

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



Baltimore's CFG Bank Arena

STAYIN' PUT!: CIAA Basketball Tournament -not moving to Charlotte for now, staying put in Baltimore's CFG Bank Arena.

LOOKIN' AHEAD

D'ALESSIO TO BLUEFIELD STATE; THREE MEDIA DAYS SET; CIAA STAYING IN BALTIMORE?

Spring Sports Round-Up

Bethune-Cookman claims 2025 SWAC baseball title; Advances to NCAA Tallahassee Regional

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. - **Andrey Martinez's** two-out, three-run home run to straightaway center field gave **Bethune-Cookman** a walk-off come-from-behind 11-9 win over **Florida A&M** in the championship game of the **Southwestern Athletic Conference Baseball** Tournament on Sunday afternoon at Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama.

Martinez

The dramatic walk-off blast capped a wild finish to a game that saw multiple lead changes and clutch hitting from both teams.

Martinez's 20th home run of the season - tying him for the single-season school record with **Ryan Durrence** (2010), came with two outs and turned what appeared to be a certain Rattlers' victory into celebration for the Wildcats, who claimed their first SWAC Tournament title, and their first soon-to-be NCAA Regional appearance since 2017.

As a result of the championship win, the Wildcats (37-21) received the league's automatic berth in the NCAA Div. I Baseball Championship field.

On Monday's selection show, Bethune-Cookman was placed in the Tallahassee Regional with host and top seed No. 1 Florida State (38-14). No. 2 Northeastern (48-9) and No. 3 Mississippi State (34-21) are the other two teams in the double-elimination regional.

Florida State will face Bethune-Cookman Friday at 3 p.m. on the ACC Network.

Florida A&M (33-25) appeared to be in control after building a 9-6 lead midway through the eighth inning, but the Wildcats scored five runs in the final two frames to steal the championship.

Martinez's three-run blast sent the Wildcats

pouring out of their dugout in celebration and gave them their first-ever baseball SWAC title.

Martinez led Bethune-Cookman's offensive attack, going 3-for-6 with four RBIs and the game-winning home run.

ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM

Juan Cruz, Alabama State; Kameron Douglas, Cameron Hill, Trey Bridges, Grambling State; William Brown, Colton Ryals, Cody Williams, Justin Crews, Florida A&M; Jeter Polledo, Sergio Rivera, Edwin Sanchez, Daniel Figueroa, Bethune-Cookman (MVP)

One black college gold medal at Div. II Track & Field championships

The **Lincoln (MO)** men finished in the top ten of the NCAA Division II Outdoor Track and Field Championships while the Lincoln (MO) women took home the only gold medal.

Lincoln's men came thru with 23 points to finish in ninth place in the men's competition won by Pittsburg State with 119 points.

The Blue Tigers' men's 4x400 relay team posted a personal-best time of 3:05.23 but fell short of claiming the national title, finishing second behind Pittsburg State. The men's 4x4 also finished second to Pittsburg State indoors.

For the men, **Sharim Hamilton** finished fourth in the men's 400 hurdles finals, while his teammate **Clinton Laguerre** came in sixth.

Elsewhere, **Claffin's Jaevon Riley** secured the best finish by a non-Lincoln (MO) athlete, coming in second in the 400 hurdles with a personal-best 49.87-second time. His teammate **Zion Murry** closed the men's 800m final in fourth place, running a 1:49.59 mark.

Johnson C. Smith sprinter **Tyson Williams** claimed a pair of top-five finishes, coming in third in the 200m final (20.63) and fifth in the 100m final (10.09).

Albany State's **Kibren Moore** finished fifth and eighth in the men's 200m and 100m, respectively. **Virginia State's Joseph Briscoe** earned a fourth-place finish in the high jump



Clarke-Giddings Brown Thomas George

while **Benedict's Zach Washington** finished fifth in the long jump.

Other team finishes for the men were Claffin in 16th with 13 points, Johnson C. Smith in 18th with 12, Albany State and Virginia State shared 39th with five points each while Benedict scored four points to finish 45th.

Lincoln's women's 4x400 relay team took home the gold in the finals after posting a personal-best time of 3:32.62.

Shaneal Clarke-Giddings ran the opening leg followed by **Britney Brown** on the second leg. **Shevanae Thomas** began the third leg in fourth place but put the team in the front of the pack with a 52.42 split while **Shantae George** anchored the team to victory with a 52.17 split. The Lincoln women also won gold in the Div. II indoor championships.

Clarke-Giddings placed sixth in the women's 800m final, while Thomas and George each finished in eighth place in the women's 400m and 200m, respectively.

The Lincoln women scored 15 points to finish 17th in the team competition.

Bowie State's Yassine Kamara finished third in the discus, **Winston-Salem State's Charnessa Reid** placed fourth in the women's 100 hurdles in 13.35 seconds and Albany State's **Nathalia Rowe** came in sixth in the women's 400 hurdles final.

NCAA DIV. II MEN		NCAA DIV. II WOMEN			
1	Pittsburg State	111	1	Grand Valley State	60
9	Lincoln (Mo.)	23	17	Lincoln (Mo.)	15
16	Claffin	13	35	Bowie State	6
18	Johnson C. Smith	12	39	Winston-Salem State	5
39	Albany State	5	50	Albany State	3
39	Virginia State	5			
45	Benedict	4			

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2025 SIAC FOOTBALL MEDIA DAY IN MACON:

The **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC)** will host this year's football media day at the *Tubman African American Museum* in Macon, Georgia.

"The Tubman African American Museum looks forward to hosting the SIAC and its member institutions in their signature event this summer," Harold Young, executive director of the museum said. "The museum is home to several events each year, but we are especially excited for the opportunity to merge our historical content with HB-CUs and sports alike for a day."

The 13 SIAC football playing institutions will congregate in Middle Georgia for two days to participate in community service outreach, a season overview and media availability.

2025 SWAC FOOTBALL MEDIA DAY:

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.- The **Southwestern Athletic Conference** will host its annual Football Media Day on Wednesday, July 16 at 10:00 a.m. CST at the Sheraton-Birmingham.

All twelve SWAC head football coaches and two student-athletes from each team will be in attendance to address the media regarding the upcoming 2025 football season.

The league will also announce the 2025 SWAC Football Preseason Teams as well as the Predicted Order of Finish at the event.

Media one-on-one interviews with coaches and student-athletes will begin at 10:00 a.m. CST.

A complete listing of the head coaches and student-athletes slated to be in attendance will be released at a later date.

2025 MEAC FOOTBALL MEDIA DAY TO BE AT BALTIMORE RAVENS STADIUM:

NORFOLK, Va. - The **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC)** announced last week that its 2025 Football Media Day will be held on Tuesday, July 22, at M&T Bank Stadium, home of the National Football League's (NFL) Baltimore Ravens, in Baltimore, Maryland.

M&T Bank Stadium offers a premier setting to celebrate the MEAC's storied football legacy, recognize its exceptional student-athletes, and spotlight the leadership of its head coaches ahead of the 2025 season. Hosting the 2025 MEAC Football at M&T Bank Stadium underscores the conference's longstanding partnership with the NFL.

"This is a historic milestone for the MEAC," said MEAC Commissioner **Sonja Stills**. "Hosting our Football Media Day at an NFL venue reflects the growing visibility, strength, and momentum of our conference. We are thrilled to showcase our member institutions in such a dynamic and high-profile environment."

Each of the MEAC's football programs will be represented by their head coach and select student-athletes, giving media outlets direct access to key voices and insights leading into the new season.

A more detailed daily schedule with full television information of the MEAC's *Countdown to Kickoff* media day show, rotational breakdown and student-athletes attending will be available prior to the event in early July.

BCSP Notes

D'Alessio let go at Fayetteville State, picked up at Bluefield State

BLUEFIELD, WV — **Luke D'Alessio**, who has led both **Fayetteville State** and **Bowie State** to CIAA men's basketball titles, was named last week as the new head coach at **Bluefield State**.

D'Alessio comes to Bluefield State after a successful five-season run at FSU where he compiled a 103-52 overall record. He led the Broncos to two CIAA South division championships and a CIAA tournament championship in the 2022 season.

After leading FSU to a 23-9 overall mark including a regular season North Division title last season, D'Alessio's contract was not renewed. After letting D'Alessio go, FSU hired last season's head coach at Bluefield State, **Devin Hoehn**. Under Hoehn last season, Bluefield State posted a 19-11 mark, its first winning record since officially joining the CIAA. BSU, under Hoehn, also knocked off D'Alessio's squad in the CIAA tournament semifinals. Both Fayetteville State and Bluefield State advanced to the NCAA Div. II national tournament.

A seasoned leader with more than 30 years of coaching experience at the NCAA Division I and II levels, D'Alessio brings a distinguished resume of competitive success, player development, and program building to Big Blue.

His most notable success came during a decade-long run at Bowie State, where he amassed a 199-96 record and led the Bulldogs to a CIAA championship and three NCAA Division II Tournament appearances. Under his guidance, Bowie State reached the NCAA Final Four, establishing the program as a perennial contender on the national stage.

"We are thrilled to welcome Coach D'Alessio to the Big Blue family," said **Dr. Darrin Martin**, Bluefield State University President. "His extensive experience and proven track record of developing competitive programs make him an ideal leader for our men's basketball team."

In addition to his head coaching roles, D'Alessio has served in assistant coaching positions at several NCAA Division I programs, including Loyola University, Siena College and **North Carolina Central**. His teams have consistently ranked among national leaders in scoring, assists, and defensive efficiency. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated a consistent ability to recruit, mentor, and develop high-caliber student-athletes while maintaining a strong commitment to academic success and character development.

"I would like to thank President Dr. Darrin Martin, Brodderick Tucker and Ryan Bailey for giving me this great opportunity," said D'Alessio. "I am honored, blessed and privileged to represent Bluefield State University and I'm excited to build on the recent success of the men's basketball program. I can't wait to get started and be a part of the Big Blue family."

D'Alessio will begin his duties immediately as preparations begin for the upcoming season.

CIAA announces end-of-the year awards

RICHMOND, VA. (May 13, 2025) - The **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA)** held its annual Spring General Assembly meeting and end-of-year awards reception in Richmond, Va. last Tuesday announcing its highest team and administrative awards at the reception.

Virginia State University won the **C.H. Williams Men's All-Sports Award**, while **Fayetteville State University** secured the **Loretta Taylor Women's All-Sports Award**. Both recognitions are annually awarded to CIAA institutions with the leading men's and women's athletic programs, determined by a points system.

VSU clinched the 2024-2025 conference championship in men's basketball and men's cross country. FSU's women's teams seized conference crowns in women's cross country, women's indoor track & field, and bowling.

Fayetteville State's athletic department was recognized with the award of Most Positive Game Environment. Selected by members of the CIAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), the award is given to the school that exhibits good sportsmanship by student-athletes and coaches during both home and away contests.

Nia Gibson of Fayetteville State, who finished second in the 3,000

meters and fourth in the 1,500 meters at the Outdoor Track Championship, was selected as the 2024-2025 CIAA Female Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

Jared Achuff of **Bowie State** was voted as the CIAA Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year after earning all-conference honors as an offensive lineman while maintaining a perfect 4.0 GPA.

FSU's **Anthony Bennett** was named CIAA Athletic Director of the Year after leading the Broncos to titles in women's cross country, indoor track & field, women's basketball, and bowling. Academically, FSU had two teams win the Team GPA award, including bowling (3.623) and softball 3.655.

Winston-Salem State's Etienne Thomas received the **Jeanette Lee Athletic Administrator of the Year award**, which is given to an administrator within the membership at the recommendation of the CIAA Commissioner for servant leadership and embodies the commitment exemplified by Lee, former CIAA Coach and Athletic Administrator.

Adrian Ferguson of Fayetteville State University was named CIAA **John Holley Sports Information Director (SID) of the Year**. Ferguson's leadership and forward-thinking approach have transformed Fayetteville State Athletics Communications and Media into one of the premiere Athletics Departments in the CIAA.

The CIAA also introduced the Faculty Athletics Representative (FAR) and Compliance Director of the Year to this year's awards recipients. The FAR of the year is **Dr. Cynthia Williams-Brown** from Winston-Salem State, while the Compliance Director of the Year is Virginia State's **Felicia Johnson**.

LaTaya Hilliard-Gray of **Elizabeth City State University** was voted by her peers as the CIAA Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) of the Year. Embarking on a journey of continuous growth and excellence, we are thrilled to highlight her strides in the realm of athletics over the past academic year.

CIAA basketball tournament appears headed to stay in Baltimore until 2029?

The *Charlotte Business Journal* has reported that the CIAA basketball tournament will remain in Baltimore despite a bid from the city of Charlotte to return it to North Carolina's Queen City.

The Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority released a statement Monday saying it had been working to return the popular tournament, held in the city from 2006 to 2020, to Charlotte in 2027 but that effort had fallen thru. When in Charlotte, the tournament generated some \$650 million in local economic spending over its 15-year stay.

Charlotte and Baltimore were reportedly the only cities to submit bids for the coveted tournament, which has operated on three-year renewable contracts for close to the last 40 years.

A surprising bid from Baltimore moved the tournament to Maryland's Charm City beginning in 2021.

The CIAA's contract with Baltimore ran through the 2026 tournament, scheduled for late February next year. The CIAA will apparently now stay in Baltimore through 2029 though no official word as of press time has come from the conference's office.

The conference's requirements for a competitive bid include a minimum 7,500-seat venue, a ban on ticket resales, and the CIAA controlling all sales and revenue for the championship games.

According to the CBJ story, Charlotte's key concern was the pricing of hotel rooms, which allegedly drove the CIAA away from the Queen City following the 2020 tournament.

Host cities are required to have a hotel headquarters that accommodates 500 rooms for conference staff, sponsors, game officials, media, and guests at a maximum of \$200 per night. Cities should also work with the conference to secure blocks of hotel rooms for fans and tournament attendees at a maximum price of \$225 per night.

"We didn't have the flexibility," Mohammad Jenatian told the CBJ, adding that he remains hopeful the CIAA Tournament will consider Charlotte in future years.

The CBJ story quotes two sources with knowledge of the bid saying a significant problem with Charlotte's proposal was the use of Bojangles Coliseum for early round games before moving later rounds to the downtown Spectrum Center, a provision that the conference was not willing to consider.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

2025 CONFERENCE FOOTBALL MEDIA DAYS

SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (SIAC)

Wednesday, July 16
Tubman African American Museum
Macon, GA

SOUTHWESTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (SWAC)

Wednesday, July 16, 10 a.m. EST
Sheraton-Birmingham
Birmingham, AL

MID-EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE (MEAC)

Tuesday, July 22
M&T Bank Stadium
Baltimore, MD