Wansley's Play Was Turning Point In Hoya Game, Bell Says

BLACKSBURG—"The turning point was the way "E" (Ernest Wansley) played. He had about three in a row and really took it to the basket," said guard Ronnie Bell, whose own outside shooting and that of Marshall Ashford contributed heavily to Tech's NIT regional win Wednesday night.

Bell added, "There was some contact tonight. They let them play. That was good for our big men. It will help them in the next tournament game."

"The crowd was wild tonight" the junior went on, "I really enjoyed them. I wish they had been like that in more games this year."

Senior Duke Thorpe commented, "In the first half I wasn't blocking out my man. In the second half I was more aggressive on rebounding. I wanted everything that came to me." (Thorpe led Tech in rebounding).

Thorpe added, "We got together when we had a two point lead and said we're going to win this game. It's not going to be like it was last year." (Tech lost in the first round of NCAA tournament play last year).

Asked about the layoff (Tech's last regular season game was Feb. 26) he said, "It was good for some of us and bad for others. It helped me to get over the pulled groin. Nothing was bothering me at all tonight. In the first half we were not as sharp but in the second half we got our act together.

"We've got to work on free throws. We'll get back in the groove. It was a great win and now I can hardly wait."

Senior guard Phil Thiene,man, contacted in Florida where he spent the break from classes, was the last to arrive back in Blacksburg for the tournament. He had no field goals but went three out of four from the free throw line where his percentage puts him among the nation's leaders.

Normally in double figures for the Hokies, Thiene,man said he had had "too much sand, beach and water. I had Daytona in the back of my mind. I usually feel that I'm in better shape than the man I play against but I didn't have that confidence.

"Our guards hit real well. They took some bad percentage shots but what can you say? They went in. That's what counts. On the foul shots it's just a matter of practicing more. It was just a great win."

Ernest Wansley commented, "When I started hitting my free throws I got more confidence. In the second half they were getting it to me more, hitting me more.

Wansley said of Georgetown "They played good defense. They tried to intimidate me. I wouldn't be intimidated. As far as their height goes this is the biggest team I've ever played against."

Marshall Ashford contributed: "We were fired up. We got that team effort. The crowd gave us a psychological boost. They were behind us and pushing for us and we couldn't let them down."

In response to a question, Ashford said his new haircut--super short--was his "spring haircut" and explained "I didn't know we were going to a tournament."

Reserve center Sam Foggin said "I am looking forward to Madison Square Garden. I've never been there before."

"Marshall shot the eyes out of the basket. Defensively it was a physical game. Several times we had a flurry of elbows under the basket."