MORE GRID OUTLOOKS

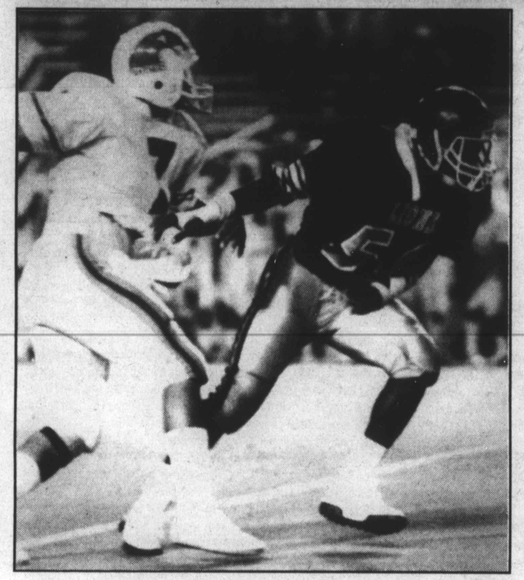

Photo courtesy University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

Arkansas-Pine Bluff linebacker James Austin is a nightmare for opposing offenses.

Keep an eye out for the Arkansas-Pine Bluff gang

Call 1988 the era of good feeling for **Arkansas - Pine Bluff.** Last season the Golden Lions roared to a 7-4 record under the wide open offensive philosophy of Archie "Gunslinger" Cooley.

Folks around Pine Bluff are elated that the Lions have all 22 starters returning from the squad that ranked tenth among NAIA scoring offenses (30.9 points a game). On defense, they had been ranked as high as second nationally.

A prime time guy for the offense is wide receiver Robert Marshall, a transfer from Mississippi Valley State, Cooley's former place of employment. Marshall at 6-4, 210, is being compared to ex-Delta Devil Jerry Rice who in three years with the 49ers is among the league's best. Marshall had some Rice-like numbers: 52 catches, 928 yards, seven TDs.

Kevin Eaton enters pre-season camp as the top quarterback. As a freshman, he passed for 1,462 yards and 14 TDs. David Isom also saw considerable action , completing 65 percent of his tosses for 761 yards and four scores. Cooley will go with whoever has the hot hand on game day.

The Lions are deep at running back. It wasn't certain if sophomore Terry Crowley would be back with the team. Crowley rushed for 784 yards and scored 13 times. Gary Williams is said to have more speed and moves than Crowley and David Janice was the '87 starter before being injured early in the year, paving the way for Crowley to play.

A-PB is extremely beefy along the offensive line, and should average 6-5, 280 per man. Michael Barnes (6-5, 285) is the most experienced returnee.

The defense will be led by James Austin at linebacker. Austin (6-1, 220) is a hustling hitsman, coming off a phenomenal year. He was in on 113 tackles (including 59 solos), had 17 1/2 sacks, broke up six passes and recovered three fumbles.

Defensive end Ronald Bryant (6-4, 265) and tackle Charles McCullough (6-3, 265) will make life tough for opposing offensive linemen. The secondary was burned at times in '87, but is poised for calculated revenge this time around.

The **Central State** Marauders could be in for a lean year in '88. They lost eight starters from the team that went 10-1-1 last year. Five of those were offensive players, the remaining three were defensive people.

The biggest void that coach Billy Joe will have to fill is in the backfield. Terry Morrow, an NAIA All-American has graduated. He was the nation's fifth-leading rusher in '87 with 1,563 yards.

Placekicker Reza Khalaj is the only returning player who ranked among last year's statistical leaders. Khalaj was the team's leading scorer with 79 points. He converted 40 of 43 extra point attempts and made 13 of 21 field goal tries.

The Marauders were scintillating on defense last season, ranking third nationally against the run and fourth in total defense.

Darrell Suber (105 tackles), Harold Hogue and Vincent Buck form the nucleus of the defense, which on paper, appears to be the unit that will have to perform up to its capability if the Marauders are to retain their winning ways. Central State has lost just three regular season games over the last five years.

West Virginia State was riding on the crest of a marvelous '87 season in the West Virginia Conference until the school's registrar discovered that one of the players had falsified his records when he was admitted.

The Yellow Jackets were conference co-champs and were 8-1-1 when that occurred. The infraction caused them to forfeit their wins and their share of the conference crown. So now coach Clifton Moore feels that his team has something to prove. They're out to prove that last year wasn't a fluke and they have the tools to do it.

The defense carries the big sting with nine starters back. Charles Clark (6-2, 225), Johnny Goodwin, Herschel Reveal and Clinton Sills all have solid game experience in grid wars.

The Jackets plan to be a wide open group on offense. Led by quarterback Keith Franklin, the conference MVP, State will pose problems for their opponents. Tony Nichols (6-3, 270), John Painter (6-1, 245)and Vernon Thomas (6-3, 245) are the people to watch on the offensive line.

Kentucky State (3-7-1) is hoping their search for available high school and junior college talent will produce some depth in the offensive line. In their last '87 game, the Thoroughbreds had just six offensive linemen on the roster who were healthy enough to play.

The defense, though, is the best part of their team. Charles Highbaugh (6-2, 300), Anthony Tichenor (6-3, 215), Gary "Buff" Cole (6-0, 250) and James Price (6-1 1/2, 215) anchor the defensive line. Nathan Gardner, Sylvester Brown, and Luvanda Armstrong are stalwarts in the secondary. Offensively, K-State emphasizes the pass. Kenny Martin gets the starting nod at quarterback.

If you're Bill Thomas, **Tennessee State** head coach, you'd like to forget about last season and start from scratch. That's exactly what's going in Nashville, after the Tigers fell to 3-7-1, their worst records in years.

Thomas has done some rethinking and changes have been made. TU will be young and very inexperienced. They most certainly will take their share of lumps in the Ohio Valley Conference.

Thomas feels that his defense suffered a "total collapse" last year. Don't be surprised if TU goes to a more controlled, bend-but-don't break philosophy, instead of their usual gambling, make the offense make a mistake type of defense. Roderick Reed was the team's leading tackler last season and is felt to be the best on that side of the football.

Points have been hard to come by for the **Cheyney State** Wolves (2-8). They only scored 75 points in '87 and need a jump start to get themselves offensively rejuvenated. If not, they are headed for more tough times in the Pennsylvania Athletic Conference.

Coach Mike Costa is looking forward to the return of running back Ben Frazier who was missed all of last season due to an pre-season injury. In '86, Frazier led Division II in punt return yardage. Perhaps the Wolves will get additional firepower with the development of quarterback Andre Baylor.

On defense, the Wolves have a savage defense which gave up a total of 138 points in 10 games last year. That unit is led by sophomore defensive end Jim Williams (6-8, 280) who was the '87 Conference Player Of The Year.

Lincoln University (2-9) is well stocked in their defensive backfield. Cornerback Sean Tarrant has led the team in interceptions for the last two years. Bryant Hawthorne is very able as the strong safety, he was honorable mention all-conference and registered 124 tackles as a freshman in '87. Leother Branch (5-10, 210) is the best of the linebacking crew. Offensively, the Tigers will get a lot of production from quarterback Steve Bohlken. The junior accounted for 1,052 total yards last year. Doug Scott is the top rusher returning.

How much the Tigers improve hinges on how quickly their young offensive linemen develop. Darrien Harper (5-11, 220), Timothy Durnill (6-2, 250), Ed Bounds (5-11, 240) and Enos Chamberlain (6-1, 260) are the guys that coach John Freeman is counting on to raise the level of play along Lincoln's front line.

Victory was elusive for **Langston University** (0-10) last season, prompting coach Ron Aiken to seek wholesale help from the junior college crop. It's clear that the Lions' defense will have to carry them if they are to start ending their futility streak. They are deep at linebacker with Darryl Johnson (6-3, 220), Deryl Lane (6-3, 227) and Curtis Mungin (6-2, 225). Johnson and Lane were extremely busy last year. They combined for 211 tackles.

Most conference insiders feel that Howard is the team to beat. But Florida A&M, Delaware State and perhaps South Carolina State figure to have a say in the final outcome.

'Right stuff' for MEAC

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finished the season at 6-5 and there's optimism that the Bulldogs will be a serious challenger.

The offensive line is one reason that Hamilton is smiling. Bobby Irby (6-0, 249), Eric Douglas (6-1, 290), Robert Dendy (5-11, 264) and Kenny Pate (6-2, 265) look forward to reaking havoc in the trenches this fall.

That group will opening holes for All-American candidate and pro prospect William DeBose, a versatile athlete who is proficient at running and receiving. Last season, the fullback averaged 5.2 yards per rushing attempt. James Darby is expected to compliment DuBose in the Bulldogs' backfield.

The quarterback situation hasn't been settled, but Hamilton has two experienced seniors vying for the starting job. Tyrone Gilmore was the starter at the beginning of last season, then yielded to Lance Salters after the fifth game. Gilmore threw for 603 yards and 2 TDs, while Salters threw for 757 yards and 7 TDs. If there's an edge, it goes to Gilmore, in large part because Salters injured his shoulder in spring practice. In addition, Gilmore was a contributing factor in the '87 Grambling game that the Bulldogs won 15-13 to assure the team of a winning season.

State doesn't figure to fill the air with footballs, but when they do they have the people to get the job done. Tight end Rodney McLaughlin is no speed merchant, but he has sure hands. J.W. Montgomery could be a big weapon if properly utilized. The junior wide receiver set the South Carolina high school single season receiving record with 87 catches.

In order for the Bulldogs to make their title hopes become reality, the offense will have to carry the defense during the early part of the season. As a unit, the defense will need time to jell. All of their starting linebackers have graduated, but they do have a couple of tackles to depend on. David Ammons (6-2, 275) had six sacks last year, is a Sheridan All-American and two-time all-MEAC selection. Marco Elliot (6-2, 282) recorded seven QB sacks. Ellis Hawkins (6-1, 250) will clog the middle at nose tackle.

The defensive backfield has Dwayne Harper and Ernie Peace returning. These two ranked first and second on the team in interceptions. Harper made the 1-AA All-American team and shares the conference single season interception record (8) with ex-SC State DB Donnie Shell, who recently retired from the Pittsburgh Steelers. Safeties William Weaver and Jamal Isom are being counted on to help the defense develop into a solid group.

The kicking game was a sore spot for State last year and they've signed two of South Carolina's top high school punters to help improve that facet of their game. Losses to Virginia Union and Del State were the direct result of deficiencies in the kicking department.

Bethune-Cookman fans will have to get adjusted to a new style of offense. In the recent past, the Wildcats have had a serious air game with quarterbacks like Bernard Hawk and Greg Ross doing the throwing.

Now it's a new day. B-CC will do its offensive work on the ground to get the fullest benefit from their running backs and option quarterbacks. Steve Thomas won the number one QB role in the spring over Anthony Davis, who played in four games last year as Bethune went 4-7.

When Thomas isn't running the option, he'll have Kevin Finney and Marty Butler to help shoulder the load. Finney and Butler combined for close to a 1,000 yards rushing last year. Michael Thompson enjoyed a productive spring and could be the guy at fullback, supplying a bruising style as a blocker and inside runner.

The front wall looks to be in good shape. Michael Floyd (6-3, 265) is felt by some to be among the top offensive tackles in the league. John Brown (6-5, 285) is expected to be the other tackle, while Ronald Dismuke (6-2, 270) and Fred McPherson (6-2, 285) are slated for guard duty. Chris Holmes (6-0, 250) has been shifted from guard and play center.

On the other side of the ball, the Wildcats have more than a few vacancies to fill. Cornerback Terry Williams, the NFL's top draft pick from the black college ranks, is likely to be the starter with the New York Jets. Chris Stewart was still in the Washington Redskins camp after being invited as a free agent.

Nevertheless, Little's staff feels they have some folk who can step in and do the job. Alex Armenteros is solid as the strong safety and Andre Pugh, a cornerman, started five games last year until an injury sidelined him for the remainder of the season.

B-CC has a solid group of linebackers and all are game-tested. Amos White (6-0, 210) mans one of the outside LB slots and recorded 74 hits last season. Joe Jackson (6-0, 250), Boris Johnson (6-1, 225) and Ron Edwards (6-1, 230) will provide ample support.

They should also get help from Godfrey Story, a 6-4, 245, defensive end who runs a 4.8 in the 40. The plans are to put him a stand-up position more often to taken advantage of his quickness. Opposite of Story will be Reggie Boyd (6-2, 255) and the man in the middle of the 3-4 set is slated to be nose tackle Joe Jones (6-2, 255).

The Wildcats are looking to sneak up on some folks, and time will tell how that turns out. Perhaps the new 10,000 seat stadium they will play in this season will add a little more spice for B-CC followers.

What a difference two years make. If you don't believe it, take a look at **North Carolina A & T.** None of the members from the '86 squad that won the conference championship are around, including the quarterback and head coach.

Bill Hayes, the Winston-Salem State coach for 12 years, takes over and is hopeful he can begin to transform the Aggies into a consistent contender again. A & T was 3-8 last year. This year is anybody's guess as to how well they will do.

One observer noted that this year's edition will be a mystery. Hayes took over for Mo Forte, who accepted an assistant coaching job with the Denver Broncos. Not having been involved in A & T's spring drills, Hayes isn't sure what he has. He won't know until pre-season drills begin, and even then he will have less than three weeks to get his team ready for the season opener against North Carolina Central.

There will be some adjustments on the A & T campus in August. Fort's offense was more pass oriented, while Hayes favors a ground game as the bread and butter. But based on Hayes' record at WSSU, he will have the Aggies being a better defensive team than they were in '87. Opponents rarely threw on A & T. No need to. The Aggies gave up an average of over 201 rushing yards per game.

The defense, though, isn't completed devastated. Linebacker Demetrius Harrison is the bright spot. Harrison (6-4, 215) had 114 tackles last year and is The *Sporting News'* pre-season pick as the top defender in the conference. Brian Bowden and Rodney Hatton are the stalwarts in the secondary.

Offensively, there are a buschel of questions to be answered. Anthony Parker and Hilton Winstead appear to be the top candidates at quarterback and neither have considerable experience.

Whoever is the QB will have wide receiver Maurice Sowell as a prime threat. Sowell had 42 receptions for 590 yards and two scores last season. Center Eduardo Turnbull (6-3, 250) will be the leader on the offensive line.

Even the most optimistic **Morgan State** fan has wondered when and if the Bears will ever come out of their gridiron hibernation.

Finishing '87 at 1-9, the Bears enter this season with a new coach, a new attitude, and new philosophy.

Ed Wyche, assumes command of the Bears fortunes and is striving to instill consistency and a competitive frame of mind among his players. During his coaching career, Wyche has found himself in similar situations where he was hired to reverse a program that had nosedived to ground zero.

With 18 starters returning (nine each on both sides of the ball), Wyche has some seasoned performers among his troops. He's installed the wishbone offense and recruited at least three QBs who ran the wishbone in high school. Last year's starter, Daryl Jackson, will have to continue to adjust to the new scheme. By nature, he is a pocket passer. In six games last year, he threw for 853 yards and six scores.

The new coach is offensive minded and is expected to pass more than most wishbone teams. Marco Kornegay (6-0, 185) should help bolster an anemic running attack. Kornegay missed last year, but was all-conference in '86 as a kick returner. His 4.3 speed in the 40 should keep defenses on edge. Nathan Ayers should also see playing time and burly James Dokes at 6-1, 225, is a bullish runner who is an exceptional receiver coming out of the backfield.

Calvin Montgomery (6-5, 290) and Bruce Lewis (6-2, 270) are the top offensive linemen coming back. Freshmen Carl Gamble (6-6, 300) and Al Ott (6-3, 280) will push for starting positions.

The Bears have the makings of a group that could be tough to push around on defense. Nose guard William Foye (6-0, 245), according to sources, has the potential to be one of the school's best ever. Willie Jones (5-11, 250) made the Black College All-Rookie team as a tackle. Linebackers James Dozier (6-3, 245), Ed Gaugh (5-11, 225), Steve Reese (6-2, 220) and Tim Hanks (6-2, 210) will be called on lead the defensive charge.

All-MEAC free safety Vernon Beard is tops in the secondary while frosh James Pitt, a Maryland all-state linebacker in high school, is expected to challenge for a starting berth at strong safety.

– BCSR Staff