Statistics are different, too, between the sports and often can be frightenin Just the sheer numbers explain why black college basketball players haven't fared well.

Figures show the NBA can be as cold as the Alaskan tundra if the draft doesn't go your way. Half of the 276 players in the NBA were first-round draft choices. Eighty-six percent of them were taken in the first two rounds. If a player is picked in the third round or below, his chances of even playing the leagues are one in six. Tenth-round draft choices making it big in the NFL aren't unusual, but in the NBA, that's like a Celtics-76ers game without some kind of skirmish.

Furthermore, nine of the 23 secondround picks in the '84 draft were released or are playing in Europe. Plus, draft pick, Michael Young from Joe Daniels). Houston. And probably the bleakest statistics of all: There are only an players who can play, but players who average of 50 newcomers who play at least part-time in the league with each a lot of bearing on it, too." season. While the 1,372-member NFL averages between 250 and 280 roster openings during training camp each season, there are only 30 to 35 full-time slots available in the NBA each year.

That many players from predominantly black schools don't make it in the NBA isn't surprising, given that information. Most of those New Jersey Nets Coach Stan Albeck draft is concerned. When I was at drafted from such schools are picked in the third round or later.

"(NBA teams) aren't going to give them that money, so they'll be fourthor fifth-round draft choices," said Alcorn State head basketball Coach Davey Whitney, one of the most successful black college coaches in the nation. Alcorn State, which lost 57-56 to Kansas in the '84 tourney, is the only black school to win an NCAA tournament game.

riors' Purvis Short, whose voice is as nard King in scoring, a statistic lofty the best player in the state in Cleo Hill. smooth as his silky jump shot, broke enough to earn him an invitation to the Nobody in the white community had that no-first-round NBA stigma. NBA all-star game. ("That's up to the seen him play. The ACC and SEC, of Short, 6-7, was the third-leading scorer fans," says Short. "Playing here is like course, weren't recruiting black players in the country, behind Freeman playing at Jackson State; I'm not a at that time. I went back and told my Williams and Larry Bird, during his household name.") Short also had one coach, Bones McKinney, about him. I senior year at Jackson State. He also stretch in mid-November when he told him this was the best player in the showed he wasn't short on skills as he scored 40 points or more - including fared well against some of the nation's 59 against the Nets - in three out of best seniors in the Aloha Classic in four games for the lowly Warriors, Hawaii for college all-stars.

Result: A projected second-round Pacific Division. choice before the Aloha Classic, Short round in 1978.

available. They're not only looking for the coach of the Warriors during

PANEL PRESIDENTITION, 198



the Celtics even cut their '84 No. 1 A&T's Binion: My agent said I didn't work as hard as they wanted me to. But I worked hard. I always do (photo by

can bring fans into the arena. That has

Therefore, since many of the black college players aren't household names, unlike crowd-pleasers such as a Michael Jordan or an Akeem Olajuwon, they aren't counted on to help boost lagging attendance in many NBA

Short's patented rainbow jumper says Short is the only guy whose eight-

Short's rookie year, had much to do Greensboro) go to Minnesota and with his being drafted in the first Herm Gilliam (of Winston-Salem) go

"He (Attles) was from a small school (N.C. A&T), too," said Short. "I think he could identify with me.

"There are a lot of talented players who do go to black colleges. But the major universities get the publicity. When you're on TV a lot, it helps you with publicity and as far as the NBA Jackson State, I never played on na-

footer goes 20 feet -- isn't lagging this tional TV. I think only one or two of "It's unfortunate (the dwindling number of black college alumni in

the pros). I can see the handwriting on the wall." -- Former NBA star Willis Reed

season. He has the reputation of having the highest trajectory in the league, who are the cellar-dwellers in the Winston-Salem players.

Short, who is from Hattiesburg, was the fifth player chosen in the first Miss., had the long jump shot when he entered the league but lacked magnetic that. In 1962, Danny Manning would "Each team carries 12 guys," ex- effect with the fans because of his be at North Carolina A&T instead of plains Short. "There aren't many spots underexposure in the media. Al Attles, the University of Kansas.

our games were on TV."

Says Packer, who played for Wake and is averaging 29.8 points per game Forest: "In 1962 I went to see However, the Golden State War- to rank second behind the Knicks' Ber- Winston-Salem State play and I saw state. Cleo Hill put on one of the greatest exhibitions I've ever seen. We used to play pickup games against the

"That was 1962. But Cleo Hill 1984, if he were from, say, New Jersey, would be at DePaul or somewhere like

"Bones helped Lou Hudson (of

to Purdue. When integration took place in the Southeast, it opened up things for a lot of kids." Both players went on to star in the NBA.

But for every Hudson, Gilliam of even Short, there's a Joe Binion.

Binion left N.C. A&T with the stats of a Charles Barkley, a first-round '84 pick by the 76ers, but most majorcollege fans would be stumped like a "To Tell the Truth" panel in regard to his collegiate career.

Binion, 6-81/2, 224 pounds, was the MEAC Player of the Year for three consecutive seasons, which ended with at least 20 wins each time for A&T. He averaged 20.4 points and 11.6 rebounds and was the Most Valuable Player in the MEAC Tournament last season. Binion and North Carolina's Sam Perkins were the only players drafted in '84 with 2,000 points and 1,000 rebounds during their careers. Binion, a third-round pick and the last player cut by the San Antonio Spurs in training camp, is now playing for the Sarasota (Fla.) Stingers of the Continental Basketball Association.

Another player with lofty credentials who couldn't make the ultimate dream

"We black college players, we're used to that (combating the slim chances of making the league and playing without exposure)," said Binion, who from Rochester, N.Y. "We're dreaming -- just dreaming. It's playing for a dream.

Binion refused to say if he felt there was any NBA bias toward players from

the NBA drills.

"My agent said they (Spurs) said I didn't work as hard as they wanted me to. But I worked hard. I always do.

"It's hard, but it's fair. That's what they (NBA coaches) say (about their evaluations during rookie camp). I don't believe it, but you got to love it.

"I played in two of the five exhibition games (during the preseason), maybe 10 or 11 minutes in all. I got three points, two rebounds and one steal. (Coach) Cotton Fitzsimmons told me he couldn't find room for me to play. I asked him how did he expect me to make the team if I didn't get any

you're out.

(Whitney) couldn't have said it any

The Warriors are a rarity in the league, having Short as well as another black college player, 6-8 forward Larry Smith, in the starting lineup.

Smith, who played at Alcorn State, led the nation in rebounding two years in a row. If Moses Malone is the chairman of the boards, Smith must be the vice chairman. Smith, a paragon for rebounders, is second to Moses this season in offensive rebounding, and is eighth in the league with a 10.6-pergame overall average.

"People were amazed around here

"They're not only looking for players who can play, but players who can bring fans into the arena. That has a lot of bearing on it,

-- Purvis Short of the Golden State Warriors

they kept me so long if I didn't get any sportswriter Ron Thomas, who covers tion games, so I must have had Chronicle. something. I thought I might have a Smith was a second-round draft spot on the team, since they kept me so choice for the Warriors in 1980. Again,

"They were prolonging my agony, l

Plus, to make it in the NBA, Binion needs to prolong his look for the outside jump shot, something a pro forward needs. ("I like the highpercentage shots," he says.)

gotten if the Spurs had kept him, Binion is trying to make do with a little more than \$400 a week for about 14 weeks, the length of the CBA season.

"If I can't get more than \$6,000 (in the CBA)," added Binion, "I'll give it up. But I think basketball will pay off. I just have to keep working hard, keep a positive attitude and stay determined.

"If I get a good offer from Europe, I'll go there. But I think I should get out of this league by Christmas and be in the NBA. You got to have condfidence in yourself. I'm a talented brother, now."

Quite often, talent isn't the only factor used when evaluating a player. Most NBA teams search for so-called playing a major schedule. I think even hired and first fired.

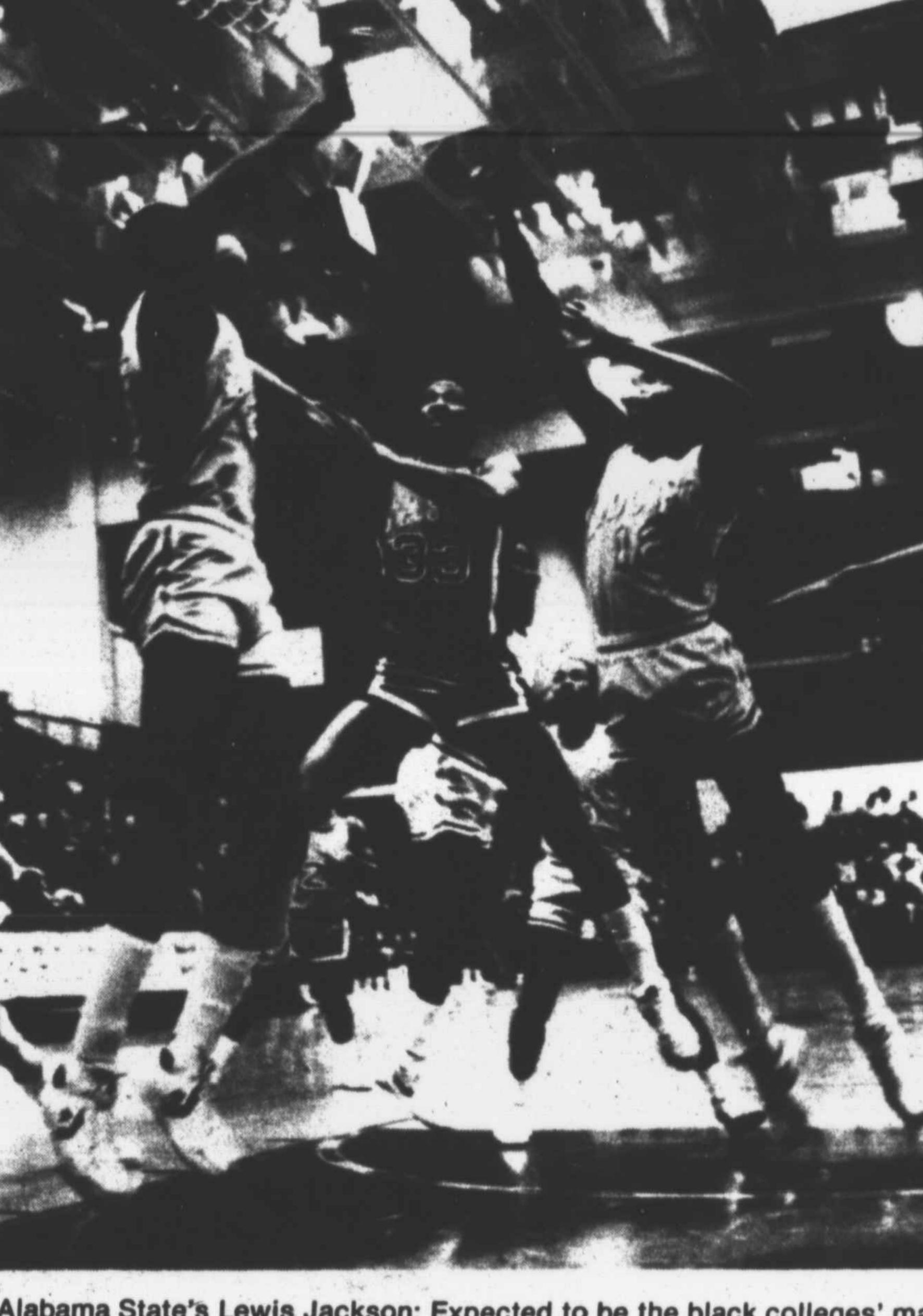
"When it comes to the black athlete publicity." from black schools," says Alcorn matter the skills. He can't have any prepared as his peers. strikes against himt one strike and THE LEBENEEU DIENNIN EBIC WENT LITS SAIL TO WAS ARRESTED WITCH.

a player with first-round statistics but a lower-round evaluation.

have to dominate their competition to receive national and regional attention. Another reason for the demise of black college basketball players is competition among the schools. Black Now, instead of making about schools tend to play other black \$8,000 a month, which he would have schools. Alcorn State is one of the few that plays major colleges consistently during the regular season.

playing time. I was wondering why about his rebounding ability," says playing time. I got through five exhibition the Warriors for the San Francisco

In many cases, black college athletes



Alabama State's Lewis Jackson: Expected to be the black colleges' major hope in the NBA, he fell prey to a late cut this year (photo by Joe

"When it comes to personnel, they going to a major white school." said college. I think they (A&T officials) (scouts) start evaluating competition," Short. "I say no. I had a better rela- care more about you as a person. They said Whitney, who coached Smith at tionship at Jackson. We were like care what happens to you. My coach

"People always ask me if I regret not going to a major white school I say no. I had a better relationship at Jackson. We were family,

-- Purvis Short

Alcorn State. "Many black colleges don't play strong schedules year in and year out.

"I think Alcorn took the lead in if we don't beat them (major colleges), "temperamental" player is the last the publicity will be there. If we play them close, we'll still get the

Despite the publicity, once Short got State's Whitney, "they (pro scouts) to the NBA, he found that many of the measure the attitude, but they don't do major college players whom he watchit for 'other' ball players. The black ed on national television weren't any player has to be above reproach, no more talented than he. Short felt as

"People always ask me if I regret not

family, man. I had a great time. Maybe I missed out on a lot of publicity. But things have changed even since I've here." been out of school. Now, black schools ment Television). I'm not prejudiced, but I think the people there cared more about me. We had a nice, friendly atmosphere."

A&T's Binion is on the same wavelength: "I'm really happy I went than I think I would have at a major

(Don Corbett) at A&T calls me. I don't think a white coach at a white school would do that. At a big school, they just want you to play, use your athletic

Despite the low number of black college players in the league, there is a sort of unspoken and natural camaraderie among them. It's like, "I know where you've been and what it took to get

"When you see guys like that on the are getting more publicity with the new court (from black schools)," says cable station, BET (Black Entertain- Short, "you wish them well. It gives black schools more attention and hopefully will attract more athletes to the schools."

But the Purvis Shorts, Larry Smiths and Ricky Mahorns, etc., are the exceptions in this league. For many black to a black college. I can really speak college basketball players -- some highly of A&T. It helped me develop as super-talented -- getting a chance to a person. I think I learned more there shoot a jumper in the NBA is only a wish hidener gives tenes or while meridian