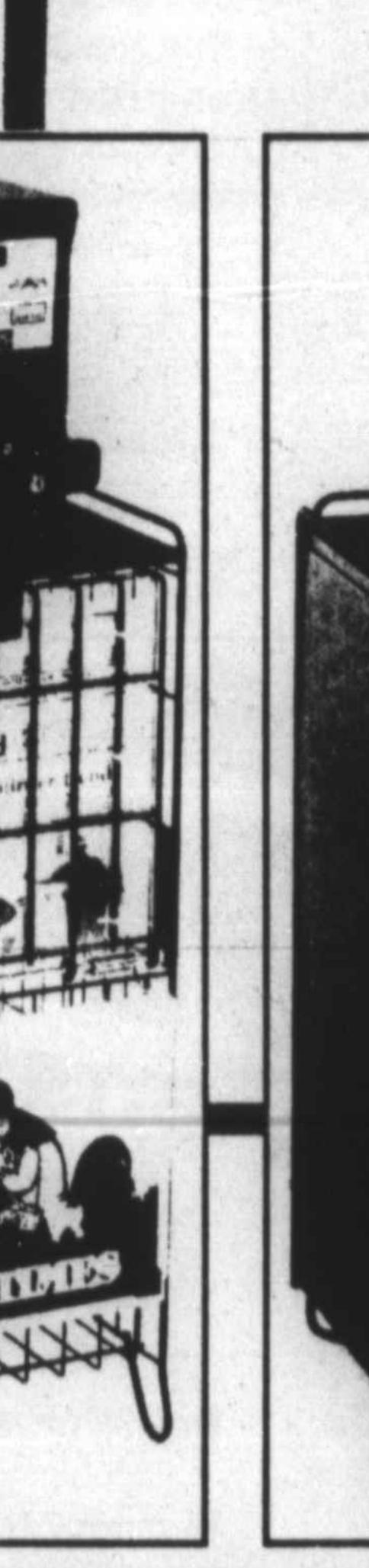
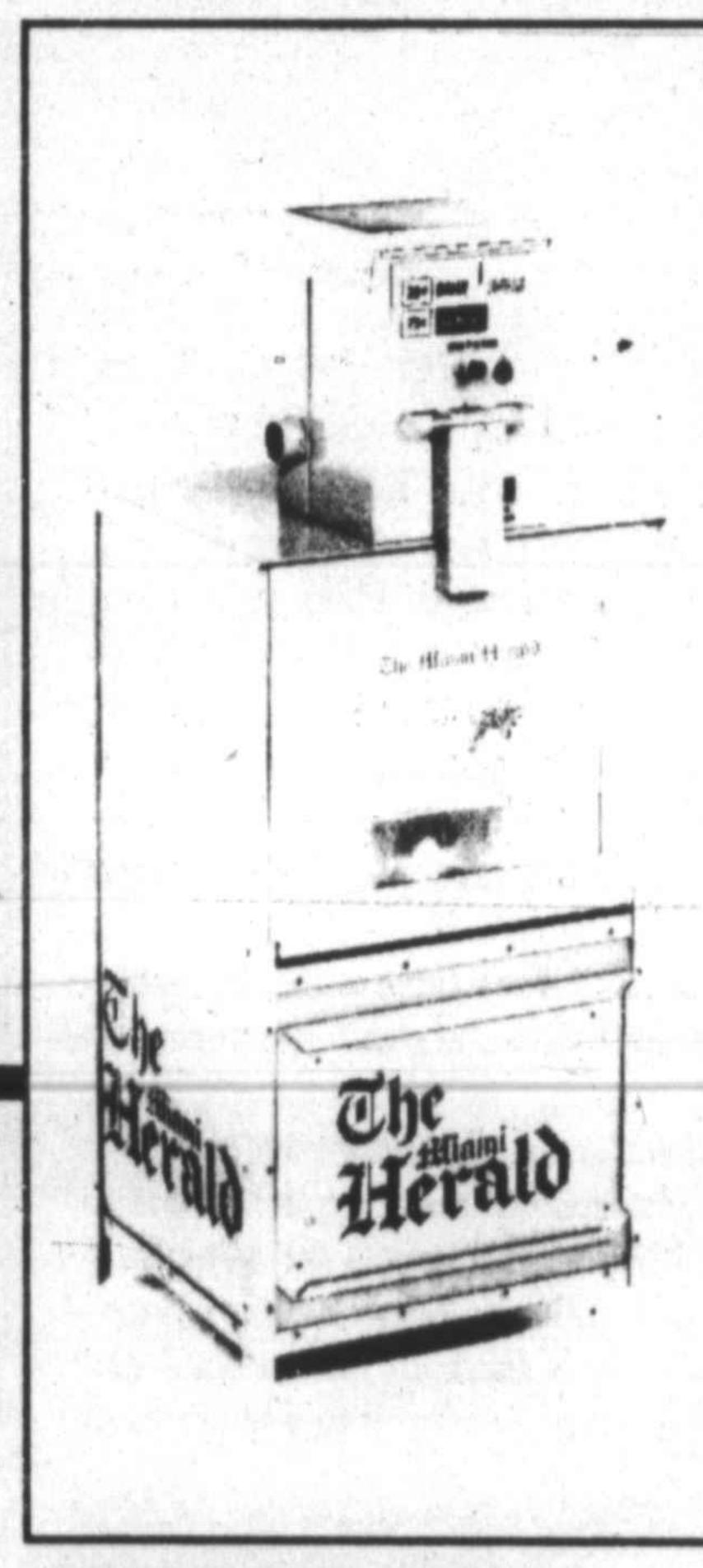
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## Network TV coverage

ers aren't very likely to see Division I-AA game reviews are areas that he is looking into football or Division II football and basketball on a regular basis. At present, the network spend their money with BET. airs 210 college basketball games during the "We'll continue to do what we have in the game. They believed that fewer people a useful purpose, he said.

decided to do with black college sports.

"People are letting us know that they can't get enough of it (games of the week),"

Because of that, Matthews notes, view- such as halftime reports, pre-game and post-

year. Adding on more games wouldn't serve the past," Whigham said. "Last year, we would attend the game if it were on televidemonstrated that we could produce high sion and they would have no way of recover-Whigham sees no reason why BET quality programs that is of national caliber. ing those losses because of what we could would suffer because of what ESPN has Now all we have to do is bring our numbers afford to pay them for an appearance fee." up so we can give advertisers more bang for their buck."

could make more money by not having us air schools.

BET will carry the '89 Bayou Classic, but it will be shown on a delayed basis. This Sports, has signed a personal services con-Money or the lack of it, is a reason why way, the schools feel they have more of an tract with the BET and will be involved in

"They were concerned about what thing we'll see more of. After all, ESPN would happen at the gate and they should doesn't cover black college sports like BET, in an effort to induce more advertisers to be," Whigham added. " They felt that they so their people aren't as familiar with the

> Having Neal appear on ESPN to do black college sports is a feather in BET's cap, Whigham says. "The more visibility our talent gets, the better we look as a network," he said.

BET will benefit from such an arrangement. James Brown, commentator for CBS he said. "We only do one game a week. Our ESPN could be viewed as more attractive by opportunity to fill the Louisiana Superdome various projects in the coming months.



Photo by The Magnificent Eye

ESPN already has a proliferation of major college football games on its schedule. So it's unlikely that folks will see any Division I-AA or Division II football on that network.

viewers want us to do two or three games a black colleges who appear on that network. week instead of one. But we're not ready to BET reportedly pays a flat fee of \$6,000 for do that as of yet."

financial drain on a young network that is \$10,000 per school for the finalist in the still growing and BET is no exception. The MEAC Basketball Championship. advertising revenue hasn't been bad, and the dollars have increased which is encouraging.

help BET Sports become profitable. He plans to do that by providing advertisers with more agree on a fee. The schools wanted more grams shown. Different segments of games, they opted to forego having the game aired.

schools appearing on the Game of the Week. Live sports programming can be a (The schools split the total fee). ESPN paid

This money issue has surfaced before. Last year's Bayou Classic between Gram-However, Whigham's major push to bling and Southern wasn't aired on BET because the network and the schools couldn't sales opportunities associated with the pro- money than BET was prepared to pay, so

and the network still gets to broadcast one of black college football's grandest events.

In summation, it appears that for now, BET and ESPN won't be engaged in a war over black college sports. BET will continue its specialized programming, which provides viewers with a brand of coverage that would be difficult for ESPN to duplicate.

One example of this was this year's SWAC Basketball Tournament finals on ESPN. Charlie Neal, sports director for BET, co-anchored the game with an ESPN analyst. These type of joint ventures may be some-

Brown, incidentally, got his first network job with BET.

At this point in time, it's clear that BET will continue to be the major force in providing black college sports with a national audience. ESPN's efforts is supplementing that, and Black College Sports Today should further add to that.

All that's necessary now is for black college sports followers to fully support those

> Black college sports will be better off. -Craig T. Greenlee

July 1989 - Page 11