

Virginia Tech Softball
Director of Athletics Whit Babcock
Pete D'Amour Introductory Press Conference
June 7, 2018

Opening Statement

“Good afternoon and thank you all for joining us today. Before we formally turn to the next chapter of Virginia Tech softball, I would like to pause and look back for a brief second to appreciate our past and publicly recognize and thank Scot Thomas, and to say a job well done. Many of you are aware of many of the accolades that Scot earned. To start the program on the intramural field, to get to the World Series and to leave in such great shape and the foundation that it is today certainly should be honored and be appreciated and I wanted to at least express that. It's never easy when that chapter ends, but Scott left it way, way better than he found it, so he deserves that.

“Also, much respect to all of the former players, coaches and staff that built the foundation that we're going to play from starting today, including our best player in history Angela Tincher-O'Brien. I also want to thank the president and board of visitors for their faith and support. Allowing us to go recruit, do our job and bring high quality individuals to Virginia Tech. I want to thank [Senior Associate AD] Chris Helms who ran the search. He does a great job of that and his role on the World Series and softball committee played a huge role in this as well. And [Assistant AD] Derek Gwinn, [Senior Associate AD] Angie Littlejohn and all of those that helped behind the scenes in the athletic department and across campus.

“I would also like to thank Kennesaw State. I've been on the other end on this and thanks for their professionalism and I know it puts them in a bind to lose good coaches, but they were professionals, very gracious and helped develop a wonderful coach we have here today. This next chapter in Virginia Tech softball is in great hands with Pete D'Amour. We're all excited for the future success we know will be coming. Pete and Scott have already connected actually. Pete initiated that and transitions in respect are important here.

“Our search started with a blank list. It was no desk drawer, or those things you potentially heard about having a candidates. It was a decision, a transition that we weighed heavily for a long time and it was difficult, but we thought best for our future. When we started this search for lack of a better term lost track of Pete. We worked together from 2007-11 at Missouri. I knew he had left Missouri a few years later, but I had not followed Kennesaw State. I remembered him fondly but again I had not kept in touch.

“When Chris Helms and I started this search, we each went through our connections in softball and we just went about calling people, cross referencing, looking and just seeing what names rose to the top and was glad to Pete's do that, and it was nice to say hey I know him and I've worked with him before. We found two or three coaches that we really wanted to focus on. We evaluated them, we vetted them and we recruited the one we wanted. Pete was our top choice

and I'm so glad that he's here, and certainly our time at Missouri gave Chris and I great comfort in his ability to lead. I got to see it first hand and it sped up the vetting and evaluation process when can call out there to people you know, and certainly get a good look at somebody behind the scenes.

"I was very impressed with what we heard from coaches, administrators and especially players. They loved playing for him. As a coach you have to have that respect and love for your players, and when you have both you've got something special... he has that. Pete checked all of our boxes that we wanted. We wanted a sitting head coach. We won't always do that, but you sure do a lot in that big chair and to come into an ACC job with those credentials... that's what we were looking for. We wanted a proven winner and found that. One that knows how to do it right way at the Power Five level. Pete certainly knows what that looks like and that experience is invaluable. He's a recruiter, NCAA compliant, believes in academics and is a total person. He coaches his players hard like athletes, and treats them ladies and he wanted to be at Virginia Tech.

"We had a lot of candidates at other times and other positions where people just say, hey I want to come the Power Five, the ACC or this or that. He had done his homework, and Virginia Tech meant a lot to him, and I really liked that. We wanted someone ideally that had to hustle at some point of time in their and had grit. We believe in his ability to follow the only coach we've ever had and he certainly reflects the values we have at Virginia Tech. It's a great day to be a Hokie as we move forward. We're proud and honored to introduce you to the next head coach of the Hokies. Welcome to Virginia Tech Pete D'Amour."

What qualities were you looking for during this head-coaching search?

"In no particular order. You look for a proven winner. Someone that has fire to compete and go do this job at a really high level. You want somebody that fits the values of Virginia Tech. I think we've done a really good job of that and coach [Frank] Beamer set the pace and the brand for that, and that's a map that will never steer us wrong. Someone that can recruit the Mid-Atlantic. I don't know that Pete has done a ton of that but his Maryland and Mid-Atlantic roots, as much as we like Mid-Atlantic and Virginia players we don't care where they come from as long as they love Virginia Tech and play hard. I also had no doubt when I learned about his recruiting connections during the interview process that he could get in here and get it rolling. I certainly wanted someone that was NCAA compliant and that treated their players with respect. Some body that wants to come along and be a good teammate around here. I like people who are in the community and root for each other. That's why it makes me proud that all of our coaches and everybody else reached out to Pete, they didn't have to do that."

This was a pretty quick search for you guys, what made you sure you wanted Pete to take over this program?

"They are pretty quick, although I do think it's the best way to do it if you can. You certainly don't want to rush and make a bad decision, but NC State was in the market at the time, Missouri had already hired someone, Texas was in the market, so in that situation I don't think you can drag your feet. When Chris and I did our due diligence, he's on the softball selection

committee, and he knows a lot of coaches as do I. Very quickly Pete's name came up, and we started with no list, but when his name kept coming up it was like, alright I'm glad to hear about that. When I spoke to him I just felt he had that humble confidence and he had really grown as a coach. When you work with someone for five years it's easy to know enough people to find out what they're really about. I felt like I knew it and it was very easy to catch up with people at Missouri to find out what made him tick. A lot of that sped up the process."