Gobbler Recalls Magic Moments

(Continued From Page 12)

grid and cage standout Willie Townsend came flying in the direction of the airborne sphere.

"I don't know how Townsend missed it," said Stevens of the blocked-shot attempt. "The film from CBS shows he missed it by that much," Stevens held two fingers two or three inches apart, demonstrating his statement.

The ball arched toward the basket and swished through at the buzzer. Tech's impossible dream was a reality and Stevens, never a champion before, but always seemingly a runner-up in his cage career, was a very special hero of heroes.

Tech won its four tournament contests by a total of five points. No one believed it was possible, except the Gobblers themselves. "We had a long season with a lot of close games," Stevens opined. "We wanted to at least win the first game (New Mexico), so we could stay a week in New York City. Many of the guys had never seen it. Winning the first game was a big boost."

A late season victory over the University of Virginia (87-83 at Blacksburg) had much to do with Tech's selection to the NIT.

"People don't like to talk about it, but I think our double overtime loss to Richmond brought about the biggest change in our season," commented Stevens.

The Gobblers were ready for Virginia, soon after the Richmond loss. Thomas manhandled the Cavaliers' All-America guard Barry Parkhill and Calvin Wade came off the bench to score 21 points, offsetting splendid performances by UVA's Gus Gerard (30 points) and Wally Walker (18).

Tech was rolling. They had found a fantastic groove, one which would write their names in history books.

"We're one big family at Tech," stated Stevens. "Someone said togetherness was the key to our success. I think it was."

"We beat seven teams which had at least one big man (6-foot-10 or taller)" commented DeVoe last May. "We had one of the smallest major college teams in the country, yet our players developed themselves into an unselfish team."

"Winning the N.I.T shows what coach DeVoe has got," said Stevens. "He's got a great philosophy. You know playing at Ohio State with (Jerry) Lucas and (John) Havlicek helped influence his thinking."

The "Gritty Gobblers" were characterized by unselfish play, an organized offense and a pressure defense. All the players contributed, not only Stevens, Thomas, Leider, Bristow and sixth man Wade, but also Altavista's Ed Frazier.

"I've never seen a guy like him," said Stevens. "Ed takes more charges and beatings. Defensive players never get credit. Without Ed and Charlie..."