Gobbler Recalls Magic Moments

By PETE GRAVES
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When Don DeVoe, head basketball coach of National Invitational Tournament champion Virginia Tech spoke at the Lynchburg Sports Club in May, he said:

"Forty years from now, people will remember the last-second efforts of Craig Leeder and Bobby Stevens."

Stevens, whose second shot within the last eight seconds of the title tilt's overtime downed Notre Dame, 92-91, was in Lynchburg Monday to attend the Tech Alumni meeting.

The Norfolk resident, who played basketball at Norfolk Catholic, Frederick Military Academy and Ferrum Junior College before transferring to Tech last fall, had some intriguing comments about those magic moments.

"We were destined to win that game," said Stevens, a 5-10 senior. "We knew Notre Dame was improved and that their record (14-11) coming to the tournament was not indicative of their ability. We knew we had a tough game on our hands." Tech came from 12 points behind to tie Notre Dame at the end of regulation time. Leeder, a 6-foot-5% all-stater from Maury (Norfolk) High School, sank a 20-footer with seconds remaining to send the contest into an unforgettable overtime.

After falling behind by five points in the extra frame, the Gobbler pressed the Irish all over the court and Tech climbed within winning distance on a three-point play by Stevens with 45 seconds left.

Down 91-90 with 18 seconds showing on the clock in Madison Square Garden, defensive whiz Charlie Thomas, a teammate of Stevens at Ferrum, foiled Irish guard Gary Brokaw. The former New Jersey scholastic all-America missed the front end of a one-and-one and Tech's senior star Alan Bristow grabbed the rebound and called timeout.

"The Notre Dame big men did a good job zoning. Leeder away from the in-bounds pass," recalled DeVoe. "Bobby Stevens took a shot which missed and Bristow slapped the rebound away from the basket into an open area. I've never seen a player go after a loose ball with as much speed as Stevens did. He got the ball, realized he had little time, didn't panic, made an offensive move and got off a good shot to give us the win."

Describing his first shot and the action thereafter, Stevens explained, "It felt good, but it was a little short. The ball ricocheted off John (Shumate, NIT MVP) and Alan (Bristow). My momentum was carrying me to my right. I took one dribble to my left and shot right." Somehow, in all the commotion 12,000 fans were going berserk, Stevens was keeping cool, eluding one man, and hopefully, another. Irish

SPECIAL HERO—Bobby Stevens, left, whose game-winning basket at buzzer gave Virginia Tech 92-91 victory over Notre Dame and National Invitation Tournament title last March, chats with Tech alumnus Conway Candler at school's alumni meeting here.