

Copes With Transition To Big Times

Howard Post First NCAA 1 Win

By Cureton L. Johnson
Special To The Post

When the Howard University basketball team clapped and ran onto their homecourt for a season opener against Catholic University last Monday night, little did Bison Coach A.B. Williamson realize that the applause foreshadowed history in the making.

As the final buzzer sounded and Howard stumbled from the hardwood with a 78-74 achievement over the cross-town rival Cardinals, the Bisons claimed their first NCAA Division I victory over a non-conference team.

Noteworthy? Maybe. Significant? Only time will tell.

Howard and other teams in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference eased into the highest NCAA college basketball classification in 1974. That was the same year MEAC champion Maryland-Eastern Shore put a scare into NIT officials by whipping Manhattan College and nearly toppling Jacksonville University in the second round of that classic.

Since then Black colleges, MEAC institutions and Howard, have been dealt an overwhelming number of defeats in trying to cope with the

transition to the "big time." In the basketball hotbed of Washington, D.C., Coach Williamson has assembled a representative team in his second season; one holding potential to win their first conference championship. But football, not basketball, is the league's forte. And an MEAC basketball title would only be ornamental, like putting a Mercedes emblem onto a Vega.

As evidenced in the Catholic game, Howard has a fine supporting cast but no super star to support. Junior college transfer John Smith scored 14 points, hauled down nine rebounds and fed three assists to complement all-conference forward Gerald Glover. The junior from Atlanta responded with 18 points. Both capitalized on the new NCAA dunking allowance with crowd-chilling, gravity-defying slams.

The centers proved capable as 6-9 sophomore John Mullen and 6-8 junior Mike Nettles contributed 13 and 10 points respectively. And while the guards are still inconsistent, they are no longer consistently bad. Washington, D.C. products Angelo Council (Dunbar High) and Gerald "Tub" Gaskins (Eastern High) demonstrated an ability to move the

ball through traffic. Last season the Howard backcourt rarely got past the opponent's basket.

"We've got a young ball club," says Williamson, whose 15-man roster includes three seniors. Only one starts.

"What we did get against Catholic was a mature performance from Smith. He'll help our younger players as the season progresses."

The Western High (Washington) product played an exceptional all-around game. And the Bison cast for the season should be enhanced by another D.C. gem, 6-10 center Dorian Dent (Ballou High), when he suits up in the second semester.

And there are bound to be more fluid performances than Monday's opener when freshman guard Nathaniel Speight (MVP in Baltimore, Md., Southern High, '75-'76) begins to draw up to 20 minutes of playing time coming off the bench.

After upcoming bouts with Hampton Institute and Delaware State College, the Bisons will find out how much they really need a "super star." The University of Buffalo, Robert Morris College and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, all Division I entries, serve as pre-Christmas "bit time" tests.

Following a 9-19, 1975-76 campaign sliced with whopping losses to the University of North Carolina, Southern California and other heavyweights, Howard's current cage edition should be ready to climb up to the next rung of the ladder to competitiveness in Division I respectability.

In the meantime, Williamson will be looking for that super star, that David Thompson, that Scott May who can fire to a team and give it lofty goals. Time will tell.



Willie Robinson, a native of Charlotte, N.C. and a graduate of West Mecklenburg High School, is the best defensive guard on the North Carolina A&T basketball team this fall. Robinson is a sophomore and is expected to see considerable playing time during the 1976-77 season.

CIAA Selects Corley, Grimsley

Defensive tackle Ronald Corley and center Chet Grimsley of Johnson C. Smith University were named to the All-CIAA Football Team, an announcement last week said.

Corley, a 290-pound senior, gained the coveted honor for the second straight year. It was the first appearance on the honor team for Grimsley, 235-pound junior.

While the lowly Golden Bulls were placing two players on the 24-man squad, Virginia Union University, a team that finished well-back in fourth place in the conference's final football standings, put six men on the All-CIAA Team.

Virginia State, another team that didn't do well this past season, followed with four while Norfolk State, which won the conference championship for the third straight year, was represented by three players. Livingstone, Fayetteville State and St. Paul's had two each and Shaw, Hampton and Winston-Salem each had one player named to the team.

James Woodson, senior wide receiver from St. Paul's College, was named to the team for the third consecutive

year. He ended the year with 51 receptions for 618 yards and five touchdowns. Dexter Curry of Norfolk State, quarterback Sam Cosby of St. Paul's and defensive back Maurice Franks of Fayetteville State joined Corley as the players making the squad for the second straight year.

Cosby, who led the league in

total offense with 1,661 yards for a creditable 151.3 yards per game averaged, won-out over Steve Graeff of Norfolk State and Russ Seaton of Hampton.

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Dexter Feaster Named

To State's All-Star Team

The most feared passing combination in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, Ellsworth Turner and Dexter Feaster both of North Carolina A&T, have been named to the coveted Greensboro Daily News All-North Carolina football team.

Turner, who holds nearly every Aggie passing record, completed 153 of 273 passes for 2046 yards and 12 touchdowns. Turner is the first passer in the history of the MEAC to pass more than 2,000 yards in a single season.

Feaster, a senior from Charlotte, North Carolina, caught 49 passes for 775 yards and four touchdowns. His reception and yardage totals are MEAC records.

FOUR AGGIES GAIN ALL- MEAC HONORS

Four members of the North Carolina A&T football team gained first team All-Conference honors.

Quarterback Ellsworth Turner, receiver Dexter Feaster, defensive end Lucien Nibbs, and linebacker Jearold Holland were selected to the



Dexter Feaster ...Gains another honor all-star team.

Other Aggies gaining all-conference recognition included center Joe Bloomfield, guard Ron Aiken, punter Hornsby Howell, Jr., tight end Coy Holland, defensive tackle James Merrick, and defensive back Howard Barnhill.

In addition to gaining All-Conference honors, Turner was selected as the conference's "Offensive Player of the Year."

Jeffries Lands New Honors

ORANGEBURG, S.C.—Willie Jeffries of South Carolina State College, who led his team to a 9-1 record this season, has been named South Carolina Coach of the Year. It marked the second time in four years that the Bulldog mentor has received the honor. In 1973, his first season as a head coach, Jeffries became the first Black to receive Palmetto State Coach of the Year honors.

The recognition was the third such honor this year received by Jeffries, who has compiled a 32-10-2 record in his four years as a head coach. Earlier, the S.C. State graduate was picked as the top coach in NAIA District 6, the fourth consecutive time he has won that honor, and he and Hank Lattimore of Morgan State who led their teams to a

co-championship of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference were named co-coaches of the year in the league.

Jeffries' Bulldogs will go against Norfolk State Dec. 11 in the Bicentennial Bowl at Richmond, Va.

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WBTB To Carry UNC-VPI Game

The basketball game between the University of North Carolina and Virginia Tech will be seen on WBTB, Saturday, December 11th at 8 p.m.

Armed with three members of the U.S. Olympic team, Charlotte's Walter Davis, Phil Ford and Tommy LaGarde, the "Tar Heels" of Carolina are pre-season favorites to win the A.C.C. Championship.

However, Dean Smith's celebrated team may find Virginia Tech "Globblers" a worthy foe with the returning 6 foot 10 center, Ernest Walmsley and shooting star, Duke Thorp in their starting lineup. Their

new coach, Charles Moir, will be remembered for leading his Tulane team to four overtimes with the "Tar Heels" last season.

The Carolina-Virginia Tech game will be played in Roanoke, Virginia with Bill King, Sports Director of WDBJ, providing the play-by-play.

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