Tech plays Tar Heels

UNC on rebound?

By BOB TEITLEBAUM
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Virginia Tech guard Dave Sensibaugh had mixed feelings Saturday as he sat and watched Maryland bomb North Carolina on television.

"I was trying to decide which was better," said Sensibaugh. "Was it better the way it happened or would it have been to our advantage for North Carolina to win?"

"I don't know if they'll (North Carolina) get mad. They might do that and try to get back on the winning track."

Sensibaugh's concern is natural. The Gobblers are at home tonight at 8 in a televised (WDBJ, Channel 7) game against North Carolina. The Tar Heels are coming off a 22-point beating administered by Maryland. Tech, 15-7, is playing its best basketball of the season and is currently looking for a berth in a postseason tournament.

Tech's game against North Carolina is one of two tonight for area teams. Roanoke College, 13-11, closes one of its most disastrous regular seasons in recent history at George Mason. The Maroons will be hoping to bounce back from a 94-73 trouncing Saturday at Baltimore.

Virginia is idle after suffering a tough 71-70 overtime loss at Pittsburgh. The Cavaliers have a big week coming up with home games Wednesday against Maryland and Saturday with North Carolina.

Sensibaugh says Tech players are trying not to let the fact that North Carolina is an ACC power affect them.

"They're the ones who get the prestige, so you want to beat them," Sensibaugh admitted.

"Of course, I was anxious last year to hear that we would play them in Blacksburg. This is my last chance to play them at home. We've always played them on a so-called neutral floor, but Charlotte, N.C., really isn't neutral.

"I don't think the aura of the ACC will make us tight. Personally, I really think of North Carolina as just being one of the better teams in the country."

Roanoke's loss pushed the Maroons to fourth spot in the M-D standings. The Maroons, with a loss tonight, will plummet into a tie for fifth and sixth spots.

Roanoke walloped George Mason 95-81 at home two weeks ago. The Maroons used a press to overcome a 40-34 halftime deficit and pull away for what was their last win.

"We'll try to play the same type of game as we did at our place," said Roanoke Coach Mel Hankinson, who for the time being has ditched his control offense. "The trap press hurt them at our place."

The Maroons must try to win tonight to keep out of Baltimore's bracket in the M-D tournament. Even that's not assured, but this would be the best chance Roanoke would have of avoiding the Bees.