Tech Has No Trouble Beating Marietta in Opener

By DENNIS LATTIA
Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — The game itself was in no way exciting, but a few dunk shots and a fast-breaking Virginia Tech team did rouse some excitement Saturday night.

"We had them outmanned," said Tech Coach Charlie Moir. "There's no denying we were bigger and quicker."

Marietta College quickly found out how big and quick Tech was. The Pioneers lost, 92-55, but they were glad to get out of that well. Only one Tech starter played more than 20 minutes. Moir was shuffled in and out so quickly that the score keeper had trouble keeping them straight.

"We'll play eight or nine people normally," said Moir. "I don't know if we'll play 10 like we did tonight. I have confidence in my second unit."

The game was a rout from the tipoff. Tech took a 21-4 lead with less than 10 minutes gone in the first game. That's when Moir started sending players in, and he didn't stop until the game ended.

Five players scored in double figures for the Hokies, but two of them were subs. Moir had a starting lineup of Ernest Wansley, Duke Thorpe and Phil Thiesman on the front court and Ron Bell and Marietta Ashkar at guards.

Bell was a surprise starter. Thiesman was expected to start at guard with freshman Lee Henson at forward. "I decided on the lineup Friday," Moir explained. "Bell played so well in the last two scrimmage and Phil plays good defense as a forward. Bell was the fourth guard until recently."

High scorers for Tech were reliable Brian Willey, who scored 19 points, and Moir with 14 points. Robinson, 6-7, hit seven of eight shots from the floor and had eight rebounds. "I was particularly pleased with the way Robinson played," Moir noted.

Moir, however, was not pleased with some play he saw in the second half. Tech had a 46-19 lead at halftime and looked sluggish through parts of the final period.

"We missed some easy shots, but I was pleased with our performance in the first half," said Moir. "We just stood around in the second half. We didn't have movement."

Marietta, a Division II team from Ohio, didn't have impressive credentials or much of a shot at ever competing in the game.

"I was nervous," said Moir. "I was afraid we would not play real well offensively. It's really difficult in practice to tell how well you're playing. I'm glad we've got this first game behind us."

Wansley, one of only two starters back from last year's 21-7 team, agreed. "I thought it if we take a couple of games to get used to the new people with the 6-11 center. We're quicker. Anytime I come down with the ball, I'm looking for the fast break. We send everybody on the ball this year."

Wansley had only four points in the game, but he shot five times which was more than usual for him last year. "I would have shot more times if I could have gotten the ball. I'll be shooting more this year."

As a team, Tech shot 53 percent from the floor. "Actually, we shot better tonight than we did in practice," Moir observed. "I was glad to see Marshall shoot as well as he did."