Thorpe To See Action Tonight

By JERRY VERNON
Sports Writer

Charlie Moir has a lot more to his smile about now than he did after his Virginia Tech eagers copped honors in the Times-Dispatch Invitational Tournament last Thursday.

After the tourney Moir believed Tech had paid a high price for the title — the loss of star forward Duke Thorpe for at least one game. But now, a smiling Moir says Tech's season leading scorer (16.6) will start tonight at eight when Texas Wesleyan invades Cassell Coliseum.

"I'm surprised at Duke's progress," said the first year Hokie coach. "He should be able to play and he will be in his best shape of the year."

But this top condition does not mean Thorpe will hit the court at full speed. A knee injury the 6-6 forward suffered in Richmond has healed, but a groin injury still hampers the Tech leader's game.

"I feel like the groin injury is going to linger all year," admitted Moir. "He'll always be at 85-90 per cent, but his charley horse thing seems to be gone now."

Tech board strength which suffered last week should come back strong tonight with Thorpe playing in better physical condition. His 7.7 rebounding average is surpassed only by 6-11 center Ernest Wansley's 7.8 mark.

The Hokies might need the big men's prowess under the boards against a Wesleyan squad which has outrebounded its opponents this season 44 to 35. Tech has outboarded its opponents this season 39.8 to 33.6.

Rebounding is not Charlie Moir's biggest concern going into this game. The Hokie coach must convince his players not to bask in past tourney glory and take the Texans too lightly. On the surface Hokie eagers may have just reason to snub the visitors.

Uncovering facts on Wesleyan basketball is much like looking into the financial assets of Lockheed Corporation. You know the Texans have a team, but the squad's real assets are hard to find.

One Wesleyan sports information secretary was working through her school's break Tuesday and said she knew something about the team. Her knowledge did not include the squad's record or its top players.

The school's hometown publication, The Fort Worth Star Telegram, disclosed Wesleyan's 9-3 record going into Tuesday night's game with Navy in Maryland, but a newspaper spokesman was unable to name a single player on the squad's roster.

With all this in mind one could justly wonder if Tech can approach this game against the Texoma Conference members seriously.

Moir thinks his squad realizes the ability of Wesleyan and its governing body, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (N.A.I.A.) which many consider a lightweight to the more respected NCAA.

"At this day and time I think players have learned you don't take anyone lightly or you'll get your toes stumped," warned the Hokie coach. "They (Texas) have a veteran ball club, but I know we're not as likely to get as psyched up for them as for the University of Virginia."

The Hokies will be clashing with no highly acclaimed squad tonight even though Wesleyan claims a couple of players who can consistently ripple the nets. The Texans' highest scorer, 6-1 guard Donnie Kliever, averages 22 points a game while 6-8 center Wayne Waymain's 14 point average stands second to the postman's 12 rebounds an outing.

Another 6-1 guard, Carl Webb, and 6-4 forward Gerry Greene and 6-5 forward Vern Wright round out the Wesleyan starting lineup.

Moir plans to send his regular starters, Thorpe, Wansley.

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