Galloway Enjoys Unity Under New Coaches

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BLACKSBURG—After surviving the turbulent final three years of Charlie Coffey’s regime, Steve Galloway assumed his remaining time at Virginia Tech would be a pleasure.

He had, after all, been through what he personally considers the darker side of college football.

“During my first three years here it was like hell,” Galloway said Thursday afternoon while sitting in front of his locker at the Virginia Tech Coliseum.

Making it clear he laid the blame at Coffey’s doorstep, Galloway said the team “was riddled with cliques and all the players were stabbing each other in the back. It was an incredible situation.”

According to Galloway, the players’ mood is different now that Jimmy Sharpe has assumed control of Tech’s football program. It is, he says, a radical change from the past that he hopes will reverse the Hokies’ fortunes of recent seasons.

Spring practice was under way.

“There’s a unity here now that was lacking before,” Galloway said. “Every player on this squad believes we can win, and we’re all working together. We all know what’s expected of us, and if we can eliminate a lot of the little mistakes and bickering there’s no reason we can’t have a fine season.”

Despite all the outward changes, Steve Galloway still has a few things to prove. The change of coaching administrations might have relieved his personal anxiety, but it did bring a few setbacks for him as a football player.

“I wouldn’t have given Coffey the satisfaction of knowing I quit football because of him,” Galloway said, “but I knew there would be problems for me when I heard Coach Sharpe was coming here.

Steve Galloway

“He runs the wishbone offense, and that means there’s only one wide receiver. Since Ricky Scales already had established himself and I hadn’t, the picture was pretty clear.

“Once I got moved to halfback last year, it seemed like I’d be playing pretty regularly. Just like I had before Coffey went wild, screaming and yelling irrationally at halftime and after the game when we lost to Kentucky two years ago. Then I strained ligaments in my right knee during a scrimmage and pulled a hamstring muscle.”

After talking with the team doctor, Galloway met with Sharpe about his injury status. “The doctor said I probably couldn’t play until the last two or three games of the season,” Galloway said, “so I was redshirted and sat out the whole year.

“I stayed around here until just after the Houston game, then I dropped out of school and went home to Maryland. I worked for a moving company, then came back at the start of the winter quarter.

“Hanging around here watching everybody else practice and play would have really gotten to me. That’s why I had to leave. I meant to go to a couple games after that, but something always came up. So, I just read about the games in the Sunday papers. And that was pretty tough, especially since we lost to VMU the week after I left.”

Intent upon redeeming something from his college career, and interested in keeping the attention of professional scouts who have talked with him in the past, Galloway spent last winter working on his speed and lifting weights.

“Steve used to run a 4.9 in the 40-yard dash,” Sharpe said, “but he’s consistently running 4.6 now, and he gives us a game-breaking threat.

“More important, though, he’s probably a better downfield blocker than Scales was. Not that I’m taking anything away from Ricky, but I think Steve’s time as a running back helped him in that area. He really attacks those defensive people on the outside, and that’s essential when you run a wishbone offense.”

The prospect of being primarily a blocker doesn’t overly dismay Galloway, however. “You can’t run the ball every play,” he said, “and my speed is good enough now so I think I can get down there past a few people on pass patterns.

“Wide receiver is a position that’s more natural for me, anyway. The pro scouts who’ve talked to me are all thinking in terms of leaving me at that position if I’m drafted. The scout from Dallas didn’t even know I’d been moved to running back last year.

“A lot will depend on what kind of year we have. And, with the way everybody feels now, it should turn out pretty good. There aren’t any cliques on this team anymore.”