When Virginia Tech announced its basketball schedule, more than a few eyebrows were raised.

After all, in a story on basketball scheduling by state schools last year, Tech had been one of the institutions surveyed.

While the Hokies made no rash promises, there was a hint that no more than one or two college division teams would be on the next schedule.

An insider also said Tech was working on a game against Old Dominion. That would definitely have been an attractive game, no matter where it was played in the state.

Alas, when Tech’s schedule was announced, it included the usual number of “dogs” that would seem to insure Tech a winning basketball season despite a lackluster year in recruiting.

Ohio Northern, Ohio Wesleyan, Upsala, Arkansas-Little Rock and Samford are probably the names that cause people to wonder if Tech basketball is big time.

Though New Hampshire, Brown and Ohio University are university division schools, they aren’t likely to attract great crowds to Blacksburg.

A game with Old Dominion wasn’t even included.

There are reasons why Tech is playing some no-name schools. Assistant Athletic Director Bill “Moose” Matthews leads one to believe the Hokies aren’t happy about the way the schedule turned out.

"You never have a schedule that suits you perfectly," Matthews admits.

Matthews says part of the problem is working out a home-and-home schedule with other teams. He points out that with more teams joining conferences, Tech’s list of attractive home games has been cut.

"Conference teams won’t come to Blacksburg, unless there is a reason," said Matthews, who adds most schools in a league are locked into so conference games they are picky where they go to play an outsider.

"So you go with independents. But there are less independents available now because of new conferences like the Metro Seven," he said.

Matthews says Tech had basketball relationships going with Memphis State and Florida State, but those series are dead because those teams are in the Metro Seven.

"Overall," said Matthews, "the schedule is attractive. The games in Blacksburg aren’t as attractive as we would want. But the games (Jake and Virginia) in Roanoke are as being in Blacksburg.

"Getting rated teams to come to Blacksburg is tough. But we’re not backing off. We hope to show them money or a reason they can make money at their place (by playing Tech)."

The problem is compounded further, Matthews continues, because many teams can get schools not as tough as the Hokies to play at home and make more money with a lower guarantee.

All this is so much rhetoric in one sense. However, the question about why Tech hasn’t scheduled Old Dominion, Madison, VMI or William and Mary. If a couple of these teams were on the schedule in place of say Upsala and Arkansas-Little Rock, no one would be sniping at the Hokies’ schedule.

Matthews sheds no light on the Old Dominion question. “It just didn’t work out. The date was the first thing.”

Matthews says there are no present negotiations with Old Dominion, Madison or William and Mary for future games.

"We’re still talking with VMI, but we haven’t done anything. Richmond (at Richmond Coliseum this winter) is a one-year thing.”

This means Tech’s state schedule for 1978-79 might have just Virginia (twice) if the Richmond Times-Dispatch Invitational tournament (VCU, Tech, Virginia and Richmond) doesn’t make it for another year.

All this makes little sense in view of bringing in teams that have names which won’t attract fans. Yet from one reason, Tech seems to feel it is a step above most other state teams.

This feeling, of course, is one that Tech must suffer in reverse. ACC teams feel to some degree they are a step above Tech. Hence, the Hokies have trouble scheduling home games against ACC schools (other than Virginia). That is why people at Blacksburg rarely see North Carolina and never Duke.

The Clemson series, supposedly set to start this year, has fallen through. But Matthews says Tech is negotiating with Maryland and the sites involved include Blacksburg, Roanoke and Richmond.

"It could be a long series, but it would start at two years and go from there," said Matthews.

If it’s signed, one can’t help wondering if Tech won’t have to play at Maryland while the Terps catch the Hokies at a neutral site like Richmond or Roanoke.

"It is a continuing battle," said Matthews. "But last year’s schedule included a lot of NCAA and NIT teams."

That brought up another point. Tech played the top two NCAA teams (Marquette and North Carolina) as home games (North Carolina was played in Roanoke). The Hokies also played at St. Bonaventure, and the Bonnies went on to win the NIT.

This year, Marquette was to come back on the schedule. However, the Warriors begged off to play a national TV game. That’s the price Tech must pay to keep a team like Marquette on the schedule as a home-and-home entry.

"Anytime you get to 12 nationally rated teams on your schedule," said Matthews, "you have a good schedule."

By nationally rated teams, Matthews means schools that are in and out of the Top-20.

Applying this formula, Tech’s schedule is more than decent. Still, it seems the Hokies could have added a couple more schools from the state and then there would be no question of the schedule’s quality.