Gobblers Defeat GW in Overtime

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WASHINGTON — Charlie Moir's voice quivered, but it wouldn't break, much like his Virginia Tech team had refused to yield just moments earlier.

The Hokies, holding their hearts in their mouths for four quarters, survived a second comeback by George Washington to upset the Colonials 73-71 in overtime Saturday night.

In a game that is unlikely to be repeated in the near future, the Hokies watched desperately as GW guard Tom Tate banked in a 46-footer at the buzzer to send the game into overtime.

It was Tate's only shot of the night. And it was the big one.

In the overtime, though, Tech took control to build a six-point lead. Then came missed free throws and turnovers. Suddenly GW had the ball and a chance to tie the game again.

Sub Mike Samson missed a jumper, but it fell into the hands of John Hollaran, the game's top scorer with 29 points. Hollaran shot a 15-footer that somehow missed.

This time GW's Tom Glenn tipped the ball. The buzzer rang as the ball bounced twice on the back rim and then fell off to give Tech its win.

"Believe me," said Moir, obviously shaken by the emotional game, "we needed this win or our morale would've been at an all-time low.

"The kids played with emotion. The bench was alive. The kids were playing together and they were complimenting each other on good plays."

The Hokies were obviously motivated for the game by criticism from their lack of emotion in a home loss to West Virginia on Wednesday. And it showed as the Gobblers seemed in control except at the end of both the regulation play and overtime.

"We really hadn't had the enthusiasm on the floor all year like you have to have. But we have some good kids who have a lot of character. They showed it the way they came back tonight."

There were other obstacles in Tech's way besides the last few seconds of both the regulation and the overtime.

The Hokies came here with subs Sam Fogg and Wayne Robinson back in Blacksburg. Fogg was out with the flu while Robinson's nose, broken in an earlier game, was set Friday.

Then Duke Thorpe fouled out with 3:09 left in regulation play after scoring 14 points.

But 6-11 Ernest Wansley, who had only one rebound the entire first half, got 12 in the second half, including four in overtime when he seemed to get every miss by GW.

Sub guard Ron Edwards had his moments too. He fired in four-second-half field goals and helped the Hokies open an eight-point lead.

"I couldn't believe he (Tate) banked that shot," said Thieneman, whose pass had started the improbable play.

Thieneman, who led Tech's scoring with 19 points, was.

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trying to get the ball over the time line when his pass was deflected away from Marshall Ashford. The ball ended up in Tate's hands and he simply turned and shot from 40 feet away.

"It came to my mind we might cave in," said Thieneman. "But we couldn't let them have this one. We had lost too many that we shouldn't have lost."

As for Wansley, he got keyed up when Thorpe left the game.

"I knew I had to rebound then because we didn't have Duke. When it's on our shoulders, it seems to motivate me," said the senior center.

Wansley had a perfect view of both Tate's shot and the last-second missed tip. "I thought he'd (Tate) make it or it would be just short. Then I said, 'Oh, no, it's going in,'" said Wansley of Tate's shot.

I tried to get my hands on the ball when he (Glenn) tipped the ball.

Though Tech led most of the second half, GW tied the game when Hollaran's jumper went through with 1:38 left. But Tech scored four quick points as Phil Thieneman and Wansley made free throws for a 66-64 lead.

This time Tate took over. He was fouled with 12 seconds left and made both shots. The game his final heave.

In overtime, Tech scored the first four points and was never headed. The lead was stretched in his last to 68-64 before Ron Bell missed the first of a one-and-one attempt that would have given the Hokies an eight-point bulge.

Tech missed free throws two more times and GW got its last-gasp chance.

"I would say," said Thieneman, "we gave the fans their money's worth tonight."

No one would argue that point.