Shuffled Gobblers Thump Indians as Thorpe Stars

BY MARC MENG
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BLACKSBURG — Don DeVoe is really going to enjoy coaching the Virginia Tech basketball team as soon as he finds out who's playing on it.

DeVoe shuffled enough folks in and out of the lineup Thursday to make up a good tournament. He is just as, or more, excited about his inside game as ever, but the variety of combinations was sufficient enough to knock off William and Mary 84-71.

A big second half (due mostly to the newfound skills of freshman Bob Thorpe) supplied the final margin, but the first half the Hokies were anything but impressive.

Thorpe came in off the bench to pump in 29 second-half points in relief of starter Kyle McKee. The burly West Point product was almost the entire Tech offense for a seven-minute stretch.

"Thorpe is doing it for us now," DeVoe said. "What Calvin Wade did last year. He has become a super sub. He isn't afraid to take the ball and go for the basket. He draws the fouls and is getting better every game."

McKee was the man who was supposed to fill the inside void left by Allan Bristow, but is too timid. "Every time McKee gets the ball," DeVoe said, "all of our offense is going to be his, and he's afraid to go to the basket."

After stumbling through the first half and barely salvaging a two-point halftime lead, Tech got things moving.

Craig Leider hit two quick ones at the start of the half to counter a pair of Mike Atti's baskets. Then, Charlie Thomas hit one to put the Gobblers on top 37-35 and the race was on.

Leider cashed in a technical free throw and Thomas stacked in a rebound. The Indians drew an offensive foul on the inbound play and Thomas hit again.

William and Mary had spent 1½ minutes on the VPI end of the floor before Thorpe coughed up the ball. By that time, the Indians were down by 13 and they had gone into unfriendly territory trailing by only four.

Then Thorpe went into his act. He wasn't particularly astute handling the ball, but he singlehandedly took it to the basket and put in 10 of 15 shots.

"I'm trying to get an inside combination," DeVoe said. "I have no idea how many different groups I had in there tonight, but we're winning."

"I don't know if I would start Thorpe when he's doing such a good job off the bench. Yet, he is the best rebounder for us."

The Hokies are shooting atrociously, 44 percent for the season, and only 42 percent Thursday. The first half they were a miserable 13 for 36 from the floor.

"I can't figure the shooting of this team," DeVoe said. "I thought that would be one of our strong points this year. But, when you only get eight points the first five or six minutes when you're trying to get on top of somebody you're in trouble."

"I don't care how sticky your defense is, without better shooting than that you're going to get beaten because your defense isn't going to shut anybody out."

William and Mary, led by Ron Satterthwaite with 14 points, drops to a 6-11 record. Virginia Tech climbs to a 10-7 mark and won its 52nd straight game at home against state competition. The Hokies host Wake Forest Saturday.

Gobbler Craig Leider Takes a Rest While Going for a Lose Rebound