OKLAHOMA CITY—Virginia Tech’s hopes for a post-season tournament invitation suffered a serious setback here at The Myriad Thursday night, as Oklahoma City University rallied in the second half then held on for an 85-81 victory.

The loss leaves Tech with a 15-9 record going into Saturday’s game against Oral Roberts. OCU evened its record at 12-12, and forced the Hokies into a precarious position in so far as their race for a National Invitational Tournament bid is concerned.

In order to reach, or at least entertain any chance of making the NIT field, the Hokies would have to defeat highly-favored Oral Roberts, then whip West Virginia in Blacksburg on Wednesday.

Tech fell apart midway through the second half Thursday, allowing the Chiefs to tie the score, 63-63, at 9:35. After that, the Hokies held a lift lead until Jonathan Manning scored to give Oklahoma City a 74-73 lead.

“This team lacks the qualities you need to be a good team,” said Tech Coach Don DeVoe. “We’re just a day late and a dollar short.”

Manning, a 6-foot-2 freshman, ended the night with 23 points and barely surpassed his season average of 21.7 points per game. He had only six points at halftime, however.

Because of Manning’s early problems, OCU substituted Herb Gilkey at guard and he responded magnificently. Getting penetration to the inside consistently, Gilkey kept the Chiefs within striking distance throughout the first half and held Tech to a 41-37 halftime lead.

Tech did make a charge in the final minutes of the game, pulling to within one point of catching the Chiefs, 78-77, before John Powell hit a pair of free throws and Lawrence Wilson scored to give Oklahoma City an 81-77 lead.

Dave Sensibaugh hit two free throws with 50 seconds left in the game to give Tech a breath of hope, 81-79, but Manning came right back with two foul shots. Those came at a time when Tech would have cut the Chiefs’ lead to one point. Larry Cooke committed his fifth personal foul while Tech was taking an in-bounds pass from the baseline, however.

Mark Cartwright scored for Tech with 21 seconds left, making the score 83-81, but Duke Thorpe then fouled-out with 15 seconds remaining and Burns Boylan dropped in two fouls shots for the winning margin.

Tech missed two other gold-plated scoring opportunities in the last minute when Thorpe and Dave Sensibaugh missed shots from within five feet of the basket.

The Hokies traded the lead with Oklahoma City during the early part of the first half, then blew out to a 25-20 lead with 10:15 remaining in the period.

Five straight points by Gilkey erased that margin, but Tech held firm and built an eight-point, 41-33, lead before the Chiefs rallied with four points at the end of the half.

Much of Tech’s problem in the latter stages of the second half revolved around the Hokies’ inability to master Oklahoma City’s press. Tech had a 53-48 lead when the Chiefs started using pressure defensively, but that margin quickly disappeared under Oklahoma City’s scrambling.

The Roanoke Times

Friday, February 21, 1975

Sports

VIRGINIA TECH

Thorpe 6-1 1-3 5 5 5, Davis 4-5 1-3 9, Cook 5-6 5-6 16, Sensibaugh 3-3 2-2 8, Foggin 0-0 0-0 2, Carter 2-4 1-1 5, Boylan 2-4 0-0 4, Collins 2-3 0-0 4, Totals 17-26 12-15 58 19 81

OKLAHOMA CITY

Grace 3-3 0-0 0 2, Tucker 1-0 0-0 1, Poweri 1-0 0-0 2, Boylan 4-4 3-3 11, Manning 10-14 2-2 24, Wilson 2-2 2-2 6, Kozel 5-8 0-0 11 8, Gilkey 4-11 1-2 11 6, Totals 38-56 18-21 81 19 85

Halftime: Tech, 41-37

Attendance: 3,100