

# BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



LA Rams Photo

## ON TO THE NEXT PLAY!

**DURANT SHINING IN PLAYOFFS; BCFHOF ANNOUNCES 2026 CLASS; COACHING LEGEND JAMES SWEAT PASSES**

**COBIE DURANT:** Undrafted DB out of SC State making his presence felt in LA Rams run to NFC title game.

## MEN'S 2025-26 BLACK COLLEGE BASKETBALL (Standings & Players of the Week)

CIAA	CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION	MEAC	MID EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	SIAC	SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	SWAC	SOUTHWESTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	INDEPENDENTS	
<b>NORTH DIVISION</b>	CONF ALL W L W L		CONF ALL W L W L	<b>EAST</b>	CONF ALL W L W L		CONF ALL W L W L	CONF ALL W L W L	
Virginia Union	1 0 4 1 14 2	Md. E-Shore	4 0 8 13	Morehouse	10 3 10 7	Florida A&M	4 1 7 9	SAC	8 3 14 4
Bluefield State	1 0 5 2 6 11	N. C. Central	3 1 7 12	Clark Atlanta	8 4 11 5	Bethune-Cookman	4 1 7 9	Langston	8 3 14 4
Virginia State	0 1 3 3 10 9	Norfolk State	3 2 9 12	Savannah State	8 6 8 8	Jackson State	4 1 5 13	MIAA	1 8 7 10
Lincoln (PA)	1 0 3 4 8 11	Howard	2 2 12 8	Benedict	7 7 7 7	Alabama A&M	3 2 10 8	Lincoln (Mo.)	1 8 7 10
Bowie State	0 1 3 4 5 14	S. C. State	2 1 3 16	Fort Valley State	6 7 7 7	Southern	3 2 7 11	FLORIDA SUN	5 3 13 7
Elizabeth City State	0 1 1 6 2 12	Morgan State	2 2 5 13	Albany State	6 7 7 10	Prairie View A&M	3 3 8 11	Florida Memorial	5 3 13 7
<b>SOUTH DIVISION</b>	CONF ALL W L W L	Coppin State	1 3 3 18	Edward Waters	6 8 8 10	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	3 3 6 13	MEC	2 7 5 11
Claflin	1 0 6 1 9 7	Delaware State	0 4 5 14	Allen	1 13 2 14	Grambling State	2 3 8 10	West Virginia State	2 7 5 11
Fayetteville State	1 0 5 2 11 6			<b>WEST</b>		Alabama State	2 3 5 13	OV	6 2 12 6
Shaw	1 0 3 4 12 4			Tuskegee	13 1 14 3	Alcorn State	2 3 4 14	Tennessee State	6 2 12 6
Winston-Salem State	0 1 2 4 7 8			Miles	11 3 13 3	Texas Southern	2 4 4 13	CAA	0 6 7 10
Livingstone	0 1 2 4 8 10			Central State	7 7 8 8	Miss. Valley State	0 6 1 19	Hampton	3 3 9 10
Johnson C. Smith	0 1 2 5 5 10			Lane	6 7 6 9				
				LelMoyn-Owen	6 8 6 9				
				Kentucky State	4 8 4 11				
				Spring Hill	2 12 2 16				

**PLAYER OF THE WEEK**  
**Ezekiel Cannedy**, 6-2, Sr., G, FSU - JC Smith transfer averaged 25.0 points, 5.5 assists and shot 55% from the field, 50% on 3s and 76% on free throws in two wins. He had 24 points on 7 of 15 shooting, 5 of 10 3s, 5 of 6 FTs with 10 assists vs. JC Smith Saturday, 26 points on 7 of 12 shooting, 4 of 8 3s, 8 of 11 FTs and one assist in two-point win (114-112) vs. USC Beaufort Monday.

**PLAYER OF THE WEEK**  
**Anthony McComb III**, 6-3 Sr., G, NSU - McCombs had team-high 19 points (2-8 FGs, 1-4 3s, 14-15 FTs) in 89-82 road win at SC State Saturday and team-highs of 25 points (7-11 FG, 3-6 3s, 8-9 FTs) and 7 rebounds in home win over ECSU Monday.

**PLAYERS OF THE WEEK**  
**Anthony Wright**, 6-7, Jr., F, TUSK - 15 points, 4 rebounds in 76-65 win over Miles Saturday, team-high 23 points with 8 rebounds, 3 blocks, 3 steals in 87-61 win over Albany State Monday.

**PLAYERS OF THE WEEK**  
**Daeshun Ruffin**, 5-10, Sr, F, JSU - Ole Miss transfer veraged 22.5 points, 13 assists in two wins with 23 points (8-15 FG, 2-7 3s, 5-6 FTs), 10 assists, 3 steals in 82-78 win over Prairie View Saturday, 22 points, 16 assists in 94-89 win vs. TSU Monday.  
**Jakobi Heady**, 6-6, Sr., F, B-CU - Averaged 24.0 points and 5.5 rebounds in two wins with 23 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists vs. MVSU Saturday, 25 points, 6 boards, 2 assists vs. UAPB Monday.

**PLAYER OF THE WEEK**  
**Aaron Nkrumah**, 6-2, So., PG, TNST - In two wins, averaged 27.0 ppg. and 9.0 rebounds with team-highs of 30 points (12-20 FGs, 2-3 3s) and 7 rebounds, 5 assists in 105-100 OT win vs. Morehead State, and team-highs of 24 points (8-14 FGs 3-3 3s), 11 rebounds with 2 steals in win over S. Indiana.

## UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

### COACHING LEGEND SWEAT PASSES:

From the CIAA:

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association and the HBCU and college basketball world mourns the passing of coaching legend **James Sweat**, one of the most significant and prolific figures in CIAA and Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference women's basketball history whose career helped define an era of excellence at both Hampton and Norfolk State.

Sweat's leadership produced championships, elevated women's basketball within historically black colleges and universities, and shaped the lives of generations of student athletes in the NCAA.

Sweat first emerged as a transformative force during his tenure as women's head coach at Hampton from 1981 through 1988. In seven seasons, his teams compiled an 183-44 record, won CIAA championships in 1985 and 1987, and became a perennial postseason contender on the NCAA Division II stage.

Hampton's 1987-88 campaign stands as one of the most dominant in conference history, producing a 33-1 season and securing the NCAA Division II national championship with a 65-48 victory over West Texas State. That title remains a defining milestone for the CIAA and an enduring achievement in HBCU women's basketball.

Sweat's time at Hampton was marked not only by championships but by player development at the highest level. He was named CIAA Coach of the Year three times and coached four consecutive CIAA players of the year. Decades later his contributions were recognized through induction into the CIAA Hall of Fame, the Hampton Athletics Hall of Fame, the Hampton Roads African-American Sports Hall of Fame, and the Virginia State University Athletics Hall of Fame.

After leaving Hampton, Sweat became head coach at Norfolk State beginning with the 1988-89 season. Over nineteen seasons he guided the Spartans to more than 340 wins, five CIAA tournament championships, and multiple NCAA Division II regional appearances. Norfolk State's 1990-91 team achieved a school record 33 victories and advanced to the NCAA Division II Final Four.

Norfolk State transitioned to Division I competition during Sweat's tenure, and in 2002 the Spartans captured the MEAC Tournament championship, earning the program's first NCAA Division I Tournament appearance in women's basketball. Sweat's ability to guide a program through divisional transition while sustaining competitive excellence underscored both his adaptability and his command of the collegiate landscape.

CIAA Commissioner **Jacqie McWilliams Parker** played for Sweat at Hampton and reflected on the role he played in her life and the lives of her teammates.

"Coach Sweat elevated the game across our HBCU community and raised expectations for what our programs could achieve with the support and the investment. His leadership, his standards, and his belief in his student athletes helped shape generations of women who went on to lead in sport and beyond. His influence and legacy will be felt for years to come."

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### Cobie Durant balling out in NFL playoffs

Fourth-year NFL veteran defensive back **Cobie Durant** out of South Carolina State has been instrumental to the Los Angeles Rams in their two playoff wins that have them vying for a NFC Championship and spot in Super Bowl LX when they visit the Seattle Seahawks Sunday (6:30 p.m., FOX).

Durant had one interception of Carolina quarterback Bryce Young in the Rams' close 34-31 win over the Panthers in the opening Wild Card weekend. He then picked off two passes of Chicago quarterback Caleb Williams in Sunday's 20-17 win in overtime versus the Bears. After three interceptions in the regular season, his three in the postseason give him six picks for the year.

In Sunday's contest, Durant was also the defender when Williams completed a miraculous 14-yard touchdown pass to Bears' tight end Cole Kmet with just :18 seconds left that tied the game at 17 and forced overtime. On that play, Williams ran backwards for nearly 30 yards before heaving the pass while retreating that fell right into Kmet's hands in the end zone as the tight end disengaged from tight coverage by Durant.

While some may have felt Kmet pushed off before catching the pass and should have been called for offensive pass interference, Durant said he and his teammates did not dwell on it.

"On to the next play," Durant repeatedly said in a postgame interview about the play. "They're NFL players just like we are. They're gonna make plays. On to the next play. The biggest thing that we have on this team is get turnovers, put the ball back in (Rams' QB) Matthew Stafford's hands, and let him do what he do." That's exactly what Durant, who Rams' head coach Sean McVay calls "Land Shark," did.

Durant went undrafted in 2022 after a storied career at South Carolina State that included two all-MEAC selections and a defensive MVP and *Celebration Bowl* championship in 2021. In that game, a 31-14 beatdown and upset of head coach **Deion "Coach Prime" Sanders** SWAC champion **Jackson State** squad, Durant and the Bulldogs chased JSU quarterback **Shedeur Sanders** forcing him into a 16 of 36 passing effort for 175 yards, picking him off twice, sacking him three times and causing him to lose a fumble. Durant had a signature sack late in the game blitzing from his safety position to down Sanders.

Durant and teammate **Xavier Smith**, a wide receiver/kick returner out of **Florida A&M**, are the HBCU players on the Rams' roster. Former **Florida A&M** running back **Terrell Jennings** is on the lone HBCU player on the roster of the New England Patriots who will face Denver in the AFC Championship game Sunday.

#### SOME OF DURANT'S ACCOLADES

- Has appeared in 47 games (25 starts) and recorded 104 tackles (69 solo), 15 pass breakups, 21 passes defended, 2.0 sacks, five tackles for loss, six pressures, one defensive touchdown, five quarterback hits, one hurry, one forced fumble, and five interceptions with 151 return yards.
- Became the first cornerback in franchise history to record a sack in a playoff game in the Wild Card Round in 2024. Durant recorded a sack and an interception in the same defensive series, becoming the third player in franchise history to record at least one sack and one interception in a postseason game.
- Led the NFL in interception return yards as a rookie (151).
- In Week 2 against the Atlanta Falcons, Durant became the first Rams rookie, and eighth player in NFL history, to record a sack and interception in the same game within their first two NFL games.
- Recorded his first career start in Week 15 against Green Bay in 2022.

### SWEAT

Sweat and his wife, life partner for 66 years and longtime collegiate track and field coach **LaVerne Sweat**, are widely regarded in Hampton Roads and the broader NCAA, HBCU athletics community for their shared commitment to student athletes, education, and competitive excellence. Their joint induction into the Hampton Roads Sports Hall of Fame and others, reflects a lifetime of service to collegiate sport and to the region they helped shape.

Arrangements for memorial services will be shared as information becomes available. The CIAA encourages former players, colleagues, and supporters to keep the Sweat family in their thoughts during this time and to honor Coach Sweat's legacy through continued support of women's athletics throughout the HBCU community. The CIAA encourages former players, colleagues, and supporters to keep the Sweat family in their thoughts during this time and to honor Coach Sweat's legacy through continued support of women's athletics throughout the HBCU community.

• Was voted as the 2022 Carroll Rosenbloom Memorial Award winner by Rams players, honoring the team's rookie of the year.

### Black College Football Hall of Fame announces 2026 class of six inductees

ATLANTA, GA – The **Black College Football Hall of Fame (BCFHOF)** announced last week its Class of 2026. The six-member class was selected from a list of 28 finalists previously determined by the BCFHOF Selection Committee.

The Black College Football Hall of Fame Class of 2026 includes: Pass catcher extraordinaire **JIMMY SMITH** out of **Jackson State** who had nine 1,000-yard receiving seasons and five Pro Bowl selections in a 13-year NFL career (862 receptions, 12,287 career yards); Linebacker **EDDIE ROBINSON JR.** of **Alabama State** had an outstanding 11-year career with four NFL teams after being taken in the second round of the 1992 draft before becoming the head coach at his alma mater in 2022; **Bethune-Cookman** safety **NICK COLLINS** was taken 51st in the 2025 NFL Draft before a seven-year career in the league that included a Super Bowl XLV championship with Green Bay and three Pro Bowl and All-Pro selections; **Fort Valley State** defensive back **TYRONE POOLE** was selected 22nd overall in the 1995 NFL Draft before carving out a 13-year pro career that included back-to-back Super Bowl championships (XXXVIII and XXXIX) with New England; Head coach **RUDY HUBBARD** led **Florida A&M** from 1974-85 compiling a 83-48-3 record and guiding the Rattlers to the inaugural I-AA championship in 1978, the only such title in HBCU history, and back-to-back black college national championships in 1978 and 1979; **Howard** grad **STEVE WYCHE** is a chief national reporter & senior NFL media analyst for NFL Network and NFL.com since 2008. Wyche consistently elevates the visibility of Historically Black Colleges and Universities through national coverage spotlighting the rich culture and talent pipeline of HBCU athletics.

"What we have with the Class of 2026 is an incredible showcase of excellence, leadership, and impact that continues to come from Historically Black Colleges and Universities," said Black College Football Hall of Fame Co-Founder and 2011 Inductee **Doug Williams**. "When the Black College Hall of Fame was established, its purpose was to elevate and recognize the past, present, and future of Black College Football. This class exemplifies that mission."

The Class of 2026 will be officially honored at the 17th Annual Black College Football Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, presented by the Atlanta Falcons, on June 6, 2026, in Atlanta, Georgia. Inductees will also be recognized during halftime of the 5th Annual **Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl** on February 21, 2026, at Yulman Stadium in New Orleans, Louisiana, airing live on NFL Network at 3:00 PM CT

### BCSP NFL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

For NFL Divisional playoff games of January 17 - 18, 2026

**DEFENSE**  
 - **#14 COBIE DURANT, CB**, Los Angeles Rams (4th season, **SOUTH CAROLINA STATE**) - In the Rams' 20-17 overtime win vs. Chicago Sunday in one NFC Divisional game, Durant started at cornerback and had two total tackles, one solo, and two interceptions. The picks were his second and third of the postseason after getting one in the Wild Card game vs. Carolina. Durant was also the defender on a miraculous 14-yard pass from Bears' QB Caleb Williams to tight end Cole Kmet with :18 seconds left in regulation that tied the game and sent it into overtime with the teams tied at 17. Durant logged 54 snaps on defense (67%) and two on special teams (8%).

**OFFENSE**  
 - **#71 TYTUS HOWARD, OL**, Houston (7th season, **ALABAMA STATE**) - In the Texans' 28-16 loss to New England in an AFC Divisional playoff game, Howard started at right tackle as the Houston offensive line paved the way for 48 rushing yards on 22 carries (2.2 yards per carry) and a 20 of 47 passing performance for 212 yards and one TD with four interceptions while giving up three sacks for -19 yards. Howard played 73 offense snaps (97%) and four snaps on special teams (13%).

**SPECIAL TEAMS**  
 - **#19 XAVIER SMITH, WR/KR**, Los Angeles Rams (3rd season, **FLORIDA A&M**) - In the Rams' 20-17 overtime win over Chicago Sunday in the NFC Divisional game, Smith was not targeted in the passing game and had two fair catches as a punt returner. Smith played five offensive snaps (6%) and 11 on special teams (42%).

## WOMEN'S 2025-26 BLACK COLLEGE BASKETBALL (Standings & Players of the Week)

CIAA	CENTRAL INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION	MEAC	MID EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	SIAC	SOUTHERN INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	SWAC	SOUTHWESTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE	INDEPENDENTS	
<b>NORTH DIVISION</b>	CONF ALL W L W L		CONF ALL W L W L	<b>EAST</b>	CONF ALL W L W L		CONF ALL W L W L	CONF ALL W L W L	
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Bluefield State	1 0 4 3 10 5	Howard	3 1 13 7	Clark Atlanta	9 4 9 8	Alabama A&M	4 1 8 9	Langston	10 2 16 2
Virginia Union	0 1 4 4 9 5	Norfolk State	3 1 8 11	Albany State	9 5 10 5	Alcorn State	4 1 7 9	MIAA	2 7 4 12
Bowie State	0 0 2 4 10 5	S. C. State	2 2 5 14	Allen	9 5 10 6	Texas Southern	4 2 8 10	Lincoln (Mo.)	2 7 4 12
Elizabeth City State	0 1 0 7 3 14	Coppin State	2 2 4 16	Benedict	7 7 7 7	Florida A&M	3 2 4 12	FLORIDA SUN	4 4 8 6
Lincoln (PA)	0 0 0 3 15	Morgan State	2 2 3 17	Savannah State	5 9 6 9	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	3 3 4 13	Florida Memorial	4 4 8 6
<b>SOUTH DIVISION</b>	CONF ALL W L W L	N. C. Central	0 4 3 14	Fort Valley State	2 11 2 13	Miss. Valley State	3 3 4 13	MEC	4 5 7 8
Winston-Salem State	1 0 6 0 15 1	Delaware State	0 4 3 16	Allen	9 5 10 6	Alabama State	2 3 5 11	West Virginia State	4 5 7 8
Fayetteville State	1 0 5 1 12 2			<b>WEST</b>		Grambling State	2 3 5 13	OV	2 5 3 14
Claflin	0 0 5 1 9 4			Miles	14 1 16 2	Jackson State	2 3 4 13	Tennessee State	2 5 3 14
Shaw	0 1 3 4 6 8			Tuskegee	10 5 10 6	Bethune-Cookman	1 4 3 15	CAA	2 3 8 9
Johnson C. Smith	0 1 3 5 6 9			Kentucky State	3 10 3 12	Prairie View A&M	0 5 2 15	Hampton	2 3 8 9
Livingstone	0 0 0 3 4 10			Spring Hill	3 11 5 12			N. C. A&T	2 3 7 9
				Central State	3 13 4 14				
				LelMoyn-Owen	2 12 2 12				

**PLAYER OF THE WEEK**  
**Maya Ellis**, 6-2, Sr., G, VSU - In two-point (68-66) win over VUJ Saturday, Ellis led the Lady Trojans with 19 points on 6 of 11 shooting from the field and 4 of 9 3s, and six rebounds. She also had 3 steals.

**PLAYERS OF THE WEEK**  
**Ashanti Lynch**, 5-9, Sr., G, UMES - Had team-high 28 points (8-16 FG, 1-2 3s, 5-10 FTs) with 15 rebounds (7 turnovers) in 68-61 win over Coppin State Thursday that kept Lady Hawks in first place.  
**Da'Brya Clark**, 5-7, Jr., G, NSU - Tallied 30 points hitting on 9 of 22 shots, 9 of 17 from 3-point range, with 11 rebounds, 5 assists, 4 steals and 2 blocks in 85-41 win vs. SC State Saturday.

**PLAYER OF THE WEEK**  
**Samarian Franklin**, 5-3, Fr., G, MILES - 18 points, 2 rebounds, 6 assists and 2 steals in win over Spring Hill Monday, 14 points, 2 rebounds, 6 assists, 2 steals in 81-52 win over Tuskegee Saturday. Franklin leads the SIAC at 4.3 assists per game.

**PLAYERS OF THE WEEK**  
**Khaniah Gardner**, 6-2, Jr., F/C, UAPB - In two wins averaged 13.5 points and 8.5 rebounds with 15 points and team-high 7 rebounds vs. B-CU and 12 points, team-high 10 rebounds, 4 assists and 2 steals vs. FAMU.

**PLAYERS OF THE WEEK**  
**Janiyah Tucker**, 5-7, So., G, LANG - UAPB transfer averaged 22.0 points in two wins with 29 points (11-17 FG, 4-7 3s), 6 rebounds, 5 steals vs. John Brown, 15 points 5-12 FG, 4-6 3s), 4 boards vs. College of Ozarks.