Tech Wins Over Tough Huskies

Virginia Tech must have a four-leaf clover stashed away somewhere and it really works.

Tech backed into its first road win against a University division team Monday night, edging the Northern Illinois Huskies, much tougher than their 4-13 record indicates, 75-74.

NIU freshman John Fisher, who had scored 8 points on field goals, had a golden opportunity for an overtime or a Huskie win but missed the front half of a one-and-one free throw after Bobby Stevens’ fifth personal with three seconds left in the game.

After trailing for nearly all of the first half, the Hokies tied it just before intermission on a jump shot by Mike Collins, 38-38.

Charlie Thomas, with 16 points and some key steals and freshman Duke Thorpe, whose hot second half gave him a varsity career high of 22 kept Tech in contention and, until a field goal by Bryant with 3:59 to go, in the lead.

NIU, playing like anything but a loser, had four players in double figures and applied full court pressure that made Tech bend badly but not break, causing crucial turnovers.

A crowd that almost failed to show up, listed at 1,200, saw Tech’s patented whirlwind finish, topped off with the gamesmanship time out with the Hokies giving 51 percent free throw Fisher time to get tense before the shot.

Virginia Tech 75: Thorpe 22; Craig Lieder and Thomas each 16; Collins 9; Stevens 8; Kyle McKee 2; Calvin Wade 2.

Northern Illinois 74: Bryant 16; McDowell and Williams, each 14; Holmes 12; Fisher 9; Newton 6; Caldwell 4.

Tech hosts William and Mary tonight in an effort to run its streak to 10-7, heading into Saturday’s home game with the Wake Forest Demon Deacons. After hosting Toledo Wednesday, Feb. 6, Tech finishes out the season with six games on the road and one (Mercer) at home Feb. 23.