

# BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



Virginia Union Sports Photo

**HURDLING BARRIERS:** Virginia Union running back Curtis Allen becomes the first black college player to win the Harlon Hill Trophy, given to the most outstanding player in NCAA Div. II football.

## FINISHING TOUCHES

2025 "BAAD TEAMS" UNVEILED; FLORIDA A&M, SAVANNAH STATE GET NEW COACHES; FINAL STAT LEADERS

**FIRST TEAM OFFENSE** QB: Andrew Body, Jr., Alabama State; RB: Marquis Gillis, Sr., Delaware State; Chris Mosley, Sr., N. C. Central; WR: Jalen Jones, R-Fr., Alabama State; Iyzaiah Rockwell, Jr., Prairie View A&M; TE: Travaunta Abner, R-Sr., Alabama A&M; OL: Calvin McMillan, Gr., Prairie View A&M; Roger Smith, Sr., S. C. State; Jestus Johnson, Gr., Delaware State; D'Andre Townes-Blue, Sr., Jackson State; Cameron Smith, Gr., Alabama State; PK: Kaleb Robinson, So., N. C. Central; KR: Elijah Kennedy, R-Jr., N. C. A&T;  
**FIRST TEAM DEFENSE** DL: Quincy Ivory, Sr., Jackson State; Askelby Givens, Sr., Southern; Michael Lunz II, Gr., SC State; Noah Miles, Sr., Howard; LB: Erick Hunter, Sr., Morgan State; Reid Pulliam, Sr., Jackson State; Stemarion Edwards, Sr., Alcorn State; DB: Jelani Vassell, R-Sr., N. C. Central; Travon Randle, Sr., Prairie View A&M; TaShaun Sims, So., Alabama State; Jarod Washington, Sr., SC State; P: Max Tulen, R-Jr., Bethune-Cookman;

**FIRST TEAM DEFENSE** QB: Isaiah Knowles, R-Jr., Albany State; RB: Curtis Allen, Sr., Virginia Union; Fabian Duncan, So., Allen; WR: Deandre Proctor, Sr., Johnson C. Smith; Arnone Harris, Sr., Clark Atlanta; TE: Kahlil Ashley-Diarrh, R-Sr., Fayetteville State; OL: Bruno Onwuazor, R-Sr., Virginia State; Daniel Bostick, R-Sr., Kentucky State; Noah Stovall, Jr., Albany State; Chance Bush, So., Allen; Jamari Mason, Sr., J. C. Smith; PK: Brady Myers, Sr., Virginia Union; KR: Jaxon Williams, So., Benedict;  
**FIRST TEAM DEFENSE** DL: Kenyon Garner, So., Livingstone; Israel Nwokocha, Sr., Benedict; Amarie Fleming, So., Allen; Xavier Esquillen, Jr., Savannah State; LB: Dominick Davis II, Sr., Central State; Darrin Bell, Gr., Savannah State; TyMetrius Patterson, Sr., Benedict; DB: Darnell Stephens, Gr., Fort Valley State; Matthew Leach, Fayetteville State; Michael King Jr., Sr., Tuskegee; Navy Curry, Sr., Kentucky State; P: Callum Brent, Fr., Tuskegee

**SECOND TEAM OFFENSE** QB: Walker Harris, Sr., N. C. Central; RB: James Jones, Jr., Delaware State; Reggie Davis, Sr., Alcorn State; WR: Jordan Smith, Gr., S. C. State; Maleek Huggins Jr., Bethune-Cookman; TE: Travon Jones, Gr., Prairie View A&M; OL: Isaiah Cook, R-Sr., Delaware State; Brian Williams Jr., R-Fr., Jackson State; Ashton Grable, R-Sr., Florida A&M; Elijah Baker, R-Jr., Alabama State; Trevon Humphrey, R-Jr., N. C. Central; PK: Daniel Porto, R-Jr., Florida A&M; KR: Javon Ross, So., Bethune-Cookman;  
**SECOND TEAM DEFENSE** DL: Warren Robinson, Grambling State; Thomas Johnson, R-Jr., N. C. Central; Jeremiah Williams, Sr., Jackson State; Blanche Gold, R-Sr., Morgan State; LB: Darius Hilliard, Sr., Arkansas-Pine Bluff; Harold O'Neal III, Gr., Hampton; Jordan Franklin, R-So., S. C. State; DB: Markel Linzer, R-Sr., Grambling State; Deante Morris, Sr., Alabama State; Kendrick Green, R-Jr., Howard; Antwone Watts, R-Sr., Bethune-Cookman; P: Brandon Bowman, R-So., N.C. Central;

**SECOND TEAM OFFENSE** QB: Kelvin Durham, Sr., J. C. Smith; RB: Johntarrius Thomas, Jr. Edward Waters; Tiant Wyche, So., Albany State; WR: Amare Ary, Jr., West Virginia State; Jon McCall, Sr., Kentucky State; TE: Maurice Venev, r-So. Morehouse; OL: Mathias Nielsen, Jr., Virginia Union; Benjamin Hicks, R-So., Fayetteville State; Leon Wesley, So., Albany State; O'Shea Stroman, So., Albany State; Joseph Rounds, R-Jr., Virginia Union; PK: John Hernandez-Vargas, R-So., Fayetteville State; KR: Zyaire Tart, Jr., Virginia Union;  
**SECOND TEAM DEFENSE** DL: Jamal Jones, R-Sr., Bowie State; Dedrick Drayton, R-Jr., Albany State; Shawn Robinson, Sr., Fayetteville State; Cadricus Stanley, Jr., J. C. Smith; LB: Jamieson Alston, Sr., Winston-Salem State; Vincent Hill, R-Jr., J. C. Smith; Robert Williams, Fr., Miles; Isaiah Stephens, Gr., Albany State; DB: Evan Powell, R-Sr., Winston-Salem State; Donovan Howard, R-Jr., Virginia State; Travion Search, Jr., Central State; Samuel Graham, R-Sr., Bowie State; P: Danny Dales, Gr., Bluefield State;

# Body, Allen, Ivory and Davis lead 2025 "Baad Teams"

**LUT WILLIAMS**  
BCSP Editor

ATLANTA, GA – For the second consecutive year, the BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE is picking two all-American teams – what we dub the "Baad Teams" – from the 2025 football season (see above).

One squad represents the HBCU star players that compete in Div. I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) conferences and the other representing the HBCU stars that compete in NCAA Div. II or NAIA conferences.

The separation comes after the BCSP in 2023 went away from ranking the Top Ten teams in all of black college football to BCSP Top Fives of FCS and Div. II/NAIA teams. We revealed the Final Top Fives last week.

Given this new designation, the BCSP now selects offensive and defensive players of the year and a coach of the year from each of the divisions.

The runaway offensive players of the year for 2025 and leaders of their respective team's list of stars are **Alabama State** junior quarterback **Andrew Body** for the FCS black college all-Americans and **Virginia Union** senior running back **Curtis Allen** for the Div. II/NAIA Baad Team.

Each distinguished himself in special ways, maybe even in staggering ways, this season.

Body, a 6-foot, 205-pounder who transferred from **Texas Southern** in 2024, despite playing in only eight games in 2025, led the SWAC in passing yards per game (264.0), passing efficiency (202.9) and rushing (708 yds., 88.5 ypg.).

Despite playing in only eight games because of injuries, he still led all SWAC passers with 24 touchdowns with just one interception. His passing efficiency number, had he qualified, would have been nine points better than any FCS passer in the nation and is over 30 points better than any black college passer. His 352.4 yards of total offense per game topped the black college chards and was an average of 66 yards better than anyone else.

Body, a scintillating runner and passer from Corpus Christi, Texas, was well on his way to passing for over 3,000 yards and rushing for over 1,000 yards.



Body

Ivory

Berry



Allen

Davis

Gray

Allen sat for two years behind 2024 Baad Team offensive player of the year **Jada Byers** before exploding on the scene this season.

The big 6-2, 215-pounder out of Petersburg, Va. seemed to glide his way past defenders as if they were standing still enroute to a record-breaking season.

Allen led all black college and Div. II rushers in yards (2,406), yards per game (200.5), touchdowns (30), scoring (180 points, 15.0 points per game) and all-purpose yards (205.8 ypg.). His 8.03 yards per carry was fourth-best in Div. II.

For his efforts he was named this week as the 2025 recipient of the *Harlon Hill Trophy*, the NCAA Div. II equivalent of the *Heisman Trophy*, awarded annually to the most outstanding player in Div. II football.

Allen becomes the first student athlete from Virginia Union, the **CIAA**, and any historically black college or university to earn the sport's highest individual honor at the Division II level, marking a breakthrough moment for HBCU football on the national stage.

On the defensive side, **Central State** senior **Dominick Davis II** was hard to ignore - he stuffed the stat sheet.

At just 5-11, 204 pounds, Davis was a terror. He lead all black college tackles with 113 stops, 11.3 per game for the Marauders. He posted double-digit tackles in nine of ten games. Davis also shows up in the top five with 1.65 tackle for

loss per game.

Jackson State's **Quincy Ivory**, a 6-3, 235 prototypical pro linebacker, was a *Buck Buchanan Award* finalist and HBCU Player of the Year finalist for the Tigers as a defensive lineman. Ivory is our FCS Defensive Player of the Year.

He finished the regular season with a team-high 64 tackles including 31 solo, while also recording 13.5 tackles for loss and 6.0 sacks. He also recorded an interception, recorded five quarterback hurries, forced one fumble, and recovered two others. Ivory recorded eight or more tackles four times.

Choosing the top coach in FCS and Div. II black college football was not as clear cut.

Second-year head man **Chennis Berry** of **South Carolina**, first-year head men **Tremaine Jackson** of **Prairie View A&M** and **DeSean Jackson** of **Delaware State** had outstanding seasons.

The BCSP chooses Berry for this year's FCS award after his Bulldogs repeated as **Mid Eastern Athletic Conference** champs and knocked off Tremaine Jackson's Panthers of **Prairie View** in a thrilling come-from-behind 40-38 victory in four overtimes at *Celebration Bowl X* two weeks ago in Atlanta.

A year after leading Valdosta State to the Div. II nationally championship game, Tremaine Jackson led **Prairie View** to its first SWAC championship since 2009. Former NFL all-pro DeSean Jackson stunningly turned around a seemingly moribund DelState program, leading the Hornets to an 8-4 overall record, only losing in the MEAC to South Carolina State in the last game of the regular season.

Both third-year head coaches **Quinn Gray** of **Albany State** and **Maurice Flowers** of **Johnson C. Smith** won titles in the **SIAC** and **CIAA** respectively. But Gray's Golden Rams went further. As the top seed in Super Region II his squad won two playoff games to make it to the Div. II Super Region II finals, farther than the Golden Rams had been in their storied football history. For leading the Rams to uncharged territory, Gray gets our Div. II Coach of the Year award.

# BCSP Notes

## Quinn Gray all but in at Florida A&M

**Florida A&M** is in the process of finalizing a deal to make former FAMU standout quarterback **Quinn Gray** its next head football coach.

The *Tallahassee Democrat* reported Monday that an 11-page draft of Gray's contract has been uploaded to its website. The reports says it's a five-year contract worth \$1.4 million with a starting salary of \$240,000 and a \$25,000 signing bonus. Gray will receive a \$20,000 annual raise.

Included in the contract is a \$1.2 million pool for assistant coaches' compensation. The story says the contract will be presented to the FAMU Board of Trustees for approval in a special meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 23, at 9 a.m. The meeting will be open for public viewing via Zoom.

Gray is coming to Tallahassee to lead the Rattlers after serving the past three seasons as head coach at **Albany State**. He led the Golden Rams to two appearances in the **SIAC** championship game and won this year's title over **Benedict**. Albany State then won two Div. II playoff games to reach the national quarterfinals.

He was 24-11 in three seasons at Albany State with a 20-4 mark in SIAC competition.

Gray will be replacing **James Colzie III** who posted a 12-12 record in two years leading the Rattlers including a 5-7 record this season.

Gray was a gun-slinging QB at FAMU under former head coach **Billy Joe** leading the Gulf Coast offense from 1997 to 2001 before a six-year pro career in the NFL.

## Savannah State hires Thomas Howard

**Savannah State University** has announced the hiring of **Thomas Howard** as the 28th head football coach in program history. Howard will officially begin his tenure on January 5, 2026.

"This is a new chapter, not just for me, but for every SSU student-athlete, fan, and supporter," Howard said. "I'm truly blessed and excited to join this institution, community, and fanbase. Now it's time to get to work and put this program back on top."

Howard arrives at the University By The Sea after serving as defensive coordinator at **Fayetteville State University**, where he helped guide the Broncos to a 6-1 record in CIAA play. His defense ranked among the nation's best, finishing top 15 in rushing defense, top five in sacks, and top 10 in tackles for loss, while leading the CIAA in all four categories, including interceptions.

"We are excited to welcome Coach Howard to Savannah State," said SSU President **Dr. Whirl**. "His leadership, defensive expertise, and commitment to developing student-athletes align perfectly with our vision for the future of Tiger football."

Howard brings a wealth of collegiate coaching experience, having served as defensive coordinator at **Alabama A&M** and **South Carolina**



Howard

**State** along with other career stops **North Carolina A&T**, the University of Findlay, **Lincoln (Mo.)**, Slippery Rock, and **Allen University**. Throughout his career, he has coached numerous all-conference performers, FCS Freshman All-Americans, and was part of four HBCU National Championship teams at North Carolina A&T.

"We are thrilled to welcome Coach Howard as the new leader of our storied football program," said Director of Athletics, **Opio Mashariki**. "We believe he is the right person to guide our student-athletes to success both on the field and in the classroom."

A former standout defensive back at **Morehouse College**, Howard was a two-time team captain and graduated cum laude with a degree in early childhood development.

An introductory press conference to officially welcome Coach Howard to the Savannah community will be held in early January.

## BCSP NFL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

For NFL games of December 18 - 22, 2024

### OFFENSE

- **#23 EMANUEL WILSON**, RB, **Green Bay** (3rd season, **FORT VALLEY STATE**) - In the Packers' 22-16 loss to Chicago Saturday, Wilson had team highs of 14 carries for 82 yards (5.9 yards per carry). He was not targeted in the passing game and recovered a fumble. He was in for 33 offensive snaps (46%).

- **#71 TYTUS HOWARD**, OL, **Houston** (7th season, **ALABAMA STATE**) - In the Texans' 23-21 win over Las Vegas Sunday, Howard started at left guard as Houston offensive line paved the way for 83 yards on 26 carries (3.2 yards per carry) and a 23 of 35 passing performance for 187 yards and one TD while giving up no sacks. Howard played all 65 offense snaps (100%) and five snaps on special teams (17%).

### DEFENSE

- **#53 CLAUDIN CHERELUS**, LB, **Carolina** (3rd season, **ALCORN STATE**) - In the Panthers' big 23-20 win over Tampa Bay Sunday, Chereilus started at linebacker and had seven total tackles, six solos, while logging 46 (72% of the defensive snaps and five (19%) on special teams.

### SPECIAL TEAMS

- **#19 XAVIER SMITH**, WR/KR, **Los Angeles Rams** (3rd season, **FLORIDA A&M**) - In the Rams' 38-37 loss to Seattle Thursday, Smith had two catches for 57 yards (28.5 yards per catch) with a long catch of 48 yards. He also had one punt return for 31 yards and three fair catches. He was in for 22 plays on offense (24%) and six on special teams (18%).