

Women's basketball tops Mountaineers 70-68  
 Sports/B2

# Sports

## O'Kelley buries jumper to down Hoyas

Freshman Robert O'Kelley scored with 6.9 seconds left to lift the Deacs over Georgetown 56-54

By Scott Payne  
 Sports Editor

Prior to the Deacons' trip north to face the Georgetown Hoyas in Springfield, Mass. on Nov. 21, somebody forgot to tell Robert O'Kelley that he is just a freshman.

Somebody forgot to tell O'Kelley that in his first game on ESPN he was supposed to be nervous and crack under the pressure.

Whoever forgot to remind O'Kelley about his lack of experience should be thanked.

In only his fourth collegiate game, O'Kelley poured in 25 points on 8-of-14 shooting, including four three-point bombs, after being forced to log a workman-like 32 minutes because of the first-half injury to senior Tony Rutland.

But none of O'Kelley's 25 points were as impressive as his final two, which came with 6.9 seconds remaining. The 6-1 freshman from Memphis, Tenn., drove into the lane and threw up a high-arching shot that found the bottom of the net, giving the Deacons a 56-54 victory.

Even after O'Kelley's hanging jumper dropped, the Deacons still had work to do; six seconds is a long time in college basketball.

The Hoyas pushed the ball quickly up the court and fired two attempts that would

have tied the game, but both shots were rejected by sophomore seven-footer Loren Woods. In addition to his game-saving blocks, Woods grabbed a game-high 12 rebounds but shot a disappointing 3 of 17 from the field, scoring only six points.

The Deacs jumped out to a 22-13 lead following the first quarter and were able to maintain that lead throughout the entire game. The Deacons, however, were never able to distance themselves from the Hoyas, partly because they shot a miserable 35 percent from the

field for the game. Midway through the third quarter the Deacons opened up their largest lead at 45-33.

The Hoyas closed that gap to a mere six points by the start of the fourth quarter and kept it within that margin for the duration of the final frame.

When Georgetown's Kenny Brunner sank one of two free throws with just over a minute left, the Hoyas tied the score for the first time since it was 2-2, only 49 seconds in.

Senior guard Jerry Braswell was the only other Deacon to register double digits in the scoring column, with 10 points. Braswell made four of his six attempts, including two three pointers.

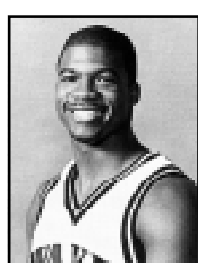
As Head Coach Dave Odom continued to

search for the right combination of players to foster both chemistry and consistency, ten players saw significant playing time, including five freshmen.

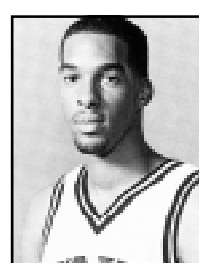
The win moved the Deacons record to 3-0 on the season, but it may have been a costly victory. After playing only 13 minutes and scoring a single point, Rutland injured his right knee, the same knee he injured in the 1995 ACC Tournament which plagued him throughout the 1996 season.

Following the game, Rutland's knee was evaluated and determined to have only a slight twist.

Rutland is not expected to miss any action in the Deacons' upcoming games, but this reoccurrence raises doubts about how thoroughly his knee has healed.



O'Kelley



Woods

## Deacons extinguish Flames, 81-47

By Scott Payne  
 Sports Editor

Served slightly chilled as an appetizer for Thanksgiving dinner, the visiting Liberty Flames were devoured by the Demon Deacons Nov. 24 in Joel Coliseum. After jumping out to a quick 12-0 lead, the Deacs dominated the Flames for 40 minutes and cruised to a 81-47 victory.

"I was very pleased with the win. I was pleased with the way we approached the game," said Head Coach Dave Odom, whose squad moved to a perfect 4-0 on the young season.

Coming off their dramatic last-second victory over Georgetown three days earlier, the Deacs were able to respond well.

"I've seen teams that, coming off an emotional win that we had against Georgetown on Friday night, I've seen them kind of lay as flat as a frog on a rock," said Odom. "I thought our team approached this game with every effort that they made on Friday night. I think they saw this game as an opportunity to improve and I think by-and-large, they did improve."

Liberty Interim Head Coach Randy Dunton agreed with Odom. "They came out and played very physical early. I was hoping that they would come out and play a little bit soft, but they didn't."

Often heavily favored teams, such as the Deacs, have trouble getting motivated for these early non-conference games. Prior to this season, Liberty had to deal with the loss of its starting center to graduation, and then four of its top seven were either dismissed from the team or left voluntarily, which reduced its already slim chance of victory.

With only three players having true experience, Liberty was clearly out-manned and out-gunned, and the Deacs knew this.

"These games right here count toward NCAA participation if you're fortunate enough to get that far. The greatest respect we could show (Liberty) was to play the game like it means something because it does. And my players understand that. So I was very proud of them for that," said Odom.

The Deacons were led in the scoring column by freshmen Robert O'Kelley and Rafael Vidaurreta, who each tallied 14 points. Vidaurreta shot a perfect 4-4 from the field and hit six of 11 free throws, while O'Kelley was 5-7 from the field, including two from downtown and a pair from the charity stripe.

The outstanding performance of these freshmen is just another example of a trend that has marked all the Deacs' games so far this season. In each contest, one of the six Deacon freshmen has stepped up to make a contribution most uncharacteristic of a player in his initial collegiate outings.

"Going into the season anybody that would listen, I told them that the freshmen were going to play, and a



Carlton Ward/Old Gold and Black

Senior point guard Tony Rutland sizes up his defender as he prepares to make a move towards the basket. Despite injuring his knee the previous game, Rutland was able to play against Liberty.

lot, and that I wasn't going to call them freshmen," said Odom. "We know they're first-year players, we know they're going to make mistakes, but I also know they're going to play, because you look down the roster and there is no other choice."

Before a crowd of 8,500, the Deacons frustrated the Flames with their pressure defense the entire game. The Deacs forced Liberty to commit 15 turnovers and to shoot a dismal 29 percent from the field. Except for an 8-0 run midway through the second half by Liberty, the Deacs were able to maintain a comfortable lead of at least 20 points.

With the 7:24 mark the Deacs led 60-41, but they scored 21 of the game's final 26 points to roll to the 34-point victory on the strength of fast breaks and consistent free-throw shooting. For the game, the Deacs shot 44 percent from the field and 69 percent from the line,

more than enough to bury the overmatched visitors from the Big South.

Senior Steven Goolsby scored 11 points in only 17 minutes of action, and sophomore center Loren Woods scored nine points and grabbed nine rebounds in only 21 minutes. Woods left the game only two minutes into action with an ankle injury sustained going for a rebound, but returned seven minutes later, showing no ill effects.

No Deacon player logged more than 25 minutes of playing time in the game, which allowed everyone to get play and save some strength for the season ahead.

"The toughest part of our schedule definitely lies ahead," said Odom. "There's no question about that. We've got some very difficult non-conference games and I continue to remind myself it's not even December yet."

## Who's hot and who's not in the ACC this season

By Scott Payne  
 Sports Editor

Even though the season is just getting started, it is already apparent that the Atlantic Coast Conference is once again the premier conference in the country.

The schools from the ACC have traveled around the country and beaten up on other teams.

Duke pummeled the defending national champion Arizona Wildcats on their way to winning the Maui Invitational.

The Tar Heels of North Carolina, under the guidance of new Head Coach Bill Guthridge, whooped up on UCLA and Purdue as they won the Great Alaska Shootout last weekend as well, in a most impressive fashion.

The scrappy Wolfpack of North Carolina State surprised the nationally ranked Georgia Bulldogs.

All of these impressive victories mean that when January rolls around and the ACC season gets into full swing, there will be great basketball games every week, with every game a competitive one.

So without further delay I will attempt to make some sense of the ACC this season and make my picks about who will finish where in the toughest conference in the country.

This season there can be no doubt that the best team is definitely Duke. They should have little trouble winning the ACC regular season championship. The Blue Devils have too much talent and experience not to dominate most of their games.

After watching Duke in the Maui Invitational, the most impressive aspect of the Devils is their incredible defensive intensity and how they pressure every dribble, every pass and every shot.

Duke's toughest test will come against its neighbors down the street, the Tar Heels. The Heels have shown early this season that they have what it takes to do considerable damage this season and possibly vie for a national title. However, the loss of Dean Smith to retirement may prove to be too much for them. It will be interesting to see how well Guthridge can make the transition from being an assistant for 30-plus years to trying to fill the shoes of the greatest basketball coach of all time. If Guthridge can't get it together, neither can the Tar Heels.

Finishing third this season will be the Clemson Tigers, who have gotten off to a bit of a rough start this season. Most likely, Head Coach Rick Barnes can get his club turned around and they will return to the winning ways that have marked that program for the last few seasons. With practically everyone returning from last year's squad, the Tigers will ride the shoulders of Greg Buckner, again.

The Demon Deacons will work their way into the fourth spot this season, despite all of the talk this season that the loss of Duncan will be too great. The Deacs have demonstrated this season that they are going to live and die by the three pointer. If the Deacon guards hit their shots it could be a productive year for Odom and Co.

Nipping at the Deacons' heels is the Wolfpack of N.C. State in fifth place. The injury to sophomore Damon Thornton, who broke his foot last week and will likely miss the season, is costly, but the one-on-one skills of C.C. Harrison should be enough to finish respectably.

The rest of the conference will finish as follows: sixth, Florida State; seventh, Maryland; eighth, Georgia Tech; ninth, Virginia.

But despite preseason speculation by pundits, every team has winning capabilities. It should be an interesting season. See you at the game. Remember, Demon Deacon home games are in Joel Coliseum, and it is all right to be loud.

## Hilton Head proves too tough for Deacs

By Jon Giokas  
 Old Gold and Black Reporter

The Demon Deacon men's golf team competed in the last tournament of its fall season last week at the Golf World Palmetto Dunes Collegiate in Hilton Head Island, S.C. The team finished a disappointing 16th place in the 18-team field.

The Deacs were unable to get anything going over the par-72 Arthur Hills Course after the first round of play.

Two players posted scores of 81 in the first round, one of which had to be counted in the stroke play format, where each team is allowed to discard its highest score for each round.

The Deacs were left in 17th place after the first round. The team was unable to recover from such a dismal opening and was haunted by the slow start for the rest of the tournament.

"It was a terrible start, we had to count an 81 the first day, and it kind of just went on from there," said first-year Head Coach Jerry Haas. "The guys went off the last two days at 7:30 (a.m.), and it was cold and windy. It's kind of hard when you get behind the 8-ball," said Haas.

Because of the team's low standing after the first round, they were forced to play in poor conditions over the final two rounds.

The team compiled a three day total of

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Jerry Haas  
 Head Coach

25 over-par, with rounds of 297, 294, and 298, and were left 37 strokes behind Texas Christian University, the winner of the tournament.

Senior Todd Lynch was the top individual for the Deacons, finishing with a

total of one over-par 217, good for 26th place in the individual competition, which was won by Jeremy Anderson of UNLV.

Anderson tore apart the Hilton Head Course and finished the tournament 13 under-par.

Junior Michael Capone was the next-best Deacon individual, finishing one shot behind Lynch in 31st place.

Senior Ray Floyd, Jr. started well with an opening round 71, but fell to 71st place with rounds of 79 and 77.

In addition to TCU and UNLV, other teams competing in the Palmetto Dunes Collegiate included Clemson, Houston, Arizona, East Tennessee State, Virginia State and Oklahoma State.