

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



Tennessee State Sports Photo

IN THE MADNESS MIX

THE NEWBIE: First-year Tennessee State head coach Nolan Smith one of two former Duke players leading black college teams in the NCAA Tournament.

FIVE HOOPS TEAMS IN NCAA BIG DANCE; FOUR OTHER WOMEN'S TEAMS PLAY ON; DIV. II RESULTS

2026 SWAC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT RESULTS

WOMEN	MEN
OPENING ROUND #11 Bethune-Cookman 66, #10 Texas Southern 62 #9 Miss. Valley State 63, #12 Prairie View A&M 49	OPENING ROUND #11 Alcorn State 77, #10 Alabama State 65 #9 Grambling State 77, #12 Miss. Valley State 52
SECOND ROUND #8 Florida A&M 55, #11 Bethune-Cookman 52 #7 Arkansas-Pine Bluff 81, #9 Miss. Valley State 74	SECOND ROUND #8 Prairie View A&M 65, #11 Alcorn State 56 #7 Jackson State 68, #9 Grambling State 65
QUARTERFINALS #1 Alabama A&M 72, #8 Florida A&M 68 #7 Arkansas-Pine Bluff 64, #2 Alcorn State 60 #4 Southern 64, #5 Jackson State 51 #3 Alabama State 56, #6 Grambling State 50	QUARTERFINALS #8 Prairie View A&M 71, #1 Bethune-Cookman 67 #2 Florida A&M 70, #7 Jackson State 60 #5 Alabama A&M 85, #4 Texas Southern 74 #3 Southern 64, #6 Arkansas-Pine Bluff 51
SEMIFINALS #4 Southern 51, #1 Alabama A&M 49 #3 Alabama State ??, #7 Arkansas-Pine Bluff ??	SEMIFINALS #8 Prairie View A&M 74, #5 Alabama A&M 55 #3 Southern 73, #2 Florida A&M 70
CHAMPIONSHIP #4 Southern 73, #3 Alabama State 66	CHAMPIONSHIP #8 Prairie View A&M 72, #3 Southern 66
ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM Jocelyn Tate, SOU (MVP); Olivia Delancy, SOU; Kaila Walker, ALA&M; Khania Gardner, ARKPB; Caylee Simpson, ALST	ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM Dontae Horne, PVA&M (MVP); Lance Williams, PVA&M; Koron Davis, ALA&M; Tyler Shirley, FLA&M; Michael Jacobs, SOU

2026 MEAC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT RESULTS

WOMEN	MEN
QUARTERFINALS #1 Howard 75, #8 South Carolina State 43 #2 Maryland-E.Shore 55, #7 Daelaware State 45 #4 Coppin State 70, #5 N. C. Central 52 #3 Norfolk State 69, #6 Morgan State 43	QUARTERFINALS #1 Howard - Bye #7 Delaware State 75, #2 Morgan State 70 OT #5 S. Carolina State 88, #4 Norfolk State 82 #3 NC Central 83, #6 Maryland-E. Shore 76, OT
SEMIFINALS #1 Howard 65, #4 Coppin State 50 #3 Norfolk State 60, #2 Maryland-E. Shore 51	SEMIFINALS #1 Howard 78, #5 South Carolina State 61 #3 NC Central 59, #7 Delaware State 52
CHAMPIONSHIP #1 Howard 53, #3 Norfolk State 46	CHAMPIONSHIP #1 Howard 70, #3 North Carolina Central 63
ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM Zennia Thomas, HOW (MOP); Ariella Henigan, HOW; Jasha Clinton, NSU; Anjanae Richardson, NSU; Kaliya Perry, UMES	ALL-TOURNAMENT TEAM Bryce Harris, HOW (MOP), Cam Gillis, HOW; Cedric Taylor III, HOW; Dionte Johnson, NCCU; Gage Lattimore, NCCU
TOP COACH: Ty Grace, HOW	TOP COACH: Kenneth Blakeney, HOW

Tennessee State new entry to March Madness

2026 TOURNAMENT FINALS RECAPS

MEAC MEN

Howard 70, North Carolina Central 63



Harris

NORFOLK, VA – Top seed Howard had four players score in double digits and its starters score all but six points in downing third-seed North Carolina Central 70-63 for its third men's MEAC Basketball Tournament title in the last four years under head coach Kenneth Blakeney.

Junior point guard Cam Gillis, grad senior Bryce Harris and senior Ose Okojie each tallied 14 points while junior Cedric Taylor III had 13 in the title game. Fifth starter, junior forward Alex Cotton, had 9 points.

Howard trailed early but built a 26-23 halftime lead. That lead stretched to as much as 17 in the second half as the Bison opened the second half on a 15-1 run over the first four minutes to lead 41-24.

NCCU (14-18), playing its third game in three days, continued to fight and rallied late getting the lead below double-digits several times in the final seven minutes. But each time Howard got timely plays and converted timely crucial baskets to keep the Eagles at bay. The closest NCCU got was at six points twice in the final two minutes.

NCCU was led by 14 points from Dionte Johnson, 12 from Gage Lattimore and 11 from Kelechi Okwonrogoro before he fouled out.

Harris was named the tourney's most outstanding player with teammates Gillis and Taylor joining Lattimore and Johnson on the all-tournament team.

SWAC WOMEN

Southern 66, Alabama State 56

COLLEGE PARK, GA – Fifth-seed Southern ran out to a 41-19 halftime lead before settling for a 73-56 win over 3rd-seed Alabama State to repeat as women's champion of the SWAC Basketball Tournament here Saturday afternoon. The win is the third tournament title in four years for head coach Carlos Funchess and fourth overall.

ASU (17-15) cut into the lead, opening the third quarter on a 12-2 run capped by Caylee Simpson's traditional 3-point play to pull within 43-31 with just under six minutes left in the quarter. Southern (19-13) however was able to keep the lead in double-digits for the rest of the game.

Tournament MVP Jocelyn Tate had 10 points in the final, one of four Lady Jaguars to score in double-digits with Zaria Hurston leading the way with 13, Olivia Delancey getting 12 and D'Shantae Edwards 11. Tate had 13 points and 8 rebounds in the quarterfinal win over Jackson State and 10 points including the game-winning basket with :01 second remaining in a 51-49 takedown of top-seed Alabama A&M in the semifinals.

MEAC WOMEN

Howard 53, Norfolk State 46

NORFOLK, VA – Top-seed Howard used a balanced scoring attack and a big advantage in second-chance points to pull away to a 53-46 win over third-seed Norfolk State in the women's championship game of the 2026 MEAC Tournament.

Following a closely-contested first half, the two teams entered the break deadlocked at 27-all. Howard took control in the third quarter as the Lady Bison (26-7) outscored NSU, 15-6. For the game, Howard had a 24-6 advantage in second-chance points.

The Bison, who last won the MEAC title and an NCAA automatic berth to "March Madness" in 2022, were led by MEAC Player of the Year and tournament MVP Zennia Thomas with 15 points and eight rebounds. Nile Miller chipped in 12 points and a game-high 13 boards, while Ariella Henigan, the league's Rookie of the Year, added 11 points. Thomas, Miller and Sa'lah Hemingway each had five rebounds off the offensive glass.

Jasha Clinton had 11 points and Anjanae Richardson had 10 to lead NSU (18-14).

SWAC MEN

Prairie View A&M 72, Southern 66

COLLEGE PARK, GA – Eighth-seed Prairie View A&M calmly worked its way to the SWAC Tournament title, winning four games in five days, beating Alcorn State 65-56 in Tuesday's second round, knocking off top seed Bethune-Cookman 71-67 in Wednesday's quarterfinals, dispatching 5th-seed Alabama A&M 74-55 in Friday's semifinals before surviving a late charge by third-seed Southern to prevail 72-66 in Saturday's championship game.

In the title game, the Panthers ran out to a 41-28 lead at the half and saw that lead balloon to as much as 22 points, at 59-37 with 12:30 left, before a furious Jaguar comeback. Southern went on an 18-2 run to pull within 61-55 and got as close as 68-66 in the final minute before PV got two baskets from tournament MVP Dontae Horne to pull out the victory. Lance Williams led the way for PV with 18 points with Cory Wells getting 16 and Horne 15. They each had two 3-pointers and were a combined 6 of 11 from beyond the arc in the title game. Southern (17-17) was led by 19 points from Michael Jacobs and 18 from A. J. Barnes.

That same trio of 6-4 senior guard Horne, 6-1 grad point guard Williams and 6-7 grad forward Wells took turns torching the competition with the three scoring in double-digits, with one exception, in each of the Panthers' (18-17) tournament wins.

Horne had 26 points, Williams 17 and Wells 8 points and 7 rebounds vs. Alcorn State. Horne had 30 points (3 of 5 3-pointers) in the takedown of B-CU. Wells added 22 points (4 of 5 3-pointers) and also pulled down a team-high 10 rebounds while Williams had 12 points. In the win over Alabama A&M, Horne had 25 points, Williams had 18 including sinking 12 of 13 at the charity stripe and Wells had 17.

The all-tournament team included Williams, Horne, Jacobs, Koron Davis (ALA&M), Tyler Shirley (FAMU) with Wells somehow left off.

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

There is a black college team other than the men's and women's champions of the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) and Mid Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) in the 2026 NCAA Div. I Basketball Championship's Big Dance.

The men of Tennessee State, the Ohio Valley Conference regular season and tournament champion, joins the party this year.

The Tigers (23-9), playing under first-year head coach Nolan Smith, received a 15th seed and will face 2nd-seed Iowa State (27-7) in Friday's second round of the Midwest Regional in St. Louis (1:50 p.m. CDT on CBS).

Smith and Howard men's head coach Kenneth Blakeney are two coaches who played at Duke that are leading black college teams into the tournament.

MEAC Champs

Blakeney, in his eighth season leading Howard, led the Bison (23-10) to the regular season title and their third MEAC tournament title and NCAA berth in the last four seasons (see TOURNAMENT FINALS RECAPS). This will be the fifth overall NCAA appearance for the Bison.

For the second time during Blakeney's run, Howard was seeded 16th and this time was placed in the Midwest Region in Tuesday's First Four game vs. America East regular season and tournament champion UMBC (24-8). The winner of the Howard/UMBC contest will face region top seed Michigan (31-3) in Thursday's second round in Buffalo, NY (7:10 p.m. on CBS).

In Blakeney's first title in 2023 after beating Norfolk State in the MEAC final, the Bison were a 16th seed and fell to top seed Kansas in the second round. In 2024, after beating Delaware State in the MEAC final, the Bison lost to Wagner in the First Four.

Regular season champion and top women's seed Howard under 12th-year head coach Ty Grace ended Norfolk State's run of three straight MEAC Tournament titles and NCAA berths in Saturday's title game win over NSU. It earned the Lady Bison's (26-7) their second NCAA berth under Grace and seventh overall.

Howard received a 14th-seed and will travel to Columbus, Ohio to face the third-seeded Ohio State Lady Buckeyes (26-7) on Saturday (11:30 a.m., on ESPN) in a first round Fort Worth I



Byron Smith



Grace

Regional game. As the fifth seed in the Big Ten Tournament, Ohio State lost 72-62 to top seed UCLA in the semifinals.

In Grace's first appearance in the NCAA Tournament in 2022, Howard earned the program's first NCAA Tournament victory defeating Incarnate Word in the First Four before falling to South Carolina in the second round.

SWAC Champs

Both SWAC men's champion Prairie View A&M and women's champion Southern are seeded 16th and will play in First Four games this week.

Prairie View prevailed in the SWAC tourney despite entering the tournament as the eighth seed. The Panthers (18-17) will be making their second appearance in the Big Dance under 11th-year head coach Byron Smith who first won the SWAC title and NCAA berth in 2019.

They faced Lehigh (18-16), tournament champions of the Patriot League, in Wednesday's First Four game in Dayton with the winner meeting South Region top seed Florida (26-7) in Friday's (9:25 p.m. on TNT) second round.

Prairie View won one other SWAC title and earned an NCAA berth under Elwood Plummer

BLACK COLLEGES IN 2026 DIV. I NCAA TOURNAMENTS

MEN

FIRST FOUR / MIDWEST REGION on truTV
TUES., MARCH 17, 6:40 P.M. (CDT) - DAYTON, OH
#16 UMBC (24-8) vs. #16 Howard (23-10)
winner vs. #1 Michigan (31-3)
THURS., MARCH 19, 7:10 P.M. (EDT) - BUFFALO, NY on CBS

FIRST FOUR / SOUTH REGION on truTV
WED., MARCH 18, 6:40 P.M. - DAYTON, OH
#16 Lehigh (18-16) vs. #16 Prairie View A&M (18-17)
winner vs. #1 Florida (26-7)
FRI., MARCH 20, 9:25 P.M. (EDT) - TAMPA, FL on TNT

MIDWEST REGION on CBS
FRI., MARCH 20, 1:50 P.M. (CDT) - ST. LOUIS, MO
#2 Iowa State (27-7) vs. #15 Tennessee State (23-9)

WOMEN

FIRST FOUR / SACRAMENTO 4 REGIONAL on ESPN2
THURS., MARCH 19, 6 P.M. - COLUMBIA, SC
#16 Southern (19-13) vs. #16 Samford (16-18)
winner vs. 1) SOUTH CAROLINA (31-3)
SAT., MARCH 21, 1 P.M. (EDT) - COLUMBIA, SC - on ABC

FORT WORTH I REGIONAL on ESPN
SAT., MARCH 21, 11:30 A.M. (EDT) - COLUMBUS, OH
#14 Howard (26-7) at #3 Ohio State (26-7)



Blakeney



Funchess

in 1998.

Southern (19-13) under eighth-year head coach Carlos Funchess, was placed in the Sacramento 4 Region First Four and will face Southern Conference tournament champion Samford (16-18) in Columbia, S. C. on Thursday (6:00 p.m. on ESPN2). This is Southern's seventh appearance and fourth under Funchess.

Awaiting the winner on Friday (7 p.m., ESPN) is region top seed South Carolina (31-3). As the top seed in the SEC Tournament, USC lost to 3rd-seed Texas in the championship game.

OVC Champs

Nolan Smith's Tennessee State team won its last four regular season games to earn a share of the OVC regular season title with Morehead State, its first top finish in 31 years. The Tigers then walloped Morehead State in the OVC tournament to earn its first NCAA appearance since back-to-back dates in 2023 and 2024 during the Carlos Rogers era.

TSU (23-9) is seeded 15th in the Midwest Region and will play 2nd-seed Iowa State (27-7) Friday (1:50 p.m. on CBS) in St. Louis, Mo. ISU lost to eventual champion Arizona in the semifinals of the Big 12 Tournament.

BCSP Notes

Seven in, seven out of D2 playoffs; WSSU women run to region final

All seven teams, four women's and three men's squads, are out of the NCAA Div. II playoffs after the first week of play but not before some impressive performances.

The women of Winston-Salem State, champions of the CIAA Tournament, were by far the most impressive.

The Lady Rams, under first-year head coach Tierra Terry, were seeded third in the Atlantic Region in Indiana, Pa. They posted double-digit wins in Friday's quarterfinals (88-71 over 6th-seed Glenville State) and Saturday's semifinals (67-48 over 7th-seed Gannon) to earn a spot in Monday's regional championship game vs. top-seed and host Indiana, Pa. A spot in the Div. II Elite Eight this week in Pittsburgh went to the winner.

The Lady Rams, with leadership from sophomore point guard Ah'Khiya Pye, played solidly and led for most of the game. They had a 64-60 lead with :36 seconds left before two costly in-bounds turnovers led the two IUP baskets, the last a 3-pointer with :06 seconds left resulting in a heartbreaking 65-64 loss. Pye led WSSU (28-4) with 16 points, 8 rebounds and 3 assists. Reserves Makayla Waleed and Alana Biosse had 14 and 11 points respectively while sophomore center Maia Charles had 7 points and a team-high 13 points.

The men of Virginia Union, under head coach Jay Butler, got the only other win.

The Panthers, the CIAA North Division champs knocked out in the CIAA Tournament quarterfinals, were seeded seventh in the Atlantic Region. They faced 2nd-seed West Liberty, a team averaging 98.8 points per game, second best in all of Div. II. VUU came in leading the nation in scoring defense giving up just 59.9 ppg.

In the quarterfinal, the Panthers shut down the West Liberty offense, holding the Hilltoppers to 27.9% (17 of 61) shooting from the field including 14.3% (5 of 35) from 3-point range, to garner a 52-46 win. Bobby Gardner had 23 points and Noah Richardson-Keys had 11 to lead the Panthers.

In the semifinals vs. 6th-seed Indiana (Pa.), VUU trailed 30-25 at the half, went down by as much as ten, 44-34 with 12:14 to play, before coming back to take the lead before settling for a 56-all tie at the end of regulation. IUP outscored the Panthers 10-6 in the extra period to pull out a 66-62 win. Gardner again led VUU (25-6) with 19 points. Malachi Dark and Richardson-Key had 11.

Fourth-seeded Seton Hill needed two overtimes to subdue fifth-seed women's CIAA Tournament runners-up Fayetteville State 88-85 in the Atlantic Region quarterfinals.

Alabama A&M women in WBIT, three more in WNIT

The Alabama A&M women's basketball team, the regular season SWAC champion, has earned one of 16 bids to compete in the 2026 Women's Basketball Invitation Tournament (WBIT), marking another milestone in a historic season for the Bulldogs.

The Lady Bulldogs (22-10), under head coach Dawn Thornton, who lost on a last-second shot in the SWAC Tournament semifinals, will face top seed Brigham Young University (22-11) on Thursday, March 19 in the opening round of the tournament. The game will be streamed on ESPN+ at the Marriott Center in Provo, Utah.

WBIT semifinals will air on ESPN and the championship game on ESPN2.

Three other black college women's teams are in the WNIT.

NCAA DIV. II BASKETBALL RESULTS

WOMEN

ATLANTIC REGION - Indiana, PA
QUARTERFINALS
3) Winston-Salem State 88, 6) Glenville State 71
4) Seton Hill 88, 5) Fayetteville State 85, 2 OTs

SEMIFINALS
3) Winston-Salem State 67, 7) Gannon 48
FINAL
1) Indiana (PA) 65, 3) Winston-Salem State 64

SOUTH REGION - Huntsville, AL
QUARTERFINALS
1) Alabama Huntsville 95, 8) Edward Waters 85
5) Nova Southeastern 91, 4) Miles 71

MEN

SOUTH REGION - Fort Lauderdale, FL
QUARTERFINALS
1) Nova Southeastern 94, 8) Morehouse 60

ATLANTIC REGION - Erie, PA
QUARTERFINALS
7) Virginia Union 52, 2) West Liberty 46
4) California (PA) 96, 5) Fayetteville State 83

SEMIFINALS
6) Indiana (PA) 66, 7) Virginia Union 62, OT

Alcorn State (17-13) out of the SWAC and Maryland-Eastern Shore (19-14) out of the MEAC were automatic qualifiers. MEAC member Norfolk State (18-14) received an at-large bid.

Maryland-Eastern Shore will play at Wake Forest (14-17) on Friday, March 19 at 6 p.m. Norfolk State is hosting Loyola-Chicago (14-17) on Saturday, March 21 (2 p.m.). Alcorn State hosts South Alabama (16-18) Saturday at 4 p.m.

Forty-eight (48) teams are in the WNIT field. Automatic berths were granted to the highest ranking team from each of the nation's 31 conferences. The remaining selections were at the direction of the WNIT Committee.