Carolina Slips By Hokies

By JERRY VERNON
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The University of North Carolina did not appear to be impressed with Virginia Tech early Saturday evening.

The Tar Heel cagers 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 Carolina escape with a 81-77 win.

The scrappy Hokies took the 12th ranked Heels down to the final minute of play. Only Tech, trailing 79-77, waited too long to make its move as the last seconds of the game ticked off with Carolina moving the ball in its slowdown four corners offense.

"It was my fault we didn't commit a foul sooner," admitted Tech Coach Charlie Moir in accepting the Hokies second loss in five tries.

Tech waited until four seconds were remaining on the clocking to stop the Tar Heel stall with a foul.

Then Hokie Ron Edwards pushed the wrong Carolina player—preseason All-American guard Phil Ford.

"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 Heels, hitting both ends of an one-and-one shot. He connected on half of his 16 field goal attempts and eight of 12 free shots for a game high 24 points. Ford also recovered the most playing time with 37 minutes.

Only Tech's Ernest Wansley challenged the Tar Heel star for huffs and puffs after the end of the fast break clash. The 6-11 center scored nine points and snagged the same number of rebounds during his 36 minutes on the court.

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

The 6-10 Tar Heel senior must have felt like he was caught in crosstown traffic with Wansley hemming him under the basket. LaGarde managed only four points and four rebounds before exiting via fouls with 6:16 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 throw 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 fast break and stuffed the ball.

Ashford amd Wansley led Tech in the point revival that kept Carolina from sending the Hokies packing to Blacksburg. After a four minute drought beginning at 15:26 struck a scoring oasis to hit the locker room with a crowding pleasing tie.