WOMEN'S SPORTS

A pretty good little track factory at Grambling

By CRAIG T. GREENLEE
Review Staff Writer

One reason women's track is so big at tiny Grambling State is its Caribbean pipeline.

As one of the smaller Division I schools, Grambling has had one of the nation's top relay teams the past 10 years. The Lady Tigers have appeared in the NCAA outdoor championships for the last six years. They won the 4x200 relay and finished second in the 4x400 in last year's nationals.

This year Grambling continues its excellence, boasting a crop of top-notch 400-meter runners. Is there a track factory there?

"Well, Coach Eddie Robinson runs a football factory," says Ed Stevens, Grambling's head track coach. "I don't claim to have a track factory, but I have a pretty good little shop off on the side street. We do the best we can to keep up the image."

That image has been largely maintained by a tradition of Caribbean women becoming Lady Tigers. They're usually recommended by former Tiger athletes whose homes are in the West Indies.

"Several years ago we had athletes from Trinidad," Stevens explains. "They all graduated and did well in our program. They recommended their friends. They came and did well also. We hope to keep our connections alive."

Grambling came precariously close to winning this year's NCAA indoor championships with three ladies from the islands. But a pulled hamstring knocked them out of the qualifying heats in the 4x400 relay. Even so, they still finished fifth in the nation.

Florida State won the team title with 34 points, while Grambling finished with 24. The Tigers' points came from Cynthia Green (Jamaica) winning the 500 meters and Yolande Small (Trinidad) taking third place in that race. Gail Emmanuel, also of Trinidad, broke the collegiate indoor 400 record but finished second to Lillie Leatherwood, a U.S. Olympian in 1984, who finished fifth in that distance in Los Angeles.

The same three Grambling runners all made their nations' respective Olympic teams. They are also part of the same Lady Tiger 4x400 relay team that had a solid chance of helping Grambling win the national indoor championship – if they could've won that relay.

But it was not to be. Reva Knight of Jamaica pulled up lame during the first leg of the relay and Grambling's chances for the team championship went down with her. Knight, a senior, has been Grambling's MVP since her freshman year.



Knowing how much better she'll be with continued training, Grambling's Cynthia Green sets her sights on being among the best in the world in the 400 meters (photo by Craig T. Greenlee).

The moment was emotionally draining for the team, recalls Emmanuel.

"We work harder than anybody, and these women can handle the workload."

-- Grambling Coach Ed Stevens

"When Reva pulled up, Yolande was screaming and Cynthia was acting crazy," she says. "I was trying to be calm and help Reva. We were so emotional that all of the attention was focused on us on the side of the track."

Stevens only shrugs his shoulders about the misfortune. "We felt like the best mile relay team in the nation didn't get the chance to make it to the finals," he says. "With the 10 points from winning that relay, we had a shot at the title."

Nevertheless, the Lady Tigers were ranked number two in the world for that relay at the end of the indoor season.

Aside from his present group of seasoned runners, Stevens feels the track program keeps getting better because "we attract youngsters that have a desire to win and they love the sport. Our youngsters look at our experienced runners and they want to fill their shoes. They know that, when the seniors leave, it's going to be tough. But they all work hard."

Stevens says freshman 400 runner Bernadette O'Connor started running the relay when Knight was injured. "She holds her own," he says, "and it's because she wants to be a Gail Emmanuel someday. O'Connor is from Trinidad, too. To her, Gail is a big sister, and she wants to run with big sister. That's what keeps us going."

Grambling's four-lap relay team, says Emmanuel, has seven good quarter-milers. It isn't always certain that the same foursome will run in every relay race.

"We all know," says Small, "that any one of us might be the best at a particular time. But it may not stay that way."

Small says her "home girls" convinced her that Grambling was the place she should go to school. "My friends talked about the coach as a person, and the school," she says. "They told me the school is not large with a lot of money, but that it is a school that will take care of you and that you won't be a number. And, since my home girls were there, I knew I would be well looked after."

But running in the Grambling women's track program requires a lot of work.

"We work harder than anybody," Stevens says, "and these women can handle the workload."

"He's very hard and very tough;" Emmanuel says of Stevens. "He usually gets the best out of you. What it boils down to is winning."

Stevens' training philosophy is simple.

"At Grambling we try to take athletes and tell them not to worry about winning and losing," he says. "(We tell them to) just worry about training and training and they will eventually get there.

His team trains "purely on an individual basis," Stevens says. "We don't have team workouts. Kids pair off and run sometimes, but not on a daily basis. Every workout is based on previous performance and how they feel that day."

There are days when the ladies aren't up to a demanding workout, Stevens says, and he's aware of that. "But I can usually find some kind of way to get them going and we'll do twice as

Please See Page 15

RECRUITING

Rams get richer in CIAA football recruiting

By DAVID BULLA
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The business of assessing football recruiting entails a lot of hitting and missing.

It's about as fun as predicting who's gonna win the major league baseball division races before the season starts.

With this in mind, the *Black College Sports Review* begins a series of reviews of recruiting in the major black conferences.

We begin with the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association, where Norfolk State is the defending champion. Since the Spartans had a small turnover, they did not need a big recruiting year.

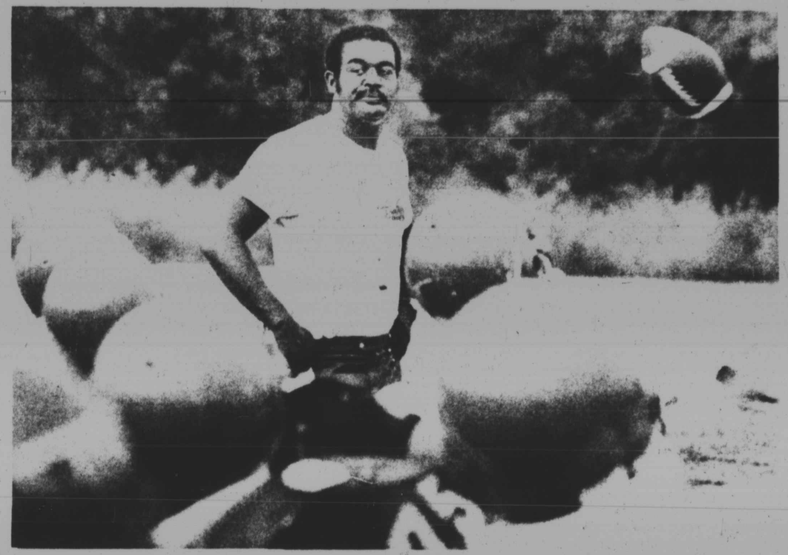
Some of the better years were turned in by schools who contended for division championships last fall. These included Virginia Union, North Carolina Central, Virginia State, Fayetteville State and Elizabeth City State.

But in sheer quality, Winston-Salem State Coach Bill Hayes and his staff had the best haul. Hayes landed 19 recruits. The Ram coach says it's one of his best years in terms of quality.

"How you recruit depends on what you have coming back," said Hayes, in his 10th year at Winston-Salem State. "If the program's doing well and you're not in a pinch, you can recruit a certain type of athlete.

"We had good seasons the last two years and had the luxury of looking for good athletes, instead of filling specific needs."

Thus, Hayes' Rams will be in good shape to repeat as Southern Division champions, although Coach Hank Lattimore recruited perhaps the conference's best individual in Tim Oakley of Oxford, N.C.



WSSU's Hayes: Hoping to keep Ram fortunes aloft in the Southern Division (photo by James Parker).

"We had good seasons the last two years and had the luxury of looking for good athletes, instead of filling specific needs."

-- WSSU Coach Bill Hayes

Following is a look at the CIAA recruiting year. These lists are partial in the sense that Division II programs rely on walk-ons more so than Division I and I-A schools.

Southern Division

Winston-Salem State: With the luxury of going after good athletes, Hayes concentrated on linebackers. Eight of his 19 recruits are linebackers.

Bobby Scrivens of Winston-Salem and James Singletary of Fayetteville, N.C., head the list.

"The thing we like about Scrivens is he's not afraid to hit," said Hayes, whose Rams posted a 9-2 record last fall. "We think he can be a good weak-side linebacker, which in our scheme means he'll help out in the secondary."

The defensive front incurred significant losses in ends Daniel Bryson and Mike Warren and tackle Tim Platt. But Hayes has several veterans ready to fill their spots. Six-foot-three, 270-pound James Daniels of Florence, S.C., should vie for playing time at one of the end positions.

For the most part, there will be stiff competition at each position among veterans. Hence, Hayes' freshmen should play the role of understudies.

North Carolina Central: Lattimore says Oakley will give the Eagles, 7-4 last year, a needed lift on the ground. Clifton Kersey, who has graduated, was the team's top rusher last season and he gained 540 yards. The 6-1, 200-pound Oakley ran for 1,931 yards as a senior at Webb High School. That eclipsed Webb's single-season record, which had been held by NCCU's leading returning rusher in Darryl Webb.

At the same time, Oakley is an outstanding receiver. He and Alan VanHook, a wide receiver recruit from Hillsborough, N.C., give Lattimore the most enviable receiving corps in the conference. The Eagles return all-CIAA ends Robert Clark and Robert Green and tight end Terrence McNeill.

Despite the loss of all-time CIAA passing leader Gerald Fraylon, the Eagles will continue to have one of the most potent offenses in the league.

A trio of freshmen will battle for the starting quarterback job. They include Robert Harvey of Fayetteville, N.C., Robert Booker of Clarksdale, Miss., and Kyser Wilson of Durham, N.C.

Fayetteville State: The Broncos, 4-4-1 last year, have never won a CIAA football championship, but their last two recruiting years indicate that they want one bad.

Last year Fayetteville State had *50* freshmen. Coach Robert Pulliam had added 31 this year.

"I know I'm prejudiced," said the first-year head coach, "but I think this group is probably better than last year's. They weren't bad last year, but I'd like to think we're gonna get contributions from all of these recruits."

Four offensive linemen had to be replaced and Pulliam landed eight. Dale Erving, a 6-1, 250-pounder from Benson, N.C., and Raymond Bradley, a 6-1, 265-pounder from Fayetteville, N.C., head that group.

Quarterback was another position Pulliam concentrated on. Mike Jennings, a 6-0, 180-pounder from Chattanooga, Tenn., and Darren Bynum, a 6-0, 175-pounder from Salisbury, N.C., were his recruits at that position.

Livingstone: Assistant Coach Anthony Curry handled Livingstone's recruiting and, despite a change at head coach, he was satisfied with the Bears' recruits.

"We did a really good job considering the coaching change (David Corley replacing Melvin Rose, who went to Hampton University as an assistant)," Curry said. "I think we signed two good quarterbacks in Jimmy Fleming and Stepp Banner."

Fleming, a 6-4, 210-pounder from Concord, N.C., is a dropback passer and Banner, a 6-1½, 175-pounder from Lenoir, N.C., is a scrambler.

"Since we started late, I think we did really well," Curry added. "Things slowed down after the coaching change (which occurred Feb. 28).

Please See Page 13