Tech's New Coach to Start With Defense

By BILL BRILL
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BLACKSBURG—When Virginia Tech lost 77-6 at Alabama last fall, the football Gobblers were ripp'd for 833 yards by the 'Bama wishbone in the most explosive show in the history of college football.

The man who called the plays for Alabama that Saturday night in Tuscaloosa was officially hired Tuesday as head coach at Tech, and thus charged with the responsibilities of fixing up that Hokie defense.

Jimmy Sharpe, 34-year-old protege of the legendary Bear Bryant, took over at Tech as the replacement for Charlie Coffey, who left a tutored program after a 24-year Sharpe was given a five-year contract.

Sharpe, who has spent the last 15 years at Bama-four as a player and 11 as a coach—met with the Tech squad Tuesday afternoon, then began the task of assembling a staff and trying to salvage something from a recruiting year that already is well along.

Sharpe said that he would have eight assistant coaches. "They will all be coaches. There won't be any titles."

While Sharpe said one coach might head up the offense and another the defense, there would be no designated coordinators. "Four years ago at a convention in Atlantic City, Coach Bryant called me a coordinator for the first time. Heck, I've had the same job for seven years."

Sharpe also said that each coach would have recruiting responsibilities and there would not be a head recruiter on his staff.

While he did not identify any prospective assistants, the youthful ex-'Bama line- man said he hoped to bring in one member of the present Alabama staff. "I won't say he'll come with me unless he visits, but I hope he will. Coach Bryant wants him to take my place."

Sharpe also said he hoped to hire "the best young secondary coach in the country. He used to be with us at Alabama but he's at another school now and that head coach doesn't want him to leave."

Sharpe said he hoped to hire three assistants now, get on with the needed recruiting, and then complete the rest of the staff at a later date.

There was no indication what Sharpe planned to do about assistants left over from the previous staff. "I haven't met any of the other coaches and it wouldn't be fair to make any statements on that yet."

Sharpe said he had been "amazed" at the number of coaches who were interested "in coming back to this area."

As for recruiting, Sharpe said he realized Tech was way behind and it will be tough as hell. First, we'll contact the players in Virginia and the states nearby, and then we'll branch out. But I..."