Hokies Dominate Cadets 89-74; Thorpe Leads Way With 24 Points

By Mark Kozak
Tech took control early, and was never really threatened in posting a surprisingly easy 89-74 win over Army Saturday night in the Cassell Coliseum.

Against a team with one of the top defenses statistically in the nation, Tech got their fast break rolling, and never trailed. The 89 points was the most scored against Army (16-6) all year.

"I was surprised at the number of fastbreaks we were able to run," Head Coach Charlie Moir said following the game. If it had been a close game early, say 18-18 midway through the first half, it would have been a helluva game."

As it was though, the Hokies outscored the Cadets 8-0 in the first five minutes on layups by Duke Thorpe and Ernest Wansley and a jump shot by Ron Bell. The Cadets were able to close the lead to 8-4, but Tech scored the next six points, and weren't pressed again.

Part of the Hokies' success in the first half, which ended with the Hokies leading 43-27, was due to a full court press on inbounds plays. It disturbed the usually well disciplined deliberate Army offense into committing 16 turnovers.

"We played real well in the first half," Moir said. We were playing real hard on defense, reaching and grabbing. He (Army head coach Michael Kryzewski) complained to me about the officiating, but they didn't make his team turn the ball over 16 times."

In outshooting the Cadets 47 percent to 34 percent in the first period, Tech was led by Duke Thorpe with 17 of his game total 24 points. Meanwhile, Army's All-American candidate Gary Winton had 14 points. He finished the game as the leading scorer with 28 points.

"Winton is a helluva player—a great scorer and rebounder," Moir said. "But I thought Ernest did a good job on him in the first half even though he did get his points."

The Hokies continued their inspired play through the first six minutes, and led by their largest margin 58-39 with 13:37 remaining. However, the Hokies lost some of their aggressive edge at that point and the Cadets began to close the gap.

With 6:02 left, Army had closed the lead to 71-61 on eight straight points, three of them layups.

"I was disappointed in the way some of our guys played in the second half," Moir said. "Our execution got a little sloppy with soft passes that let them get steals. With sharp passes and cuts, we could have blown them out."

The Hokie coach spent a lot of time switching personnel in and out of the game, as Tech got into more foul trouble than it has been in all year. Five Hokies (Thorpe, Thieneman, Wansley, Les Henson, and Ron Edwards) had four personals at the end.

"We did a lot of standing around on defense," Moir said in explaining the number of fouls. "You tend to do that with a big lead, and so you foul more."

As quickly as the Cadets closed the gap, Tech wiped out all comeback hopes on two quick layups by Thieneman with little over five minutes to go.

Apparently used to getting more charging calls than they did Saturday night, the Cadets were also in foul trouble, many of them blocking fouls.

But Moir was not sympathetic to Army's problem. "It's dangerous as hell the way they were cutting under," he said. "If they are going to take the chance, we are going to drive right into them. It ought to be a technical for cutting under like that."

Tech finished with five players in double figures. In addition to Thorpe, who was playing sick, the Hokies were led by Thieneman and Bell with 15 points, and Marshall Ashford and Henson with 11.

Aiding Winton for Army were Pat Harris with 15, Cleennie Brundidge 11, and Matt Brown, 10. Winton's 14 rebounds also enabled the Cadets to outrebound Tech 45-41.

Ron Edwards, who went down late in the second half, was kicked in the head, but will be alright.