

Sports Review

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War of verbs - the sequel

The NCAA Presidents Commission is putting everyone on notice that athletes will have to do the job academically if they want to compete and have a college scholarship.

Well, geez, what more can they already do? Proposition 48 has been in place since '86 and doesn't show any signs of becoming an endangered NCAA by-law. The presidents, however, are going a step further. They're calling for a new and improved version of Prop 48. They plan to convince NCAA members that they should approve the changes when the NCAA has its annual convention in January.

The presidents have developed a system that they feel is fair. Instead of a set requirement (2.0 GPA in core curriculum courses and 700 SAT/15 ACT is the current minimum), they're calling for a sliding scale. The commission proposes a three-tiered arrangement to determine freshman eligibility. With a higher GPA, you can have a lower SAT score and vice versa (see article on page 14 for specifics).

If this measure passes in January, it becomes effective in August '95. Youngsters who will be high school freshmen this fall will be the first class to be governed by the proposed ruling.

It's somewhat ironic that in light of this proposal, the NCAA has released some interesting statistics regarding black athletes and the current version of Prop 48.

Last year, for example, blacks comprised 83 percent of non-qualifiers in football and 65 percent of non-qualifiers in all sports. But the most telling set of numbers is that of all the non-qualifiers in football, 69 percent failed because of SAT/ACT scores, while only 10 percent failed because of GPA.

As the months pass before the start of the next convention, all that's likely to happen is another full-scale, war of verbs debate about standardized test scores, which have proven to be culturally biased against minority students. But at least this plan gives student-athletes more options than they presently have. Under the presidents' guidelines, student-athletes have some leeway because of grade point averages. And let's face it, some people perform better in the classroom than they do on a standardized test. That's what the NCAA figures strongly suggest.

What this all comes down to is that like it or not, jocks, if they want to play and be on scholarship, will have to make sure they can handle college-level work. And since the high school class of '95 will have three years to make sure they're ready for it, it's up to parents, students and school systems to get the message across.

But mostly, it's on the kids. You can't make them go to class and you can't make them study. But they can be taught what they need to know in order to hold their own in academia.

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— John Holley

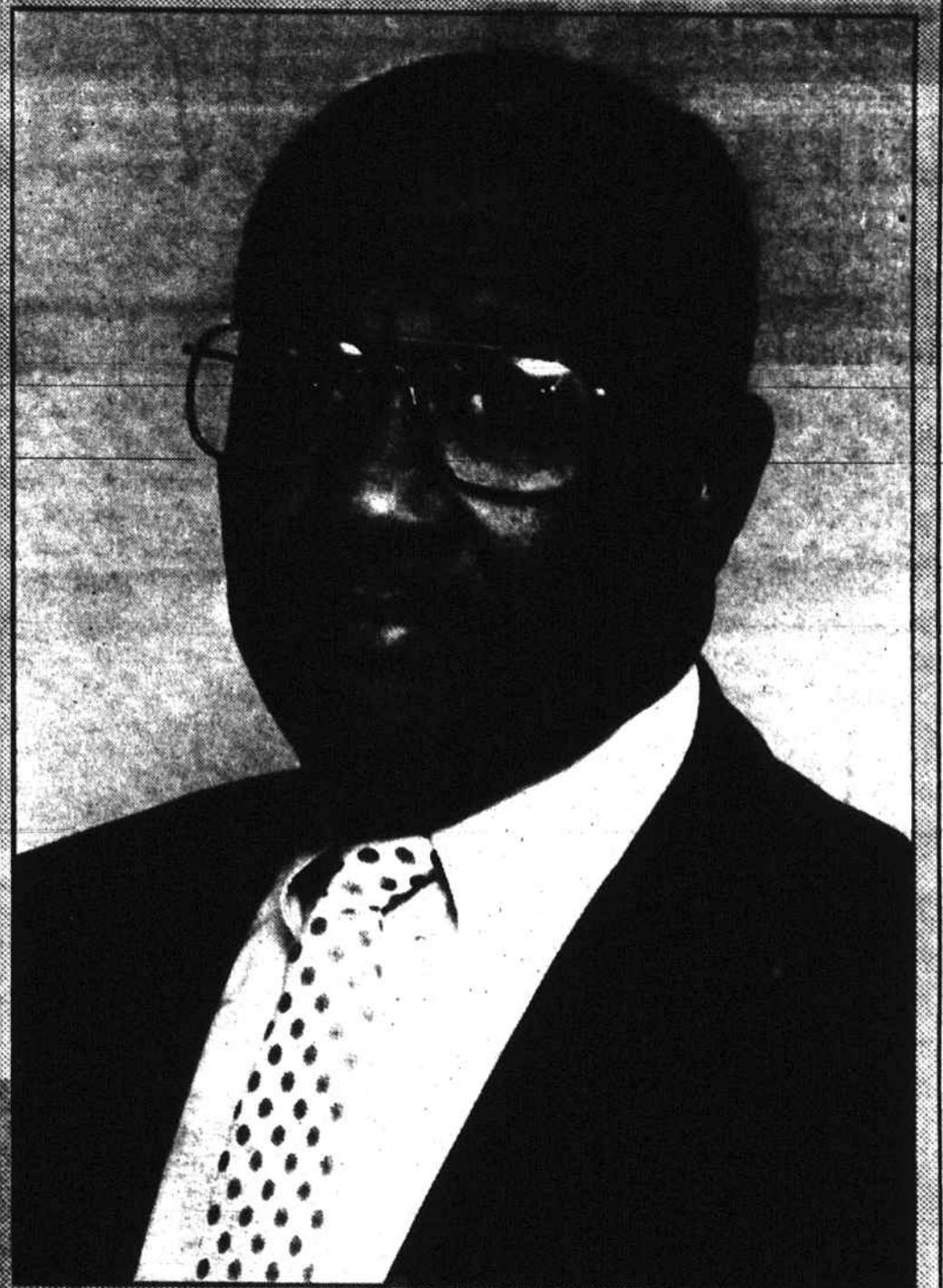


Photo by E.L. Saunders

Holley is Jacox/Champ winner

Talk about irony.

John Holley recently won an award that's named after the guy who gave him his start in his sports publicity career. Holley is the sports information director at Norfolk State and winner of this year's Cal Jacox/Champ Clark Award, which goes annually to the top SID at a historically black institution.

Sam Jefferson, Jackson State sports information director finished second in the award balloting and Alvin Hollins, Florida A&M sports information director, finished third. Hollins is last year's winner.

The three winners were honored at BCSIDA's Annual Business Meeting early this month at the CoSIDA Convention in San Francisco. Jim Albright and the Eastman Kodak Co. made presentations that totaled \$1,000 to the three SIDs. Holley received a check for \$600, Jefferson received a check for \$300, and Hollins' check was for \$100.

Holley, who finished third in last year's voting, has more than 20 years experience as a publications, public relations and sports information practitioner.

"I'm kind of surprised, but very happy and honored to be selected," Holley said. "And what makes it so special is that I knew Cal Jacox and Champ Clark. Jacox was the one that gave me my start in the field."

Jacox provided Holley with an opportunity to get some on-hand experience in the field when Holley was a freshman at North Carolina Central in 1953. At the time, Jacox was sports editor for the *Norfolk Journal & Guide*, and he needed writers to submit articles on teams in the CIAA.

"That's where it all started for me," Holley recalled. "Cal Jacox gave me my first by-line. I started out writing about North Carolina Central since that's where I was going to school. But I also got the chance to do articles on other schools in the conference."

Holley is elated about being honored, but is quick to point out that he didn't do it all by himself. To him, it's been a collective effort that has helped him to effectively promote Norfolk State athletics.

"There are a lot of people who made this possible," he said. "I'm fortunate to be in the kind of situation I have at Norfolk State. I have the budget and the time to do the kinds of things that need to be done to properly promote our athletic program."

"I don't think it's fair for me to get all the credit. I've been able to do a lot of things with the cooperation of a lot of different people. The players and the coaches we have make my job easier because they've done so well over the years."

Holley, who is a native of Baltimore, has directed public information, publications and sports information programs at Morehead State (Ky.), Albany State, Morgan State, Mansfield University (Pa.) and Lincoln University (Mo.). The NCCU alumnus is a member of the Public Relations Society of America, Communications Media of Mid-America, the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) and the Black College Sports Information Directors of America (BCSIDA). Currently, he serves as a member of CoSIDA's Publications Certification Committee.

Jefferson, a native of Centerville, Miss., has served as Jackson State's SID for 17 years, a post he has held since 1974. His brochures and publications have received numerous awards.

Jefferson, BCSIDA's current president, is the host of "Tiger Rap" a highly popular 30-minute radio talk show which features Jackson State head football coach W.C. Gordon.

Hollins is now in his 12th year as FAMU's SID. The Baton Rouge, La. native has also won his share of awards for his publications. Hollins handles both men's and women's sports publicity for the Ratlers.

— Steve Zimmerman

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