

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



DC Defenders photo

WINNERS ALL AROUND

CHRIS ROWLAND: Former Tennessee State star named to all-league team and leading DC Defenders into UFL playoffs.

CARUTH WINS!; 15 TRACKSTERS HEAD TO D1 NATIONALS; SWAC, MEAC AWARD WINNERS

Spring Sports Round-Up

15 black college tracksters advance to D1 NCAA nationals

Fifteen (15) black college individual performers and five (5) relay teams qualified out of East and West Regionals over the weekend to punch their tickets to the 2025 NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

The 2025 NCAA DI Outdoor Track and Field Championships are set for Wednesday, June 11 through Saturday, June 14 at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon. The athletes from regionals will join the combined event athletes (heptathlon and decathlon) that were already accepted into the championship meet.

With the qualifying round of the 2025 DI Outdoor Track and Field Championships complete the top 12 competitors from each individual event and the top 12 teams from each relay event advanced from each first round site to the national championship meet.

The most impressive performance by HBCU athletes was a 1-2-3-12 finish in the men's East Regional 400 meter hurdles in Jacksonville, Florida.

North Carolina A&T sophomore **Xavier Taylor**, the CAA champion, topped that podium with a program-record 49.18 finish. He was followed by **Howard** senior **Noah Langford** in second (49.50) and **Coppin State** senior **Jarrett Gentles** in third (49.78). All three ran personal bests. Xavier Taylor had the only first-place finish for an HBCU athlete.

Xavier Taylor's twin brother, NC A&T sophomore **Isaiah Taylor**, grabbed the 12th and final qualifying spot in 50.25. Isaiah Taylor also qualified for the 110 meter hurdles in Eugene with a sixth-place finish in 13.46 seconds.

Both Taylors will likely compete in A&T's 4x100 and 4x400 relay teams that both earned spots in Eugene. The 4x100 team qualified seventh in 39.09 seconds while the 4x400 team ran 3:03.56 to also qualify seventh.

Among the other outstanding HBCU performers, **SWAC** sprint champion, junior **Jamarion Stubbs** out of **Alabama State**, advanced in both the 100 and 200 meters in the East Regional. Stubbs finished 11th in the 100 in 10.11 seconds and was seventh in the 200 in 20.11.

Black colleges also had three top ten finishes in the East Region triple jump competition. Alabama State junior **Anthony Wood** was fourth (16.04m), **Jackson State** senior **Ledamian Rowell** sixth (15.99m) and



NC A&T sophomore **Xzavier Partee** eighth (15.37m).

Southern senior **Roman Smith** jumped 2.18m (7 ft. 1/3/4 in.) to finish tied for third in the men's high jump.

The best finish for HBCU ladies in the East was NC A&T junior **Olivia Dowd** who had a leap of 13.22 meters (43 ft., 4 1/2 in.) to earn fifth place in the triple jump.

In the West Regional at Bryan-College Station, Texas, **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** sophomore **Jordan Pierre** qualified seventh in the 400 meters and was part of the UAPB 4x400 relay team that finished fifth.

Bethune-Cookman eliminated in Tallahassee Baseball Regional

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – **SWAC** baseball champion **Bethune-Cookman** saw its 2025 season come to a close after two losses in the NCAA Div. I regional here over the weekend.

The Wildcats (37-23) fell 6-2 to host and No. 9 national seed Florida State Friday and 4-3 Saturday afternoon to No. 19 Northeastern in the elimination game at Mike Martin Field at Dick Hower Stadium.

In the second game, Northeastern (49-10) scored two runs in the top of the ninth inning to break a 2-2 deadlock after eight innings of play.

B-CU didn't go away quietly in the home-half of the ninth. The Wildcats used back-to-back walks to put two aboard to begin the at-bat. A **Sergio Rivera** sacrifice bunt moved both runners up a base before pinch runner **Pablo Torres** scored on a Northeastern error.

With B-CU down 4-3 – and a steal of second by Figueroa, junior **Andrey Martinez** stepped to the plate for the Maroon and Gold with both the game-tying and winning runs in scoring position. However, the SWAC Co-Hitter of the Year would go down on strikes to close the ballgame.

In Friday's contest, FSU (39-14) used three home runs to hold off upset-minded B-CU.

The game was tied at 2 in the third inning when the game entered a two-hour rain delay. FSU jumped on top with a two-run homer, its third of the game, to go up 4-2 and added two insurance runs later.

QUALIFIERS FOR NCAA DIV. I TRACK & FIELD CHAMPIONSHIPS

FROM MEN'S EAST REGIONAL

100 METERS		
RANK	NAME, CL. SCHOOL	TIME
11	Jamarion Stubbs, Jr., Alabama State	10.11
200 METERS		
7	Jamarion Stubbs, Jr., Alabama State	20.11
800 METERS		
9	Kirk Dawkins, Jr., Florida A&M	1:49.62
110 HURDLES		
6	Isaiah Taylor, N. C. A&T	13.46
400 HURDLES		
1	Xzaviah Taylor, So, N. C. A&T	49.18
2	Noah Langford, Sr., Howard	49.50
3	Jarrett Gentles, Sr., Coppin State	49.78
12	Isaiah Taylor, So., N. C. A&T	50.25
4 x 100 RELAY		
7	N. C. A&T - Nya Gumbs XTaylor ITaylor	39.09
4 x 400 RELAY		
7	N. C. A&T - Thomas Djymond Gurnell XTaylor	3:03.56
10	Howard - Brazell Langford McKendra Grant	3:03.88
HIGH JUMP		
3	Roman Smith, Sr., Southern	2.18m
TRIPLE JUMP		
4	Anthony Woods, Jr., Alabama State	16.04m
6	Ledamian Rowell, Sr., Jackson State	15.99m
8	Xavier Partee, So., N. C. A&T	15.97m

FROM WOMEN'S EAST REGIONAL

100 METERS		
RANK	NAME, CL. SCHOOL	TIME
11	Keilei Collins, Sr., Howard	11.21
100 HURDLES		
8	Marcia Sey, Jr., Howard	12.99
400 HURDLES		
6	Aniya Woodruff, Jr., Howard	56.12
13x	Arianna Smith, Sr., Howard	57.20
4 x 100 RELAY		
6	Howard - Gray-Wms Sey Collins Pittman	43.36
HIGH JUMP		
6	Spirit Morgan, Jr., N. C. A&T	1.82m
TRIPLE JUMP		
5	Olivia Dowd, Jr., N. C. A&T	13.22m

FROM MEN'S WEST REGIONAL

4 x 100 RELAY		
RANK	NAME, CL. SCHOOL	TIME
5	Arkansas-Pine Bluff - Henry Sylvester Pierre Walrond	38.98
400 METERS		
7	Jordan Pierre, So., Ark.-PB	45.75

The B-CU offense out-hit the host Seminoles, collecting 10 hits on the day. The bats were led by four different Wildcats with two hits each – **Darryl Lee**, **Jorge Rodriguez**, **Rivera** and **Daniel Figueroa**.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS



THE YOUNGSTER WINS AGAIN: 22-year old Winston-Salem State product Rajah Caruth straddles his No. 71 Chevrolet Silverado after winning Saturday's NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series Race in Nashville. It was Caruth's first win of the 2025 season and second overall joining veteran successful racers Kyle Larson and Kyle Busch as multiple winners for Spire Motorsports.

CARUTH TAKES CHECKERED FLAG IN NASHVILLE, GETS HIS SECOND WIN:

Winston-Salem State University alum and rising NASCAR star **Rajah Caruth** won his first victory of the 2025 season by winning the *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series* race at Nashville Superspeedway on Saturday, May 30.

The second win of his career comes just over a week from his 23rd birthday and ended a 31-race winless streak for Caruth and the No. 71 Chevrolet Silverado. He deftly held off Corey Heim and Layne Riggs, who came in second and third, respectively.

During the hotly contested race, Caruth took the lead on pit road at the end of the second stage and never surrendered it, leading the final 51 laps 0.518 seconds ahead of Heim and 0.629 seconds ahead of Riggs.

"I didn't expect that at all," Caruth said after his victory. "Those guys were breathing down my neck the whole run. My pit crew won that race – Jarius, Zico, Dawson, Josh, Cody – they won that race for us. Thanks to them, thanks to everyone at HendrickCars.com, the men and women at Spire Motorsports. We've been off this year, but good to get a dub tonight, man.

"I'm out of breath."

Speaking with reporters, Heim lauded Caruth for his performance in the race.

"Big congrats to Rajah. He did an awesome job managing from the lead, and I was really free behind him, and he made pretty much the right choice every time as for where I was gonna go," Heim said. "It's nice racing against people that aren't going to wreck you, racing for the race lead."

Heim is the winningest driver of the 2025 season with four wins in the first 11 races, including last weekend's event at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

The victory is the ninth win in the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series for Spire Motorsports, with Caruth becoming just the third driver to earn multiple victories for the organization in the NASCAR Truck Series, along with Kyle Larson and Kyle Busch.

Because of his victory, Caruth secured a spot in the Craftsman Truck Series Playoffs. The Truck Series Playoffs will begin in late August and conclude with the championship race at Phoenix Raceway in late October.

The next NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series race will take place on June 7 at the Michigan International Speedway, the first event at the racetrack in several years.

CHRIS ROWLAND EARNS TWO SPOTS ON 2025 ALL-UFL TEAM

Former Tennessee State standout and black college player of the year **Chris Rowland** has continued his outstanding play as a professional as he was named this week to the All-United Football League (UFL) team as both a receiver and kick returner.

Rowland played in all ten games for the 6-4 DC Defenders and finished second in the UFL in receiving yards (522) and third in total receptions (42), accounting for three touchdowns.

He also ranked in the top 10 in kick and punt returns, helping lead the Defenders to a playoff berth.

Rowland was named to the first All-UFL team in June of last season as a kick returner.

Rowland went undrafted after his sterling career at TSU where he amassed 5,516 all-purpose yards and 17 total touchdowns. In 2019, his final season at TSU, he won the *Deacon Jones Trophy* as the top HBCU player given by the *Black College Football Hall of Fame*.

He spent two seasons in the NFL with Atlanta and Tennessee before playing for the Philadelphia Stars in the XFL in 2023 before the league folded.

BCSP Notes

Alabama State three peats in two of three SWAC 2024-25 postseason program awards

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.- The **Alabama State University** Athletics Department claimed two of three **Southwestern Athletic Conference** 2024-25 all-sports awards winning the *James Frank Commissioner's Cup* and the *Sadie Magee/Barbara Jacket Award* for the third consecutive year.

The **Jackson State University** Athletics Department claimed the *C. D. Henry Award* to round out the list of institutional winners.

Alabama State claimed the James Frank Commissioner's Cup awarded to the top overall program (men's and women's) in the SWAC after amassing 163.0 total points. Jackson State (147.5 points) and **Southern** (139.5) claimed second and third place respectively.

Alabama State claimed the Sadie Magee/Barbara Jacket Award finishing with 94.5 points in the women's final standings. Southern (85.0 points) and **Florida A&M** (78.5 points) finished in second and third place respectively.

Jackson State won the C.D. Henry Award for the second time in the past three academic years after accumulating 72.0 points in men's sponsored sports. Alabama State finished second with 68.5 points falling 3.5 points shy of sweeping all three awards. **Texas Southern** (68.0 points) finished third.

The all-sports awards are determined by program finishes in league sponsored sports. Each respective sports program's finish is awarded a point value and the member institutions with the highest point totals at the conclusion of the athletic season are named the all-sports awards winners.

A complete listing of final standings and individual program point totals for the three awards can be found below.

JAMES FRANK COMMISSIONER'S CUP AWARD

1. **Alabama State** – 163.0; 2. Jackson State – 147.5; 3. Southern – 139.5; T4. Florida A&M – 133.0; T4. Texas Southern – 133.0; 6. Prairie View A&M – 127.0; 7. Alabama A&M – 120.5; 8. Bethune-Cookman – 107.5; 9. Arkansas-pine Bluff – 83.5; 10. Grambling State – 75.0; 11. Alcorn State – 71.0; 12. Mississippi Valley State – 40.0

MAGEE/JACKET AWARD

1. **Alabama State** – 94.5; 2. Southern – 85.0; 3. Florida A&M – 78.5; 4. Prairie View A&M – 77.0; 5. Jackson State – 75.5; 6. Alabama A&M – 71.0; 7. Texas Southern – 65.0; 8. Bethune-Cookman – 52.0; 9. Grambling State – 48.0; 10. Arkansas-Pine Bluff – 33.5; 11. Alcorn State – 32.5; 12. Mississippi Valley State – 25.5

C.D. HENRY AWARD

1. **Jackson State** – 72.0; 2. Alabama State – 68.5; 3. Texas Southern – 68.0; 4. Bethune-Cookman – 55.5; T5. Southern – 54.5; T5. Florida A&M – 54.5; T7. Univ Arkansas-Pine Bluff – 50.0; T7. Prairie View A&M – 50.0; 9. Alabama A&M – 49.5; 10. Alcorn State – 38.5; 11. Grambling State – 27.0; 12. Mississippi Valley State – 15.0

Norfolk State and Howard repeat as recipients of MEAC All-Sports Awards

NORFOLK, VA – **Norfolk State University** captured the *Talmadge Layman Hill Men's All-Sports Award* while **Howard University** won the *Mary McLeod Bethune Women's All-Sports Award* in end-of-season **Mid Eastern Athletics Conference** honors.

This is Norfolk State's third Talmadge Layman Hill award in the last four years and the Spartans' 14th overall. Howard picked up its fourth consecutive Mary McLeod Bethune award and its eighth overall.

The awards were given during the MEAC All-Sports Award Dinner presented by Coca-Cola® hosted at the Embassy Suites by Hilton at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront Resort, held in conjunction with the conference's annual spring meetings.

The all-sports awards are indicators of the overall strengths of the conference's men's and women's athletic programs. Norfolk State and Howard were each presented with \$20,000 checks.

In the men's all-sports award tally, the Spartans collected 46 points finishing 11.5 points ahead of second-place South Carolina State (35.5). NSU won championship titles in the cross country, indoor and outdoor track & field and finished as co-regular-season champions in men's basketball.

South Carolina State won the conference title in football while also claiming the regular season championship title in tennis. **North Carolina Central** (32) was third in the men's all-sports standings, and Howard (31) finished fourth.

Howard claimed the Mary McLeod Bethune Women's All-Sports Award finishing first with 60.5 points. The Bison secured the volleyball and softball regular season titles while winning both the indoor and outdoor track & field championships. The Bison finished as runner up in cross country championship and the basketball regular season standings.

Norfolk State finished second in the women's all-sports standings with 52 points. The Spartans won the cross country championship and claimed the basketball regular-season title for the fourth consecutive year.

Points are awarded in a descending order beginning with nine (9) points for championships or first-place regular-season finishes. The second-place team receives seven (7) points. Tied teams split the point total.

Points were awarded for regular-season finishes in every sport but cross country, indoor track & field and outdoor track & field, where points were awarded based on finishes at MEAC championships.

Additionally, **Morgan State** was honored academically, posting the MEAC's highest academic progress rate (APR). For its efforts, the Bears' athletic department received a check for \$10,000.

Delaware State and **South Carolina State** were recognized as the 2025 co-recipients of the MEAC's Highest Graduation Success Rate (GSR). The Hornets and Bulldogs 81-percent GSR is the highest among MEAC institutions spanning the 2014-17 cohorts, and they each received a check for \$12,500 from the conference.

UFL concludes regular season, playoff games on tap

The 2025 United Football League playoffs begin this weekend. Both Conference Championship games presented by New Era are slated for this Sunday, June 8.

The USFL Conference Championship Game is scheduled for 3 p.m. ET at Protective Stadium, where the Birmingham Stallions will host the Michigan Panthers. Birmingham has on its roster offensive tackles **Armani Taylor-Pringle** (#73) out of **S. C. State** and **Lachavious Simmons** (#70) out of **Tennessee State**.

The XFL Conference Championship will kick off at 6 p.m. ET at The Dome at America's Center, with the St. Louis Battlehawks hosting the DC Defenders. The Battlehawks have former **Alcorn State** running back **Jarveon Howard** (#41) on its roster while the Defenders have all-UFL WR/KR **Chris Rowland**, and **Virginia State** products in running back **Darius Hagans** (#28) and defensive back **Willie Drew** (#23).

The season will conclude with the UFL Championship Game presented by Underdog on Saturday, June 14, at 8 p.m. ET at The Dome at America's Center in St. Louis.