16th-Ranked Gamecocks Challenge Gobblers With ‘Awesome’ Front Line

By ALAN HIRSCH
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Virginia Tech will pit the weakest part of its game against the teeth of the University of South Carolina attack tonight at the Gobblers’ coliseum.

Tech (7-4) has been weak on the offensive boards this season, and the Gamecocks (7-3) have what Gobbler Coach Don DeVoe calls “an awesome front line” in Alex English, Nate Davis and Tommy Boswell.

“I’m so impressed by that front line,” DeVoe says. “They give you one bad shot and control the defensive board. Their strength is our weakness.”

It isn’t an exceptionally tall team (English is 6-foot-8, Boswell 6-9 and Davis 6-4), but the Gamecock front court can shoot with anybody.

Before South Carolina’s 94-67 whipping of Fordham Monday night, Boswell had made good on 56.1 per cent of his field goal attempts. English hit on 54.5 per cent and Davis was right on the 50 per cent mark.

In addition, 6-6 junior Mark Greiner had put in 16 of 21 shots (most coming from in close) and the team had an accuracy mark of 50.3.

The nation’s 16th-ranked team has another forward capable of coming in and doing the job, too. Bob Mathias, a 6-8 veteran, started every game last year before Boswell arrived. Boswell is a transfer averaging 17 points an outing.

English, who had 37 points against Houston last year, hit his high mark of this campaign (22) last week against Manhattan. He has averaged 14.7, while Davis had an 11-point norm. Jack Gillool , a fancy-Dan freshman who likes to dribble to his side rather than bounce the ball in front, had an 11.3 average and 57 assists before the Fordham victory. The other Gamecock guard, Mike Dunleavy, had a 16.7 average.

Tech, meanwhile, comes off its worst performance of the year, an 88-69 loss at St. Bonaventure.

“It was just horrible,” DeVoe remarks. “I don’t know what will happen if we continue that kind of effort. It left a lot to be desired.”

DeVoe says West Point forward Duke Thorpe may get a starting nod over Mike Collins tonight.

“Duke has been very consistent and close to being a starter,” DeVoe explains. “We’ll have to see how the scouting report goes before making a decision.”