WIN OPENER

VPI Dumps Sticky VMI

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BLACKSBURG—Virginia Tech’s basketball team, looking anything but the National Invitation Tournament champions they are, managed to open their 1973-74 season by defeating sky-high Virginia Military Institute, 62-51, before a sold-out crowd of 10,000 at the Coliseum Saturday night.

With four of five starters back from the team that electrified the basketball world last spring, Gobbler adherents expected to see the fire and dazzle that thrilled crowds in New York on national TV.

Instead they saw a tenacious VMI team that utilized a match-up zone defense to stymie the inside offense of the Don DeVoe-coached Techmen.

The Gobbler were blanked from the floor from 9:36 in the second half when sophomore Dave Sensibaugh scored on a jump shot until Duke Thorpe tallied on a driving layup with 1:32 left in the game.

The Gobbler started this dry spell leading 46-37 and were up 58-45 at the end before Thorpe, the freshman from West Point, scored.

What saved the Gobbler was their own deadly man-to-man defense and accuracy at the free throw line.

For the game, Virginia Tech made 16 of 30 free throws while the visitors hit on five of 12.

Each team made 23 field goals. The visitors tried 67

See Thorpe, D-3, Cols. 6-7