

Coppin Is Back!

utes played, scoring and three point baskets, rebounds and steals. He is averaging 16.6 points and 6.8 rebounds a game.

Sidney Goodman, a sophomore from Camden, N.J., directs the offense this year. He averages 11.8 points per game and 2.9 rebounds.

Goodman likes the family atmosphere at Coppin, and hopes to help his team make it to the NCAA tournament this year.

"When I recruit a young man, I look for someone who is a good person, someone who will listen," says Mitchell.

"Playing basketball is part of it. You must be a student-athlete."

Even though Mitchell has a reputation as a tough taskmaster, he does have a softer side.

Kenyatta Massey of Washington, D.C. was recruited to play power forward. Massey hails from nationally ranked D.C. Dunbar high school in

Washington, D.C., coached by Michael McLeese.

However, upon enrolling at Coppin, it was found that Massey has a degenerate hip, the same condition that afflicts former baseball star Bo Jackson. The hip, if snapped by physical force, can render a person unable to use it for life.

Mitchell convinced the administration to allow Massey to continue his studies on an athletic scholarship for three years (Massey is a junior) or until Massey completes his degree.

Another situation involved Sherman Stewart, the younger brother of Coppin alumnus and present Washington Bullet Larry Stewart. Stewart had academic problems in high school and was not looked at by many schools.

Mitchell, nevertheless, recruited him and persuaded him that it was in his best interest to attend Coppin. Stewart was MEAC Rookie of the year candidate and is averaging nine points

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— Coach Mitchell.



a game with four rebounds. He is also on time academically with his liberal arts curriculum.

Mitchell's record stands at 112-82 and he believes the future is bright for his young team.

"It isn't one person who makes a

program it is all who are involved: administrators, coaches, fans and faculty," says Mitchell. "That is why we are on top and hope to win the MEAC." As stated above, Coppin is back!

— James Wright, Jr.

Top Recruits Still Rarity At Black Schools

During Coach Jake Gaither's heyday at Florida A&M, recruiting players never was a problem. Gaither, now retired, stockpiled so many good football players that the Rattlers had three units called "Blood, Sweat and Tears."

Chances are any of the three could have beaten the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Today, colleges spend as much as \$500,000 a year on football recruiting. Gaither was so powerful that all he needed was pocket money for telephone calls. Near the end of the season, Gaither would call a dozen or so of the top high school coaches in Florida and use his booming voice to say: "What have you got down there, baby?"

Usually, that's all it took. A few months later, some of the biggest, toughest, high school players in the country would show up at the FAMU campus, ready to give their all for Gaither and the Rattlers.

If only black college recruiting could be so easy today.

The Rattlers still have immense pride, but no one in black colleges can recruit the way Gaither and Grambling's Eddie Robinson use to.

During the 1950s and 1960s, before integration, Florida A&M and Grambling — along with Jackson State, Tennessee State and a few other schools — were to young black athletes what Notre Dame, Southern California and Alabama are the most bright-eyed recruits today.

If you were a black kid growing up in the segregated South, you

thought about playing for Gaither, Robinson, or one of the other top black college coaches. Robinson once joked that Grambling didn't rebuild. "We just reload," he said. And Gaither used to tell booster clubs that he recruited only three types of players: "Agile, hostile and mobile."

Today's black college coaches are singing a different tune. They're having to take whatever players they can get, says Bill Buchalter, one of the country's leading experts on college recruiting.

"It's not impossible for the black schools to recruit some of the top players, but it has been a long time since integration," he said. "What we're seeing now is that the top kids will consider the black colleges only as a second choice."

The end of the segregation brought about much needed changes for the good except for black college athletic programs. Once Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant and other white coaches in the South began recruiting black players, it was if floodgates had been opened. Now, some black players would rather risk being at the end of the bench at Notre Dame than starting at Howard.

"You can't take a person's dream away from him," Buchalter said. "At one time black kids had to go to black colleges because the other schools wouldn't recruit them. Now, the top kids generally won't show up on a black college campus unless their families have strong ties to a black col-

lege, or one of the bigger schools backs off for the same reason."

Today's black college coaches have found they have to be visionaries. They have to be able to spot a player who may be undersized today, but has the ability to build another 50 pounds of muscles. They have to take a chance on a kid who is academically lacking but seems to have potential. The black

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college coaches are forever looking for a diamond in the rough.

"The recruiting was the biggest frustration I had," said former Bethune-Cookman Coach Larry Little. He was fired at B-CC a year ago, partly because of his inability to land much of the top talent in the state.

"You do your best to develop players, but in the end, you're only as good as the talent you have to work with," Little said.

Sometimes, black colleges are able to find that diamond in the rough. One player in Mississippi was considered too slow and too skinny to be recruited by the larger schools. His name: Jerry Rice.

Today, Rice, who played at Mississippi Valley, ranks as one of the greatest receivers in NFL history.

Another player from Mississippi also was considered too small. His name: Walter Payton. He played at Jackson State, and went on to become an NFL Hall of Fame running back.

It won't be easy, but black colleges will have to find more prospects like that. There are some encouraging signs. The NCAA has passed a rule allowing players from Division I-A

programs to transfer to I-AA schools without penalty.

Now, a talented athlete who finds himself at the end of the bench at say, Michigan, can transfer to Jackson State and possibly be starting for the Tigers the next fall. There no longer is a one-year waiting period.

There is also a resurgence of black pride among high school students. More and more black students are enrolling at black colleges. The top black colleges, such as Florida A&M, Howard, and Morehouse, find they have far more applicants than they can accept.

Perhaps one day, some of the top black athletes will be among the students applying to Clark Atlanta State, Southern and Norfolk State.

— Barry Cooper