Size Problem Gets Bigger For Gobblers

Virginia Tech's lack of a big man is becoming more and more of an obvious problem every time the Gobblers take the basketball floor.

Last night the defending National Invitation Tournament champs took the floor in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and dropped a 75-64 decision to Alabama.

The win was sweet revenge for the Crimson Tide, which was upset by Tech 74-73 in the NIT semifinals last March.

For awhile last night, Tech's short front line held its own against Alabama. Craig Lieder, the Gobblers' 6-5 center, played tough defense against 'Bama's 6-10 sophomore Leon Douglas in the first half, and the Gobblers scrapped their way to a 39-33 lead at halftime.

But Douglas came back strong with 13 points in the second half, and Tech headed home to Blacksburg with a 1-2 record.

Tech was the only one of Virginia's six major college basketball teams in action last night. But four are scheduled tonight: Richmond (1-3) visits William & Mary (1-3) in a Southern Conference duel; Virginia (2-1) is home for a nonconference game with little Lehigh, and Virginia Commonwealth (3-0) plays its first road game by visiting Middle Tennessee (2-2).

Freshman guard T. R. Dunn came off the bench in the first half and gave Bama a big lift when the Tide trailed by 10 points. Dunn finished with 12 points, three assists, one blocked shot, four steals and nine rebounds. Dunn, from Birmingham, stands 6-4.

Tech's starting front line averages less than 6-5 per man. Joining Lieder up front are 6-8 Calvin Wade and 6-4 Ed Frazier. It looks like a real problem for the independent Gobblers, who face a rugged schedule. The next assignment is Ohio State on Monday in Blacksburg.

Richmond and William & Mary are both on the rebound tonight. The Spiders lost a 77-73 conference decision at home to Furman on Monday night, while W&M was getting ripped, 88-85, on the road against a hot-shooting Citadel team.

Richmond relies on the scoring of 6-5 star Aron Stewart, while W&M is led by 6-5 sophomore Mike Arzini and 6-4 junior guard Tom Pfingst.

Virginia, which clobbered Duke, 104-52, at home Monday to get the jump on the rest of the Atlantic Coast Conference in the standings, is expecting to have little trouble with Lehigh.

The VCU Rams have blitzed three straight foes in the Richmond Coliseum, but Coach Chuck Noe hopes to get a better idea of just how good his club is tonight on the road. Guard Jesse Dark and 6-10 center Bernard Harris lead the Rams against a Middle Tennessee team which knocked off Nebraska recently.