Moir Makes Tech Debut Saturday

By Staff Writer

The Virginia Tech basketball team, under the guidance of new head coach, Charles Moir, will make its debut Saturday night when it opens the 1976-77 season against Marietta at 7:30 p.m. in the Cassell Coliseum.

Saturday’s game will begin a challenging 27-game schedule which includes 13 home contests and six neutral site outings.

The schedule is highlighted by opponents such as North Carolina and Marquette. Both have been picked in the top three nationally by virtually every pre-season poll.

As for Tech, having lost three starters (6-6 f Russell Davis, 6-4 g Larry Cooke and 6-1 g Dave Sensibaugh) plus two top reserves (6-9 Kyle McKee and 6-8 f Mike Collins) from last year’s NCAA team, and being under a new coaching regime, makes the Hokies somewhat of a question mark.

Charles Moir (MOY-yer), new head coach, inherited just six scholarship players, only three of whom are proven performers (and the only three seniors on this year’s squad): 6-6 f Duke Thorpe, 6-11 c Ernest Wansley and 6-5 g-f Phil Thieneman.

(Moir served four years, 1963-67, as an assistant at Tech, spent six years at Roanoke College, where he had a 133-44 record and an NCAA college division championship, and three seasons at Tulane where his team posted 12-14, 16-10 and 18-9 marks, the latter the best in 27 years at Tulane).

Despite Tech’s coaching change, the only basic change on the floor will be to a high-low post offense - and the Hokies, while relying mainly on man to man defense, might switch to zone more frequently than in the past.

Aside from the three seniors, Marshall Ashford, 6-2 sophomore, rates as top contender for one of the guard spots. In contention at the other are Thieneman, 6-1 sophomore Ronnie Edwards, 6-1 junior college transfer Ron Bell and 6-2 freshman Chris Scott.

Wansley will handle the pivot, with assistance from 6-9 junior Sam Foggin.

Up front, where Thorpe was one of the nation’s best “sixth men” last season, anything can happen. Assuming that Thorpe will be a starter, he’ll likely team with 6-5½ freshman Les Henson, although another frosh, 6-9 Wayne Robinson has been improving rapidly and 6-8 John Greene, a transfer sophomore, appears certain to see action.

And, of course, Thieneman hasn’t been completely counted out of front court duty.

“We probably will be making lineup changes until at least the middle of December,” Moir notes, adding, “I’ve been pleased with our overall progress, but the strongest thing in this team’s favor so far is senior leadership. It’s as good as any team I’ve ever been around; you just don’t often find seniors like the three we have.”