

BARRY COOPER

Few Fringe Benefits For Black Coaches

As far as we can tell, all college football coaches are created equal. But somewhere along the way, thanks to the American way of free enterprise, the pendulum begins to favor those coaches who:

- a) are white.
- b) coach at the biggest schools.
- c) have teams that wins lots of games.

Though that indeed is the American way, it is not fair, especially when you consider that only the men who meet the above criteria make big money.

Grambling's Eddie Robinson, one of the best coaches in the country, has not made lots of money until recently because he is not white and does not coach at a very large school.

Never mind that in about two years Robinson will have won more games than any college coach ever has.

Never mind that another black coach, Jackson State's W.C. Gordon, consistently develops athletes who become NFL stars.

Never mind that Florida A&M Coach Rudy Hubbard became the first coach to win the Division I-AA national championship and is the only black to win such a title.

Never mind that Mississippi Valley Coach Archie Cooley is considered something of a genius when it comes to devising high-powered offenses.

Despite all that, these men remain far less marketable and earn considerably less money than their counterparts at larger schools.

Apparently, the only way to make the really big bucks -- and we're talking \$300,000 a year -- is to strut the sidelines at a big-time school, preferably on national television.

Only then will the automakers come running with big contracts, along with athletic shoe companies and fast food chains.

Okay, all you cynics out there may be thinking something like this: If small-college coaches want to make big money, let them go to work for big schools. Isn't that the American way?

Sure is. Except that big schools aren't hiring black head coaches. Most of them are even reluctant to hire black assistant coaches.

So if black coaches are to make a lot of money coaching college football, they'll have to do it on the small-college level.

Because of shrewd marketing strategies employed over the years, Grambling's Robinson has become a household name. But only now, at age 65, are endorsements and other money-making opportunities starting to come his way.

No other black coaches are making much money, no matter how talented they are.

For the coaches of small colleges,

especially those at predominantly black schools, life means making about \$40,000 a year and working 80 hours a week.

That's not bad money, but it won't make a man rich, either. Jackie Sherrill, coach at Texas A&M University,

Please See Page 26

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