

The CIAA Football Season Kicks Off

By Nathan Ross Freeman

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) consist of fourteen historically black institutions. The Southern Division includes Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University, Livingston College, North Carolina Central University, St. Augustine's College, Shaw University, Winston-Salem State University. The Northern Division includes Bowie State University, Elizabeth City State University, Hampton University, Norfolk State University, St. Paul's College, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University.

The CIAA is the oldest black athletic conference in the nation. It's 76 years of operation stretches its successful lineage of competition from Bowie Maryland to Charlotte N.C.

This year 11 teams will compete for the conference championship. The divisional races will determine the participants for the 1988 Championship Game to be held in the South on November 12.

The CIAA has successfully placed a team in the NCAA Division II playoffs every year since 1978. In 1981 Virginia Union and Elizabeth City both re-

competed in 296 games, winning 159, losing 124, tying 13, earning a percentage of .559. WSSU will open its season on September 3 against non-conference Elon College, at Elon, 7:00 P.M.

Defending champion WSSU "Rams" is the number one pick of the South by the CIAA head coaches with the "Trojans" of Virginia State selected as their northern counterpart. Pete Richardson, the former offensive coordinator inherited the 1987 CIAA Champions minus five starters, seven lettermen, plus some top notch recruits. It is felt throughout the conference that the team depth and experience should keep the Rams at the top. For the seventh year the CIAA Championship Football Game will pit the divisional champs - North versus South - in the deciding battle for the conference crown. This year the Southern Division champions will be host.

In 1976 Bob Moorman became the CIAA's first full time commissioner in several years, and the conference has enjoyed great accomplishment regionally and nationally in the athletic arenas. Bob Moorman who has served on any committee that is a committee in regional and national athletics also served on the NCAA television committee. his present and busy schedule made him unavailable to discuss the future of CIAA and TV network broad-

casting. In talking with various sources throughout the conference concerning this issue there was much consensus.

Unfortunately with all the above state credentials of a sophisticated conference, that constantly intrudes on the NCAA schedule with their prowess, the only way most of us will be able to witness their prowess is by attendance at the home games, maybe some "away" games if they are not too far away, or maybe occasionally on some after hour cable station aired after the scores have been televised on the sports news.

The questions: Can there be more prime time showing of CIAA games? Will the three major Networks ever air CIAA games on a regular basis like the NCAA games? And to all these questions: Why not?

The answers are simple. College football is big, big business. A college or university football team with good competitive standings nationwide doesn't even open the door when talking big TV network broadcasting. First of all you have to have a big consistent attendance every Saturday, which

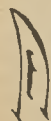
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ceived playoff bids, marking the first time two representatives of the same conference had a chance at the national title. To exemplify the strength of the CIAA as a significant conference in the national collegiate football scene it should be noted that five CIAA schools have competed for the national title: Elizabeth City, Hampton and Norfolk once, Winston-Salem State twice and Virginia Union five times. The competitive force of the CIAA has earned its self acclaimed slogan, "Fourteen of the Finest."

The CIAA will kick off its seventy-sixth year of football competition, Saturday, September 3, 1988. This opening weekend will host two conference and seven non-conference games. Winston-Salem State, which ranks fifth in CIAA standings in overall stats since its 1946 date of entry to the conference, has

Both the CIAA and the MEAC hope that one day their games will be televised with more frequency as the conferences become more competitive with themselves and outside of conference play.



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