BEST BY V.P.I. NETS BIG HAUL
RICHMOND — The huge trophy hoisted high by the victorious Spiders when Thorp was symbolic of more than just another much-relished conquest of Virginia by Virginia Tech, 58-60. It also represented big take-home financial spoils from the first American Times-Dispatch Invitational Tournament.

Exact figures won’t be known for days, possibly a week, but the gobblers and their vanquished championship round trip were guaranteed around 330,000-3,500 plus another 15,700 from gate receipts for the second day. Thus paying Thursday night, the crowd total for the two nights came to 2,745, and that assures the T-D venture a huge success.

The Gobblers earned the loot, though, With Thorp coming apart after various pastime and injuries, they just barely got by Richmond Wednesday night. Thorp got only eight points each game, but he was in on the vital fines of the fray with VUA and made small but valuable contributions — not the least of which is his morale-bouncing presence.

ASHFORD MATER COMING ON

However, with or without “Dock,” Coach Charles Moir’s first remarks in his post-game sessions were with pride that the Gobblers performed at their best to date this season. They barely held their own, of course, in the opening half when VUA’s big front line kept them from getting inside for better shot selection.

Then Moir’s two guards, Marshall Ashford and R. Deen Gabbert sparked the second half after having played superb the first half. Bell sent the Techman in front for good at 27-26; Ashford pulled off a steal and raced for a layup, then Bell came back 52 seconds later to boost it to 41-30 in ailestone part.

Thompson, whose acrobatic layup won the opener for Tech, pumped in the next six markers and after that Carroll added another that got closer than two points — 59-51 with 4:45 remaining. From then on, Ashford, voted Most Outstanding Player by a wide margin, and Bell maintained control of the tempo with time-killing tactics.

THORPE SURPRISINGLY EFFECTIVE

Moir declared Ashford’s efforts were his best defense display for the Challenge of sub Wayne Robinson and the man he replaced — Thorpe, who according to his coach “was better than I thought he could be.” Tech’s mentor added Thorp will be greatly rested now and may even sit out the Gobblers’ next game.

“Virginia played surprisingly the first half,” observed Moir, but our “best defensive show- ing” up to this point had something with Tech stopping them pretty soon in the second half. The Gobblers reduced UVA’s shooting effectiveness to .41 to .34 in the final 20 minutes, while boosting its own rating from .57 to .68.

Terry Holland of the livers said: “It was a most disappointing loss. We had a lot of good spots, but we lost our last half didn’t get the scoring — again — from our front line.” Worst of all, according to Holland, the Cavaliers “made too many errors, too many mistakes. We’re just not playing together well enough yet, we must — and will improve.”

The host city’s two teams in the consolation round Thursday weren’t the only losers. Before they were through, Richmond edging past Virginia Commonwealth 58-55, they took the tournament’s officials down with them to levelling heavy criticism at the crew assigned by the Southern Conference.

“We haven’t been too bad playing the honor system,” remarked Carl Stone of the Spiders, adding “two nights in a row is too much to take, to the mark, correction in Stone’s honor-system remark, then said the otherwise well-staffed and well-received tournament’s first game a hill we were poorly-called.”

No matter who won the first annual T-D Invitational. It seemed sure that his 48 points in two games would win the host city at least the title of all-time tournament.