Hokies Fall To Tar Heels, 81-77

BY JERRY VERNON
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The University of North Carolina did not appear to be impressed with Virginia Tech early Saturday afternoon. The Tar Heel coaches blew into Roanoke Civic Center without their cheerleaders backing them. But by the time Coach Dean Smith's squad left Tech Country it had probably wished a few more Tar Heels had been around to watch Virginia Tech escape with a 61-77 win.

The scrappy Hokies took the 12th ranked Heels down to the final minute of play. Only Tech, trailing 77-77, waited too long to make its move as the last seconds of the game ticked off and who could have predicted the game would feature the game with nine rebounds. The Hokies made a costly mistake in the late part of the opening half that cost them the game. The end result was Virginia Tech holding a 12-point lead, 63-51 at half.

"I didn't want to foul Ford," lamented Moir. "I would have liked to have had a less experienced player on the line. Ford is a pressure player. He's used to it."

The 6-2 junior came through for the Hokies, hitting both ends of an one-and-one shot. He connected on half of his 16 free shot attempts and eight of 12 foul shots. Ford also added 10 rebounds, the most playing time with 32 minutes.

Only Tech's Ernest Wansley challenged the Tar Heel star for rebounds and scored the same number of rebounds during his 36 minutes on the court. The Heels' star scored nine points and snugged the same number of rebounds during his 36 minutes on the court.

His most worthy mention comes under Virginia Tech's Tom LaGarde's story.

The 6-10 Tar Heel senior must have felt like he was caught in crossfire traffic with Wansley hemming him under the basket. LaGarde managed only four points and four rebounds before exiting via fouls with 2:36 left in the match.

"We knew they liked to take the ball inside," said Moir outside Tech's locker room.

"We did a tremendous job on the inside. We were getting the scores when we needed them, but we didn't employ our defense like we wanted to. They (Carolina) work hard to get the inside shot."

While LaGarde spent a long night under the basket, teammate Walter Davis fared better as the 6-6 senior threw in 17 points and landed four rebounds. As the final score indicated, the game was by no means all Carolina. Tech, trailing by 11 points midway through the first half, came back to tie the game in the first stanza, at 1:44 when 6-2 sophomore Marshall Ashford caught the lead on a fastbreak and stuffed the ball.

Ashford and Wansley led Tech in the point revival that continued. From Page 6

Carolina from sending the Hokies packing to Blacksburg after a four minute drought stemming at 12:26 struck a corning oasis to hit the locker room with a crowd-pleasing tie, 1-33 each.

"At the half I thought we could win," said Moir to a crowd of reporters, "if we could contain their fast break. But we just made too many mistakes to win." In fact both teams committed a modest number of errors for such a physical encounter. Tech held the edge 19-18. The high pressure match sat three players on the bench early—Carolina lost Davis as well as LaGarde, while Tech's Ashford committed his fifth foul. Tech surprised a lot of the sellout crowd with its board strength. The Hokies pulled down 49 errant shots to Carolina's 7 recoveries.

They just completely dominated the boards in the last eight minutes of the first half," said Tar Heel Coach Dean Smith

Most of the Hokie rebounding strength in the last part of the opening half came from forward Duke Thorpe who finished the game with nine rebounds. The Hokies were a 6-5 senior's 61 points were collected under the basket on tip-ins and lead passes from Ashford.

Guard Ron Bell and forward Phil Thieman picked up 12 and 11 points respectively to give the Hokies four double figure players. Tar Heel Bruce Bockley and John Kuester were the only other players to finish in double figures. The 6-9 forward hit for ten points. Kuester fired in 14.

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