

# Alabama State is primed to win it all

Barring an unlikely calamity, the conference title will belong to Alabama State. The Hornets finished second behind Jackson State a year ago, but in the process, proved that they will be a powerhouse to be reckoned with.

Jackson State, in the meantime, won't take a back seat to anyone. As usual, they'll be right in the thick of the race from start to finish. JSU has

developed a tradition of maintaining a steady supply of talented players.

Grambling, on the other hand, will have a say in who finally emerges as the ultimate SWAC victor. But the G-Men will also need to find replacements for several key players in order to seriously challenge. But then again, coach Eddie Robinson has a finely honed skill of getting the max out of his players.

League teams should be aware that Mississippi Valley State is no longer a team to be taken lightly. The Delta Devils barely missed the break-even point, which is quite an achievement considering how downtrodden they had been in recent seasons.

Southern University enters the season full of hope that consistency will become a trademark, while Alcorn State is out to show that '90's dismal

record was an aberration.

Texas Southern got a brief taste of victory during the early part of last year. They still remember it, in spite of a disappointing second half of the season. That should be sufficient incentive to inspire TSU to reach new heights.

Prairie View A&M returns to the SWAC fold after axeing football last year. The Panthers faithful are realistic enough to know that winning a championship in '91 is out of the question. But at least they have a team that will have a season.

## Predicted Order of Finish

1. Alabama State
2. Jackson State
3. Grambling
4. Mississippi Valley State
5. Southern University
6. Alcorn State
7. Texas Southern
8. Prairie View A&M

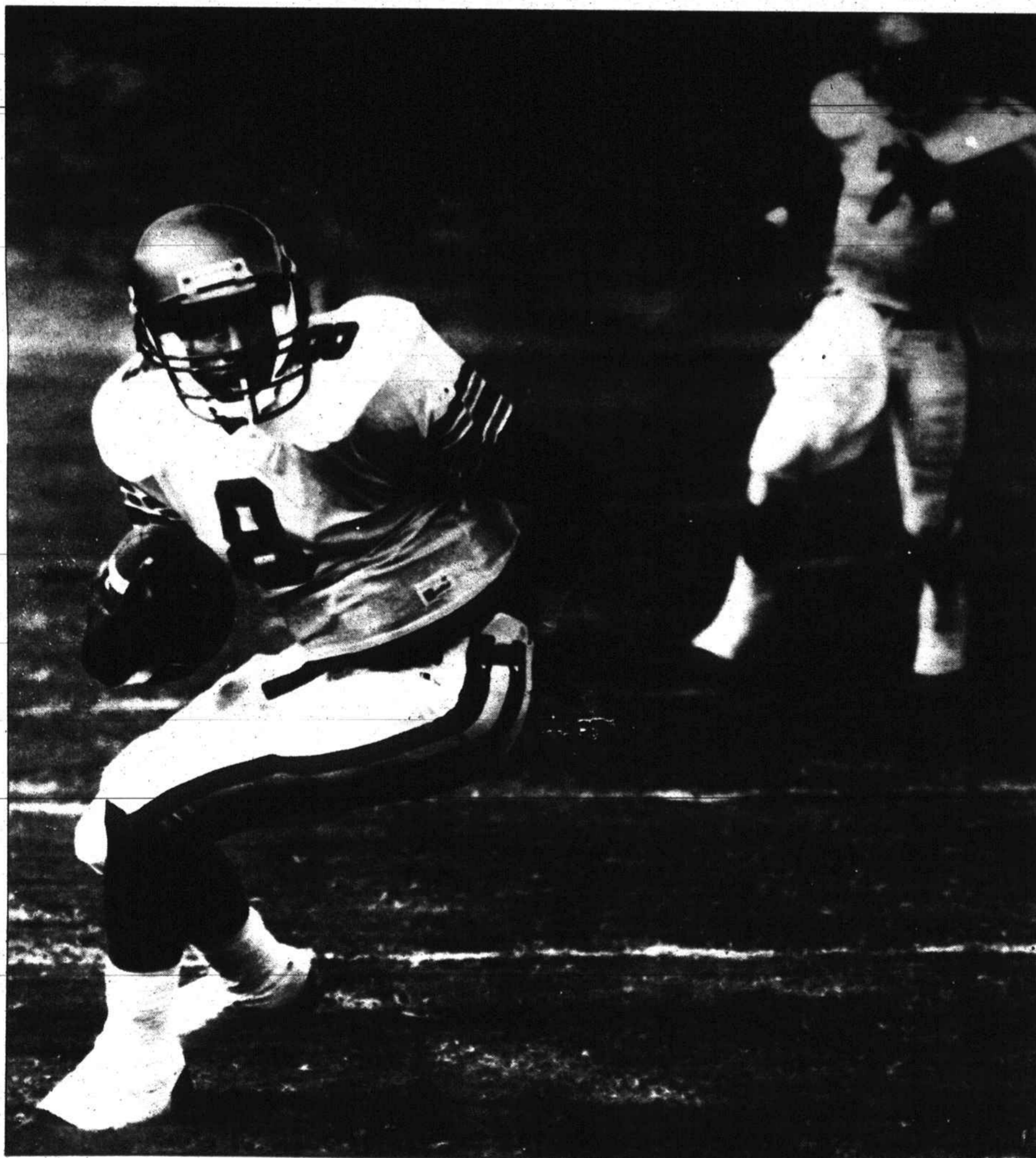
### Alabama State

Make no mistake, this should be the year that the Hornets' sting operation comes full circle. Coach Houston Markham's guys are primed after going 8-2-1, their best showing in 22 seasons. And with only two starters missing from last year, all systems are go for ASU to begin their reign as league kings.

For starters, Alabama State has proven they can beat the best around. They handed Jackson State, last year's SWAC champ, its only conference loss and they also beat Grambling. But don't forget that ASU's two defeats were by a total margin of two points. That's why they are the hands-down pick to win the title this time around.

Linebacker Eddie Robinson is the center of attention for a defense that allowed the fewest points (16.1 ppg) and rushing yards (106.4 ypg) a year ago. Robinson recorded 89 hits last season and was an Associated Press All-American pick. Additionally, he was the first player selected to represent the West squad in next January's East-West Shrine All-Star game.

Defensive end Charles Northern is a stand-out up front, while DB Emmanuel Martin (7 interceptions) is a pass thief supreme in the secondary.



"Downtown" Reggie Brown averaged 17 yards a catch as Alabama State's prime-time wide receiver.

Photo by Mark Gail.