Southeastern League Clubs Next For VPI

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Virginia Tech's basketball team was stymied by VMI's zone defense in Saturday night's opener which the Gobblers won, 62-51.

Virginia Tech Coach Don DeVoe expects to see mostly man-to-man defenses this weekend when his team plays two Southeastern Conference foes, Auburn and Alabama on a Saturday-Monday setto.

"Auburn's Bob Davis likes man-to-man defenses. We scouted them last week in the Clemson tournament. We expect to see some zone and a half-court trap. We feel our guards can handle it.

"Alabama should use a man-to-man. They have good height and will be a great test. We beat them last year in the NIT by a single point. So they'll be ready. They have a very good team that wasn't hurt that much by graduation."

Auburn lost its two games at Clemson. Alabama won by a large score at Georgia Tech.

DeVoe explained that his team didn't score well against VMI because it failed to exploit its advantage and rushed its shots.

"We forgot about patience. We displayed poor shot selection. We can pinpoint the errors from our game films.

"We played an even dozen players and some of our younger players like Denny Fugate and Duke Thorpe looked good. They'll certainly help us as the season continues."

Thorpe, a native of West Point, had seven rebounds in his six-minute stint.

Freshman Thorpe and sophomore Kyle McKee led the Gobblers' rebounding. McKee had 11. The team had a total of 58. DeVoe feels he can stay with his 'short' starting team with 6-foot-7 Craig Lieder as its big man, knowing his bench has great rebounding potential.

"We'll stay with our experienced starting team until we find out they don't do the job."

DeVoe has good reason to stay with senior starters. Guards Bobby Stevens and Charlie Thomas, center Lieder and forwards Ed Frazier and Calvin Wade all played major roles in the Gobblers' 22-5 NIT championship season.