Hokies Upset Wake
In Overtime 98-97

By Mark Kozak

Despite Super Deac and a super Deacon, the Hokies overcame the applause meter siren, a frenzied crowd, and an overtime period to beat seventh ranked Wake Forest 98-97 in Winston-Salem, N.C. Saturday night.

Rod Griffin, the super Deacon, contributed a career high 37 points and 19 rebounds, while being guarded by several different Hokies, but couldn’t destroy the confidence of a determined Tech squad.

The Super Deac was Jeff Dobbs, Wake’s All-American male cheerleader, who led a spirited Wake crowd into enough noise to keep the applause meter lit and the siren sounding.

The overtime period was necessary after senior guard Skip Brown dribbled the length of the court with four seconds left, took a shot from 35 feet at the buzzer, and got nothing but net. The basket knotted the score at 91-91.

The Hokies looked to have the game wrapped up in the regulation when Sam Foggins, playing perhaps the best game of his college career, tapped dunked an errant Ron Bell shot with four seconds left. “It was just a lucky shot,” Coach Charlie Moir said, after Brown’s shot had stripped the net, “but Brown is the kind of player who makes those kind..”

Brown had a chance for further heroics with seven seconds left in the overtime, Foggins missed on a chance to put the game away at the foul line, and Wake rebounded.

Brown again got the call to win for the Deacons. From 20 feet Brown raced to fire, but Marshall Ashford reached up and knocked the ball out of Brown’s upraised hands.

“He stuck the ball up there so I reached up and touched it,” Ashford described. “We went for broke. I had to take a chance.”

The go for broke attitude on Tech’s part was apparent throughout the game. The Hokies’ biggest lead was five points, and largest deficit was six points.

“When Brown’s shot went in, it almost destroyed our hopes,” Foggins said, “but we regained our composure for the overtime.”

“We knew we could still win,” said Duke Thorpe, “We kept our poise and played our game, both offensively and defensively. This was our biggest win, and I’m so glad for this team.”

“Wake is the prestige team in the ACC right now, and we wanted to prove we could beat them,” Thorpe added. They were up for us too because we beat them last year.

It was a run and gun game. Foggins all the way as the two teams traded leads 18 times and had 16 ties. The overtime was a meeting between two teams who had not lost in overtime this year. Wake had won three this year over North Carolina, Maryland, and William and Mary. Tech had won its only extra period game over George Washington.

Tech was able to stay in the game in the first half behind 13 points by Ashford who was 6 for 7 from the field, mostly from the outside. Also Ron Bell’s 10 points, including four for four from the foul line helped counteract Griffin’s 20 for the Deacons.

Griffin was five for 10 in the first half and 10 for 10 from the foul line. “He’s the best in the ACC,” said Thorpe, one of four Hokies to guard the 6-6, 225 pound junior forward.

“We tried to front him in the second half, and they didn’t get the ball into him inside as easy,” Moir explained. “He’s the Hokies best person you’ve got to contain, and that includes those guys from Alabama.”

Offensively, the Hokies were able to work the ball inside much better in the second period.

Thorpe who had only four points in the first period, had 23 for the game. He was seven for seven from the foul line, including two for the Hokies final points with :33 remaining.

The Deacons came down court after Thorpe’s free throws, but were unable to score when a pass was kicked out of bounds by Wake. Tech was able to steal off all but seven seconds when Foggins was fouled.

“I'm totally exhausted,” Moir said immediately following the game, “I’m very proud of our players. It was a great team effort. I think we played as well as we could. We had some turnovers, but you’re going to turn it over some in a fast paced game like this one.

“I think this game really shows what we’re made of after losing to Ohio University,” Moir added. “It took a lot of desire, determination, and dedication.”

Those three “D’s” were important, but he might add one to the list—the defensive play by Ashford.

In addition to Griffin’s mammoth effort the Deacons were led by Brown with 26 points, freshman Frank Johnson’s 19, and senior Jerry Schellenberg’s 9. Wake’s 65 percent shooting average in the second period gave them 53 percent for the game.

Tech was led by Bell with 24, Thorpe with 23, Ashford 18, Phil Thieneeman, 14, and Foggins 13. The Hokies shot 43 percent for the game, and outrebounded the taller Deacons 48-42.

(staff photos by Jeff Tate)

Sam Foggins goes up over Wake Forest’s Leroy McDonald for a layup in Tech’s upset over the seventh ranked Deacons.

Ron Bell challenges several Deacons including Wake’s Rod Griffin (right) on way to two points.