Red Hot Bonnies Blitz Gobblers

By JERRY VERNON
Sports Writer

ALLEGANY, N.Y. — If Essie Hollis had gotten what he desired out of St. Bonaventure’s 84-42 win over Virginia Tech Saturday night the 6-6 center would face homicide charges today.

“We wanted to kill them,” said Hollis in the cigar smoke-filled, Bonnie locker room after the New Yorkers ran their season record to 7-3. “We didn’t beat them like we wanted, but I guess we’re satisfied.”

The Bonnies’ greatest satisfaction over Virginia Tech, which conquered St. Bonaventure last season 115-74, came from one of the hottest shooting exhibitions ever staged on a college floor. Hollis became the fifth highest career Bonnie scorer (1487) as he sank 15 of 21 field goals for a game high 37 points while teammate Greg Sanders followed closely behind with 32. The duo burnt Tech’s alternating man-to-man and zone defense to the second half hitting an unbelievable 13 of 13 floor shots.

“I didn’t think they ever missed,” sighed Tech Coach Charlie Moir as he watched his squad’s record dip to 7-4. “It was incredible shooting. I’ve never seen such shooting.”

The Bonnies missed only four of 25 floor shots in the final half while Tech netted 15 of 29 attempts in the last twenty minutes. The two squads traded baskets for the first 13 minutes of the decisive period with the Bonnies holding a 74-70 edge with 7:02 remaining. Then it happened. Tech managed only four more field goals for the remainder of the game as the Bonnies continued to dazzle the nets.

“If I don’t think our players could believe the way St. Bonaventure was shooting,” lamented Moir. “But what worried me was the way we didn’t get back on defense and the way we gave up the base line. We should have stopped them.”

Tech high scorer, Duke Thorpe with 23, agreed with his coach. The 6-6 Hokie forward drew the assignment of guarding Hollis whose 37 points was the Bonnie senior’s most productive game ever.

“This was the worst game defensively I’ve ever played,” admitted Thorpe. “If I was the coach I would bench myself. I wouldn’t blame him if he did.”

Moir was not as critical of Thorpe’s play, but did notice that the Hokie forward seemed to lack a move or two. “Maybe his groin injury was bothering him,” said the coach. “Duke doesn’t play as good on defense when his back is to the hoop.”

The smaller, but quicker Bonnies pushed the inside Hokie defense back with unfailing outside shooting from 6-6 Sanders and 6-0 guard Glenn Hagan who scored 13 points.

“We tried to go to Essie because we knew Thorpe had three fouls on him,” said Bonnie Coach Jim Satalin as he pumped his cigar symbolizing revenge from last year’s defeat.

“We talked all about last year’s game before this one,” he said. “Kids forgot pretty quickly, but I don’t. It embarrassed me.”

Despite the two man performance by Hollis and Sanders the Bonnie coach argued Tech should feel no shame over the loss.

“They’re two excellent offensive players,” praised Satalin of the duo who brought St. Bonaventure out of a two game losing skid. “It’s no disgrace when someone has problems guarding them.”

For a good part of the game St. Bonaventure had problems guarding a Tech offense that shot a respectable 57 per cent of the floor.

Tech forward Phil Tinnemans fired in eight of 13 field goal attempts for an individual season high 22 points while 6-11 Ernest Wardsby collected 11 points. Tech’s outside shooters, Ron Bell, Marshall Ashford and Ron Edwards hit nine of 17 shots to keep the Bonnie inside alert.

The shorter St. Bonaventure squad almost battled even with Tech on the boards — 23 to 27. Hollis claimed a game high 15 rebounds while Thorpe picked off ten missed shots. Tinnemans and Wardsby both managed six rebounds for the Hokies.

Tech grabbed the lead three times in the first half only to watch St. Bonaventure’s two strong men regain control of the contest, and lead the Bonnies to a 68 per cent shooting night from the floor. If a two man act ever threatened the extinction of the Hokies, Hollis and Sanders did so in the first half. The Bonnie duo scored 10 of St. Bonaventure’s first 12 points, helping the New Yorkers to a 12-2 spread with the game less than four minutes old.

But when Hollis missed the