

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



Texas Southern and Lincoln Pa. Sports photos

TOPS IN 2023 HBCU FOOTBALL

TOP ATTENDED GAMES, HOMECOMINGS AND STAT LEADERS; NEW COACH AT ALCORN STATE

LEADERS OF THE PACK: 2023 offensive leaders of the BCSP "Baad Team" of black college all-stars are stat-stuffers LaDarius Owens and Malachi Langley.

Langley, Owens lead 2023 "Baad Team" offense

LUT WILLIAMS BCSP Editor

Gaudy offensive numbers were not the order of the day in the 2023 black college football season.

There were only three 1,000-yard rushers, one 1,000-yard receiver and just two 3,000-yard passers.

However, a couple of offensive performers distinguished themselves and they are the leaders of the 2023 BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE "BAAD TEAM" of gridiron all-stars and the 2023 BCSP co-Offensive Players of the Year.

Lincoln (Pa.) sophomore wide receiver Malachi Langley was the lone HBCU pass catcher to top 1,000 receiving yards this season. Langley teamed with fellow sophomore quarterback Isaiah Freeman to form a dynamic duo that helped propel Frank Turner's Lions into the thick of the CIAA North Division race.

Langley finished with 46 catches for black-college bests of 1,042 receiving yards and 11 touchdowns. His average of 22.7 yards per catch was second best among HBCU receivers and his 104.2 receiving yards per game were fifth in NCAA Div. II football.

Langley is sharing the 2023 BCSP Offensive Player of the Year award with Texas Southern senior running back LaDarius Owens.

While the TSU Tigers struggled to a 3-8 overall mark, Owens shined. The 5-9, 180-pounder rushed for over 100 yards in eight games while finishing the season topping the 100-yard mark in seven straight contests.

FIRST TEAM - OFFENSE

QB - Davius Richard, Sr., NC Central; RB - Jada Byers, Jr. Virginia Union; LaDarius Owens, Sr., TXSOU; WR - Malachi Bailey, So., LINCP; Johnny Jones, So., EWC; TE - Keshawn Toney, Gr., SCST; OL - Tariq Stewart, Gr., NC A&T; Toricelli Simpson III, Jr., NCCU; Justin Meade, Gr., VUU; Mitchell Romig, Gr., BEN; Cameron Covin, Gr., FAMU; PK - Adrian Olivo, Sr., NCCU; KR - Taymon Cooke, r-Sr., NCA&T

SECOND TEAM - OFFENSE

QB - Jeremy Moussa, Gr., FAMU; RB - Joel Felder, Jr., WVU; Brandon Marshall, Gr., FVSVU; WR - Keshane Hinkley, r-Sr., BSU; Jaquez Jones, Jr., Lane; TE - Travaunta Abner, Jr., MILES; OL - Nick Taiste, r-Jr., SCST; Jamree Meyer, So., VUU; Joshua Simon, Gr., ALBST; Deontae Graham, Gr., JSU; Eric Dunn, Jr., r-Sr., PVA&M; PK - Tom Picirillo, Gr., BEN; KR - Barry Elliott, Jr., Gr., FSU

THIRD TEAM - OFFENSE

QB - Isaiah Freeman, So., LINCP; RB - Elijah Burris, Jr., HAMP; Jawarm Howell, Fr., SCST; WR - Kisean Johnson, So., ALST; Antonio Meeks, So., TUSK; TE - Kalen Carver, r-Jr., VUU; OL - Michael Todd, r-Jr., FSU; Ryan Atkins, Gr., UAPB; Anim Dankwah, Gr., HOW; Jamal Jackson, Jr., FVSVU; Brandon Hardy, Sr., Hampton; PK - James Lowery, r-Jr., TNST; KR - Brandon Codrington, Sr., NCCU;

BCSP Notes

Cedric Thomas to lead Alcorn State

Alcorn State announced last week that alumnus Cedric Thomas has been hired as its new head football coach. Thomas becomes the 22nd head coach in the program's history.

He is taking the place of fellow Alcorn graduate Fred McNair who resigned a week earlier and stated he was slated to become the next head coach at Texas Southern. No announcement has been made on McNair's hire.

"I am thrilled to appoint Cedric Thomas as our new head football coach," Alcorn State President Dr. Trach Cooks said in a statement. "I believe he is uniquely positioned to continue our championship-winning tradition."

Thomas rejoined the Alcorn State football staff as the defensive coordinator in March 2022 after previously serving roles of defensive back coach and defensive coordinator for the Braves. Alcorn won four straight SWAC Eastern Division titles and back-to-back SWAC titles in 2014 and 2015 with Thomas on board.

He also had a two-year stint as the head football coach at the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

Attendance Matters; Numbers up again!

A year after the tsunami of HBCU football attendance caused by one Jackson State with head coach Deion "Coach Prime" Sanders, attendance in 2023 remained steady, and with the exception of the inflated numbers from JSU's outsized attendance in every game, the numbers rose.

The top three intra-state classic games that were the top attended games from 2022 stayed the same in 2023 - the Magic City Classic (Alabama A&M vs. Alabama State), the Bayou Classic (Southern vs. Grambling State) and the Florida Classic (Florida A&M vs. Bethune-Cookman).

There was really no way to duplicate what Sanders' Tigers of JSU did last year when each of their 12 games topped 20,000 in attendance. But ten still topped 20,000 in 2023.

In homecoming attendance, Tuskegee with 31,726 for its Oct. 14 date vs. Edward Waters topped the list, quite a bit down from the over 51,000 at JSU's homecoming in 2022.

ers with 1,848 all-purpose yards (168.0 ypg.), third best in the FCS. He averaged a whopping 6.8 yards per carry.

Joining Owens in the first team backfield is North Carolina Central senior quarterback Davius Richard and the 2022 BCSP co-Offensive Player of the Year, Virginia Union junior running back Jada Byers.

Richard was the most prolific dual-threat HBCU quarterback as he threw for 2,177 yards and 21 touchdowns and ran for another 630 yards and 18 TDs while leading the Eagles to an NCAA playoff berth.

Byers, after topping 1,800 rushing yards in 2022, finished behind Owens with 1,186 rushing yards and 16 rushing TDs despite missing two games.

Joining Bailey as a first team receiver is Edward Waters sophomore Johnny Jones. He finished with an HBCU-best 71 receptions, 7.1 catches per game, tied for eighth in Div. II football, for 855 yards and six TDs.

Holding down the other three skill positions are South Carolina State tight end Keshawn Toney (20 rec. 244 yds., 4 TDs) North Carolina A&T redshirt senior kick returner Taymon Cooke and Benedict graduate place-kicker Tom Picirillo.

Cooke led all black college returners and tied for the FCS-best with three kickoff returns for touchdowns. His 34.2-yard average on 16 returns was the best in HBCU football and second best in the FCS.

MEAC Lineman of the Year, NC Central center Toricelli Simpson III anchors the first team "Baad Team" offensive line. He is flanked by Benedict grad all-American lineman Mitchell Romig, Virginia Union's CIAA Lineman of the Year, senior Justin Meade, second team all-CAA tackle Tariq Stewart of NC A&T and Florida A&M first-team all-SWAC and Box-to-Row all-American graduate tackle Cameron Covin.

STAT CORNER II

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2023 BLACK COLLEGE FOOTBALL INDIVIDUAL STAT LEADERS - OFFENSE

Table with columns: RUSHING YARDS, PASSING YARDS, PASS EFFICIENCY, TOTAL OFFENSE, RECEPTIONS/GAME, RECEIVING YARDS, ALL-PURPOSE YARDS. Lists player names, schools, and various statistical metrics.

STAT CORNER I

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE AT 2023 BLACK COLLEGE FOOTBALL GAMES

Table listing 26 football games with columns for game name, date, location, and attendance. Includes games like Magic City Classic and Alabama A&M vs. Alabama State.

HIGHEST ATTENDANCE AT 2023 BLACK COLLEGE HOMECOMING GAMES

Table listing 18 homecoming games with columns for game name, date, and attendance. Includes games like Tuskegee vs. Edward Waters and Jackson State vs. Alabama State.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

McNAIR TO TSU ON HOLD FOR NOW:

HBCUSports.com reported Tuesday that the decision to hire former Alcorn State head coach Fred McNair as the new coach at Texas Southern is being held up.

Citing a report from The Defender newspaper in Houston, the website says the "Texas Southern Board of Regents decided to table moving forward on McNair;s contract due to reservations stemming from the former Alcorn State coach presented by Texas Southern athletic director Kevin Granger."

According to the newspaper, two of the five-member TBR board are reportedly leaning toward former Houston Texans and NFL great Andre Johnson, who has indicated that he would "be open" to the Texas Southern job.

The Texas Southern Board of Regents announced it has called a special virtual meeting for Thursday morning where a coaching decision is expected.



LEONARD ROAMS AGAIN!

Former Indianapolis all-pro linebacker SHAQUILLE LEONARD (#53, SOUTH CAROLINA STATE), (above l.), now playing for Philadelphia, sacks Giants' quarterback Tommy DeVito (top r.), stops RB Saquan Barkley (bottom r.) in two of his team-leading seven tackles in the Eagles' 33-25 win over New York Monday.

BCSP NFL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

For games of December 21-25, 2023

DEFENSE

- #53 SHAQUILLE LEONARD, LB, Philadelphia (6th season, SOUTH CAROLINA STATE) - Leonard started at middle linebacker in Eagles' 33-25 win over the New York Giants and led the team

with seven total tackles, five solos with one sack for -7 yards and two tackles for loss. He was in on 54 (86%) of the defensive snaps and one (3%) of the special teams' snaps.

OFFENSE

- #72 TERRON ARMSTEAD, OT, Miami (10th season, ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF) - Started at left offensive tackle in Dolphins' 22-20 win over the Dallas Sunday. The Dolphins rushed for 91 yards and passed for 293 yards and one TD while giving up just one sack. Armstead was in for 65 (100%) of the offensive snaps.

SPECIAL TEAMS

- #12 KHADAREL HODGE, WR, Atlanta (8th season, PRAIRIE VIEW A&M) - In the Falcons' 29-10 win over Indianapolis, Hodge had one 5-yard reception in his only target. He was in on 20 (31%) of the offensive snaps and 18 (64%) of the snaps on special teams.