

Comments on Sports by Alex Darley
PV's Marion Henry: A cautious approach

Dr. Marion Henry, former Prairie View athletic director and presently faculty chairman of the athletic committee, has been criticized in some circles, because of his cautious approach to Prairie View's entry into NCAA Division I. The criticism has come mostly from SWAC athletic directors.

Henry's stand on Division I membership has been the same as the stand taken by MEAC athletic directors from North Carolina Central, Morgan and Maryland Eastern Shore (formerly Maryland State). Though their reasons for not seeking Division I membership may be different, but the results have been the same.

The three dissenting MEAC schools caused a split in the conference and a bitter divorce. Prairie View's stand put the Waller County school on a collision course with other SWAC schools.

If one has not followed closely the developments leading to the seeking of Division I membership by SWAC schools and the subsequent developments, an unfair judgement may be lodged against Henry or the SWAC schools who sought Division I membership.

Henry's initial objections were expressed to this writer two years ago. His objections may be briefed by the following summary:

1. Giving up NAIA membership. Prairie View had won national championships in basketball and track, and was runner-up in football. The baseball team had won area playoffs and participated in the national finals.

2. Henry did not believe that the same opportunities would come as a Division I member and he wasn't about to sacrifice the chances for the various teams to participate nationally, for Division I membership.

One must remember that there was no football Division I-AA when Henry made his decision, hence no lucrative television promises. Television and I-AA came on the scene because the football and basketball powers in the NCAA opposed the addition of Division II type schools and

threatened a revolt, because they felt that these schools would further dilute their votes on legislation that is designed to serve their best interest.

Enter Walter Byars and his classification committee. Divide Division I football into Division I-A and I-AA. To encourage the non-powerful teams to choose Division I-AA, an ABC television package of 13 appearances on regional television was offered. Most of the non-powerful members didn't bite and only 37 schools chose I-AA. To satisfy the demands of the have-nots, the NCAA basketball playoffs were extended to 40 teams, resulting in automatic classification for many of the smaller conference basketball teams.

Placed in its proper perspective, these movements took place after Henry had decided to remain with the NAIA program. His absence from some NCAA meetings robbed him of the behind the scene politickings and restroom caucuses that are often used to push through legislation affecting certain interest groups.

A sense of history and the realities of the revolution in thought must be the guiding lights SWAC must follow in the ensuing years.

The big question:

Will black schools have to achieve beyond itself in the ensuing years to escape mediocrity?

S.D. Simmons, vice chancellor of North Carolina Central College, believes so.

"The truth is that the MEAC is not ready for big time college competition," Simmons told Sam Lacy of The Baltimore Afro-American. "The MEAC wants the label of Division I, not the reality and we (NCC College) do not agree with that philosophy. The cost factors which prohibit Division I membership for us — are recruiting, team travel and the cost of adding three sports."

It is not a coincidence that the four remaining schools in the MEAC are seeking an alignment with the five Division I schools in SWAC. Their problems are common and inter-related.

It is not an accident of history, nor a freak of the present that the minds of Prairie View's Marion Henry and North Carolina Central's S.D. Simmons, take a cautious look at the new approaches to college athletics in the black schools. A sense of history has made them cautious. On the other hand, the blythe spirit of the American Revolutionaries has produced a revolution in thought among the black athletic leaders as they seek a new image for black athletics. For true and realistic success, the thinking and thoughts of both groups will be needed and welcomed by black college administrators.

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The Other Side

By Sam Jackson
Informer Staff

If somebody had told me last November that 1) Sparky Anderson and Pete Rose would leave Cincinnati, 2) all four division-winning ballclubs in 1978, the Dodgers, Phillies, Royals, and Yanks, would be faced with the possibility of replacing their managers, 3) Baltimore would have two very possible 20-game winners at the all-star break, and that neither of them was Jim Palmer, 4) a club which is 22nd in batting average, 25th in runs batted in, and dead last (26th) in the major leagues home runs would be leading the NL West division by 5½ games at the break, I probably would have called in the folks from the funny farm.

The Astros continue to cling to a 5½ game lead, despite dropping five of six on home turf, and being swept at

Rockets get Tom Henderson

The Houston Rockets called a Monday news conference to announce the signing of Tom Henderson, a 6-3, 190-pound Washington Bullets

ter playing out his option with the Bullets.

Henderson, 27, this season ranked eighth in the league for assists, averaging six a game, and

pic team and was ta's No. 7 draft choi played for Atlanta 1974-76 and was t along with a first draft choice, to th