Jacksonville Defeated 74-68
Tech Back On Winning Track;

By C.T. Claytor

While many students were in icy Blacksburg wondering if Virginia Tech should be called the Gobblers or the Penguins, the basketball team was finishing a three game road trip in Florida. The Gobblers rebounded from a loss to UVA in which their shooting percentage wasn’t much than the temperature in Blacksburg, with a 74-68 victory over Jacksonville’s Dolphins.

The Gobblers found out during the first half that they wouldn’t have as much fun playing Jacksonville as they could have had at Disneyland, as neither team was able to gain a lead of more than four points. Tech still managed to be on the upper end of a 31-20 score at halftime, led by Duke Thorpe’s eight points. Jacksonville’s big men, 6-8 James Ray and 7-0 Felton Young, kept the Dolphins close by scoring 22 of their team’s first half points.

Trailing 29-25 in the final minute of the opening period, outscored the Dolphins 6-0 on a layup by Duke Thorpe and two jumpers by Ron Bell for the 31-29 lead at intermission. The lead seemed to inspire Charlie Moir’s squad.

Jacksonville regained the lead 34-33 early in the second half. Ron Bell and Duke Thorpe then took control by scoring 18 points over the next eight minutes as the Gobblers outscored the Dolphins 20-8 to take a 53-42 lead.

Over the final ten minutes the Gobblers were never seriously threatened. Jacksonville was never closer than eight points until their final shot made the score 74-68.

Both squads shot 50 percent from the floor with Tech actually winning the match from the free throw line. In the last 3:39 of the game Jacksonville sent the Hokies to the line for 15 shots.

Having hit only four of 11 free throws in the first 36 minutes Tech proceeded to make 12 of its last 15 attempts. Guard Marshall Ashford hit eight free passes in as many tries for his night’s ten points. Bell popped four of six tosses en route to a 19 point performance, second only in scoring for Tech to Duke Thorpe. Thorpe finished as the game’s high scorer with 22 points while hauling in nine missed shots.

Tech not only beat the Dolphins from the free throw line, but also whipped Jacksonville in ballhandling ability. The host squad turned the ball over 20 times with the Hokies losing it only on 11 occasions.

The win raised Virginia Tech’s record to 7-5.