VPI Football Coach Sharpe Says ‘Time Biggest Enemy’

By CHUCK FRAINIE
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BLACKSBURG — The biggest enemy we have at this point is time,” emphasized Virginia Tech’s first-year coach Jimmy Sharpe Saturday.

The affable newcomer from Alabama was standing by while members of the news media got their first look at the 1974 version of the “Fighting Gobblers.”

The 122-man contingent, which includes about 25” freshman walk-ons, went through physical examinations and physical tests after the morning-long picture-taking session.

“Remember, we’ve only had 19 sessions with this squad,” Sharpe hastily reminded all who listened. “That’s not much time to put in a whole new wishbone offense and fix up a defense as bad as ours was here last year.

“We want to put in several things we didn’t have time to do in the Spring — very important things. Remember, we play our first football game three weeks from today. Kentucky, our first opponent (Sept. 14), has five days practice on us already and they’re not changing coaches and systems like we are.”

One of the new things Sharpe wants to insert into what he terms “the simplest offense in modern football” is a passing game.

“I think the passing game is the most overlooked area in a wishbone offense,” the man who built Alabama’s vaunted attack points out.

“The whole idea of the offense is to get outside — put pressure on the corners.

“The cornerbacks have to stay home to protect against the run. That leaves that sideline area open.”

Sharpe lists senior wide receiver Ricky Scales as one of four players on whom the Gobblers must pin their hopes.

“Right now, everything I say about personnel is pure guesswork,” he prefaxes. “Till, I’d list Scales and running back Phil Rogers as See Quartet, D-2, Coles 6-7.”