

SIAC ROUNDBALL

Atlanta schools build a strong case

The SIAC scramble for regular season titles could very well involve all three Atlanta-based schools — Clark/Atlanta and Morris Brown in the East Region and Morehouse College in the West Region.

Going into the final month of the season, the top teams have very little breathing room. Here's a look at how things are stacking up around the league.

EAST REGION

Clark/Atlanta is on a roll having won six of seven league games. The Panthers have discovered the path of consistent winning by getting more of an even distribution of points offensively.

James Martin (19 ppg, 3.6 steals a game) is still the guy to watch, but he has very capable help with the addition of guard Dalton Greene. Greene ranks among league leaders in three-point field goal percentage (.407) and free throw percentage (.762).

CAU has also done a better job as a team in terms of field goal shooting (49.1 percent) and rebounding (winning the battle of the glass by an average of 7.8 caroms a game). Argent Steele has come through as one of the SIAC's top dish-out artists, averaging 4.3 assists a night.

Morris Brown has emerged as a serious contender because of added and more accurate firepower. The Wolverines are the league's second best shooting squad, canning 49.2 per cent of their shots from the floor. Kirt Baker (19.5 ppg) and Leroy Gasque (15.5 ppg) are major contributors in that area — both are shooting better than 59 percent from the field.

Marcus Haynes (14.8 ppg) has continued to give MBC an outside threat and along the way, Royce Turner has elevated his game. In MBC wins over Fort Valley (89-74) and Albany State (115-112 in four OTs), Turner had 51 points, 14 rebounds, seven steals, eight assists and three blocked shots. Ali Baarqar controls the attack as the trigger man who leads the SIAC with 6.6 assists a game.

Fort Valley State was holding its own, which is more than most folk expected this year. The Wildcats have Julius Fritz (24.6 ppg) which means they always have the potential to score lots of points.

However, Fritz doesn't have to do it all on his own anymore and that has made Valley a

more formidable opponent. The presence of Kevin Simmons (19.1 ppg, 10.4 rpg, 1.8 blocks a game) and David Eaker (16.6 ppg) have given the 'Cats some inside punch which is reflected in their league-leading 50.8 percent field goal shooting in the SIAC's team stats.

Paine College is experiencing some trying times. Larry Washington is one of the league's better performers at 19.3 ppg. But the Lions haven't scored enough points (69 ppg), haven't shot well (41.6 per cent field goal accuracy) and have taken a beating on the boards. Lions opponents outrebound PC by an average of almost 11 boards a game.

Albany State has one of the conference's most productive performers in Michael Bivens — 18.2 ppg, 10.1 rpg plus 47 blocks in 17 games. Rubin Harvey has mastered the art of rejecting enemy shots. He leads the conference in that category with 69 blocks in 18 games.

Savannah State has had its problems this season. Their 42.1 percent field goal accuracy hasn't helped matters any. However, Chad Faulkner has produced very nicely, averaging 17.1 ppg.

WEST REGION

LeMoyne Owen can always be counted on to accumulate points in mad dash fashion. Within the conference, they score 95.6 ppg, but they also allow 94.3 ppg. However, they are beyond the .500 mark, indicating that they know how to get the best out of their fast-paced style.

Paul Wooten and Anthony Tolbert form the foundation for this team. Wooten scores 20.8 ppg, hands out 4.6 apg and is a chief thief at 2.9 steals per contest. Tolbert contributes 17.5 ppg, and leads the SIAC in field goal percentage (.633).

Allen Perry provides solid help in the rebounding department with 8.9 caroms a game, while John Boyd is ranked among the SIAC assists leaders, averaging 4.9 a game.

Morehouse hasn't always looked like the team that was picked to win the national title this season. However, the Maroon-Tigers realize that any thoughts of going back to the Elite Eight will have to start with a conference tournament win.

They're in the hunt for sure. And that's the way it will stay. Harold Ellis will see to it personally. Ellis is the circuit's top gun at 25.7 ppg. There are times when Ellis takes total control

TOURNEY UPDATE

The SIAC men's tournament returns to Atlanta this year, but with a slightly new twist. The league tourney will be played at the Alexander Coliseum at Georgia Tech University, March 7-9. The championship finals will be aired live on March 9 at 8 p.m. by Black Entertainment Television.

The winner gets an automatic berth to NCAA Division II playoffs. Best bets to make the Final Four are: Clark/Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College and LeMoyne Owen College. Morehouse is the choice to win it all. Clark/Atlanta is the darkhorse pick.

For ticket information, call the SIAC office at 404/659-3380.

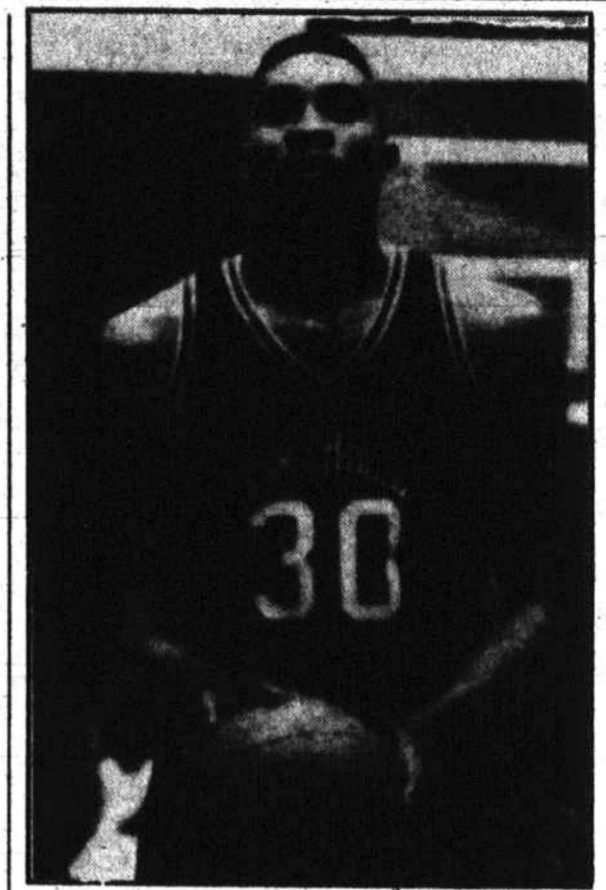


Photo by Donald Sang

Harold Ellis is eager to take Morehouse back to the Division II playoffs in '91.

Ample evidence of that was provided in games vs. Albany (a 95-87 win) and North Alabama (105-100 loss). In that two-game span, Ellis poured in 64 points, collected 17 rebounds and had four steals.

Stewart Watkins has continued to improve his defensive play in the post. He has 51 blocks in 20 games.

Miles College has a serious love affair with the three point shot. The SIAC's top rated offense (96.4 ppg) has attempted far more tries than anyone in their conference — 430 to be precise. The second most attempts have been launched by LeMoyne Owen, 290.

Anthony Watson is one of the beneficiaries of this long distance approach. Watson tops the league in threes made per game (2.9) and is among SIAC leaders in three point shooting (40 percent).

But the Bears have also done a solid job around the glass. They are the top rebounding squad in the conference (48.9 a game) and are No. 2 in rebounding margin at a +4.3 caroms a

game. Paul Beaty is one of the top lead guards around (4.4 apg).

Alabama A&M is not the same kind of team it has been in recent seasons. The Bulldogs work hard on the boards thanks to Frederick Clemons and Johnny Perry. Clemons (17.6 ppg) gets 9.6 rebounds a night and Perry picks off caroms at a rate of 8.4 per contest.

But in the final analysis, the Dogs have fallen on hard times because of poor shooting — 41.5 percent from the field is the lowest in the conference.

Tuskegee has Gary Hunt, one of the most lethal scoring forces in the league. Hunt (20.8 ppg) has gotten support from Alvin Wimberly, a 60.7 percent field goal shooter who averages 14.3 ppg and 7.8 rpg.

The Golden Tigers are the SIAC's tops in three point shooting (39 percent as team). Dennis Martin (48.6 percent) and Anthony Walker (41.3 percent) are ranked first and second in three-point shooting accuracy.

-Zack Monday

Virginia State Invitational

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19), but the accuracy told the story. The Lady Pirates converted 75 percent of their foul shots, while VSU managed just 42.1 percent, hitting 16 of 34.

Hampton had five women score in double figures in the finals. Jackie McWilliams, tournament MVP, finished with 17 points, five rebounds and four steals. Thelka Blue added 15 points and six rebounds and Candace Tillman contributed 11 points (including seven of nine shooting from the foul line). Angela Faulk (nine rebounds) and Wendy Good-

win chipped in with 10 points each.

Virginia state benefitted from some stellar play by Chris Richardson, who totaled 19 points and 15 rebounds. Ruthie Miles (16 points, nine rebounds), Jackie Carter (13 points, six rebounds) and Anita Taylor (12 points, 14 rebounds) provided ample support for Richardson.

Hampton reached the finals by dumping St. Paul's, 78-52. Faulk led the attack with 13 points while McWilliams and Blue tallied 12 points each. Tillman chipped in with 10 points.

The Trojanettes blasted their way to the championship game by virtue of their 70-36 drubbing of Morris Brown. Miles and Taylor scored 17 points each for the victors. The key to VSU's victory was their ability to shut down the MBC offense, holding the Lady Wolverines to just eight points in the first half.

Morris Brown rebounded to win the consolation game for third place by besting St. Paul's, 55-52.

Kimberly Lewis led the Lady Wolverines with 20 points and 13

rebounds. Sharon Harris added 14 points and Telicia Davis had nine rebounds for the game. MBC controlled the game because they controlled the boards, outrebounding St. Paul's by a 52-40 margin.

The top offensive performers for St. Paul's were Daphne Trusty (22 points, six rebounds), Michelle Nhambure (14 points). Sylvia Howard and Angela Ramsey came through with solid work on the boards, grabbing 11 and nine rebounds respectively.

-Steve Zimmerman