Last Of Coffey Staff Fired, New Coach May Build Own

BLACKSBURG—Athletic Director Frank Moseley—in a move that had been expected—announced Monday the dismissal of all six assistants to head coach Charlie Coffey who resigned abruptly last Friday morning.

The six former Coffey assistants released were administrative assistant Jack Prater, offensive coordinator Dan Henning, receiver coach Marshall Taylor, offensive line coach Richard Trail, JV head coach Terry Don Phillips, and defensive tackle coach Carl Ellis.

All were assured last Friday that they will be paid through February.

One of the assistants, Prater, survived an earlier upheaval, when Jerry Claiborn was fired, to serve on the Coffey staff.

Moseley termed it “normal procedure” to dismiss the remaining assistants so that a new coach, when one is hired, can build his staff from the ground up.

Moseley heads a four-man committee charged with finding a replacement for Coffey. Many names have been suggested but none will be released until a new coach is named.

Coffey compiled won-lost records of 4-7, 6-4-1, and 2-9 in his three seasons, starting with 1971. He had taken on the job of rebuilding Tech’s defense, statistically one of the worst in the nation last season, firing a defensive coordinator and apparently landing a replacement when former assistant Bill Clay returned to fill that position.

Clay, however, stayed barely long enough to unpack, changed his mind, and went back to South Carolina. Coffey, apparently despairing of rebuilding Tech without the defensive coordinator of his choice, threw in the orange towel.