

SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE

Albany State has the troops and the artillery

By EARNEST REESE
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IT APPEARS that ALBANY STATE is not only loaded for Bears, but for Wildcats, Panthers, Tigers or any other basketball-playing animals as well.

Under Coach Oliver Jones, one in a long list of Jones brothers who played at ALBANY STATE, the Rams are expected to occupy a VIP suite in the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference, if not the penthouse.

The reason for such expectations swirls around the presence of five players who started last year and two others who logged a good portion of playing time.

Returning to a team that was 15-15 (10-6 in the league) are senior and sophomore guards Leonard Wright (6-0) and Macklin Bradfort (5-10), respectively, along with 6-3 swingman Kelvin Rice and Chamberlain Campbell, a 6-6 junior forward who averaged 12.6 points and 10.7 rebounds.

The key returnee, however, is 6-7 sophomore Jerome Reeves, who last season made all-conference and several freshman all-America teams after he averaged a team-leading 15.1 points and 11.7 rebounds.

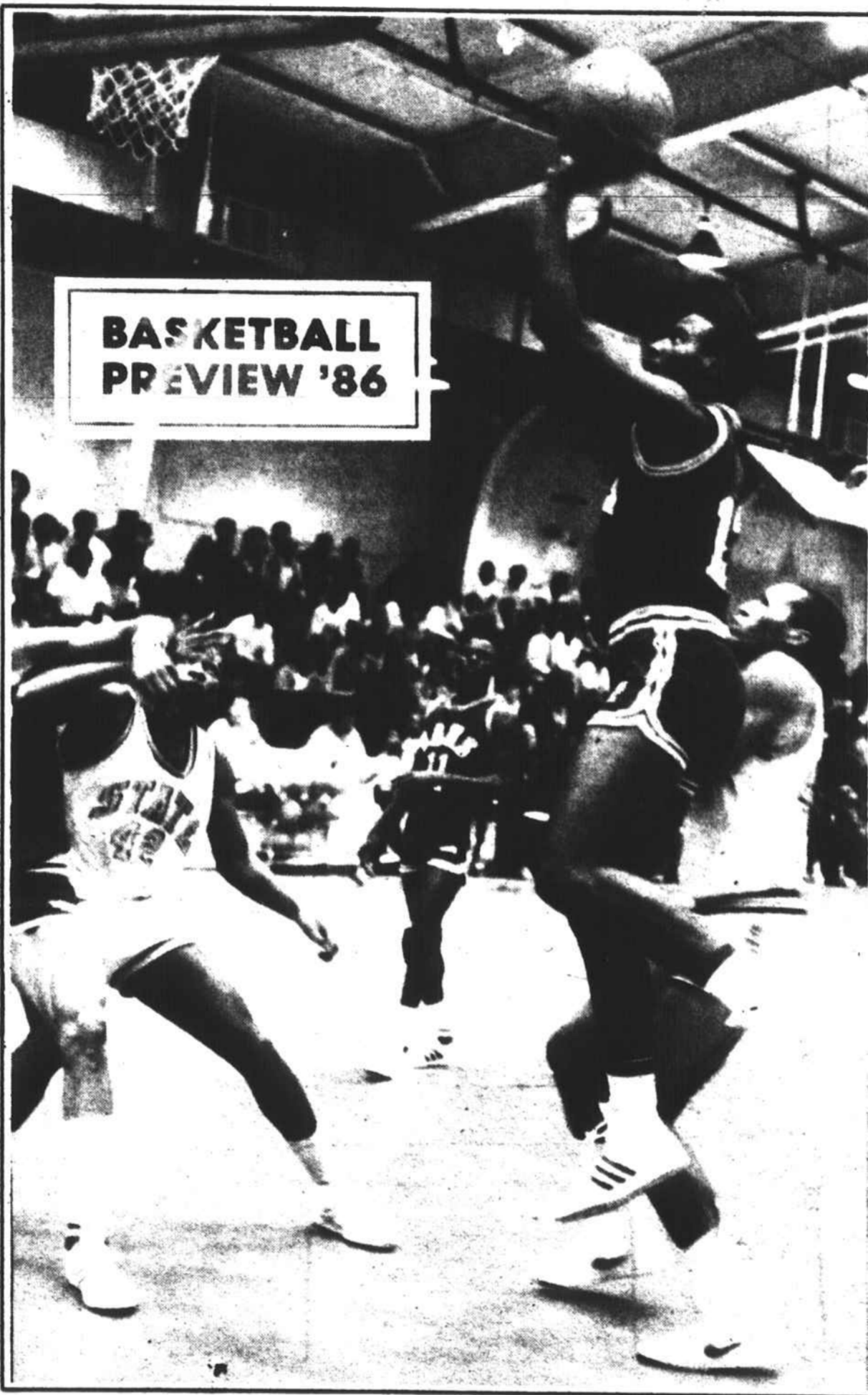
Add to the quintet sophomores Milton Morris (6-3), Eric Gervin (6-5) and Reginald Johnson (6-3), and the Rams' chances of winning the SIAC title seem enhanced. They'll be enhanced even more if freshmen Jimmy Emmers (6-7, 230) and Maurice Hodges (6-7, 230) start throwing their weight around.

There is, however, another serious contender.

Chances are, when the regular season is over in the SIAC, the ALABAMA A&M Bulldogs will be right there, at or near the top of the heap. From a team that finished 21-10 (11-5) and in a first-place tie with Savannah State for the conference visitation championship, Coach Ben Jobe has three starters and two other veterans returning.

The key player among them is three-year starter Donald Reedus, a 6-7 senior forward. In Jobe's third season at A&M, where he has posted a three-year record of 60-27 since leaving Georgia Tech as Bobby Cremins' assistant, Reedus scored 18.7 points and pulled down 9.1 rebounds a game.

Reedus, an all-SIAC selection during the '84-85 season, this year will try to blend his talents with those of sophomore Ondray



Chamberlain Campbell's inside play keyed Albany State' comeback over Savannah State in the finals of the SIAC Tournament (photo by Craig T. Greenlee).

Wagner and senior Wesley Brackett, the other two returning starters.

While Brackett is a 5-11 guard, Wagner, at 6-6, plays that position also. In fact, around Huntsville, he's known as A&M's version of Magic Johnson.

In addition to the aforementioned players, however, the Bulldogs, off to a 4-0 start, apparently will benefit from the presence of two junior transfers in their lineup. Robert Thomas, a 6-5 forward from Martin Junior College (Tennessee), and

Woodland Island (6-7, 220) are proving themselves to be quality players in this league.

Jobe's bench isn't bad, either. For instance, King Solomon Green (6-5), also a JUCO transfer, is averaging 16 points as a reserve. Then there are 6-6 sophomore Nathaniel Crowder and point guard Richard Perry, who led the team in assists last season with 159.

For the Bulldogs, this should be a good year. By Jobe.

TUSKEGEE, treated rudely in

and out of conference play last season, as indicated by a 12-16 record and a 6-10 finish in the league, is capable of at least reversing those marks. In fact, with four starters back, coupled with the addition of Richard Person, a transfer from Mississippi State, the Golden Tigers may be the dark horse of the SIAC.

This is a team, coached by 11-year veteran Charles Thompson, that has three players (more than any other in Division II) rated among the top 100 in the country by the NCAA. Senior Ignatius Lott (6-5, 225), who averaged 19 points and 9.8 rebounds last season, is one of the trio. Juniors Joe Johnson (6-2) and Tommy White (6-4), who scored a combined total of 32 points a game in '84-85, are the other two.

"Offensively, we're going to do quite well," said Thompson, who owns a doctoral degree in P.E. "If we can get our defense together and become a bit more consistent, we've got a good chance of winning the conference championship."

The Tigers have started off 3-0, beating a Paul Quinn team that was 8-1 at the time.

Three starters are gone from the CLARK squad that was 15-12 (10-6) last season. However, Ernest Lee, who, in his sophomore season last year led the nation in scoring (34.1 points a game), is back.

So is sophomore Anthony Ikeobi, a 5-10, 235-pound Nigerian who has improved tremendously after playing in the Atlanta Hot Net Summer Basketball League.

The Panthers, who will play senior Costia Harris (6-6) at forward and Coach Robert Pritchett's son, Robert Jr., at the point, will probably be one of those teams that will improve as the season progresses. However, should freshmen Tony Jenkins (6-8) and Peter Jacobs (6-3) come around on schedule, the struggling may be short-lived.

Not even its first-year coach can predict what MORRIS BROWN'S Wolverines are going to do this season when they try to adjust to the loss of three-year starter and leading scorer Bernard Tittle.

Despite the uncertainties, Coach Harold Merritt will look to returning starters Alvin George (6-9), Jeff Brown (6-7) and Paul McClary (6-4) for some positive answers.

"We're going to need patience," said Merritt, who has been an assistant at New Orleans and Long Beach State. "Plus, I'm the new kid

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