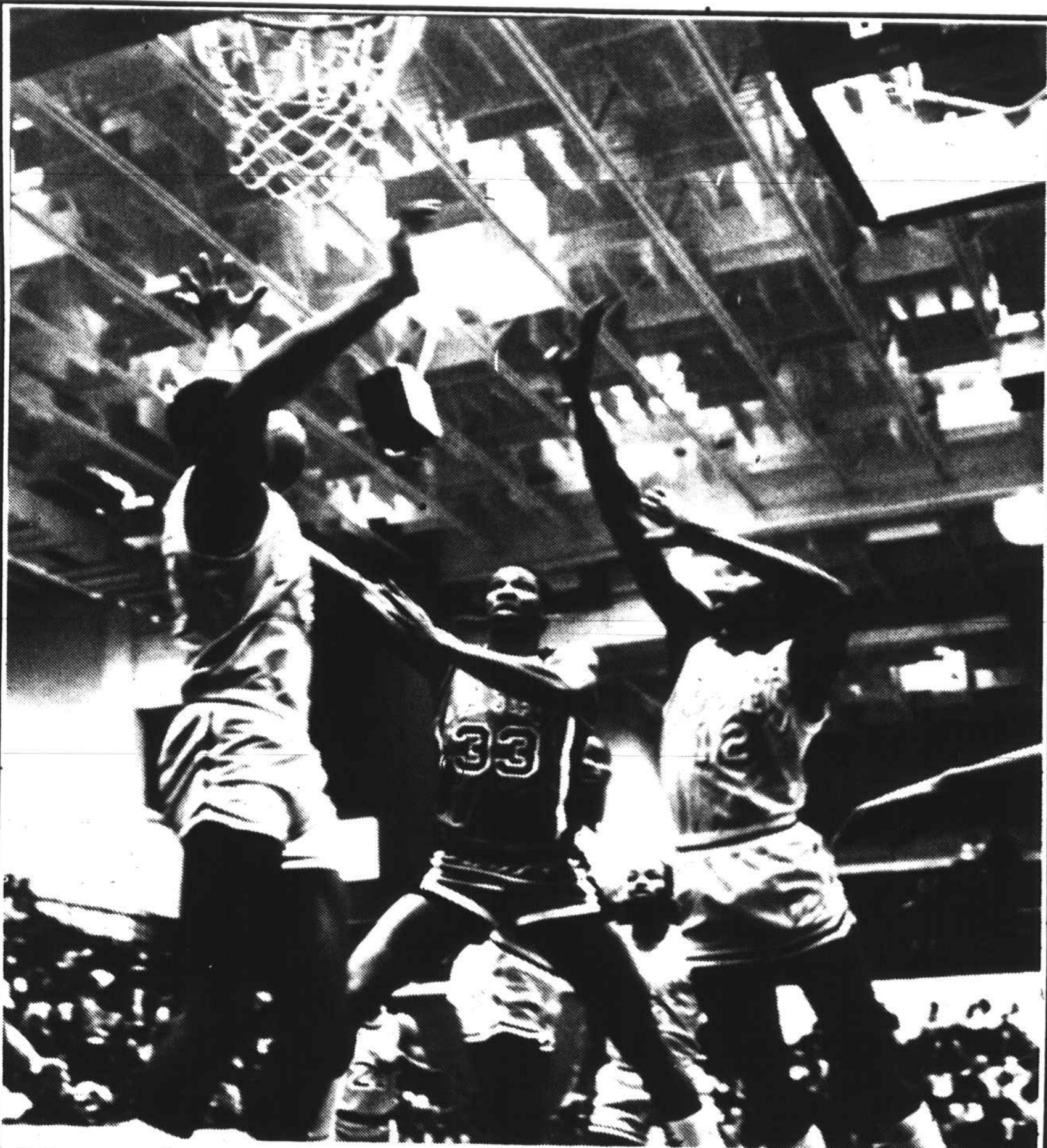


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Columns, Scores, Profiles, Predictions



Battle of The Titans

A&T defenders clog the middle against Alabama State all-America candidate Lewis Jackson (photo by Joe Daniels).

Aggies Demolish Alabama State, In A Surprisingly Lopsided Affair

By ROBERT ELLER
Sports Editor

North Carolina A&T turned what many thought would be a nail-biter into a rout last week at Corbett Arena, clobbering Division I rival Alabama State 100-73.

Leading only 39-35 at the half, the Aggies steadily pulled away in the first 10 minutes of the second half, then staged an imitation of Houston's Phi Slama Jamma in the final seven minutes, getting seven dunks and turning the game into a runaway.

Aggie Coach Don Corbett, who saw his team win its fourth straight game and up its record to 7-3, credited the defense of Jimmy Brown on Alabama State star Lewis Jackson for the second-half blitz.

"We played defense in the second half," said Corbett. "We changed to a box-in-one on Jackson and Jimmy (Brown) did a super job on him. He was their outside offense and, once we stopped him, the game was ours."

The margin of victory was extremely surprising, considering the fact that the Hornets entered the game with a 10-2 record, their only losses coming by six points each on the road against nationally-ranked Tulsa and Arkansas.

An irate James Oliver, holder of the top winning percentage among active Division I coaches, blamed the officiating for the rout. "You don't worry about these kinds of losses," Oliver said after the game. "The officials in this game were a disgrace to basketball. They don't even know the rules."

Despite Oliver's complaints, the fact is that the Hornets never led in the contest. They did forge ties at six and 22 during the opening half as forwards Jackson and Joe Williams combined for 22 points. But the Aggies' Eric Boyd was on target from the outside and tallied 14 of his 24 points in the half.

The Aggies came out hot in the early moments of the second half and outscored the Hornets 10-4 over the first three minutes to build a 49-39 lead. The closest Alabama State, which finished 22-6 last year and played in the NIT, could get after that was 51-43 at the 15:37 mark.

From that point on, the Aggies were in total control, even after star forward Joe Binion went to the bench with his fourth foul at the 14:08 mark and his team up 55-43.

Alabama State shot better than 55 percent from the field for the game while the Aggies hit only 46.5 percent. But that was not enough to make up for A&T's 52-28 edge in rebounding.

"The kind of shot selection they were taking put us in good rebounding position," said Corbett of the huge board advantage turned in by his smaller squad. But Oliver saw another reason for the rebounding disparity.

"A&T was allowed to push and shove under the basket and we weren't allowed to get physical back with them," he said, still steaming. Oliver added that the Aggies are not the caliber of team that Arkansas and Tulsa are.

"A&T is nowhere close to those teams," he said. "They have a good team and they may be the third-best team we have played this year but they aren't thirty

"We played defense in the second half. We changed to a box-in-one on Jackson and Jimmy (Brown) did a super job on him. Once we stopped him, the game was ours."

-- A&T Coach Don Corbett

points better than we are. With the officials they used, I'll never come up here to play another game."

Corbett was a little more generous in his praise for the Hornets, since his club must visit Montgomery Feb. 6 to face the SWAC power at its place. "We played consistent defense and they may have gotten a little tired and frustrated in the last eight minutes," he said.

The Hornets certainly looked tired in the final eight minutes. Binion re-entered the contest at the 8:12 mark with the Aggies up 66-55. Brown's dunk, the second of six in the final seven and a half minutes, upped the lead to 76-55.

The Aggies went to their bench at that point but the flood gates were already open. James Horace, who had 20 points and 11 rebounds on the night, sub guard Brian Booker and Binion added dunks before little-used guard Duane Williams brought the house down with a driving slam for a 97-67 bulge with 1:15 left on the clock.

The Aggie fans then began calling for the century mark

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CIAA Basketball

Rams Take Two But Big One Gets Away; Another Big One's Ahead In Tough A&T

By ROBERT ELLER
Sports Editor

The Winston-Salem State Rams got back into action after a long Christmas layoff last week and won two of three contests to up their record to 8-3 for the season.

The Rams claimed non-conference wins over Morehouse College 89-80 on Jan. 11 and 69-66 over Bowie State on Jan. 14. But it was the one that got away on Jan. 12 that Rams Coach "Bighouse" Gaines really wanted.

"Any time you win you have to be happy, but the Shaw game (a 64-57 Southern Division loss) was the one we needed badly," Gaines said.

The Rams had not played since Dec. 16, when they entertained Morehouse at the Gaines Complex, and the layoff showed. The Rams, leading 84-73 with 2:37 left, looked to have the win sewed up, but four straight turnovers allowed Morehouse to close to within 84-80 in little more than a minute.

The Rams shook off the errors and scored the game's last six points to ice the win. A Troy Russell dunk put the game away but Russell was knocked down on the shot and slightly injured. He led all scorers in the game with 25 points, but the knee injury he suffered on the play came back to haunt the Rams the following night against Shaw, the Southern Division's hottest team.

With Russell scoring only six points (he

entered the game averaging 25 per game), Shaw overcame a 10-point deficit five minutes into the final half and defeated the Rams 64-57.

"Russell was only about half-speed," said Gaines, referring to the twisted knee that slowed down his star in the game, "and without his scoring we are in trouble."

Russell's lack of scoring wasn't the only problem the Rams faced against the Bears, who won their third straight contest and raised their division-leading record to 2-0. Guards Dave

"Russell was about half-speed, and without his scoring we are in trouble."

-- "Bighouse" Gaines

Lacy and Andre Sheppard combined for 41 points, including the Bears' last 26 in the win.

"We couldn't stop their guards near the end. They just were too quick for us," moaned Gaines. "You have to have an intimidator to defend a guy like Sheppard and they didn't throw the ball away."

Shaw Coach Warren Reynolds said the Bears' strategy was to allow Sheppard and Lacy to go one-on-one once the Rams went to a man-to-man defense. "We wanted them to play man-to-man and, once they did," he said, "we just isolated Sheppard or Lacy and let them go one-on-one."

The play worked to perfection as Shaw, trailing 50-43 with 7:55 left, scored the game's next

seven points, five by Sheppard, and a basket by Lacy, to take the lead with 5:15 left.

After a Buck Mitchell basket gave the Rams their last lead, Sheppard put the Bears back in the lead for good with Shaw's last field goal of the night.

Down the stretch the two combined to hit 11 of 12 free throws to assure the win.

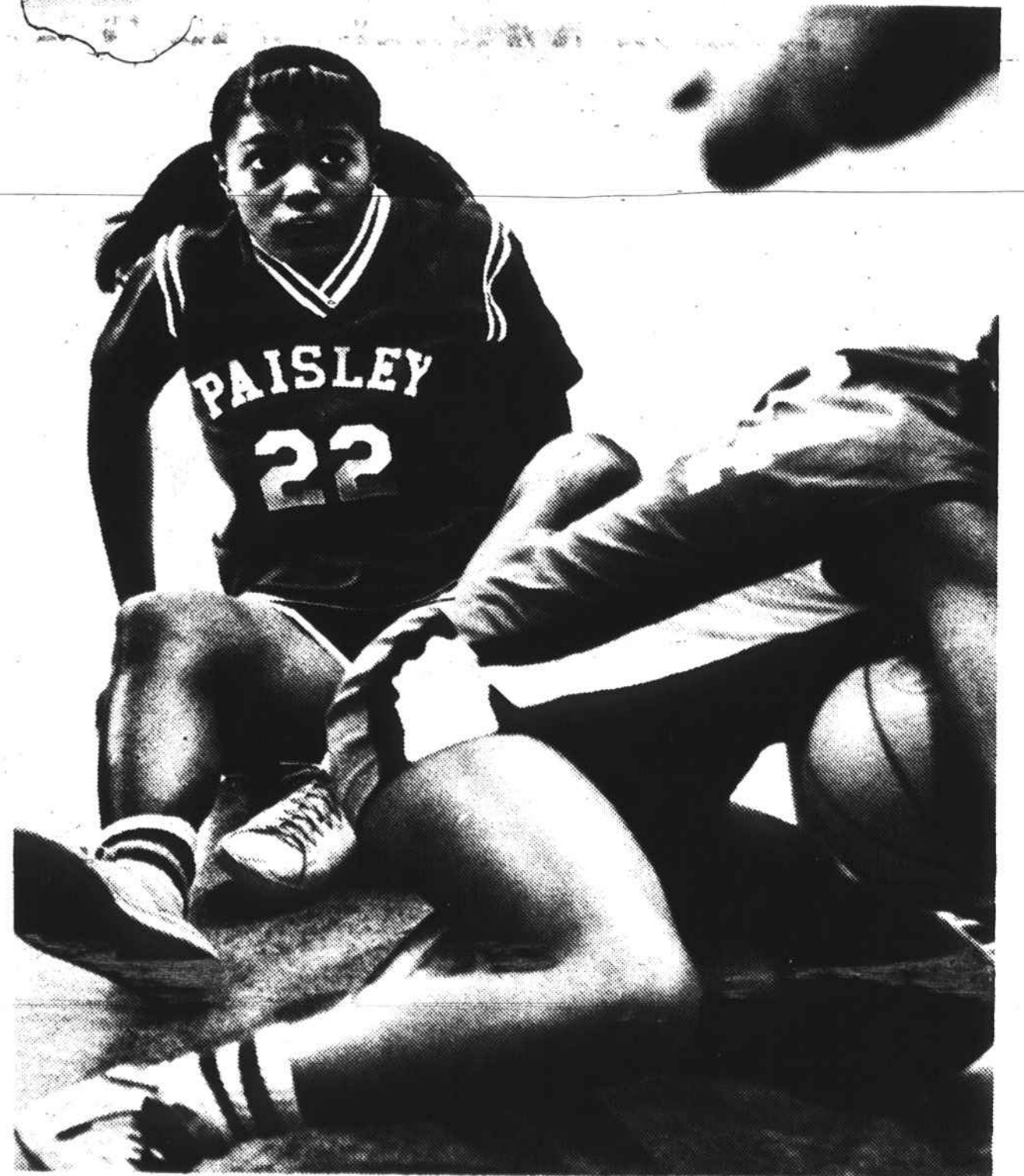
WSSU came back to nip Bowie State on Saturday night.

Playing without the services of Russell, the Rams trailed 36-29 at the half and were down by as many as 15 in the final stanza before Rodger Mason and Eugene Pennick led the comeback that produced the win.

Mason led the Rams with 19 points and Pennick added 15. Center Kevin Vaughn and sub guard Larry Nance chipped in 10 points each.

As for next week's slate of games, WSSU sandwiches its first of two meetings of the year with archrival North Carolina A&T Wednesday, Jan. 25, at Memorial Coliseum with a road game at Fayetteville State Monday, a road game at North Carolina Central Thursday and a home game with Johnson C. Smith Saturday.

In other pivotal matchups involving CIAA teams during the next week, Virginia Union plays at Hampton Institute and Shaw travels to N.C. Central Saturday. Hampton hosts the still-struggling District of Columbia and Virginia Union entertains high-flying Norfolk State next Thursday.



Who Me?

Having been accused of a personal foul, Paisley High's Rhonda Jones seems to anticipate a stiff sentence during a 9-10 girls basketball game. Kennedy beat Paisley 58-34 (photo by James Parker).

How Television Blacks Out Black Schools And Why It Shouldn't

By BARRY COOPER
Syndicated Columnist

This is a column about compassion and fair play. If it sounds militant, then that's OK, too. When smaller colleges get stepped on repeatedly, somebody's got to stand up for them.

Today's crusade concerns those television networks -- particularly the cable outfits -- that ignore black colleges when it comes to programming basketball games.

A case in point: ESPN, whose full name is Entertainment and Sports Programming Network --

broadcasts more college basketball games than any network in the country.

I mean, there are times when you can watch five games in a single day on ESPN!

But while nearly all of the top teams appear on ESPN, and even a lot of not-so-top teams, black colleges do not. It ought not be that way.

ESPN boldly claims that it has the "best college basketball schedule ever," but where's North Carolina A&T? How about Alcorn State? What happened to Howard University?

Household names those are not. Among the best basketball teams those are not. But Howard, A&T

and Alcorn are members of Division I, which means they are on the same official level with UCLA, North Carolina State and all the other hot-shot teams you hear so much about.

We use the word "official," since there is no arguing the fact that most of the lower-level Division I basketball teams clearly are inferior to many of the bigger schools. But that is not the point.

While ESPN sees no harm in showing a North Carolina-Dartmouth game, which is a lousy matchup, it chooses to thumb its nose at a UCLA-Howard or North Carolina State-North Carolina A&T.

Can one lousy matchup be any worse than the other? What this column would like to see is for ESPN to simply toss a bone in the direction of black Division I clubs. Just one or two a year.

Granted, Florida A&M against South Carolina State probably would not be a very good draw for national television. But Texas Southern-Kansas, which was not televised, is no worse a draw than Seton Hall-Fordham, which was.

All this column asks is that the networks show some compassion, some fairness. Seeing as how ESPN will show more than 150 college games this

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