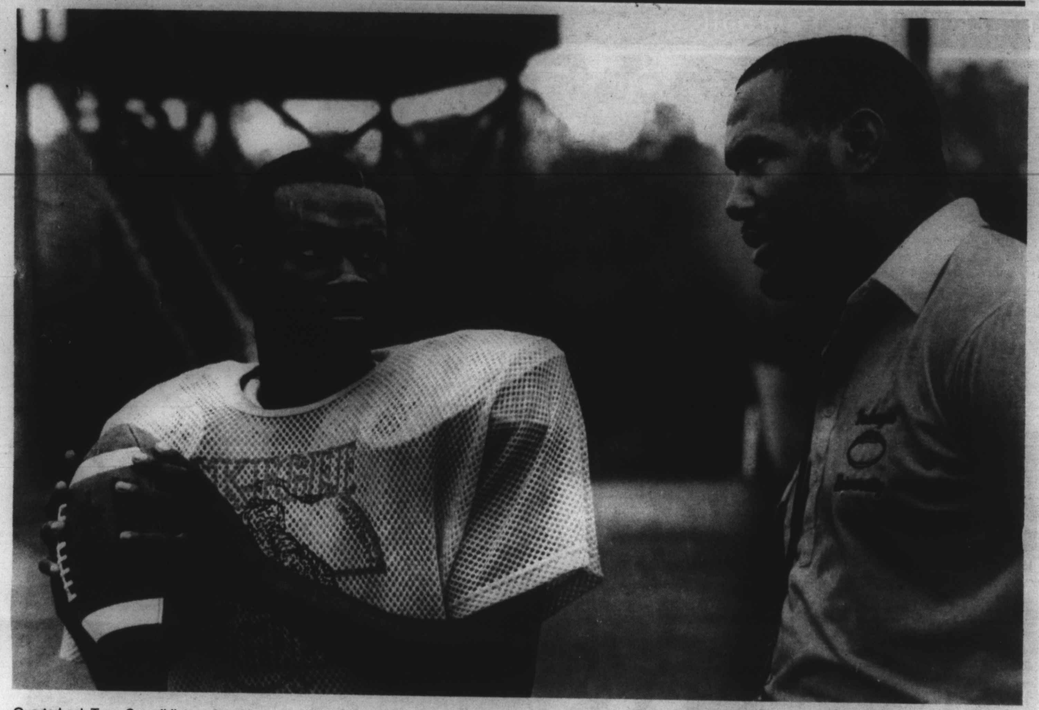

Quarterback Tony Carroll listens intently to Tuskegee offensive coordinator Mike Williams (photo by Frank Williams of the Montgomery Advertiser).

## SIAC *CONTINUED*

the heim for FORT VALLEY STATE (7-3) (5-2). Porter had to take an unplanned extended vacation last year because of heart problems. He has fully recovered and ready to build on his 53-17-2 record compiled in seven autumn's at the Georgia school.

One can never talk about the Wildcats without mentioning its famed "Blue Death" defense, which is one of the best in Division II year in and year out. Last year, they were fourth in rushing yardage allowed, a miserly 96.6 yards a game. They also ranked sixth in total defense. This year should be no different.

All-America and all-SIAC defensive Lineman of the Year Jerry Jackson returns to wreak havoc on Saturday afternoons.

The 6-1, 250-pound defensive tackle recorded 119 tackles and 14 sacks in '86. Defensive end Willie Scrivens (6-4, 230) comes back from an ankle injury to help bolster the defensive line.

The Wildcats boast another top performer in all-league cornerback Willie Collier, who had six interceptions last campaign.

Offensively, Fort Valley will need quarterback Chris Hill to return to his all-conference form of two years ago. Hill had an off season last year because of a bad ankle, but still threw for 1,187 yards and seven TDs in eight games. Hill has a proven pass catching threat in split end Rodney Parker, who hauled in six touchdown receptions last year.

Porter's return is bound to give the Wildcats an early mental boost. But it could be a long season if the offense isn't able to take advantage of scoring opportunities.

ALBANY STATE (9-2) (6-1) is a marked team this year. Opponents are bent on preventing them from winning a fourth consecutive league crown. The loss of running back Dan Land, who was twice named SIAC Player of the Year, and quarterback Nathaniel Street leave gaping holes to be filled.

Head Coach Hampton Smith openly admits that it will be very difficult for his Rams to win four straight, because the conference is more balanced this year.

Nevertheless, the Rams are known for tough football and they aren't likely to be blown out of the water by anyone.

Stanley Williams has the task of taking over for the departed Street as the Rams' QB. He's not a greenhorn, as he demonstrated in '86 with 1,349 passing yards good for 10 touchdowns.

Williams has a pair of wideouts who could make a big difference in the Rams attack this fall. James Rich is the man to watch in the ASC air game. The Denver Broncos are interested, having sent scouts to watch Rich in pre-season workouts. Rich caught 21 passes for 329 yards and should benefit from the presence of his counterpart Anthony Kelly, who caught four TD passes in six games before his season was cut short by a broken shoulder.

The big question about ALABAMA A&M (5-4-2) (2-3-2) is whether they can maintain some continuity by keeping people healthy for a whole season. For the past two years, injuries have destroyed what chances the Bulldogs had for continued success. If they can avoid the hospital wards, they will loom as a very formidable contender in the conference.

Coming into this season, the Bulldogs under Ray Greene have ample reason to feel they can make a move toward first place. They ended last season by defeating playoff bound Tennessee State 7-6 in Nashville. TSU of course is annually one of the nation's Division I-AA football powers.

For A&M to realize its ambitions, it's imperative that they get off to a fast start. The October portion of their schedule could prove to be murderous, with consecutive games against the University of North Alabama, Fort Valley State, Morris Brown and Alabama State.

Like most of their conference members, the Bulldogs' strong suit is defense. They have a seasoned group of defensive backs led by cornerbacks Darren Wilson

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## Black College Football '87

# Howard's Bison picked to win MEAC

By EDWARD HILL JR.
Review Staff Writer

THE Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference is perhaps the most balanced conference in college football. Consider this: Over the past four years, four different teams have won the title. South Carolina State, Bethune-Cookman, Delaware State and North Carolina A&T have all walked away with the trophy.

**1** And to add further proof of its balance as a conference, there will be a fifth in 1987 if HOWARD lives up to its preseason billing.

Long the doormat of the MEAC, Howard finally came alive last season under the leadership of Head Coach Willie Jeffries. The Bison reeled off seven straight victories to end the 1986 season and finished 8-3, its best mark since 1975. Twenty starters return to the fold, making the Bison certainly the team to beat.

Howard features one of the most explosive offenses in the country. Led by senior tailback Harvey Reed, the Bison ranked in the top 10 in 1-AA in total offense, rushing offense, scoring offense and turnover ratio.

Reed, who led the conference in rushing (1,386 yards) and scoring (18 touchdowns), runs behind a veteran offensive line that averages 285 pounds. The native of Miami has great speed (4.4 in the 40-yard dash) and is a threat to go all the way every time he touches the ball.

But Reed is not the only weapon in the Bison's high-powered attack. Junior quarterback Lee DeBose poses a serious threat with both his running (539 yards, 3 TDs) and his passing (990 yards, 13 TDs). And when the defense tries to stop that duo, they may be burned by steady, reliable fullback Ronnie Epps (474 yards, 4 TDs).

When Howard goes to the air, it can be equally successful. Senior wide receiver Curtis Chappell (16 catches, 201 yards, 4 TDs), sophomore wideout Derrick Faison (18 receptions, 499 yards, 9 TDs) and junior tight end Jimmie Johnson are all formidable targets. Faison and Chappell both run 4.4 in the 40-yard dash.

But no offense can be successful without the people up front. And that is where the Bison can match anyone in the conference. Led by senior tackle Roy Pierson (6-5, 305), junior guard Pat Boyd (6-0, 310) and Dwight Brunson (6-2, 295), Howard has a veteran line that averages over 285 pounds.

Defensively, the Bison should be improved. Nine starters return from a unit that led the conference in scoring defense (18.2 points per game) while finishing second in defense against the run.

The strength of the unit centers around senior nose tackle Billy Does (6-0, 280) and linebackers Marty Graves (6-3,203) and Marvin Jackson (6-0, 205), both former all-MEAC selectees.

**2** The Bison should receive its strongest challenge from the Hornets of DELAWARE STATE. DSC (7-4, 3-2 MEAC) dropped its last three games and Head Coach William Collick was none too pleased.

"We just did not get it done when we should have," says Collick, entering his third season at the helm. "The kids were disappointed and frustrated. I think they will respond and come back more determined."

The Hornets feature one of the top rushing games in the country. Senior fullback Terrance Hoover (1,103 yards, 3 TDs), junior halfback Reggie Barnes (734 yards, 10 TDs) form one of the top backfields in the country. Junior quarterback Mike Walker (519 yards passing, 4TDs) is very proficient in running the Delaware Wing-T offense that averaged 372 yards per contest.

The Hornets are almost exclusively a running team but when they did pass, senior John lane (17 catches, 2 TDs) was usually the most reliable receiver.

DSC's offensive line is led by first team All-MEAC selection Tony Danzey (6-1, 255) and senior Neal Judkins (6-0, 286).

Defensively, the Hornets ranked first in most categories in the conference. Linebackers Kevin Bryant (6-4, 200) form a strong nucleus.

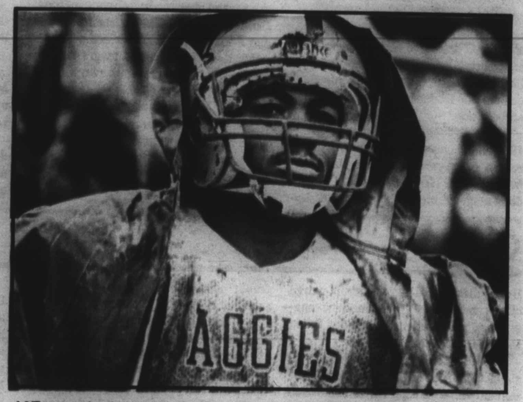
DSC has an added weapon in senior punter John Lane and junior placekicker David Parkinson (65 points), both of whom are all-MEAC selections.

**3** The NORTH CAROLINA A&T Aggies lost several key performers from last season's team that posted a 9-3 mark and won the conference title and advanced to the 1-AA playoffs.

But cry no tears for the Aggies because as long as they have quarterback Alan Hooker, they will be in the race.

The MEAC Player of the Year has the ability to make the players around him better while at the same time creating nightmares for defensive coordinators.

The 6-2 senior from Liberty, N.C., ranked second among all 1-AA quarterbacks in passing efficiency. Hooker completed almost 60 percent of his passes, good for 1,907 yards and 17 touchdowns. He also rushed for 418 yards and seven scores.



A&T quarterback Alan Hooker will shine as A&T attempts to win its conference title (photo by Joe Daniels).

Hooker will miss his leading receiver and all-MEAC selection Herbert Harbison (63 catches, 883 yards, 7 TDs) but junior Anthony Best (36 catches, 390 yards, 4TDs) should provide a deep threat.

N.C. A&T's running game features hard-running Stoney Polite (840 yards, 13 TDs) who also found time to catch 27 passes for 232 yards and 5 touchdowns.

Polite and Hooker operate behind a seasoned offensive line that features center Marvin Christian (6-3, 240) and guards Ken Canion and Kelvin Lee.

The defense will miss the services of several key veterans and that concerns Aggie mentor Maurice "Mo" Forte.

"We have some question marks on defense," says Forte, entering his sixth season. "Some of the people we lost were seasoned veterans and we are going to miss their leadership. We just hope that some of our returnees and young players can come in and do the job."

**4** BETHUNE-COOKMAN COLLEGE lost six of its last seven games to finish 3-8. But some of those losses came at the hands of Grambling, Tennessee State, Florida A&M and Georgia State.

And to make the prospects bleak for the upcoming season, the Wildcats lost eight starters off the defensive unit.

B-CC will rely on its high-powered passing attack to stay in games this season. Senior Greg Ross (1,041 yards, 7 TDs) and junior Anthony Thomas (1,139 yards, 9 TDs) will split the time at quarterback, and they will be throwing to some quality receivers in Stevie Thomas (20 receptions, 379 yards) and Greg Taylor (28 receptions, 367 yards, 2 TDs).

Junior running back Kevin Finnie (804 yards, 7 TDs) leads the ground game but other than offensive linemen Wallace Artiside and Mike Floyd, the Wildcats have little experience.

One bright spot for B-CC is kicker Manny Manolas, who was a perfect 28 for 28 on conversions and 11 of 24 on field goals.

"We have a very tough schedule that includes Grambling, Georgia Southern, Tennessee State and Central Florida," says Wildcat Head Coach Larry Little, now in his fifth season. "We are going to find out how good or bad we are very early."

**5** After dominating the MEAC during the 1970s and part of the early 1980s, the SOUTH CAROLINA STATE Bulldogs have taken on a new position. The Bulldogs finished 5-6 in 1986 and they open the season with more question marks than periods.

"We have a difficult task ahead of us," says second-year Head Coach Dennis Thomas. "We lost a lot of key people and, unfortunately, we will have to depend on a lot of freshmen. And when you have to do that with the schedule we have, it's not going to be easy."

Offensively, the Bulldogs will depend on the running of running backs Michael Summers and William Dubose (372 yards). Senior tight-end Robert Tyler is an All-MEAC performer, but who will be throwing to him?