

MEDIA

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ed, we don't see it as such a major decision," says CIAA Commissioner Bob Moorman. "We are getting one regional telecast per year and that only guaranteed a total of \$45,000, which was split between the two schools."

But television and the exposure it brings is a valuable tool in today's recruiting battles for the "blue chip" or "impact" athlete. Since the advent of desegregation, the predominantly white schools have all but dominated the black schools in the recruiting sweepstakes. That left the black institutions with very little to choose from. Now, with the Supreme Court decision, those schools stand to lose even the second-level quality athletes they've been able to lure to their programs.

"I can see it going back to the early and mid-60s," says Eddie Robinson, who still gets his share of blue-chippers. "With this ruling, the major schools have improved their position even more. They'll now be able to land all the top-flight athletes because of the attractive TV schedules they'll have."

"We have enough problems as it is in recruiting the talented black athletes," says South Carolina State Coach Bill Davis. "Now it will even be more difficult. At least under the former plan, you had a chance to

sell the athletes on the fact that you'd get on regional TV once a year. But now, with nothing ..."

There are some, however, like CIAA Commissioner Moorman and Howard Coach Willie Jeffries, who feel the ruling will have no significant impact on recruiting.

"First of all, you have to consider that the games that we got were all regional telecasts," Moorman says. "It's not like they were national telecasts or anything."

"If Virginia Union was playing Winston-Salem, the only people who would see that game were the ones in those respective areas. So I don't see it as having that great an impact."

"I think it's highly relative situation," adds Jeffries, in his first year at Howard. "Your opponents in the conference are basically competing for the same athletes that you are. Since they don't get on TV more than you do, there's no advantage."

Another area that stands to suffer is the college football playoff system and the money it afforded to schools that qualified and advanced. Unlike I-A, where teams can qualify for lucrative bowl games and vie for a mythical national title, the Division I-A, II and III schools play for the title in postseason tour-

naments.

Not only did those teams receive money from the playoff pot, depending on how far they advanced, but they also got large regional television exposure once they reached the semifinal round and the championship. Now, with the Supreme Court decision, that system may become obsolete.

"Since we don't have the bowl games in I-AA, there was great incentive in conferences and among independents to make it to the playoffs," says Grambling's Robinson. "From the look of things, we may not even have a playoff anymore."

"Even if there is the playoff, the money to be gained may not be sufficient enough for the teams which advance," says S.C. State's Davis, who has led his team to two I-AA playoff appearances. "With no money available, teams may have to end up paying their own way, and the way things are economically at many of our schools, I don't think that's feasible."

The irony here is that the NCAA has decided to increase the 1984 I-AA playoff field from 12 to 16 teams, thus allowing more teams to qualify for the money and the prestige. It may now be a moot point.

While the coaches, athletic directors and conference commissioners may not all agree on the the impact the decision will have, they all concur that it may, in the long run, prove to be the best thing that could have happened to their programs.

"I think this forces us to get together and try to do a better job of selling our product," says Jackson State Coach W.C. Gorden.

"We need to band together and get our schools the best possible package," adds Robinson.

"We've got a good product, but we've got to do a much better job of marketing it," says Davis. "Now maybe we can hire people who are consultants and experts who can help us sell this product. It could prove to be the best thing that could have happened."

"We are working on some projects that we hope will offset this," says MEAC Commissioner Free, choosing not to be specific. "We are exploring a number of things, including working with the other I-AA schools and conferences to put together a package and sell it to the networks or cable."

"We are not completely discouraged by it," says SWAC Commissioner Frank. "There is a chance we will be able to work out something in the near future."

SWAC

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center Paul Sights are TSU's only returning starters on the offensive line.

The Tigers' running and receiving corps offer much brighter hopes for Taylor and his staff. The rushing tandem of Rodney Shelton (557 yards), Nathaniel Johnson (442 yards) and Roger Allen (403 yards) is back as are receiving aces Darrell Colbert (30 receptions, 424 yards), Arthur Burns (341 yards) and Donald Narcisse (202 yards).

Defensively, TSU should be strong with the return of nine starters, including the entire starting secondary.

ALABAMA STATE

The Hornets received a crude introduction to SWAC football in 1983, compiling records of 2-9 overall and 0-7 in the conference in their first year of league competition. It was, indeed, a year the folks in Montgomery would rather not talk about.

But hope springs eternal.

"I don't think this team will finish at the bottom," new Coach Jim Parker says of his Hornets' chances in the upcoming league race.

"I think we'll finish the season in a representative manner. I haven't seen the other SWAC teams except on film, but if we continue to improve as we did during spring practice, I think we'll be somewhere in the middle of the conference standings."

Parker's prediction is modest but may be hard to fulfill nevertheless, given the ample ammunition returning on at least six of the other SWAC teams. But the new coach is convinced that he'll get all he can out of the 41 lettermen, six offensive starters and six defensive starters which return for Alabama State this season.

"Our defense will be our strength," says Parker. "I feel the linebacker position is one of our strongest."

Junior linebackers William Tolbert and Lavis Winfrey are the cream of the crop among the returning Hornets. Tolbert, a 6-3, 230-pounder, led the team in tackles last year with 133 takedowns, while Winfrey, a 6-3, 205-pounder, tallied 45.

Other key defensive returnees include all-SWAC candidate Marvin Hinton, a 6-2, 248-pound senior noseguard; Larry Melson, a 5-11,

184-pound senior defensive back, and Ricky Corbitt, a 6-3, 248-pound junior defensive tackle.

The offensive picture, admit Parker and his staff, is not so rosy.

Alabama State's sputtering offense averaged only 13 points and 196 yards of total offense last year. Moreover, the Hornets will be counting on basically the same personnel this season.

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M

The team that "always finds a way to lose" will make a concerted effort to rid itself of that dubious distinction in '84. No, the Panthers aren't expected to be a title contender this season, but they shouldn't be a pushover, either.

"Experience" is the watchword in the plains of Prairie View, Texas, these days. Fifty-one lettermen were counted when spring drills ended, among them 16 returning starters and a number of other players who started in at least one game a year ago.

"We saw a lot of surprises in spring drills that left us encouraged about the season," says Conway Hayman, yet

another new SWAC coach. "We'll play the 1984 season with a high level of intensity".

Offensively, Hayman and his assistants have made several strides to boost a unit which went 0-11 overall last year (0-7 in the SWAC) and ranked at the bottom of the league in total offense and near the bottom in points scored.

Defensive tackle Cyril Kennedy (6-6, 245) was switched to offensive tackle; linebacker Darryl Riser (6-0, 200) to fullback; quarterback Archie Seals (5-9, 175) to halfback. Offensive tackle Joseph Harris (6-4, 223 junior) now is a tight end.

Defensively, the new coach tabs the linebacker position as the most solid and the key to any success the Panthers will enjoy in 1984. He also labels the secondary as his team's most vulnerable position.

Saying his squad needs to develop "strong fundamentals and techniques," Hayman intends to develop a "12th-man personality" in his defense. That will be one way, he hopes, of elevating a unit, which, like his offense, has nowhere to go but up.