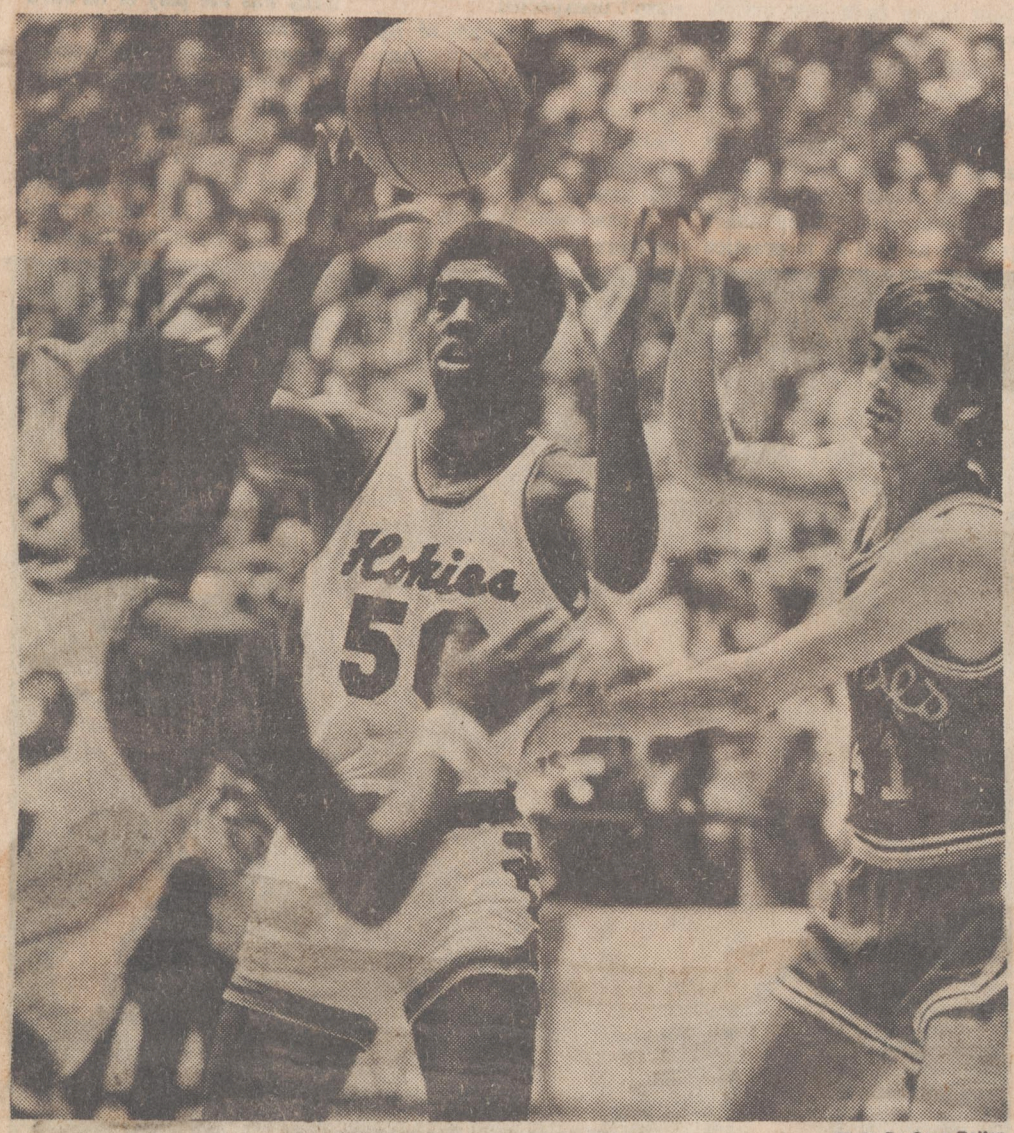
Tech Whips Buckeyes



COMBINING FOR TWO
Hokie's Ernest Wansley (50) Assists Ron Bell

Photo By Gene Dalton

Inside Game Potent

By JERRY RATCLIFFE
Senior Sports Editor

Virginia Tech, playing nearly an "iron man" lineup the entire second half, and getting strong performances from guard Ron Bell and center Ernest Wansley, continued its winning spree against Big 10 member Ohio State Saturday night, 84-77 at Tech's Cassell Coliseum.

Ohio State hasn't beaten Tech in four meetings.

Wansley, playing what he termed the best game of his career, provided the Gobblers with the inside strength they needed while Bell and backcourt teammate Marshall Ashford were effective outside in handing the Buckeyes their first loss in three starts. Tech is now 2-1.

Wansley scored 17 points, pulled down 13 rebounds and provided some intimidation to a smaller Ohio State team. First year Buckeyes coach Eldon Miller, whose Western Michigan team last season knocked Tech out of NCAA

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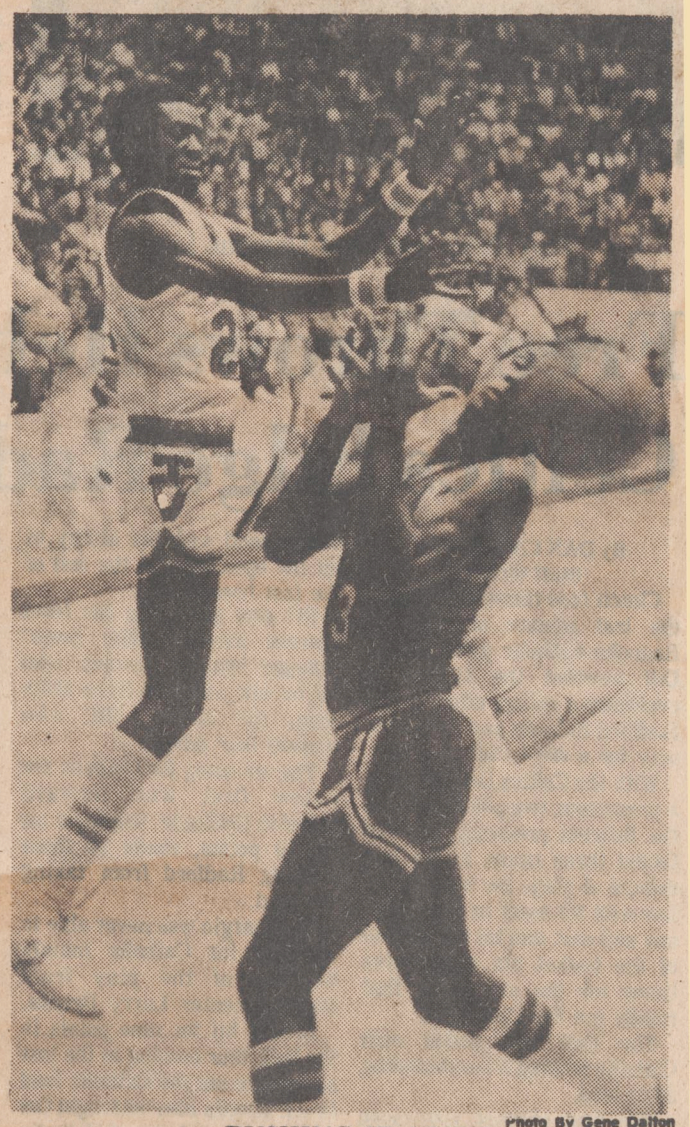

PUSHING IT ASIDE
Tech's Ron Bell Blocks Buckeye Pass

Photo By Gene Dalton

GETTING SQUEEZED OUT
Buckeye Blocks Tech's Duke Thorpe From Basket

Photo By Gene Dalton

★ Tech

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regional play, said the difference in the game was the Hokies' guard tandem of Ashford and Bell.

Ashford connected on 6 of 10 shots and two free throws for 14 points, while Bell hit 7 of 9 and 5 of 8 charity tosses for 19 points. Perhaps it was Bell who most redeemed himself after taking the blame for Tech's narrow 74-73 loss to West Virginia Monday night. In that game the junior college transfer, who averaged 31 points per game last season, missed the front end of two one-and-one situations which were most costly to the Hokies.

"We played defense on (Duke) Thorpe and Wansley," admitted Miller. "We held Thorpe to five shots, of course he made them all, but rarely do you hold him to five."

"But we didn't stay with their guards. It's that simple. Ashford and Bell killed us."

Tech had built a 16-point lead, the longest of the game, at the 11:30 mark of the second half on a basket by Thorpe making it 63-47.

But Ohio State guard Kelvin Ransey found the range on a series of jumpers to cut the lead to 67-59 at the 7:34 mark. Wansley then came back with a short jumper and added a dunk on a missed Ashford layup to make it 71-59.

However, the Buckeyes kept plugging away with a weave offense that highlighted good guard play by Ransey and Larry Bolden, who together scored 44 of State's 77 points. A Bolden drive, and two Ransey baskets narrowed Tech's lead to a mere three points at 76-73 with 2:28 showing.

Ashford added a basket on a reverse layup for a five-point lead then the Gobblers played some cat and mouse by going into the "four corner" stall.

Ohio State fouled at the 1:10 mark with Bell going to the line. He missed the front end of the one and one and the Buckeyes took possession. Only 10 seconds later Terry Burris scored on a stickback, for a 78-75 score.

With 47 seconds to go Thorpe cooly sank two free throws pushing the margin back to five. Bolden drove down the floor, with his layup rolling off the rim and Thorpe plucking it away with 33 seconds left.

Ohio State's final points came on a pair of free throws by Mike Laugherty with 18 seconds to go, cutting it to 80-77. Then the Buckeyes called time and immediately fouled Bell on the inbounds pass, evidently fouling the youngster because of his misses at Morgantown Wednesday.

But Bell more than redeemed himself sinking both shots for an 82-77 lead, and then stealing the ball for a spectacular layup that added salt to the wound with six seconds to go.

"I was really pleased," said Tech Coach Charlie Moir. "We played extremely well the first half, but I think we were too conservative late in the game."

He blamed the conservatism for Ohio State managing to close the gap the final eight minutes. "We didn't carry our offense to them like we did earlier."

Tech broke open an 18-18 tie and gained its first lead of the game at the 11:31 mark of the first half on a basket by Thorpe for a 20-19 edge.

From there, freshman Les Henson played his 10 minutes of the game to spark Tech to a 30-23 advantage with 5:13 to go, including a dunk that brought the sellout crowd of 10,000 to its feet. From there Thorpe took over on two free throws, a stickback and a three-point play for a full 10-point 43-33 advantage before taking in a 45-37 cushion at intermission.

Ball led Tech with 19 points, followed by Thorpe with 18, Wansley 17 and Ashford 14.