

SWAC

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tire starting lineup, a lineup which carried the Braves to four straight national post-season tournaments, three SWAC tournament championships and three SWAC regular-season titles. Alcorn will be hard-pressed, yet, better than some.

"This will be the third time that we've lost five starters in one year," said Whitney. "Each time, we've always been able to rise to the occasion. It may be difficult this time around, but we hope to have the same kind of end results."

David Palmer, a 6-9 senior center, and Davey Whitney Jr., a 6-3 senior guard, represent the Braves' best hope of salvation. Palmer averaged 9.6 points and 5.0 rebounds last year, while Whitney netted 4.8 points and handed out 2.7 assists.

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE should be competitive enough to remain in the higher echelon of the SWAC this year, after finishing 18-11 overall and 7-7 in the SWAC (third) last year. Lafayette Stribbling's team returns three starters and had a decent recruiting season.

The best of the Delta Devils includes 6-3 senior guard/forward Mark Coleman (11.8 ppg., 6.2 rebounds, 5.1 assists), 6-0 junior guard George Ivory (9.4 ppg., 4.5 assists) and 6-3 guard Mike Ferguson (8.4 ppg., 4.6 rebounds).

Heading up the SWAC's bottom four are the Alabama State Hornets, followed by the Texas Southern Tigers, the Prairie View A&M Panthers and the Grambling State Tigers.

James Oliver's ALABAMA STATE Hornets lost four starters from last year's 14-17 team that went 7-7 in SWAC play (third) last year. It was Oliver's first-ever losing campaign and his team will struggle to stay above .500 this season.

Frank Silmon, a 6-6 sophomore forward who averaged 10.8 points and 5.6 rebounds per game a year ago, is Alabama State's lone returning starter from a team that lost the likes of guards Michael Freeney (12.9 ppg., 5.6 rebounds) and Alexander Newell (10.1 ppg.), forward Douglas George (5.5 ppg., 4.5 rebounds) and center Joe Williams (19.8 ppg., 11.1 rebounds).

TEXAS SOUTHERN, like Alcorn State and Alabama State, was hit hard by graduation, losing four starters, including forward Amire Applewhite (14.8 points per game, 6.4 rebounds) and forward-center Stephenfon Standfield (12.5 ppg., 9.8 rebounds).

Robert Moreland's Tigers went 11-5 overall in 1984-85, finishing 6-8

in the conference (tied for fifth).

Returning 6-1 senior guard Lester Brooks (13.5 ppg., 5.8 assists) could be the catalyst for the Tigers, a team that will depend heavily on a crop of impressive newcomers. The best of those freshmen appear to be 6-9 center Fred West and 6-5 guard Brian Brooks.

Bringing up the rear, but perhaps not the very rear for a change, are PRAIRIE VIEW A&M'S Panthers, who may escape the SWAC cellar

this year.

Terrance Artis, a 5-11 senior guard (6.2 ppg., 5.6 assists) and 6-6 junior forward Marc Horne (8.1 ppg., 4.2 rebounds) should help the Panthers improve on their marks of 5-22 overall and 4-10 in the SWAC (seventh) last year.

That leaves Fred Hobdy's GRAMBLING STATE Tigers, who went 8-19 overall a year ago, 4-10 in the SWAC, in the league basement.

The entire Tiger lineup was eligi-

ble to return but Hobdy has suspended three of those starters, including guard Willie LaPoole (15.2 ppg., 4.8 rebounds), guard Roger Jones (9.6 ppg., 4.0 rebounds) and center Marlon Paige (7.2 ppg., 4.6 rebounds).

Dissension is the word that best describes the Tigers' program of late.

Lonza Hardy is sports information director at Alcorn State University.

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