happening."

seen, but for now, such stalwart per- rebounds. formers as 6-6 forward Aaron Brandon, 6-4 guard Michael Phelps and 5-10 guard Eddie Archie are just three reasons Alcorn State is the overwhelming favorite to repeat as conference champ. The trio, second-team members of the Black College Sports Review all-America team last season, are the class of the SWAC and should cause many a heartache for opposing coaches outside the conference as well.

Brandon is the SWAC's top returning scorer from last season, having pumped in an average of 19.5 points per game. Phelps is considered the graduated, giving the conference's SWAC's top all-around ballplayer, averaging 16.7 points, 3.8 rebounds and 2.2 assists last year. Archie, meanwhile, is one of the nation's flashiest playmakers, netting 10.8 points, 6.3 assists and three steals per contest.

After Alcorn, the battle for No. 2 in the SWAC will probably involve Alabama State, Southern and Texas Southern.

The Alabama State Hornets, under Coach James Oliver, finished the 1983-84 campaign deadlocked with Alcorn State for the league championship with an 11-3 record. However, their 22-6 overall record was the best among conference schools and Oliver was one of many who still questions why his team was not extended an invitation for post-season play in either the NIT or the NCAA playoffs.

"It wasn't very pleasing to see teams in the NIT with double digits in their loss columns," Oliver still grumbles. "We had over 20 wins and we played a very tough schedule."

The Hornets again will play a cess. relatively tough schedule, and reaching the 20-win plateau will be substantially tougher this time around. The reason: the loss of 6'8" forward Lewis Jackson and 6'6" forward/center Melvin Arm-

Jackson was the undisputed Player of the Year in both the SWAC and all of black college basketball last season after averaging 29 points per game while teammate Armstrong con- long, will not only have to fill the void the league's premier players. Meantributed admirably, too, netting 8.8 left by Binion, but also two other while, 6-9 sophomore center Robert teams to the NÇAA Division II points and four rebounds.

"We'll be hard-pressed to come up to the positions we had the last two years - back-to-back 22-6 records," Oliver notes. "It'll be a tough time replacing the 38 points we lose with the loss of Jackson and Armstrong."

While Jackson and Armstrong have gone separate ways, eight of Alabama State's 10 lettermen of a year ago do .

that'll catch up with us when this class return, headed by the twosome of 6-1 leaves," says Whitney. "We're work- guard Michael Freeney and 6-6 foring hard to keep that from ward Joe Williams, both all-conference performers. Freeney averaged 11.9 What'll happen next year when the points and 7.0 assists last year, while 1984-85 class leaves will remain to be Williams averaged 14.6 points and 7.7

MID-EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

For the first time in a long time, North Carolina A&T does not own the

on basketball dominance in the league

The logical replacement for A&T at the head of the MEAC pack is Delaware State, which returns the top three scorers in the conference last year. But South Carolina State and Howard will also make noise.

Second-year head coach Joe Dean Davidson of Delaware State says his team has a tough road to hoe if it is to indeed challenge for the title.

"I think we're finally headed in the right direction," says Davidson. "But it's going to take time and plenty of hard work - a lot of sweat."

was the Hornets' leading scorer a year ago. Campbell, center Dominic Snowden and guard Danny Sapp give Delaware State bonafide all-conference performers at every position.

While Campbell has better figures than Snowden, Davidson says Aggies' second leading scorer last out 4.6 assists a game last year. Snowden is the key to the team's suc-

outside play," Davidson says. "He's ficulties. of intensity."

monopolized conference play for so freshman, should develop into one of players for Coach Don Corbett.

-LONZA HARDY JR.

The Aggies' seemingly eternal lease

ended when forward Joe Binion, threetime MEAC Player of the Year, other six teams chances to win the conference crown and receive an automatic bid to the NCAA playoffs.

Bernard Campbell, a 6-7 forward,

Sapp, the top free throw shooter, point guard slot, but can also score the Bison contenders this year.

starters. Neither Brian Booker nor McIlwaine gained valuable experience James Horace had outstanding in the pivot as a freshman and will statistics, but both were consistent

"We lost more than Joe Binion," South Carolina State will also make a says Corbett. "Before, we had people in the program capable of stepping in The Bulldogs compiled a 14-16 record and carrying on. Now we will have to in Caldwell's first year and, with three year ago. Though Harvey Heartley lost depend on freshmen and sophomores. starters and a host of talented recruits Ken Bannister to the New York Knicks

my Brown (son of the former NFL

season with a 15-point average, won't be available to the team until the se-"Snowden gives us good inside- cond semester, due to academic dif-

very physical, fast and plays with a lot A&T archrival Howard finished second in the conference last year with three freshman starters who ought to gives the Hornets leadership from his be seasoned enough in '84-85 to make

Point guard Fred Hill, who averaged North Carolina A&T, which 11 points and four assists as a years. make it pay dividends this season.

Coach Chico Caldwell's team at bid for the conference title this season.

returning. Seniors Eric Boyd and Jim- clubs in recent years.

Virginia Union's Oakley: A force on the inside (photo by James Parker).

The Bulldogs' backcourt returns ingreat), give the Aggies the finest tact and will be their strong suit. Ralph backcourt in the MEAC. But Boyd, the Miller averaged 15 points and dished

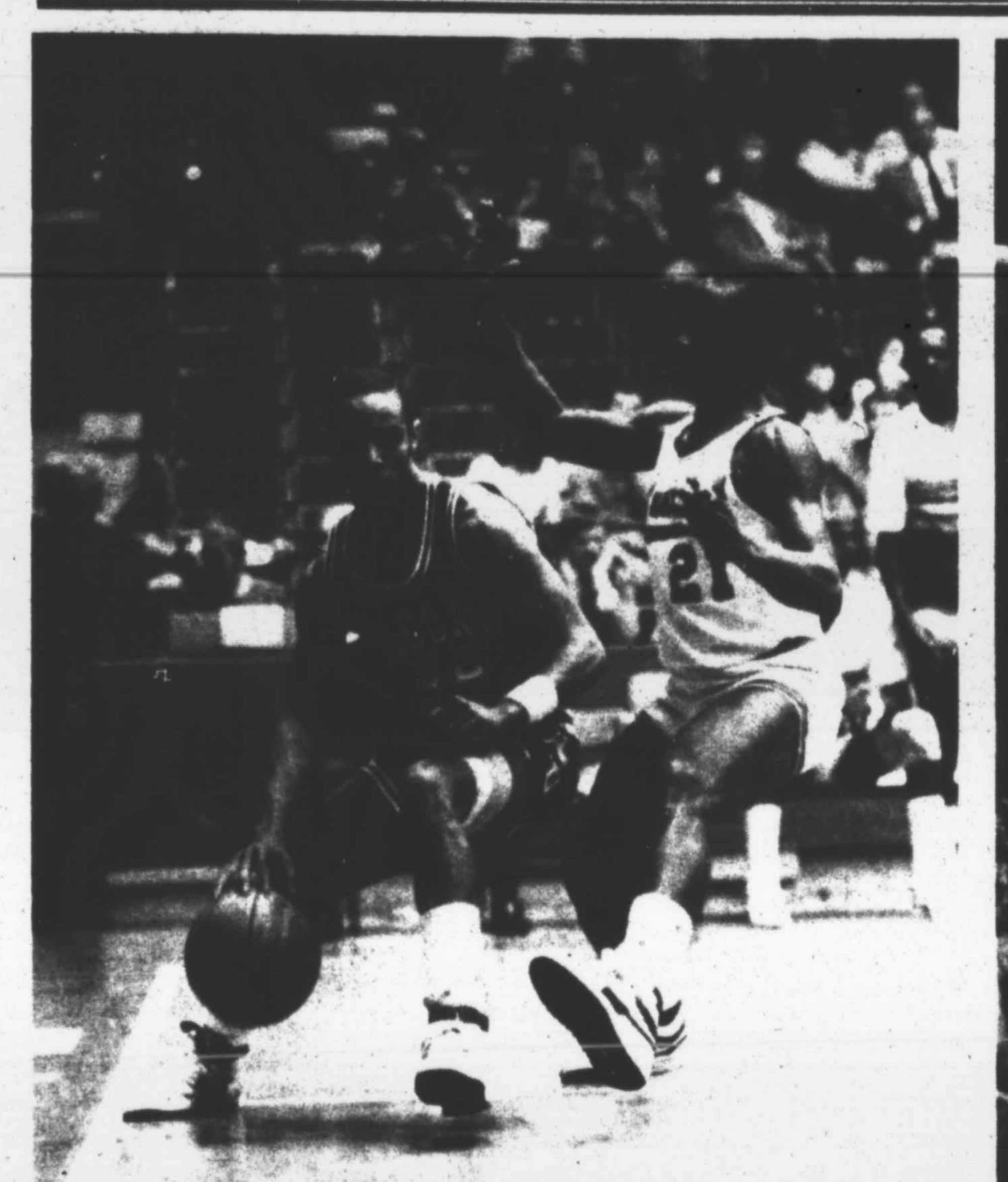
- SAM DAVIS

CIAA SOUTH

As anyone who can tell the difference between a slam dunk and a free throw knows, the CIAA has been a small-college basketball hotbed for

The conference added credence to its reputation last season by sending four playoffs. St. Augustine's stormed all the way to the championship game and Norfolk State, Virginia Union and Winston-Salem State all qualified for

Yet, the 1984-85 edition of CIAA basketball could be even better than a Yet, Corbett does have two starters coming in, will field one of their better and David Pope no longer plays for



Alcorn State backcourt ace Eddie Archie in last year's NCAA playoff (photo by Joe Daniels).

Charles Christian's Spartans at Norfolk State, others wait in the wings to strut their stuff this year.

through the bad times, including an considerable inside scoring punch, 0-39 streak at one point in his second while Derrick Sheffield lends leaderseason at the Raleigh, N.C., school. ship at point guard. But his luck may change this year. Division title.

pair, they are the best two guards in the

Lacy, a shooting guard, pumped in CIAA NORTH 18 points per game last season, while Shepard provided strong floor leadership at point guard.

Across town at St. Augustine's, Heartley is less enthused, but believes he has a good team despite losing four starters. Only Al Coates returns from last year's first five.

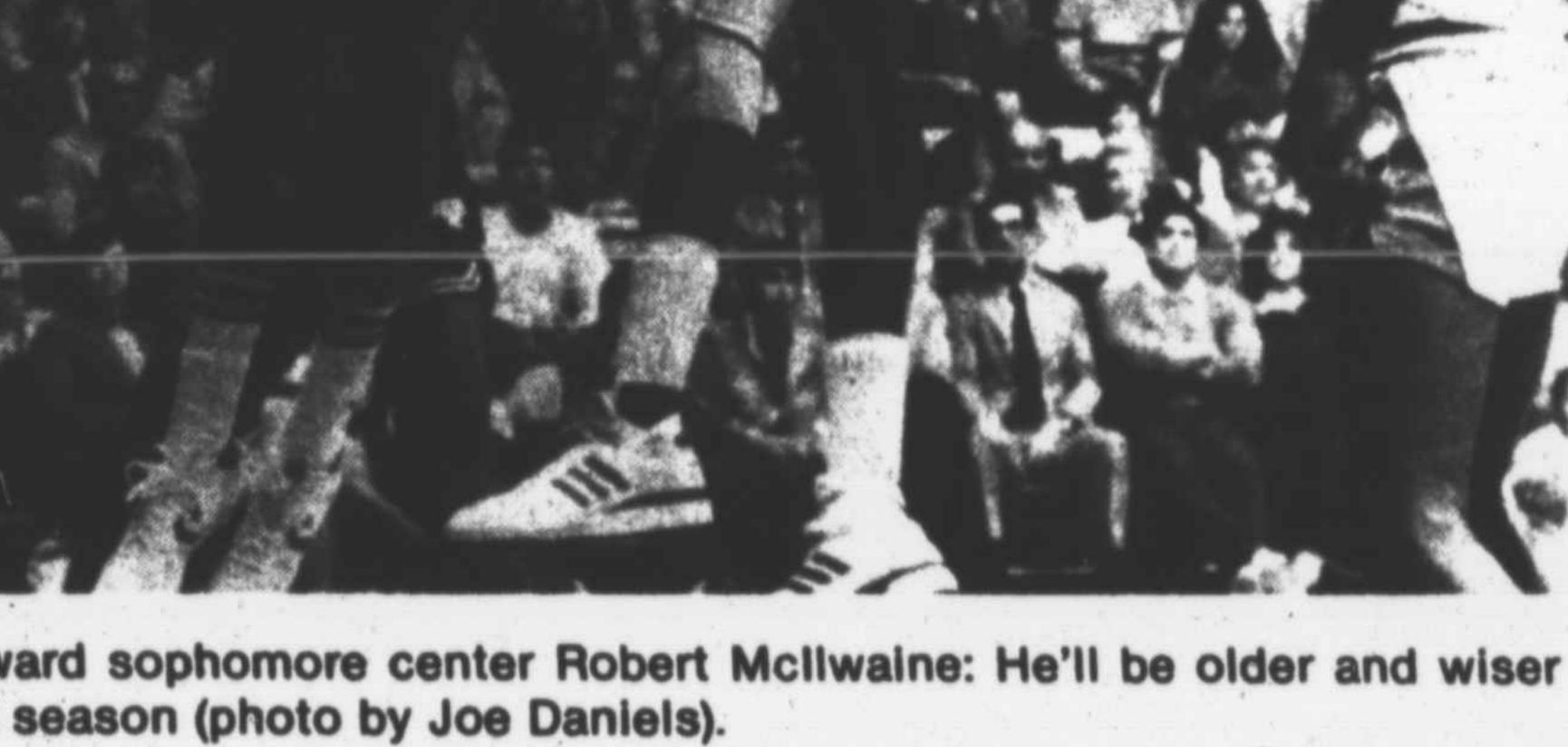
Meanwhile, Fayetteville State predicted to finish third behind Shaw rebuilding than Coach Warren surprises this season. Ed James, the Reynolds at Shaw. Reynolds has lived Broncos' 6-9 forward, should provide

Winston-Salem State, the co-With his most experienced group since champion in the South last year, he came to Shaw, Reynolds appears returns only four players and legendary eager to make his move for a Southern... Coach "Bighouse" Gaines will be put to the test by conference foes this year. "We have a strong nucleus coming The Rams have been picked to finish back this year," says Reynolds. "I'm fifth, but anyone who knows Gaines putting our success on the shoulders of has to feel they'll claw their way into Dave Lacy and Andre Shepard. As a the thick of things, by hook or crook.

- SAM DAVIS

For the longest time now, the CIAA's Northern Division wars have boiled down to a race between Norfolk State and Virginia Union, and this year shouldn't be much different.

With three-time all-CIAA center "As far as classification, we're not a Charles Oakley, a muscleman who young team," says Heartley. "I have a shuns weight training but doesn't look lot of players that have been with me it, returning for his senior year, Union Ford looks to a promising batch of awhite, but the players we've had "is the favorite to win the fegular season" recruits to Kelp solidify his team's



the transfer of the second of

Howard sophomore center Robert McIlwaine: He'll be older and wiser this season (photo by Joe Daniels).

year included a 21,7 scoring average to guard, could see action this season as

While Oakley is the Panthers' bread Perhaps no one knows more about and St. Augustine's, could pull some and butter, four other notable returnees rejoin the lineup from a year ago. Junior Steve Silva and sophomores Jerry Hargrove, Jamie Waller and Greg Williams give Union a solid starting unit.

> Norfolk State finds itself without David Pope, its inside scoring machine the past four years, but Charles Christian still has a lot to work with, even if he does insist that the Spartans need help. "We're really rebuilding this SIAC season," says Christian. "Pope gave us so much and you just don't replace a player like him easily."

Super-sophomore Ralph Talley is ready to take up the scoring slack left by Pope and center Darnell Brown and forward Barry Mitchell will give the Spartans a strong inside game.

Six-ten all-America candidate Cedric Miller gives Hampton Institute plenty to look forward to this season. Coach Hank Ford has 10 lettermen returning. including senior guard Larry Riddick and Kenneth Fleming, who averaged nine points a game last year as a

go along with 13.4 rebounds per game. well as 6-9 John Lane.

Veteran Elizabeth City Coach Robert Vaughan welcomes four starters back from a team that finished 9-18 a year ago. However, the Vikings are expected to fare much better this time out with a balanced lineup featuring guards Benjamin Brown and Kenny

- SAM DAVIS

Third-year Alabama A&M Coach Ben Jobe is probably starting to think the Bulldogs are snakebitten after posting two regular-season titles, but seeing upstart Albany State steal away from the SIAC's annual tournament with the conference crown.

Jobe has compiled a 39-15 mark through his first three years and has never had a losing season as a player or coach. The former Denver Nugget served as an assistant to South Carolina Coach Frank McGuire and Georgia Tech's Bobby Cremins before

heading the program at A&M.

The Bulldogs are again rated as the haven't -- cotten -- much -- came -- sithe Oaklan's immessive statistics last -- change of the same -- catten -- much -- came -- sithe Oaklan's immessive statistics last -- change of the same -- catten -- came -- catten -- came -- catten -- came -- catten -- came -- catten --