

# A tribute to some little-recognized athletes

By ANTHONY POWELL  
Special To The Review

I know it is close to football season, but I want to "heap praise" on a group of athletes who have performed extremely well this past spring. Few know about their hard work and their accomplishments.

Few people have heard of Paul Emordi and Vernon George or Texas Southern. They aren't first-round prospects in the NFL draft. You will never read about them in the *Review* because they are being drafted by the NBA or major-league baseball.

In fact, Emordi, who is from Nigeria, probably never heard of these sports until he arrived in the United States. But Emordi, George and others like them are very good at what they do.

Emordi and George are long jumpers for Texas Southern and finished one and two in the NCAA Division I track and field championships. Emordi won the long jump with a leap of 27' 1". George came in second with a leap of 27' 0 1/2".

Track and field is probably one of the strongest sports on black college campuses. This event deserves our support and praise. But track and field is considered a minor sport, and the accomplishments of the athletes who participate in it go unnoticed.

Most people don't know -- except the track insiders -- that Prairie View won the women's NAIA track and field title with 44 points. This was the sixth straight championship for Coach Barbara Jacket.

Edith Renfro was voted the Most

Outstanding Performer in the meet. Renfro won the heptathlon with 5,162 points. Renfro accounted for 31 of the Panthers' 44 points. Renfro -- along with Lavonda Lockett, Cathy Taylor and Jocelyn Tatum -- helped the Panthers win the 1,600-meter relay in 3:41.1.

Hats off to the Panthers!

Most people don't know that Lincoln (Pa.) University came in second in the men's Division III championships. The Lions won the Division III title two years ago. The Lions -- with a well-balanced team -- finished second with 56 points behind Frostburg State. Willard Fairweather, Dekalo Whitfield, Andre Hall and Mark Long gave the Lions 10 points with a victory in the 1,600 meters in 3:13.25.

Good job, Lions!

Most people do know that Alabama A&M (women), Hampton (women) and St. Augustine's College (men and women) are powers in Division II track and field. In fact, these schools can hold their own with major Division I schools on the track.

Ask Texas how good Hampton's 400-meter relay team is -- the team that beat them in the Penn Relays in Philadelphia in a time of 44.18. Morgan State finished second in 44.50.

The relay team of Edoce Clarke, Maureen Wilshire, Vivienne Spence and Trina Creekmore spoiled Morgan's chance of repeating as champions. The Pirates have a good sprinter in Spence, who won the Penn Relays 100 meters in 11.59. She finished fourth in the Division II championships in 11.76. This

foursome also won the 400-meter relay in the Division II championship in 44.80.

This year, Hampton knocked off St. Augustine's College in the women's division in the CIAA championships in Hampton. But the Falcons have been and always will be a power in Division II track and field. They won both men's and women's indoor titles this winter.

Even though the Falcons couldn't pull off that feat during the outdoor championships -- the men finished third and the women ninth -- they are a power to be reckoned with.

Coach George Williams gets good athletes, he runs them in major meets against good competition, and they always finish high in the Division II championship standings. Plus the Falcons can spend quite a bit on track because they don't have a football team to bust their budget.

Donovan Callum, Earnest Barrett, Timothy Chapman and Trevor Graham, who helped the Falcons to a victory in the 1,600-meter relay in 3:07.68 at the championship, are a few of the good athletes on Williams' squad. Graham also won the 400 meters at the Division II championships in 45.81.

How lucky can a coach get to have a great athlete like Jeari Miles of Alabama A&M on his squad? She scored 21 of A&M's 60 points at the Division II championship. She won the 400 meters in 52.36 (a new meet record), the long jump in 20' 11/4" and came in sixth in the 200 meters in 23.92. Miles is one of several good athletes on the

A&M squad.

Hats off to Alabama A&M, Hampton and St. Augustine's!

Black colleges on the Division I level "have their moments" against the bigger schools. I don't think they have the resources -- right now -- to win the Division I crown. But the schools in the MEAC and the SWAC (along with Tennessee State) do produce some good athletes. William Moultrie, who is also the athletic director, does a good job at Howard. Fred Sowerby does the same at Delaware State for the women.

Texas Southern recruits heavily in track-crazy Nigeria, and that has enabled the school to surprise a few folks come championship time. Morgan State, which is hurting in basketball and football, does well in track.

The Bears have All-America sprinters Rochelle Stevens and Wendy Vereen. Stevens came in second in the 400 meters in the NCAA Division I championships in 51.23.

I know that most *Black College Sports Review* readers want to read about football. They want to know whether Brad Baxter of Alabama State can have another 1,000-plus-yard season on the ground. Whether Kevin Dent of Jackson State can lead Division IAA in interceptions again.

But let us give praise to athletes in a minor sport who have made major accomplishments. I am sure that Kenny Vivett of Norfolk State, who won the Division II long jump with 25' 10 3/4", would agree with that.

## Thomas

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assistant since 1973. But Gilliam had the experience and the track record, they argued. The same couldn't be said for Thomas.

"I don't think it was ever a matter of me being accepted or not," Thomas recalls. "It was a matter of differing opinions (as to who should get the job). There were never any hard feelings between us about it.

"As for what people were saying, I've found that in sports, there is a lot of emotion involved, and people tend to react in

ways that they don't really mean to. Everybody's main concern was the success of the program. There was a degree of uncertainty because I was untested as a head coach. But I've always felt that victories settle a lot of issues. I feel that people are more comfortable with the staff we have now."

Not getting the head coaching job didn't sit well with Gilliam. In spite of Thomas' requests, he felt it best to remove himself from TSU football. After all, Gilliam had nurtured Thomas, coaching

him as a middle linebacker for the Tigers from '67 to '70.

Their relationship hasn't changed. Gilliam Sr. remains the teacher, Thomas remains the student. Thomas often calls on Gilliam's advice in coaching matters.

"Gilliam started me in the coaching business," Thomas says. "He even convinced me to stay in coaching when I was thinking about changing professions. When it comes to him and myself, I step aside. Joe Gilliam, John Merritt and Alvin Cole-

man have played major roles in my development as a coach."

It appears that Bill Thomas has some insurmountable mountains to scale. But you won't hear any TSU opponents feeling pity. The Tigers always seem to get it done, and TSU's football opponents are all too well aware of that fact.

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## ALUMNI

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working on their blocking schemes to try and affect my play. They paid a lot more attention to me last season because of the MVP award. The adjustments I made were just a matter of me working harder. I saw more people when I rushed the passer, which I felt like I was going

to see anyway. If I hadn't seen more people, I would've felt that I wasn't doing the job."

Being on a contending title team and being the defending world champion comprise two different worlds, according to Dent, who has been in both positions. "We worked

hard to get to the top," he says, "but it's even harder to stay there. Other teams are working to get to the top level also. When you're the champ, teams can have bad games for weeks, but when they play you, they almost always play their best game. The Giants will find that

out this year. It's going to be much tougher (to repeat than they think."

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