Gobblers Rely On Transfers
Cooke, Davis To Carry Load

By ALAN HIRSCH
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BLACKSBURG — Virginia Tech basketball Coach Don DeVoe has acquired a pleasant habit. While relaxing in his office and speaking of his 1974-75 Gobblers, the fourth-year mentor will reach back and gently rap on the wood paneling.

That's just the way DeVoe describes his team.

The Gobblers lost four of five starters to graduation, but (rap, rap) "We have people who can do things that nobody has ever been able to do here."

Junior college transfers Larry Cooke (6-foot-4) and Russell Davis (6-5½) are two of the people doing those things.

"Today, for instance," DeVoe remarks, "there was a play where the ball went up and Larry came out of nowhere to knock it away. Of course, that would be goal-tending in a game, but we've never had players who could do that."

Another transfer likely to see action when the Gobblers bus over to Lexington tonight to meet Virginia Military Institute is 6-9 Barry Isom.

"Isom sure looked good in that zone defense today," says DeVoe, referring to the last Tech practice before the season-opener. "He isn't the finest defensive player, but he's presenting a problem for us. He's just flat putting the ball in the basket."

The problem is that pivot man Kyle McKee (6-9) is already slated to start and Isom, freshman Sam Foggin (6-8) and Mike Collins (6-8) will have to wait their turn.

While he's waiting, though, Collins can play the wing and go low on double post setups.

"I expect that by January, our junior college players should be carrying 65 or 70 per cent of the scoring load," DeVoe reveals with Isom, Davis and Cooke in mind.

Foggin is another story.

DON DEVOE
Material Best Ever

"We expect an awful lot from him," the coach says. "If we can keep him healthy and continue to develop, he'll no doubt help us. This is the first time he's been completely healthy (rap, rap). He had mononucleosis as a junior in high school and had a cracked vertebrae in his back last year."

Foggin, a muscular young man, could provide some of the rebounding muscle the Gobblers will need to improve last year's 13-13 mark.

Virtually known from the first day of practice, Dave Sensibaugh (6-0½) will be the team's ball handling guard.

"We don't have a lot of people who are strong in all phases of the game," DeVoe admits, "but we will try to use the players who can give us the best balance."

"We're just happy that the players that we need are going to be healthy," he adds, knocking on wood again. "It wasn't that way when we began practice seven weeks ago."

Duke Thorpe, a sophomore who was injured toward the end of last season, is Tech's "ace in the hole," according to the 33-year-old coach.

Thorpe (6-6) of West Point, will be on the bench when Tech challenges VMI tonight, but not for long.

"Just because he's a substitute, it doesn't mean he's not important," DeVoe remarks. "When we need him, he'll be in there. It may be 40 seconds into the game."