Tech May Lead Nation
In Scholarship Players

Virginia Tech basketball coach Don DeVoe finds himself in a difficult recruiting situation which forces the Hokies to go against a national trend.

In a time when most colleges are cutting back on scholarships, DeVoe will increase Tech’s scholarship budget. In fact, there is speculation that Tech may have more scholarship players in the fold next season than any other conference team.

Tech, which is still seeking to broaden its horizon in basketball to leave it squarely in the national picture, took 11 players on its recent road trip to Wake Forest and Eastern Kentucky.

"Not a single one of those players was a single digit," the group consisted of seven juniors, two sophomores and two freshmen—Sam Pope and George Agalar.

Yet DeVoe says that he hopes to bring in "the best six players we can find."

It is admittedly a difficult situation, which actually got started before DeVoe ever took over at Tech.

The NTII championship team, in DeVoe’s second season, was basically a junior club with senior stars Allan Hristow and George McGinnis. Last year’s 13-14 group was almost exclusively a senior-sophomore aggregation.

On many occasions this year DeVoe has started five juniors. Against Eastern Kentucky last week he had four and soph Duke Thorpe. The junior starters include the team’s two leading scorers, junior college transfers Larry Cooke and Russell Davis.

The Danger: Too Many

In ending up with a large number of scholarship players, there is always the danger of having too many. Maryland, which has tracked exactly 10 players this year, has exactly nine scholarship players in school. Of course, the Terps expected to have Moses Malone, who never showed up, and Wilson Washington and Mike Cherry, who transferred.

But Tech, which is considered one of the weaker players, has 26 players. Most coaches have all but wiped out their junior varsity programs. If a player can’t help the varsity immediately, he is seldom recruited at the major college level. The number of freshman starters—and stars—is increasing every year.

DeVoe could stand pat and have a respectable team, but it would be a year without a year from now when this year’s junior graduates. And the Tech bench is not likely to fill with his overall talent. He wants even better performers.

This year, Tech had to recruit the junior college. If Baltimore was not already injured in fall practice, there might well be three JUCO starters. But six players have already graduated springly and not at all since December.

DeVoe says this year the concentration will be on freshmen. "We have to get some stability in this program. You can’t sustain a good program by concentrating on juniors and sophs Duke Thorpe. The junior starters include the team’s two leading scorers, junior college transfers Larry Cooke and Russell Davis.

It is no secret that Tech would like to sign a 6-11 junior college center. The Hokies have a lot of height, but no center is available, no other jucos players will be signed.

DeVoe hopes that some of next year’s freshmen will be able to fight for starting jobs and perhaps earn them. "We want a point guard we can challenge Dave Sensabaugh," he said in a manner of illustrating his point.

Over the weekend, two highly recruited players were quoted in newspaper stories as saying they were interested in Tech. One is Al Taylor, a 6-6 forward from Raleigh, and the other is Brian Grevey, brother of Kentucky star Kevin Grevey.

One of this year’s recruits, Chuck Lucas, quit after the winter quarter, and blow has been of little help. Nobody knows—and won’t until it actually happens—how well some of the incoming freshmen beat out the rising seniors.

But DeVoe is going all out to build a program at Tech in spite of all obstacles, the most serious of which is the school’s independent status.

Tough on Independent

The role of the independent has grown more difficult with each additional piece of NCAA legislation. It is such a problem now that eight eastern independents are seeking to start their basketball programs in jumps and getting their champion automatically qualified for the NIT.

Next year, DeVoe has scheduled 15 home games for the Hokies. There also will be a daddy trip to Chicago and Milwaukee to play DePaul and Marquette, as well as a venture to the Indiana Hoosiers home tourney. The field includes the host team, currently No. 1 in the nation with five undefeated starters, Georgia and Oregon.

Teams such as Eastern Kentucky, which Tech has played for the last nine years, will be dropped from the schedule. If I’m going to lose on the road," said DeVoe, "I’m going to lose to a strong team. Playings schools like Eastern does us no good. We have every thing to lose and nothing to gain. Nobody cares if you win those games.

The expansion of the series with Virginia will enable Tech to play its biggest state rival in college sports other than Blacksburg and Charlottesville. Next year, the Hokies will play one game in Richmond, which should soothe the feelings of those Richmond area fans who are miffed that DeVoe has dropped Richmond, University, of from his future schedules.

With the possibility of so many independent programs, DeVoe says he will probably revive the junior varsity program, which may seven or eight games," he said. Obviously there remains the chance that some seniors could find a school to play for in an 11.2 program, but less they quit the team.

There is nothing certain in recruiting. Recruiting is such an adventure, so unpredictable, that nobody can be certain of the event or another school will recruit with the idea in mind of bringing future stars to Blacksburg.

The Tech manager is a hard one to play, and DeVoe is not necessarily a numbers man, but there is one number he is interested in—the number of victories.

Have you ever heard a college basketball coach talk about "must" games? Well, he means his teams absolutely needs to win these and whether the opponent is UCLA or Podunk State?

Virginia Tech Coach Don DeVoe could very easily be ex claimed the Hokies could be up for the contest with DePaul tonight and one of those crucial matches.

In the visiting Blue Demons, Virginia Tech will host a team with a record (12-7) identical to Tech’s and several impressive wins over such teams as Maryland and St. Bonaventure.

DePaul, located in Chicago, is imposing not so much for its talent, but for its coach. Ray Meyer, one of the most highly-regarded coaches nationally, has won over 500 games at the college level.

Among Meyer’s last success is 6-7, 230-lb. forward Bill Robinson, who is averaging 17.3 points a game. In fact, five Blue Demons are averaging in double figures, including 6-7 forward Ron Norwood (15.2) and 6-11 center Dave Corzine. Corzine, who is an 11.2 player, is a new face, the former high school all-American.

The Hokies probably have the edge in momentum. DePaul is coming off back-to-back heartbreaking losses to Marshall and Marquette, the latter loss being a 93-79 defeat. Larry Cooke scoring 32, Virginia Tech topping the Eastern Kentucky 80-61 Monday night. Over 2,000 tickets remain for the game at the Tech Coliseum.

In Lexington, Virginia, Military attempts to regain its winning ways against Bridgewater. The Keydets dropped a 90-79 decision at George Washington, but the Eagles should not furnish half as much competition as the Colonials. Bridgewater is just 6-13 against the play of forward Tom Wright, who aver ages 15.2 points a game and rounds a game. John Krovic, who has been a VMI’s 6-op scorer while Dave Montgomery leads the Keydets in rebounding. Wake Forest travels to Duke tonight in the only ACC contest.

Fresh off a seven-point overtime loss to Virginia at Lexington, the Blue Devils will be trying to lose out of their new-school eight conference.

In the Southern Conference, East Carolina will visit Appala chia in the hopes the Western Carolina mountain should be enough to get the Hokies on top in the contest with DePaul tonight.

LARRY COOKE: Star at Eastern

Rod’s Stars

May Request Arbitration

CINCINNATI — The biggest news on the Cincinnati basketball team for the next 25 years was the possibility that two seniors, George Agalar and Larry Cooke, may request an opportunity to play for other schools.

"I would have one, two, or three," said Tech Coach Don DeVoe.

"I don’t know who they are, but I don’t want them to get into any other schools.

Two candidates are pitcher Clay Carroll and Don Gullett, both two who are last year’s seniors and made little progress in one season.