Moseley Retirement Completes Shake up

From Staff Wire Dispatches
BLACKSBURG, Va. - Frank O. Moseley, who in 27 years as Virginia Tech athletic director oversaw the construction of an imposing, multimillion dollar athletic complex, announced his retirement yesterday just 24 hours after the firing of football coach Jimmy Sharpe.

The announcement by Moseley, 66, apparently completed a top-level shakeup of the Tech athletic department by president Dr. William E. Lavery, who personally fired Sharpe Monday afternoon.

Moseley, an assistant to Bear Bryant when the latter was coaching football at Maryland and Kentucky, came to Tech in 1951 as both football coach and AD. He gave up his coaching duties following the 1966 season with a 10-year mark of 54-42-4. His 1954 club was unbeaten, although one tied, in nine games and his 1956 team finished 7-2-1.

MOSELEY HAD ANNOUNCED plans to retire four years ago, but was talked out of it at the time by predecessor administrators. This time his decision is irrevocable.

He has come under fire recently from influential contributors to the Tech football program who have been disappointed with the lack of success. It was published on Nov. 19 that the Richmond chapter of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association had, at a Nov. 18 meeting, drawn up a petition which called for a change in the Tech athletic directorship.

In a statement announcing his retirement, Moseley made it clear he plans to have no voice in the selection of the next football coach.

"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 interests of the university and its athletic program."

Lavery said Moseley "has served Virginia Tech long and well ... and he richly deserves that his request for retirement be respected.

MOSELEY MADE HIS greatest mark as AD when Tech raised its sports sights to the big league level in the early 1960s.

Under his leadership, the university built 25,000-seat Lane Stadium (soon to be expanded to 47,500 permanent seats) and the 10,000-seat Cassell Coliseum.

At the same time, Tech constructed a modern indoor playing field, a new baseball stadium, an all-weather track and indoor tennis courts among other things.

Lavery said Moseley had agreed to "advisory services to remain available for some months to assist with the selection of a new athletic director and building coaching staffs."

The Tech president said he hoped to name a new athletic director "at the near future, and the new athletic director will have as his first order of business the employment of the coach."

Meantime, he said, a search committee will be named to screen and recommend candidates for the coaching position. It has also been reported that, although Lavery would rather not take such a step, the university would entertain the possibility of again combining the athletic director and football coaching jobs.

Lavery said one possible candidate for Moseley's job is assistant athletic director Bill Matthews, former basketball and golf coach at Tech.

Sharpe was fired after posting a four-year mark of 21-21-1 with four additional years still on his contract, a move that will cost the university more than $120,000.

His last Tech team finished with two wins for a 3-7-1 mark, but he had been under pressure since before the start of the season when he made an appearance at the Aug. 4 meeting of the Roanoke Touchdown Club. He was alleged to have been intoxicated, and his base of power with the Tech alumni continued to dwindle as the Hokies struggled through the losing season.