Last year from Virginia Tech basketball was the Cinderella year with a team that won consistently when a lot of people didn’t expect to. This season just ended, in which all hoped the NIT magic would continue, turned out to be the Year of The Cracked Glass Slipper.

More than 100,000 fans turned out to watch the home games almost as if it were a record, but it wasn’t a championship year. Tech got off to a good start, beating Ohio State, scaring North Carolina badly and starting to look like a winner. On Dec. 22 Calvin Wade was injured in the Florida game and the bad things started to happen, with losses by wide margins in two games of the All-College tournament to Houston and Weber State.

Big wins over Southwestern in the consolation round and over Eastern Kentucky at home made it look like turnaround time, but again, no luck. Tech soon had its sixth road loss and before the season ended lost two at home (which doesn’t happen often) to Oral Roberts, a fantastic team, and Wake Forest (on a good day you could believe fantastic).

West Virginia and Richmond got revenge on their home courts, South Carolina was much improved over last year and slowly Virginia took time out from being thrashed to thrash.

The departing seniors still are the people who (with Bristow) put Virginia Tech basketball on the map and won a national championship. Lieder, Thomas, Stevens, Frazier, Wade all will be missed next year when Mike Collins and Duke Thorpe team with (probably) Dave Sensibaugh, Mark Cartwright and Dennis Shrewsberry in an attempt to put Humpty Gobbler together again.

If Tech had to have a less sensational year this time around, a slower descent would have been welcome, but a shooting average of about 40% seemed to cut the cable on the elevator.

Will winning Tech basketball be back? It will.

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The gasoline crunch—will it affect attendance at Virginia Tech home football games next Fall? Unless it has eased by then, you can expect it.

Ticket Manager Tom McNeer points out that three of Tech’s home games-opener Kentucky, Richmond and West Virginia in late November—are contests which under normal conditions would be expected to draw some fans from their home areas into Blacksburg with them.

It’s too long a drive from Lexington, so groups smaller than charter bus size can be ruled out. An economy car driving slow and with a nose for sniffing out gas stations that have gas might make it from Richmond and back with luck. West Virginia fans living farther away than White Sulphur Springs probably wouldn’t risk it.

Virginia Tech, having to rebuild from a 2-11 record last year, very likely won’t pack the people in next season as it did last season. Rekindled interest caused by a new dynamic coaching staff should offset some of the gloom.

When the expected drop comes, it will be hard to know how much of it to blame on the gas shortage, since other factors must be considered.

Football fans from the area close enough to get to and from Lane Stadium on one tank of gas probably will turn out as usual. It doesn’t take ESP to know that if Tech wins its opener against the Wildcats, the gas line crunch won’t throw that long a shadow.