

THE SIDELINES

Black college SIDs: Big jobs, little budgets

By DAVID BULLA Review Staff Writer

YANKEE STADIUM is one of the treasure palaces of American sports, but it is, after all, only a small island in a fast stream called New York City.

When North Carolina Central played Grambling State at the Bronx arena in September, NCCU Sports Information Director Chris Fisher performed his usual duties of compiling a blow-by-blow statistical account of the game. Fisher, who is one of the fastest stat men in the business, had finished his work and was ready to return to his Manhattan hotel around midnight after the 7:30 p.m. ballgame. But he had no transportation. A cab was out of the question -- too expensive -- and the subway a last resort. The Central SID had missed the crowded team bus and nobody from his school seemed to miss him.

Fortunately, someone associated with the New York Urban League offered Fisher a ride back downtown at the last minute.

This scene is not exactly atypical for black college sports information directors, who rely on small budgets to amass and disseminate facts and Busy Fingers figures about their schools' athletic SIDs look forward to the travel, few if any ever travel first class all the way. They often have to spend discreetly to make ends meet. Yet, a bright-lightsbig-city place like New York does not lend itself to frugality.

Jack-Of-All-Trades

WHILE SIDs have to watch over lean budgets, their operations require more money and man hours than are generally spent on sports information by black colleges. Why? Because black college SIDs wear several hats.

Statistics come first for every sports information office and Ed Hill, the SID at Howard University, says every football Saturday goes by the numbers. Hill, a former newspaper reporter, says he gets to the office at 8 a.m. on Saturdays of home dates and prays he will be home by 8 o'clock at night.

"It's pretty much the same on the processing correspondences. days of basketball games, only I stay later at night," Hill said. "I'm lucky to get out at midnight."

times as many basketball as football



programs. While most black college Sports information directors at black schools juggle a number of duties, often including teaching (photo by James Parker).

about what the SID does.

"The image of sports information among many people at Howard is it's a description of the smallest operation." high-profile position with a guy who likes sports a lot and doesn't have information offices are smaller than DelState. This has included the promuch to do," he said. "That's not the one Hill described. Most are one-duction of a rap video much like the case. This is a one-man show and I'm person offices at best. As a result, one the Chicago Bears produced last on the go non-stop."

releases of all the athletic programs at SIDs. Howard; writing, editing and publishing media guides and game programs; attending practices to keep up State Of Confusion on pertinent information; promoting the programs by calling the media, and

few part-time student employees perform are handled by an entire department at other NCAA Division schools (Howard is Division I in basketball and I-AA in football).

"Sports information has entered an guides for the Bison football and era of specialization," Hill said. "You some misconceptions around campus are responsible for the revenue sports, losing) numbers."

one for the non-revenue and one who manages the entire operation. That's a information-filled weekly reports on

something has to suffer. Non-revenue year. She enjoyed the work, but it cost Hill's other duties include compiling sports often get scant publicity and her. and sending stats to the NCAA and the sometimes newspaper reporters may conference; setting up and providing know as much inside information football season started," she said. "I information at the football or basket-, about a team as the SID. That situation ball coach's weekly press conference; almost never occurs at the Division I obtaining information on upcoming football factories and basketball opponents; writing and dispatching breeders, where reporters compete with feature stories; composing weekly one another to tease information from

SOME BLACK colleges are seeing that big schools spend a lot of energy most willing Division II schools Hill said these odd jobs that he and a promoting athletics. Promotion is (NCCU, Norfolk State, Hampton beneficial, all of the SIDs agree. University, Fort Valley State) can af-However, promotion is distinct from ford to bring in professional personnel. compiling and providing information.

SID at Delaware State. "Statistics are money for sports information, the what put us on the map with the media. football manager and a student combasketball programs, says there are have one or two full-time persons who They want to know the winning (and bine to perform the SID's duties.

Lewis, who's known for her the total athletic program, has been But almost all black college sports asked to do some promotion by

"That took all of my time before the haven't recovered yet. I've been trying to explain to my administration that if they want promotion, they need to hire a full-time person for promotion."

While the operations at Division I schools like Delaware State and Howard effectively disseminate information to the NCAA, conference and media, sports information offices at many Division II schools operate on smaller scales. Only the largest and

The operation at Winston-Salem "The administration here sometimes State is a bit more typical of Division II confuses the two," said Maxine Lewis, programs. Because of a dearth of Please See Page 23

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