DRAFT PREVIEW

Once again, the name of the game is defense

By G.D. CLAY
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IT'S probably a secret to most fans of the National Football League. But with marked consistency, players from predominantly black schools have risen to the defense on many teams for several years.

Take linebacker Harry Carson of the world champion New York Giants, for example. The 34-year-old perennial all-pro is a South Carolina State alumnus. But a younger defensive player on the rise is Albert Lewis, age 27. He's a Grambling State product who plays cornerback for the Kansas City Chiefs.

And then there are the linemen. Schools such as Tennessee State, Grambling and Jackson State have produced their share.

In the old days, there were guys like Buck Buchanan and Ernie Ladd (both from Grambling). They were hulk linemen, clogging the middle. But now times have changed. Big, strong, fast linebackers are in demand for most pro defenses. And, because of the new and sophisticated passing offenses, the guys with the quick feet and calculating moves in the trenches -- the pass-rushing specialists -- are at a premium.

Which brings us to Leon Seals of Jackson State and Sean Smith of Grambling. Both are defensive linemen with chances to make contributions in the NFL.

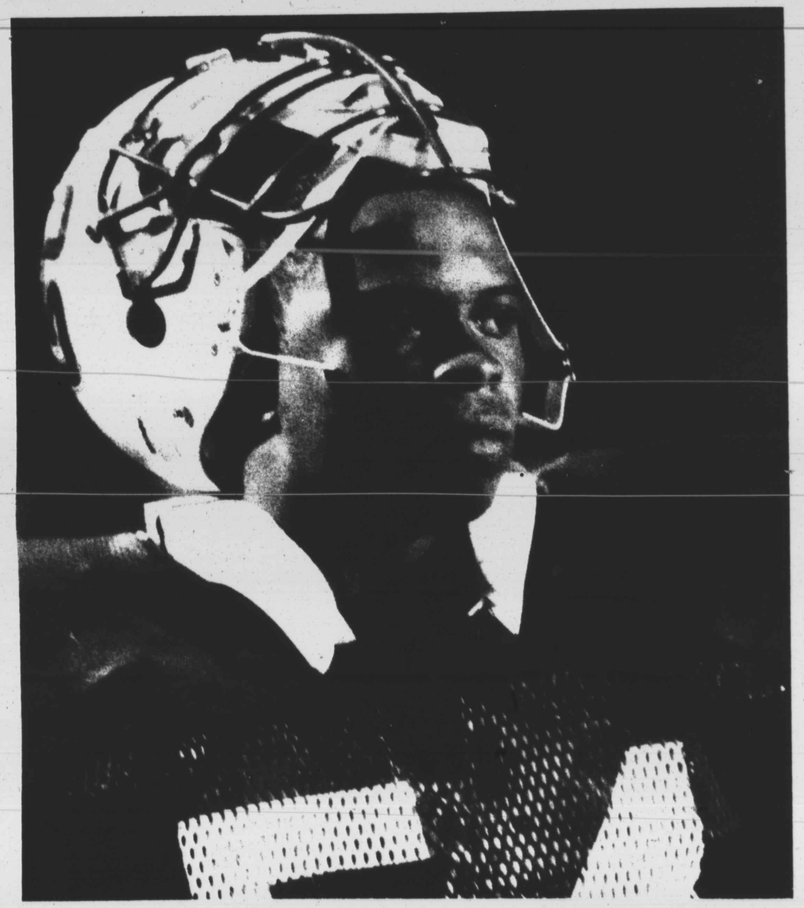
Other top players to watch are: Onzy Elam, a linebacker at Tennessee State; Robert Clark, a wide receiver from North Carolina Central; Arthur Wells, a tight end from Grambling, and Milton Mack, a cornerback from Alcorn State. And the top "sleeper" among the predominantly black schools is considered to be Donald Evans, a 6-2, 257-pound defensive end from Winston-Salem State. And, yes, he is considered a good pass rusher.

In addition, there are Stacey Mobley, a wide receiver from Jackson State; Milton Barney, a wide receiver from Alcorn State; Mark Irvin, a safety from Bethune-Cookman, and Charles Glaze, a quarterback from South Carolina State who probably will be converted to safety.

This year there is a good chance that at least 11 players from predominantly black schools will be drafted April 28. In 1986, 11 players were selected, down from the 13 taken in 1985.

Now back to the S-and-S Duo.

Seals, who had four solo sacks and eight unassisted tackles in the Freedom Bowl to earn the defensive MVP award, is a 6-4, 263-pound defensive end. Called "Dr. Sack," he recorded 16 sacks during his junior season in 1985, and he had 10 in 1986, despite missing three games because of a knee injury.



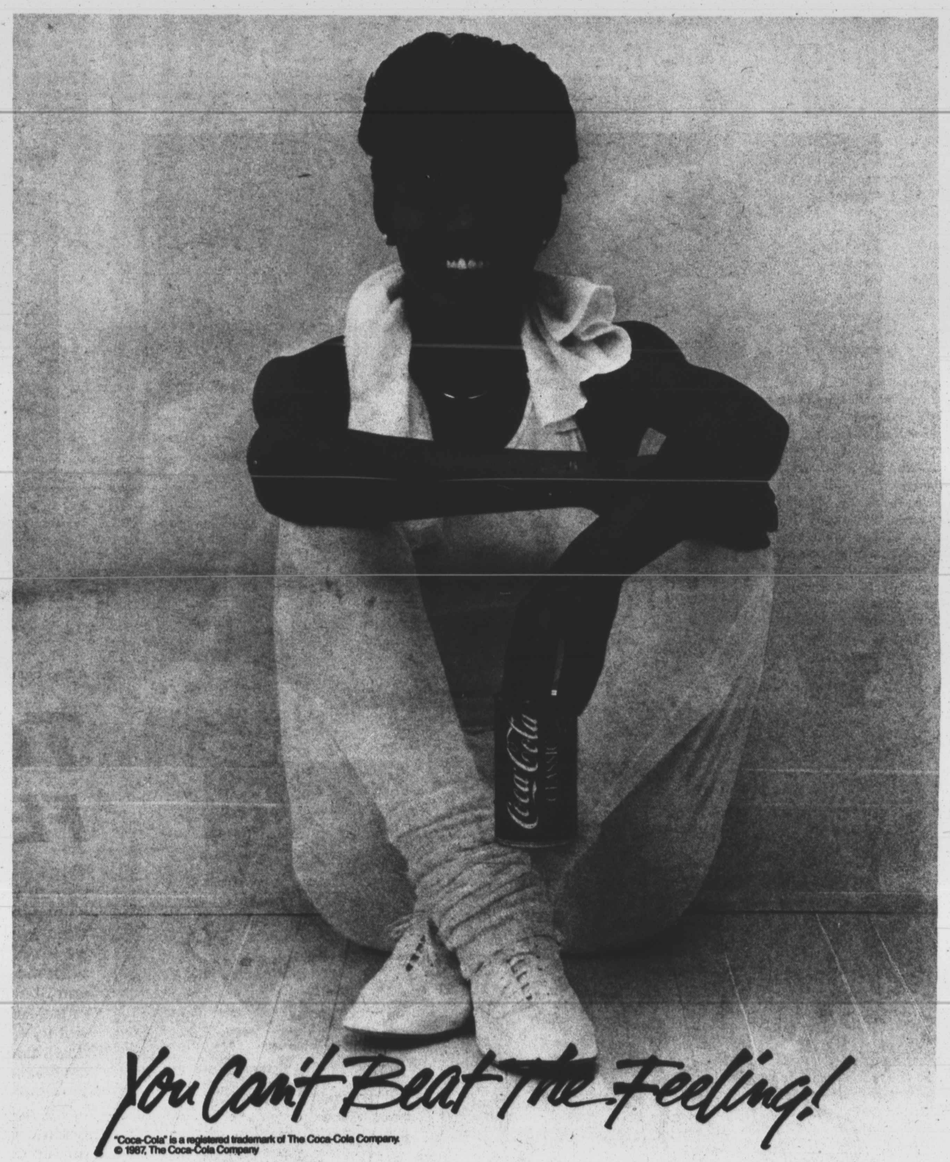
Honor student and prize catch Onzy Elam, a Tennessee State linebacker. "Onzy is a talent," says San Francisco scout Tony Razzano (photo by Craig T. Greenlee).

At the annual NFL scouting camp where the top college seniors are invited, this year held in Indianapolis, Seals ran a 4.9 to 5.1 40-yard dash, according to Baltimore-based draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr., author of the *1987 Draft Report*. Kiper rates him as the sixth-best defensive end in the draft, although he says Seals must improve his strength and add solid weight.

"He's a good football player," said Tony Razzano, director of college scouting for the San Francisco 49ers. "He has athletic skills. He's quick. He gets off his mark. He's playing at a lower level of competition, but players have come from there before.

"His skills have to be honed and developed, because of the level of competition. He has the basics -- height, weight, speed and competitiveness. I think he can play in the National Football League."

"He had a nose for ball when we played him," said Sylvester Collins, offensive coordinator at Tennessee State. "He made a lot of plays when we ran away from him. He's a good runner; he's quick and fast. And he's kind of mean."

Said New York-based draft analyst

Please See Page 12