Hokies Win ‘Yawner’

Tech Came Through When It Counted

BY BOB MCELLELAND

BLACKSBURG — Tales Locke had a lot to say—none of it good about his Clemson basketball team but several compliments for the Gobblers of Virginia Tech.

“That was the worst game I have ever seen,” Locke said as he tried to accept the 48-44 licking his Tigers has just received here last night from the determined Techmen.

“I’ve played in a worse game but I never had one of my teams to play that way.”

And then turning his remarks to Tech, Locke paid the Gobblers several fine tributes.

“They might not have played well but they were tough and ready when they had to be,” he said. “That was the difference. They got the big rebounds and made those free throws. They were simply tougher in the clutch and that’s to their credit.”

The game certainly wasn’t a work of art. But it was competitive with bruising defense from both teams. However, it was Tech that really did the better job. The tight man-to-man defense had the Tigers forcing a lot of shots.

Meanwhile, Tech ran its offense rather well in face of the tough Clemson defense but poor shooting took its toll.

It was a shooter’s nightmare. Tech hit 17 of 48 shots from the floor for a poor 35 per cent. But Clemson was even worse with just 17 of 52 for 33 per cent.

The big difference was the fact Tech hit when it counted the most.

Captain Charlie Lipscomb hit his only three field goals in the final six minutes. Bill McNeer got two of his in the final four minutes.

Actually, the game was iced by the free throws of Craig Leider and Lipscomb.

Leider really made the pressure shots. There were 34 seconds left when Leider stepped to the line in a one-and-one situation with Tech holding a slim 44-42 edge. The big sophomore hit two.

Lipscomb got his chance with 27 left when he pulled down a big defensive rebound and was fouled. Charlie hit two and that was it.

“I just thought it was about time I did something,” Lipscomb said of his play in the clutch moments. “I missed most of the practice this week with the flu and I guess I was burying my shots too much at the first.

“But at last I got calmed down and was taking my time. I know one thing—this was a mighty big win for us.”

It was a big win and marked the first time this season the Gobblers have reeled off three straight. The Gobblers are now tied with a game at Richmond Saturday night and a big one at nationally No. 1 ranked Virginia next Monday.

Locke said the game was perfectly scheduled for Tech and was the poorest possible for Clemson. The Tigers lost to Virginia 68-68 at home Monday and has to follow up Tech with arch-rival South Carolina on Saturday.

“That loss to Virginia killed us,” he said. “But I thought we were ready tonight. There was a lot of enthusiasm coming into the game. But man, you saw what happened once the thing got started.”

It was a miserable start and each team seemed to be trying to outshine the other. Each team made only six field goals in the first 12 minutes.

Clemson held a 19-16 lead at the half. But McNeer opened the second half with a field goal and Leider made a three-point play for a 21-18 Tech lead—only the Gobblers never relinquished.

Allan Britlow, who was off in accuracy but not in effort, hit 14 points to lead Tech. He also pulled down 12 rebounds.

McNeer and Leider each had 11 points.

Terrell Sutt led Clemson with 12—the only Tiger in double figures.

And to make matters worse for the Tigers, they had to spend the night in Blacksburg. Heavy fog prevented their charter plane from returning home.

“This is a heck of a way to start getting ready for South Carolina,” Locke moaned.

Things were much rosier for DeVoe and his Gobblers—who seem to be becoming a better combination all the time.

“With a little luck and some more hard work, we can win the rest of the way,” Leider said with an optimistic grin.

The Tech freshman got things off to the right start by whipping Hargrove Military Academy 109-30 in the preliminary. Five Techmen were in double figures with Gene Furrnash high with 19.

Tech's Charlie Lipscomb grabs a rebound

Clemson’s David Angel looks toward the basket