

Tiny But Tenacious

The Washington, D.C., All-Stars stunned the Winston-Salem teams with their trapping defenses and constant ball-hawking. When the dust settled after the two-day tourney last week, the Winston-Salem All-Stars found themselves bewildered and winless. Above, a portion of the 10-and-under division D.C. squad, including Kristen Noble (2) and Raylon Etheridge (12), doesn't seem to care which Hart twin it corrals (photo by James Parker).

Sports People

Hampton coach doing it his way

By BARRY COOPER
Syndicated Columnist

It makes no difference to some that Hampton Institute, a small, private college located in Hampton, Va., has the best tennis program in the history of black college athletics.

It does not matter to some that, over the last 14 years, Dr. Robert Screen's teams have won an incredible 80 percent of their matches (262-62), and captured 11 Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association championships, as well as the NCAA Division II national crown in 1976.

Those accomplishments often are pushed aside by Hampton alumni, who would rather talk with disgust about the racial makeup of Screen's teams.

If Screen is the most successful tennis coach in black college history, then he is also one of the most controversial. Though enrollment at his school is virtually all-black, few black athletes are ever on the Hampton tennis team.

This year, of the top eight players on the squad, only three are American blacks. In previous years, the situation has been worse.

Despite all that, Screen, a very outspoken man, make no apologies. He says as long as the top black high school talent ignores Hampton Institute, then he will ignore it,

and stick with the overseas recruiting that has made him famous.

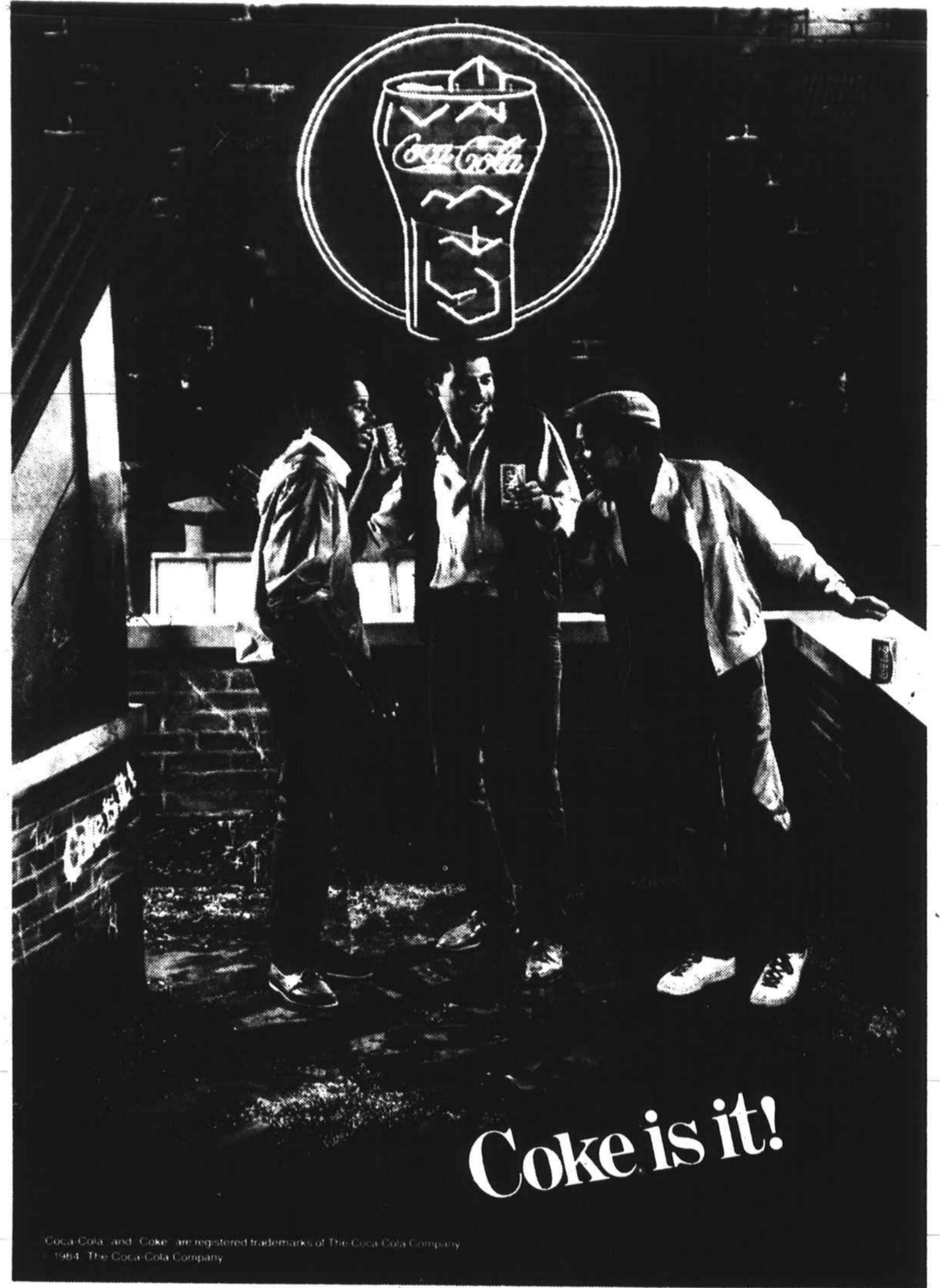
"I think two things are going on," Screen says. "Number one, blacks are still suffering from the 'white is right' syndrome. When the top black tennis players come out of high school, their parents pack them off and proudly send them off to Stanford or UCLA. When players who could hardly make their high school team get ready to graduate, their parents try to send them to me. I won't stand for that. I'm not interested in taking kids who have to be taught how to serve, how to lob."

"The second thing is, black kids don't know anything about black culture. They're ignorant. I have to explain to them where Hampton Institute is. That is incredible for a school that was associated with Booker T. Washington, who was associated with W.E.B. DuBois. It's a shame what is happening."

Alumni groups have not been able to change Screen's recruiting practices. While other black college coaches take whatever black youngsters they can get, Screen helps keep the phone company in business by calling all over South America and Africa for talent.

His top player this year is Godwin Emeh, from Lagos, Nigeria. Other foreign players on the team include Mauro Menzes of Brazil, Scott Miller of the Bahamas, Alex

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