



Sports



Basketball In the Black Colleges

A Historical Chronology

1891 - 1980

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Part II The CIAA Contribution

With Emphasis on Period III (1940-1950)

It would be extremely difficult for those early founders of the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association to believe the remarkable changes, both in human opinions and in social conditions, that have taken place in this country in less than three generations.

Changes have been steady and salutary with clear, forceful influence from college athletics.

The CIAA was organized on Feb. 2, 1912 at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Va. Physical educators, coaches and faculty representatives who made up the historical nine-man delegation that formed the first black collegiate conference were:

- W.E. Atkins, Shaw University
- J.W. Barco, Virginia Union University
- Charles Frazier, Shaw University
- H.P. Hargrave, Shaw University
- George Johnson, Lincoln (Pa.) University
- Earnest Marshall, Howard University
- J.W. Pierce, Virginia Union University
- Allen Washington, Hampton Institute
- Charles H. Williams, Hampton Institute

The objectives of the CIAA, as expressed in the charter incorporated under the laws of Virginia, was "to form an intercollegiate association of colleges for the promotion of high standards in athletics."

One of the initial moves was to regulate participation in a varsity sport to four years. At the time, an athlete could play on most black college teams for an unlimited period, even while he was still in high school.

Earnest J. Marshall, a member of the Howard University faculty, was the first CIAA president. In one of his early letters, he wrote: "The league is needed to unite area colleges in a common effort for athletic elevation. It will serve to train students in self-reliance and stimulate race pride through athletic attainment."

Commendable progress was made, primarily because of unyielding faith and confidence in goals and objectives. The CIAA served as a great incentive to encourage self-help activity by other school officials who later formed the Southeastern Conference at Morehouse on Dec. 30, 1913, and the Southwestern Athletic Conference on Feb. 2, 1922 in San Antonio, Texas.

An early, yet significant CIAA development was an attempt by E.N. Williams of New York City on April 24, 1915 to form a basketball league to include Hampton, Lincoln, Howard and the St. Christopher Club of New York. The idea was rejected and CIAA basketball competition was later initiated to include Hampton, Shaw, Lincoln and Howard.

Other noteworthy events followed. However, it was not until after World War I that basketball fever flared on black college campuses in the area.

Up until this time, college teams were well nigh anonymous with attention focused on such club teams as Cum Posey's Loendi Big Five in Pittsburgh, Pa., and its cross-town rival, the Rabbi Coffey Quintet.

Later, the New York Renaissance, New York Celtics and the Harlem Globetrotters served as pilgrimages evangelists of the new art form.

Black college athletic programs continued to grow steadily and substantially, especially in the CIAA, but faced perils and misgivings everywhere.

From the beginning, segregation was a legal and ugly fact, and there appeared no visible avenue for change.

Black schools were restricted to athletic competition between themselves exclusively, track in AAU events being the one exception. Hotels, motels and restaurants refused to accommodate blacks and buses and trains were segregated.

But a new day was dawning. Scattered, as they were, throughout the South, alike in purpose and spirit, and drawing support and inspiration from a single source, blacks were pushing with renewed vigor for equality and equal opportunity under the Constitution. "My country, 'tis of thee Sweet land of liberty."

It was a period in our history that young people of today cannot measure or comprehend. Only a few black men and women who lived through those demeaning years can refer to them without some emotion.

Blacks snatched what comfort and pleasure that could be extracted from any situation that offered hope for the future.

Former heavyweight champion Joe Louis, more than anyone else, enabled the entire race to live with the storm and stress of the time with his fistic prowess and characteristic modesty.

Blacks owe this great champion so much more than they could ever repay.

By example, the Brown Bomber gave credence to the fight for equality.

In basketball, the New York Renaissance continued to wage a quiet battle. In doing so, they provided new hope and aspirations for youngsters throughout the country with their traveling road show.

This early "super team," promoted and coached by the late Bob Douglass, ushered in the mid-'30's as the greatest caravan on hardwood.

They won over 200 games a year for ten seasons, starting with the American Professional Basketball Championship in 1939. In 1948, the Rens combined with the Washington Bears to win the world pro championship.

What does this have to do with CIAA history? Obviously, their exploits gave young black basketball players a new perception of themselves. Teams in the CIAA attempted to emulate them and the Renaissance stars became "role models."

Most successful in this regard with their great finesse game was the Virginia Union Panthers. In sports annals, they are remembered as the "Dream Team."

This great team played as a unit in 1939 and 1940, winning the league visitation titles. It featured two proud, purposeful and poised performers — Wiley "Soupy" Campbell and Melvin Glover, both all-Americans.

Union was coached by Henry Hucles, an early CIAA legend. The "Dream Team" lost only twice in 44 games.

Black college basketball "became of age" in 1940 when the "Dream Team" defeated the fabled Long Island Blackbirds, perennial basketball power and NCAA national champion, in a two-out-of-three-game post season series.

To the everlasting credit of Long Island coach Clair Bee, he was big enough to take the risk — thereby permitting the "Dream Team" to authenticate what it already knew about itself.

The fact that two CIAA teams had defeated Virginia Union earlier, added prestige and overall respect to the league.

Black historians, who delve in sports, agree that the Long Island-Virginia Union series was a pivotal point for black college basketball teams.

A new yardstick would be required to measure CIAA teams in the future.

While coaches waited for greater opportunities, the first National Negro Basketball Tournament was played in Cincinnati in March, 1941.

It was staged to further upgrade black college basketball by providing a wider audience, while enabling coaches to function at the national level. Someone called it "on-the-job training for the emancipation of college athletics."

The tournament was sponsored by the Knoxville College Alumni Association of greater Cincinnati in association with DeHart Hubbard, Olympic broadjump champion and YMCA director in the Ohio city.

Teams entered the tournament hopeful that the same opportunities afforded white schools in the NCAA, NIT and NAIA tournaments would soon be open to them. It marked the beginning of an all-out assault on social inequality and athletic indignation.

Tournament participants — all striving for national attainment — included champions and/or runners-up from the CIAA, Mid-West Athletic Conference, Southwestern Athletic Conference and the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Southern University edged North Carolina College 48-42, to annex the title. North Carolina College was coached by this writer.

Primarily because of the war, the tournament idea was put on the griddle until the early '50's. Then it was revised as a qualifying tournament for entrance into integrated national championships — part payment for a sublime and unflinching faith in a process that recognizes and rewards merit.

A necessary sequence followed. Sports writers from powerful black weekly newspapers — the *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Chicago Defender*, *Amsterdam News*, *Atlanta World* and *Norfolk Journal and Guide* — openly challenged white institutions to play basketball and football teams from developing colleges.

One such challenge resulted in Brooklyn College being invited to Washington, D.C. for a game with North Carolina College, 1942 CIAA champs. Brooklyn accepted and the game became a reality, resulting in the initial inter-racial event involving a black college in the nation's capitol.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a leading social justice advocate of the time, was invited to attend the game. Unable to do so, she sent then Secretary of State, Harry Hopkins.

North Carolina College prevailed, nipping Brooklyn 36-33. The victory provided another positive answer to the reigning question in basketball at the time. That question was: "Can a well-coached Negro team, with limited resources, compete with money, superior athletic facilities and the 'big time' tradition of major white university powers?"

Other events followed. In 1943, Rudolph "Rocky" Robeson, NCC, broke the national one-game individual scoring record established seven years earlier by Stanford University's all-time all-American Hank Lusetti. Lusetti's record was fifty points.

Against Shaw University on Feb. 23, 1943, Robeson scored 58 points. This outstanding feat, documented on NBC network radio by sportscaster Bill Stern, coast-to-coast, gave national recognition to the CIAA. First time in basketball.

A year later, North Carolina College established a national second-half scoring mark with 67 points in a game with Shaw. This fact was also reported via network radio and mentioned in the *Official Basketball Guide*.

Otherwise, for the most part, the notable deeds of black schools and their athletes were not reported or generally recognized. Daily newspapers and magazine ignored black schools, and the NCAA and NAIA declared them nondescript.

The one exception was a page — one page devoted to all developing schools — in the *Official Basketball Guide*, labeled "Basketball in the Colored Colleges." It was written at various times by such talented writers as Henry Arthur Kean, then of Kentucky State, A.S. "Doc" Young, *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, and

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NCCU Men's Basketball Team

First row: 34 Duane Griffin, 35 Donald House, 41 Ron Willie, 15 Mike Wright, 22 Martez Faucette, 30 John Bishop, and 12 Darnell Evans.
Second row: Marvin Dyson, 32 Mike Oakley, 33 Craig Moore, 44 Charles Murphy, David Binion, 31 Doug Taylor, 43 Ed Brooks, 10 Donald Sinclair, and Sebastian Curtis.
Seated on floor: 11 Tony Johnson and 24 Art Tyson.

STILL IN THIRD PLACE

Eagles Split Two Games

NCCU's basketball team split two conference games during the past week to remain in third place in the Southern Division of the CIAA. The Eagles upended Shaw 82-78 on Saturday, January 17 while falling to Johnson C. Smith 107-101 in Charlotte Tuesday, January 20.

NCCU 82, Shaw 78
Senior guard Donald Sinclair sparked a second half rally scoring all of his 21 points as the Eagles beat Shaw 82-78 in McDougald Gym.

"We were extremely fortunate to beat this vastly improved team," lamented second year NCCU head coach Jesse Clements. "Their front line of Al Tyson (6-10), Charlie Patterson (6-10) and Victor Blakley gave us severe problems in the first half." "At one point they were outrebounding us 26-11 and we made several adjustments, including moving Dave Binion down low to counteract them." "I was pleased with our second half play, especially our shot selection and hitting those 21 of 26 free throws." "We are continuing to make progress in our overall play and Shaw's 2-12 record is not indicative of their play."

The Eagles took a shortlived 5-4 lead on a three point play by junior guard John Bishop at 16:55 of the first half.

Shaw's Victor Blakley sank a basket twelve seconds later and the Bears were off to the races. They raced so good that they built up a 39-22 lead with 5:40 to go in the half before seeing their lead dwindle to 47-39 at intermission. ECU transfer Al Tyson paced the Bears to that point with 18 first half points and 10 rebounds. Charlie Patterson added 12 points. Bishop had 16 at the half.

The second half belonged to the Eagles as Central hit 11 of 18 field goals (61%) and 21 of 26 free throws.

The Eagles cut the margin to 49-47 with 16:40 left before the Bears made one last spurt upping their lead to 57-47 at the 15 minute mark. Sinclair went into his act getting seven of Central's 12 points including the layup that put NCCU on top 59-58 at 13:08. The Eagles were tied 68-all with 6 minutes on a baseline jumper by Dooley Jackson, however, Bishop put them ahead to stay with two free throws 53 seconds later. The Eagles enjoyed their largest lead 77-71 with 1:52 to go on two charity tosses by Sinclair.

Bishop and freshman center Charles Murphy each led the Eagles with 22 points. Murphy tied Tyson for game-high rebound honors with 12

caroms. IN a free-wheeling affair, the Eagles were guilty of only 10 turnovers. Tyson paced the Bears with 22 points and 2 rebounds. Patterson added 19, Carl Lacy 11 and Lester Harris 10.

Reserve forward David Binion responded with 10 points and 6 rebounds in 18 minutes.

Shaw (78) Lacy 11, Harris 10, Bishop 9, Patterson 19, Tyson 22, Phillips 3, Tamm, McFarland, Jackson 8.

NCCU (82) Sinclair 21, Tyson, Bishop 22, Griffin 1, Murphy 22, Binion 10, Wright 6, Taylor 1. Halftime: Shaw 47-39.

J.C. Smith 107, NCCU 101
CHARLOTTE — Phil Flores and Bleu Oliver combined for 61 points in leading Johnson C. Smith to a 107-101 CIAA win over NCCU in Brayboy Gym. The Golden Bulls lead the CIAA Southern Division with a 6-1 record. They are 9-2 overall. Central fell to 5-3, 7-6.

Smith came barreling out of the chute rolling up a 37-22 with 7:01 left in the first half. Central rallied to narrow the halftime lead to 53-43.

The Eagles found the going extremely tough for the next 8 minutes as Smith went up 81-59 with 11:40 to go. The Golden Bulls had hit 14 of the first 19 second half shots while the Eagles were true on 8 of 15 attempts. The Eagles continued to languish in complacency until Smith broke the 100-

mark — 101-85 with 2:10 to go on two free throws by guard Louis Lowery.

Then the madness in Brayboy's House became the Eagles. NCCU senior guard Donald Sinclair hit a driving layup at the 2:01 mark. Junior guard John Bishop canned two free throws two second later and Sinclair hit another basket at the 1:54 mark, cutting the Smith lead to 101-91. More heart-throbbing antics were to come as Lowery, was connect on the first of the one-and-one free shots three times with Sinclair sand-

wiching a basket between his second and third points of the moment. Smith held a seemingly commanding 104-93 lead at the 1:24 mark.

The Eagles were not to be outdone however. Bishop canned a layup eight seconds later, David Binion scored on an offensive rebound off a missed Doug Taylor free throw fourteen seconds later, Bishop hit another driving layup with 45 seconds left and freshman Darnell Evans had an offensive tap at the 24 second mark.

Central was now down 104-101. NCCU freshman point guard Mike Wright, who dished out a game high 14 assists, fouled Lowery with 21 seconds. Lowery calmly sank his two free tosses thus sealing the Smith victory.

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NCCU Women's Basketball Team

First row: 24 Aurora Benn, 30 Daisy Morris, 23 Brenda Cox, 13 Olivia Evans, 15 Edna Vann, and 20 Nita Coley.
Back row: 21 Cowell, 45 Jackie Pinnix, 10 Diodra Solomon, 14 Metrial Floyd, 22 Notosha Scott, 40 Bernadine Lytle, 25 Eugenia Tynes, 11 Mary Simpson and Coach Alberta Gatline.

NCCU Basketball

At McDougald Gym

Women
Jan. 24 Winston-Salem
Jan. 26 St. Augustine's
Jan. 30 UNC-Asheville
Jan. 31 Fay. State
Game time is 5:30 p.m.

Men
Jan. 26 St. Augustine's
(Doubleheader)
Jan. 31 Fay. State
(Doubleheader)
Game time is 7:30 p.m.

ADMISSION FOR DOUBLEHEADERS
(At The Door)

Adults—\$4.00 (Non-Central) Students—\$2.00