Tech's Tom Beasley Drafted by Steelers

UVa's Mike Ozdowski Goes to Colts

Ring!

Beasley Waits; Call Finally Comes

By DENNIS LATTA
Sports Writer

BLACKSBURG — At 4:31, after a long afternoon of waiting, the ring of the phone finally came.

Actually, it only half a ring. Tom Beasley just happened to be sitting next to the phone and had it out of the cradle before the ring finished.

A voice at the other end of the line established he was talking to Beasley and then said, “Congratulations Tom, you’ve been drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers.”

Beasley, a four-year starter for Virginia Tech, was the No. 4 pick in the third round of Tuesday’s NFL draft. After waiting 6½ hours, he got the call from the Steelers.

“I predicted I’d go in the third round,” said an obviously relieved Beasley. “I was told the first two rounds took quite a bit of time, but each minute was getting to be a long time.”

The first state player to be drafted was Virginia defensive tackle Mike Ozdowski, who was picked by Baltimore in the second round. It was somewhat of a surprise pick since Ozdowski missed the last four games last season following knee surgery.

Pittsburgh’s call to Beasley actually came before he was drafted. The Steelers called to inform him he would be picked. “I talked to Dick Haley (director of personnel for the Steelers), the defensive line coach, a public relations man and a man from the business office,” Beasley said of his first phone call.

Then Beasley’s agent called from New York. After that, a radio station called from Pittsburgh to get a quick interview with the Steelers’ third pick in the draft.

“They put me on the board as a defensive tackle,” Beasley noted. “But Dick Haley said that defensive tackle and end were interchangeable.”

Beasley wasn’t sitting in his living room alone, waiting for the call. His wife Marge and his brother were there. His parents had driven over from Elkhorn, W.Va., and were part of the waiting group.

“I’ve been waiting for this since about bowl time in December,” Beasley explained. “Maybe the late draft helped me. I put on some weight. I’m up to about 253. Dick Haley came to Blacksburg and we talked for about an hour. He said Pittsburgh is one of the few teams that don’t worry about your weight.”

Beasley knew he would be drafted, but every round a player drops down costs him money—lots of it.

“I stayed up late last night and studied until about 2. I couldn’t get to sleep. I woke up several times during the night,” Beasley admitted.

But he was pretty well covered. “I signed a contract with an agent three months ago. It said that if I went in the top three rounds, they handled everything, even the taxes. I wouldn’t have used them if I had gone later than the third round.”

But the agent won’t really be doing much negotiating for the rookie who went to high school in North Fork, W.Va.

“The scales are pretty well set,” Beasley explained. “All third-round picks will get about the same amount. There might be some type of signing bonus, but I’m not certain.”

One of the questions in the radio interview was if he would rather play behind L.C. Greenwood or Dwight White. “This could be a chance for me to get some good experience behind some great players,” Beasley said.

But the bubble will quickly burst for the 6-6 Tech senior. “They said they have a rookie camp May 23rd. I think I finish class on the 24th. Starting tonight, I’m going to start running.”

Beasley really doesn’t know what his chances are of