'Bama Bounces Back, Ends VPI's NIT Bid

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NEW YORK CITY — Alabama unfurled a 17-3 blitz in the middle of the second half Monday night, then followed with a five-point flurry in a 21-second span.

The combination was enough to erase what at one time had been a 10-point Virginia Tech lead and led the

(See Way The Ball Bounces on page 16)

Crimson Tide a 78-72 conquest in the first round of the 40th annual National Invitation Tournament.

The modest Madison Square Garden gathering watched in disbelief as the Gobblers, ravaged 108-78 by Alabama earlier in the season, clicked for a 31-21 advantage with 7:51 left in the first half.

Eventually, 'Bama cut the halftime spread to 45-40, faltered slightly early in the second period and trailed 57-48.

Then came the crucial period and, by utilizing pressure performance from freshman guards Bob Scott and Kent Looney, the Southeastern Conference powers made their role as tournament favorites look sound.

In the end, each team put five players in double figures, but it was Alabama reserves who spelled the difference and enabled the victors to jack their ledger to a school record high of 25-4.

Game scoring and rebounding honors, however, went to the pride of West Point, Va., Duke Thorpe with 19 and 13, respectively. Obviously, the effort wasn't enough to thwart the Tide once it started rolling.

That 17-3 bombardment was recorded in a period that lasted 6 minutes and 24 seconds. Reginald King (17 points and 12 rebounds) started the spree, but Looney (10 points) and Scott accounted for nine of the points (five by Looney). King also scored four while Chris Brugwell and Anthony Murray each contributed two points each.

When the blasting was over, only Sam Foggan had been able to score for Tech and the Tide was up 65-60. Then came what turned into the Gobblers' last thrust. Thorpe hit twice from the foul line and Ron Bell (13 points) scored from the left baseline to cut the lead to 65-64 with 5:03 left.

Twenty-two seconds later and King tallied from short range. On the inbounds play, Marshall Ashford (14 points) recalled: "Ron and I split and Phil (Theinemann) threw into the middle."

This left Murray with the ball and three points. The last one came because Theinemann fouled on the layup.

Even with the burden of a 70-64

VIRGINIA TECH'S RON BELL PUSHES BALL UP
Vainly Trying For Block In NIT Tussle Is Alabama's Anthony Murray

Newton of Alabama and Charlie Moir of Tech said, was the 'Bama pressure,

See Duke, Page 16, Column 3