Tech and Virginia Big—Except in Hampton

The Richmond Times-Dispatch Invitational Tournament last week was a success, to put it mildly. Organizers of the event believe it was the fourth best paying holiday tournament in the country this year. It wasn’t that the tournament drew so many people—since the coliseum wasn’t sold out either—but tickets were so expensive that a ton of money was made.

Tickets for the two nights cost $16 for a book. Over 8,000 showed up Wednesday with over 9,000 in the stands Thursday. The tournament took in about $100,000.

Organizers were fortunate in the results. Without a doubt, Virginia Tech is the biggest draw, in Richmond or anywhere else in Virginia. The final night of Richmond vs. VCU and Tech vs. Virginia couldn’t have worked out better. Normally, it takes a year or two for an event like that to get off the ground. But the tournament probably drew better this year than it will next. That’s simply because it will be held in February next year. The Christmas holidays are a much better time.

The same four teams are in the tournament again next year. Because of Virginia’s commitment with the Sugar Bowl tournament, the Cavaliers couldn’t play in the Richmond event over the holidays.

A good game between UVa and Tech was needed in the final. The two teams played each other twice more this season. The Gobblers and Cavaliers have both of those games on neutral courts.

Jan. 12, Tech and UVa played in Hampton. So far, the game has been a bust. Fewer than 4,000 tickets have been sold. Press luncheons have been held to try to stimu-
late interest. But it will take a big rally for the game to really be a success.

The CIAA tournament was held in Hampton last year and standing room tickets had to be sold. But that is the only event that goes over well there. William and Mary gets very poor attendance, even this year when the Indians had a good football team and a good record.

The second Tech-UVa game will be played in Roanoke. It’s not until Feb. 23 but over 9,000 tickets have already been sold. It should be a sellout by the end of this week.

Roanoke is undoubtedly a Tech town. The Hokies are considering three games here next year. All three should sellouts, if decent competition is provided.

But even in Richmond, the Hokies are the biggest thing. When they played the Spiders at U of R, the Gobblers had more fans in the stands.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch event helps fill a void. A tournament involving Virginia schools was needed. It will be held for two years and then be re-evaluated. There should be little doubt that it will be considered a success and be extended.

Old Dominion held its own tournament this year, but ODU was the only state school involved. UVa opened its season with a tournament involving four state schools, but the Cavaliers didn’t take any chances in scheduling Roanoke and Madison.

Last year, three schools from the state went to the NCAA. But which was the best team? U of R has lost to Virginia this year, but is 7-1 and improved from that game. Then Tech beat Virginia but the Gobblers have lost three games. ODU had a big win over Mississippi State, but the Monarchs have lost to VMI.

VMU and ODU both have a chance at being ranked this week because of their performances in holiday tournaments. But are they better than Tech or UVa? The Cavaliers play the Monarchs later in the season to help settle that, but the schools in this state play each other so seldom that there might never be a clear-cut best in Virginia.

Tech Coach Charlie Moir got a pleasant surprise while in Richmond. Former Tech player Calvin Wade is trying to get Moir to sign a player he has found in Portsmouth.

The guy happens to be 7-4 or 7-5. He has the grades and is eligible. But he has one drawback—he has never played any high school basketball.

The player, who Wade introduced to Moir, grew so fast that his knees didn’t keep up with him. He’s had to have them operated on. If his knees hold up, he could be a real find. Right now, he is not being recruited by anyone. But after visiting the Richmond tournament, at least four schools are interested.

He stopped by the Tech locker room after the game and is probably the only high school player around who big Ernest Wansley has to look up to.

The Richmond Spiders lost a player during the tournament. Guard Larry Slay-

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