



Edward Waters Sports Photo

**400 WINS AND COUNTING:** Edward Waters head baseball coach carries his SIAC championship team to Div. II playoffs after reaching historic milestone.

## SPRING WRAP-UPS

HBCU OFFSPRING IN NBA PLAYOFFS, PRODUCT AT NBA COMBINE; SWAC FOOTBALL SCHEDULES; NEW NCCU COACH

# BCSP Spring Notes

## SIAC softball champ Spring Hill heads to NCAA Div. II South Regional

MOBILE, Ala. — SIAC Softball champion **Spring Hill** will compete in the South I Regional bracket in the NCAA Division II Softball Championship Regionals this week, hosted by Saint Leo University in Saint Leo, Florida.

The South Region is made up of two Regionals, South I and South II, which will host eight teams. Eight-seed Spring Hill will open against the top-seeded Saint Leo on Thursday at 11 a.m./noon ET. The fourth-seeded Auburn University Montgomery will face the fifth-seeded University of Tampa at 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET, that same day.

The Winners will advance to Friday and play at 11 a.m./noon ET, while the losers from Thursday will play an elimination game at 2 p.m. CT/3 p.m. ET.

## Clafin wins CIAA softball title advances to Div. II Atlantic Regional

ORANGEBURG, S.C. (May 9, 2026) – Top-seeded **Clafin** (31-12) captured the 2026 **CIAA** Softball Championship, edging **Winston-Salem State** (12–21), 7–6, Saturday afternoon at the Orangeburg Recreational & Sports Complex. The victory marks the second CIAA championship in program history for the Panthers and earns Clafin the conference's automatic berth to the NCAA Division II Regional Tournament.

Championship MVP **Aniyah Jackson** delivered the biggest swing of the day — a two-run home run to left field that gave Clafin critical separation. Clafin secured the championship win in the final inning thanks to a walk-off RBI single by Jackson.

Drawing the eight-seed in the Atlantic Region, the Panthers will look forward to a first-round matchup against the number-one seed, PSAC champion Shippensburg (38-16) . That match is set for Thursday (May 14) at 12 noon. The winner will advance to play against the winner of the game between Glenville State and Charleston, while the losers will face each other in a win-or-go-home contest.

## Edward Waters earns No. 8 seed in Div. II South baseball regional

INDIANAPOLIS — SIAC baseball champion **Edward Waters** is headed to the NCAA tournament for the first time in program history, earning the No. 8 seed and facing top seed West Florida Thursday in the NCAA Division II Baseball South Regional, the NCAA announced Sunday.

Edward Waters earned the SIAC automatic bid following its 4-0 run at the 2026 SIAC Baseball Tournament, marking its second title in the last three seasons while continuing a milestone season for head coach **Reginald Johnson II**, who surpassed 400 career wins.

The winner of the Edward Waters-West Florida matchup will advance to meet the winner of No. 5 Lee vs. No. 4 Delta State on Friday, May 15, at 6 p.m. EDT.

## Miles golf completes season at Div. II regional

VALDOSTA, Ga. — SIAC golf champion **Miles** closed out its 2025-26 season on Saturday when it completed its final round in the NCAA Division II South/Southeast Region Tournament at the Valdosta Country Club.

The Golden Bears, posted successively better rounds over the three-day event but finished 20th on the team leaderboard, well behind regional champion West Florida. Miles finished with a team score of 916 (309-306-301).

**Bradyn Moye** shot an even-par 72 in the opening round and was within five strokes of the lead. But carded a 7-over 79 that took him out of contention. He rebounded with a 1-over 73 on the final day to finish at 8-over 224, tied for 69th overall and the best score for the Golden Bears.

**Adrian Raya** (+13, 229), **Jerris Baker** (+15, 231) and **Zostrianos Giordani-Gross** (+17, 233) each finished in the top-100 of the event.

## Howard wins 2026 MEAC softball title, advances to region play

NORFOLK, Va. – The top-seeded **Howard** Bison captured the 2026 MEAC Softball Championship with an 11-2 victory in five innings over No. 3 seed **South Carolina State** on Saturday afternoon at TowneBank Field. With the win, Howard secured back-to-back conference tournament titles and earned the MEAC's automatic bid to the NCAA Softball Championship.

Outfielder **Maryn Jordan**, named the tournament's most outstanding player, drove in three runs and scored three times in the title game. **Maklyia Taylor** added three RBI, while **Laurny Jones** reached base three times.

Howard was placed in the Durham Regional and faces No. 12 Duke on Friday (May 15) at 12 noon, live on the ACC Network. Duke (39-14) will host the four-team, double-elimination tournament inside Smith Family Stadium. Arizona (35-16) and Marshall (37-17) faceoff in the other matchup.

## SWAC, MEAC Outdoor Track & Field Championships

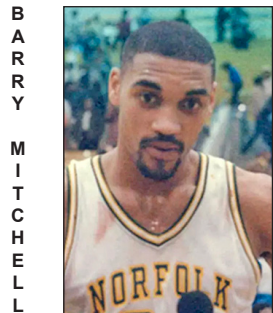
**SWAC** (Updated) - May 11-12 - Baton Rouge, LA - After Day One  
WOMEN - 1) Southern 37.5 2) Alabama A&M, Bethune-Cookman 18  
MEN - 1) Jackson State 34, 2) B-CU 31, 3)Texas Southern 19

**MEAC** - May 14 - 16 - Dick Price Field - Norfolk State, Norfolk, VA  
Championship Saturday's action will be streamed live on ESPN+, beginning at 1 p.m.

## UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

A  
J  
A  
Y  
M  
I  
T  
C  
H  
E  
L  
L



B  
A  
R  
R  
Y  
M  
I  
T  
C  
H  
E  
L  
L

## OKC'S AJAY MITCHELL SON OF LATE NORFOLK STATE LEGEND:

One of the stars of the Oklahoma City Thunder's 4-0 sweep of the Los Angeles Lakers in the NBA Western Conference playoff semifinal concluded Monday has a black college connection.

Six-four second-year OKC guard **Ajay Mitchell** out of UC Santa Barbara is the son of former **Norfolk State** and pro standout **Barry Mitchell**. The younger Mitchell, like his father, is a left-hander.

Mitchell stepped into the starting line-up for the Thunder in the absence of injured starting off-guard Jalen Williams and demonstrated poise, efficiency and scoring prowess. He scored 18, 20, 24 and 28 points, averaging 22.5 points over the four games vs. the Lakers. The career-high 28-point output came in Monday's closeout game. He had 24 points and 10 assists in game three of the series. Mitchell shot 31 of 61 (.508) from the field and 14 of 16 (.875) from the line in the sweep.

OKC's 2025 NBA MVP and scoring leader Shai-Gilgeous Alexander, who the Lakers double-teamed and tried to deny the ball, remarked after Monday's game that Mitchell had been the Thunders' best player during the series.

With the playoff win over LA, the Thunder advance to the Western Conference finals vs. the winner of the San Antonio Spurs vs. Minnesota Timberwolves series.

The sweep of the Lakers was the second straight 4-0 result for the Thunder this postseason. OKC defeated Phoenix in the Western Conference first round. Against Phoenix, Mitchell started the first two games scoring 22 and 15 points. He played off the bench in the final two games tallying 14 and 9 points, averaging 15.0 points per game in that series. Mitchell has scored in double-digits in seven of OKC's eight postseason games.

For the season, Mitchell has averaged 13.6 points, 3.3 rebounds and 3.3 assists per game while shooting .485 from the field and .870 from the line.. He started 16 games in the 2025-26 season.

Mitchell, who led UCSB to two NCAA appearances during his two seasons with the Gauchos and was named the Big West Player of the Year averaging 25 points per game, appeared in 36 games with one start during his rookie campaign and averaged 6.5 points on .495 shooting, including .383 from three-point range, 1.9 rebounds and 1.8 assists in 16.6 minutes per contest. He was signed to a multi-year contract extension in July 2025.

Mitchell was selected with the 38th overall pick in the second round of the 2024 NBA draft by the New York Knicks but, he was immediately traded to the Thunder on draft night. During his rookie season with the Thunder, Mitchell won his first NBA championship in the 2025 NBA finals. He has also played for the Belgium national team.

His father, Barry Mitchell, a Virginia Beach, Va. native, had a decorated career on the hardwood at Norfolk State from 1983 to 1987 when the Spartans competed in the NCAA Div. II CIAA. He was a three-time All-CIAA selection (1985–1987) and played a pivotal role in clinching two CIAA Championships with the Spartans (1984 and 1986). In his four-year career Mitchell played in 119 games, totalling 1,631 points (13.7 average), 928 rebounds (7.8), 502 assists (4.2) and 235 steals (2.0). He led the team in rebounds for three consecutive seasons from 1984 to 1987, in assists in 1985–86 (4.9 average) and 1986–87 (5.1), and was the steals leader in 1986–87.

After college, Barry took his talents to the professional ranks, playing in the World Basketball League (WBL) and the Continental Basketball Association (CBA), where his impact was undeniable. He was a two-time WBL Champion and Most Valuable Player (1989, 1990) and a three-time WBL All-Defensive Team selection (1988–1990). In 1992, he earned both CBA Most Valuable Player and CBA Defensive Player of the Year honors; was the CBA steals leader; a member of the All-CBA first team and the CBA All-Defensive Team; and later a CBA Champion (1994) - an exceptional dual achievement that highlighted his all-around excellence.

Barry later continued his professional career overseas in Belgium, where he both played and coached

CONTINUED

## SWAC announces 2026 Football Media Day, HBCU Go schedule

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.- The **Southwestern Athletic Conference** has announced Wednesday, July 15 as the date for its annual Football Media Day and its 2026 SWAC Football schedule on **HBCU GO**.

All 12 SWAC head football coaches along with two student-athletes from each institution will be present to discuss the upcoming 2026 season at the Media Day beginning at 10:00 a.m. CST at the Sheraton-Birmingham. The conference will also unveil its 2026 SWAC

Football Predicted Order of Finish during the event. One-on-one interviews with coaches and student-athletes will be available starting at 10:00 a.m. CST.

The **HBCU GO** schedule kicks off with **North Carolina Central** at **Texas Southern** on Saturday, August 29th at 7:00 p.m. EST and concludes with **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** at Texas Southern on Saturday, November 21st at 3:00 p.m. EST. A complete listing of the upcoming slate of games is listed below.

Date	Time (ET)	Matchup
Sat, Aug 29	7 p.m.	N. C. Central at Texas Southern
Sat, Sep 5	7 p.m.	Edward Waters at Jackson State
Sat, Sep 12	7 p.m.	Alcorn State vs. Ark.Pine Bluff
Sat, Sep 19	7 p.m.	Tennessee State at Florida A&M
Sat, Sep 26	7 p.m.	S. C. State at Bethune-Cookman
Sat, Oct 10	4 p.m.	Florida A&M at Alabama State
Sat, Oct 17	3 p.m.	Alcorn State at Prairie View A&M
Sat, Oct 24	3 p.m.	Arkansas-Pine Bluff at Florida A&M
Sat, Oct 31	3 p.m.	Southern at Florida A&M
Sat, Nov 7	3 p.m.	Miss. Valley State at Jackson State
Sat, Nov 14	3 p.m.	Alcorn State at Southern
Sat, Nov 21	3 p.m.	Ark.-Pine Bluff at Texas Southern

# BCSP Notes

## Tennessee State's Aaron Nkrumah among elite pro prospects at NBA Combine

NEW YORK – After an outstanding performance at the AWS NBA G League Combine this past weekend, **Tennessee State** forward and 2026 Ohio Valley Conference (OVC) Player of the Year **Aaron Nkrumah** is one of the 70 players invited and participating in this week's AWS NBA Draft Combine, May 10-17.

Nkrumah was one of 44 players at the G League Combine (May 8-10) in Chicago's Wintrust Arena showcasing skills in front of scouts, coaches, and front-office executives. He was one of five players chosen from those workouts to join 73 others at the 2026 AWS NBA Draft Combine held at the same arena featuring top draft prospects (including potential lottery picks).

Nkrumah was hard to miss at the G-League Combine, according to a report on the event by Michael Baumbach.

According to Baumbach's report, the 6-6 specimen had 22 points in one scrimmage and showed "defensive dynamism and versatile scoring" that made him a standout all week long. "He's looking like a surefire call-up (NBA) player," Baumbach reported.

Nkrumah averaged 17.7 points, 5.5 rebounds, 3.0 assists and 2.8 steals per game for the Tigers this season while shooting 35.1% from 3-point range. He led TSU to a share of the OVC regular season championship and the first OVC Tournament championship in three decades and its first NCAA Tournament bid since 1994. Nkrumah led the OVC in scoring and was second nationally in total steals with 92.

The list of activities and drills at the NBA Combine are on nba.com (<https://www.nba.com/news/nba-draft-combine-overview-2026>).

## Olivia Gaines new head women's basketball coach at N. C. Central

DURHAM, N.C. – **North Carolina Central** officially named **Olivia Gaines** as its new head women's basketball coach on Friday, May 8. An official press conference was held on Wednesday, May 13, at the William Jones building on campus at 10 a.m.

An emerging coach in the profession, Gaines has produced successful seasons at multiple collegiate programs, most recently at **Allen**, which recorded back-to-back winning records the past two years.

Allen posted a 36-19 record, including a 29-14 conference mark, in the **SIAC** from 2024 to 2026. In her first season as head coach, Gaines led Allen to program records in the Division II era for single-season wins (18) and conference victories (13). This year, Allen tied last season's win total while setting a new league mark with 16 victories.

Under Gaines' leadership, **Tailah Wesley** was named SIAC Player of the Year and **Eboni Clay** was chosen SIAC Freshman of the Year in the 2024-25 season. It is the first time an Allen player won either award in program history.

Gaines returned to a head coaching role after one season (2023-24) as an assistant at Georgia Southern.

Prior to her time at Georgia Southern, Gaines gained a winning reputation in the junior college ranks. In the 2022-23 season, she guided

Richard Bland to a 29-3 record and a trip to the NJCAA national championship game, finishing runner-up in its first-ever season.

Her first collegiate head coaching position was at USC Salkehatchie from 2020 to 2022. Gaines led the Indians to a 20-2 mark and the NJCAA Region 10 Championship in her first season (2020-21). She was named Region 10 Coach of the Year for her efforts.

Gaines became head coach at USC Salkehatchie after stints as an assistant coach at Vassar and Northwestern Oklahoma State. She was a high school head coach at Andrew Jackson, Fort Dorchester and Cross in South Carolina.

Before embarking on a coaching career, Gaines tasted success as a collegiate basketball player, most notably at South Carolina under Head Coach Dawn Staley.

During Gaines' two seasons, South Carolina won the SEC Tournament, shared the regular-season title and reached the Final Four in 2015 while claiming the SEC regular-season crown in 2014.

Gaines was a sought-after recruit after two stellar seasons at Louisburg (N.C.). She was named WBCA National Junior College Player of the Year and led Louisburg to the NJCAA Division II national title in 2013. Two years before, she was an All-State high school player as a senior at Chester.

A native of Chester, S.C., Gaines earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from South Carolina in 2015 and an associate degree in sociology from Louisburg in 2013.



Gaines

## MORE UNDER THE BANNER

FROM FIRST COLUMN

competitively. He became the all-time leading scorer in the history of Belgian basketball and earned MVP and All-Defensive Player honors, along with being a three-time All-Star. He was a Belgian League Champion (1995) and a two-time Belgian Cup winner (1997, 1998). He holds the record for most championships won and was the oldest active player in league history.

He returned to the Tidewater Virginia area after his stint overseas where he found a passion for working with troubled youth at Foundation to Success, LLC. He dedicated his time to mentoring and being a positive influence on children throughout the Hampton Roads area. In his free time, he volunteered faithfully with Ice4Life Foundation, Inc., assisting with community service projects. He also volunteered at basketball clinics to help develop critical skills and spent time refereeing basketball games..

Barry Mitchell, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend, passed on December 17, 2025. One of Barry's most prideful moments was when Ajay was drafted into the league. The deal was even sweeter when OKC won the NBA Championship during Ajay's rookie season, and Barry was for the ring ceremony.