Tech Plays Michigan

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ANN ARBOR, Mich. — The moment of truth has arrived for Virginia Tech's basketball team. This game tonight against the University of Michigan will go a long way toward showing what kind of team Don DeVoe will have this season, even though DeVoe hesitates to call it "crucial."

"Even if we lost to Michigan, it wouldn't be that much of a disaster," DeVoe said Thursday afternoon, "so it really wouldn't be fair to put a great amount of importance on it."

"If we win, it would give us a great mental lift, of course. This will be our second straight game against the Big 10, and it practically would ensure us of having a winning season in December.

"That (winning in December) was the thing that concerned me most. I always felt coming out of this month in good shape would be essential."

If the Hokies are to defeat the defending Big 10 champion in the first round of the Michigan Tournament, a young man named Larry Cooke will have to be at his peak.

"The way things look now," DeVoe said, "Larry will be guarding Joe Johnson most of the time, and it should be a pretty big challenge for Larry."

"Johnson is only 5-feet-11, but he's Michigan's big scorer and their playmaker. He's really quick, and we have to stop him."

"When Cooke's not on Johnson, I'll probably use him against Steve Grote, who's a 6-foot-2 guard. Grote's capable of getting 25 points at any time. He's just that good."

Cooke doesn't appear overly concerned by his role in this game, calling it merely "another test for us."

"The single biggest thing we have to correct is our inconsistency," Cooke said. "We don't start playing, really playing, until the end of the game. We usually go in spurts, not one minute, down the next."

"Personally, I haven't been playing up to my ability. I know I'm not shooting as good as I could, and my defense could be better. I never was very strong on defense, but I have improved since I've been at Tech. Not enough, though."

As a consequence, he has been beaten on the fast break and allowed Tech to be put into a few precarious situations.

"Our last four minutes

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