DeVoe More Patient; Team Morale Improved

As time passes, the more impressed you have to be with Virginia Tech basketball coach Don DeVoe. With each season DeVoe has gained more poise, a trait that undoubtedly comes with experience.

Winning the NIT last season was a fantastic achievement for a second-year head coach, especially when you consider there were some morale difficulties on the team. This season, however, the relationship between DeVoe and his players seems vastly improved and you have to believe it is because the Tech coach has been more patient with his team.

That is the mark of a good coach—one who realizes he doesn’t have all the answers and one who is willing to make changes to benefit his team (and himself).

What I’m saying, I suppose, is I had doubts about DeVoe earlier. But the jury is back in. The verdict: damn good basketball coach.

It is difficult to tell how good Tech will be at this point. Obviously, the Hokies miss Allan Bristow. Bristow had that intangible going for him which allowed him to make buckets which had no business going in and he had an ability to catch and pass the basketball that bordered on fantastic.

Bristow Made Something Happen

But what Bristow really had going for him was he always made something happen. Because of him, Tech had the ability to score quickly with sports of eight to 12 points in a brief stretch.

It was not that Bristow was always making the baskets. For DeVoe, it is the ability to make a rebound here, make an assist there, then lead the fast break, then get another rebound.

Bristow’s offensive proficiency also kept the defensive heat off Craig Lieder, especially during the first half of the season. That will not be true this year. Lieder will find himself double-teamed occasionally, particularly if he shoots as well as he did last season.

Tech could have a great team if it had a big man. It is too early to tell, but DeVoe may be forced to move Lieder back to forward and use 6-8 sophomore Kyle McKee in the middle. That’s almost certain to happen in some games.

Regardless, as long as DeVoe is at Tech the Hokies will certainly be representative because they play excellent defense.