VPI Begins 7-Game Home Stand Tonight

By Stan Shalett
Daily Press Sports Writer

Virginia Tech Basketball Coach Don DeVoe feels that now is the time for his team to start winning. "We have a lot of home games during the next month," he says, "and we should be able to improve on our 4-5 record."

The youthful coach says his team isn't playing badly but has missed the opportunity to win in several games: "If we made the big play against Auburn, North Carolina and Weber State, we could be 7-2. We're a good team, better than our record."

The Gobblers begin a January slate - playing at home seven times with only two road appearances - tonight when they host Eastern Kentucky.

Saturday, St. Bonaventure comes into the Coliseum at Blacksburg.

"We could be at full strength for this set," DeVoe adds. "Calvin Wade missed out three games in the All-College Tourney with a strained knee. He should be ready. Also sophomore transfer Mark Cartwright will be eligible to play. He's a 6-foot-4 swingman who started his college career at South Carolina."

DeVoe is also thinking about moving Duke Thorpe, the West Point native, into the starting lineup. "I don't like to move my players around that way," he says, "but how can you keep someone on the bench when he's shooting 60 per cent and grabbing about 10 rebounds in 15 minutes play?"

That's what Thorpe is doing. He had 28 points in the Gobblers' last two games in the tourney. "Sure, he'll make mistakes," says DeVoe, "all freshmen do, but he can give us a lift. Also, the only way he'll get over the errors of inexperience is by playing, so there's no point in keeping him on the bench.

"Our guard play was spotty in Oklahoma City. Bobby Stevens had two mediocre games. We know he can play better."

Among the other bright spots was the play of junior Geoff Wiggins and the first serious effort of Dennis Shrewsberry. In one stretch, Shrewsberry scored 10 points in 38 seconds.

"I don't know much about our opponents this weekend," DeVoe says. "I know that Eastern Kentucky has lost to the likes of Alabama, Louisville and Maryland and that the Bonnies had a big win over Penn in the Quaker City tournament."

"I believe all the teams we play are tough, and these two are no exceptions."