18 Wins By Virginia Tech
Adds Up To Good Season

BLACKSBURG — If anyone had guaranteed Virginia Tech 18 wins before the 1976-77 season began, it would have been happily accepted—no questions asked.

The Hokies achieved the figure by winning more than their share of the close ones—five out of six, including two in overtime, and all but one of the six on the road.

In one-pointers the Gobblers beat Dayton, Richmond, Memphis State and Wake Forest, while losing to West Virginia by a single point. And the Hokies downed GW by two points, in overtime.

Lacking the scoring punch of the previous season (87.2 points a game), the Gobblers still managed 81 a game, with very balanced scoring: Duke Thorpe 15.6, Phil Thieneman 12.5, Ron Bell 12.4, Marshall Ashford 11.8 and Ernest Wansley 8.7.

Despite exceptional shooting by Thorpe and Thieneman, the Gobblers as a team compiled a not-too-hot 47 percent accuracy from the field, although they did hit almost 73 percent on free throws.

Thorpe set a new Tech career record for field goal percentage: .589. And Thieneman established a new high on free throw accuracy for a season (.922) and career (.845).

Perhaps one of the least heralded strengths was that Tech got 21 points a game from the bench, and in the last seven games of the season the Gobblers got a solid lift from 6-9 junior Sam Foggin who averaged 10 a game during that stretch.

The Hokies were bombed just once—by Alabama in the finals of the Dayton Tournament.

All told, it was a very good year that added to the Hokie basketball tradition which has brought Tech only one losing record in the last 22 seasons.