COMMENTARY

NCAA rule: The proverbial rock and hard place

By ROSCOE NANCE
Review Columnist

PROPOSAL 48, the NCAA's recently passed legislation regarding freshman eligibility for Division I, wedges predominantly black schools between a rock and a hard place.

That's Alcorn State athletic director and football coach Marino Casem's assessment of the situation, and he's right.

Under Proposal 48, incoming freshmen must have a 2.0 grade-point average in core curricula and 700 on the SAT or 15 on the ACT to be eligible. What this does is cut into the pool of talent available to black schools since blacks score 218 less than whites on the SAT and almost seven points less than whites on the ACT.

If Proposal 48 had been in effect in 1982, 34 percent more black males would have been ineligible and 29 percent more black females than white females based on their SAT scores. You don't have to hold a Phi Beta Kappa key to figure who the impact of this legislation will hurt most.

But there are alternatives -- if you want to call them that.

The first is legal action. That's the in thing these days. If you don't like the way things are, go to court and get them changed. But black schools would lose more than they would gain in a court battle.

"I don't foresee a class action suit," said Jackson State's athletic director, Dr. Walter Reed. "If we do that, it projects an image that we're not as for academic excellence as anyone. That's a misnomer that has gone out."

A second alternative is for black schools in Division I to move to Division II.

This one has a lot of interesting possibilities. Many of the athletes not qualifying for Division I schools will end up at Division II schools, which could mean a return to the glory days for black college athletics.

"I would say now that possibility is good within the next four years, especially if the ACT scores of blacks do not increase as rapidly as they are projecting them to," said Casem. "The NCAA says, with the change (in the core curriculum requirement), ACT scores will increase drastically. But school is still out on that. If they don't I would project the majority going to Division II."

There are those who say black schools are in way over their heads in Division I anyway. Their chances of winning a national championship in any sport are just about slim and none. When the Supreme Court ruled the NCAA's television package for football unconstitutional, the black schools lost a major payday.

Still, a decision to leave Division I would be a tough one. It would mean losing automatic berths in national tournaments and playoffs in baseball, basketball and football, which translates into losing money.

"That's not a viable alternative," said Reed. "We stand to lose a whole lot of the gains we've made and we would never get them back."

Casem agrees, but for a different reason.

"Moving to Division I would be a drastic step," he said.

You'd reduce scholarships to 45 or 50 (from 75 for football). For highly competitive schools like Florida A&M, Grambling, Tennessee State, Alcorn, Jackson State and South Carolina State, it would be hard to drop to 50

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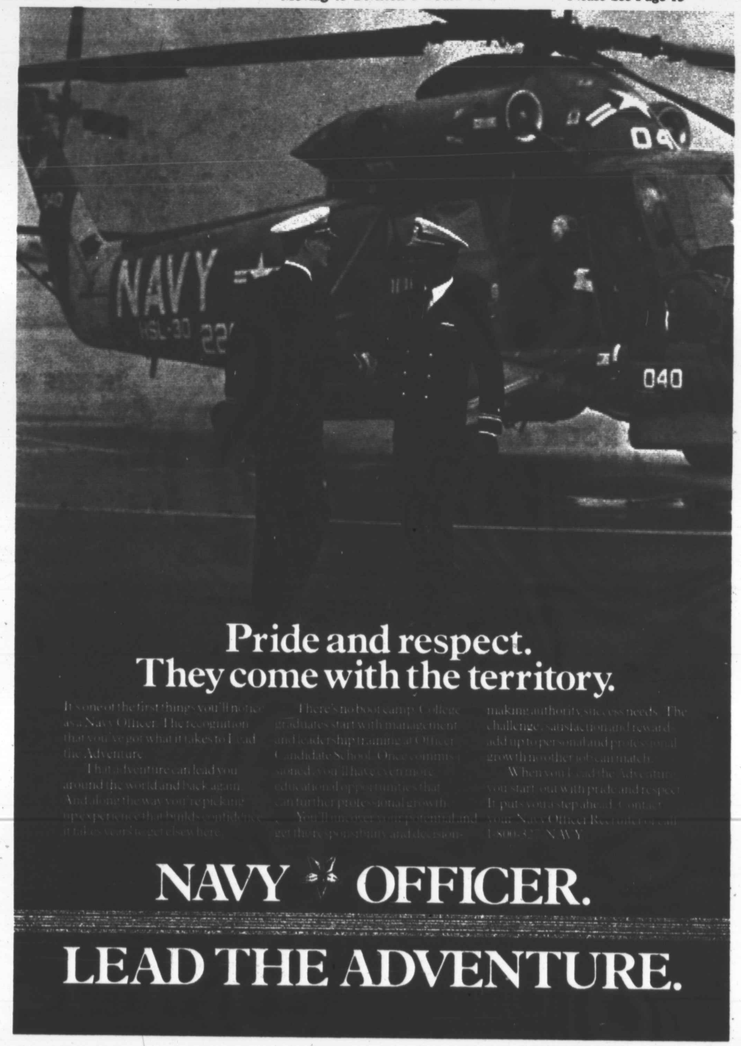

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COVER STORY

Norfolk State's Tally: A bravura performance

By DAVID BULLA
Review Staff Writer

VIRGINIA UNION'S Jamie Waller and Norfolk State's Ralph Tally took turns at center stage in the championship game of the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association Tournament. But Tally took the last bow.

The first half of the tournament final belonged to Union's high-flying Waller, who totaled eight points, including a magic-carpet-ride dunk on a follow shot, and nine rebounds in the first 20 minutes.

Yet, the halftime question was, whither Tally? The Norfolk State all-America had missed all six of his field goal attempts in the first 20 minutes and had but two points on a pair of free throws. Luckily for the Spartans, center Darnell Brown and forward Robert Revell took up the slack with 13 and eight points, respectively, and NSU built a 31-28 halftime edge.

But, tallyho, the Spartan guard found his game in the second half and led his team to a 75-71 win over the Panthers at the Richmond Coliseum on March 1. That ended the Panthers' six-game winning streak against the Spartans and forced a fourth meeting between the Northern Division rivals in the NCAA Division II South Atlantic Regional at Emmittsburg, Md., March 6. Norfolk won again and Tally starred again with 36 points, including eight in the final 58 seconds, to key a 70-60 semifinal win.

As for the CIAA finals, his teammates knew Talley would take charge sooner or later.

"I knew Tally would come back in the second half and pull us through," said Norfolk State forward Barry Mitchell, who played with a sprained shooting wrist. "Ralph's been doing things like this his entire career."

The 6-foot-1 Tally scored 22 second-half points, hitting eight of nine from the field, including two three-pointers, and all four of his free throws.

Tally said his poor first half was the result of a hip pointer sustained in a 76-63 semifinal win over Elizabeth City State.

"My hip was hurting in the first half," the Atlantic City, N.J., native said. "But I couldn't let it bother me in the second half. I told Coach (Charles) Christian I wouldn't let him down."

It took everything Tally could offer for the Spartans to hold off the Panthers, who beat Norfolk State twice in the regular season. A pair of reserve guards, Doug Cromartie and Eric Neblett, matched Tally basket for basket and then some. Cromartie scored a season-high 18 points, all in the second half. Neblett added 16 points, 13 in the second half.

"Cromartie did a super job for them," Norfolk's Christian said. "We couldn't stop him and he shot the lights out."

Perhaps the key to the win was the play of Norfolk State's veteran front line of Brown, Revell and Mitchell. Brown, a senior, totaled 15 points and six rebounds, Revell, also a senior, 12 points and Mitchell, a junior, nine points, 10 rebounds and four assists.

"The seniors wanted this one," Christian said. "Maybe they wanted it worse than Union's guys because the seniors really played some outstanding basketball."

Mitchell and point guard Lawrence Hayes were largely responsible for dictating the game's tempo. It was clear the Spartans didn't want to get into a running game with the Panthers.

"We simplified things in this game," Christian said. "We wanted to go inside. When we couldn't get the ball inside, we wanted to go to Ralph. When Waller made that spectacular dunk in the first half, we didn't let it affect

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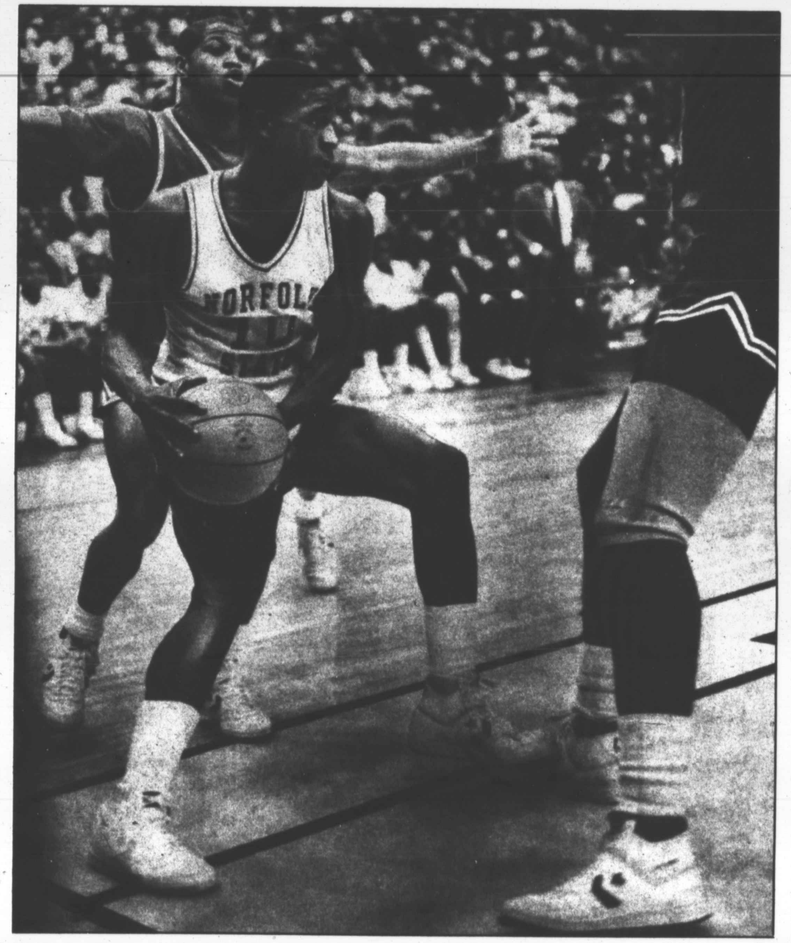

When the game's on the line, Tally doesn't mind stepping on a few toes to get the job done (photo by James Parker).