

Gaines, who was genuinely surprised that his team received a bid and had to hunt down his players to arrange workouts.

"When you lose two in a row at the end of the season, it destroys the whole year," Gaines lamented. "I had already dismissed the kids from practice and gone on a recruiting trip when I heard we got a bid."

In the South Atlantic title clash, CIAA runnerup Virginia Union scored the first basket of the game and never trailed as the Panthers held off Norfolk State 58-56 to advance to the quarterfinals.

Norfolk finished at 29-2, with both of its losses coming to the Panthers. But once Spartan Coach Charles Christian had cooled off from the heat of battle, he still was able to smile about his team's superb year, which nobody anywhere had predicted.

"Not many teams will finish the season 29-2," Christian said. "I'm proud of my kids. They played half-healthy."

CIAA tourney MVP Ralph Tally suffered a groin injury and super-sub Albert Gatling also played hurt.

Virginia Union Coach Dave Robbins, who started four players who weren't on his roster when the Union lost in the first round of the CIAA tourney last season and missed the playoffs, praised his team's defensive effort.

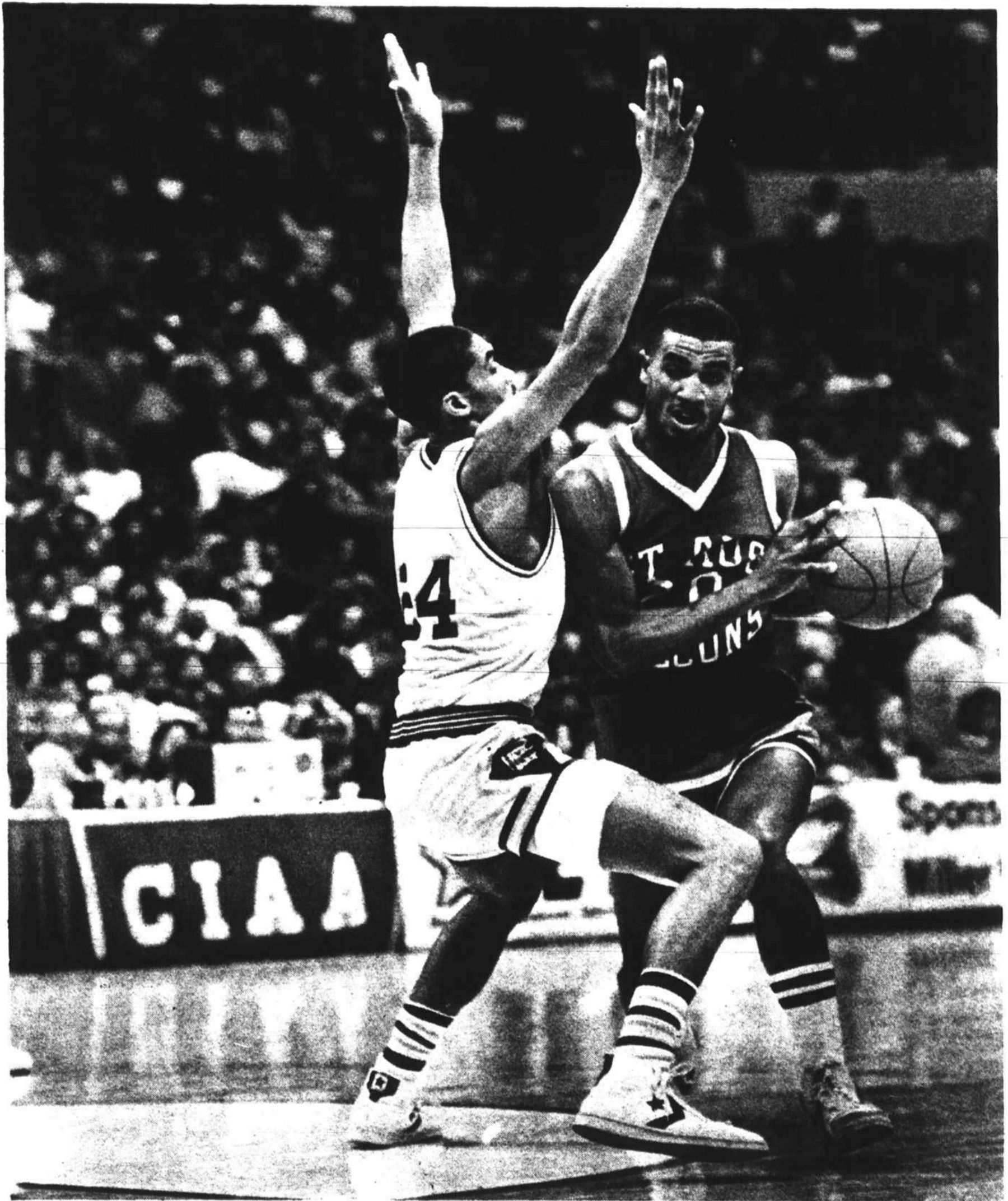
"I told the kids that the only thing that will win against a team like Norfolk is defense and they gave a great effort," Robbins said.

Freshman Jamie Waller started the first game of his career at guard, scored 19 points in the title game against Norfolk and was named the regional's MVP.

Meanwhile, Harvey Heartley and his Falcons braved a snowstorm that caused their flight to be rerouted to Buffalo, N.Y., where they chartered a bus to Erie for their opening-round game with sixth-ranked Mansfield State.

But, despite not playing since the CIAA tourney and not having time to

*Please see page 9*



### Dangerous Footing

**Anthony Rogers on the move in the CIAA Tournament: His footwork wasn't as nimble in the NCAA finals, where an ankle injury slowed both him and the Falcons against Central Missouri State (photo by Joe Daniels).**

## A&T's Big Chance *From Page 6*

in some cases, money and cars — the NCAA Tournament has not been kind to Don Corbett.

The fiery North Carolina A&T coach had his team mauled by West Virginia on its first visit two years ago.

Then he had it befuddled and beguiled by a well-drilled Princeton team that might have been better at Scrabble but clearly had inferior basketball talent.

This year, however, Corbett

brought a seasoned, more confident team to the NAAs.

The Aggies had played defending national champion N.C. State tough and got exposure against big schools and big crowds early with forays to Detroit and Michigan (which eventually won the NIT).

They then dismantled strong Alabama State at home, and later played the Hornets tough in a road loss, but no matter.

All Corbett and his team have to

show for their NCAA trips is a Big Oh.

They lost this year by one to Morehead State, a team they appeared to be under man.

Now, with the graduation of star forward Joe Binion, the Aggies will have to rebuild and may, in fact, have trouble winning the MEAC championship, which usually seems reserved for A&T.

Corbett obviously was disheartened by the Morehead loss, which might have been a breakthrough win had a last-gasp jumper by Eric Boyd found the mark.

"We played too well to lose,"

Corbett said. "We didn't make a lot of mistakes. We got the shots we wanted. It's a very tough loss to take considering the way we played."

Said Boyd of the last-second jumper: "I thought that shot was going in. I got a good release. The play was designed to go to Jimmy Brown but it sailed over his head and I got it."

The near miss ironically hurt A&T more than its pair of lopsided NCAA losses. And, with key player Joe Binion gone, it could be quite a

*Please see page 10*