Moseley Retires, Will Boost Matthews For Top VPI Post

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Frank Moseley announced his retirement plans Tuesday and immediately talked enthusiastically of Bill "Moose" Matthews as a possible successor.

Moseley, in 27 years as the Virginia Tech athletic director, oversaw the construction of an imposing sports plant but had less success picking football coaches.

At 66, his announcement may or may not have opened the way for a completed cycle by Matthews.

The towering former Tech basketball star out of tiny Claudeville became a Gobbler assistant six years before taking over as the head basketball coach for two years. Then he assumed duties as assistant athletic director under Moseley, a job he has maintained 11 years.

Moseley, who will remain on the job until a successor is found, feels strongly that Matthews should apply for the post. "I certainly hope he applies for the job. He should have the opportunity to be a candidate," says Moseley.

Mechanism for applications haven't been set up yet but when they are, I'll submit his name.

On the other hand, Matthews hedges. "I won't know for a couple of days if I'll apply for the job or not," he told The Daily Press Tuesday.

The conjecture is that he will confer with President Dr. William E. Lavery before making his decision. "If I don't apply, I won't be here next year," Matthews says. This would terminate a relationship which began in 1982, when he was a 17-year-old future ODK and Phi Kappa Phi honor student.

The announcement by Moseley apparently completed a top-level shakeup of the Tech athletic department that began Monday with the dismissal of Head Football Coach Jimmy Sharpe.

Lavery personally fired Sharpe, whose contract had four years to run.

Moseley, a former assistant to Alabama coach Bear Bryant when Bryant was head coach at Maryland and Kentucky, came to Tech in 1951 as both football coach and director of athletics, but gave up the coaching position in 1961 while remaining as athletic director.

Since then, he had had the largest voice in selecting three head coaches — Jerry Claiborne, Charlie Coffey and Sharpe — all of whom also had been Bryant assistants.

Claiborne, now the successful head coach at Maryland, lasted longest — 18 years — before he was dismissed by then Tech President T. Marshall Hahn after suffering two straight losing seasons.

Coffey was hired in 1971 and was fired after Tech's 2-9 season of 1972. Sharpe then arrived and got his walking papers after three years in which his teams won 21 games, lost 22 and tied one.

Moseley had announced plans to retire See Gobblers, Pg. 25

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two years ago, but at the time was talked out of it. This time, his decision was irrevocable. He has come under fire lately from influential contributors to the Tech football program who have been aghast at the team's non-success.

In a statement announcing his retirement, Moseley made it clear he plans to have no voice in choosing a successor to Sharpe.

"I think it would be most appropriate for the Athletic Association to act at once and hope to name a new director of athletics in time for the new director to take part in the naming of a new football coach," he said.

"If that request is granted, I wouldn't take part in the selection of a new coach. I want to...take whatever steps...will be in the best interest of the university and its athletic program."

Lavery said he hoped to name a new athletic director "in the near future, and the new athletic director will have as his first order of business the employment of the coach." During his 10 years as head football coach, Moseley's teams had a 54-42-4 record. His 1964 club was unbeaten, although once tied, in nine games and his 1956 team finished 7-2-1.

He made his greatest mark, however, as director of athletics when Virginia Tech raised its sports sights to the big league level in the early 1960s.

Under his leadership, the university tucked among the western Virginia hills built 35,000-seat Lane Stadium, soon to be enlarged to 47,500 permanent seats, and 10,000-seat Cassell Coliseum.

Lavery said Moseley had agreed "to remain available for some months to assist with a number of special projects," chief among them expansion of Lane Stadium by 12,500 seats.