



Monday, January 29, 2024

DUKE BLUE DEVILS @ VIRGINIA TECH HOKIES

Game Time: 7:00pm ET

TV: ESPN

Selection: Virginia Tech + 4

Despite winning three of its past four games, Duke has not been overly impressive during this stretch. They should have lost to Clemson at home on Saturday (a 1 point win on a questionable call) and in their prior game, a bad Louisville team hung with them for most of the game. 3 games back, Duke lost to Pittsburgh at home. You can point to Duke's defense as the cause of the inconsistent play, especially defending outside shooters. That matters even more against one of the elite shooting teams in the ACC — Virginia Tech.

While the Blue Devils' defense is shaky, their offense is the best in the ACC. Duke owns the ACC's highest Offensive Efficiency in conference play. Their elite offense runs through dominant big man Kyle Filipowski, who's averaging 17.7 points and 8.7 rebounds per contest. Duke isn't nearly as reliant on 3s as their opponents, but it's equally effective from deep (38% on decent volume). The guards all shoot it consistently from deep: Jeremy Roach (44%), Tyrese Proctor (37%) and Jared McCain (41%). They don't turn the ball over very often.

Virginia Tech enters this contest sitting on the outside looking in of the NCAA tournament bubble. The Hokies' 13-7 record is solid. They don't have any ugly losses on their resume and did defeat a very good Iowa State team. The Hokies play the same style as usual under Mike Young, attempting triples on 43% of their possessions in ACC play and connecting on 39.2% of them (second in the ACC). Also, Virginia Tech boasts the best effective field goal percentage in the conference.

A trio of shooters make Virginia Tech's offense lethal from the perimeter. Point guard Sean Pedulla, wing Tyler Nickel and shooting guard Hunter Catoor all shoot 39% or better from 3. They have been turning the ball over more than usual, so protecting the ball is important in this game.

This is a marquee game at home for Virginia Tech. I feel their solid shooting and the raucous crowd will help keep them in the game. I will gladly accept the 4 points the linesmen are giving us.

If a single game you purchased does not win based on the point spread, you will receive the next equivalent game FREE OF CHARGE.

Any questions or comments can be sent to: wiz@wizardraceandsports.com

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