

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



NC A&T Sports photo

THE DANCING CONTINUES

FLURRY OF TOURNEY PLAY LEAVES LANGSTON, NORFOLK STATE MEN, NC A&T WOMEN STANDING

MALEIA BRACONE: Drains a 3-pointer Sunday with a second left to send NC A&T past Old Dominion and into the WNIT Super 16.

TOURNAMENT RECAPS

NCAA WEST REGION MEN - FIRST FOUR

Wagner 71, Howard 68

DAYTON, OH – MEAC champion **Howard** fought back from 17-point deficits in both halves and had a chance at the end to catch NEC champ Wagner but could not get a final bucket as the Bison fell in a First Four NCAA Tournament game Tuesday, 71-68.

The Bison (18-17), down 38-27 at the half, trailed 48-31 with 16:46 left and still trailed by 13 at 67-54 with 4:26 before beginning their comeback. A full-court press ignited a 15-1 run that pulled them within 69-68 with :17 seconds to play. Down 71-68, they got two shots from behind the arc from MEAC Tournament MVP **Jordan Hairston** around a 3-point shot attempt from **Marcus Dockery** as the final buzzer sounded.

Seth Towns and **Bryce Harris** each had 16 points to lead Howard. Dockery and **Isaiah Warfield** had 9 and Hairston 8.

NCAA MIDWEST REGION MEN - FIRST FOUR

Grambling State 88, Montana State 81, OT

DAYTON, OH – SWAC champion **Grambling State**, playing in its first-ever NCAA Tournament, fought back from a 14-point second-half deficit to force overtime and then outscored Montana State 16-9 in the extra period to pull out an 88-81 win Wednesday over the champs of the Big Sky Conference.

The Tigers (21-14) went into the break trailing 42-33 and were down 53-39 at the 14:37 mark. Ten points from reserve point guard **Jimel Cofer** fueled a 21-6 run that gave GSU its first second-half lead at 60-59 with 5:47 to play. The Tigers did not surrender the lead until under a minute was left. Cofer's layup with :34 seconds left tied the game at 72 and were the last points in regulation.

The nip-and-tuck extra period saw the teams tied at 78 with 2:02 before Grambling pulled away. The key play came with :55 seconds left and GSU up 80-78. Six-seven senior forward **Jourdan Smith** flew thru the air to put back **Tra'Michael Moton's** layup miss with a follow dunk. The Tigers canned 6 of 6 free throws from there while the Bobcats' (17-18) only score came on a late 3-pointer.

Cofer, a sophomore point guard, finished with a career-high 19 points, all in the second half and extra period. He made 7 of 9 shots from the field and 5 of 6 free throws. Smith and **Antwan Burnett** each scored 18. Smith led the Tigers with 9 rebounds. Grambling advanced to face region top seed Purdue on Friday in Indianapolis.

NCAA MIDWEST REGION MEN - FIRST ROUND

Purdue 78, Grambling State 50

INDIANAPOLIS, IN – Take away Purdue's 7-4 Big Ten Player of the Year and 2023 Wooden Award winner Zach Eady's 30 points and SWAC champion Grambling State would be just about even with the Big Ten champions. But the big man was unstoppable as he also pulled down 21 rebounds as the centerpiece of the Boilermakers' 78-50 win.

Tra'Michael Moton led the Tigers (21-15) with 21 points and **Kintavious Dozer** had 16, 12 in the first half as GSU stayed within 9 at 36-27 at the break. Purdue opened things up in the final period outscoring the Tigers 42-23.

WOMEN'S NCAA PORTLAND 3 REGION

Stanford 78, Norfolk State 50

STANFORD, CA – No. 2 Stanford used an 11-0 second quarter run to pull away to a 32-19 lead at halftime and outscored MEAC champion and No. 15 Norfolk State 47-31 in the final two quarters Friday en route to a 79-50 first round NCAA Portland 3 Region win.

Diamond Johnson had 19 and **Kierra Wheeler** had 17 to lead the Lady Spartans (27-6) but their supporting cast managed to score just 14 points. Stanford (29-5), had 14 bench points but four starters combined for 65 points led by 19 from Elena Bosgana.

WOMEN'S NCAA PORTLAND 3 REGION

UConn 78, Jackson State 50

HARTFORD, CN – No. 3 UConn sprinted out to a 22-8 first quarter lead, stretched the lead to 49-28 at the break and cruised to a 86-64 win over SWAC champion and 14-seed Jackson State in an NCAA first round Portland 4 Region contest Saturday.

JSU's **Ti'lan Boler** had a team-high 25 points and **Angel Jackson** had 13. The next four players for JSU (26-7) shot 7 of 30 from the field. Paige Bueckers had 28 and Ashlynn Shade 26 to lead UConn (30-5).

NCAA DIV. II ATLANTIC REGION FINAL - WOMEN

Gannon 72, Fayetteville State 45

ERIE, PA – Region top seed and host Gannon (35-2) started to pull away from CIAA Tournament women's champion, third-seed Fayetteville State late in the second quarter and outscored the Lady Broncos 38-22 in the final two periods to secure a 72-45 win in the championship game of the Div. II Atlantic Region Tuesday.

Sophomore point guard **Talia Trotter** had 12 points, all in the first half, to lead FSU (29-3). The Lady Broncos had defeated No. 6 Indiana (Pa.) 72-63 and No. 2 Fairmont State 70-62 to reach the regional final.

CBI FIRST ROUND

Arkansas State 86, Bethune-Cookman 85

Bethune-Cookman trailed 40-35 at the half but battled back to lead into the final minute before falling 86-85 to Arkansas State Saturday in a first round CBI game.

The Wildcats (17-17) took their last lead at 83-82 on a 3-pointer by **Derrick Carter-Hollinger Jr.** with 1:34 left. ASU scored at the :56 second mark and again after a B-CU miss with :06 seconds left. B-CU had a 2-point basket at the final buzzer.

Jakobi Heady had 19 points and Carter-Hollinger had 15. **Dhason Dyson** tallied 14 while **Zion Harmon** added 11.

Seattle 79, Delaware State 66

MEAC Tournament runners-up Delaware State hung with Seattle thru one half, only trailing 34-32 at the break, but saw the Redhawks (20-14) roll off 12 straight second-half points and balloon the lead to 19 at 74-55, before the final 13-point spread.

Freshman point guard **Deywilck Tavarez** was the only double-figure scorer with 15 for the Hornets (15-19) in the first round CBI game.

Women'sNIT

Grambling State 93, Oral Roberts 91

STEPHENSVILLE, TX – Five players scored in double digits and Grambling State got a clutch 3-pointer late to earn a 93-91 win on the road at Oral Roberts in a first round WNIT contest Thursday.

Five-seven sophomore shooting guard **Jazmyne Jackson's** 3-pointer with :22 seconds left, the final tally of her team-high 21 points, gave GSU a 91-89 lead and **Kahia Warmlesley's** two free throws with :03 ticks left sealed it for the Lady Tigers (23-9). Jackson, playing 20 minutes off the bench, canned 7 of 11 shots from the field including 4 of 7 from behind the arc to pace GSU. **Jordyn Carter** had 17 points, **Amanda Blake** had 14 and a team-high 13 rebounds, **Douthshine Prien** had 12 and Warmlesley had 11.



Jackson

Three teams still alive for postseason glory

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

Postseason college basketball winds to a close over the next couple of weeks. For most Historically Black College and University (HBCU) teams however, the end came a bit sooner (see Tournament Recaps).

But for three black college hoops squads – the men of **Langston** and **Norfolk State** and the women of **North Carolina A&T** – the dream of finishing the season on a winning note is still alive. Here's the line-up for this week.

Langston in NIAA

National Championship Game

Sooner Athletic Conference (SAC) champion **Langston** (35-1) has continued its remarkable turnaround under second-year coach **Chris Wright**.

After winning the SAC regular season and tournament titles and receiving one of four No. 1 seeds into the 64-team NIAA national tournament, the Lions have run off five straight wins to earn a spot opposite Freed-Hardman of Indiana (31-4) in Wednesday's 7 p.m. (CDT) championship game.

After four double-digit wins, three in blowout fashion, the Lions had to dig deep to defeat defending national champion College of Idaho Monday 58-52 in a national semifinal game.

If the Lions win the championship, they would join **Tennessee State** (1957, '58, '59), **Grambling** (1961), **Prairie View A&M** (1962), **Central State** (1965, '68), **Kentucky State** (1970, '71, '72) **Coppin State** (1976) and **Texas**



Southern (1977) as black college men's NIAA national basketball champions.

EDITOR'S NOTE: New York Knicks players, in a 124-99 win over Detroit Monday, warmed up wearing shirts with Hall of Famer **Willis Reed's** No. 19 on the back on the night they celebrated HBCU Night. Reed, who died last year at 80, led **Grambling State** to the 1961 NIAA championship and a third-place finish in 1963.

Norfolk State men in C-I-T Championship Game

When MEAC regular season champion **Norfolk State** lost to **Howard** in the tournament semifinals, head coach **Robert Jones** said the Spartans (23-11) would be playing in what was to be the 16-team College Insider Tournament. The C-I-T is being contested this year for the first time since 2019.

Only nine teams agreed to play in this year's edition. Norfolk State, who got a bye in the first round, was one of three HBCUs, including **Texas Southern** and **Alabama A&M** out of the SWAC, who consented to play.

Tuesday, TSU (16-17) lost at Tarleton State (82-71) while Alabama A&M won at Austin Peay (81-71).

Norfolk State then beat AA&M 81-66 Saturday to earn the spot opposite Purdue Fort

Wayne (24-12) in the CIT Championship Game Wednesday (3/27, 7 p.m.) at Echols Hall in Norfolk.

North Carolina A&T women in the WNIT Super 16

The Lady Aggies (22-11), after bowing out in the quarterfinals of the Colonial Athletic Conference (CAA) tournament, received the CAA's berth in the 48-team Women's National Invitational Tournament, known as the WNIT.

Head coach **Tarrell Robinson's** team opened play at home Friday with a 56-51 first round win over crosstown Greensboro (N.C.) opponent UNC-Greensboro out of the Southern Conference. They followed that up Sunday with another home win, knocking off Sun Belt Conference member Old Dominion 48-45 at Corbett Sports Arena on a buzzer-beater.

That win vaulted the ladies into the WNIT's Super 16 where they will again play at home this Friday (7 p.m.) vs. Troy (20-11), who is also out of the Sun Belt. After a first round bye, Troy defeated Florida International 92-62 Monday to reach the Super 16. The winner of the Troy/NC A&T game will meet the winner of Southern Miss and Louisiana-Monroe in the WNIT's Great Eight on March 30 or April at a site to be determined (TBD).

BCSP Notes

Joyner announces his retirement from J. C. Smith

Stephen Joyner Sr. announced Friday his retirement as **Johnson C. Smith's** men's head basketball coach after 36 years.

"It was a great run here at Smith," Joyner said in a post on X, published by the university's official account. "The Gold and Blue runs deep in me and I will always cherish the memories."

Joyner, a standout guard for the Golden Bulls from 1969-73, took over as head coach prior to the 1987-88 season. He had served as women's basketball coach the previous six seasons beginning in 1980 including an NCAA Division II tournament appearance in 1985.

Joyner won exactly 600 games as men's basketball coach, the third most in CIAA men's college basketball history. The milestone victory came in what turned out to be his final home game, 80-74 over **Claffin** on Feb. 24. The Golden Bulls were eliminated in the first round of the 2024 CIAA Tournament by **Virginia State** 66-56 on Feb. 28.

Joyner's Bulls captured the CIAA Tourna-

ment Championship in 2001, 2008 and 2009. In 2001, he led the team to its first-ever appearance in the NCAA Elite Eight Tournament. His Golden Bulls completed their historic 2001 season ranked #10 in the final NCAA poll and #2 in the final Sheridan Broadcasting Network poll of black colleges. Joyner was selected as CIAA Coach of the Year in 1992, 1997, and 2001, and as NCAA Division II South Atlantic Region Coach of the Year in 2001.

He was inducted to the **John B. McLendon, Jr. CIAA Hall of Fame** in 2014 in recognition of his coaching success and his lifetime of contributions to the CIAA. Joyner had also served as athletic director at JCSU before stepping away from that position last May.

Hampton wastes little time placing Buck Joyner

HAMPTON, VA — **Hampton University** Director of Athletics **Anthony D. Henderson Sr.** introduced former Georgetown assistant **Ivan Thomas** as the Pirates' new basketball coach.

Thomas is replacing **Edward "Buck" Joyner Jr.** whose contract was not renewed after 15 years leading Hampton. The Pirates finished 9-24 overall and 3-15 in the Colonial Athletic As-

sociation (CAA) in Joyner's last season.

When asked about the new hire Henderson Sr. stated, "In our conversation with Georgetown head coach Ed Cooley and administrative staff they feverously supported Ivan becoming a head coach. It was a thorough process and we have the right person for this job here at Hampton."

Thomas, who becomes the 17th head basketball coach at Hampton, is excited to be returning to Hampton Roads. "This opportunity has led me back home to the 757 where I am proud to say I am the head coach of Hampton University, where the standard of excellence is an education for life," the Norfolk, Va. native said.

Thomas spent seven years as head coach at Hampton's Kecoughtan High, leading the team to a 127-60 mark and to Peninsula District championships in 2010 and 2012. He was head coach at T.C. Williams High in Alexandria, Va., where he led the team to a 75-9 mark, winning three league titles. He was named Virginia Coach of the Year in 2008 after guiding the Titans to the state title. He also spent 13 years as an AAU coach for the Boo Williams 17-U team.



Thomas

The Grambling State women advanced to face Louisiana-Monroe on the road in the second round of the WNIT at 6 p.m. Monday at Fant-Ewing Coliseum.

Louisiana-Monroe 102, Grambling State 76

MONROE, LA – Louisiana-Monroe had five players score in double-digits led by 30 from Jakayla Johnson as they methodically pulled away from Grambling State for a 102-76 second round WNIT win Monday.

ULM (20-13) ran out to a 48-30 lead after two quarters and stretched the margin with a 33-18 third period that put the game away..

Sophomore shooting guard **Jazmyne Jackson** again led GSU with

North Carolina A&T 56, UNC-Greensboro 51

GREENSBORO, NC – Hosting its first postseason game at Corbett Arena on campus, **North Carolina A&T** rallied in the second half to down crosstown rival UNC-Greensboro 56-51 Friday in a first round WNIT game.

An energetic crowd of over 3,900 watched the locals go at it with UNC-G building a 28-19 halftime lead. The Lady Aggies (21-11) wiped that lead out with a 21-12 third quarter to enter the final period with the teams tied at 40. There were three more ties down the stretch, the last at 44. The Lady Spartans (21-12) took their only fourth-quarter lead at 45-44 before A&T went up for good at 46-45 on a **Chaniya Clark** layup with 5:35 to play.

North Carolina A&T 48, Old Dominion 45

GREENSBORO, NC – Five-ten senior guard **Maleia Bracone** drained a 3-pointer with less than a second left to propel **North Carolina A&T** to a thrilling 48-45 home win over Old Dominion in a second round WNIT game Sunday.

The trey was the last of Bracone's game-high 17 points and allowed the Lady Aggies (22-11) to escape from a game that had ten ties and 12 lead changes. Three of the ties and five of the lead changes occurred in the fourth quarter after A&T opened the period up 36-35.

Bracone's layup with 3:22 left put A&T up 45-43 only to see ODU (22-10) tie the score at 45 :20 seconds later. Bracone's game winner was the only basket over the final three minutes. **D'Mya Tucker** had 10 points and tied for the team high with 8 rebounds.

The Lady Aggies will play a third home postseason game Friday at 7 p.m. vs. Troy in the WNIT Super 16.

(M) COLLEGE INSIDER.COM TOURNAMENT (CIT)

Tarleton State 82, Texas Southern 71

STEPHENSVILLE, TX – Trailing 36-26 at the half, **SWAC** tourney runners-up **Texas Southern** fought back to tie the game at 58 with just over six minutes left but was outscored 24-13 over the final stretch in falling in the first round of the CIT Tuesday.

Jaylen Wysinger and **Deon Stout** led TSU (16-17) with 18 points, **Kenny Hunter** tallied 15 and **Jonathan Cisse** added 11.

Alabama A&M 81, Austin Peay 71

CLARKSVILLE, TN – **Chad Moodie**, the **Southwestern Athletic Conference** (SWAC) Freshman of the Year, scored 18 of his game- and career-high 24 points in the second half to pace **Alabama A&M** to a CIT road win at Austin Peay Tuesday. Alabama A&M advanced to meet **Norfolk State** in the semifinals Saturday.

Moodie went 11-of-13 from the floor and added five rebounds, two blocks and one steal. **Omari Peek** scored 14 of his 18 points in the first half, along with seven boards and one assist. **Caleb Blackwell** chipped in a career-high 13 points, with three boards, two assists, one steal and one block and defensively, **Cameron Tucker** grabbed a career-high 13 rebounds for the Bulldogs (12-22).

Norfolk State 81, Alabama A&M 66

NORFOLK, VA – MEAC regular season champs **Norfolk State**, playing without league Player of the Year **Jamarii Thomas**, outscored **Alabama A&M** 26-13 over the final seven minutes to pull away to a 81-66 CIT semifinal win over the Bulldogs Saturday.



Moodie

Dubbed the CIT's **John McLendon Classic**, A&M (12-23) ran out to a 31-28 halftime lead and stayed even or ahead of the Spartans (23-11) thru most of the second half. They were down just 55-53 at the seven minute mark before NSU sprinted to the win.

NSU had five players score in double digits with **Allen Bertrand** getting 16, **Daryl Anderson** 15, **Jack Doumbia** 13 and 11 each from **Christian Ings** and **Chris Fields Jr.** **Jaylani Darden** had 6 points, 8 assists and tied Fields with a team high 8 boards. **Lorenzo Downey** and **London Riley** had 15 and **Chad Moodie** had 14 for A&M.

Norfolk State will play Purdue Fort Wayne (24-12) for the CIT Championship on the Spartans home floor, Joseph Echols Hall, Wednesday at 7 p.m.

MEN'S NAIA SWEET 16

Langston 78, LSU-Shreveport 61

KANSAS CITY, MO – **Langston** had five players score in double digits and moved to 33-1 on the season in a 78-61 Sweet 16 NAIA win over LSU Shreveport Friday.

Anthony Roy had 17 points to lead the Lions. **D'Monte Brown** got 16, **G'Quavious Lennox** 14, **Toru Dean** 13 and **Cortez Mosley** 10.

MEN'S NAIA QUARTERFINALS

Langston 61, Indiana Wesleyan 48

KANSAS CITY, MO – No. 1 **Langston** used a 16-3 first-half spurt to open a 37-26 halftime lead and held on to a double-digit lead for most of the second half in a 61-48 win Saturday over No. 3 Indiana Wesleyan (29-6).

Cortez Mosley led the Lions (34-1) with 15 points and **Anthony Roy** added 13. Langston (34-1) moved on to face 2023 defending NAIA champion College of Idaho (32-3) at 7 p.m. in Monday's second NAIA national semifinal. The 5 p.m. semifinal had Grace (IN) (34-1) facing Freed-Hardman (TN) (30-4).

MEN'S NAIA SEMIFINALS

Langston 58, College of Idaho 52

Langston went eight second-half minutes without a basket but got its offense going late to down 2023 NAIA national champion College of Idaho 58-52 in a hard-fought national semifinal game Monday night.

With the win the Lions (35-1) advance to Tuesday's 7 p.m. (CDT) national championship game where they will face Freed-Hardman (TN). Freed-Hardman (31-4) beat Grace (IN) 86-81 in the other semifinal game.

The tough defensive slugfest saw the Lions tied with CI at 27 at the break. After taking a 29-27 lead in the first minute of the second half, Langston did not score another basket until Sooner Athletic Conference (SAC) Player of the Year **Anthony Roy** sank a 3-pointer with 10:52 to play. The trey cut CI's largest second half lead of 39-32 to 39-35 and woke up the Lions' offense.

The Lions pulled even at 43 on another Roy 3-pointer with 8:57 left and took their first lead of the half at 46-43 on **D'Monte Brown's** 3 at he 7:43 mark. Langston pushed the lead to five at 48-43 before CI (32-4) fought back to go up 49-48 on two Samaje Morgan free throws with 5:27 to play. The lead changed hands twice before LU took its final lead at 52-51 on the second of **Cortez Mosley's** two free throws with 3:30 left.

CI made one of two free throws to tie the game at 52 with just :44 seconds left but would not score again. Langston got a big inside basket from **Jay Allan-Tovar** with a half-minute left and a breakaway Mosley dunk off a scramble to stretch the lead to 56-52. **Toru Dean** added a basket at the final buzzer.

Langston came in averaging 81 points per game and had won their three previous tournament games by an average of 25 points. The Lions were led by 14 from Mosley and 12 by Brown off the bench. Roy finished with 9 points, a team-best 7 rebounds and tied for the team high with 5 assists.



Roy