BLACK COLLEGE REPORT

Former Howard assistant new S.C. State coach

By ALLEN H. JOHNSON
Review Editor

NEW South Carolina State basketball Coach **Cy Alexander** says he isn't a "miracle worker," but he believes he can make the Bulldog program successful.

Alexander, an assistant at Howard for 11 years, was named recently to replace **Percy "Chico" Caldwell** as the new head coach at S.C. State. Caldwell resigned under pressure after the Bulldogs finished 14-15 this past season. Caldwell had a four-year record of 48-65.

"I am sincerely grateful to be here," Alexander said at a news conference. "I am not a miracle worker, but I believe with a unified effort from the administration, the coaching staff, our players, the college, the community and alumni, we can have a successful program.

"I am totally committed to this and am looking forward to getting started," Alexander said. "There is a great foundation already here."

Alexander said the Bulldogs already have considerable talent in the fold.

"They already have the necessary ingredients to put together a great team," he said. "It's just going to be my job to help put it all together."

Alexander said he hopes to run a more up-tempo offense and will be looking for quick players.

Toward that end, Alexander has tied his loose ends with Howard and already has begun recruiting South Carolina talent, primarily in search of guards.

"We're going to recruit guards with quickness who can play a fullcourt defense," Alexander said.

Alexander said he intends to emphasize defense.

"I want to increase the team's speed and quickness," he said. "But I want to do it primarily for defensive purposes.

"... Above all, we will have discipline. I believe that you can't lose with 'solid citizens,' and our players will be solid citizens."

Cy Alexander: Hoping now to teach the Bulldogs how to win.

The SWAC blues

The Southwestern Athletic Conference did not enjoy a vintage year in 1986-'87.

No team lost fewer than 12 games this season and none won more than 19.

The league's best overall record was posted by Southern University, which went 19-12.

Perennial kingpin Alcorn State plummeted to rock-bottom, going 5-23, 3-11 in the league, but still managed to avoid last place.

That honor went to Prairie View (2-12 in the conference and 6-22 overall).

Only three of the SWAC's eight teams -- regular-season champ Grambling State (16-14), Southern and Jackson State (15-14), posted winning records.

Among the SWAC women, Southern (21-7) and Grambling (21-9) led the pack.

Correction

The February issue of *BCSR* incorrectly identified a photo of Fritz Pollard II as Fritz Pollard I in a story on the first black coach in pro football.

The photo depicted the younger Pollard with former Olympic great Jesse Owens.

We apologize for the error.

WRESTLING

Champion wrestler keeps renaissance going

By HENRY DUVALL
Special To The Review

WHEN Howard University track Coach William P. Moultrie became the school's athletic director last fall, he declared "a new day dawning" at a university that has prided itself more on its academics than its athletics.

The Howard Bison football team responded with one of its best seasons in years. Then the basketball squad ran up the longest winning streak in major-college basketball this season, ending with 17 straight victories as the Bison lost the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference championship game.

But all wasn't lost. The Howard women's basketball team won its conference title.

And one of the university's wrestlers, Tony Mack, became the first Howard athlete ever to qualify for the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Wrestling Championships, helping to keep Howard's "new day" alive.

Here was a three-sport letterman who had gotten off to a late start, missing preseason wrestling tournaments to play in his first season of football. But he went on to win the MEAC championship in the 150-pound weight class, receiving an automatic bid to the national wrestling championships.

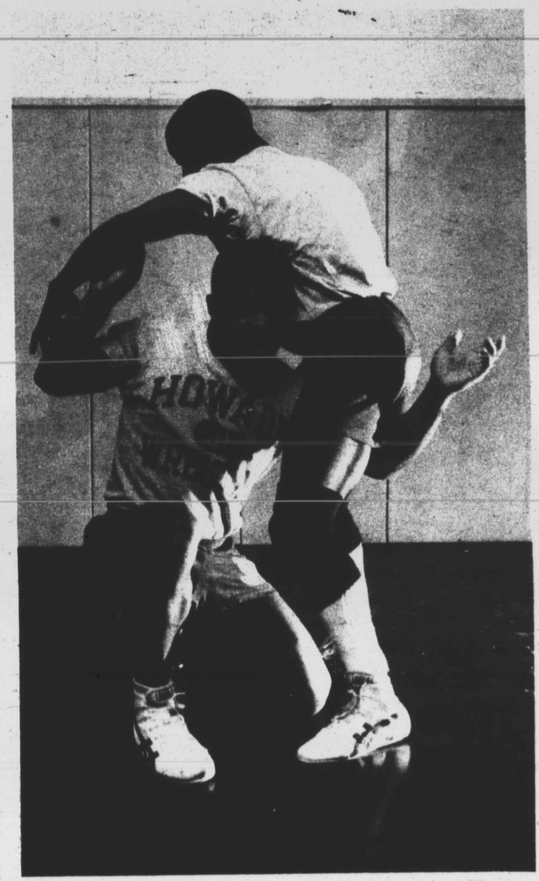
The honor of being the first wrestler to represent Howard in the NCAA Division I championships still "hasn't quite hit me yet," says the 21-year-old junior from Trenton, N.J.

But Mack's claim to fame in athletics goes beyond wrestling. The versatile athlete is also a star baseball player, a .300 hitter who last year was a leading base stealer for Howard.

Mack is making points in the classroom as well, maintaining nearly a "B" grade-point average. "Without these sports," he said, "I wouldn't be able to succeed in the classroom. It's added pressure I want."

The international business major was in demand three years ago when he was a "B" student, a three-sport letterman and a champion wrestler at Trenton High School. He had been offered more than 10 wrestling scholarships.

After visiting a few schools, including Louisiana State and South Carolina, he decided to accept a scholarship at predominantly black Howard University because "I wanted to be happy socially as well as athletically."



While warming up for the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships, Howard University wrestler Tony Mack shows his form. The three-sport letterman is the first Howard wrestler ever to qualify for the NCAA Championships (photo by Harlee Little).

In his freshman year, he earned Most Valuable Player honors in wrestling, and since then he has become a drawing card for wrestling matches. Home attendance has risen from an average 25 spectators in Mack's freshman year to more than 200 today, according to wrestling Coach Paul Cotton.

Cotton describes his champion wrestler as quite a character. "He has an outstanding sense of humor," Cotton says. "He's the Bill Cosby of the wrestling team."

Asked if being a three-sport athlete hinders Mack's wrestling abilities, Cotton says, "He would be a better wrestler if he concentrated only on wrestling. But would he be a happier person?"

Mack's desire to win and his strength both contribute to his championship posture. Says his coach: "He is one of the strongest persons I've ever met under 160 pounds. He bench presses about 365 pounds."

Mack is sharpening his championship form with morning roadwork and evening workouts on the mat. One of his mentors is three-time all-America wrestler Buddy Lee, a Marine and one of the nation's top amateur contenders.

Mack has his career sights set on becoming an entrepreneur and believes his studies in international business will broaden his business horizons.

But Mack also confides a desire to play professional sports, probably at second base on a major-league baseball team. "I would love to play professional football, but the chances are a little slimmer than baseball because of my height," he says, noting that pro football scouts generally look for athletes taller than his 5-4 frame.

In wrestling, though, even a try at the Olympics is a possibility.

Mack has been playing football and baseball since age 10. He began wrestling in high school on the advice of his football coach. "He told me (that) if I wrestled, I would be a good football player," Mack says. "It was true."

Howard's only current three-sport letterman says he feels more comfortable playing football than participating in the other two sports, noting that he has good "football sense." But he believes he has been more successful in wrestling and that his chances are much greater in baseball to become a professional athlete.

Following in his footsteps is his youngest brother, who also is a three-sport athlete at Mack's former high school. "I give him all of my good habits," Mack says, smiling.

An avid churchgoer, Mack says that divine inspiration nourishes his drive to win. "I've been in the church as long as I've been playing sports," he says.

His aim in life is straightforward: "I just want to succeed, whether it's tackling a (math) functions problem in the classroom, running a football on the gridiron, pinning a wrestler on the mat or getting the winning hit in a baseball game."