

## FOOTBALL RANKINGS

# Central State's theme: Play it again, Billy Joe

Evidently, Central State loves living the life at the top of the gridiron heap. The Marauders have been voted as *Black College Sports Review's* No. 1 team for the '88 season. This is the second consecutive year that coach Billy Joe's Marauders have finished as el numero uno.

The Marauders compiled an 11-1 mark, and were the last black college team to exit from the national post-season play-

## BCSR's Final Football Poll

1.	Central State (Ohio)	11-1
2.	Jackson State	8-1-2
3.	Grambling	8-3
4.	North Carolina Central	9-2-1
5.	Winston-Salem State	10-2
6.	Albany State	8-2
7.	Alabama State	7-3
8.	Alabama A & M	7-3
9.	Bowie State	9-2-1
10.	Howard University	7-4

off picture. CSU made it to the NAIA semi-finals before bowing out to Carson-Newman, 13-0. Coach Joe's squad opened the playoffs with a 24-10 victory over Catawba College and they defeated Hillsdale College (Mich.) 14-7 to become one of the NAIA's Final Four in football.

As they did last season, Central State proved that they could more than hold their own against opponents in Division I-AA and Division II. They dusted off Division II foes Virginia State (who played Winston-Salem State close before losing the CIAA football championship); Johnson C. Smith; Kentucky State; and Ft. Valley State.

However, the clincher for the Marauders, in terms of the mythical black college national title, came when they downed a solid Florida A & M team on the Rattlers home turf in Tallahassee, Fla.

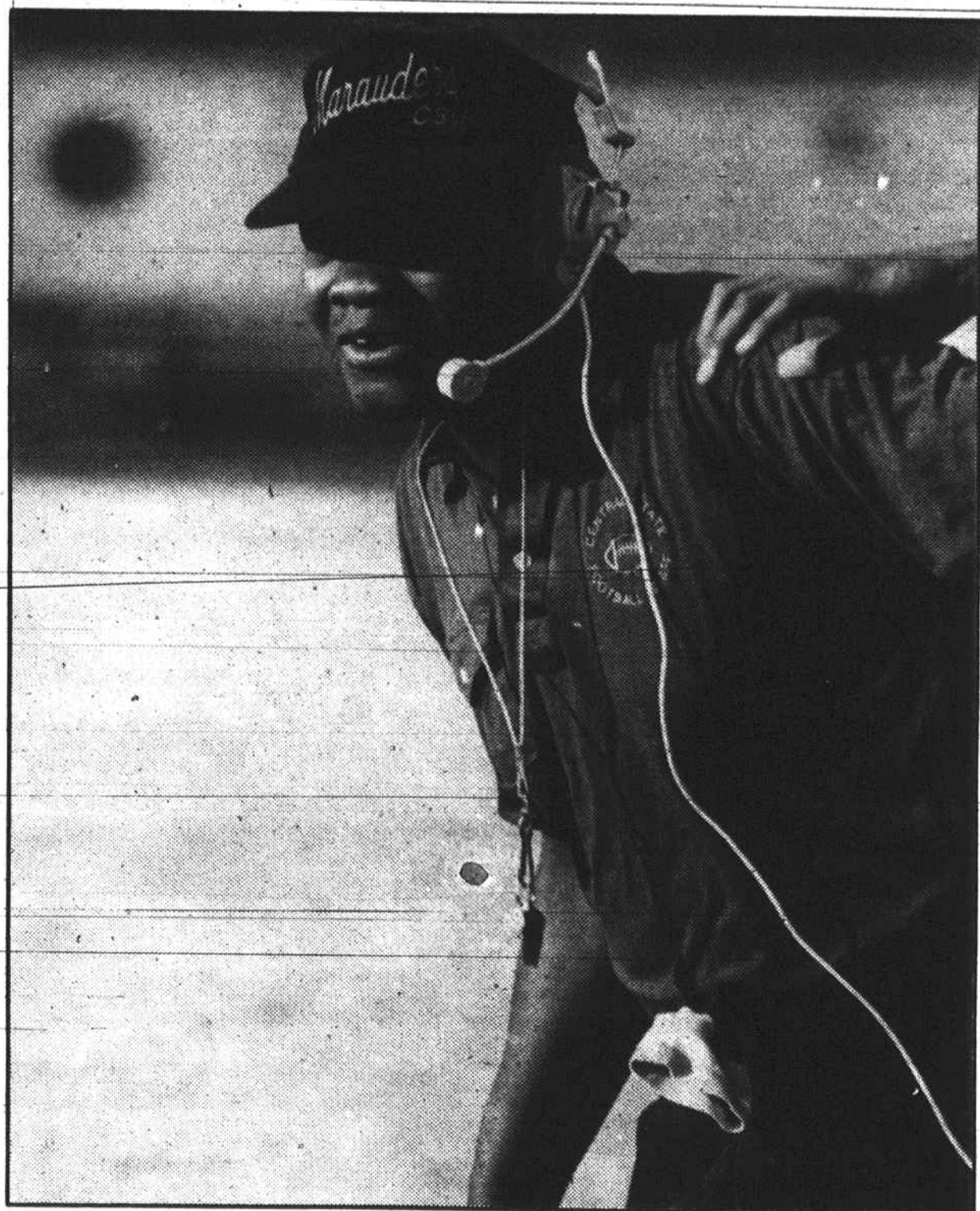
CSU fell behind early in the first half (17-0), then came on waning during the moments of the second quarter and continued their blitz for the remainder of that game. They rode that momentum to give FAMU some of their own venom, and walked away with a 27-23 triumph. At that point in the season, the Rattlers had been ranked among the Top 20 teams in the national Division I-AA polls.

As usual, there are cries from people in the SWAC who believe that Jackson State should be rated ahead of the Marauders. But since the two teams didn't meet face to face, we'll never know what may have transpired in '88. However, there is one measuring stick that *BCSR* used to determine that Central State should be awarded the top spot -- common opponents.

The Marauders and Jackson State's only common opponent was Florida A & M. When the Tigers and Rattlers tangled on neutral territory in the Circle City Classic in Indianapolis, the game ended in a 10-10 tie.

The key point here is not the score, but how the game ended in a stalemate. Late in the game, with FAMU leading 10-7, an official ruled that the Rattlers fumbled and gave possession to Jackson State when it appeared that the ball had rolled out of bounds. The Tigers converted the miscue, with Nigerian placekicker Osa Ohonba kicking a 36-yard field goal to salvage a tie for JSU.

One can debate about that rationale on several counts both pro and con. Still, *BCSR's* final poll (whether you're in agreement or not) makes for some interesting conversation as to how one goes about determining a national black college football champion. The folks who put on the Circle City Classic are working on a post-season bowl game that will crown a national champ. If that becomes



Staff Photo

Coach Billy Joe and his Central State team bask in the limelight once more as the nation's No. 1 team in black college football.

reality, perhaps they will come up with something suitable that will satisfy most interested parties.

-Steve Zimmerman

## NOTES ... QUOTES ... AND TALES OF WOE

By  
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Football coaches have been coming and going at a dizzying pace at predominantly black schools since the season ended.

Here's the body count:

• Joe Gilliam Sr. has replaced Bill Thomas at TENNESSEE STATE. Thomas was 34-13-2 in five seasons.

The Tigers were 3-7-1 for the second consecutive season in '88. Thomas will remain as athletic director. Gilliam, a long-time assistant to the late TSU coach "Big John" Merritt, was passed over for the job when Thomas was hired. He has been teaching physical education classes the last five years.

• Marino H. Casem has resigned as football coach at SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, but will remain as athletic director. Casem was 13-9 in two seasons at Southern and beat Grambling State twice in the Bayou Classic. However, supporters viewed him

as an outsider and grew restless when he replaced some popular long-time coaches.

• Lionel Taylor resigned under pressure at TEXAS SOUTHERN, where the Tigers never had a winning season during his five year tenure. The Tigers were 0-11 in '88. ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF coach Archie Cooley, a candidate for the job when Taylor was hired, and former Houston Oilers wide receiver Ken Burroughs, are said to be in the running to replace Taylor. Burroughs is a Texas Southern graduate.

• HOWARD UNIVERSITY coach Willie Jeffries is a finalist for jobs at SOUTH CAROLINA STATE and Temple University. Dennis Thomas resigned at South Carolina State and Temple fired Bruce Ariens. Thomas was 15-18 in three seasons.

Jeffries has said that he's happy at Howard, and interviewing at South Carolina State, where he attended school and was head coach, is a matter of professional courtesy. He didn't say the same thing about Temple.

Other finalists are assistant coach Richard Wilson of the Citadel, Virginia coach Joe Taylor and South Carolina State assistant Larry Thompson. ....

You can call ALABAMA STATE'S basketball team the gang that couldn't shoot straight -- at least from the three-point distance. The Hornets put up an NCAA record 42 three-pointers in a loss to North Carolina A & T, making just 12 of those shots.

"I want to set records, but not that kind," said coach James V. Oliver. ....

NORTH CAROLINA A & T's 38-game home winning streak, the longest in the nation, was stopped when the Aggies lost their home opener to NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL, 66-54. ....