Christmas Spirit Backfires On Cold Tech in All-College

Blame it on Mother Nature, the Christmas Spirit and a leaping defense.

That's what coach Don DeVoe did after his Virginia Tech basketball team was embarrassed last night by Houston in the 38th annual All-College Tournament in Oklahoma City.

To borrow an old hunting phrase, the Gobblers' couldn't hit the broad side of a barn. They took 94 shots and hit just 29 for a woeful 30.9 per cent.

Result was an easy win for Houston, 85-66.

DeVoe had a quick explanation for his team's poor shooting.

"We should have practiced on Christmas Day. I should have had the foresight to call the players back to Blacksburg a day earlier," said DeVoe.

So the Gobblers missed a valuable practice session, and perhaps that explains the poor shooting.

But there's another big factor: the tall, high-jumping Cougars played intimidating defense.

"They were blocking just about everything that went up," said Tech guard Charlie Thomas. "They made us hesitate before shooting."

And like they say, he who hesitates is lost.

STEVENS BLANKED

Ask Ed Frazier, Tech's normally-steady senior forward. He missed 13 of the 16 shots he took from the floor.

Ask guard Bobby Stevens, hero of Tech's National Invitation Tournament championship last year. He didn't score a point last night.

Houston had a fine shooting night. The Cougars took 59 shots and hit 35 for an outstanding 59.3 per cent. Five Cougars scored in double figures, led by 6-9 All-American candidate Louis Dunbar's 18.

Houston led by 12 at halftime (46-34), used the fast break to reel off ten straight points at the start of the second half. At one point in the second half, the Cougars led by 37 points. Coach Guy Lewis mercifully cleared his bench.

In consolation action this afternoon, Tech (3-4) was to meet Weber State (5-3), an 82-79 victim of powerful Oral Roberts.

"We'll have to bust ourselves to get going again," said DeVoe, whose team was top-seeded in the tournament based on the NIT championship.

Houston (4-4) meets Oral Roberts (8-1) in tonight's semifinals. The other semifinals match involves Southern California and Rutgers.