AUBURN, Ala.—As Virginia Tech Coach Don DeVoe points out, his team is on a big, big road trip.

“Just think,” said DeVoe, whose team opens a two-game invasion of Alabama against Auburn University here tonight, “we either come a winner or loser.”

DeVoe’s reasoning is that the Hokies, 1-0, must win at least one game to come home with a winning record. Two losses and Tech will return under .500.

After tonight’s game against Auburn Tech travels to Alabama for a Monday night repeat engagement of last year’s semifinals in the National Invitation Tournament.

The Hokies beat VMI in their opener, but were not impressive in doing it. So there is cause for concern. In spite of the fact that Auburn has only a 1-2 record, DeVoe sees no sure win for his veteran squad tonight.

“They’re better than that record indicates,” the youthful Tech coach insisted. “Also, this will be our first real test against a team with any height.”

The Tigers boast a pair of 6-7 frontliners and another who is 6-8. This is a much taller front line than VMI challenged Tech with last Saturday night.

Still, Auburn uses a guard-oriented offense and will depend on Mike Christian and Eddie Johnson.

“They each took from 25 to 28 shots against Western Carolina,” DeVoe remarked. “They have decent height and use the fast break a lot.

“They’re also a physical team. Coach (Bob) Davis (Auburn coach) is of the opinion that you win games on physical ability.”

Tech will open with its senior lineup of Charlie Thomas and Bobby Stevens at guards, Craig Lieder in pivot and Calvin Wade and Ed Frazier at forwards.

“But we expect to get other people in quick,” DeVoe insisted. “Such as Duke Thorpe, Kyle McKee, Mike Collins, Dave Sensabaugh and Tim Harvey. We’ll need them.”

DeVoe says his team is anxious to see what it can do. “I just hope they’re not overanxious,” said the Tech coach.