

BLACK COLLEGE NOTES

MEAC announces new format for March tourney

By RANDY PETTITT
Chronicle Sports Editor

The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference has announced that there will be a change in the format of their conference basketball tournament.

The MEAC tournament, held Friday, March 4 and Saturday, March 5 in the Greensboro Coliseum, will use a two-day format for the first time ever.

Instead of the usual three-day format, both men's and women's first round games will be played at the home sites of the top seeds on Monday, February 29 and Tuesday, March 1.

The final four qualifiers will then meet at the Greensboro Coliseum for the semi-finals on March 4 and 5.

MEAC Commissioner, Ken Freese, said the two-day format was adopted to insure financial security.

"The new format should stabilize the tournament financially," said Freese in a prepared statement. He was in Tennessee with members of the NCAA at press time.

"First round profits at campus sites should produce revenues

greater than what we could have with all the first round games at one site.

"In two years, we should know which is better -- the two-day or three-day format."

Free said officials of the Greensboro Coliseum consented with the new format.

"They're happy with it," he said. "They agree it will be more beneficial to the conference."

According to sources, the tournament is one of the poorest in Division I in terms of attendance. Conference officials hope campus games will improve their status and increase profits to the member institutions.

Greensboro Coliseum hosted the tournament from 1976 to 1979 and in 1983. It was also held in Winston-Salem from 1980 to 1982.

Aggies Top MEAC

N.C. A&T is sitting in a very familiar place this week -- on top of the men's standings in the MEAC. The Aggies are 2-0 in league play with a 90-61 win over Coppin State

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Gary Cromartie throws one down against Francis Marion in the Rams' opener. This is Cromartie's favorite way of following up a rebound and he gets plenty of practice (photo by Mike Cunningham).

Chairmen of the Boards From Page B2

thought about the different styles. I just feel comfortable with it."

Reid says though they have different styles in some degree, the subject is the same.

"You have to box out, jump up there and bring down the basketball," he said. "If you do that, then the wins will come -- and so will the points."

All The Right Stuff

The fire of last year's bitter losses in the semi-finals of the CIAA Basketball Tournament still lies in their eyes as the Rams ready themselves to plow straight ahead into the heart of a schedule laden with CIAA competition.

"This year we're well adjusted and know our roles," said Cromartie. "There has been a time when I played here and we didn't know our roles."

"Now we do and we're starting to execute them well. I will be disappointed with anything short of the CIAA championship."

Not only do the Rams claim

perhaps the CIAA's best 1-2 rebounding punch, they possess a formidable 1-2 combination on the perimeter as well.

Guards Steve Hood and Charlie Hood are both All-CIAA caliber and have paced the team in scoring with their steady shooting.

And with the "chairmen of the boards" on the job, the Rams' guards feel a whole lot easier about firing up their three-pointers.

"Bighouse" probably feels a little better too.

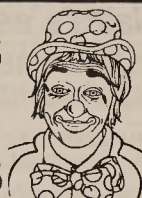
Add 6-7 razzle-dazzle swingman, Matthew "Ice-man" McMillan, and such reserves as Mike Lesane, Jamal Pierce and Toby Barber into the formula, and it paints a pretty complete picture.

The Rams could be heading into the Norfolk Scope to play for the CIAA title knowing all the bases may finally be covered.

WSSU indeed has a pair of 1-2 punches. But the knockout punch has yet to be discovered. Plowing headfirst into the CIAA schedule, Gaines is still searching.

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