Virginia Tech Whips Jacksonvile 74-68

By DENNIS LATTA
Sports Writer

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Coach Charlie Moir was taking no chances. Virginia Tech badly needed a win. A loss could have ruined the rest of the season.

But Moir and his Gobbler got their win, beating Jacksonville University, 74-68, Saturday night to make Moir a happy man.

"This was a very crucial game for us," the Tech coach explained. "We had lost two in a row. We played a terrible game against Virginia. It was very important for us to not lose this one.

The Gobblers were beaten by St. Bonaventure last Saturday and by Virginia Wednesday. A promising 8-3 record had dropped to a disappointing 8-5 and Moir didn't want it to drop any further.

"If we had lost this game, I think we would have lost Monday night, too," Moir said, referring to Tech's next game against a talented Oral Roberts team in Blacksburg. "If we had lost three in a row, it would have been awfully tough for us to come back.

"The Gobblers anything but classic basketball in the second half against JU, before rebounding in the last 20 minutes to take command.

In that second half, however, Moir went with his starters the whole way. The only sub who made an appearance in the second half of the game, came in with 17 seconds remaining when Duke Thorpe fouled out.

"I'm playing cautious," admitted Moir. "It's not that I don't have any confidence in my bench, but I knew we needed this one badly.

"If we had used the iron men in the second half and lost, it really would have been tough on us."

With Tech having been playing a good basketball team, it would have found itself behind—probably far behind—in the first half. But JU happened to be playing as badly, maybe worse, than the Gobblers.

The Dolphins, who are 6-9, outrebounded Tech, 23-15, in the first half. The Gobblers hit only one of five foul shots and committed nine turnovers in the first 20 minutes.

JU returned the favor with 13 turnovers. After a 9-6 Tech lead, the Dolphins stayed with the Gobblers through the rest of the half and JU even managed to go ahead (29-25) with a little over a minute left.

But Tech picked up three easy baskets to end the half, two by Ron Bell, and had a 31-29 halftime lead.

With Thorpe, Bell, Ernest Wansley, Phil Thieneman and Marshall Ashford doing all the playing, Tech played a better second half.

Thorpe had two rebounds in the first half but added seven in the second period and Ashford was scoreless at halftime but scored 10 points in the final 20 minutes.

After Jacksonville took a 34-33 lead to start the second half, the Gobblers took control. They gradually opened a lead with the biggest margin being 12 points, 64-52, at the 3:39 mark. Even then, Moir didn't go to his bench.

Tech hit just four of its first 11 foul shots. But in the last three minutes, the Gobblers hit 12 of 15 to put the game away. Tech let up in the last minute and the Dolphins cut the lead to six when it was obvious who the winner would be.

Thorpe hit 11 of 13 field goal tries against JU's zone defense but guard Ashford hit only one of seven. Bell finished with 19 points—sinking 7 of 12 shots from the field—to match his best performance of the season.

"We needed this one super bad," Thieneman said. "It would have really hurt to lose this one."

Bell agreed with Thieneman. "I really believed we should have beaten St. Bonaventure. I was down for the Virginia game and I think everyone else was. After the Virginia game, the players had a meeting without the coaches and we decided to tough. I think we did."

But one game doesn't make a season and the Hokies will need to be tough again—about 13 more times.

VIRGINIA TECH
Tangler 0-0 0-0 0-0 Williams 0-0 0-0 0-0 Bell 0-0 0-0 0-0 Ashford 1-1 1-0 2-1 Thompson 1-2 0-0 0-2 Edwards 1-1 1-0 2-2 Henson 0-0 0-0 0-0 Robinson 0-0 0-0 0-0

JACKSONVILLE
Cissler 5-7 0-0 5-7 Ying 0-0 0-0 0-0 Brown 2-3 2-2 2-5 Williams 2-5 1-1 3-6 Williams 1-1 1-0 2-2 Feltz 1-1 1-1 2-2