



Hampton Sports Photo

WARMING UP THE BUS

ELIJAH BURRIS: Second leading CAA rusher only Hampton player picked preseason all-CAA. The Pirates are picked to finish 12th.

MEAC, CAA FOOTBALL PREDICTIONS; 42 IN NFL TRAINING CAMPS; NEW HOOPS COACH AT LINCOLN

2024 MEAC FOOTBALL PRESEASON PREDICTIONS

2024 MEAC FOOTBALL PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

School (1st Place Votes)	Points
N. C. Central (4)	110
Howard (4)	92
Morgan State (1)	80
S. C. State (2)	78
Norfolk State (1)	50
Delaware State	22

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Jarett Hunter, Gr., RB, Howard
DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Kenny Gallop Jr., Gr., DB, Howard

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE

QB	Otto Kuhns, Sr., Norfolk State
RB	Jarett Hunter, Gr., Howard
RB	Eden James, Jr., Howard
WR	Kasey Hawthorne Sr., Howard
WR	Justin Smith-Brown, R-Sr., S.C. State
TE	Keshawn Toney, Gr., S.C. State
C	Eric Brown, Jr., R-Sr., S.C. State
OL	Nick Taiste, R-Sr., S.C. State
OL	Cam Johnson, R-Sr., S.C. State
OL	Treyvon Branch, Sr., Morgan State
OL	Trevon Humphrey, RSo., N.C. Central
OL	Darius Fox, Sr., Howard

FIRST TEAM DEFENSE

DL	Jaden Taylor, R-Sr., N.C. Central
DL	Elijah Williams, Sr., Morgan State
DL	Jamel Stewart, Sr., Howard
DL	Keshawn Lynch, R-Jr., Norfolk State
LB	Aaron Smith, R-Sr., S.C. State

2024 PRESEASON ALL-MEAC FOOTBALL TEAMS

LB	AJ Richardson, So., Norfolk State
LB	Erick Hunter, Sr., Morgan State
DB	Kole Jones, Sr., N.C. Central
DB	Kenny Gallop Jr., Gr., Howard
DB	Jamare Benjamin, R-Sr., S.C. State
DB	Terron Mallory, Gr., Norfolk State
P	Juan Velarde, Sr., N.C. Central
PK	Dylan West, Sr., Howard
RS	Keith Jenkins Jr., Jr., Morgan State

SECOND TEAM OFFENSE

QB	Tahj Smith, So., Morgan State
RB	J'Mari Taylor, Sr., N.C. Central
RB	Kevon King, Jr., Norfolk State
WR	Joaquin Davis, Sr., N.C. Central
WR	Richie Ibarra, Sr., Howard
TE	Edward Core Jr., Sr., Delaware State
C	Garrison Wheatley, Sr., Norfolk State
OL	Vincent Byrd Jr., Jr., Norfolk State
OL	Tim Artis Jr., R-So., Howard

Samuel Eskridge, So., Norfolk State
OL Ja'Quan Sprinkle, So., N.C. Central

SECOND TEAM DEFENSE

DL	Nana Asante, Sr., Morgan State
DL	Eric Montes, Sr., Delaware State
DL	Noah Miles, Jr., Howard
DL	Darren Cook, Sr., Delaware State
LB	Daylan Long, R-Jr., Norfolk State
LB	Terrance Hollon, Sr., Howard
LB	Max U'Ren, R-Jr., N.C. Central
DB	Devon Allen, Sr., Norfolk State
DB	Carlvaisky Decius, Sr., Morgan State
DB	Ja'son Prevard, So., Morgan State
DB	Carson Hinton, Sr., Howard
P	Noah Tracey, So., Norfolk State
PK	Grandin Wilcox, Jr., Norfolk State
RS	Einaj Carter *, Sr., S.C. State
RS	Jaylen White *, R-Jr., Norfolk State

NC Central, Howard at top of MEAC poll

NORFOLK, VA – Last year's (2023) champion **Howard** swept the preseason player of the year awards but 2022 champion **North Carolina Central** narrowly edged out the Bison as the **Mid Eastern Athletic Conference's** choice to win the league's football title in 2024.

Those were some of the picks unveiled last week as the league held its annual preseason media confab here Tuesday.

Head coach **Trei Oliver's** NCCU Eagles racked up 110 points with four first place votes to lead the poll conducted by the league's head coaches and sports information directors. Head coach **Larry Scott's** Howard Bison were a close second with four first-place votes and 92 total points.

Damon Wilson's Morgan State Bears garnered one first-place vote and 80 total points to finish just behind Howard in third. New **South Carolina State** head coach **Chennis Berry's** Bulldogs were a close fourth with two first-place votes and 78 total points.

Dawson Odums' Spartans of Norfolk State came in fifth with one first-place vote and 50 points. **Lee Hull's** Hornets of **Delaware State** was the only program not to receive a

first-place vote and finished sixth with just 22 total points.

Howard defeated NC Central 50-20 on the next-to-last week of the regular season in 2023 and won the MEAC title with a 4-1 record that earned it the league's berth in the **Celebration Bowl**. The Bison's only conference loss was 27-23 on the road at **South Carolina State**. Howard lost in the Celebration Bowl to **SWAC** champion **Florida A&M**, 30-26 to finish 6-6.

NCCU also was 4-1 in the MEAC, 9-2 overall that earned it a trip to the FCS playoffs. The Eagles lost in the first round at Richmond, 49-27 to finish 9-3.

Howard graduate running back **Jarett Hunter** and graduate defensive back **Kenny Gallop Jr.** were voted the preseason offensive and defensive players of the year respectively.

Hunter rushed for 626 yards and nine touchdowns and caught 26 passes for 257 yards and another two scores in 2023.

Gallop, the 2023 MEAC Defensive Player of the Year and **Buck Buchanan Award** finalist garnered several all-American honors last year. He had two interceptions, two quarterback hurries, three pass breakups and was one tackle



Hunter



Gallop

shy of tying for the team lead with sixty-five (65) total tackles, including four for a loss, one fumble recovery and one forced fumble. Gallop was named the 2023 **Aeneas Williams Awardee**, given to the top defensive back in HBCU Division I college football.

Howard placed 11 players on the preseason all-MEAC first and second teams including first-team junior running back **Eden James** (627 yds., 5.6 ypc.) who joins Hunter in the backfield and first team wideout **Kasey Hawthorne**, the league's leading returning receiver (38 rec., 535 yds., 2 TDs). NCCU, SC State and Morgan State had eight players named to the preseason teams.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

HBCU ROOKIE FREE AGENTS IN NFL CAMPS



Jennings



Victor



Codrington



Riley



Drew



Wheeler



Howard



Dankwah



Anderson

BLACK COLLEGE PLAYERS ON 2024 NFL TRAINING CAMP ROSTERS

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE (AFC - 16)

BALTIMORE (0)					
CINCINNATI (0)					
CLEVELAND (0)					
DENVER (0)					
HOUSTON (1)					
71 Tytus Howard	OT	6' 5"	322	6	Alabama State
INDIANAPOLIS (2)					
55 Isaiah Land	DE	6' 4"	225	2	Florida A&M
90 Grover Stewart	DT	6' 4"	314	8	Albany State
JACKSONVILLE (1)					
47 De'Shaan Dixon	DE	6' 5"	247	2	Norfolk State
KANSAS CITY (2)					
6 Bryan Cook	S	6' 1"	206	3	Cincinnati/Howard
2 Joshua Williams	CB	6' 3"	193	3	Fayetteville State
LAS VEGAS (0)					
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS (1)					
98 Andrew Farmer	LB	6' 4"	250	2	Lane
MIAMI (1)					
72 Terron Armstead	OT	6' 5"	305	12	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
NEW ENGLAND (4)					
29 Isaiah Bolden	CB	6' 2"	205	2	Jackson State
29 Terrell Jennings	RB	6' 0"	217	R	Florida A&M
51 Nick Leverett	G/C	6' 3"	310	4	Rice/NC Central
47 Mikey Victor	CB	6' 2"	205	R	Alabama State
PITTSBURGH (0)					
NY JETS (3)					
43 Brandon Codrington	CB	5' 9"	185	R	NC Central
31 Tarik Cohen	RB	5' 6"	181	5	NC A&T
87 Marcus Riley	WR	5' 11"	175	R	Florida A&M
TENNESSEE (1)					
73 Lachavious Simmons	OT	6' 5"	315	3	Tennessee State

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE (NFC - 26)

ARIZONA (1)					
26 Bobby Price	CB	6' 3"	208	5	Norfolk State
ATLANTA (3)					
19 Chris Blair	WR	6' 2"	198	1	Alcorn State
33 Antonio Hamilton	CB	6' 0"	188	9	SC State
12 KhaDarel Hodge	WR	6' 2"	208	5	Prairie View A&M
CAROLINA (3)					
53 Claudin Chelrus	LB	6' 2"	230	2	Alcorn State
34 Willie Drew	CB	6' 0"	185	R	Virginia State
61 Ricky Lee	OT	6' 5"	289	2	NC A&T
CHICAGO (2)					
69 Ja'Tyre Carter	G	6' 3"	311	3	Southern
33 Ian Wheeler	RB	5' 11"	205	R	Howard
DALLAS (1)					
14 Markquese Bell	S	6' 3"	205	3	Florida A&M
DETROIT (1)					
41 James Houston	LB	6' 1"	245	3	Jackson State
GREEN BAY (2)					
33 Jarveon Howard	RB	5' 10"	215	R	Alcorn State
31 Emanuel Wilson	RB	5' 11"	226	2	Fort Valley State
LOS ANGELES RAMS (2)					
14 Cobie Durant	CB	5' 11"	182	3	SC State
19 Xavier Smith	WR	5' 9"	173	1	Florida A&M
MINNESOTA (0)					
NEW ORLEANS (2)					
68 Mark Evans II	OT	6' 4"	295	1	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
42 Mac McCain	CB	6' 0"	185	2	NC A&T
NEW YORK GIANTS (2)					
6 Jamie Gillan	P	6' 1"	207	6	Arkansas-Pine Bluff
77 Joshua Miles	OT	6' 5"	325	4	Morgan State
PHILADELPHIA (2)					
78 Anim Dankwah	OT	6' 7"	330	R	Howard
47 Shaquan Davis	WR	6' 5"	215	1	SC State
SAN FRANCISCO (2)					
98 Javon Hargrave	DT	6' 2"	305	9	SC State
75 Brandon Parker	OT	6' 8"	320	7	NC A&T
SEATTLE (1)					
47 Sunnie Anderson	LB	6' 4"	250	R	Grambling State
TAMPA BAY (1)					
16 Keenan Isaac	CB	6' 3"	190	1	Alabama State
WASHINGTON (1)					
73 Trent Scott	OT	6' 7"	330	7	Howard

BCSP Notes

Hampton and NC A&T picked in bottom half of 2024 CAA preseason football rankings

Hampton was picked to finish 12th and North Carolina A&T 14th in preseason voting for 2024 football predictions in the 16-member Coastal Athletic Association (CAA).

Hampton is coming off a 5-6 overall and 3-5 CAA campaign in 2023. The Pirates will enter 2024 with interim head coach **Trent Boykin** at the helm. NC A&T finished 1-10 overall and 0-8 in CAA play in head coach **Vincent Brown's** inaugural season. The Aggies only win was over **Norfolk State**.

Both Hampton and A&T had just one player voted to the preseason all-CAA team.

Hampton senior running back **Elijah Burris** (5-10, 205) was named to the offensive team. Burris was second in CAA rushing a year ago with a league best 8.3 yards per carry en route to 803 yards and six TDs.

NC A&T backfield ace **Karon Prunty** (6-2, 180) was named to the all-CAA defensive team. Prunty had 43 tackles, 33 solos, a sack and five pass break-ups for the Aggies last season.

42 black college players on NFL training camp rosters; Tarik Cohen among them, Shaquille Leonard not

Training camps opened last week for all 32 NFL teams with a total of 42 former black college players on their rosters (see STAT CORNER).

Though no black college player was taken in this year's April 25-27 NFL Draft of college players, there are nine who signed undrafted rookie free agent contracts that are in camps.

Five of those players are on the offensive side of the ball including running backs **Jarveon Howard of Alcorn State** (Green Bay), **Ian Wheeler of Howard** (Chicago) and **Terrell Jennings of Florida A&M** (New England). The others are offensive lineman **Anim Dankwah** of Howard (Philadelphia) and wide receiver **Marcus Riley** of Florida A&M (New York Jets).

The four rookie defenders are **Virginia State** defensive back **Willie Drew** (Carolina), Florida A&M cornerback **Mikey Victor** (New England), **North Carolina Central** defensive back and kick returner **Brandon Codrington** (NY Jets) and **Grambling State** linebacker **Sundiata "Sunnie" Anderson** (Seattle). **Morgan State** defensive back **Jordan Toles** was let go by Baltimore just before camp opened.

Miami's left offensive tackle **Terron Armstead** out of **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** returns as the dean of black college players in the league entering his 12th season.

Notably back on a roster and looking to get back on the playing field is the **MEAC's** all-time leading rusher, former **North Carolina A&T** and Chicago Bears all-pro running back/kick returner **Tarik Cohen**. He is in the New York Jets camp after a stint last year on the Carolina Panthers practice squad.

Cohen, who will turn 29 in July, has not played a down in the NFL since 2020 when he was with the Chicago Bears. The 2017 fourth-round pick suffered a torn ACL, MCL and leg fracture during Week 3 of the 2020 season and missed the entire 2021 campaign recovering.

After being released by the Bears in March 2022 Cohen suffered a torn Achilles tendon during an offseason workout. A year later, he announced he was attempting a comeback and was signed to the Carolina Panthers' practice squad in September 2023. The Panthers' released Cohen in May and the Jets already have an idea of how they'd like to use him.

"Tarik, explosive playmaker, he's starting to get back healthy," said Jets head coach Robert Saleh in May. "With the new kickoff rules, these kick returners are going to touch the ball over 100 times a year, which is significant. A guy like him, who's still young, obviously coming off his injuries, we're excited to have him aboard."

In parts of four seasons with the Bears, Cohen, a 2018 All-Pro and Pro Bowl selection, ran for 1,101 yards on 264 attempts with five touchdowns. Out of the backfield, he caught 209 balls for 1,575 yards and found the end zone nine times. He returned 30 kickoffs for 628 yards as well as 96 punts for 985 yards and a touchdown.

Notably absent from an NFL roster is former **South Carolina State** and MEAC standout **Shaquille Leonard**, a former AP Defensive Rookie of the Year (2018) and all-pro linebacker for Indianapolis who played last year for Philadelphia.

Leonard, who signed a \$99.25 million extension with Indianapolis in 2021, making him the league's top-paid linebacker and setting up him, in theory, for the next six years, was derailed by back injuries and cut by the Colts after nine starts in 2023. Leonard played in five games for Philadelphia, logging 23 tackles and one sack last season. He was inactive for Philly's wild-card loss to Tampa Bay.

"I'm more so just sitting back, getting the body healthy, and whenever the opportunity presents itself, we'll give it a try," Leonard told the *Indianapolis Star's* Kyle Smedley. "I just continue to be me by working hard. If it happens, it happens. If it don't, it don't. I think throughout my career I've had a great career, even if I do step away from it. ... I'm enjoying life and just waiting on that opportunity."

In his career, Leonard put up impressive numbers totalling 637 tackles, 31 passes defended, 17 forced fumbles, 16 sacks and 12 interceptions in 75 regular-season games played.

For the 2024 season, NFL teams must have their rosters reduced to a maximum of 53 players on the active/inactive list by 4 p.m. ET on August 27.

Eight on FCS Football Central preseason team

Eight black college players were named to the *FCS Football Central* Preseason All-American Team this week.

Morgan State placed two defenders – lineman **Elijah Williams** (6-3, 270) and linebacker **Eric Hunter** (6-4, 210) – on the first team defense. They are joined by Howard defensive back **Kenny Gallop Jr.** on the first team. Gallop is the preseason MEAC Defensive POY while Williams and Hunter are all-MEAC first teamers. **South Carolina State** lineman **Nick Taiste**, also an MEAC first-teamer, was the only HBCU selectee on the first team offense.

Named to the second team defense were linemen **Ckelby Givens** of **Southern** and **Malachi Bailey** of **Alcorn State**. Givens is the SWAC's preseason Defensive POY and Bailey an all-SWAC first teamer.

The punters on both the first and second teams came from HBCUs. **Trey Wilhoit** of **Florida A&M** is the first teamer with **Matt Noll** of **Jackson State** on the second team.

CIAA men's champion chooses new head men's basketball coach

After winning its first ever CIAA men's basketball championship this past season, **Lincoln (Pa.)** surprisingly parted ways with head coach **Jason Armstrong**.

Last Wednesday, Lincoln Athletics Director **Harry Stinson III** announced the hiring of two-time All American and NBA first round draft pick **Julius Hodge** as the Lions 24th head men's basketball coach.

To basketball junkies, Hodge's name and exploits are quite familiar. As a player, the New York native was a two-time All-American, two time all-Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) selection and the 2004 ACC Player of the Year at North Carolina State from 2001-05. He was a second-team consensus All-America as a junior and an Associated Press honorable mention All-America as a senior. The 6-7, 210-pound playmaker was drafted in the first round