

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



National Battle of the Bands logo

TRACKIN' THE ACTION

MEAC, SWAC TRACK CHAMPS; D2 NCAA TRACK UNDERWAY; BYERS TO UFL; BENEDICT HIRE

DON'T MISS IT! A dynamite list of some of the top HBCU bands in the land will battle it out in Houston in August at the 2025 National Battle of the Bands.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2025 BATTLE OF THE BANDS LINEUP SET:

The *National Battle of the Bands* is returning to Houston on Saturday, August 23rd with a stacked lineup of eight storied HBCU marching bands.

The event, presented by Pepsi and produced by *Webber Marketing*, will be at NRG Stadium. The weekend officially begins Friday, Aug. 22, with programming that highlights entrepreneurship, education, music, and public service.

"Each year, we aim to raise the bar," said **Derek Webber**, executive producer of the event and CEO of Webber Marketing. "This isn't just a show. It's a platform that honors the music, the legacy, and the impact of HBCUs nationwide."

This year's band lineup includes:

- Alabama A&M University, Marching Maroon & White
- Albany State University, Marching Rams Show Band
- Florida A&M University, Marching 100
- Jackson State University, Sonic Boom of the South
- Langston University, Marching Pride Band
- NC A&T State University, Blue and Gold Marching Machine
- Prairie View A&M University, Marching Storm
- Texas Southern University, Ocean of Soul

Tickets are available now at nationalbattleofthebands.com.

Spring Sports Round-Up

Florida A&M women, Texas Southern men claim SWAC Outdoor Track and Field titles

BATON ROUGE, La.- The Florida A&M Lady Rattlers claimed the 2025 SWAC Women's Outdoor Track and Field Championship title while Texas Southern swept the men's title over the weekend.

FAMU head coach **Garfield Ellenwood II** was named the SWAC Women's Outdoor Track and Field Coach of the Year after leading the Lady Rattlers to their first SWAC Outdoor Track and Field title.

Florida A&M scored 127.5 points to edge **Alabama State** (124.5 points) ahead of third-place **Southern** (105.5 points). FAMU's women took its crown with several impressive individual performances.

2025 SWAC Women's Outdoor Track and Field Most Outstanding Field Performer was **Prairie View A&M's Keonna Otis**. Otis was first in the discus and second in the shot put. Florida A&M's **Arayanna Ladson** claimed Most Outstanding Track Performer honors after finishing second to teammate **Nya Blocker** in both the 100 and 200 meters while winning the 100 meter hurdles and running a leg in the 4x100 meter relay title.

Texas Southern led all teams in men's competition with 136 points followed by **Jackson State** with 125 points and **Alabama State** in third place amassing 93 points.

TSU head coach **Clyde Duncan** was named the SWAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field Coach of the Year after leading the Tigers to titles in Cross Country and Indoor Track and Field.

Jackson State's Godfrey Kimutai was named the 2025 SWAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field Most Outstanding Track Performer. **Texas Southern's Jalen Walker** claimed Most Outstanding Field Performer honors.

Kimutai finished second in the 1,500, 5,000



Ellenwood



Otis



Ladson



Oliver



Kimayo



Young



Duncan



Kimutai



Walker



Giles



Hopkins



Swepson

and 10,000 meters. Walker won the hammer throw, was second in the shot put and fourth in the discus.

Howard women, Norfolk State men both win fourth straight MEAC Outdoor Track & Field titles

NORFOLK, Va. – Head coach **David Oliver** led the **Howard** women to their fourth straight **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC)** Outdoor Track & Field Championship over the weekend.

Howard delivered a record-breaking performance, scoring a meet-high 292 points, 103 points ahead of runner-up **Norfolk State**. **Morgan State** finished third with 74 points.

Oliver was named outstanding coach of the meet.

Mercyline Kimayo of Norfolk State earned her third consecutive outstanding runner of the meet award after winning at 10,000 meters and finishing second at 5,000 meters.

Teammate **Leslie Young** secured her fourth straight outstanding field athlete of the meet honor after a fourth-place finish in the discus, second in the hammer throw and javelin and

third in the shot put.

The Bison dominated across all disciplines, collecting 14 gold medals and making 28 total podium appearances, including three podium sweeps.

The Norfolk State men finished with 227 points, 115.5 points ahead of co-runners-up **Howard** and **Coppin State**.

NSU's **Kenneth Giles** was named outstanding coach of the meet, while Spartan rookie **Lewis To** earned outstanding runner of the meet honors.

Too finished fifth in the 1,500 meters, third in the 5,000 meters and second in the 10,000 meters and Steeplechase.

South Carolina State's Michael Hopkins and **North Carolina Central's Matthew Swepson** were recognized as Co-Outstanding Male Field Athletes of the Meet. Hopkins finished second in the decathlon and won the pole vault. Swepson placed third in the hammer throw and javelin.

The Spartans dominated the weekend with six gold medals and a total of 19 podium finishes on the men's side.



Too

List of HBCU athletes for the D2 NCAA track and field championships

The following is a comprehensive list of every black college athlete who has qualified for the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

The championships will be held from Thursday, May 22 to Saturday, May 24, 2025 at the CSU Pueblo ThunderBowl in Pueblo, Colorado. The qualifiers were announced on May 13.

Here's everything you need to know. The list was compiled by

Jarrett Hoffman of HBCUsports.com.

The list with detailed accomplishments of each athlete can be seen at this link:

<https://hbcusports.com/2025/05/14/these-are-all-the-hbcu-athletes-who-qualified-for-the-d2-ncaa-track-and-field-championships/>

MEN

- 100m: Romar Stapleton, Claflin
- 100/200m: Tyson Williams, J.C. Smith
- 100/200m/4x100: Kibren Moore, Albany State
- 200m: Yumana Lofton, Kentucky State
- 200m: Darrian Clarke, Benedict

- 200/400m: Reuben Nichols, Lincoln (Mo.)
- 400m: Samuel Vessat, Edward Waters
- 400m: Michael Simmons Jr., Morehouse
- 800m: Zion Murry, Claflin
- 10/400h: Mohamed Adoini, Johnson C. Smith
- 400h: Jaevon Riley, Claflin
- 400h: Sharim Hamilton, Lincoln (Mo.)
- 400h: Shawn Jarrett II, Tuskegee
- 400h: Clinton Laguerre, Lincoln (Mo.)
- 400h: Jermiah Alibey, Morehouse
- 4x100: Benedict
- 4x100: Albany State
- 4x400: Lincoln (Mo.)
- High Jump: Joseph Briscoe, Virginia State
- Long Jump: Zach Washington, Benedict
- Triple Jump: Malik Drummond, Lincoln (Mo.)

Triple Jump: Jahaz Morgan, Virginia State

WOMEN

- 100m: Brianna Benloss, Winston-Salem State
- 200m: Cadence Cray, Albany State
- 400m/400h: Shevanae Thomas, Lincoln (Mo.)
- 400m: Kamani Johns, Lincoln (Pa.)
- 800m: Shaneal Clarke-Giddings, Lincoln (Mo.)
- 100h: Charnessa Reid, Winston-Salem State
- 100h: Aaliyanah Anderson, Lincoln (Mo.)
- 400h: Nathalia Rowe, Albany State
- 400h: Odeshia Nanton, Lincoln (Mo.)
- Triple Jump: Jhnyia Knuckles, Claflin
- Triple Jump: Jada David, Benedict
- Shot Put: Yassine Kamara, Bowie State
- Discus Throw: Yassine Kamara, Bowie State

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2025 SWAC AND MEAC INDIVIDUAL OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONS

SWAC WOMEN

- TRIPLE JUMP: Savoria Anderson, Prairie View A&M
- 4X100 METER RELAY: Florida A&M
- 1500 METERS: Aliyah Williams, Alabama State
- 100 METER HURDLES: Arayana Ladson, Florida A&M
- 400 METER DASH: Laila Gaynor, Alabama A&M
- 100 METER DASH: Nya Blocker, Florida A&M
- 800 METERS: Taliyah Wickett, Alabama State
- 400 METER HURDLES: Katelynn Smith, Florida A&M
- 200 METER DASH: Nya Blocker, Florida A&M
- 5000 METERS: Alyvia Brown, Texas Southern
- 4X400 METER RELAY: Alabama A&M
- STEEPLECHASE: Doreen Onchangu, Southern
- SHOT PUT: Lilliann Dudley, Jackson State
- DISCUS: Keonna Otis, Prairie View
- HAMMER: Lyric Love, Arkansas-Pine Bluff
- JAVELIN: Jessica Hess, Southern
- HEPTATHLON: Ajanae Cressey, Alabama A&M

MEAC WOMEN

- TRIPLE JUMP: Kellis Armstrong, Howard
- 4X100 METER RELAY: Howard
- 1500 METERS: Camille Egbula, Howard
- 100 METER HURDLES: Marcia Sey, Howard
- 400 METER DASH: Kiya Lawson, Howard
- 100 METER DASH: Kailei Collins, Howard
- 800 METERS: Camille Egbula, Howard
- 400 METER HURDLES: Arianna Smith, Howard
- 200 METER DASH: Kiya Lawson, Howard
- 5000 METERS: Joslyn Crosby, Howard
- 4X400 METER RELAY: Howard
- STEEPLECHASE: Mercyline Kimayo, Norfolk State
- SHOT PUT: Kendra Ezeama, Howard
- DISCUS: Cailyn Johnson, Morgan State
- HAMMER: Erin Hatcher, Howard
- JAVELIN: Areyanna Scott, S. Carolina State
- HEPTATHLON: Jasmyn Hunter, Howard

SWAC MEN

- POLE VAULT: Adam Hines, Texas Southern
- TRIPLE JUMP: Anthony Woods, Alabama State
- HIGH JUMP: Randell Pompey, Florida A&M
- 4X100 METER RELAY: Arkansas-Pine Bluff
- 1500 METERS: Kirk Dawkins, Florida A&M
- 110 METER HURDLES: Dwight Henry, Arkansas-Pine Bluff
- 400 METER DASH: Trellas Forrest, Alcorn State
- 100 METER DASH: Jamarion Stubbs, Alabama State
- 800 METERS: Kirk Dawkins, Florida A&M
- 400 METER HURDLES: Vaughn DeVaughn III, Alabama State
- 200 METER DASH: Jamarion Stubbs, Alabama State
- 5000 METERS: Andrew Kiplagat, Jackson State
- 4X400 METER RELAY: Alabama State
- STEEPLECHASE: David Livingston, Texas Southern
- SHOT PUT: Blaine Nunn, Texas Southern
- DISCUS: Elijah Blige, Jackson State
- HAMMER: Jalen Walker, Texas Southern
- JAVELIN: Everett Alberty, Alcorn State
- DECATHLON: Che Rockford, Arkansas-Pine Bluff

MEAC MEN

- POLE VAULT: Michael Hopkins, S. Carolina State
- TRIPLE JUMP: Jayden Gordon, Norfolk State
- HIGH JUMP: Ja'Mari Manson, Delaware State
- 4X100 METER RELAY: Coppin State
- 1500 METERS: Caleb Mincey, Morgan State
- 110 METER HURDLES: Noah Langford, Howard
- 400 METER DASH: Premer Wynn, Norfolk State
- 100 METER DASH: Solomon Hammond, Coppin State
- 800 METERS: Etiam Torgbenu, Coppin State
- 400 METER HURDLES: Noah Langford, Howard
- 200 METER DASH: Kendrick Winfield, Norfolk State
- 5000 METERS: Gidion Sigei, Norfolk State
- 4X400 METER RELAY: Norfolk State
- STEEPLECHASE: Marian Drazan, Delaware State
- SHOT PUT: Gabriel Urracia, N. Carolina Central
- DISCUS: Delano Lawrence, Md. E. Shore
- HAMMER: Troy McWilliams, Norfolk State
- JAVELIN: Robert Carter, S. Carolina State
- DECATHLON: Andrew Betton, Coppin State

BCSP Notes

VUU's Jada Byers signing with UFL's Memphis Showboats

The United Football League's Memphis Showboats have bolstered their backfield by signing standout **Virginia Union** running back **Jada Byers**. The NFL Network's **Steve Wyche** first reported the news.

Byers, a dynamic playmaker during a storied four-year career with VUU, brings an impressive collegiate résumé to the UFL.

A 5-foot-7, 185-pound native of Bridgeton, New Jersey, Byers made his mark at the Division II level with the Panthers. Over four seasons (2021-24), he amassed 5,978 rushing yards and 71 touchdowns on 967 carries, while adding 70 receptions for 482 yards and four touchdowns.

Byers was a three-time CIAA offensive player of the year and earned first team All-American honors from both HBCU and AFCA entities. He also won the *Deacon Jones Trophy* as the player of the year from the Black College Football Hall of Fame and the *Willie Lanier Award* twice, given to the top player in the state of Virginia below the NCAA Div. I level. These awards cemented his status as one of the most decorated players in HBCU football history.

His 2024 campaign was particularly historic. Byers rushed for a single-season school record of 2,061 yards and 27 touchdowns on 329 carries, while also contributing as a receiver and return specialist. His versatility and explosiveness made him a constant threat, both in the backfield and on special teams. VUU went 10-4 overall, won its second straight CIAA title at 6-1 and won the program's first two games in the Div. II playoffs before falling to top seed Valdosta State in the national quarterfinals.

Despite being considered undersized for the professional level, and being bypassed in the NFL draft and rookie free agent market, Byers' speed, vision, and playmaking ability have consistently set him apart.

BLACK COLLEGE SOFTBALL (Postseason Results)

MEAC SOFTBALL CHAMP
HOWARD FELLED
IN NCAA DIV. I
DURHAM REGIONAL

Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference champion **Howard** lost 9-1 to Coastal Carolina Saturday after falling to Duke 12-0 on Friday to be eliminated from the NCAA Durham Softball Regional.

The Bison were held to two hits in its shutout loss to Duke. Allyssa Vasquez's home run accounted for the only score vs. Coastal Carolina.

Howard concludes the 2025 campaign with an overall record of 31-20, including a dominant 20-1 mark in MEAC play.

SWAC SOFTBALL CHAMP
JACKSON STATE
BOWS OUT IN
DIV. I TUSCALOOSA REGIONAL

SWAC champion **Jackson State** was held to just one hit by **Jace Jackson** in falling to host Alabama 8-0 Friday and battled gamely before falling 2-1 to Belmont on Saturday to be eliminated from the Div. I Tuscaloosa Softball Regional.

Belmont pushed across the winning run in the bottom of the sixth inning. **Jorgina Gant** (9-8) took the loss in the circle for Jackson State (29-25). **Brooklyn Morris** went five innings, surrendering one run on five hits, walking none and striking out one.

Talladega's Dannton Jackson new men's basketball head coach at Benedict

Longtime HBCU coach **Dannton Jackson** has been tabbed as **Benedict College's** next men's basketball coach, marking his first career NCAA head coaching job. Jackson is replacing **Artis Maddox**.

An alumnus of **Xavier University** of Louisiana (XULA), Jackson began his coaching career there, serving as an assistant on the men's and women's basketball teams.

In 2002, he was promoted to head coach of the men's basketball team, a role he held for the next 13 seasons, excluding the 2005-2006 season, which was shut down due to Hurricane Katrina. Jackson finished with an overall record of 294-130, guiding the Gold Nuggets to 10 NAIA National Tournament appearances.

Following stints as an assistant coach at the University of Albany and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), he was hired as head coach of **Talladega College** in 2022.

The XULA alum was tasked with taking over a Talladega team that had made it to the NAIA National Championship game the year before under head coach **Chris Wright** (now at **Langston**).

After posting a 12-17 record in his first year with the team, Jackson helped lead Talladega to consecutive 20-win seasons, including a 20-9 mark this past season.

"I'm truly blessed and excited to be here at Benedict College," said Jackson. "This is a special place with a proud legacy, and I'm ready to get to work. My goal is to build a program that our students, alumni, and the entire Benedict family can be proud of. We're going to compete, we're going to grow as men, and we're going to win the right way—together."

Benedict finished 6-22 overall record in 2024-25 in Maddox's last season, a significant dropoff from a 23-8 record the previous year.

TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS (Team Results)

MEAC

MEN	PTS
1 Norfolk State	227
2 Coppin State	111.5
2 Howard	111.5
4 N.C. Central	93
5 SC State	81
6 Delaware State	71
7 Morgan State	67
8 Md. Eastern Shore	52

WOMEN

MEN	PTS
1 Howard	292
2 Norfolk State	189
3 Morgan State	74
4 N.C. Central	73
5 Delaware State	72
6 SC State	50
7 Coppin State	25
7 Md-Eastern Shore	25

SWAC

MEN	PTS
1 Texas Southern	136
2 Jackson State	125
3 Alabama State	93
4 Arkansas-PB	88
5 Bethune-Cookman	80
6 Florida A&M	78

WOMEN

MEN	PTS
1 Florida A&M	127.5
2 Alabama State	124.5
3 Southern	105.5
4 Prairie View	100.5
5 Alabama A&M	90
6 Texas Southern	81