Alabama A&M

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"Being down at the half didn't bother me," Pettaway said. "We hadn't hit our stride at that point. I felt good that we were down by only five. After all, we can get five points with two trips down the floor."

Pettaway was all too aware that his team had the fortitude to bounce back and successfully defend their conference tournament crown. Over the past four seasons, the Dogs have built a rock solid reputation as the premier hoops program in the SIAC.

During his halftime talk, the only thing on Pettaway's mind was motivating his team to reach a higher intensity level. To his way of thinking, that was the only change his team needed in order for them to cut down another set of nets at the end of the championship game.

With that in mind, A & M (25-5) came out in the second half with a more determined mental approach. They executed their half-court defense to Pettaway's liking and that helped the Dogs to begin dictating the game's tempo in their favor.

"We needed to force a quicker tempo," Pettaway points out. "We did that by changing our defensive look every two trips down the court.

A & M wasn't at full strength for the finals. All-American point guard Willie Hayes hadn't returned to full speed after undergoing orthoscopic knee surgery for cartilage damage two weeks prior to the tournament.

Hayes, who averaged better than 20 points and eight assists a game during the regular season, couldn't move in his customary zip-quick fashion. But he still contributed 12 points and six assists.

However, the Dogs compensated for Hayes with the help of Frank Sillmon and Nathan Crowder. Sillmon poured in 23 points and snatched 12 rebounds and was chosen as the tournament MVP.

Crowder provided a lift at both ends with 18 points and 11 boards (five on the offensive glass). Haynes ended the night with 12 points and Tucker had 10.

The revived defensive efforts of A & M had a detrimental effect on Paine's offense. Their shooting touch went into a deep freeze. The Lions shot 37 percent from the field in the game's last 20 minutes. A & M, on the other hand, got the shots they wanted and made the most it, sinking 20 of 33 attempts (60.6 percent).

"In the second half, we just gave up too many second and third shots when they went to the offensive boards," Spry said. "We fell behind by three, they got a dunk and the crowd really got into the game after that. Plus we started missing shots that we had been making and that was the turning point for us. A & M just did what they had to do to win. We just fell short at the end (of the game)."

The Lions weren't taking this sitting down, though. Patrick Williams led PC with 25 points, Don Smith had 14, and Paul Davis added 13 points and seven boards.

"Both teams came out a little tentative in the early going," observed Pettaway. "But it was still a very intense game. And it's always that way everytime we play Paine."

In the consolation contest, Morehouse College secured a 109-98 victory over Albany State to make it known that they will be strong contenders in the SIAC next season. The youthful Maroon Tigers led 55-54 at the half, then outscored the Rams by 10 in the second half to put the game away.

The "M Force" was led by rookies Roderick Stubbs and Harold Ellis. Stubbs tallied 26 points (which included perfect shooting from the field -- 11 of 11), and Ellis contributed 25 points and seven rebounds. William Ford added 16 points and Damon Dixon finished with 15.

Byron Martin carried the Rams' offense with 32 points to lead all scorers. Charles McGill totaled 19 points, eight assists, and four steals. Tony Dunham added 14, while Larry Franklin and Scott Jackson chipped in with 12 and 10 points respectively.

-- Franklin Douglas

SIAC Men's All-Tournament Team

Willie Hayes	Alabama A & M	Guard
Julius Fritz	Fort Valley State	Guard
Frank Sillmon	Alabama A & M	Forward
Byron Martin	Albany State	Forward
Harold Ellis	Morehouse College	Forward

Tournament MVP
Frank Sillmon

NCAA Playoffs: Getting past first round

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closed the gap by employing a match-up zone which featured variations of the triangle and two and box and one. The move, designed to curtail the effectiveness of the Devils' Danny Ferry and Phil Henderson, worked up to a point. But the Dogs then got careless with the ball, committed three straight turnovers, Duke converted those miscues into points and the game was all but over.

Jags are overpowered

Southern's fortunes weren't any better in round one of the Southeast Regionals in Atlanta. They went up against a rugged and physical bunch in North Carolina. The Tar Heels' size was so dominant that the Jaguars could never get anything going inside the paint. The bulk and size of the front line gradually began taking a toll and UNC rolled to a 93-79 win.

Because Southern had no answer for what was going down on the blocks, North Carolina ruled the boards with the authority of a Russian czar.

This left the Jags with little else but the perimeter game and they enjoyed some success with it. For the game, Southern put up 28 three-pointers, converting 10 of them.

Point guard Johnny Sample topped the offense for coach Ben Jobe's team with 22 points (which included six for 10 in three-point goals) and seven assists. Bobby Phills followed him up with 20, while Joe Faulkner and Darryl Battles finished with 14 and 11 points respectively. Battles, who finished among the top five in the nation in rebounding this year (11.8), recorded 10 boards vs. the Tar Heels.

Southern got in early trouble when they couldn't hit their shots after the opening tip. They shot three for 25 in the first half and the taller Heels made them pay dearly for the errant shots.

Division II competitiveness

Norfolk State won the bid to host the South Atlantic Regionals and the match-ups promised to whet the appetites of all black college basketball fans.

North Carolina Central, Norfolk State, and Virginia Union were the CIAA representatives, while Alabama A & M, winners of the SIAC were moved from their usual location in the South Region.

The Eagles earned their revenge over rival Union in the regional finals as they worked their game plan to perfection and won 60-55.

Miles Clarke was the catalyst in the finals, scoring 16 points before he fouled out in the final minute. It was Central's first win over Union in three games this season.

With under four minutes left in the game, Jeff Hayes' free throw put the Eagles in the lead to stay 53-52. NCCU then ran off five unanswered points and held a 57-52 margin with less than two minutes remaining. But A .J. English kept Union in contention with a three-point play, to cut Central's lead to two points. However, NCCU hit three of four foul shots in the game's final 14 seconds to secure the victory.

Aside from Clarke's 16, Fred Bennett and Hayes each scored 13 points for the Eagles and Dominique Stephens added 11. For the Panthers, English scored 16 and Terry Davis, the CIAA Player of the Year, was held to 11 points.

The first round game between A & M and Union was viewed as potentially the best of the year. However, that never materialized as the Panthers put a dusting on the Bulldogs 116-80. Terry Davis paced Union with 32 points, English had 21, P.J. Honore added 19 and Tim Price contributed 18. A & M got 20 points from Frank Sillmon and 18 from Ronnie Tucker. Willie Hayes scored nine points and dished out nine assists.

Central took up where they left off in the CIAA semi-finals when they downed Norfolk State 67-64 in their regional opener. Clarke led the Eagles with 26 points and Henry Canty had 10. Jerome Coles was the top Spartans' scorer with 15 points, Darren Sanderlin had 12, Guy Fauntleroy 11, and Clinton Wright 10.

-- Ronald Kirk

Central

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tion down low and he made them pay the price by sinking 11 of 15 foul shots.

Stephens let it all flow in Springfield, using an array of power and finesse moves on his jumper along with some highlight film type dunks (eight during the Elite Eight) that charged up the Eagles. If it wasn't Clarke doing the damage, then it was Sifford, or it was Hayes (10 points, eight assists), or it was Adrian McKinnon (11 points, nine boards).

In the final analysis, Central's being cast as decided underdogs worked to their advantage. Nobody expected much of them once they got to Springfield. They barely survived the first round, sneaking past Sacred Heart 58-57. Jacksonville State was favored to crack the Eagles by at least 25 points, but they were embarrassed instead to the tune of 90-70. And in the finals, there was no more to say.

The final score said it all.

-- Craig T. Greenlee

NFL DRAFT PREVIEW

Pros like Massey's potential as cornerback

He's got speed. He's tough, and he has athletic ability.

But he doesn't have polish or refined skills in technique.

That's a common label attached to black athletes from predominantly black colleges and universities. Still, several players with that definition have made it in the National Football League.

The latest with that tag -- and potential -- is Robert Massey, a cornerback from North Carolina Central University. Massey probably will be the first player from a predominantly black school taken in the 1989 NFL draft, to be held April 23 and 24 in New York City. Selected higher than record-breaking running back Lewis Tillman of Jackson State? Yes, but don't be surprised.

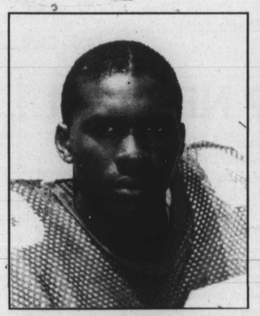

Photo Courtesy of Alcorn State University

Pro scouts have no questions about Elliot Smith's skills in the secondary. But what they aren't sure about is his consistency.

For one thing, Massey is a cornerback -- a premium position in the NFL, especially with the new-found emphasis on the passing game league-wide. Top-flight cornerbacks with the ability to run stride-for-stride with receivers and cover one-on-one are difficult to find. Tillman, on the other hand, plays at a position that usually is overloaded with athletes come NFL draft time each year.

In other words, it's much easier to land a good running back than a good cornerback.

Massey, 5-10, 185, is considered to have much raw ability, but he has tremendous physical skills. He runs a 4.45 to 4.5 time in the 40-yard dash.

"He's a little rough around the edges," said Tony Razzano, college scouting director for the Super Bowl champion San Francisco 49ers. "But he has the physical ability you like in cornerbacks. He has one-on-one ability. He hits well. Forces the run aggressively. And he returns punts, too."

Massey also played well in the postseason all-star practices and games. "He overcame a lot of his technique deficiencies with his athletic ability against the good wide receivers," said Joel Buchsbaum, draft analyst and author of the "Scout's Notebook."

After Massey and Tillman, the list of top prospects from the predominantly black schools thins out. It seems there are fewer prospects this year than in the last several years.

Either Alcorn State's Elliot Smith or his teammate Michael Andrews will be the third player from a predominantly black school selected. And cornerback Maurice Hurst, 5-9 1/2, 185, of Southern could be a factor in this scenario, too. All three cornerbacks have enough physical ability to make an NFL team.

But Smith, 6-0, 190, has been called a mystery man by some. He was in and out of the starting line-up in college. "But he has all the physical tools," Buchsbaum said. Smith performed well in practices before the Senior Bowl, although he made only 11 tackles and intercepted three passes last season.

So the key questions with Smith concern consistency and concentration. Andrews, 5-11 1/4, 176, was more consistent, but he doesn't have as much physical ability as Smith. Furthermore, Andrews, who was second team All-SWAC in '87 with six interceptions, is a little light in weight. Says Buchsbaum: "He's a good athlete who appears alert in a zone (defense)."

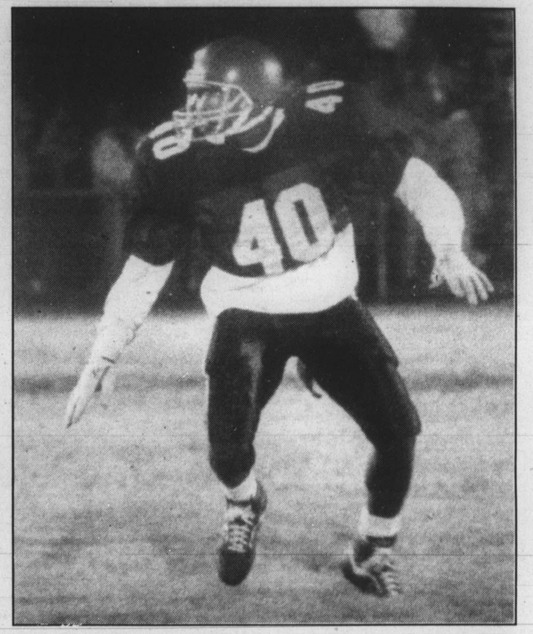

Photo by Max Dunhill

Massey's ability to cover swift receivers all over the field will most likely make him the first black college player selected in this month's NFL draft.

Hurst, who caught 18 passes for 347 yards as a wide receiver in '86, has some coverage ability, Buchsbaum says. He also has been timed at 4.55 to 4.6 in the 40. "He's a good athlete with quickness, speed and recovery," Buchsbaum says. "Can play bump-and-run and cover man-to-man."

But to the 49ers, it's a little more difficult to evaluate him. "One of our scouts says he has the ability to play for us," Razzano said. "But one of the other scouts looks at him as a late-round guy, as a camp competitor with an outside shot. A little short, but he's productive."

Other players who should be selected in the middle to late rounds are fullbacks Brad Baxter, 6-1, 238, of Alabama State, and William Dubose, 5-11 1/2, 219, of South Carolina State; running back Reggie Barnes, 5-9 1/8, 207, Delaware State; linebacker Cammie Collins, 5-11 1/2, 222, of Jackson State; free safety Matthew Fair of Florida A&M and linebacker Xavier Hall of Alcorn State.

Baxter, says Buchsbaum, plays

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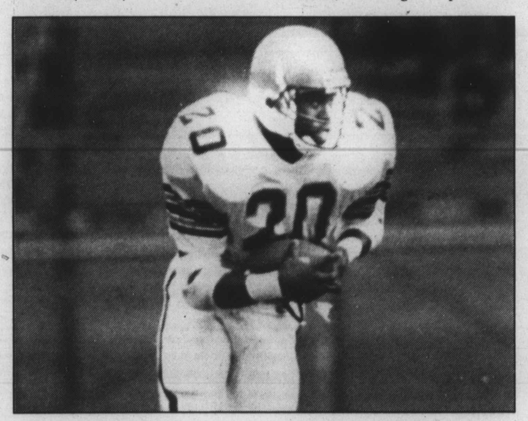

Photo by J.D. Schwalm

Burly Brad Baxter is much faster than he looks, say NFL scouts.