Virginia Tech Hosts Florida Saturday Night

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Virginia Tech, coming off a stubborn loss to second-ranked North Carolina, hosts the University of Florida at Blacksburg Saturday night.

Tech, now 2-3, will be favored over Florida, who’s 3-1 with wins over South Florida, University of the South and Central Missouri St. The Gators’ only loss came at the hands of Houston in a 97-73 setback.

What might hurt Tech, though, is that Florida’s best two players are big men inside, where the Hokies are at their weakest. Gator center Chip Williams is averaging 25 points per game and 16 rebounds but he’s just played one game. The other center, Curt Shellabarger is averaging only 3.3 points per game and isn’t much on the boards.

Gene Shy, one starting forward has hit 50 per cent of his field goals in playing four games and is averaging 22.3 points per contest and 12.8 rebounds per game. Bruno Caldwell, a guard, is averaging 12.5 per game, followed by Mike Lederman, a guard 10.0, and Mark Thompson, a forward 10.0. Steve Williams, another forward, is averaging 8.7 per game. Williams was listed Thursday as a doubtful starter because of a Wednesday injury.

Florida is big. Williams is 6-8, Shy 6-5, Thompson 6-4 and Lederman and Fletcher, the two guards are 6-1 and 6-0 respectively. Tech has guards Bobby Stevens 5-10, and Charlie Thomas 6-3, center Kyle McKee 6-9, and forwards Craig Lieder 6-6, and Ed Frazier 6-4.

Florida coach John Lotz says, of Tech: “Virginia Tech is the best-coached and best disciplined team we have played. They play excellent team defense and do the best job of boxing out under the boards of any team I have seen this season.” North Carolina will attest to that. The Gobblers rebounded well with the much taller Tar Heels Thursday before dropping a close loss to the second-ranked team in the nation, according to UPI’s coaches poll.

Lotz, who was North Carolina’s assistant coach last season, added, “When they (Tech) played Alabama, which out-manned them in height by about five inches at every position, Tech only got out-rebounded 50-48. In the size department, we match things well, make the good passes and hustle well. Because of their hustle, they are never going to be out of any game.”

Lotz said Thursday that “I look for them to play North a very close game in Charlotte, and whoever has the fewest turnovers in that one will probably win it. We’ll have to play as well as we can to stay in the game with them.

A win would certainly help the Gobblers whose next game after Saturday is the All-College Tournament in Oklahoma City with opponents like Houston, Oral Roberts, Southern Cal and Weyer St.

Saturday’s game has many, many tickets still available and will not be televised.