Gobblers Edge GW in Overtime

By JIM McDONALD
Sports Writer
WASHINGTON, D.C.—Virginia Tech has found out this season that it's difficult to play successfully on the road.

Hostile crowds, unfamiliar courts and crucial calls by the officials that seem to always go the wrong way make it tough for the visiting team to win a close game.

The Hokies coped not only with those adverse conditions, but also with a 40-foot jump shot by sophomore guard Tom Tate and an overtime period, Saturday night at George Washington University on their way to a 75-73 victory over the Colonials at Smith Center.

"It's tough to win on the road. Especially with the crowd and the refs a little biased against you," senior Hokie forward Phil Thieneman said. "It makes us feel real good. Even more than it normally would since we stunk the place up against West Virginia last Tuesday (an 86-70 loss in Blacksburg)."

The win upped the Tech's record to 13-7 while the Colonials, which beat Maryland for the first time in 17 years only a week ago, dropped their second straight contest, falling to 11-7.

Despite the euphoria that filled the Tech locker room after the victory, the Hokies almost lost the game twice. They seemed to be in control during regulation play when Tate and company performed their heroics for George Washington.

With 29 seconds remaining Hokie center Ernest Wansley was fouled by backup Colonials center Mike Zagarbo. The 6-11 big man converted both ends of the one and one to give Tech a 69-61 lead.

After missed opportunities by both teams, the Hokies' lead stood the same at the 12 second mark when Tech guard Marshall Ashford fouled Tate. The playmaker then made the one and one to give the score 55-53.

The Colonials went into a 2-2-1 full court zone press which they had used extensively throughout the battle to try for a steal.

Passing the ball upcourt, Hokie forward Phil Thieneman attempted a toss to Ashford which was deflected into Tate's hands by George Washington forward Mike Samson. Tate took three dribbles and, as the final second ticked away, let a shot fly that was never going anywhere but in.

"I knew he had made it when the ball left his hands," Ashford said. "There was never any doubt about it."

As the ball fell through the net the gym went wild with pandemonium. The outlook wasn't too bright for the visitors.

"It takes a lot out of a team to get tied like that. But we had the kind of enthusiasm we've wanted, and lacked, all year," Tech Coach Charlie Moir said.

"We just went back to the bench and started yelling, 'we aren't going to lose this thing,' Thieneman added. "We heard the crowd screaming, but it only made us more determined. We worked too hard not to win."

History was almost repeated in the extra period. Tech again seemed out of danger, only to have to withstand another furious George Washington charge.

With 1:21 to go in the five-minute overtime the Hokies owned a 73-67 lead. The Colonials closed to 75-73 on John Hollaran's 15-foot jump shot. Tech guard Ron Bell missed the front end of a one-and-one with 13 seconds left that would have made it extremely difficult for George Washington to come back.

Down to their final chance, the Colonials put everyone in the packed 5000 seat arena on edge. They took five shots in their last possession. The last, a tip by forward Tom Glenn who had been recruited by Tech, hung, for what seemed like an eternity, on the rim before falling helplessly to the floor.

"At first I thought the shot was going in," Wansley said. "But then I saw it had the wrong kind of spin and I knew it had missed."

Asked if Tech could have withstood five more minutes of action he said, "We could have handled it. I really don't want to think about that, though."

Wansley, who went unnoticed in the first half, was dominating in the second as he had 12 rebounds and ten points, giving Tech the victory.

See TECH, Page 12

Hollaran led all scorers with 29 points and forward Les Anderson added 18. Tate, the not quite savioir, had only four.

The contest was close throughout. At intermission the teams were tied 29-29.

Statistically the Hokies had 38 rebounds, 21 turnovers and shot 45 per cent from the floor. George Washington had 37 rebounds, 19 turnovers and connected on 43 per cent of its field goal attempts.

Although the Colonials may have had the American tradition on their side, Virginia Tech won the revolution.