

## BASKETBALL PREVIEW '83-84 *continued*

underdeveloped and work with it. But that is the way it is."

Glory is not the only reason: black college basketball coaches are anxious to swim against the tide in an effort to reach the NCAA tourney.

For those teams good enough and lucky enough to reach the Final Four, a check for more than \$1 million awaits.

Even for teams such as Alcorn and North Carolina A&T, who have trouble making it past the first round, there is a check for \$90,000, just for making the field.

The money goes up from there. Alcorn, with its five NCAA tourney games, figures to have made close to \$500,000. That's enough to fund most black college budgets eight years or more.

It is peanuts, though, compared with what the bigger schools spend.

While most Division I black colleges operate with a budget of around \$60,000, bigger schools spend that much on recruiting alone.

The University of North Carolina, which won the national championship two years ago, operates with a budget of around \$1 million.

North Carolina State, which won the title last year, has a budget of around

\$500,000. While that pales in comparison to what its sister school spends, it ain't exactly peanuts, either.

"It all comes down to the money," says Winston-Salem's Gaines. "Our teams can't afford to do all the things the bigger schools do. We can't afford to have a coach follow a kid around from the time he is in the ninth grade."

So, what's the answer?

"You just have to prepare a plan," says Florida A&M's Tony Fields. "I have no problems with being in Division I. I don't think being here is a dream. If you can develop a plan and develop your personnel, then you can find yourself moving up the ladder. One thing you have got to keep in mind is that all the white schools that are in Division I aren't doing that well either. I think the black schools can succeed."

A.B. Williamson, head coach at Howard, has a startling idea.

He figures many black schools should get rid of football, and put all their resources into basketball.

"A lot of white schools have done this," he says. "Medium-range white

conferences have cut out football to put more money into basketball."

It is not likely that Williamson's suggestion will ever be taken seriously,

though. Black college football is a tradition at most schools, and an often lucrative one as well, and is unlikely ever to be scrapped.

In the meantime, most black college Division I basketball teams this year will finish with losing records.

And the odds are that those two black teams that advance to the playoffs will be beaten in the first

round. Black college football is a tradition at most schools, and an often lucrative one as well, and is unlikely ever to be scrapped.

found the answer are those in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association -- a Division II league. Those teams play to packed houses, with one of them, Norfolk State, among the leaders in Division II attendance last year with an average of more than 5,000 fans per game.

And tickets for the CIAA tournament in Norfolk are often very difficult

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*-- "Bighouse" Gaines*

round.

Is it worth it?

"I think Division I is good for some black colleges," says Williamson. "I think some black institutions will profit because there is no money to be made in Division II or Division III, even if you win the championships. And, with the kind of money problems everybody is having now, that has to be a positive factor."

Of course, all college teams constantly search for new ways to make money. But the only black college basketball teams that seem to have

to come by. Last year's tourney attracted a record 45,452 fans over four days

So, while some black schools wallow in the big, uncertain sea of Division I, hoping to reach the pot of gold that is the Division I Final Four, others go a different route.

Who's right and who's wrong? There's no way to say. Besides, there also is that chance that one day a Howard or a Florida A&M will land the next Abdul-Jabbar.

Then, that pot of gold won't seem so far away.

## WRITE FIELD

# Column Neither Promising Nor Polished

### To The Editor

In response to a column by Staff Writer John Slade in your November 1983 issue ("MEAC Review Promising, If Not Polished"), its headline could also apply to the writer's efforts -- especially where the words "not polished" are concerned.

First of all, please advise Mr. Slade that Sallie Hayes did not play football at North Carolina Central University -- one of his sentences reads, "Both Sallie Hayes and Maurice Spencer, who played football at North Carolina Central University, look good on television."

Since Mr. Slade is a staff writer for the *Black College Sports Review*, such sentence structure does not make the publication appear "promising," and certainly not "polished."

As for the statement, "Spencer, on the other hand, leaves so much to be desired that he is one of the show's biggest liabilities," did Mr. Slade conduct a survey to substantiate that observation? I wasn't part of the survey if he did.

Thus, either the survey participants were randomly selected, or Mr. Slade made a very ambiguous and downright slanderous statement, ignorant of all the contributions made by Spencer on and off the tube to the "MEAC

Review."

Can Mr. Slade name the coaches who have been "embarrassed" by Spencer? Where and how did the writer receive confessions from coaches to this effect?

I'm sure he must have had the facts, since the *Black College Sport Review* wouldn't publish anything without concrete data.

Why doesn't Mr. Slade contact Sallie Hayes, Maurice Spencer and the "MEAC Review" staff and become educated about the production of the program, then write an intelligent negative or positive article?

I realize Mr. Slade expressed his opinions based on what he saw on the television screen. But his ability to interpret what he was looking at and publish it in an article should have, in my opinion, been kept under the rug. His article revealed a great lack of knowledge involving TV production and a negative picture of his abilities.

I have known and followed both Sallie Hayes and Maurice Spencer for a number of years. Neither deserves this kind of publicity, nor does the "MEAC Review" staff.

If John Slade is interested in the "MEAC Review" in a positive way, why doesn't he contact the "MEAC Review" office and offer positive suggestions and financial support?

The article, "'MEAC Review' Promising, If Not Polished," made the *Black College Sports Review* something I read in the past for want of something better. I am cancelling my subscription.

N.G. Liggins  
Greensboro, N.C.

*Editor's note: We appreciate your comments. However, we'd like to make some points of clarification: the Winston-Salem Chronicle, which publishes the Black College Sports Review, has featured a profile on the "MEAC Review" in its regular edition, including a front-page photo and interviews with Sallie Hayes, Maurice*

*Spencer and producer Stuart Davis.*

*That article preceded John Slade's column, which was a review and, therefore, is his opinion of what he saw, not an article based on surveys or interviews.*

*Finally, we wholeheartedly support the "MEAC Review" and wish it continued success and growth in the future.*

*Part of that success hinges on the ability of its staff to take criticism constructively.*

*As for the cancellation of your subscription, we find that difficult to do, since our records indicate that you are not a subscriber nor have you ever been.*

## Write Field

We welcome letters from Black College Sports fans. Letters must be signed and should be no more than 300 words in length. We reserve the right to edit all letters for brevity and clarity. However, we will not in any way alter its content. Letters should be typed or neatly printed and mailed to: Allen H. Johnson, Editor, *Black College Sports Review*, P.O. Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101. (919) 722-8624.