Gobblers Hold Off St. Bonaventure 77-75

By BILL BRILL
Times Sports Editor
BLACKSBURG — What does a 6-9 center do to break a shooting slump? Why does he move outside and become the world's tallest guard, that's what.

Kyle McKee added that new dimension to Virginia Tech basketball Saturday night, and it was a good thing he did. The Hokies needed all of his 15 points to beat a good St. Bonaventure club, 77-75.

The win was the fifth straight at home for Tech, where Coach Don DeVoe has dropped only one in two-plus seasons. The resurgent Hokies are now 6-5, while the Bonnies fell to 9-3.

"That was McKee's best game ever," said DeVoe. "If he hadn't scored and rebounded (12) like that, we would not have won.

As it was, the Bonnies got off a last-ditch midcourt shot by freshman Eddie Hollis that bounced harmlessly off the glass.

Tech had a chance to wrap it up with three seconds left, but Charlie Thomas, who otherwise had a super game, missed two free throws.

St. Bonnie called time out with two seconds left. The pass went to Hollis, whose turnaround heave wasn't that far off.

Tech, which trailed 39-36 at halftime, had taken the lead midway in the second half on the scoring of McKee and Thomas, and the defensive pressure of reserve guard Dave Sembush.

Senbaugh was in the game only five minutes, but during that period, Tech grabbed a four-point edge by putting pressure on Bonnie guard Steve Hocker.

Otherwise, each team was permitted to work its offense. The Bonnies either hit from outside or got the ball inside to slick Glenn Price, a 6-9 senior who had 36 points and 14 rebounds. Hollis scored 36, but he also was beaten badly by Thomas defensively. Most of Charlie's 18 points came on layups.

Mackee, though, was the difference. "He just played with utter confidence," said DeVoe.

This was the first time that the slender sophomore has shot so well from outside. Seven of his nine baskets were long one-handers.

"I was a forward in high school," McKee said. "I didn't play underneath, I have more confidence shooting when I'm facing the basket.

"Actually, I prefer forward to center.

McKee said there was no plan for him to shoot from long range. "That's just the way it worked out," he said.

Price booked one in. Then the Bonnies stole the ball, and Price charged on a layup. Official Lon Moser disallowed the goal and it was Price's fifth foul with 25 seconds left.

Again, the Bonnies stole and Bill Moore hit a jumper with 22 seconds left. Tech managed to kill off 19 of those seconds before Thomas was deliberately fouled. His miss of both tries gave the Bonnies their last chance.

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