QUARTER		
URI FG 12:15 C.J. Carrick 41 Yd Field Goal		10
7 plays, 51 yards, 4:02	3	
VT TD 9:46 Damon Hazelton 37 Yd pass from Hendon Hooker (Brian Johnson Kick)		17
6 plays, 66 yards, 2:28	3	
URI FG 3:29 C.J. Carrick 36 Yd Field Goal		17
14 plays, 56 yards, 6:17	6	
THIRD QUARTER		
URI TD 12:26 Ahmere Dorsey 9 Yd pass from Vito Priore (Vito Priore Pass to Aaron Parker for Two-Point Conversion)		17
8 plays, 75 yards, 2:34	14	
VT TD 7:57 Dalton Keene 3 Yd pass from Hendon Hooker (Brian Johnson Kick)		24
10 plays, 93 yards, 4:25	14	
URI FG 2:37 C.J. Carrick 41 Yd Field Goal		24
10 plays, 60 yards, 5:16	17	
FOURTH QUARTER		
VT TD 13:41 Deshawn McCleave 1 Yd Run (Brian Johnson Kick)		31
9 plays, 75 yards, 3:56	17	
VT FG 2:06 Brian Johnson 22 Yd Field Goal		34
10 plays, 76 yards, 5:27	17	

Team Stats	URI	VT
First Downs	18	25
Passes for First	13	8
Rushes for First	1	15
Penalties for First	4	2
Third Down Efficiency	5-15	6-10
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-4	0-1
Total Yards	310	485
Total Plays	63	68
Avg Gain Per Play	4.9	7.1
Net Yards Rushing	24	224
Rushes	15	40
Yards Per Rush	1.6	5.6
Net Yards Passing	286	261
Comp-Att	26-48	16-28
Yards Per Pass	6.0	9.3
Times Sacked	3	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-33	-11
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	2	1
Punt Average	39.5	39.0
Penalties	8	6
Penalty Yards	67	54
Fumbles	0	1
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	28:54	31:06

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
RHODE ISLAND							
Zoe Bryant Jr.	10	54	5.4	0	22		
Naim Jones	1	3	3.0	0	3		
Aaron Parker	1	0	0.0	0	0		
Vito Priore	3	-33	-11.0	0	0		
VIRGINIA TECH							
Deshawn McCleave	12	124	10.3	1	25		
Hendon Hooker	15	43	2.9	0	11		
Keshawn King	6	30	5.0	0	17		
Tahj Gary	4	24	6.0	0	16		
Tayvion Robinson	2	13	6.5	0	18		
Team	1	-10	-10.0	0	0		
PASSING							
	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
RHODE ISLAND							
Vito Priore	26	47	286	6.1	1	0	--
Aaron Parker	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	--
VIRGINIA TECH							
Hendon Hooker	16	27	261	9.7	3	0	85.9
Tayvion Robinson	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	2.8
RECEIVING							
	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
RHODE ISLAND							
Isaiah Coulter	9	152	16.9	0	51		
Aaron Parker	5	64	12.8	0	25		
Ahmere Dorsey	4	34	8.5	1	16		
Zoe Bryant Jr.	5	19	3.8	0	7		
Ed Lee	1	14	14.0	0	14		
Justice Antrum	2	3	1.5	0	2		
VIRGINIA TECH							
Damon Hazelton	5	93	18.6	2	37		
Dalton Keene	4	53	13.3	1	18		
Tayvion Robinson	4	48	12.0	0	31		
Keshawn King	1	40	40.0	0	40		
James Mitchell	1	27	27.0	0	27		
Darryle Simmons	1	0	0.0	0	0		