

# SPORTS REVIEW

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## Will others follow in Prairie View's footsteps?

Now that Prairie View has decided to whittle its athletic program down to nothing but men and women's track over the next five years, one can't help wondering if the floodgates have been opened and other schools will follow the same route.

Prairie View faces a \$3 million deficit over a five-year period. Pairing down the athletic program will save the school 70 scholarships and thousands of dollars annually in student fees, according to school president Julius Becton Jr. However, this move should not be thought of merely in terms of dollars and cents. It should be thought of in human terms too because it is humans who will be affected by it.

First, there are the athletes involved. It will cost many of them their collegiate careers. It could end up costing some academic careers as well.

Then there are the 70 athletes who would have gotten scholarships to Prairie View each of the next five years.

What becomes of them?

Some will go to other schools, where they will take a scholarship that could have gone to someone else. A trickle down effect is being created. But the bottom line is there will be 70 fewer scholarships available each year, which in turn means that 70 fewer students will have an opportunity for an education.

Don't think that what Prairie View is doing is an isolated situation that will not effect other schools. On the surface, it might appear that way. But the truth of the matter already has schools that played Prairie View scrambling to juggle their schedules. It really wreaks havoc with the Southwestern Athletic Conference which is left with just seven member schools.

Becton said the decision was based on Prairie View's commitment to academics, and there is no reason to doubt him. If the school isn't prepared to make a commitment to athletics, then it probably is best that it scrap its program. But it seems there should have been some middle ground.

Prairie View, the last charter member of the SWAC, once was a power in black college athletics. It produced such football stars as Ken Houston, Otis Taylor, Jim Mitchell and Jim Kearney. Zelmo Beatty led the Panthers to the '62 NAIA national basketball championship before launching a stellar professional career.

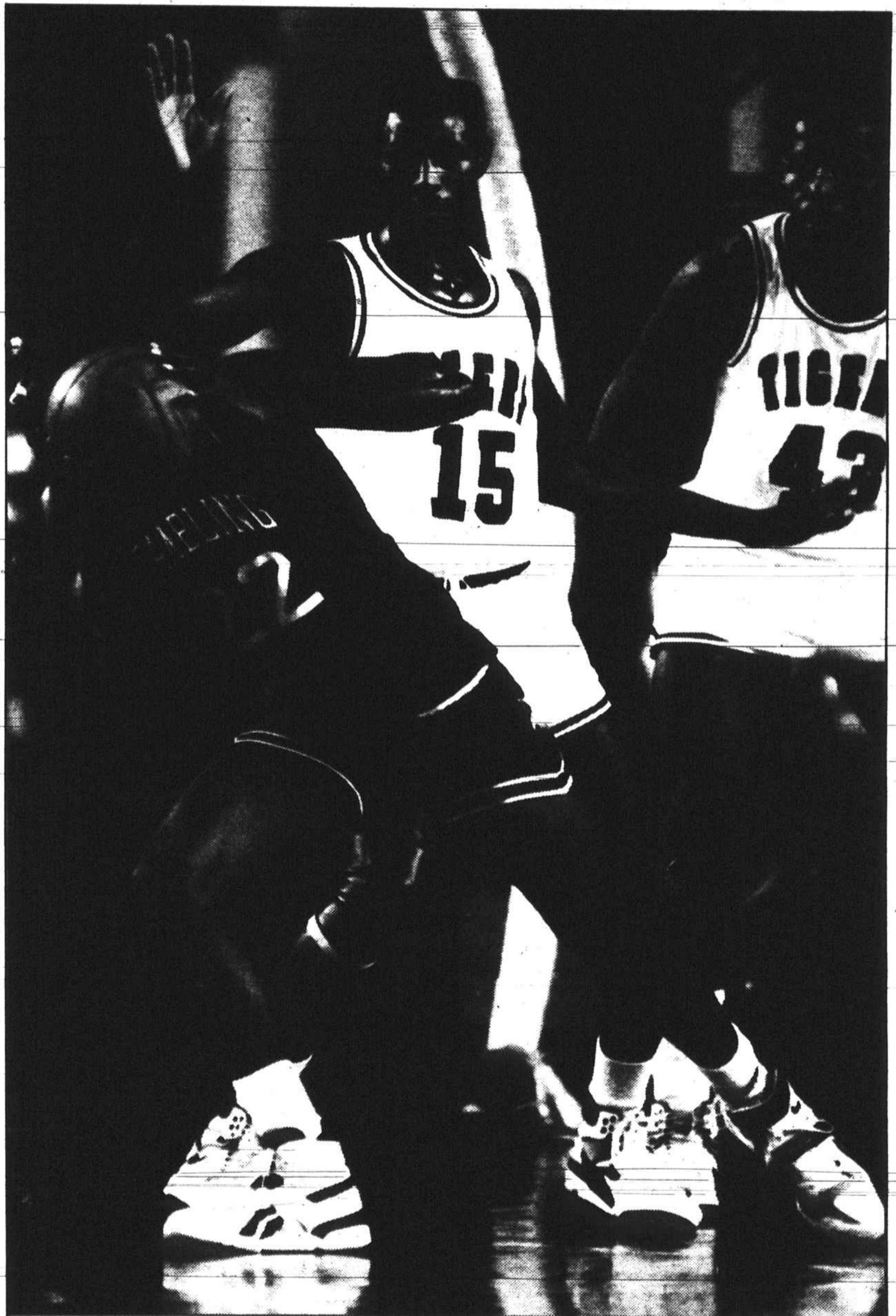
Perhaps Prairie View was in over its head in attempting to compete in Division I. All indications say that was the case. The basketball team has not had a winning season since '79. The football team's 5-5 record in '88 was its best since '76.

In hindsight, Prairie View would have been better served by not moving into Division I or at least dropping to a lower division while it still had a chance to save its athletic program.

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BCSR Staff Photo

## Black Collegians In Europe

Black college basketball ventured across the Atlantic this month. At presstime, a select black college all-star team had started their eight-game swing through France as part of a goodwill tour. Members of the team are: Matthew Yates and Richard McLean (Norfolk State); Stacey Clark (Hampton); Fred West and Charles Price (Texas Southern); Frank Sillmon (Alabama A&M); Kevin Glover (Florida A&M); Tim Anderson (Delaware State); James Walker (Morehouse); and Jeff Hayes (North Carolina Central). The squad is coached by Charles Christian, who recently retired as Norfolk State's head coach. The black college all-stars will play against the French Olympic team, the French national team and other international squads based in France. The July issue of BCSR will provide a full report on how the team fared.