Tech Romps Spiders

Pippin Likes Richmond

BY MARC MENG
Times Sports Writer

Don DeVoe said Richmond put up a pretty salty battle Monday before it fell 62-54 to his charges. DeVoe tells that to all the guys.

Devoe said his team looked ragged, "The offense was so slow we just couldn't do anything. We always do this, come off a loss and have a letdown... All two times. Virginia Tech has lost only a pair of games this season, a romping to North Carolina and a one-pointer to South Carolina last weekend. Both teams were ranked No. 5 in the nation when Tech played them.

Had DeVoe said "Richmond played us a hell of a 15 minutes," he would have been correct.

Richmond played inspired ball for the first 15 minutes, leading half of the first 20 minutes. It took the Hokies almost five minutes to get their mark on the scoreboard.

Until Darwin Pippin, a little known figure who occupies the bench the majority of the time, entered the game, the Hokies looked as though they were in for a rough night of it.

Pippin was inserted into the lineup with six minutes remaining in the half and promptly pumped in nine points to spur VPI to a 27-16 lead.

Ironically, Pippin has hit in double figures only three times in his college varsity basketball career, two of those were against Richmond. He finished second high for Tech with 17 points.

The 6-foot 4-inch senior from Gate City played superb defense and opened a hole in the Spider zone which had plagued his teammates for 15 minutes.

A high school All-American, he set a host of Virginia scoring records in high school. It is said by DeVoe to be the best shooter on the Tech roster, but hasn't hit his stride in college.

"We've always been concerned about his defensive play," DeVoe said. "He did an outstanding job tonight and has improved 100 percent this season. He was also the one that opened it up ofensively for us."

Pippin said he feels the key to his defensive improvement has been DeVoe. "This is really the first time I've ever been coached to play defense," Pippin said. "I think, though, it is the same thing that's wrong with my offensive play."

"I'll get into a game for two or three minutes and then I perk up. You can't get anything going in that length of time."

The Hokies were never pressed after the opening half after spreading the gap to 37-29 at intermission.

In the previous meeting of the two schools (Tech's opener) the Hokies won by 25.

Lewis Mills of the Spiders said, "We played a pretty good game for 15 minutes. There wasn't a thing wrong with our defense. It helped, though, when we missed the front end of three one-on-one and they missed three but got the rebounds and made the field goals. That was hell of a spot right there. As a team we're only hitting 52 percent from the foul line."

Richmond is paired against Virginia tonight. VPI will take on VMI.

Allan Bristow was the game's leading point producer, with 35 points. Clarke Williams of Richmond toured in 18.