INSTANT REPLAYS

From Page 18

"As a graduate of a predominantly black college, an employee of a black educational agency and a lifelong supporter and fan of black college sports, I certainly agree with your sentiments.

"Enclosed is a flyer for the proposed Georgia Invitational Tournament (GIT) of which my sports club, the Extra Point Club, was the founder and is the 1985 co-organizer, and a copy of the Homecoming issue of 'Maroon Tiger Football 1984,' Morehouse College's football game programs that I edited for the 1984 season.

"Please put me on your mailing list and keep up the good work."

We appreciate Mr. Barker's well wishes for our publication and wish him the same with the Georgia Invitational.

Philadelphia's Kevin Carter sends a request for help:

"I read the *Philadelphia Tribune*, and in this Tuesday's edition (March 5, 1985), your *Black College Sports Review* magazine was enclosed and I found it an interesting section on minority sports.

"I'm making a collage of various sports figures, pro and collegiate, and a few high school inter-city leagues. I would like to know if there is any way I can receive any photographs of the various college basketball players, such as from North Carolina A&T, North Carolina State, Howard University, the University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, South Carolina, and other prestigious minority colleges.

"Since February is Black History Month, I figure I can make a sports collage of minorities.

"Your time, consideration and response will be appreciated. Thank you very much."

We received Mr. Carter's letter in March, and my reply appears in print during the tail end of April, but he may be able to use my advice for the next Black History Month:

Your best bet is to write the sports information offices at the respective schools you mention, Kevin. Many have pictures of star players.

Bear in mind, however, that North Carolina State is not a predominantly black school, though the makeup of its basketball team may make it look that way.

Eddie Thorn of South Hill, Va., has a somewhat different request:

"I am writing to you to let you know that your magazine would be better if you had better coverage of women's sports.

"I don't see nearly as many pictures of girls' basketball as men's basketball. I also don't see the pictures of the attractive women on the cheerleading squads.

"I hope that in the future we can see better coverage of women's sports."

Eddie's right. We need to cover women's sports more thoroughly, and we will as we grow and space and resources permit.

As for the cheerleaders, we'll work on them, too.

THE TALENTED TEN

From Page 21

team's belief that it's every bit as good as anybody else.

"We go into a ball game not fearing anybody we play," Whitney says. "We don't worry about what they do but about what we will do offensively and defensively."

North Carolina A&T, like Alcorn, took on the best the NCAA had to offer in '84-'85, and ranked third in our poll, not far behind the Braves. In fact, the Aggies placed second on two lists.

Paced by super guards Eric Boyd and Jimmy Brown, A&T claimed its fourth straight MEAC title this year while posting a 19-10 record that included losses to Georgetown (by only five points), 1983 national champion N.C. State and East Regional finalist Georgia Tech.

The Aggies also showed their mettle in the NCAAs, playing superbly against top-seeded Oklahoma in the Midwest Regionals in Tulsa, despite being outsized -- as usual.

"If you are looking for a better pair of guards in the ACC than Boyd and Brown," says one MEAC coach, "you had better get out of North Carolina and go to Georgia."

"A&T was only a big man away from being a top 20 team this season," says another.

Low-key Aggie Coach Don Corbett, who cast his vote for Virginia Union as the top black college team, refused to rank his own team. But he did concede, after ranking Alcorn second, that "we would match up well against the Braves. They would have the edge in experience, but we would have the edge in discipline. On a neutral site, it would be a fine game. I think either team could beat the other on its homecourt."

Southern University, a team that dealt Alcorn two of its six losses, including an 85-70 pasting in the SWAC title game, places fourth in the poll.

The 19-11 Jaguars were beaten by Final Four participant St. John's in their first NCAA tourney game ever.

St. John's Coach Lou Carnesecca called the Redmen's defense against the Jaguars "one of their best efforts of the season," quite a change from the days when coaches from ranked schools would insist their teams didn't play well rather than give credit to black college opponents who didn't fall by 30 points.

The Spartans of Norfolk State round out the top five. Ranked as the top Division II team in the nation in '84, the Spartans lost David Pope to the NBA but still wound up 23-7. Three of those losses came to Virginia Union, the last in the CIAA title game that saw the Spartans play the Panthers to a standoff before losing on a basket with one second left.

Paced by the play of guard Ralph Tally, Coach Charles Christian's rugged brand of defense and all-out hustle, the Spartans moved on to NCAA Division II tourney play, beating East Montana 90-78 for third place in the West Regional.

Syndicated columnist Barry Cooper, in picking the Spartans as one of his top five, calls Norfolk's "the best in the country among Division II programs."

Robbins also put Norfolk near the top. "Norfolk would have to rank as one of the top five black college teams in the nation," he says. "They gave us a battle in all three games. Talentwise, they were just a little behind us. I think they were the second-best team in the CIAA, even though we beat them three times and were only able to beat Winston-Salem State once in two games."

Picking a second five was not so easy.

Thirteen teams were considered for the honor, with SIAC winner Alabama A&M (21-10) heading the list.

The seventh spot goes to MEAC runnerup Howard. The young Bison could be a team of the future, with sophomore guards Fred Hill and George Hamilton back next season along with junior forward Mike Hampton, 6-9 sophomore center Robert McIlwaine and 6-8 sophomore forward Robert Jones. Red-shirt sophomore center Derek Caracciolo also is expected to be fully recovered from an injury that sidelined him all season.

The Bison, playing without a senior, held their own against North Carolina in Chapel Hill this season, and, like A&T, continue to upgrade their schedule. Howard finished 16-12 on the year and took A&T to the wire in the MEAC title game.

Albany State of the SIAC ranks eighth despite finishing with a 15-15 overall record. However, the Rams were riddled by injuries early in the season and got off to a horrible start.

"It's a shame that that team couldn't have been healthy all year," says one writer. "They had excellent talent but injuries kept them from putting their best players on the floor together for much of the season."

Hampton University finishes ninth. Like Norfolk State, the Pirates (19-8) lost three times to Virginia Union. They featured one of the tallest teams in the black college ranks with all-America Cedric Miller, Rowan Gomes and John Lane, all of whom stand 6-10.

Winston-Salem State and Mississippi Valley State tie for the 10th spot. The Rams, led by Hall of Famer "Bighouse" Gaines, finished 16-10. They won the CIAA Southern Division title and beat North Carolina A&T as well as knocking off Virginia Union en route to the title game of the Division II South Atlantic Regional.

Mississippi Valley finished 18-11, good enough for third in the SWAC. The Delta Devils also claimed the Georgia Invitational Tournament title, beating Alabama State.

GEORGIA INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT

Delta Devils ride cardiac finishes to a title

By CRAIG T. GREENLEE
Review Staff Writer

Above, Alabama State's 6-6 Joe Williams, the Georgia Invitational MVP, powers inside for points and rebounds. Right, Mississippi Valley's Ray Doss, whose clutch play led the Delta Devils to the tournament title (photos by Craig Greenlee).

The Georgia Invitational Tournament had been billed as a showcase for black college basketball, and it was just that.

Six of the seven tournament games were decided by no more than two points, including two overtime contests.

There also was relentless full-court defense, aggressive play on the boards and two of college basketball's most prolific scorers in Ernest Lee (Clark) and Bernard Tittle (Morris Brown).

In the end, interloper Mississippi Valley State slipped away from Atlanta with the title, nudging SWAC rival Alabama State 73-71 in the finals.

For Valley State's Delta Devils, 18-11, the victory was especially sweet. They had lost to eventual SWAC champ Southern University by only five points in the SWAC Tournament and welcomed the chance to end their year with a win.

"It feels great," said an elated Lafayette Stribling, MVSU's second-year head coach. "I've got a great group of guys and I think they deserved to win because they came through under pressure. That's the class of the guys I coach."

The Delta Devils made a habit of making comebacks throughout the tournament, riding last-minute spurts to each of their wins.

In the finals, with the game tied at 71 and 30 seconds left to play, the Devils got the ball inside to Ray Doss. The 6-6 forward was fouled and calmly sank two free throws to provide the margin of victory. Doss and Mark Coleman then ensured the win when they combined to force an Alabama State turnover with 23 seconds remaining.

It also had been Doss' late-game heroics in the semis that propelled Valley State into the championship round. The Delta Devils were losing to tournament host Morris Brown 88-87 with seven seconds left in OT when Doss made a steal and was fouled on his drive to the basket. Before a jeering crowd in the Morris Brown Gym, Doss canned the two free throws to give his mates an 89-88 win.

When asked if last-minute heroics are part of the Delta Devils' style, Stribling grinned.

"Nobody really wants to go into those situations (close games and overtimes), not night after night," he said. "But if we have to go into them, I would rather have my guys because they know how to win. They find ways to win and never quit. They play hard every night."

Against the Hornets, it didn't seem as if the Devils would need a cardiac finish. They dominated Alabama State in the first half, leading 41-30 at intermission. With their trapping defense producing numerous Alabama State turnovers, MVSU had neutralized imposing Hornet center Joe Williams.

The Devils' bench also did the job offensively as Joe McKinley, Teddy Bloodsaw and Keith Ferguson combined for 23 first-half points.

But in the second half, Coach James Oliver's crew handled Valley State's pressure better and made a point to get the ball to Williams. The burly senior proceeded to Moses Malone his way to the hoop and, by the 7:30 mark, the Hornets took a 59-57 lead that seesawed until the game's final moments.

Williams, who was chosen the tournament's MVP, scored at a 24.3 clip for the GIT. He had 17 points and 15 rebounds in the final.

But for all of Williams' brilliance, it was difficult to overlook the play of Doss when selecting an MVP. Doss not only averaged 20 points for the tournament, but more importantly, was the catalyst for the Devils' last-minute spurts that helped them win the crown.

Still, Valley State's win wasn't all Doss. Stribling credited his team's success to good defense and team play.

"We have a lot of quickness and our guys believe in what we're doing," he said. "We go out and set up things our players can do and stay within their limits. Our kids hustle a lot, too, and you can't beat hustle in anything you do."

Stribling also had a few words of warning for the rest of the SWAC.

"People will no longer look down on the Valley," he said. "They'll have to start looking up at the Valley because we're a team whose program is going in the right direction."

The GIT was revived this year through the sponsorship of the Adolph Coors Co. The tournament was last played in 1978, but as a preseason affair. The reason for the postseason format, explained Robert Pritchett, Clark College's coach and president of Brother Sports, one of the tourney's organizers, is to give historically black colleges that don't receive NCAA or NAIA bids a place to go when the regular season is over.

Pritchett said there are still a number of good basketball teams left after one gets past the top two teams in each conference. The GIT provides a vehicle for those teams to see some postseason action, he said.

Craig T. Greenlee is the editor of Sports Express *in Atlanta.*