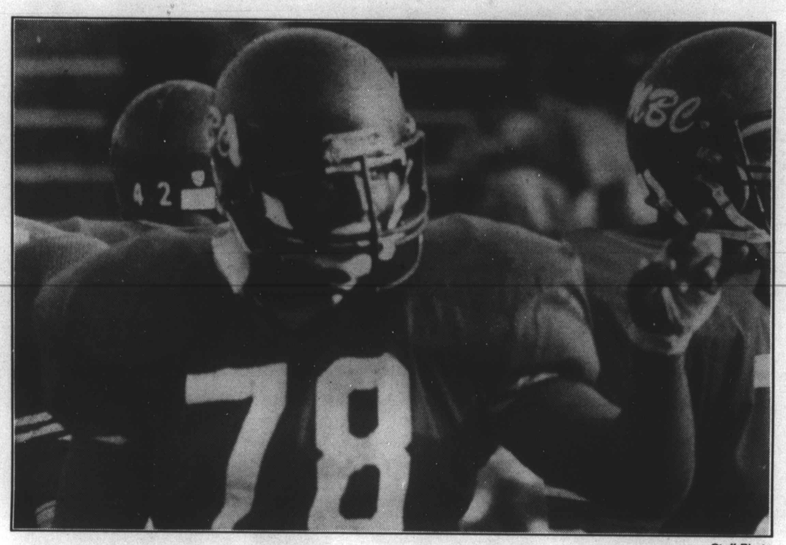
FOOTBALL UPDATE

It's Albany so far, but look out for Morris Brown



Staff Photo

Tony Robinson enjoys intimidating opponents as Morris Brown's defensive end. Robinson is the master sackster in SIAC play.

The Albany State Rams and Morris Brown Wolverines are currently sharing the top perch in the SIAC after five games. Albany stomped Tuskegee 59-0, and they defeated powerful Alabama A & M 3-2 in a game played under monsoon conditions.

The Rams victory over A & M catapulted them into the top 10 in the Sheridan poll. Going into their sixth game, they held the No. 7 ranking. However, they haven't gotten totally into the heavyweight part of their schedule. Coach Hampton Smith's team has future dates with Alabama State, MBC, Savannah State, and Georgia Southwestern.

Albany (4-0, 3-0) has shown a strong running game, which is the norm. Running backs Donald Parham and Troy Young have combined to rush for over 500 yards and score six TDs.

To date, Albany State has outclassed the opposition, scoring 141 points and yielding only 15. With placekicker Clay Perkins around, ASC is always a threat to score. He's the league leader in that department with 31 points -- converting six of nine field goal attempts. He has been perfect on 13 PAT attempts.

Morris Brown is proving to be the surprise team in the SIAC at the midpoint of the season with a 4-1, 2-0 slate.

Coach Greg Thompson's team is doing the job by playing superb defense. They have the conference's top three tacklers in linebackers Anthony Campbell (85), Allen Freeman (62) and defensive end Tony Robinson (69).

Freeman is also SIAC's top punter, averaging 48.6 yards per kick, his longest being an 80-yarder.

SIAC

Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference

The Wolverines don't appear to have any glaring weaknesses on their defensive unit. They play the run tough and have a solid pass defense. Opponents are averaging a meager 2.2 yards per rushing attempt and they are yielding 132 yards a game in the air. But more importantly, they were holding opponents to eight points a game.

Robinson has to be a good friend for MBC's secondary because he's an exceptional pass rusher. He leads the league with 11 sacks while Steve Calhoun is the interception leader with five pick-offs.

The Wolverines' only loss (13-10) came at the hands of North Carolina Central, who at the time was ranked in the Division II polls. They were in position to win that game and they kept Earl "Air" Harvey from having a field day, keeping him under 200 passing yards for the night.

They blanked Tuskegee 12-0, and eked out two come-from-behind wins against Ft. Valley State (21-14) and Savannah State (18-7). Against Ft. Valley, MBC sacked Wildcats passers 10 times and Campbell had 15 tackles and two sacks. Seven of his hits were for losses.

The Wolverines were looking for a quarterback during the pre-season and apparently have found one in Alij Tapp. Tapp guided his team on the winning TD drive and completed 16 of 23 passes for 284 yards and two scores. He leads the conference in total yards and passing yards (1,246 and and 1,154 respectively).

Tapp has relied on wide-out Lionel Camel who is the SIAC's second leading receiver with 24 receptions for 504 yards and three TDs. Camel was the main guy vs. Savannah, with 13 receptions for 205 yards.

Morehouse was holding down second place with a 1-1 mark. But the Maroon Tigers are 2-3 overall. The team has had problems stopping people. They also have a tendency to stop themselves (the second most penalized team in the league).

Opponents have outscored them by 54 points even though they can move the football up and down the field. They are tops in first downs and average 321.4 yards in total offense, but they have the most porous defense in the conference (1,866 yards allowed).

Eddie Burt is steady as a runner and scorer, averaging over four yards per rushing attempt and quarterback Jimmie Davis was tied for the conference lead in touchdown passes (eight).

Coach Mo Hunt's squad started the season by being blown out by the powerful Howard University Bison (47-21). Albany State decisioned them 27-6 and they were shut-out by Hampton 28-0.

Their best moment so far came against Ft. Valley when they rallied at the end to claim a 22-21 win.

Davis pulled victory out of what appeared to be certain defeat in the closing seconds of the contest. He threw two TD passes and completed 18 of 38 passes for 267 yards.

Alabama A & M is 3-2, 0-1, and hadn't gotten fully into the conference part of their schedule. As usual, they play a rugged schedule against some of the top schools in Division I-AA and II.

They squeezed past North Alabama 17-16, then fell 24-14 to Jacksonville State, before defeating Savannah State and Lane College.

The Bulldogs' game is ball control and they do it very well with solid running and stiff defensive efforts. Rodney Baxter is a force out of the backfield, averaging five yards a carry. Mark Smith's per carry average isn't as high, but he's scored four TDs to place him in a second place tie for touchdowns scored.

Defensively, A & M is menacing. They were No. 1 in total defense and had allowed only 396 passing yards in five games. Harvey Clayton had five interceptions and Fred Garner had two.

Ft. Valley State must feel that somebody may have put the whammy on them. A program that is steeped in the winning tradition, the Wildcats (1-3, 0-2) got to a very rocky start. The first win didn't come until the first weekend of this month against Clark-Atlanta University (43-0).

They lost two consecutive games by one point (to Valdosta State and Morehouse) and dropped a seven point decision to Morris Brown.

Curtis Bell topped all conference rushers, averaging 121.3 rushing yards per contest. He's a big play type of back -- he averages 7.8 yards per carry. In addition, Bell is the league's all-purpose yardage leader after four games with 616 yards for a per game average of 154 yards. The Wildcats offense is one of the tops in the SIAC (nearly 330 total yards per game).

But the "Blue Death" defense that throttled the opposition in the past is no longer what it once was. Defensively, Ft. Valley was ranked on the lower end of the standings among conference teams in total defense (302.5 yards a game).

A year has made a lot of difference for Jim Martin and his Tuskegee University squad. Picked as one the pre-season favorites to contend, the Tigers have found themselves falling on hard times. They are 1-3, 0-2 and took a terrible licking from Albany State to start the month of October.

Even though quarterback Maurice Heard is holding his own as a passer, the Tigers have no running game. It's clear that the offensive line is out of kilter now that Frankie Smith is overseeing the development of the offensive line at Hampton University. As a team, the Tigers average yardage per carry is a lowly 1.9. As a team, they haven't reached the 300 yards mark yet and they're almost at the mid-point of their schedule.

A year ago, Tuskegee had the toughest defense in Division II. This season, they're in the middle of the pack in terms of total defense, but giving up nearly 280 yards a game is not the type of defensive effort that the Tigers have had in recent seasons.

All the other teams in the league are ineligible for the conference title. Savannah State and Clark-Atlanta University are on NCAA probation. Knoxville College, Miles College, and Lane College were in the Division III segment of the SIAC last year and moved up to Division II when the conference eliminated that division for football.

Savannah State (2-3) started Tuskegee's downfall when they surprised TU in the season opener 31-21. Tuskegee blew that lead as Savannah came up with 11 points late in the game to pull it out. Richard Basil was responsible for four TDs. He ran for two and threw for the other two, completing 10 of 19 passes for 111 yards.

Savannah has perhaps the premier receiver in the league in Shannon Sharpe, who had 60 receptions last year and is on the same pace in '88. With five games left to play, Sharpe has 30 catches for 359 yards and four touchdowns.

SSC is also fortunate to have a solid pair of defensive backs in Mike Wallace and Eric Brown. The two are among the SIAC's interception leaders and they like to come up to force the run.

-Rolando Simmons

Minority junior golf scholarship association helps black colleges

Minority golfers are scarce on the PGA Tour.

What will happen when Charlie Sifford, Lee Elder, Calvin Peete, Jim Thorpe and Jim Dent eventually retire from the pro circuit?

The outlook is dim for younger minorities to follow in their footsteps unless a stronger push is made to fill the gap.

One group undertaking the task is the National Minority Junior Golf Scholarship Association, a non-profit organization based in Phoenix, Ariz. The group recently awarded scholarships to 18 minority student-athletes who will be competing on the golf teams of their respective colleges. The scholarships total $17,000 and range from $500 to $2,000. This program is also designed to assist golf teams at black colleges.

Bill Dickey founded the NMJGSA in 1984. During that four-year period, the organization has handed out more than $40,000 in scholarships.

"This is our way of helping minorities pursue a career in golf," Dickey said. "Some of the schools don't have the budgets to give golfers full scholarships that pay for tuition, books, and housing. We don't want a kid who may have a future in golf to suffer financially and then has to quit school."

The organization identifies minority high school golfers throughout the country. Once they've made their college choice, the college coach is contacted to inform him of the scholarship program.

"We stress education first, but the whole idea is to develop minorities for the chance to play professional golf," said Dickey.

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

By

ROSCOE NANCE

George Leftwich has been hired to coach the academically troubled **UNIVERSITY OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA** basketball team.

The Firebirds had to forfeit several games last season for using an ineligible player. There was some question whether the school would have enough eligible athletes to field a team this season.

Leftwich, who coached Gwynn Park High School of Brandywine, Md., to back-to-back state championships, replaces Wil Jones who coached the Firebirds for nine seasons and was 169-81. Jones has been reassigned to another position at the university.

UDC athletic director Lee McElroy said Leftwich was hired because of his reputation as a teacher of the game and for caring about athletes' academic progress. .....

Anne Little

Anne Little is the new public relations director for the **CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION.**

Little comes to the CIAA from Livingstone College where she served as the school's sports information director for two years.

She is a 1983 graduate of Livingstone and her conference's representative for the Black College Sports Information Directors of America. .....

JACKSON STATE'S marching band, "the Sonic Boom of the South", is accustomed to being the center of attention during halftime of Tiger football games.

But the Boom got some unexpected attention from game officials in the Tigers' 35-14 victory against Mississippi Valley State. It was assessed a 15-yard unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for interfering with putting the ball in play for playing too loudly.

The penalty cost the Tigers a takeaway when the officials waved off the play, a fumble by Mississippi Valley State quarterback J.R. Stewart that Jackson State recovered. .....

ALCORN STATE and **SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY** were thrown for losses before the season even started when each had eight players declared academically ineligible.

Jerome Vigne

Alcorn State lost seven starters: quarterback Jerome Vigne; cornerbacks Michael Andrews and Kevin Green; tight end Lee Harris; defensive tackle Roy Coleman; center Rodney Kelly; nose tackle Vernon Bee; and back-up quarterback Larry Brown.

That group was lost the day before the Braves' Sept. 3 season-opening 27-13 loss to Grambling State.

Southern lost cornerback Wyatt Harris; punter Arthur Avant; offensive tackle Greg Fotenot; quarterback Nathaniel Harrison; tailback Darryl Garner; wide receiver Alfred Martin; offensive lineman Calvin Millican; and defensive back Tim Williams.

The Jaguars were stripped of their services one day before the Sept. 10 opening season victory over Alabama State.

Harris filed suit, claiming that someone failed to record a passing grade in a chemistry course which caused him to be ineligible and the school refused to correct the mistake. Harris later dropped the suit. .....

The **MID-EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE** has ordered **FLORIDA A&M** to forfeit its 35-31 season-opening victory against Delaware State because the Rattlers used an ineligible player.

Starting running back Bryan Moore had been cleared to play because school records showed he had been redshirted for medical reasons in 1984.

But a review showed Moore played in three games that season. .....