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Will MEAC Tournament benefit from addition of Hampton, Norfolk?

From the Press



by Sam Davis

Is the CIAA's loss the MEAC's gain? Judging from the attendance at last week's CIAA Tournament, that very well might be the case.

After losing Norfolk State and Hampton over a three-year period, the CIAA's fan base has been seriously cut. Now it looks like the MEAC stands to gain from the addition of both.

Those two programs, long-time contenders in the CIAA,

haven't quite measured up yet in terms of men's basketball on the Division I level, but they nevertheless have added more drawing power to the MEAC's Tournament.

The MEAC needs such a boost. Its tournament has yet to come up to the level of the storied CIAA's annual February basketball marathon.

Despite being in a higher division on the NCAA scale, the quality and quantity of play just hasn't been up to par with its much older conference sibling. Make no bones about it, the conference has produced some quality teams. However, the level of competition from top to bottom hasn't been there year in and year out.

The league has been marked by years of domination. First it was North Carolina A&T. Then, a few years later, Howard moved into the league's upper echelon. After Cy Alexander took over the South Carolina State program in the late 80's, the Bulldogs moved into the league's penthouse.

The 90's has marked change again. Coppin State come on the scene when it won the 1990 championship against North Carolina A&T. Florida A&M copped its only tournament title in 1991, but no other team in the league has captured the league's tournament.

North Carolina Central taking long, hard look at moving to Division I,

Now that Hampton and Norfolk State have left the CIAA, can North Carolina Central be far behind?

That question is the topic of much debate in CIAA circles. But if you talk to the administration at NCCU, they say they're happy in the CIAA.

William Lide, the Eagles' athletics director, says there is no truth to the rumor that North Carolina Central has already made plans to move up to the Division I-AA level and join the MEAC as several other former CIAA schools have done in recent years.

"We have no official position at this point," Lide says. "We are in Division II right now and we are planning to be the best Division II program in the country."

"We're very pleased with the progress we're making to be the best Division II program," Lide adds. "We feel that we're getting there, not just in basketball and football but in our entire program."

"We have gone out and tried to get all of our athletic personnel to come on board full-time. We have a capital campaign in progress to increase the revenues of our program. We're renovating our stadium and we are putting \$1 million into redoing our track."

"We are putting all of these things into place to ensure that we have a broad-based program to take into the future."

Last year NCCU began evaluating its program to determine if it should move up to the Division I level or remain at the Division II level.

North Carolina Central left the CIAA in 1972 to join the MEAC. But after operating at a finan-



cial deficit for several years on the Division I-AA level, it decided to come back to the CIAA.

That mistake might make the school think long and hard before trying it again.

Lide said he won't be the person to make

that call.

"The chancellor (Julius Chambers) will make the decision in the next two years," Lide says. "My desire is that we make the program the best it can be."

Black Coaches Association gets \$50,000 from Thrifty Car Rentals

Thrifty Car Rental, the official car rental company of the Black Coaches Association (BCA) and title sponsor of the Thrifty Car Rental BCA Basketball Classic, has donated \$50,000 to college scholarship programs funded by the BCA.

This year, the BCA will grant 20 to 25 scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 each to eligible post-graduate students pursuing a career in coaching or athletic admin-

istration. To date, the BCA has awarded more than \$150,000 in scholarships since the program's inception in 1995. Last year, the BCA awarded 10 scholarships.

Founded in 1987, the Black Coaches Association consists of 3,200 minority basketball and football coaches from the NCAA and NAIA. The primary mission of the organization is to provide enhanced

opportunities for minorities in athletics through professional and career development.



Thrifty makes its contribution to the BCA.

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