Ragged Rockets Topped By Liederless Tech, 80-69

By Bill Mason
Sports Editor

BLACKSBURG—Virginia Tech, playing without injured team captain and leading scorer Craig Lieder (who was expected to be back for last night’s game at William and Mary) was primed for a rout of Mid-America conference co-leader Toledo Wednesday night, but was forced to stall to emerge with an 80-69 victory after a second half blastoff by the Rockets.

With freshman Duke Thorpe (in his first game as starter) leading the way, the Gobblers coolly traded baskets with Toledo in the early going and stretched to a 35-24 lead at halftime.

Toledo, which harassed thein-bound play nearly all night, made it pay in the second half with steals and interrupted Tech’s momentum until a late surge featuring Bobby Stevens, who scored most of his 14 points late in the contest.

Tech coach Don DeVoe praised the Rockets’ big man, 6-8 Jim Brown, saying, “he must have blocked six shots in the second half,” and calling him “their big gun defensively.”

Well-balanced scoring saved the game for Tech with Thorpe leading with 6 for 9 from the field and 4-4 at the foul line for 16. Stevens contributed 14 points and Mike Collins, in his best night to date, had 13 points and 7 rebounds. Kyle McKee led in rebounds with 10 and was 4 for 9 from the field for 8.

Charlie Thomas came through with clutch points often and wound up with 12. Ed Frazier hit an accurate 5 of 7 to add to a free throw for 11. Dave Sensibaugh with 4 and Calvin Wade with 2 completed Tech scoring.

The Rockets had some balance of their own, led by Mike Parker with 18 and Jim Kindle with 14. Jim Brown, who played only 29 minutes due to foul trouble, came through with 10 rebounds and 11 points, followed by Mike Carson and Larry Cole each with 10, Bob Conroy 4 and Bob Repp, 2.

There were 35 turnovers in the game, 20, by Toledo.

Tech moved its record to 11-8 going into last night’s return match at William and Mary.

The Gobblers will be at Richmond tonight, at West Virginia Saturday and at South Carolina Feb. 20 before returning for their final game against Mercer Feb. 23.