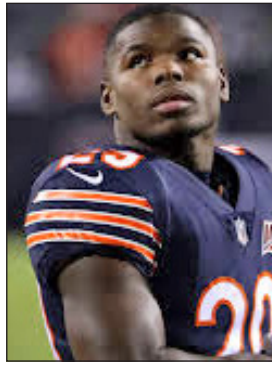


BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



Chicago Bears photo

LET'S GET IT STARTED

MUCH-ANTICIPATED REMATCH KICKS OFF 2023 GRID SEASON; NEW A-D AT MOREHOUSE

TARIK COHEN: Attempting to restart NFL career after missing three years following devastating injuries.



Taylor



Pough

REMATCH IN ATLANTA: The teams of new Jackson State head coach T. C. Taylor (l.) and 22-year South Carolina State head coach Oliver "Buddy" Pough (r.) will match up Saturday evening in the 17th MEAC/SWAC Challenge on ABC.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

AGENTS DECLARE TARIK COHEN READY TO RESUME NFL CAREER:

ESPN's Adam Schefter reported that former North Carolina A&T and Mid Eastern Athletic Conference record-breaking running back and NFL Pro Bowler **Tarik Cohen** is prepared to work out for NFL teams, according to his agents Drew Rosenhaus and Ryan Matha.



Cohen

Cohen signed a three-year contract extension with the Chicago Bears worth \$17.25 million early in the 2020 NFL season, his fourth NFL season. He went down with a serious ACL injury in the fourth game of that season against the Atlanta Falcons just after signing the contract.

While working out during his rehab, Cohen tore his Achilles tendon effectively ending his 2022 season. He was released by the Bears during the 2022 offseason.

Cohen, 28, has not played in an NFL game since.

The Bears drafted Cohen in the fourth round of the 2017 NFL Draft out of NC A&T after setting team and MEAC rushing records. He rushed for 1,000 yards in each of his four seasons with the Aggies and finished with a conference-record 5,619 rushing yards, the second-best mark in black college football history.

He posted 1,578 all-purpose yards as an NFL rookie. He was named a Pro Bowler in his second season after accumulating 1,169 all purpose yards catching passes out the backfield, rushing and in kick returns. He had 994 all-purpose yards in 2018.

NO LONG TERM DEAL FOR CIAA AND HBCU GO:

Steven Gaither of *HBCUGameday* reports Tuesday that a budding long-term media relationship between HBCUGo and the CIAA is a no-go at this time.

Less than one month after announcing a set of five football contests to be broadcast on the emerging platform - including the Nov. 11 CIAA Championship Game - CIAA officials sent an email informing school officials that a long-term deal would not be taking place.

The email and sources indicate that the parties are still negotiating a deal to broadcast the football games this season on a game-by-game basis.

The email, sent on behalf of CIAA Commissioner **Jacqie McWilliams** last Thursday, stated the league would not enter into terms with Allen Media Group/HBCO GO due to terms that are "non-negotiable." Allen Media Group, led by Chairman and CEO Byron Allen, bought HBCU GO in 2022 and broadcast HBCU football and basketball games in the 2022-23 season.

NC A&T GETS NEW GOLF COACH:

GREENSBORO - North Carolina A&T Director of Athletics, **Earl M. Hilton III** announced **Loritz "Scooter" Clark**, as the Aggies' new Director of Golf on Monday.

The position came open last spring when **Richard Watkins**, the head coach who pioneered both programs starting in 2016 with the women's program, retired after spending 32 years of service at A&T in various capacities and 45 years in public education.

Clark comes to A&T after working for the PGA of America as the Director of Collegiate Championships. Clark also has collegiate coaching experience at the Division I level as **Bethune-Cookman University's** Director of Intercollegiate Golf from 2010-2016.

Rematch tops opening game schedule

LUT WILLIAMS
BCSP Editor

The 2023 HBCU football season kicks off this week and features a rematch up recent champions.

2021 and 2022 SWAC champion **Jackson State** will face 2021 MEAC champion **South Carolina State** Saturday at 7:30 p.m. in Atlanta's Center Parc Stadium in the 17th *Cricket MEAC/SWAC Challenge*. ABC is carrying the game.

The MEAC leads the series, 11-5.

This year's game is a rematch of the 2021 *Celebration Bowl* where head coach **Buddy Pough's** MEAC champion Bulldogs of SC State stunned and dominated **Deion "Coach Prime" Sanders'** SWAC champion JSU Tigers, 31-10.

It was a shocking outcome as Sanders' 11-1 Tigers came in as a decided favorite and the top ranked team in black college football. SC State came in at a pedestrian 6-5.

But the outcome was further evidence of the MEAC's dominance over the SWAC in recent years. In addition to its 11-5 edge in the MEAC/SWAC Challenge, the MEAC then had a 5-1 edge over the SWAC in the Celebration Bowl.

SC State's win over JSU was the MEAC's fifth win. 2022 MEAC champion **North**

Carolina Central's 41-34 win in overtime vs. Sanders' 11-0 JSU squad in December gave the MEAC a 6-1 edge in the series.

What's different in 2023?

The most glaring differences between this year's match up and the previous one between the two teams in 2021 is the absence of Sanders and his host of talented players. Sanders left after last season to become head coach at Colorado and took a handful of players with him. Of the 14 all-SWAC members on last year's JSU squad, only one, tight end **D. J. Stevens** returns. Additionally, SCSU is in a rebuilding mode after finishing just 3-8 a season ago.

JSU will enter the game with former quarterback **T. C. Taylor** as its new head coach and a new cast of players expected to lead the Tigers.

Pough, the dean of HBCU coaches entering his 22nd year leading the Bulldogs, however, says he expects an even tougher Jackson State squad under Taylor that the one he faced led by Sanders.

SCSU was 0-3 vs. NC Central when Taylor was the Eagles' quarterbacks coach (2014) and offensive coordinator (2017 and 2018).

GAMES THIS WEEK

SATURDAY, AUGUST 26

Bluefield vs. Florida Memorial in Bluefield, WV	1p
Langston vs. MidAmerica Nazarene in Langston, OK	6p
CLASSICS / TV GAMES	
MEAC / SWAC Challenge	
Jackson State vs. South Carolina State in Atlanta, GA - ABC	7:30p

"This T.C. Taylor team right now will be a better football team than that (Sanders) football team," Pough said in an interview last week, "a much better team. We've had some experience against him (Taylor) in the past and it concerns us that we have not done all that well against the team that he's been a part of. So, it'll be a tough game for us. We know they'll get after us in a way that that (Sanders) team didn't."

SC State placed eight players on the first and second team preseason all-MEAC teams. The Bulldogs will be led by quarterback **Corey Fields Jr.**, defensive linemen **Patrick Godbolt** and **Jablonski Green Jr.**, all graduate seniors.

The Bulldogs may have an edge in experience. Jackson State's edge may be that no one knows what it is bringing to the table in 2023.

BCSP Notes

Morehouse names Harold Ellis as new director of athletics

ATLANTA (August 15, 2023) - **Morehouse College** announced the appointment of 1992 graduate **Harold Ellis**, a former NBA player and standout guard for the Maroon Tigers, as the new athletics director. With an acclaimed basketball career and a wealth of coaching and management experience at the professional league level, Ellis is set to lead the Morehouse athletic department with a fresh vision to take the College's program to the next level.



Ellis

"I am deeply humbled and honored to return to my alma mater as the Athletic Director," says Ellis. "It feels like a full circle moment for me, returning to where my passion for sports was nurtured and where I laid the foundation for my career. I am excited to give back to this remarkable Institution and to inspire a new generation of student-athletes to dream big and achieve greatness."

Ellis is the only Morehouse athlete to have his jersey number retired after a collegiate basketball career averaging more than 24 points per game in four years and leading Morehouse to the 1989-90 NCAA Division II Final Four. After graduating in 1992, Ellis began a successful three-season NBA career, playing for the Los Angeles Clippers and the Denver Nuggets.

Morehouse president, **Dr. David A. Thomas**, expressed his confidence in Ellis's appointment, stating, "Ellis's knowledge, expertise, and passion for both sports and the Institution has undoubtedly prepared him to lead Morehouse College's athletic program. As athletic director, we believe he will be a strong role model for our student-athletes, empowering them to excel in academics and athletics while instilling the values of sportsmanship, teamwork, and community service."

Ellis has demonstrated his prowess in basketball coaching and management, starting as an assistant coach in Roanoke, Virginia, in the NBA's Developmental League. His talents were recognized by the Portland Trail Blazers, who then selected him to help lead their summer league team.

Ellis has also served as the general manager and head coach of the World Basketball Association's Rome Gladiators, guiding them to two consecutive league titles and earning "Coach of the Year" honors. Ellis continued his successful journey, serving in various roles with the Atlanta Hawks, Detroit Pistons, and Orlando Magic. In 2018, he became the Director of Player Personnel for the New York Knicks before eventually joining basketball operations for the Detroit Pistons.

Bonzi Wells steps down as LeMoyne-Owen head coach: To join Georgia Tech

The **Bonzi Wells** era as head basketball coach has come to an end at **LeMoyne-Owen College**. After two seasons and a 34-22 record, Wells has accepted a new role as assistant basketball coach at Georgia Tech.



Wells

"I am extremely grateful for LeMoyne-Owen College and my athletics director **William Anderson**," Wells, who played 11 years in the NBA with five teams, said. "He gave me such a great opportunity."

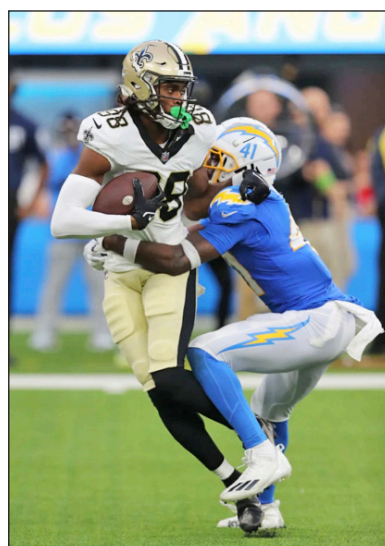
During his time at LeMoyne-Owen, Wells' squads went 23-16 in SIAC play. The Wells-led Magicians finished the 2022-2023 season with 18-11 record and lost in the second round of the SIAC tournament. He coached two players who were selected to all-conference teams, **Jaquan Lawrence** and **Gjerard Wilson**.

At Georgia Tech, Wells will be joining the staff of former Portland Trailblazers teammate **Damon Stoudamire**, who was named in March as the Yellow Jackets new head coach.

"The Magician family is extremely grateful for Coach Wells leadership, and the success that he had with our men's basketball program the past two seasons," said Anderson said. "We wish Coach Wells the best in his future coaching endeavors."

COMBAT CATCH

New Orleans rookie free agent wide receiver **SHAQUAN DAVIS (#88, SC STATE)** hauls in one of his three catches Sunday in a 22-17 preseason win over the LA Chargers. Davis led the Saints with 63 receiving yards including a 42-yarder just before halftime that led to a Saints' field goal.



neworleanssaints.com photo

HBCU rookies continue to shine in NFL preseason games

A strong group of undrafted HBCU rookie free agents, are making strong bids in the preseason to land on teams in the league.

Two games into the 2023 NFL preseason the players are stepping up, making plays and showing that they belong.

For example, rookie free agent running back **Emmanuel Wilson** out of **Fort Valley State**, has led the Green Bay Packers in rushing in both of their games. After rushing for an impressive 111 yards in just six carries with scoring runs of 80 and 11 yards in his debut against Cincinnati in week one, Wilson came back to again lead the Pack with 63 yards on 15 carries this week vs. New England. Through two games, Wilson leads all NFL rushers in the preseason with 174 yards and an 8.3 yards per carry average. His two rushing TDs ties him for the top spot.

Rookie free agent defensive end **Isaiah Land** out of **Florida A&M** had a sack and forced fumble Saturday for Dallas vs. Seattle. Former FAMU and current free agent Dallas safety **Markquese Bell**, in his second season with the Cowboys, had his second productive game with four tackles vs. Seattle. He had ten stops a week ago vs. Jacksonville.

New Orleans free agent wide receiver **Shaquan "Shaq" Davis** out of **South Carolina State** had a productive day Sunday vs. the LA Chargers. The 6-5, 215-pound former Bulldog had three catches for a team-best 63 yards including 42- and 18-yard receptions.

Former **Alabama State** defensive back **Keenan Isaac** posted five total tackles and a forced fumble Saturday vs. the New York Jets. Isaac was signed as a rookie free agent this season.

Last season's black college receiving leader, **Xavier Smith** out of Florida A&M, came through in his first extended action for the Los Angeles Rams. Smith, an undrafted free agent, had one carry for 4 yards, one 25-yard reception and three kickoff returns for 47 yards vs. Las Vegas.

Not to be outdone, one of last year's HBCU NFL stars, **Jackson State** product **James Houston**, registered a sack and four tackles for losses in the Detroit Lions' 25-7 loss to Jacksonville. Houston, a 2022 sixth-round draft pick, posted eight sacks in seven games for the Lions in the 2022-23 season.

In other news, former Jackson State defensive back **Isaiah Bolden**, the only HBCU player drafted (7th round, New England) in 2023, appeared to suffer a concussion in the Patriots' game Saturday vs. Green Bay. The game was suspended in the fourth quarter as he was strapped to a stretcher and carted off the field. He reportedly had feeling in all his extremities. He was later released from the hospital and flew back with the team.

HBCU NFL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

For preseason games of August 17 - 21, 2023

DEFENSE

- **#41 MARKQUESE BELL**, S, Dallas (2nd season, **FLORIDA A&M**) - Started at safety and had four tackles, three solos and one tackle for loss in 22-14 loss to Seattle. Number of plays on the field stats not available.

- **#41 JAMES HOUSTON**, LB, Detroit (2nd season, **JACKSON STATE**) - Was second on Lions with six total tackles, four solos, one sack and four tackles for losses in 25-7 loss to Jacksonville. Plays on the field stats not available.



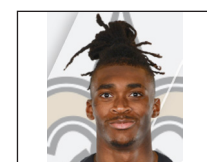
- **#53 ISAIAH LAND**, OLB, Dallas (1st season, **FLORIDA A&M**) - In 22-14 loss to Seattle, Land had three tackles, two solos, one a sack for -5 yards and a forced fumble. Number of plays on the field stats not available.



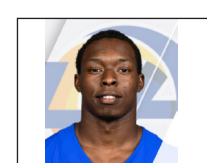
- **#16 KEENAN ISAAC**, DB, Tampa Bay (1st season, **ALABAMA STATE**) - Started at cornerback in 13-6 win over the NY Jets and finished with five total tackles, one solo, four assists and forced a fumble. Number of plays on the field stats not available.

OFFENSE

- **#31 EMANUEL WILSON**, RB, Green Bay (1st season, **FORT VALLEY STATE**) - In 22-17 loss to New England, Wilson led the Packers with 63 yards on 15 carries (4.2 ypc.) with a long run of 14 yards and caught two passes in two targets for 15 yards (5.5 ypc.) with a long catch of 11 yards. Plays on the field stats not available.



- **#88 SHAQUAN (SHAQ) DAVIS**, WR, New Orleans (1st season, **SOUTH CAROLINA STATE**) - In 22-17 win over the LA Chargers, Davis had three receptions on five targets for team-high 63 yards (21.0 ypc.) with a long reception of 42 yards and another contested catch for 18 yards. Number of plays on the field stats not available.



SPECIAL TEAMS
- **#19 XAVIER SMITH**, WR/KR, LA Rams (1st season, **FLORIDA A&M**) - In 34-17 loss to Las Vegas, Smith had one carry for 4 yards and one reception on one target for 25 yards. He also returned three kickoffs for 47 yards (15.7 ypr.) with one fair catch and a long return of 18 yards. Number of plays on the field stats not available.