



U. S. Track Photo

DYLAN BEARD: Well-travelled HBCU hurdler among the favorites at U. S. Olympic Trials this week in Eugene, Oregon.

MAKIN' MOVES

NINE HBCU PRODUCTS AT OLYMPIC TRIALS; MACK MAKES RUN AT U.S. OPEN; FOOTBALL CHANGES

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

MACK III MAKES RUN AT U. S. OPEN CUT:

Veteran former **Bethune-Cookman** golfer **Willie Mack III**, playing in his first U. S. Open last week, had a better first round score than 15-time major winner Tiger Woods, but he and Woods both missed Friday's cut.



Mack III

Teeing it up at Pinehurst No. 2 Golf Resort in the 124th U. S. Open, Mack opened with an excellent score of 1-over par 71 in Thursday's first round. That score matched the first round score of world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler. It also was three strokes better than Woods' opening round 74 and only trailed first round leaders Rory McIlroy and Patrick Cantlay's 65 by six shots.

Mack looked in great position to make the cut thru the first half of Friday's second round. He carded just three bogeys to shoot 38 and sat at 4-over par as he made the turn towards the round's final nine holes.

But his game and score fell apart on the back nine. He carded five bogeys and one double-bogey on the tough Pinehurst layout to shoot 7-over 42 and finish with a second round score of 80. His 11-over 151 total was well off the 5-over, 145 cut line.

Woods shot a second round 3-over 73 and also missed the cut with a 7-over 147 total.

The 35-year old Mack, who won 11 times during his B-CU career (2008-11) and 65 times while grinding thru various professional mini-tours, earned his way into the U. S. Open field by winning a three-man playoff in a USGA qualifier in Daytona Beach, Fla. It was his eighth official PGA Tour event of his career. He's made two cuts in those eight events and won \$28,343.

SWAC ANNOUNCES 2024 ESPN FOOTBALL SCHEDULE:

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.- The **Southwestern Athletic Conference** announced its 2024 Football schedule on ESPN highlighted by several highly anticipated games on ESPN's linear and digital platforms (see list of games).

Defending SWAC champion **Florida A&M** will kick off league coverage during Week 0 on Saturday, August 24th when the Rattlers travel to Atlanta to face **Norfolk State** in the 2024 *Cricket MEAC/SWAC Challenge Kickoff*, live on ABC at 7:30 p.m. EST.

The schedule of SWAC games is highlighted by several Classic match-ups, including the *Labor Day Classic* (**Texas Southern** at **Prairie View A&M**), the *State Fair Classic* (**Prairie View A&M** vs. **Grambling State**), the *Magic City Classic* (**Alabama State** vs. **Alabama A&M**), the *Boombbox Classic* (**Southern** at **Jackson State**) and the *Florida Classic* (**Florida A&M** vs. **Bethune-Cookman**).

The 2024 *Pepsi SWAC Football Championship Game* will air live on ESPN2 on Saturday, December 7th at 2:00 p.m. EST.

BCSP Notes



Shift up in Celebration Bowl date causing concern

ESPN Events, a division of ESPN, unveiled last week its schedule of 17 owned and operated bowl games for the 2024-25 college football season and its *Celebration Bowl* was moved up one week.

The game that pits the **MEAC** champion vs. the **SWAC** champion in the de facto black college (HBCU) national championship game has kicked off bowl season for the last eight years on the third Saturday of December. The 2024 schedule has pushed the game back to the second week, on Dec. 14 rather than Dec. 21.

That development was apparently triggered by the expansion of the College Football Playoff field from four to 12 teams. Those games will now begin on Dec. 21.

The move has brought about major pushback from some entities. Dan LeBatard, sports commentator and host of the *Dan LeBatard Show*, says the Dec. 14 date takes away from the "isolated" Army-Navy game which was the sole game on that date.

"College football does not care about our military. They don't care about our troops . . . That is a disgrace," LeBatard said. ". . . name any team who has played in the last 10 of any of those bowls (Celebration Bowl or Camellia Bowl also scheduled for that date). The answer is you can't," LeBatard said.

Maybe his listeners can't, but LeBatard obviously disregards the legion of black college sports fans that can.

Also showing concern was the **SWAC** who issued a statement saying the date change presents "additional challenges" for the conference and its representative. The league said it was looking to see how it could address the date change and how "it can make our representative have the best opportunity to be successful on the new date and time."

The Dec. 14 date is just one week after the **SWAC** championship game that is scheduled for Dec. 7 of this year. Prior to the change, the **SWAC** champion had two weeks to prepare for the **MEAC** champ. The **MEAC** champion is decided in the next-to-last week of November previously giving its representative a full month to rest and prepare for the **SWAC** titlist.

The difference in prep time has been cited as a reason the **MEAC** holds a 6-2 edge in the

bowl game.

Former **MEAC** member **Florida A&M**, now in the **SWAC**, gave the **SWAC** just its second Celebration Bowl win defeating **MEAC** champ **Howard** in this year's game, 30-26.

CIAA Football Championship returning to Durham, NC in 2025

CHARLOTTE, NC – After seven years in Salem, Va., the **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association** (CIAA) Board of Directors voted last week to approve Durham, NC as the site of the CIAA Football Championship starting in 2025 through 2027.

The championship will be hosted by the Durham County Sports Commission, with Durham County Memorial Stadium (DCMS) as the event's selected venue.

Bids were also submitted by the cities of Charlotte, NC and Salem, VA. The Board reviewed several factors in its decision to move to Durham, including facility use and staffing, team support, opportunities for community engagement, and involvement of the local business community.

The football championship has been held at DCMS previously from 2008-2012 and 2014-2015, pulling in crowds of over 10,000 fans. The CIAA Outdoor Track & Field Championship is already hosted by the Durham Sports Commission at the same venue in accordance with a three-year agreement that commenced in 2023 and will run through 2025. CIAA-member **Shaw University** currently hosts its home football and soccer games at the venue.

"The CIAA looks forward to returning to Durham County Memorial Stadium," explained Commissioner **Jacqie McWilliams**. "Our recent media rights partnership with **HBCU Go** gives us the opportunity to showcase our top teams in a centralized location, again where the football championship has thrived in the past. The CIAA will have an opportunity to engage in the community beyond the game in a way that supports the mission of the conference."

Salem has been the home of the CIAA football championship since 2017 and it is commended for its expertise and a job well done for not only CIAA championships for the past seven years, but its celebration in 2023 for hosting over 100 NCAA events.

The 2024 CIAA Football Championship will be held at Salem Stadium in Salem, Va. on Saturday, November 26.

Other decisions from the Board Meeting include:

CIAA Basketball Tournament 2027 and Beyond

– The Board agreed to initiate the CIAA Men's and Women's basketball tournament bidding process in January of 2025 for the 2027 tournament and beyond. The conference will announce the selected site before the 2026 tournament, in keeping with its standard practice. Baltimore has positioned itself as

a strong tournament host, as indicated by the upward trajectory of its economic impact during tournament week. The economic impact over the past three years currently stands at \$81.7 million.

BCHOF Legacy Bowl (CIAA vs. SIAC)

– The Board agreed in collaboration with the **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** (SIAC) that the CIAA/SIAC football champions will be invited to play in the NFL/BCHOF game annually beginning in 2025 as part of the partnership. This will take place in lieu of the previously proposed 0-week game between CIAA/SIAC.

Women's Flag Football HBCU League

– The conference will explore Women's Flag football as a sponsored championship. The Board supports the growth of flag football and agreed that each institution interested should work directly with the conference regarding its interest and ability to secure funds through the NFL/RX/NCAA to support their participation. The conference will poll membership for interest. The conference will continue to evaluate other sports interests, such as soccer, for consideration.

Football Conference Realignment

– The Board agreed that the CIAA will rank football teams from 1-12, with the two top teams advancing to the conference football championships, effective in 2024. There will no longer be Northern and Southern Division winners.

List of SWAC games on ESPN Football Schedule

Sat, 8/24 - 7:30 p.m.	Florida A&M vs. Norfolk State	ABC
Sat, 8/31 - 6 p.m.	SC State at Florida A&M	*ESPN+
Sat, 8/31 - 7 p.m.	Texas Southern at Pr. View A&M	ESPN+
Sun, 9/1 - 3 p.m.	NC Central vs. Alabama State	ESPN
Sat, 9/7 - 6 p.m.	Miles at Alabama State	ESPN+
Sat, 9/14 - 2 p.m.	Southern at Jackson State	ESPN+
Sat, 9/21 - 7 p.m.	Southern at Prairie View A&M	ESPN+
Sat, 9/21 - 7 p.m.	Jackson State at Grambling	ESPN+
Sat, 9/28 - 6 p.m.	Alabama A&M at Florida A&M	ESPN+
Sat, 9/28 - 7 p.m.	Jackson State at Texas Southern	ESPN+
Sat, 9/28 - 7 p.m.	Prairie View A&M vs. Grambling	ESPN+
Sat, 10/5 - 3 p.m.	Florida A&M at Alabama State	ESPN+
Sat, 10/5 - 5 p.m.	Alabama A&M vs. Jackson State	ESPN+
Fri, 10/11 - 9:15 p.m.	Prairie View A&M at Ark.-Pine Bluff	ESPNU
Sat, 10/12 - 3 p.m.	Alcorn State at Grambling	ESPN+
Sat, 10/19 - 3:30 p.m.	Florida A&M at Jackson State	TBD
Sat, 10/19 - 7 p.m.	Alcorn State at Southern	TBD
Sat, 10/26 - 3 p.m.	Texas A&M Comm. at Prairie View A&M	ESPN+
Sat, 10/26 - 3:30 p.m.	Alabama State vs. Alabama A&M	TBD
Sat, 10/26 - 7 p.m.	Southern at Florida A&M	TBD
Sat, 11/2 - 3 p.m.	Ark.-Pine Bluff at Jackson State	ESPN+
Sat, 11/2 - 4 p.m.	Texas Southern at Florida A&M	ESPN+
Sat, 11/2 - 5 p.m.	Alabama State vs. Alcorn State	ESPN+
Sat, 11/9 - 3 p.m.	Alabama State at Grambling	ESPN+
Sat, 11/9 - 3 p.m.	Florida A&M at Prairie View A&M	ESPN+
Thu, 11/14 - 8:00 p.m.	Grambling at Alabama A&M	ESPNU
Sat, 11/16 - 3 p.m.	Jackson State at Alabama State	ESPN+
Sat, 11/16 - 3 p.m.	Alcorn State at Prairie View A&M	ESPN+
Sat, 11/23 - 3 p.m.	Pr. View A&M at Alabama State	ESPN+
Sat, 11/23 - 3 p.m.	Jackson State at Alcorn State	ESPN+
Sat, 11/23 3:30 p.m.	Florida A&M vs. Bethune-Cookman	TBD
Thu, 11/28 - 2 p.m.	Tuskegee at Alabama State	ESPNU
Sat, 12/7 - 2 p.m.	Pepsi SWAC Football Championship	ESPN2
Sat, 12/14 - 12 p.m.	Cricket Celebration Bowl	ABC

BCSP Spring Round-Up

Current and former HBCU athletes at this week's 2024 U. S. Olympic Team Track & Field Trials

EUGENE, OR - Former **Hampton** and **Howard** hurdler **Dylan Beard** and former **North Carolina A&T** sprinter **Brandon Hicklin** are the top qualifiers among current and former HBCU athletes as the U. S. Olympic Track & Field Team Trials get started here Friday. The top three finishers in their respective events will advance to the Paris Olympics (July 26- Aug. 11, 2024)

Beard comes in with the highest ranking. He ran a time of 13.10 seconds in winning the men's 110 meter hurdles at the Last Chance Qualifying Meet in Powder Springs, Ga. on June 8. It is the fourth-best time entering the Trials trailing only world champion and adidas athlete Grant Holloway (12.96), and Daniel Roberts (13.03) and Cordell Tinch (13.04) who both run for **NIKE**. Before that best effort, Beard had run five sub 13.4-second times this outdoor season.

Beard has traversed a quite circuitous route to the Trials. The Baltimore native spent three years competing at Wagner before transferring first to Hampton where his 2021-22 season was halted by COVID-19. He then moved to Howard for his senior season of 2022-23 where he ran for and trained under former world champion hurdler **David Oliver**, the Bison's head coach.

He does not currently have a pro sponsor and works full time at a deli counter at a WalMart in the Raleigh/Durham N. C. area. His breakthrough came in February at the prestigious indoor 2024 Millrose Games in New York where he beat a world class field that included athletes with major sponsorships for the 60 meter hurdles title. Both Roberts and Tinch were in that field. In April, WalMart surprised him with a \$20,000 check that was presented to him during an interview on *The Today Show* on NBC.

Also in the 110-meter hurdles field along with Beard is former NC A&T hurdler **Michael Dickson**. He won indoor 60-meter, outdoor 110-meter and outdoor 4x100 relay titles for the Aggies under head coach **Duane Ross** before turning pro in 2019. He ran his best time of 13.26 seconds in June in a meet in Kingston, Jamaica.

Hicklin enters this week's 100 meters competition with the fifth best 100 meters time of 9.94 seconds. He ran the time at the LSU Invitational in Baton Rouge (La.) in April and matched the time at a meet this month at the Josef Ok-ozil Stadium in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Hicklin also does not currently have pro sponsorship.

Hicklin began his career at NC A&T under Ross where he competed primarily in the long jump. He won the 2021 MEAC long jump title and the 2022 Big South long jump title for the Aggies. He transferred to LSU for his senior season (2022-23) and focused on the sprints for the Bengal Tigers. He was a member of LSU's NCAA and SEC champion 4x400 meter outdoor relay team in 2023.

SWAC 100- and 200-meter champion, senior **Jamarion Stubbs** of **Alabama State** and **SWAC** high jump champ **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** senior high jumper **Caleb Snowden** are both coming off competing at the NCAA



HARD AT WORK: U. S. 110-meter hurdles championship qualifier Dylan Beard at WalMart (l.) and on the track for Howard (r.).

Div. I Outdoor Championships in Hayward two weeks ago. Snowden finished third in the high jump while Stubbs was seventh in the 200 meters.

Snowden is tied for sixth in the high jump field with a best leap of 2.26 meters (7.0 feet, 4.98 inches) that he cleared in March at the Texas Relays.

Stubbs is in with the seventh best 200 time of 19.95 seconds that he ran in the first round of the NCAA East Regional in Lexington, Ky. in May.

The best qualifier among the women with HBCU roots is **Sydni Townsend** who ran the 400 meter hurdles for two years at Pittsburgh before moving to Howard and NC A&T and ending her collegiate career at Houston. She qualified two times for the NCAA East Preliminaries at A&T.

Townsend enters the Trials competition with the eight best time of 55.00 flat that she ran while finishing second for Houston at the Big 12 Outdoor Championships last month (May). She finished fifth in 55.01 at the NCAA Championships earlier this month.

Also in the 400 hurdles field along with Townsend are Howard products **Jessica Wright** and **Simone Watkins**.

Wright has the 16th best time in the competition (55.78) while Watkins is right behind her at 55.92. Wright completed her career at Howard in the 2023 outdoor season and now runs for the adidas Bailey Track Club. She posted her best time at the Drake Relays in April. Watkins, a Texas Tech transfer, ran her best time for the Bison while winning a first round heat in the NCAA East Regionals in May.

The senior member of the HBCU contingent is former **Livingstone** (2012-15) and CIAA standout runner and 400 meter specialist **Quanera Hayes**. Hayes's time of 50.44 seconds run at the Royal City Track & Field Festival earlier this month at Alumni Stadium in Guelph, Ontario Canada is tenth best entering the competition. Hayes is a former U.S. 400 meter champion from 2017 and the 400 meter champion at the Olympic Trials in 2021. She was also a member of the second-place U. S. 4x400 relay team at the World Indoor Championships in Glasgow, UK this year.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2024 U. S. OLYMPIC TEAM TRIALS HBCU TRACK & FIELD QUALIFIERS

June 21-30, Eugene, Oregon

MEN

110 METER HURDLES

4th - **Dylan Beard**, unattached, **Howard** - 13.10
13th - **Michael Dickson**, More Sports MG, **NC A&T** - 13.26

100 METERS

4th - **Brandon Hicklin**, LSU, **NC A&T** - 9.94

200 METERS

7th - **Jamarion Stubbs**, **Alabama State** - 19.95

HIGH JUMP

T6th - **Caleb Snowden**, **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** - 2.26m

WOMEN

400 METERS

10th - **Quanera Hayes**, **NIKE**, **Livingstone** - 50.44

400 METER HURDLES

8th - **Sydni Townsend**, Houston, **Howard**, **NC A&T** - 55.00
16th - **Jessica Wright**, adidas/Bailey Track Club, **Howard** - 55.78
17th - **Simone Watkins**, Texas Tech, **Howard** - 55.92