Va. Tech Adds LSU’s Nelson Stokley To Staff

BLACKSBURG (UPI)—It looks like new Virginia Tech coach Jimmy Sharpe may be trying to bring Southeastern Conference football to Virginia.

Sharpe, a former Alabama assistant hired late last month to lift the Gobblers sagging fortunes, has named four assistant coaches, and all have Southeastern Conference credentials.

Sharpe announced Tuesday that he has hired Terry Willis, an assistant at Livingstone (Ala.) University, Alabama assistant Danny Ford and former Louisiana State University star quarterback Nelson Stokley as assistants. Monday, he hired Charlie Pell, a former Alabama player and assistant who had been head coach at Jacksonville State University in Alabama, as an assistant.

Ford and Willis played at Alabama in 1967, 1968 and 1969, when the Crimson Tide went to the Cotton, Gator and Liberty bowls. Ford was a tackle, and Willis played split end and defensive back.

Stokley was an All-SEC quarterback at LSU in 1967, and joined the Tiger coaching staff in 1968.

Pell, who was Sharpe’s teammate at Alabama in the early 1960s, built a reputation for defensive coaching at Jacksonville State. When he took the tech job, Sharpe said his priority would be defense, an area the Gobblers were sorely lacking in last season as they went 2-9.

Sharpe said he would look for “compatability” among his assistants, and that he hopes to have his staff 90 per cent complete by the end of the week, so serious recruiting can be begun.

“We’ll probably work hard for a week to 10 days before taking a short break to attend to personal details and arrangements,” Sharpe said.

Stokley, 29, served the last five years as a varsity assistant under Charlie McClendon at LSU.

A native of Crowley, La., Stokley was SEC Sophomore of the Year in 1965 when he led LSU through a great season, including a Cotton Bowl victory over Arkansas.

He sustained a shoulder injury (against Alabama) early in 1966 and sat out the remainder of the campaign.

But he returned in 1967 to pace the Tigers to another fine record and a Sugar Bowl win over Wyoming.

He was named All-SEC quarterback, LSU’s MVP and winner of the Corbett Memorial Award as the outstanding athlete in Louisiana.

In announcing Stokley’s appointment, Tech coach Jimmy Sharpe said, “I know I hated it when our team had to compete against him, and I’m glad now to have him on our side.”

Stokley set numerous LSU records, some of which he still holds, including passing yardage and total offense. He started as a graduate assistant at LSU in 1968 and the next year moved up to fulltime assistant.

He is expected to arrive on the Tech campus on Thursday.