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THE REFRESHEST

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SWAC referees are very flag-happy

For a long time, the rap against black college football has been that games take too long and there are too many penalties.

The Jackson State-Southern University game on Oct. 15th served as another witness for the prosecution.

The game, played in Baton Rouge, started 30 minutes before Kentucky and Louisiana State kicked off across town. Yet, the LSU-Kentucky game ended 30 minutes before Jackson State and Southern were done.

The reason: Jackson State and Southern were called for 23 combined penalties for 220 yards. It was more like Flag Day than a football game. It's a wonder the game ever ended.

One writer covering the game did some quick research and discovered that at least five games involving Division I Top 20 teams had fewer combined penalties and yards than either Jackson State - 12 for 115 yards; or Southern - 11 for 105.

Southwestern Athletic Conference officials have long been known as a flag-happy bunch. Their defense always has been "we call all the violations that are committed. Other conferences don't."

That's debatable. But let's give them the benefit of the doubt and say that this is the case.

It's clear that SWAC's refs should look long and hard at changing their policy to coincide with the way everybody else officiates.

By calling so many penalties, they kill the game. They make it impossible for teams to sustain any sort of offensive thrust. The needless abundance of penalties called does nothing more than infuriate coaches, confuse players and leave fans wondering if they paid to see a game or six men toss handkerchiefs around.

Even worse, the high number of penalties reinforces the theory that black schools play an inferior caliber of football, that black coaches can't teach the fundamentals.

Everyone involved deserves better.

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SIAC Hoops

A&M's theme: Let's do it again

ALABAMA A&M appears set to continue its dominance in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

The Bulldogs, winners of four consecutive SIAC championships and three of the last four tournament championships, return nine members of last year's 29-3 club that made its fourth consecutive trip to the NCAA playoffs.

Despite the graduation of All-American Ondray "Showtime" Wagner, the Bulldogs will be loaded again.

"I feel pretty good," said coach L. Vann Pettaway. "We've got experience and we'll be more of a halfcourt team. We're going to roll."

Guard Willie Hayes and forward Frank Sillmon, a pair of senior All-Americans, will pick up the scoring slack left by Wagner who is with LaCrosse, Wis., of the Continental Basketball Association. Sillmon averaged 19.9 points a game, and Hayes averaged 16.3.

The Bulldogs will lack the overall team speed they've had in previous years, but Pettaway is confident they'll be among the top teams in the country.

"I'll never go as far as saying we'll win the national championship," he said. "But our experience and winning tradition will carry us. We'll be a Top 10 team."

ALBANY STATE, 18-7, is Alabama A&M's most likely challenger. The Rams return four of their top six players from last season, including their No. 1 scorer Byron Martin (18.6 points a game). Martin, Jimmy Emmers and Robert Herrington, all 6-7, give the Rams a good inside presence.

CLARK-ATLANTA UNIVERSITY, 22-5 last season pending the outcome of its appeal of 16 games, returns starters Elgin Pritchett and James Martin, a preseason All-American. The Panthers will rely heavily on a trio of highly touted freshmen - Dabatu Willingham, a 17-year-old6-9 220-pounds center, John Stubbs, a 6"3 forward from the Bahamas, and Fred Richards, a 6-8, 210-pounder.

Coach Robert Pritchett says his expectations are high, but his No. 1 goal is to be competitive.

First-year coach Anthony Weatherspoon hopes to bring **FORT VALLEY STATE** back from last year's disappointing 10-17 record. But he has only two starters - sophomores Julius Fritz and Rudy Jamieson returning. Darris Davis, the SIAC freshman of the year two years ago, was in coach Leroy Alexander's doghouse last season. He should give the Wildcats a big boost if he is recovered from knee surgery. Weatherspoon says a .500 record would be acceptable.

LANE COLLEGE, 9-16 last season, will probably be the shortest team in the SIAC and will have to rely on speed. Marcus Hunt, a 6-4 senior, is the Dragon's tallest starter. He is also one of only two returning starters. The team's hopes revolve around freshmen Eugene McBride, Gerald Williams and Ernest Smith.

First-year **SAVANNAH STATE** coach Bob Askew hopes a trio of junior college transfers Sam Miller, Scott Reid and Kevin Williams will lead the Tigers back from last year's 9-18 record. They will team with returning starters Steven Kelly, the leading scorer at 16.9 points a game, and Keith Fields. Miller will be the first white starter in the conference in basketball.

First year coach Ajac Tripplett faces an uphill struggle as he tries to get **MORRIS BROWN** on good footing. The Wolverines were 6-20 last season and return five lettermen.

Triplett wasn't hired until well into the summer, hampering his abilities to recruit and forcing him to go with holdover players. Starters Cornelius Jones, 6"7, and Ali Baaqar, give him a good nucleus to build around.

LEMOYNE-OWEN is pinning its hopes on six junior college transfers who will team with ALL-SIAC forward Arlandus White (19.1 points a game), the Magicians' only returning starter.

Solid play at point guard, where transfers Homer Williams and Aaron Hudson are competing, will be a critical if the Magicians are to improve their 12-11 record.

PAINE COLLEGE has averaged 20 victories a season the last eight years. But with only two starters returning from last year's 22-5 squad, the Lions will have to hustle to reach that figure.

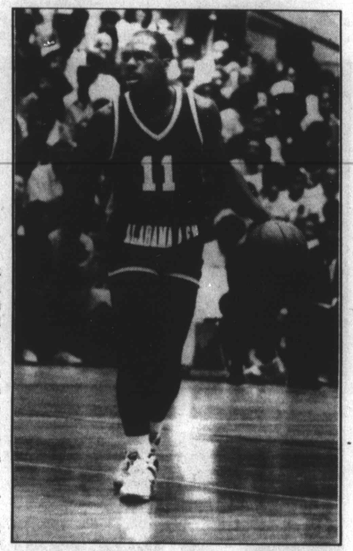

Photo by Craig T. Greenlee

With Wagner gone, point guard Willie Hayes assumes the leadership role for Alabama A&M.

Point guard Don Smith, a three-year starter, gives Paine leadership. Michael Jones, a 6-5 forward, is the other returning starter.

Swingman Marvin Williams' return after missing last season with a knee injury will help. Larry Richardson, a Proposition 48 casualty a year ago, also figures to contribute, as does Butch Beard Jr., the son of former NBA player Butch Beard now an assistant with the New Jersey Nets.

MILES COLLEGE, 11-15 last season, returns guards Eric Lee and James Nabors and forward Isiah Carter but not much else. Coach Alfred Baker is looking for lots of help from guard Milton Carter, a 6-3 junior college transfer who averaged 22 points a game and is deadly from three point range.

Four freshmen also figure prominently in the Bear's plans, especially 6-6 forward Kerven Davis.

The hard times probably will continue for **KNOXVILLE COLLEGE,** 0-16 last season. The Bulldogs lost all five starters and have a new coach, Howard Smith. Three veterans, 5-8 Quinton Smith, 6-3 Anthony Benson and 5-9 Bobby Daniels are likely starters. The remaining two spots are open.

TUSKEGEE'S Alfred Darney is another first-year coach who faces a rebuilding job. The Golden Tigers were 4-22 last season and return only one starter, 6-4 sophomore forward Billy White.

-Roscoe Nance