SPECIAL REPORT

Black college bowl game is on the drawing board

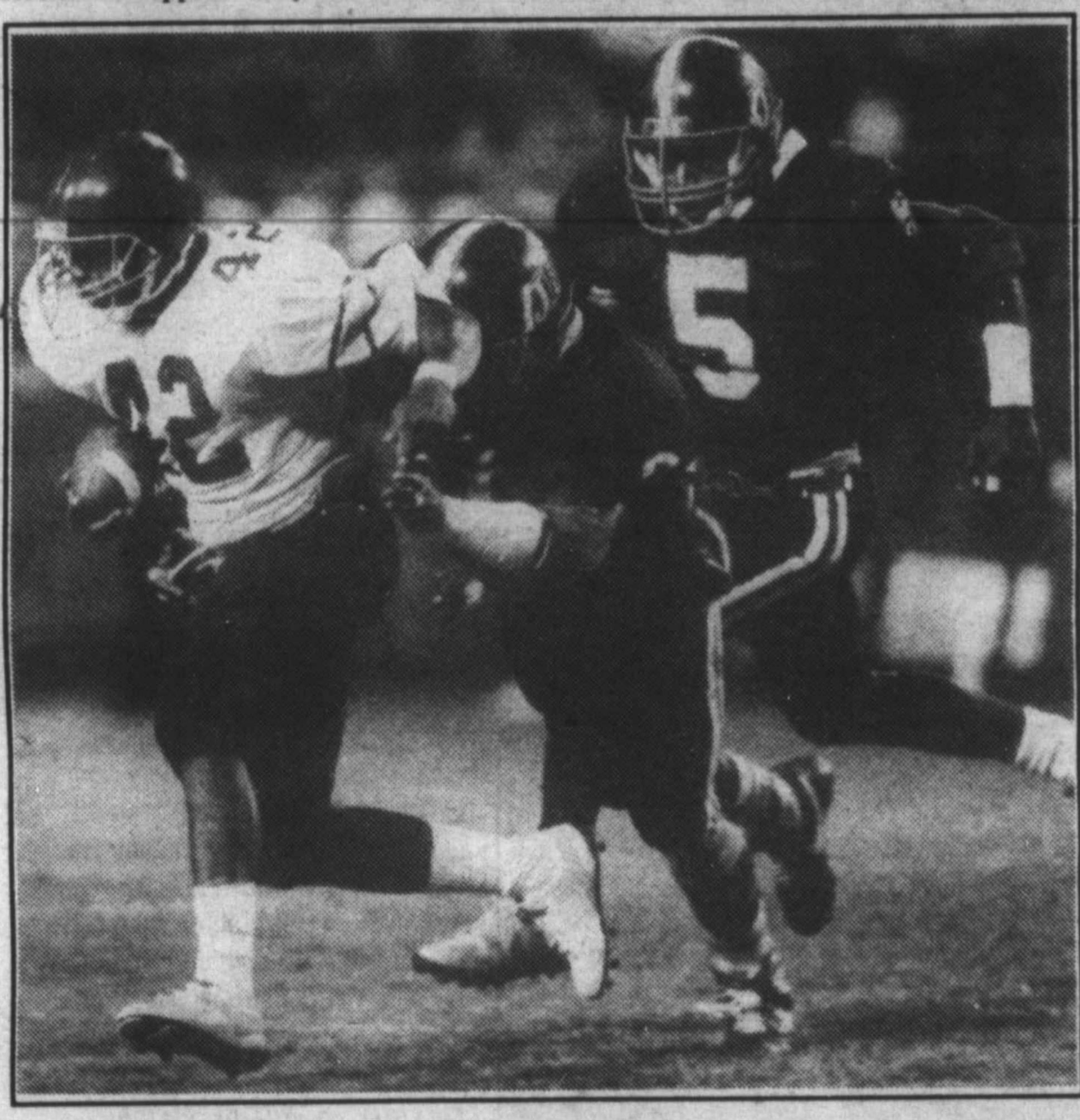
ning stages and could be played as early as teams to participate in the bowl game.

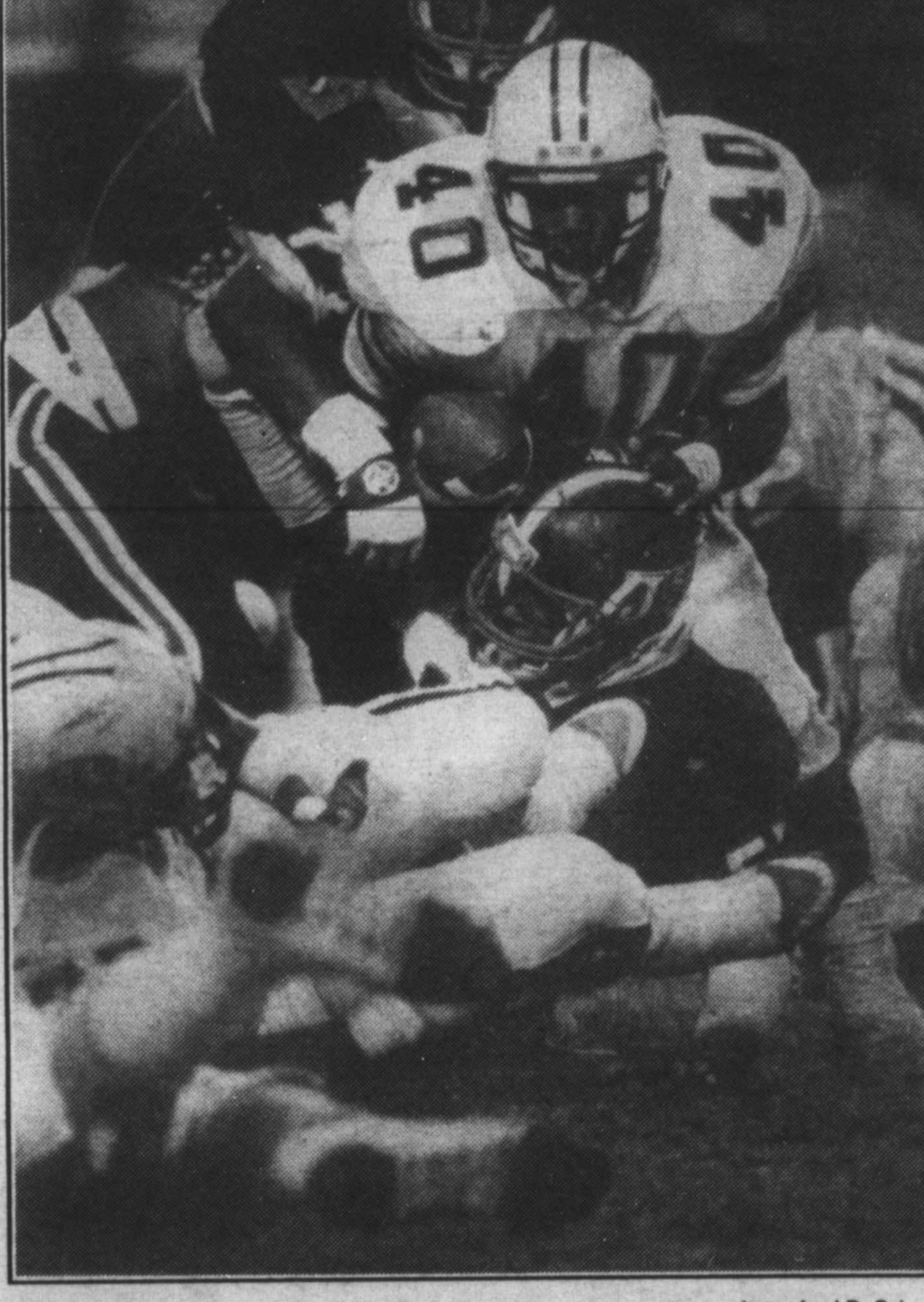
next year. Black Expo, the Indianapolis- based agency that sponsors the Circle City Classic, is the moving force behind the game approve it," said Frank. One of the NCAA's that would match the champion of the Mid- major objections would probably be that the Eastern Athletic Conference against the bowl game could mean a team will play 16 champion of the Southwest Athletic Con- games. That would only happen if the

The Heritage Bowl, a post-season bowl utive council would have to enact legislagame featuring black colleges is in the plan- tion which would allow SWAC and MEAC

> Frank said he will seek that legislation at the next NCAA Convention in January, 1989.

"I would not speculate now if they'll ference. If approved by the NCAA, the MEAC champion or SWAC champion wins





photos by J.D. Schwalm

The Heritage Bowl will be a major plus for black college football, pitting the MEAC champs against the SWAC champs in a post-season setting.

game would be played in the Hoosier Dome the 1-AA championship. on Dec. 30, 1989, according to a Black Expo spokesman.

Black Expo. "The constant elimination and NCAA would look at that." omission of black schools from the playoffs

offenses in the country.

reasons the big boys have bowl games," said SWAC commissioner James Frank. be hard to convince since there is already a It has been reported that the game's orgamake some money."

cle before it becomes reality. It must be sanctioned by the NCAA since current rules prohibit 1-AA schools from playing after Black Expo and the level of success it has goal. In '87, the classic grossed \$700,000. the 1-AA championships. The NCAA exec- had with the Circle City Classic. The game

said Florida A & M's newly appointed ath- television contracts for the Classic. "It's evident that there's a need for such a letic director Walter Reed. "That (16) is a The format for the bowl is also an advan-

> I-AA rules. And a lot of people are going to what their conference affiliation is. shouldn't have any problems.

will have an excellent facility and the Black on received less than \$90,000 for participat-"One of us is going to win it one day," Expo hasn't had problems getting radio and ing in the playoffs.

game," said Charles Williams, president of lot of games. I just don't know how the tage, said Minnix. The Heritage Bowl would would have to forfeit their membership in be a "closed bowl" where the participating that governing body. Reaction isn't likely to be favorable, said teams come from the same conferences each precipitates it. This idea came long before the one NCAA official. Robert Minnix is the year. Closed bowls aren't required to have a that's not one of the things we want to do. Howard situation, but that contributed to it." NCAA staff liaison for the post-season foot- minimum pay-out for each team in order for We're part of the system and we like to Williams was referring to Howard Uni- ball subcommittee. That subcommittee the game to be played. Open bowls, on the work within the system when possible." versity's exclusion from the NCAA Divi- works in conjunction with the NCAA's Spe- other hand, are required to have a minimal Said Reed: "We like for our kids to have sion I-AA playoffs. The Bison finished the cial Events Committee which is heavily pay-out of \$500,000 for each team. In open a chance to compete for the national chamyear at 9-1 and possessed one of the top involved with post-season bowl games. Said bowl games (such as the Orange, Cotton, pionship. It's always good to hang a nation-Minnix: "Before anything can be done, and Fiesta), selection committees have the al championship banner above your arena." "We want to play the game for the same they'll have to get a waiver of the Division flexibility to choose teams regardless of

"We need greater exposure and we'd like to 1-AA football playoffs. It's going to be very nizers must guarantee \$400,000 for each

In comparison, last year's 1-AA champi-

The two conferences could participate in the game without NCAA approval, but they

"That's an option," said Frank, "But

If the bowl game lives up to expectations, it will easily become the show piece of black college athletics.

"It can be whatever they make it," said difficult." Minnix added, however, that if team. Williams doesn't anticipate that being MEAC commissioner Ken Free. "They The game faces at least one major obsta- the waiver is secured, the bowl game a problem. He expects the bowl to gross \$1 (Black Expo) believe they can make it hapmillion its first year. Based on the Circle pen. They have made the Circle City Clas-The Heritage Bowl's major plus is the City Classic's progress, that is a reachable sic happen, and they feel they have the people around them to make this happen."

- Roscoe Nance

COMMENTARY

King Freedom Games need to be rescued

tional Freedom Games have been put on hold since 1986. Once upon a time, the games held a lofty status among the elite events of world-class track and field. After making Atlanta its permanent home in 1984, the meet has more closely resembled a majestic ship doing a deepsix in the Atlantic Ocean.

Resuscitation is needed desperately. A life support system is necessary. Committment and sponsorship are mandatory in order for the games to survive and flourish like they did in past

In four years, Atlanta hasn't provided enuine committment or adequate financial backing. Consider these key items as

· At maximum, the King Games in Atlanta have never had a budget that exceeded \$30,000. Most of that budget money was used for meeting athletes' lodging and transportation expenses. Thirty grand is really a miserly sum when you're talking about bringing in some of the world's best in track and field. The best won't compete for free. Folks like Edwin Moses, Carl Lewis, Jackie Joyner-Kersee and Ben Johnson command and get appearance fees for their participa-

· Attendance in Atlanta has been meager and that's being kind. Average attendance has been 700. Most high school track meets around the country do better than that. And again we're talking about Olympic-caliber athletes plying their trades. Among American Olympic medalists who have competed in Atlanta are Chandra Cheeseborough, Roger Glance, and Sam Graddy.

· With such a small kitty, the games publicized. National media coverage has been next to nil. The rights to the King cessfully put on the annual Peachtree spectator seating. King Games are to return to major league meet was held in locations all over the meet held in the U.S. status, they must seek and find a qualified globe, including San Juan, Puerto Rico marketeer. Anything less would be a and Oslo, Norway.

L.A. Coliseum where the '84 Olympic to the delight of spirited onlookers. though, has very little seating to stage a it seems only logical that Morehouse Col- ums and the accompanying traffic probmajor event like the King Games -- 2,500 lege should be the host. It's a natural. Dr. lems every time Morehouse has a Hometo 3,000 max, and that's stretching it. King's city. Dr. King's school.



photo by Craig T. Greenlee

Before moving to Atlanta, the King Games were a major league meet in world-class track and field. Kingdom, Antonio McKay, Harvey Above, Sam Graddy, U.S. silver medalist in the 100-meter dash, wins the century. At his left is Kirk Baptiste, who won a silver medal for the U.S. in the 200-meter dash. Morehouse College would be a natural for these games. They have the facility and the seating capacity. All the games need at this have never been properly promoted and point is a true commitment to make them work.

Games name are owned by the Atlanta Georgia Tech also has an equally nice Track Club, the same people who suc- facility, but they have even less space for Emory and Georgia Tech. The big edge by keeping the games and benging them

• The King Games have been held on problem and neither was national media room for the working press to operate in, properly, will demonstrate the city's abilthe campus of Emory University and the coverage. ABC-TV regularly aired the parking space, and traffic control are just ity to promote and stage one of the facilities are excellent. Their tartan sur- event as athletes such as Tommie Smith, some of the items would-be organizers world's premier sporting events. face track is the same as the one in the Lee Evans, and Rod Milburn competed will have to deal with. Still, some of those

The facilities are there, just like for Morehouse is that the stadium can back to life. The city has lobbled hard for Road Race every July 4th. ATC, howev- To get a better perspective of the King hold more people. Whenever Howard and won the U.S. bid to host the 1996 er, is a road racing group that doesn't Games, it's important to review its history University plays a football game against Summer Olympics. By staging the King have the expertise or resources to handle before moving to Atlanta. In the late 60s the Maroon Tigers in Atlanta, B.T. Har- Games on the level they deserve, Atlanta a major track meet that features several and during the 70s, the games were a vey Stadium is packed with at least 10,000 can substantially enhance its stature in events over a three hour period. If the prime time track and field happening. The people. That's a sizeable crowd for a track the eyes of the International Olympic

> problems won't be new. Morehouse's coming game.

Atlanta would do itself a trand favor Committee. The IOC selects the sites of Logistically, of course, there are a lot future Olympiads. Because track and of concerns. Things such as ample dress- field is the centerpiece for Olympic Heavyweight sponsorship wasn't a ing room space for athletes, sufficient competition, the King Games, if done

The King Games don't deserve to be

-- Craig T. Greenlee