SPECIAL REPORT

Proposal 42 has black colleges crying foul

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The legislation, passed at the NCAA Convention is San Francisco last month, prohibits schools from giving scholarships 2.0 GPA in high school core curriculum implementation be delayed until at least for the relief it gives. courses and score 700 on the SAT or 15 on 1992. the ACT.

The NCAA estimates that of the 600 or so athletes who are likely to be affected by Proposal 42, 90 percent are black.

Since predominantly black schools recruit black athletes almost exclusively, they stand to be hurt the most by the legis-

"It's a tremendous blow to small col-

Proposal 42 has most predominantly sippi. Valley State athletic director Chuck Prophet. "It is a slap in the face."

Proposal 42 was scheduled to go into effect in 1990. However, the president of

That decision came after Georgetown basketball coach John Thompson's personal boycott and the threat of fegal action by Temple basketball coach John Chaney (a Bethune-Cookman alumnus).

Still, there is an air of skepticism among predominantly black schools as to the rule's future.

Gorden. "They will give it the appearance that it has been rescinded. These kinds of

"There won't be the liberalized acceptance of grade point averages that most of us in the black schools favor. Some devices will be left to eliminate minorities with regard to test scores."

Says SWAC Commissioner Dr. James Frank: "I'm not sure what they mean by delay. If they're talking about coming back in January (at the next NCAA Convention) leges and borderline students," says Missis- it," says Jackson State football coach W.C. in, I'm against that. I would be in favor of bad.

putting it back the way it is now."

Under Proposition 48, which went into situations condition us to accept things that effect in 1986, freshmen athletes who were are a little less poisonous. We still dislike partial qualifiers were permitted to receive the NCAA and the chairman of the Presi- Proposition 48. But now that 42 is on the scholarships. However, they were ineligible to freshmen athletes who fail to maintain a dent's Council have recommended that its scene, we've been conditioned to accept 48 their first year, could not practice with the team and they lost a year of eligibility.

> Predominantly black schools were opposed to Proposition 48 because of the standardized tests, which has been shown to be culturally biased.

> Proponents of Proposal 42 say it closes a loophole that Proposition 48 didn't cover and the rule is necessary to protect schools'

Those opposed to Proposal 42 have "I don't think they will totally rescind and not implementing it until all the data is called it everything from racist to just plain



If Proposal 42 becomes reality, black college athletic programs will run into another stumbling block.

Photo by The Magnificent Eye

Even the American Council on Education, which was instrumental in Proposition 48 being adopted, has not embraced Proposal 42.

"The organization doesn't have a position on it," says ACE spokesman David Merkowitz. "But the personal position of (ACE president) Bob Atwell is that he doesn't support the measure.

"We felt that 48 was defensible on academic grounds. The thrust was to protect the student-athlete, especially those with weak academic backgrounds. It (48) gives them a year to get academically grounded before competing. Proposal 42 has no academic justification. It singles out nonqualifying athletes as a separate class and treats them differently. It doesn't protect them academically. It excludes them. The NCAA, by attempting to prohibit schools from awarding institutional need based funds, is going into an area that's none of its business."

Those are fairly strong words coming from the organization that engineered the passage of Prop 48 into law three years ago. There are other folk, however, who are more pointed in their criticism of 42.

"Proposal 42 is just another blatant attempt by those using the guise of education and excellence, to go about weeding out our fine athletes," says Marino H. Casem, Southern University's athletic director.

"A lot of guys aren't looking at the major picture. They look at 700 and 15 as not being a high score. They figure since 85 percent of white America makes that, it's not diff cult. They legitimately want black kids to come out with significant academic skills. But they are confused as to what tools truly measure a student's worth.

"You don't want to keep beating on this thing about racism. But if they keep hurting us like they have, I'm going to come to the conclusion that it's a conspiracy."

The manner in which Proposal 42 was passed

It was voted down originally. However, after Southeastern Conference commissioner Harvey Schiller (who sponsored the legislation), lobbied delegates, it passed by nine goes into effect. votes (163-154) on the following day. The SEC voted to stop giving scholarships to partial qualifiers in 1992.

Many think that the real impetus behind Proposal 42 was the scandal at the University of Georgia involving Jan Kemp, an instructor in the school's remedial studies program. The program, which didn't carry college credits, was open to the general student body. But it was discovered that some athletes were allowed to remain in the program when

they should have been dismissed. Many athletes competed up to two years without earning any college credits.

"They (the SEC) were trying to level the field between Georgia and other people," says Casem. "They hoodwinked the rest of the convention."

Apparently, some black schools were among those who were "hoodwinked." Florida A & M, Howard University,

"Within the NCAA we need a black caucus. There's always the possibility that we could withdraw (from the NCAA) and establish our own body. The NCAA has been a very important organization for college athletics. I'm opposed to withdrawing. But if it means the annihilation of our youngsters, we might need to do something drastic. Proposal 42 is academic genocide."

> -- W.C. Gorden Jackson State Football Coach

Maryland-Eastern Shore and the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference voted for Proposal 42.

Florida A & M athletic director Walter Reed says he voted for it because the state of Florida had passed a similar law last July. William Moultrie, Howard's athletic director, always the possibility that we could withdraw (from the says his vote was recorded incorrectly. Kirkland Hall, athletic director at Maryland-Eastern Shore, says he misunderstood what a yes vote meant. MEAC commissioner Ken Free told USA TODAY: "I voted on my conscience."

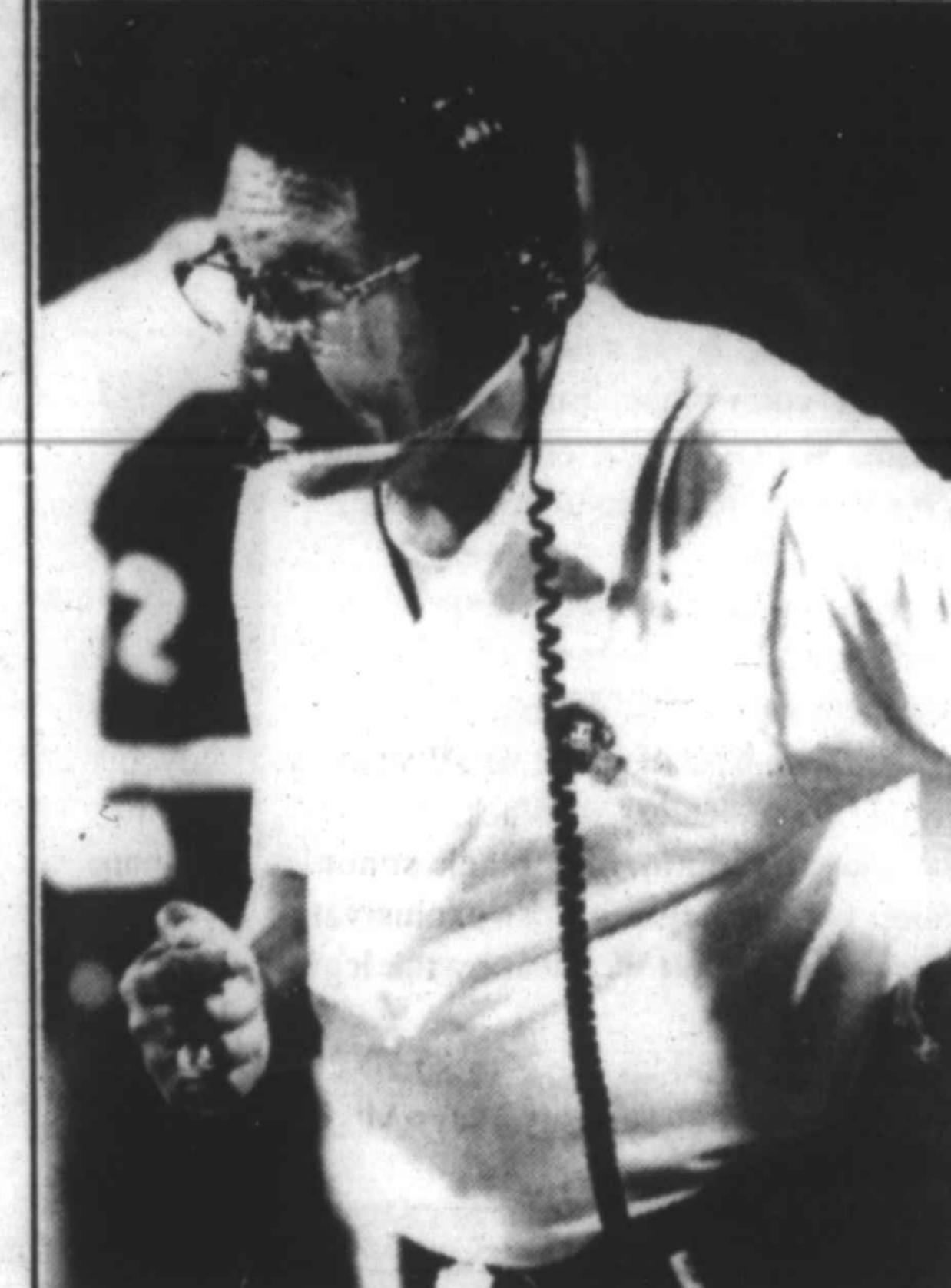
All of this confusion doesn't make Casem feel any better about the situation. "Institutions that voted funny," he contends, "need to be held accountable."

In the meantime, black schools are faced with the dilemma of how to cope with Proposal 42 if and when it

Their programs are not high-profile. Therefore, any boycott or protest would lack the impact that Thompson's walk-out produced.

"It's imperative that the leaders of the different conferences formulate strategies to protect our young people and assure them the privilege of scholarships," says Jackson

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NCAA) and establish our own body. The NCAA has been a very important organization for college athletics. I'm opposed to withdrawing. But if it means the annihilation of our youngsters, we might need to do something drastic. Proposal 42 is academic genocide.

""We need to deal with this. It's frustrating that we don't have more of an impact. People say that I'm just concerned how it's going to affect Jackson State's program. But what worries me most is it will affect minority youth. You're talking about a whole generation of black youth."

Says Casem: "The words are beginning to stir -- walkout, drop, move into another association. There was a great deal of frustration just before Division I-AA was created, just like there is now. There was a surge of pride to want to achieve something that was attainable. If they do something about the test scores, we can hang tough. I don't know what the answer is. But we have to stick together."

-Roscoe Nance

Opposing Viewpoint

Tougher academic standards may be a blessing in disguise

Spectator sports are not my game. I simply have no even reasonable competence. interest in them. But when the NCAA strikes a blow for education reform and coaches and college presidents react ruption and miseducation. Because of their own self-inter- be more highly valued than education for life. And young defensively, I get interested.

eligible for athletic scholarships, they must obtain a pass- ment in educational achievement or academic preparation. letic careers and the challenge of responsible living which ing score on a standardized test and maintain a "C" average What schools and colleges have been unwilling to do, must be confronted at the conclusion of such careers. in their studies.

tors come down on the opposite side of what essentially er levels of education. appears to be a vote for the improvement in students' aca- In the absence of reform, the students will suffer the realization that talent, aspiration, wishes and dreams are

Athletes are miseducated

'Whatever the NCAA's motives, it touched a sore tion. rve. It reopened a Pandora's box of corruption that The issue of academic preparation of athletes (athletes in their lives. thletic stardom, rather than educational excellence or ting worse for several decades. Institutions and corporate

ests, school administrators, coaches, and college presidents athletes, like youngsters who get involved in drug traffick-The NCAA recently said, enough is enough. No more have stood by and watched as students entered and exited ing, have set the highest value on monetary gratification. easy entry for athletes. If high school athletes want to be colleges without demonstrating any appreciable improve- They have done this without regard for the brevity of ath-

the NCAA has taken a small step in doing for them. The I don't see anything wrong with that criteria. But crit- NCAA is saying that if schools don't improve the perforics assert Proposal 42 is racially motivated and is based on mance of aspiring athletes during the course of their educathe NCAA's self-interest. Something's wrong when educa- tional experience, they won't be allowed to accede to high- system.

> consequences. But these consequences are not so great as not enough to be able to live successfully in a complex those of the traditional cycle of corruption and miseduca- society. They need to understand that access and opportu-

volves the miseducation of young people who aspire to who are mostly black, but not all are black) has been get-

interests have reinforced the false notion that monetary School personnel have contributed to the cycle of cor- stardom on a basketball court, or some playing field, is to

System short-changes students

It is past time that young people confront the fact that they are being short-changed by the American educationa

Athletes, like any other students, must come to the nity are meaningless if there's no discipline and diligence

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