Tech shifts lineup for Bucks

By BOB McLELLAND
Sports Editor
Coach Don DeVoe will shake up his starting lineup tonight and hope his Virginia Tech basketball team will respond with sharper shooting. The Gobblers will have to be on their best behavior if they hope to snap a two-game losing streak and knock off potent Ohio State when they battle at 8 in the Tech Coliseum.

One of the biggest problems for the Buckeyes might be arriving just in time for the game. They left Columbus, Mo., Saturday night in a sold-out arena and landed in Louisville, Ky., to refuel for the trip to Blacksburg. But Louisville officials wouldn't sell them any gas and the plane returned to Columbus, Ohio.

Weather conditions at Roanoke and Blacksburg yesterday prevented a flight so the Buckeyes were waiting until today to make the flight.

"If they can't land here, they can find somewhere to put it down and then take a bus," DeVoe said. "But there will be a game tonight unless something drastic takes place."

DeVoe said he plans to start Kyle Mckee, a 6-9 sophomore, in the center position and move Craig Lieder back to a forward post, where he played so well last year.

Ed Frazier will open at the other forward while veterans Charlie Thomas and Bobby Stevens will again handle the guard positions. Calvin Wade, who started the first three games, will return to his free man's role as the top reserve.

"Calvin played great last year coming off the bench, DeVoe said. "He has been a little tight starting. Kyle has been working hard and coming on fast. He deserves a chance to start."

Shooting has been the major problem as Tech lost road games to Auburn (76-74) and Alabama (75-64). Not a single starter is hitting at a 40 per cent rate from the floor. "We have been overplaying the ball," DeVoe said. "We have been passing up too many good shots."

Lieder leads in scoring with a 15.7 average. Thomas is hitting at a 10.7 clip. Frazier is averaging 9.3 but is hitting a poor 26 per cent from the floor.

The Gobblers, as a team, are averaging only 34 per cent in their 1-3 season.

The Buckeyes come to Blacksburg with a 2-2 record. They beat Texas of Arlington and Penn State but lost an overtime decision to unbeaten Notre Dame and then a 71-68 game last Saturday at Missouri.

DeVoe says the Bucks are a much sounder team than the one he Gobblers upset 67-62 last December in Columbus. "They have more balance, move the ball better and are tougher on defense," DeVoe said.

Coach Fred Taylor, who coached DeVoe at Ohio State and later was his boss before DeVoe took the Tech job three years ago, plans to start this lineup:

Gary Rapella (6-3) and Dan Gearhart (6-3) at guards, Bill Andrews (6-8) at center and Wendell Jackson (6-7) and Jack Wolfe (6-7) at forwards. The top sub is Craig Taylor (no kin to the coach), a 6-11 sophomore.

All starters are averaging, in double figures with Gearhart the leader with a 13-point mark. Andrews is averaging a bit over 11.

This will be a most important week for Tech. After tonight, the Gobblers meet North Carolina Thursday night in Charlotte and then play at home Saturday night against Florida.

"I should be able to make pretty good evaluation of the club next week this time," DeVoe said. "This is the week that will tell."

Tonight's game will be televised in the Roanoke area over WLS Ch. 10.