

# To the hoop

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A & T (2-7) had lost six straight games at presstime. It is their longest losing streak since Don Corbett became the head man several seasons ago.

Co-captains Carlton Becton (14 ppg, six rpg) and Corvin Davis (13 ppg) form the leadership nucleus that the Aggies must have if they are to return to the conference championship game in '89. Guard Glenn Taggart is playing very solid this season, averaging 15 points and six assists per game.

Zilch has been an unhelped for by-product for Maryland-Eastern Shore so far this season. The Hawks (0-9) have nowhere to go but up. They are the only team in the conference that had yet to win a game as of this writing.

But the team isn't without some proven talent. Keith Williams made the conference's All-Rookie team last season and is doing his part this year, averaging 12 points and four boards per game. Center-forward Michael Kirkland leads his squad with an average of 14 points and 6.3 rebounds a game.

## SIAC: A & M's in control

Another basketball season has begun in this conference, but the script is still the same. The Alabama A & M Bulldogs are again serving notice that they are the team to beat. Coach Varn Pettaway's team (8-1) is playing strong and not looking back as they gear themselves to make another appearance in the Division II playoffs. They should encounter few problems in wrapping up the conference's Western Region.

Frank Sillmon has taken over a lot of the leadership role since McClendon Award winner Ondray Wagner has graduated. Sillmon, who is an exceptional performer inside the paint, averages 23.9 points and 10.1 rebounds a game. Sillmon isn't a solo act for A & M. Willie Hayes and Ronnie Tucker provide more than adequate offensive help, scoring 23ppg and 17.9 ppg respectively. Hayes runs the Dogs offense with a fine touch and dishes out 8.4 assists per contest.

Sillmon also has help on the glass.

Bryan Haynes and Nathan Crowder are collectively pulling down nearly 17 boards per night. Haynes is also the league's top shot blocker, having recorded 31 rejections in nine games.

Morehouse has been a surprise so far. The Maroon Tigers were tied with A & M for the league's best record and they were also undefeated in conference play (3-0). M. Carter, H. Ellis, Damon Dixon, and S. Spence provide the scoring punch for coach Arthur McAfee's team. The foursome accounts for over half of Morehouse's 94 points per game team scoring average. All average in double figures. Carter leads the team at 18.1 ppg, while Spence has the lowest mean of the offensive minded bunch at 14 ppg.

LeMoyne-Owen made some noise in the early going, recording a 5-2 mark. They have shown themselves to be bullish on scoreboards by carrying a hefty team scoring average of 92.8 points a game. This month will tell a lot about what the Magicians will really be like this season. With the beefy part of their conference schedule coming out, they will be thoroughly tested.

Lane College and Knoxville College found themselves taking it on the chin at the start of the year. Both teams had won only two games (Lane was 2-10, and Knoxville posted a 2-8 record).

Lane has had no problems scoring their share of points -- they're averaging 85 points a night. But they've been very lackluster on defense. Opponents have riddled their defensive efforts, scoring nearly 104 points against them each time out.

Tuskegee University (1-8) wasn't doing much better coming into '89. The Golden Tigers are running like a sputtering engine that's in dire need of a tune-up. Coach Alfred Darney has his hands full during his rookie season as TU's headmaster.

G. Hunt is the only performer putting up some notable numbers for Tuskegee. Hunt averages 23.4 points and 9.2 rebounds. In addition, he's shooting 52.3 percent from the field. J. Burns is ranked among the league's best free throw shooters, converting nearly 79 percent of his attempts.

If Miles College hopes to come anywhere near their 11-15 mark of last season, a lot of positive things will have to happen fairly quickly. The Bears were 0-9 and it appears that things are likely to get worse before they get better.

In the SIAC's Eastern Region, Paine College would be the choice to take it all. Unfortunately, they are on probation for not fielding enough players in women's tennis. As a result, they are not eligible to play for the conference tournament title or compete in the

post-season playoffs.

The Lions (8-2) weren't supposed to be that good this season. But coach Ronnie Spry hasn't gotten some solid play out of holdovers Don Smith and Michael Jones.

Newcomer Larry Richardson, who was a Proposition 64 case last season, has entered Spry's lineup and is giving the Lions added scoring punch and solid defensive play.

Savannah State (2-6) and Clark-Atlanta University (1-7) are also on probation, so they can only play for pride.

That leaves Albany State, Morris Brown and Fort Valley State fighting it out for the two top slots in the East.

If you have an urge to wager, it would be safe to put your money on Albany State's Rams (5-4). Each year, coach Oliver Jones crew play up and down. During the regular season, you never know what to expect night in and night out. But when it's tournament time, ASC is usually one of the teams in the running. And usually it's the Rams who wind up pulling off the surprise if there any surprises to take place.

C. McGill and S. Jackson are the team's scoring aces. Together, they are averaging over 32 points a game. T. Dunham helps keep some of the pressure off of those two with his 14.5 ppg. McGill is also gifted with slick hands as an adroit defender. He's the conference's leader in steals, coming up with 34 swipes in nine games (3.7 average).

Morris Brown has a new head coach in Ajac Triplett and he's trying to find ways to turn the Wolverines into a consistent winner. They were 6-20 last year and so far this season, they're 2-4.

The Wolverines attack starts and ends with Cornelius Jones. Jones leads the league in scoring (29ppg), rebounding (16 a game), and field goal shooting (66.7 percent).

First year coach Anthony Witherspoon feels that if his Fort Valley State team can reach the .500 mark by season's end, he will have accomplished what he set out to do at the start of the season.

But at presstime, it looks like it's going to be a long haul for the Wildcats (2-7). Like some of their counterparts in the Western

Region who reside in the low rent district of the standings, Valley can't score enough points and they haven't been able to stop anybody. After nine games, opponents have outscored them by 153 points. Their average margin of defeat is 17 points as they head into the second half of the season.

## Union reloads in CIAA

If Virginia Union and North Carolina Central can maintain intensity and keep level heads, they are the teams that will meet for the CIAA conference championship in late February.

The two teams offer a stark contrast when you compare the two. The Panthers (8-0) like the uptempo game, while the Eagles (6-1) prefer to use every tick of the 45-second shot clock. In both instances, their respective approaches produces more wins than losses and that's the bottom line.

Given the two teams consistency in that regard, Union should take the Northern Division and Central should reign supreme as the Southern Division kingpins by the time the regular season comes to a close.

Here's the conference synopsis by divisions. Let's start with the North.

Most people around this league will tell you that Virginia Union is the most talent-laden team this season. They have all the people to do the job every time they take the court. The big question about the Panthers, though, is if coach Dave Robbins can keep his team from getting swelled heads because they are so talented and so deep.

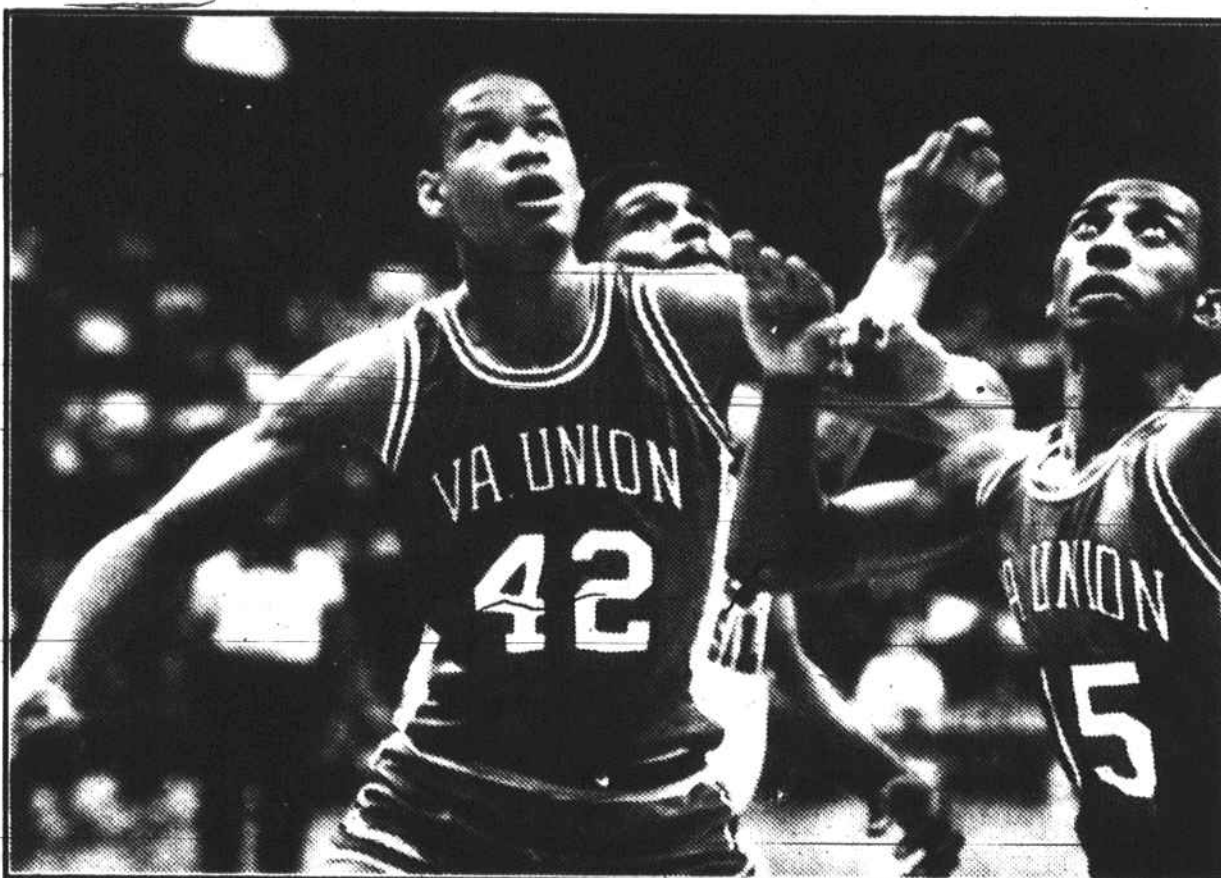
Terry Davis is playing with a ferocity that demonstrates why he was the league's Player of the Year for the '87-'88 season. The 6-9 pivotman leads the CIAA in scoring (24.4 ppg) and rebounding (12.9 a game), plus he's shooting 65 percent from the floor. A.J. English, a jumping jack of a guard, is Union's other ultimate weapon. He scores (22ppg) and is particularly effective from three-point range. He's shooting 55 percent from the field and is the conference's top free throw shooter (88 percent).

As a team, the Panthers are accurate from the field (55.4 percent) and they more than hold their own on the glass in team rebounding stats (40.6 a game).

If they can keep their heads clear, they'll play up to their enormous potential.

Elizabeth City State as played well in the early going. The Vikings (5-2) have been on the rampage scoring-wise, averaging nearly 99 points per contest. But they aren't lax on the defensive end, giving up an average of 92.4 ppg.

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Staff Photo

Terry Davis (42) is Virginia Union's center stage performer. He leads the CIAA in scoring and rebounding.