Coach Jimmy Sharpe chats with two former star Tech backs—Don Divers (center) and Dickie Beard

‘Togetherness’ is key at Tech, says Sharpe

By STEVE WAID
Sports Writer

In my ‘Sharpe, the new Virginia Tech head football coach, spoke before an enthusiastic multitude of Virginia Tech alumni last night and in his characteristic Alabama twang, told them things they liked to hear.

Sharpe didn’t act the role of a sharp-tongued hustler. He didn’t expound on the virtues of winning, nor did he tell the alumni that the Hokies would go unbeaten this season or be a national power in three years.

Speaking with conviction to the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and Student Aid Association at the Hotel Roanoke, Sharpe outlined the new foundation of the Tech football program. According to Sharpe, that foundation will not be built with super football players. It will be built with enthusiasm, togetherness and attitude.

"Look at it this way," Sharpe said before he took the podium, "if we pump enthusiasm, attitude, togetherness into the program and our players have it, win lose or draw, we are going to sell our program.

"The player who has those things we’re looking for in our program is going to go out and pass the word. He’s going to say, ‘Hey, man, it’s good at Virginia Tech. It’s fun. You know people up there. You get involved.’"

Getting the necessary ingredients pumped into the Tech football program is what Sharpe has been doing all spring. He admits that the team has a long way to go and will be in a fight all season long.

But he adds that the team will not be beaten—even though it will lose games because time has run out.

"Anything we can do over last year is an improvement," said Sharpe. "That is what we want to do and that is what we are so sold on our concept of togetherness and proper attitude. Sure, there are other ways to do things, but football isn’t all Xs and Os and a 5-2 defense or pants and jerseys.

"But this is our way. And if we can sell one young man to go out there and work regardless of his ability, then we can sell 11 men to go out and try to win on every play.

"Then we’ll take each game as a stepping stone, the good parts of the game and the bad. Sooner or later, we will stand even with anybody."

Sharpe entertained his audience with jokes and then worked on convincing them of his beliefs with a film of the Tech spring game and a call for involvement on the part of the alumni. He said that the move to Tech was the greatest, happening in his life, as he found a place where people were friendly, the facilities complete and the desire to win abounded.

Sharpe admits that there is work to be done on the team that goes beyond the concept of togetherness and attitude, where he feels the team has made its biggest progress.

"We’re young," said Sharpe, citing 10 or 11 seniors as team members, with the rest being underclassmen.

"However, these are the people we are going with and we can’t stand up with anybody else until we learn, to crawl and then to walk.”