FOR THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 4 -10, 2025



PLAYERS, **NEWS** TO WATCH

JACORY CROSKEY-MERRITT: Former Alabama State running back shows form that led to offensive MVP award at 100th East-West Shrine game.

TWO HBCU PLAYERS IN SB 59; COACHES NAMED FOR LEGACY BOWL; NC A&T, MVSU IN GAMBLING PROBE

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS



LEGACY BOWL CHAMPIONSHIP COACHES:

The Black College Football Hall of Fame announced the coaches for the 2025 Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl on Feb. 22 in New Orleans.

The championship coaching staffs of all four major HBCU conferences - MEAC, SWAC, CIAA, and SIAC will represent their respective conferences.

Both teams representing Team Gaither and Team Robinson will have two co-head coaches.

Chennis Berry of MEAC champion South Carolina State and Dr. Alvin Parker Jr. of CIAA champ Virginia Union will coach team Team Gaither named after Florida A&M and HBCU coach legend Alonzo "Jake" Gaither.

Team Robinson named after former Grambling State coaching great Eddie Robinson will be led by SWAC champion Jackson State coach T.C. Taylor and Sam Shade who coached Miles to this season's SIAC title before being named the new head coach at Alabama A&M.

"These coaches earned this honor by winning their respective conferences. Each coach exemplifies the spirit, leadership, and tradition of HBCU Football, and we're proud to have them," said NFL QB legend and Black College Football Hall of Fame co-founder James "Shack"Harris in a news release.

"It's an honor to represent South Carolina State University at the Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl," said Berry, who along with Parker were coaches in the 2024 Classic. Berry led Benedict to the 2023 SIAC crown before moving to SC State this season.

"It's a first-class experience that the players will love and provide them an opportunity to further their football career," Berry said.

The 2025 Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl featuring 100 of the best senior and grad senior talent in the nation will be held on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at Tulane University's Yulman Stadium in New Orleans, Louisiana.

2024-25 BLACK COLLEGE BASKETBALL (Men's Standings and Weekly Honors)

CIAA		ENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION			MEAC	MID E ATHLETIC	ASTE			SIAC	SOUTHI ATHI
NORTH DIVISION Lincoln (PA) Bowie State Virginia Union Virginia State Bluefield State Elizabeth City 3 SOUTH DIVISION Fayetteville Sta Clafflin Shaw Johnson C. Sm Livingstone Winston-Salerr PLAYERS OF TH Justin Morrisey 34 points on 11 o assists in win ow DEFENSIVE Caleb Johnson 18.5 points and 10 pts., 4 rebour assists in OT vs. ROOKIE	4 3 2 2 3tate 1 4 W tte 5 3 3 1tth 2 State 0 HE WEEK (6-3, Jr., BS f12 FGs, 3 rr er VSU, 8 po f 12 FGs, 7 rr, G 5.0 rebound vs. VSU	L V 1 1 2 5 2 8 3 5 4 3 5 0 7 2 6 3 5 2 6 3 5 5 0 U - In ebound ints v. 3, BSI 3 s 4 3 5 0 C - 1 1 2 6 2 8 2 8 2 8 2 8 3 5 2 8 3 5 2 8 3 5 2 8 3 5 2 8 3 5 2 8 3 5 2 8 8 7 1 9 1 9 1 9 1 9 1 9 1 9 1 9 1 9	 4 2 5 8 8 7 3 5 6 8 7 3 5 5 4 6 8 10 10	15 7 13 10 11 10 13 6 12 9 10 10 W L 15 6' 12 9 11 9 10 9 10 11 0 3 17 wins had steals, 2 ST.	Norfolk State Howard Delaware State Morgan State S. C. State N. C. Central Coppin State Md. E-Shore OFFENSIVE PLAYE Brian Moore Jr., 6- in two wins with 18 win vs. SCSU, 19 p 3-pointer in OT win v NEWCOMER Kaseem Watson, wins, had game-h 2-point win vs. MS win vs. CSU. DEFENSIVE PLAYE Kuluel Mading, 6 rebounds, 3 block 15 points, 6 rebou	W 6 3 4 4 4 3 2 0 3 8 2, Gr., G, N points, 3 r joints includir 5. NCCU. 6-9, So., gh 30 poin U, 13 poin R 11, Sr., F, s in 2-point	1 2 3 3 3 5 6 8 0 - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	16 8 12 10 10 10 4 4 4 Led Sp 10 4 4 5 SU - I rebou rebou - 5 po over S	2-point peating In two inds in inds in ints, 7 GCSU,	EAST Albany State Edward Waters Clark Atlanta Morehouse Fort Valley State Savannah State Benedict Allen WEST Miles Tuskegee Central State Kentucky State Spring Hill Lane LeMoyne-Owen PLAYER Cedric Taylor III, over CAU and SSI 3 steals vs. SAU, 2 steals vs. CAU. DEFENSE Blaise Wallace, 6 rebounds, 3 assisi	6-7, So, J, tallied 26 points -7, So, F

EAST	CONF W	L	ALL W	L	
Albany State	11	3	14	7	Southern
Edward Waters	9	4	14	7	Texas Southern
Clark Atlanta	9	4	12	8	Bethune-Cookma
Morehouse	8	5	11	10	Jackson State
Fort Valley State	6	7	7	13	Alabama State
Savannah State	6	8	8	10	Florida A&M
Benedict	4	10	4	17	Alcorn State
Allen	2	8	5	11	Alabama A&M
WEST					Grambling State
Miles	13	1	16	3	Prairie View A&M
Tuskegee	8	5	10	9	Miss. Valley State
Central State	7	7	11	10	Arkansas-Pine Bl
Kentucky State	7	8	10	10	/ indificuo i ino bi
Spring Hill	5	9	7	12	PLAYER OF THE
Lane	3	11	3	16	Trey Thomas, 6
LeMoyne-Owen	3	11	3	18	wins, averaged 2
PLAYER					and 4.5 steals wi
Cedric Taylor III, 6-7, So, G	F MI	HS -	In hi	a wins	5 assists, 2 steals
over CAU and SSU, tallied 1					rebounds, 3 assis
3 steals vs. SSU, 26 points,					
3 steals vs. CAU.					

HERN INTERCOLLEGIATE

F ALBST - 8 points 13 rebounds. 3 assists in win vs. FVSU

SWAC AT	SOUTHW				INDEPENDENTS					
	CONF		ALL			CONF		ALL		
	W	L	W	L		W	L	W	L	
Southern	9	0	14	8	SAC					
Texas Southern	7	1	10	11	Langston - 3rd	13	5	17	5	
Bethune-Cookman	6	3	9	13	SUN					
Jackson State	6	3	6	16	Florida Memorial - 3rd	8	3	17	5	
Alabama State	5	4	9	13	GLVC					
Florida A&M	5	4	8	12	Lincoln (Mo.) - T7th	6	6	14	6	
Alcorn State	5	4	5	17	OVC					
Alabama A&M	3	6	7	15	Tennessee State - T5th	6	6	10	13	
Grambling State	3	6	6	16	MEC					
Prairie View A&M	3	6	4	18	W. Virginia State - 5th	6	7	9	10	
Miss. Valley State	1	8	3	19	CAA					
Arkansas-Pine Bluff	0	8	3	18	Hampton - 12th	3	6	10	11	
					NC A&T - 14th	0	10	4	19	
PLAYER OF THE WE	ΞK									
Trey Thomas, 6-2, J	r., G, E	-CL	J - Ir	i two	PLAYER OF THE WEE	K				
wins, averaged 21.5					Mario Mitchell, 6-1, Si	G.	LA	NG -	Ave	
and 4.5 steals with 24 points, 9 rebounds,					aged 14.5 points, 9.5					
5 assists, 2 steals vs.					wins with 11 points, 11					
rebounds, 3 assists, 2 steals vs. ALST.					Central Christian, 18 points, 8 rebounds v					
000000, 2	0.0010	0.7	01.		Oklahoma City.		0 101			

HE WEEK , 6-1, Sr., G, LANG - Averints, 9.5 rebounds in two pints, 11 rebounds in win vs. an, 18 points, 8 rebounds vs. DEFENSIVE Latavious Mitchell. 6-8. Sr., F. FMU - 12

points, 16 rebounds in OT loss to Ave Maria.

BCSP Notes

One HBCU product shines in East-West Shrine Game

Thursday's East-West Shrine Bowl is in the books and one former HBCU football player stood out, but it might not be the one expected.

First-team all-MEAC linebacker Aaron Smith of South Carolina State, who led the conference in tackles (92, 9.2 per game) and led the Bulldogs with 17 tackles in the season-ending Celebration Bowl, was thought to be the only black college product in last Thursday's game. Smith did not work out or play in the game as he is dealing with an injury.

But there was another HBCU product on the field and he had a big night in front of NFL scouts.

HBCU Gameday's Steven J. Gaither reported Friday that running



2022 at Alabama

State.

back Jacory Croskey-Merritt, who started his

career at Alabama State and had stints at New Mexico and Arizona, was named the game's Offensive MVP after rushing for 97 yards on 11 carries (8.8 yards per carry) and two touchdowns on Thursday night. Playing for the East squad, he had second-quarter TD runs of 6 and 1 yards staking his team to a 14-0 lead. The East won 25-0 over the West squad.

His performance at the all-star game was huge for his confidence.

"It's been great. Just to be able to showcase to scouts all week that I can do whatever they ask me to do at the next level," Merritt told DLLS Sports after the game. "I'm just thankful to even be right here right now. It's all God.

"It taught me you can compete with the best of them. It taught me how to be a pro," the 5-11, 208-pounder out of Montgomery, Alabama said. "Just being around pro coaches, getting coached by them. It was a great experience. I'm just excited to be able to have all that in my belt when I go to the next level."

It was the first action Croskey-Merritt had seen in months as his senior season at Arizona was cut short by eligibility issues. Croskey-Merritt had 13 carries for 106 yards and a game-clinching 36-yard touchdown run late in the fourth quarter in his lone game for Arizona on Aug. 31 last season after spending the 2023 season at New Mexico.

His college career began in 2019 when he played four games for Alabama State. He went on to play four years, one a COVID season and one a redshirt, for the Hornets while putting up his best and similar numbers in the 2021 and 2022 seasons. He carried 121 times in 2021 for 423 yards and five touchdowns. In 2022, he carried 120 times for 470 yards and four TDs.

His breakout season came in 2023 after he transferred to New Mexico. In that season he averaged 6.3 yards per carry on 189 totes for 1,190 yards and 17 TDs. The TD total was fifth nationally. He had 18 total touchdowns.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: Former Alabama State running back Jacory Croskey-Merritt receives the East-West Shrine Bowl MVP trophy after rushing for 97 yards and two TDs in Thursday's all-star game. Croskey-Merritt spent four years with the Hornets before a breakout season at New Mexico. He finishef his career in 2024 at Arizona.

FSU is at J. C. Smith Thursday. Lincoln is at Virginia State, Claffin (3-2 S, 6-5) is at WSSU and Shaw (3-2 S, 6-4) is at Livingstone.

Virginia Union (8-1) has the best conference record on the women's side with Virginia State and Bowie State at 9-2. All three are at 4-1 in N. Div. play. Fayetteville State (4-1 S, 7-3) and Livingstone (4-1, 7-3) have the best records in the South.

SIAC

Albany State (11-3) got a 73-52 win over Fort Valley State to stay atop the men's E. Div. race. The Golden Rams host two of their closest pursuers 8-5 Morehouse Saturday and 9-4 Clark Atlanta Monday. Edward Waters (9-4) hosts Allen Saturday and Benedict Monday.

West Division leader Miles (13-1) got by Lane Saturday (68-63) and is at 8-5 Tuskegee Saturday and at Spring Hill Monday.

For the women, E. Div. leader Clark Atlanta (9-3) downed W. Div. leader Miles (10-3) 74-59 Saturday in a showdown of the top teams. CAU is back in action Saturday at FVSU while Miles has a W. Div. showdown at 9-4 Tuskegee. On Monday CAU is at Albany State while Miles is at Spring Hill. MEAC

Men's leader Norfolk State (6-1) got two close wins at home this week. The Spartans defeated South Carolina State 67-65 in overtime Saturday and downed N. C. Central on a buzzer-beating 3-pointer 81-78 Monday. If those outcomes are any indication, the upcoming March 12-15 Tournament in Norfolk, Va. should be quite interesting. Delaware State won at home over Morgan State Saturday in a close one that went down to the wire, 84-82. Second-place Howard (3-2), after dropping a 80-70 non-conference decision to Hampton Saturday was rocked by SC State, 89-66 Monday.

SCSU, MSU and DSU are 4-3 and NCCU is 3-3. The champ is likely to

BLACK COLLEGE GAMES TARGETED IN FEDERAL GAMBLING PROBE:

A story on ESPN.com Monday said a federal investigation into a gambling ring that brought the downfall of one NBA player is looking into suspicious activities at two black college basketball programs.

The story said Sportsbook accounts connected to the gambling ring bet against North Carolina A&T, Mississippi Valley State and Eastern Michigan in games this season, sources said.

Officials at N. C. A&T and MVSU did not respond to requests for comment. A&T Director of Athletics Earl Hilton did tell ESPN in an e-mail that the recent indefinite suspension of three players on the men's basketball team was for a violation "of well-established team rules" but declined further comment, citing privacy laws.

Former Toronto Raptors player Jontay Porter has admitted to manipulating his performance in two games during 2023-24 season for gambling purposes. He and five others have been charged with Porter and three others pleading guilty. The others are in plea negotiations with the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of New York, according to court documents.

Sportsbook sources in the U.S. and offshore pointed to suspicious betting on the first half of a Jan. 9 game involving North Carolina A&T and Delaware. The point spread on the first half moved from Delaware -2 to -3.5. The point spread on the full game closed at -4.5. First-half lines typically are equal to or around 50% of the full-game point spread.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

BLACK COLLEGE PLAYERS IN SUNDAY'S SUPER BOWL LIX

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (2)

NO.	NAME	POS	EXP	SCHOOL
2	Joshua Williams	DB	3	Fayetteville State
6	Bryan Cook	S	3	Howard / Cincinnati
PHI	ILADELPHIA (0)			

As a former HBCU player who transitioned to G5 and only got to play one game at the Power Five level, the East-West Shrine Game was a big opportunity for Crosby-Merritt to show NFL scouts what he can do.

"You gon' get a dawg," he said. "You gonna get a competitor who wants to win every week – who is a hard worker, who is a good person, and I'll just fit great wherever I go."

Final month separating contenders from pretenders in HBCU hoops

win vs. WSSU had 11 points and 12 rebounds.

Two weeks of regular season men's and women's basketball in the CIAA ends on Feb. 22 before the league tournament starts on Tuesday, February 25 in Baltimore. The SIAC has three weeks until the Feb. 26 end of regular season play and its tournaments in Atlanta begin on Wednesday, March 5.

The contenders vs. the pretenders have been all but identified.

CIAA

Despite Lincoln (Pa.) losing its first CIAA game last Wednesday to Bluefield State (78-65), the Lions still have the best record in the men's race. First-year head coach Julius Hodge's troops bounced back with a 72-56 road win at Virginia Union Saturday and sit atop the conference standings at 10-1.

Bowie State (3-2 N, 5-6 CIAA) made a jump with wins over Virginia State (85-65), Bluefield State (106-103, OT) and Winston-Salem State (71-70). Virginia State (2-2 N, 8-2) and Fayetteville State (5-0 S, 7-3) have the next best records in conference play.

come from the top six as Coppin State (2-5) and Maryland-Eastern Shore (0-6) are struggling.

This week NCCU is at Howard Saturday (2/8) and UMES Monday (2/10). Everyone else is off until Sat., Feb. 15.

Norfolk State's women (6-0) stayed unbeaten with wins over SC State Saturday (83-37) and NCCU Monday (88-52). Howard (4-1) won at home over SCSU (68-41) Saturday. Coppin State is 5-2 after wins over DelState (90-57) and UMES (66-61).

This week the Howard women have the same schedule as the men hosting NCCU Saturday (2/8) and UMES Monday (2/10).

SWAC

The Southern men moved to (9-0) with home wins over Alcorn State (74-69, Sat.) and Jackson State (91-89 in OT) Monday. Texas Southern got to 7-1 with a 79-63 win over Prairie View Saturday. Bethune-Cookman is third at 6-3 after home wins vs. Alabama State (67-64, Sat.) and Alabama A&M (89-75, Mon.). JSU, also 6-3, beat Grambling State (63-50) Saturday before its close loss to Southern.

This week Southern plays at Alabama A&M Saturday and Alabama State Monday while TSU hosts Florida A&M Saturday and B-CU Monday. JSU hosts Miss. Valley State Saturday and UAPB Monday. B-CU is at PVA&M Saturday.

The TSU women are 8-0 in first place after their 82-69 win over PVA&M Monday. The also handled Jackson State 64-47 on Thursday (Jan. 30). Alabama A&M, JSU and SU are all at 7-2, tied for second.

In games this week TSU hosts B-CU Thursday and FAMU Saturday. Alabama A&M hosts Grambling Thursday and Southern Saturday. JSU hosts UAPB Thursday and MVSU Saturday. Southern plays at Alabama State Thursday.

Regular season play ends on March 8. Tourney play begins March 11.

2024-25 BLACK COLLEGE BASKETBALL (Women's Standings and Weekly Honors)

CIAA CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION	MEAC MID EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	SIAC SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	SWAC SOUTHWESTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	INDEPENDENTS
DIV CONF ALL NORTH DIVISION W L W	WEAC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE W L W L Norfolk State 6 0 20 4 Howard 4 1 11 9 Coppin State 5 2 14 9 N. C. Central 3 2 6 15 Md. E-Shore 3 3 8 13 Morgan State 3 4 10 12 S. C. Central 3 2 6 15 Md. E-Shore 3 3 8 13 Morgan State 3 4 10 12 S. C. State 1 6 2 21 Delaware State 0 7 3 17 OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK Lail Lawrence, 6-2, Sr., F, CSU - Averaged double-double of 22.5 points and 11.0 re- Doubuds in two wins with 31 pts., 11 boards, vs. DSU and 14 pts., 11 bds. vs. UMES. ROOKIE NA DEFENSIVE Kierra Wheeler 6-1, Sr., F, NSU - 19 pts., 16 rebounds, 4	CONF ALL CONF ALL Clark Atlanta 9 3 16 5 Allen 7 4 12 6 Edward Waters 7 6 11 7 Savannah State 6 6 10 8 Benedict 5 8 7 12 Albany State 4 9 7 12 WEST 10 3 13 5 Tuskegee 9 4 12 8 Lane 8 5 12 7 Central State 7 6 9 10 Kentucky State 6 7 12 WEST 12 7 7 12 7 Central State 7 6 9 10 Kentucky State 6 7 7 12 Spring Hill 5 8 6 14 LeMoyne-Owen 2 11	CONF ALL W L W Texas Southern 8 0 9 10 Alabama A&M 7 2 14 7 Jackson State 7 2 9 11 Southern 7 2 9 11 Southern 7 2 9 13 Grambling State 5 4 8 12 Florida A&M 4 5 7 13 Bethune-Cookman 4 5 6 14 Alabama State 3 6 5 16 Prairie View A&M 2 7 5 13 Arkansas-Pine Bliuff 1 7 3 15 Miss. Valley State 1 8 2 18 PLAYER & DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE WEEK Lauryn Pendleton, 5-9, Sr., G, ALA&M - Averaged 18.5 points, 6.0 rebounds, 3.5 steals in two wins with 17 points, 5 rebounds, 6 assists, 4 steals in win over B-CU - Steals in two wins with 7 - Pinter B-CU	CONF ALL W L W L SAC 17 1 21 1 CAA 17 1 21 1 CAA 1 12 8 NC A&T - 1st 8 1 12 8 Hampton - 13th 1 8 5 15 SUN Florida Memorial - T1st 9 2 16 3 MEC W. Virginia State - 9th 4 9 8 11 OVC Tennessee State - T8th 2 10 6 16 GLVC Lincoln (Mo.) - 15th 0 12 1 17 PLAYERS OF THE WEEK Maleia Bracone, 5-10, Gr., G, NCA&T - Had 17 points hitting 6 of 8 from the field, 17 10 10
4 assists in 201 win vs. wSS0, 17 pts., 5 boards in OT win vs. FSU. DEFENSIVE PLAYER Amesha Miller, 6-1, Sr., C, VSU - 15 points, 13 rebounds, 2 steals in win over ECSU. Morgan Kelson, 5-11, Sr., F, LIV - In OT win vs. FSU had 14 points 10 rebounds, in double OT	6 rebs, 2 blocks and a steal vs. NCCU.	points, 3 rebounds,, 2 assists and 1 steal in win over West leader Miles. DEFENSIVE Atreonia Garner , 5-9, So., G/F, CLATL - 22 points, 7 rebounds, 1 steal in win over Miles.	bounds, o assists, 4 stears in win over b-cu, 18 points, 7 rebounds, 3 stears vs. FAMU.	over Hampton.