DeVoe Comments On Shooting, Recruiting, Starting Thorpe

BLACKSBURG—“Several big people are interested. It all looks very positive,” commented head basketball coach Don DeVoe on Virginia Tech’s recruiting program. DeVoe cautioned the Blacksburg Sports Club Monday that he really couldn’t speak authoritatively until some of the top prospects sign grants-in-aid.

DeVoe was favorably impressed on a recent trip to see Petersburg high school superstar Moses Malone and to the Washington, D.C., area to see three other players in which he is interested.

After an assessment of Tech’s recent victories and defeats and the rate of development of players the coach announced that freshman Duke Thorpe “probably would be starting Wednesday” (last night) against Toledo.

Thorpe, he said, “has the endurance, rebounding and inside game we need.” He noted that the high-leaping West Point High product scored more than 20 points in two consecutive games, going into the Wake Forest game and was the hero of the William and Mary win with his 26 points.

The coach praised Mike Collins for his game against Richmond and said Bobby Stevens had “a superb floor game” against NIU.

Admitting that he was at a loss to explain the poor field goal percentage that has haunted Tech all season, he said, “We spend a lot of time on shooting in practice.” The current squad, he said, is five to six percentage points behind the pace set by last year’s team.

DeVoe, who wasn’t sure whether Lieder, injured against W&M, would feel like playing, had Lou Nelson of the JV’s ready to start against Wake Forest until Lieder said that he was ready.

The coach warned that Mercer, Tech’s final home opponent on Saturday, Feb. 23, will be tough. Mercer, which made the move from college to university division in the NCAA several years ago, beat Missouri and had lost only four games going into last weekend.

DeVoe said one of Tech’s most pressing needs was to find a balance between inside and outside scoring.

Sports Club President Fred Burnett announced that Charlie Sayers and John Boling each scored 80 and tied on the tie-breaker to become co-winners of the basketball Pick the Winner contest.