Gobblers Rip Marietta

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Charlie Moir may have been nervous going into Saturday night's game with Marietta's Pioneers but after the first seven minutes of play it was the visitors who were left shuddering.

Virginia Tech completely outclassed an undersized Division II Marietta start to finish, giving Moir a 58-22 debut win in the Gobblers' opening game of the season in newly renamed Cassell Coliseum. There was never any doubt that Tech would be the winner, only by how much.

Moir wasn't immediately interested in the point spread, but rather gaining playing experience for his roster dotted with new faces.

"We had Marietta outmaneuvered," admitted the new Gobbler coach. "There's no denying that. We were bigger and quicker!"

The Hokies were far superior in every respect although playing a lineup that featured several new faces.

Tech struggled to an early 14-4 lead after only seven minutes of play, with Moir watching the lead swell to 36-12 by the fifth minute mark. Six foot-eight freshman Wayne Robinson of Greensboro erased any doubts of his ability to compete on a major college level by running rampant around the basket with eight of his 14 points in the first half, along with Tech stalwart Duke Thorpe's 10 in the first 20 minutes of play.

It was Thorpe's first slam dunk of the evening off the fast break that awoke the sparse crowd of 4,600 for a 42-17 lead just before Tech entered the dressing room at halftime with a 46-14 cushion.

Tech's starting five of Thorpe and Phil Thieneman in the front court with senior center Ernest Wansley, and a backcourt duo of freshman Marshall Ashford and junior college transfer Ron Bell were spelled often by Ron Edwards, Len Henson, Sam Foggins, Chris Scott and Robinson.

All finished with at least 16 minutes of playing time each. Ashford, who had experienced some shooting difficulties in practice, broke down with three early baskets in the first six minutes of the second half.

With the score 60-39, Moir was content with letting all 15 players build playing experience and confidence with a 30-point lead at 60-39 with 12:35 left to play.

Robinson continued to play well around the basket, with freshman forward Len Henson of Richmond rattling in eight consecutive points climaxing by a dunk at the 7:25 mark for a 74-46 advantage. The dunk, after being fouled a couple times, was back in force for the first time and the crowd howled.

With sophomore Edwards and Robinson lacing up the scoring, the lead ballooned to 84-44 until Moir called off the dogs at the 3:22 mark and inserted his third team.

"I was pleased with the performance in the first half," said Moir, who took the Tech reigns last May after a three-year stint at Tulane to its best season since 1949.

"We executed well offensively, but we stood around defensively in the second half. I smile when you consider that 84-44 margin and its 36-15 second half.

DUKE THORPE (33), PHIL THIENEMAN (44) DROP IN VIRGINIA TECH BUCKETS

Marietta's Jeff Faloba (53), Clark Dupler (15) Make Fruitless Efforts To Defend

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Guarded by Wansley with 12 and forward Gary Hursey with 11, Wansley shot 6-8 Faloba for the first 12 minutes of the second half.

The Hokies out rebounded Marietta 50-32 with Wansley leading the way with nine carrees and Robinson contributing eight. Faloba had six for the Pioneers.

Tech shot 52 percent from the floor for the game, and 78 percent from the line. Wansley hit 5-6 from beyond the arc for 60 percent on the nine and a mere 37 percent from the charity stripe.

Thieneman led Tech in assists with four with Wansley adding three; Wansley also blocked two shots, Thorne, Henson and Logan each adding a block. Freshman Chris Scott had three steals to lead that department.

"We're young and I'm confident we'll improve as the season goes along," moled the Hokie boss.

"We'll play eight or nine people all season, I don't know if we can play 10 or not. The last four or five days the second team has been playing well in practice.

"I have confidence in these people."

Moir dished out praise for many of his players. "I was pleased to see Robinson get on the boards and shoot as well. Bell, who was the fourth guard a week ago, has played well the past week and has moved up to a starter." Bell averaged 31 points a game last season at Cayuga Junior College in Albany, N.Y.

Thieneman has played 85 percent in the backcourt in practice, but he can play either place. I was also pleased to see Marshall hitting...he'll make us a couple more." Moir wasn't surprised by the zone defense Marietta used on occasion. No matter what the outclassed Pioneers could do, it wouldn't have mattered. We didn't get the ball inside like we wanted, Moir concluded.

Robinson, the freshman from Greensboro Day School, had been masterful in demonstrating the level of competition he played in high school. But the 6-8 freshman played like a veteran. "At first I was a little nervous like most freshmen, but after I got some summed up his first major college start.

He admitted that the competition in high school wasn't that tough, "but I knew I had the ability to play on this college level. I just had to be exposed to the competition and adjune myself."

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