Virginia Tech's chances of a return to the NIT, that made the Saints-Lewis Mills sight-seeing, and very likely were the differences in UR's 90-86 upset of the Hokies.

They were: Eric Gray had his night and Steve Catlett his. But most of all, Bob McCurdy had his best night since he was leading the University of Virginia freshmen scoring.

On a night when Stewart was going over the 1,000-point total with 27 (20 in the first half) and the Spiders were shooting 55.9 percent (38 of 68) from the floor, the junior transfer was scoring 34 and hitting 80 per cent (16 of 20).

One of the signs read: There Ain't Any A.H. Robins Piggles That Will Ever Win Games for Lew Mills.

Maybe not. But last night's combination and McCurdy's timelessness did.

And Tech coach Don DeVoe was most aware of it.

"We just weren't ready to play with them," said the third-year coach who directed the Hokies to the title last March. "I thought it was very obvious they outplayed us from the very beginning."

It took but five minutes for the Spiders to assert themselves. After Gray hit the 25-foot jumper that affected the game's fourth tie—10-10 at 15:08, McCurdy came back in 30 seconds to follow one of the few UR misses with the basket that put the Spiders up, 12-10, and they were never out of the advantage again.

Oh, the Hokies made waves, time and again, first half and second.

The visitors cut substantial UR margins to tenuous threes twice. But, each time, there would be Stewart or Gray or, most often, McCurdy to smooth things out for the Spiders to even their record at 10-10.

"It was certainly a credit to their game plan that they took it over against us," said DeVoe, after the Hokies had fallen to 12-9. He was surprised that the Stewart-Gray-Mccurdy inside accounted for just 59 of the UR total.

Curdy scored the last three baskets of the first half to keep the Spiders in command, 54-57, at intermission.

McCurdy, who hit eight of 10 fielders each half, scored eight of UR's first nine points of the second half before Gray gave aid and comfort.

"He (Gray) certainly made some key goals," said Mills, who was admonished by one sign to visit Hades with the Hokies.

And, none was probably more a key than his twisting layup when the game was 56 seconds from history.

A 10-2 Tech run had cut an 11-point, 81-70 UR advantage to just three at 1:26, and the Hokies were in possession after the last of Richmond's 27 turnovers.

But, Bobby Stevens missed the twisting jumper that would have cut it to one. Bobby McCurdy didn't. Then, seven seconds later, he hit both ends of a one-and-one opportunity. It was UR, 87-89.

The hole was too deep for the Hokies to dig out of, certainly with just over 40 seconds to dig.

To make sure, Stewart hit three of four free throws. "Richmond," said DeVoe, "just has more physical ability than our frontline. They took command and never let up."

"We thought we were quicker inside," said Mills. When it counted most, Stewart and McCurdy and Gray were...which made it a Spiders Night.