Sharpe Hopes Hokies Step Up

BLACKSBURG, Va. — "We've got to pick up the pace this week, and we have to find some genuine leadership which so far hasn't asserted itself," Virginia Tech Coach Jimmy Sharpe assessed the Gobblers' football situation after two weeks of spring practice.

"As a whole, we're getting good effort and steadily improved hitting; in fact, Saturday's scrimmage had the best hitting we have had so far," he said, "but we've got to develop consistency to start showing real progress.

"Our defense was better in Saturday's scrimmage, but it still lacks the all-out recklessness that it's going to take to have 11 men around the football on every play.

"Some individuals did play well," Sharpe cited Skip Creasey, a former offensive performer who now is at defensive end; tackle Tom Beasley, a rising sophomore who made a lot of big plays; tackle Larry Bearekman, "our most consistent defense man"; and tackle Richard Arthur, "who can do anything he wants when he makes up his mind."

Sharpe's word for Saturday's offense: "terrible."

"We seemed to go backwards, although that wasn't for lack of effort," he pointed out. "But we didn't discipline ourselves well enough to carry out the mechanics that make for good team execution.

"Our number one objective for the remainder of Spring practice will be to get 11 together on every play."

Bruce Arians continues to lead the battle at quarterback. Phil Rogers has established himself as a runner, "but he needs to get tougher blocking."

Rising senior Greg Toal has been the most consistent of the running backs, although Paul Adams, who spent most of the spring in baseball, has been showing toughness and running ability.