Gobblers Shade
Memphis State

By BOB MOSKOWITZ
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BLACKSBURG — In one of those inexplicable wins through valleys and peaks, Virginia Tech climbed the highest mountain after nearly gagging in the deepest gorge Wednesday night.

Two foul shots with six seconds left by game-high scorer Ron Bell capped a bizarre 75-68 conquest of Memphis State.

The two points capped a closing 12-0 spurt by the Gobblers, eight of which belonged to Bell.

Tech trailed by 24 points at 43-19 with 2:02 left in the atrocious first half, when it shot only 23.5 per cent.

To say it dominated all of the second half wouldn’t be entirely correct, either. Actually, it fell to Tech by 25 (44-24) early in the second half.

It wasn’t until Marshall Ashford, who sank but three of 16 field-goal shots, hit from the right side with exactly 15 minutes left that Tech could score a field goal after intermission.

That two-pointer peaked what really became a five-point play which evolved after a technical foul assessed against the Memphis bench 11 seconds earlier.

From there the charge began in earnest in a period of 11 minutes 11 seconds, the Gobblers outscored the 185 Tigers 21-6.

So, too, the Gobblers (14-7) still were down 68-58 with 2:02 to go.

It was no wonder Memphis Coach Wayne Yeates observed “If I could explain, I’d be a genius.”

Virginia Tech’s Charlie Moir called it “unbelievable,” and conceded that, during the 15-minute intermission when the Gobblers lagged 45-24, “I was more vocal than I’ve ever been. We stunk the place up.

Bell, averaging only 10.9 points a game, had 14 at the break and finished with 21. Even so, he only hit 9 of 21 field-goal tries.

“When it was down to five, I knew we had a chance to win,” bubbled Bell.

Adding to the unexpected victory was the contest, which attracted another disappointing Cassell Coliseum crowd of 6,000, was the first five-point margin in the West Point stawart Dale Thorpe. The big senior fouled out with 6:38 to go.

Ron Bell
Ron Woodard
Billie McClellan
Phil Thienemann
Sam Foggia
Ashford

Memphis State

Virginia Tech

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Gobblers ‘UNBELIEVABLE’

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That set the stage for Bell’s final heroics after he was fouled by Darrell Holliman.

Foggia said of the two crucial missed foul shots, "he seemed to have the same inequity every time. Everything fell into place.

"I think anyone could have gotten the ball." The big fellow said "I can’t remember a first half that has been this good for Tech," and I sure can’t remember a better closing rush. It was almost like magic.

Virtually every player lauded the enthusiasm of the crowd which, like the Gobblers themselves, has been luckless this season.

Foggia said he “didn’t feel the pressure. We knew we could do it.”

Moir wasn’t that positive. “I told the kids at the half that we could get back into the game and save ourselves from further embarrassment.”

As one wag put it. "It wasn’t even close.”

RON BELL
Triggers
VPI’s
Miracle

of the Gobblers’ final points.

Foggia made an even more electrifying contribution under the boards in the late stages when the Tigers’ Alvin Wright twice missed the front end of a one-and-one situation.

Each time the 6-foot-9 junior faced the ball, and each time Tech added two more points.

On the first occasion, Thienemann hit from the left side, cutting the spread to 69-68 with 1:18 to go. Then, with exactly a minute left, Bell dropped in a short shot and the crowd went delirious.

Nine seconds more and Virginia Tech appeared to have thrown away its chances by missing two shots from inside.

Instead, opportunity quickly beckoned again, but in disguise. Wright was fouled by Bell, which is what Moir had instructed his charges to do with the 5-10 junior, and again Foggia attacked himself to the ball, this time with 20 seconds left.

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