Va Tech Faces Virginia

More At Stake Than Records

Charlottesville, Va. - State pride will have to be the keynote Wednesday night when Virginia hosts Virginia Tech in an 8 p.m. encounter at University Hall.

The Cavaliers have slipped to a 9-14 overall mark, after three consecutive winning seasons, and appear destined to finish with a losing record unless they pull the upset of the century by winning over Tech and Maryland, sweeping the ACC Tournament, and at least splitting in the Eastern Regional—an extremely improbable turn of events.

As for the Hokies, last year's NIT champions with a 22-5 overall mark, it has been a year of ups and downs, with a current record of 13-11 and games left on the road against Virginia and George Washington.

Both teams lost their key player from last year going into the current season. It is obvious now what Barry Parkhill meant to Virginia and Allan Bristow to Virginia Tech. Neither team has been able to replace those two All-Americans.

Bill Gibson has shuffled his lineup so many times in search of a winning combination that 11 Cavaliers have started at one time or the other during the season. But it is a young team and in its eagerness to win, costly learning mistakes have been frequent.

As the 1973-74 season winds to an end the Cavaliers have displayed two players of All-ACC calibre in Gus Gerard (20.3) and Wally Walker (17.6); two freshmen who will play a prominent role the next three years in Billy Langlo (8.3) and Ed Schlicht (3.0) along with rising seniors Andy Bonini, Brian Tully and Dan Bonner.

Seniors Bob McKeag (9.3), Steve Morris (4.7), Al Drummond (6.4) and Lanny Stahurski (1.6) have contributed over the last three years, but only Drummond could be considered a consistent starter, although both Stahurski and Morris have been starting in recent games.

Comparatively Tech is a senior team with Ed Frazier, Craig Lieder, Bobby Stevens and Charlie Thomas being starters in their last year of eligibility, with one of their front-line reserves, 6-5 Calvin Wde, also playing his last year. But sprinkled in the Hokie roster are a number of talented young players like 6-5 freshman Duke Thorpe, and 6-9 Kayle McKee, 6-0 Dave Sensibaugh, 6-7 Mike Collins, all sophomores.

Tonight's game will be an opportunity for the Cavaliers to regroup after their 33-point loss to North Carolina Saturday. Momentum is a must, as supplied by a win of any dimension, going into the regular season finale at Maryland Saturday and the ACC Tournament beginning March 7th.

For the Hokies, a win over the Cavaliers would insure them of a winning season, their fourth in a row, and the glimmer of a chance of an NIT bid to defend their title. Overall, there's more at stake in this state rivalry than just glancing at the records.