Photos by Eric Miller

Above left, Michael Rattler, 28, of Jackson, Miss., measures a shot; right, Mark Nance, 21, of Shaker Heights, Ohio, concentrates on a putt.

Cleveland and Atlanta.

He hopes to sign recruits from Benton Harbor, Mich., Maryland and Vancouver, British Columbia (Canada), this year.

His secret? "I tell them the truth," said Payton. "If they're interested in playing golf and going beyond just playing, we offer the best program among black schools. If they want to go someplace and just say, 'I'm on the golf team,' fine. If they want to be on a quality team, Jackson State is the place to be."

Payton has three requirements of Jackson State golfers:

- Maintain a 2.5 grade-point average (the NCAA requirement is 2.0) out of a possible 4.0.
- Graduate.
- Attempt to improve their golf game.

"Everything else takes care of itself," said Payton.

Said Jackson State Athletic Director Dr. Walter Reed: "Eddie's done an excellent job. He's brought the golf program national exposure, and he's brought professionalism to the program. I'm proud of the progress he's making."

Payton has a long-standing fascination with golf. It began during his childhood in Columbia, Miss. Like many other blacks his age, he earned money for himself caddying at the all-white country club after school and on weekends.

"It seemed easy to play and a good way to get exercise," he said. Payton became so enthralled with the game that he built his own two-hole golf course on the campus of his high school. The first time he played 18 holes, he shot an 85 on the University of Southern Mississippi course.

He went on to star in football at Jackson State, but he was on the golf team his freshman year.

Payton became a serious golfer during his days in the NFL when he had the opportunity to play in several pro-am events.

"My pride as an athlete motivated me to get better," he said. "I wanted to win."

He's had lessons from Tom Kite, Larry Ziegler and Frank Connors.

"Once you get the fundamentals, it's up to you how much improvement you're satisfied with. I couldn't be satisfied with less than the best."

And he won't be satisfied with less than the best from his team. That's why he tries to insure that the Tigers have the best facilities and equipment.

They have access to Bay Pointe Country Club Resort, a 2-year-old, $2 million facility. He's also developed an indoor practice facility and purchased video equipment to help team members study their game.

Payton is quick to acknowledge that the strides the program has made would have been impossible without the support of the administration. He has a free hand in scheduling and a full complement of scholarships.

But he doesn't understand why the commitment the Jackson State administration has made to golf is the exception, not the rule, for black schools.

"They're as committed to developing a winning program as I am," said Payton. "I don't know why that's the exception among black schools. I fault administrations for not realizing golf is a vehicle for meeting people who can do something for the university and the kids. It's a lifetime sport unlike football, baseball and basketball. It doesn't cost a lot of money. I have difficulty understanding why a university wouldn't field a golf team. If they can produce one kid on the PGA Tour, it would generate millions of dollars of publicity. It's an investment."

Payton thinks sophomore Jaime Hidalgo of Tempe, Ariz., is Jackson State's best prospect for the PGA Tour. Hidalgo averages 74.3 over 14 rounds. He had a school record round of 68 last year.

"Hidalgo is a polished golfer," said Payton. "He can take his game a lot farther. It's just a matter of how dedicated he wants to be. He's fundamentally sound and competitive. He has all the ability and potential, but he needs to mature as a golfer."

-- ROSCOE NANCE

NOTES ... QUOTES ... AND TALES OF WOE

By ROSCOE NANCE

Here's a vote for Florida A&M for college baseball's comeback team of the year.

The Rattlers won their second consecutive Mid-Eastern Athletic conference championship after beginning the season 0-5. They were 22-10 on March 6 after losing to South Alabama. They went on a 20-2 streak to finish the season, and then breezed through the MEAC tournament.

Sophomore Marquis Grissom led the Rattlers in the tournament. He hit .643 (9-for-14), scored seven runs, hit two doubles, a grand slam and batted in nine runs. He also had two complete game pitching victories, striking out 18 batters. ...

Lester Fonville, the 7-2 center out of Jackson State, has signed a contract with the Portland Trail Blazers for the remainder of the NBA season. Fonville was the Blazers' second-round pick in the 1987 draft but chose to play in France. He returned to the United States and played for the Mississippi Jets of the Continental Basketball Association and averaged 4.1 points, 5.6 rebounds and 2.7 blocked shots a game. ...

Fonville

Delaware State Sports Information Director Maxine Brown is the winner of the third annual Cal Jacox-Champ Clark Award that goes to the top sports information director among historically black schools.

Brown

The award is sponsored by the Black College Sports Information Directors Association. Eastman Kodak will present Brown a check for $600. Runner-up Eric Moore of Fayetteville will receive $300, and third-place finisher Wallace Jackson of Alabama A&M will receive $100. ....

Howard University, snubbed by the NCAA Division I-AA playoff selection committee last football season because of a "weak" schedule, has beefed up its 1988 lineup.

The Bison open the season against Grambling at Yankee Stadium in New York Aug. 27. They have also added Florida A&M, which rejoined the MEAC, to their schedule. They will play the Rattlers Nov. 5 in Tallahassee, Fla. ...

The Alabama A&M women's track team continues to pile up impressive performances. At the South Carolina State Relays, Jearl Miles set a meet record in the long jump (19 feet, 6 inches), and Dionne Bruff set a meet record in the high jump (6-0).

The Lady Bulldogs were first in all four relay events.

In the Florida Sunkist Relays, they won the 4 x 400 relay for the third consecutive year. Bruff gave the Lady Bulldogs their other first-place finish in the high jump. ...

Miles

Record-setting North Carolina A&T quarterback Alan Hooker has signed a free agent contract with the Dallas Cowboys after rejecting offers from the New England Patriots and Denver Broncos.

Hooker

Hooker said he signed with Dallas because the Cowboys made him the best financial offer and signed him as a quarterback.

"They were the only ones that were really talking quarterback," said Hooker. "Most of the other teams were looking at me as a running back or a wide receiver. Who wants to block Lawrence Taylor? Plus, I'd decided if I was going to sign as a free agent, I wanted to sign at the position of my choice. My skills are best suited to play quarterback and that's where I think I'll have the best chance."

By rejecting Denver's offer, Hooker passed up an opportunity to be reunited with his college coach, Mo Forte, who left North Carolina A&T to become an assistant with the Broncos. Winston-Salem State Coach Bill Hayes has replaced Forte. ...

Jackson State Athletic Director Dr. Walter Reed is the leading candidate to replace Nelson Townsend as athletic director at Florida A&M. Nelson left the Rattlers to become athletic director at State University of New York at Buffalo.

Curtis Williams of Elizabeth City State is also a candidate. Ron Petro of Alaska Anchorage withdrew from consideration. ...

Reed

Campanis, Snyder -- and now Chandler

Item: A.B. "Happy" Chandler, the former governor of Kentucky and commissioner of major league baseball, causes a stir with racial slur.

It seems such headlines are being written with increasing frequency. First there was the Al Campanis incident -- blacks lack the necessities to manage -- a little more than a year ago. In January, it was Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder saying blacks were bred to be better athletes.

The Chandler incident rates right up there with the most infamous of them. In and of themselves, his words -- "You know Zimbabwe is all nigger now. There aren't any whites" -- were no more insulting than any other racial slur that has ever been uttered.

Chandler's feeble attempt to extricate himself from the mess he created by saying he used to call blacks niggers when he was growing up, and they didn't mind, just made a bad situation worse.

What sets the Chandler affair apart is the ramifications of what was said. Here we have an 89-year-old man who was once the most powerful man in Kentucky, a man who once presided over one of America's most sacred institutions, but lacks the sensitivity to understand when he has offended blacks.

It is even more shocking when you consider he is still a member of the University of Kentucky board of trustees.

What Chandler said about Zimbabwe being all nigger makes one wonder what he and other University of Kentucky supporters say about blacks who play on Wildcat athletic teams once they're behind closed doors.

It makes you wonder how supportive they would be if Coach Eddie Sutton sent a basketball team onto the floor of Rupp Arena composed of all blacks.

It makes you believe that stories of an assistant basketball coach pointing to his white skin and telling former Kentucky basketball Coach Joe B. Hall to "lighten up" the Wildcats' lineup when there were too many blacks playing are indeed true.

But let's not make the University of Kentucky a whipping boy here. When it comes to matters of race, it undoubtedly is no better or worse than any other school of its ilk. The same thing could have happened at the University of Alabama or Michigan or North Carolina or any of countless other universities across the nation.

It's about time black athletes, and their parents, recognize that to a large degree they lose their identity as blacks when they attend predominantly white schools. They are looked on as being Wildcats, Tigers or Bears or whatever ... not as being blacks.

That's why a Happy Chandler couldn't understand why black Kentucky football players were offended by his remarks and considered boycotting spring football practice unless he resigned, which he didn't.

His reasoning was, "You're Wildcats. You're different from the people I was talking about."

White schools do offer certain opportunities that black schools can't -- such as greater media attention and plush facilities -- but are those worth the price they often have to pay, and the indignities they often suffer? And are they a substitute for a well-rounded education?

-- ROSCOE NANCE

Three Jaguars are taken in NFL Draft

BATON ROUGE, La. -- Southern University was a co-leader among SWAC schools in the number of student-athletes taken in the annual National Football League College Draft.

Three Jaguar players were drafted by NFL teams between the second and 10th rounds, headed by offensive tackle Gerald Perry. The bruising 6-foot-5, 315-pounder was a second-round pick of the Denver Broncos, the 45th player drafted overall.

Southern Head Coach Marino Casem, who had earlier predicted that Perry would be a first-round draftee, said the Columbia, S.C., native could be an impact player in the pros.

"I've said all along that he's the best offensive tackle I've ever coached," said Casem. "He has the skills and the knowledge to step right in and make an impact on the Bronco team."

Ball, a 6-foot, 209-pound New Orleans native, was taken by the Indianapolis Colts in the fourth round of the draft. He was the 102nd player taken overall in the draft.

The final Jaguar taken in the draft was outside linebacker Vincent Fizer, a 6-foot-4, 210-pound native of Minden. He was a 10th-round pick of the New Orleans Saints, the 276th player drafted overall.

Perry

Porter

Ball

Fizer, in 1987, collected 58 tackles, one fumble recovery and one pass sack. Casem said the Saints may have gotten in Fizer more than they may now realize.

Several other Southern players are now awaiting free agent calls from NFL teams. Waiting in the wings are linebacker Rufus Porter (6-1, 208, Baton Rouge), fullback Jeff Alexander (6-0, 232 Baker) and defensive tackle Anthony R. Hudson (6-2, 286, Mansfield).

Other SWAC players drafted included Houston Hoover, Deatrich Wise and Albert Goss, Jackson State; Curtis Maxie and Johnny Carter, Grambling; Vincent Brown and Danta Whitaker, Mississippi Valley.