Tech’s Ford Pursue’s Goal

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There was something inside Danny Ford telling him it was time to move on.

Virginia Tech’s offensive coordinator for the last three years in Coach Jimmy Sharpe’s regime, left the post this week for the assistant head coach job at Clemson of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

At the South Carolina school, the 28-year-old Ford will be Charley Pell’s right hand man. Pell and Ford coached together when Pell served as Tech’s defensive coordinator in Sharpe’s first year.

Tearing himself away from Sharpe was the toughest thing about the decision, Ford admitted. He has been with Tech’s head coach 11 years as a player and assistant coach.

“That was the toughest part. Coach Sharpe and I sat down together and talked. I told him a long time ago, when I first came up here what my goals were and what I wanted to do,” Ford told New River Newspapers in Christiansburg Saturday afternoon.

The personal and volatile young Ford doesn’t feel the situations will be too much different at Clemson than they were when he arrived at Tech. It’ll just be to roll up his sleeves and work hard again.

“Just think of plans to realize his goal: to be a head coach someday.

“That’s the only reason I left Virginia Tech. I’m not looking at Clemson all that much, or Virginia Tech. I’m looking at myself.

“It’s an opportunity that I feel I have to take now to be where I want to be later in life. My goal is no different than anybody that’s an assistant football coach. I wanna be a head coach some day. That’s the only reason I’m leaving.

Ford wanted to make sure that there were no sour grapes involved in his leaving.

“As far as Virginia Tech goes, everyone went out of their way to make sure myself and my family had it as well as possible.

“The Virginia Tech Athletic Association, the athletic director, the assistant athletic director and everyone treated myself and the football staff just super. I enjoyed my stay there, I loved the place. There’s great people at Virginia Tech.

“And of course the kids the last three years were just great.

Clemson has won only five games in two years, the reason that former head coach Red Parker was fired and replaced by assistant Pell at Parker’s request.

“The situation there won’t be a whole lot different than it was at Tech. They don’t have quite as bad a situation as when we arrived at Tech, but it will take a lot of work,” Ford pointed out.

Ford has already talked to the Clemson players. “They’re tired of losing and want to win. They’re serious and that’s a good sign.

“It’s a college town. Two hours from Atlanta, two hours from Columbia and three from Knoxville. They have good facilities, we’ll just have to find the kind kids that want to play in that college town atmosphere.”

The experience Ford picked up at Virginia Tech was very good. “I don’t believe that my leaving Tech is going to hurt their program a bit. They’re going in the right direction.

“I feel I’ve contributed to that program. Turning it around. If we can do that again at Clemson, well, I think it’s gonna help me in the long run.”

Ford is looking forward to coaching with Pell, who has an excellent defensive reputation. “Coach Pell and Coach Sharpe don’t differ that much. They both came up under

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Tech Assistant Takes Clemson Post In Search Of Goal

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Coach Bryant at Alabama. The biggest difference is that Coach Sharpe is more offensively inclined than Charley. Both are extremely good coaches."

Clemson has a tough schedule next season, opening up with Maryland, then all the other ACC schools, Georgia Tech, Notre Dame, and Virginia Tech.

“I’m not looking too forward to when we come back up there (Blacksburg) and play. They’ll (Tech) be after my head,” he jokes.

But Ford has enjoyed his years at Tech. “It’s been extremely great. We worked our tails off, after coming in when the program was down, perhaps the lowest it has ever been. Through Coach Sharpe’s leadership, and the staff he came up with, we turned things around.

“We fell a little short on some of our goals this past season, but only 20 teams in the entire nation won over 50 per cent of their games. But they’ve turned the corner now and are headed for great things.”

Perhaps Danny Ford is too.