USC Hands Hokies

Eleventh Loss

South Carolina, a nationally-ranked independent that is almost certainly headed for a post-season tournament, got some help it needed from high-leaping Brian Winters, Alex English and freshman Nate Davis and got the benefit of silent referee’s whistles on several blatant goal tending violations in a televised game from Columbia, S.C., Wednesday night, edging Virginia Tech 82-71.

The Gamecocks started with accuracy to burn shooting just under 62 percent from the field in the first half, enough to accumulate a 12-point 42-30 lead.

Tech Coach Don DeVoe, in a move to recapture lost momentum, pulled starters Ed Frazier and Bobby Stevens, starting Calvin Wade and transfer (from South Carolina) Mark Cartwright in their places.

Wade and Cartwright each scored 14 points, although a defensive change held Cartwright to 4 in the second half. The Gobblers made a strong rally late in the game, immediately after Bobby Stevens came back in, but South Carolina kept up its blistering scoring pace and was not to be denied on its home court.

In the six year history of Carolina Coliseum, South Carolina’s home court record is 64-5 with all losses coming by six points or less.

Charlie Thomas again led Tech scoring with 15, while Craig Lieder joined Cartwright and Wade in the 14-point club.

Brian Winters had 21 for the Gamecocks, all but one of them in the first half. Davis and English each contributed 19, coming up with 59 points and 25 rebounds between them.

Tech had shots blocked by the taller USC team all night, in many cases with a Carolina hand brushing an attempted shot down and away, coming from well above the hoop.

Poor rebounding hurt Tech, which seldom had a chance at a second shot.

South Carolina emerged from the game with an 18-4 record and Tech, in its third consecutive loss, found itself 12-11, with a winning season now definitely an uphill fight. Mercer invaded for the final home game Saturday and the Gobblers have Virginia and George Washington still ahead, both on the road.

A foot injury suffered in an earlier game kept Duke Thorpe out of the lineup.