

BLACK COLLEGE
SPORTS PAGE



Jackson State Sports Photo

MAKIN'
THE
GRADE

GOLF, SOFTBALL RESULTS; HOOPS COACHES
NEWS; TWO UNDRAFTED ROOKIES IMPRESS

SHILO SANDERS: Deion's son, JSU/Colorado safety, and MEAC Defensive Player of the Year, Elijah Williams, shine at NFL rookie mini-camps.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

SHILO SANDERS, ELIJAH WILLIAMS
RECEIVE NFL MAIN CAMP INVITES:

Former **Jackson State** and Colorado safety **Shilo**



Sanders

Sanders and former **Morgan State** defensive standout **Elijah Williams** are two black college undrafted rookie free agents that have emerged from NFL



Williams

rookie mini-camps to secure spots on NFL preseason 90-man rosters.

Sanders and Williams were among 10 black college rookies that received mini-camp invites, three-day events held during the first or second weekend of May following the NFL draft. These minicamps are designed to acclimate newly drafted players and undrafted free agents to the team's systems and help them learn the playbook. They also serve as an evaluation period for coaches to assess the rookies' potential. Some teams have not finished their evaluations. Drafted players are on the 90-day rosters while those undrafted have to earn a spot.

Sanders, the less ballyhooed son of former JSU and present Colorado head coach **Deion "Coach Prime" Sanders**, is a safety who impressed in his invitation to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' mini-camp. He agreed to a three-year deal worth \$2.96 million, according to sportrac, a standard contract for rookie UDFAs (including Williams) without a signing bonus. He'll wear No. 28 for the Bucs, departing from the iconic No. 21 he wore at Colorado and his father donned during his storied NFL career.

Williams, the **MEAC's** 2024 Defensive Player of the Year, earned a spot after his stint at the Minnesota Vikings mini-camp. After the minicamp, the Vikings invited Williams and edge rusher Matt Harmon out of Kent State. Williams will wear No. 69.

Sanders was in 54 games (36 starts) while playing at South Carolina, Jackson State and Colorado. He finished his career with 229 tackles, six interceptions, and forced an impressive nine fumbles. While at Colorado, he forced four fumbles, picked off one pass, and returned both an interception and a fumble for touchdowns, showcasing his ability to create big plays on defense.

Williams, at 6-3, 270 pounds, posted 11.0 sacks, 32 total tackles (22 solo), 15.0 tackles for loss, three interceptions, one pass breakup, one forced fumble, and one fumble recovery en route to winning the MEAC's top defensive award this season. He racked up a total of 52 tackles for a loss and 31 sacks in 42 games in his four-year career. Noted for his relentless motor and pass rushing skills, Williams was one of the standouts at the **HBCU Combine** and **HBCU Legacy Bowl** in New Orleans. His pressure rate was 10.38% during his time in college, which is very intriguing.

Both hope they can crack their team's 53-man roster or their 16-man practice squad come Week 1 of the NFL season.

Spring Sports Round-Up

Fieldings takes sixth at
NCAA Charlottesville Regional

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. – **Howard** sophomore **Paris Fieldings** (Chesapeake, Va.) saw her historic run come to an end at the NCAA Charlottesville Regional after taking sixth individually.

The three-day event (May 5-7) took place at the Birdwood Golf Course (par-71, 6,365 yards) in Charlottesville, Va.

On Day Three, the Virginia native shot 5-over par (76) with a pair of birdies on the back nine. Totally, she fired 24-over par (237).

For Fieldings, she concludes her first season as the program's first golfer to win the conference tournament and NEC (Northeast Conference) Player of the Year.

NC A&T ladies, Prokhorova
win PGA Works titles

KHOLER, Wis. – The **North Carolina A&T** women's golf team won the PGA Works Championship last Wednesday, and the Aggies also had the top medalist in junior **Ekaterina Prokhorova**.

A&T junior **Polina Marina** placed second. The ladies shot a three-round 302-295-337—934 to win the tournament at the par 72, 5,287-yard historic Whistling Straits – Irish golf course by one stroke over **Howard**. The Lady Bison who shot a final-round 323 to erase a 14-shot deficit from Tuesday to make Wednesday's finish one of the most exciting in the history of the event.

Prokhorova claimed the individual title by shooting 71-73-82—226 to finish at 10-over par. On a windy day that resulted in higher scoring, Prokhorova's teammate Marina shot 84 to finish three shots off the lead after a

three-round 77-68-84—229. Howard's **Marley Franklin** rounded out the top three by shooting 74-78-79—231 to finish 15-over.

Smith leads Howard men's golf
thru two rounds of NCAA regional

AMHERST, Va.—Howard University men's golf team remains in 13th place after round two of the NCAA Amherst Regional, hosted by Liberty University and held at the Poplar Grove Golf Course (par-70, 7,212 yards) in Amherst, Va.

On Day Two, HU shot 26-over par (306). After two rounds, the Bison are 50-over par (610) with 18 holes remaining.

Fifth-year senior **Marcus Smith Jr.** (Rockford, Ill.) continues to spearhead the Bison, firing 6-over par (76) with three birdies in round two. After 36 holes, the Illinois native is 8-over par (148) and tied for 53rd overall.

Top seed Howard takes MEAC
softball crown; Heads to Duke

NORFOLK, Va. — Top-seed **Howard** claimed the 2025 **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** (MEAC) softball championship with a 6-1 victory over sixth-seeded **South Carolina State** Saturday at the NSU Softball Field.

Head Coach **Tori Tyson** was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Coach while **Ameenah Ballenger** was the tournament Most Outstanding Player.

Ballenger, a grad senior who pitches (12-5) and plays shortstop, hit safely in all three tournament wins for Howard, was the winning pitcher in relief in two of the



Ballenger

BCSP Hoops News

Cedric Baker to lead SC State
women's basketball program

ORANGEBURG, S.C. – Veteran and championship coach **Cedric Baker** has been named the new **South Carolina State** head women's basketball coach during a press conference May 6 by Interim Athletics Director **Oliver "Buddy" Pough**.

"At this pivotal moment in the future of our women's basketball program, we believe Coach Baker is the right person to lead us forward," Pough said. "His experience, vision and values align with our mission of developing student-athletes who excel on and off the court."

Baker joins SC State after an extraordinary 22-year tenure at **Savannah State**, where he built a program defined by excellence, discipline, and historic achievement claiming 262 wins overall. Prior to his time at SSU, Baker compiled a 55-19 record at **Benedict** and was 139-86 in seven years leading the women at his alma mater, **Voorhees**. At Voorhees his teams earned four **EIAC** championships and three NAIA Division I national tournament appearances.

"I'm excited to join the South Carolina State family and eager to begin building something special with the student-athletes, staff, and supporters here in Orangeburg," said Baker.

During his career, his legacy includes guiding three collegiate programs to a total of six national tournament appearances, nine regular season and conference tournament championships, several outstanding Coach of the Year awards, and the development of several elite student-athletes.

Coach Baker's most recent record-breaking milestones:

- Producing Savannah State's only WNBA player and women's basketball Olympian, **Ezinne Kalu**;
- Recording the most single-season wins (27-3), and a historic 14-0 season start
- Achieving two perfect Academic Performance Rating scores of 1000
- Achieved the program's highest Division II national rankings in both the WBCA and the NCAA South Region polls
- Securing key wins over major programs including the University of Florida, Georgia Southern University, University of Central Florida, East Carolina, Troy University and University of Louisiana-Lafayette
- Most Division I wins in Savannah State's program history
- MEAC Tournament Ring Recipients, 2015
- MEAC Tournament Outstanding Coach, 2015.

Beyond the numbers, Baker brings a proven commitment to academic integrity, player development, and championship-level performance. A leader who builds culture and winning teams, his confidence will have an immediate and lasting impact at South Carolina State.

A 1990 graduate of Voorhees College, he earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics and applied sciences. At Voorhees, he was a four-year basketball letterman and a member of the 1987 Voorhees Men's Basketball EAIC Championship team.

Mississippi Valley removes acting tag from
women's basketball head coach Jason James

ITTA BENA, Miss. — **Mississippi Valley State** University (MVSU) announced the appointment of **Jason James** as the new head coach of the



James

James as the head coach of our women's basketball program," said MVSU interim Director of Athletics **George Ivory**. "His passion for developing student-athletes, his proven leadership, and his vision for the future of our program made this an easy decision. We are confident that under his guidance, our program will continue to rise and compete at a high level."

During his time as acting head coach, James demonstrated exceptional leadership, fostering a culture of resilience, hard work, and teamwork. His dedication to player development, both on and off the court, earned the respect of the team, the athletic department, and the Valley community.

He compiled a 6-12 SWAC record, tying two other teams for eighth in the conference standings, and an 8-23 overall record this season as interim head coach.

"I want to Thank Dr. Briggs and his staff as well as Coach Ivory for this opportunity and I want to thank all the supporters and the Valley Alumni for all their support," said Coach James. "Last but not least I would like to thank (Assistant) Coach (**Ashley**) **Shields** and (Assistant) Coach Young for helping me keep this team together last season, during our run all the way to the SWAC Tournament. I look forward to the future and getting that SWAC championship back to the Delta."

Florida Memorial mens basketball coach
steps down

The **Florida Memorial** men's basketball team is now in the market for a head coach following reports that current position holder **Delano Thomas** is stepping down from the role.

Thomas was hired by Florida Memorial in March 2023, filling a role left vacant by previous coach **Ansar Al-Ameen**, who left to take a job as an assistant coach with the University of Nebraska at Omaha women's basketball team.

In his two seasons at Florida Memorial, Thomas led the Lions to a 47-15 overall record, securing a berth in the NAIA National Tournament each year. His first season with the Lions saw him help the team improve from a 14-14 overall record and a 5-11 record in the Sun Conference the previous year to a 24-7 overall record and a 9-5 conference record.

In addition to leading Florida Memorial to its first 20-win season in over a decade, Thomas also coached the team to a Sun Conference Tournament championship.

Before coming to Florida Memorial, Thomas served as the head coach at Shawnee State, where he won the Don Meyer National Coach of the Year award and led the team to its first NAIA National Championship in school history.

2025 BLACK COLLEGE SOFTBALL (Postseason Results and Honors)

CIAA CHAMP BOWIE STATE
OUSTED FROM
DIV. II ATLANTIC REGIONAL

CIAA three-time champion **Bowie State** lost 3-0 to top seed and host East Stroudsburg Thursday and was narrowly edged by West Chester 5-4 Friday to be eliminated from the Atlantic Regional.

The Bulldogs got just four hits and committed two errors in the loss to East Stroudsburg..

Against West Chester, BSU (27-20) built a 3-0 lead by the third inning and led 4-0 after a short rain delay before the Golden Rams rallied for five runs over the final three innings.

SIAC CHAMP SPRING HILL
BOWS OUT IN
DIV. II TAMPA REGIONAL

SIAC champion **Spring Hill** lost 4-0 to top seed and host Tampa Thursday and fell 9-1 to No. 5 seed Barry Friday to be eliminated from the NCAA Div. II Tampa Regional.

The Badgers kept the game against Tampa close but could manage just three hits against pitcher Kate Desimone who went the distance.

SHU (31-23) got just four hits Friday vs. Barry. **Rycca Hinton** surrendered just two earned runs but walked seven. She (2-4) took the loss.

Emma Curry came in in relief and gave up six earned runs.

MEAC SOFTBALL
ALL TOURNAMENT

Most Outstanding Coach:
Tori Tyson, Howard

Most Outstanding Player:
Ameenah Ballenger, Howard

Ameenah Ballenger, Howard
Mia Gonzales, Howard
Taylor Ames-Alexander, SC State
Destiny Calloway, SC State
Jamaria Charley, SC State
Karly Cain, Delaware State
Mi'Shon King, Delaware State
Zaelyn Harding, Delaware State
Amber Rivas, Morgan State
Victoria Fletcher, Morgan State
Kailey Bryant, Norfolk State

SWAC SOFTBALL
ALL TOURNAMENT

Most Valuable Player (MVP)
Brooklyn Morris, Jackson State

Kendall Macauley, Bethune-Cookman
Alyssa Lopez, Bethune-Cookman
Jaibriel Terrell, Alabama State
Ayana Frank, Alabama State
Keeleigh Spooner, Florida A&M
Amari Brown, Florida A&M
Zoryana Hughes, Florida A&M
Samantha Smith, Florida A&M
Ka'Liyah Gipson, Jackson State
Mari Stephens, Jackson State
Jace Jackson, Jackson State

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2025 BLACK COLLEGE BASKETBALL
HEAD COACHING CHANGES

MEN	OUT	IN
Alabama A&M	Otis Hughley, Jr.	Donte' Jackson
Alcorn State	Landon Bussey	Jake Morton
Allen	Shawn Walker	Andre Payne
Benedict	Artis Maddox	????
Bluefield State	Devin Hoehn	????
Chicago State	Scott Spinelli	Landon Bussey
Fayetteville State	Luke D'Alessio	Devin Hoehn
Florida A&M	Patrick Crarey III	Charlie Ward
Florida Memorial	Delano Thomas	????
Fort Valley State	Montex Robinson	Spencer Wright (Interim)
Grambling State	Donte' Jackson	Patrick Crarey III
Johnson C. Smith	Antwain Banks (Interim)	Antwain Banks
Morehouse	Doug Whittier	????
Paul Quinn	James Stafford	LeShawn Hammett
Savannah State	Horace Broadnax	Clevon Thompson
Texas College	Walter Yates	James Hartsfield (Interim)

WOMEN	OUT	IN
Alabama State	Freda Freeman-Jackson	Johnetta Hayes
Coppin State	Jermaine Woods	Darrell Mosley
Johnson C. Smith	Monterika Warren	Taisha Murphy (Interim)
Mississippi Valley State	Jason James (Interim)	Jason James
Morgan State	Ed Davis Jr.	Nadine Domond
Norfolk State	Larry Vickers	Jermaine Woods
Prairie View A&M	Sandy Pugh	Tai Dillard
S. C. State	Tim Eatman	Cedric Baker
Virginia State	Nadine Domond	Millette Green
Winston-Salem State	L'Tona Lamont	Tierra Terry