

# BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



BCSP Photo

**CHARLIE NEAL:** At his induction ceremony to the SWAC Hall of Fame during the week of the 2023 Celebration Bowl in Atlanta. Neal passed on Tuesday at 80 after nearly 50 years covering HBCU sports.

## A LEGEND IS LOST

**SWAC, MEAC CROWN TRACK & FIELD CHAMPS; JACKSON STATE BEST IN SWAC; SOFTBALL, BASEBALL RESULTS**

## UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS



**DYNAMIC DUO:** Charile Neal (l.) and Lem Barney (r.) broadcasting for BET here at the 1993 Circle City Classic in Indianapolis. The duo helped introduce American TV audiences to black college football and basketball games and stayed together on the air for 24 years. Neal passed last Tuesday at 80.

### HBCU BROADCASTING GIANT CHARLIE NEAL PASSES:

Legendary, veteran broadcaster **Charlie Neal**, whose name, voice and face became synonymous with black college sports over nearly 50 years, passed Tuesday night in his home outside Washington, D. C. after a year-long battle with a chronic illness.

Neal, 80, who's golden voice was made for radio and television, came to the broadcast booth as the play-by-play man for Bob Johnson's Black Entertainment Television (BET) in the early 1980s when the network pioneered weekly TV coverage of live black college football and basketball games. He teamed with **Jackson State** grad and NFL Hall of Famer **Lem Barney** as his broadcast partner for over 20 years to unite the then excitement, thrills and pageantry of HBCU sports with its glorious past and history.

After BET moved away from carrying live black college sports events in the early 2000s, Neal continued that role helming HBCU coverage for another black-owned entity, the Atlanta-based Major Broadcasting Company (MBC), before again taking the lead role as ESPN started its live coverage of black college sports games in the early 2000s. He called the first black college football game aired on ESPN and became the lead announcer of the coverage of black college games on ESPN and ESPN+.

When another black-owned broadcast network, Byron Allen's Allen Media Group, bought out streaming entity HBCUgo.tv in 2021 and inked major deals with HBCU conferences in 2022 to air black college games, they turned to Neal as their lead announcer as well. He served in that capacity until his battle with the disease began last Fall.

During his long career, Charlie rubbed shoulders with and became close friends with the gamut of men and women actors – the game's top players, coaches, administrators, school presidents and conference officials, game officials and referees, cheer squads, band directors, sponsors, network TV executives and fans – who are the on- and off-field generators of the spectacle of black college sports while also helping to mentor the next generation of men's and women's media personalities, and in so doing, he became part of the story.

All these entities turned to him in one way or another for their sporting events, award banquets, Hall of Fame ceremonies, athletic forums, schedule consultations and the like throughout his illustrious career.

He became truly "the name, voice and face of black college sports" as evidenced by his induction into the **CIAA, MEAC, SWAC and Black College Football** Halls of Fame. No other can lay claim to those honors.

In 2023, Neal became the first National Football Foundation (NFF) **Chris Schenkel Award** recipient from the HBCU ranks, an annual award given to a sports broadcaster who has had a long and distinguished career broadcasting college football.

The Philadelphia native and Villanova graduate, began his career as a radio disc jockey in his hometown before moving into television as a sports anchor in 1971 in Washington, D. C., later moving to similar roles in Detroit and New York City. Neal also worked for CBS Sports announcing college football, basketball, track & field, and gymnastics also doubling up with assignments from Turner Sports which included the first ever Goodwill Games in Moscow. He hosted the NBA halftime shows for TNT along with play-by play assignments on basketball, gymnastics, and track & field.

Away from his media endeavors the always nattily dressed Neal wore a plethora of hats that many did not see. He was a former basketball and football official, owner of a bus company that provided a host of services including transportation to and from games for high school and black college teams, and a consummate trainer of 'motormen' the term used in police circles to identify a motorcycle cop, or any law enforcement officer assigned to the motorcycle division. Above all, he was a decent and caring man.

In many more ways than one, Charlie Neal will be sorely missed.

# Jackson State claims SWAC Commissioner's Cup

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – **Jackson State** claimed the top spot in the final 2025-26 **Southwestern Athletic Conference** Commissioner's Cup standings with 152.0 total points, edging **Alabama State** who finished second overall with 149.0 points.

The **Dr. James Frank Commissioner's Cup** Award annually recognizes the league institution that posts the strongest overall athletic performances across conference-sponsored sports throughout the academic year.

Jackson State's championship run was fueled by strong performances across both men's and women's sports. The Tigers finished second in the men's standings with 69.0 points while placing second in the women's rankings with 83.0 points.

Alabama State secured the women's sports title (**Magee/Jacket Award**) after recording a league-best 92.0 points in women's competition while also finishing fifth in the men's standings with 57.0 points.

**Texas Southern** finished third overall with 138.5 points followed by **Southern** in fourth with 133.5 points. **Florida A&M** rounded out the top five overall with 123.0 points.

On the men's side, **Bethune-Cookman**



captured the men's all-sports crown (**C.D. Henry Award**) with 70.5 points. Jackson State followed closely behind in second while Texas Southern finished third with 68.0 points. Florida A&M and Alabama State rounded out the top five men's programs.

In the women's standings, Alabama State led the way followed by Jackson State and Southern. Alabama A&M finished fourth with 76.5 points while Texas Southern claimed fifth place with 70.5 points.

The final overall standings saw Prairie View A&M finish sixth with 119.5 points, narrowly ahead of Alabama A&M's 119.0 points. Bethune-Cookman placed eighth overall followed by Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Alcorn State, Grambling State and Mississippi Valley State.

### OVERALL SPORTS RANKINGS (Dr. James Frank Commissioner's Cup Award)

- Jackson State – 152.0
- Alabama State – 149.0
- Texas Southern – 138.5
- Southern – 133.5
- Florida A&M – 123.0
- Prairie View A&M – 119.5
- Alabama A&M – 119.0
- Bethune-Cookman – 113.0
- Arkansas-Pine Bluff – 79.0

- Alcorn State – 75.5
- Grambling State – 70.5
- Mississippi Valley State – 36.5

### WOMEN'S SPORTS RANKINGS (Jacket/Magee Award)

- Alabama State – 92.0
- Jackson State – 83.0
- Southern – 80.0
- Alabama A&M – 76.5
- Texas Southern – 70.5
- Prairie View A&M – 67.5
- Florida A&M – 65.5
- Alcorn State – 43.5
- Bethune-Cookman – 42.5
- Grambling State – 40.5
- Arkansas-Pine Bluff – 34.0
- Mississippi Valley State – 20.5

### MEN'S SPORTS RANKINGS (C.D. Henry Award)

- Bethune-Cookman – 70.5
- Jackson State – 69.0
- Texas Southern – 68.0
- Florida A&M – 57.5
- Alabama State – 57.0
- Southern – 53.5
- Prairie View A&M – 52.0
- Arkansas-Pine Bluff – 45.0
- Alabama A&M – 42.5
- Alcorn State – 32.0
- Grambling State – 30.0
- Mississippi Valley State – 16.0

## BCSP Spring Notes

### Jackson State Claims SWAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field title

BATON ROUGE, La. – **Jackson State** claimed the 2026 **Southwestern Athletic Conference** Men's Outdoor Track and Field Championship with 142 total points. **Texas Southern** finished second with 110 points while **Bethune-Cookman** placed third with 104.5 points.

The title marks Jackson State's first championship in Men's Outdoor Track and Field since 1990.

During the meet, Jackson State claimed a pair of gold medals with multiple student-athletes scoring points. **Collins Kibet** claimed the gold in the 3000-meter steeplechase with a time of 9:41.74, while **Kaiden Berry** - the co-Most Outstanding Field Performer - claimed gold in the shot put with a throw of 17.13 meters (56-02.50).

Jackson State's championship effort was also highlighted by **Sedgwick Pitts Jr.**'s fourth-place finish in the men's 200-meter dash and key performances in the decathlon from **Connor Cooper**, who finished fifth overall with 5,046 points.

**Alcorn State's Derrick Williams** delivered one of the fastest performances of the championship meet by winning the men's 200-meter dash in 20.49. Texas Southern's **Joshua Brown** placed second while Bethune-Cookman's **Shanard Walker** finished third.

**Florida A&M's Tyon Reed** claimed the men's 400-meter hurdles title with a winning mark of 51.43. **Prairie View A&M's Ronzell Woods** and **Alabama A&M's Nathan Anderson** finished second and third respectively. In the men's 800-meter run, **Arkansas-Pine Bluff's Kewarny Fletcher** captured the conference title with a winning time of 1:50.00 while **Southern's Marcus Deley** finished second in 1:51.07.

Texas Southern's **Donovan Brooks** secured the men's decathlon championship with 6,152 total points. Brooks posted event victories in the javelin throw, shot put and 1,500-meter run during the competition.

### Florida A&M Claims SWAC Women's Outdoor Track and Field title

BATON ROUGE, La. – **Florida A&M** captured the 2026 **Southwestern Athletic Conference** Women's Outdoor Track and Field Championship title with 145.50 total points, edging **Alabama State** (132). **Southern** placed third with 95.50 points while **Alabama A&M** finished fourth with 93 points.

Florida A&M was led by a dominant performance from **Diandrenique Gaines**, who won both the 100- and 200-meter dash. Gaines set a championship-record time of 11.15 in the 100 meters before claiming the 200-meter title in 22.72. Teammates **Kiersten Clark** and **Janaree Kinchen** also delivered strong performances for the Lady Rattlers in the sprint events.

Alabama A&M excelled in the 400-meter dash as **Alisha Wilson** and **Laila Gaynor** finished first and second respectively in the event finals. Wilson posted a winning time of 53.26 while Gaynor crossed the line just behind her at 53.27.

Alabama State's distance runners also played a major role in the team standings. **Aliyah Williams** swept both the women's 800-meter run and 1500-meter run, while teammate **Shone Walters** finished runner-up in both races.

In the women's long-distance events, Alabama A&M's **Laura Avila** claimed the 5,000-meter and 10,000-meter titles. Avila won the 5,000 meters in 18:20.40 before returning to take the 10,000-meter crown as well.

Southern's **Tashina Alase** delivered one of the top hurdle performances of the meet, running a time of 12.84 in the preliminaries of the women's 100-meter hurdles.

### Norfolk State claims fifth straight MEAC Men's Outdoor Track & Field title

NORFOLK, Va. – For the fifth consecutive season, the **Norfolk State** captured the **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** (MEAC) Men's Outdoor Track & Field Championship, finishing with 183 points while defending their home track.

Spartan **Kristopher Stephens** earned Outstanding Field Athlete of the Meet honors. Stephens claimed gold in the men's triple jump with a leap of 15.64 meters. **Kendrick Winfield** led the charge on championship Saturday, claiming gold in the 400-meter run with a time of 46.09 before winning the 200-meter final in 20.55.

Standout weekend performances from **Christopher Baskings** (sprints), **Daniel Mathenge** (distances), and **Landon Walker** (pole vault) were key in helping the Spartans total 183 points and secure their fifth straight MEAC crown.

Norfolk State head coach **Kenneth Giles** was named Outstanding Coach of the Meet.

**North Carolina Central** rookie **Aaron Alukunyang** earned Outstanding Runner of the Meet honors.

The championship concluded with a statement performance in the men's 4x400-meter relay, where the Spartans held off **Coppin State** and **North Carolina Central** to secure gold in 3:07.92.

### Howard wins fifth straight MEAC women's Track & Field title

NORFOLK, Va. – For the fifth straight season, the **Howard** Lady Bison claimed the **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** (MEAC) Women's Outdoor Track & Field Championship.

Following last year's record-breaking performance of 292 points, Howard finished this year's meet with 235 points, further solidifying its program as a powerhouse in HBCU track and field.

Howard head coach **David Oliver** was named Outstanding Coach of the Meet, while **Nihjah Darden** and **Yahnari Lyons** earned Co-Outstanding Runner of the Meet honors.

Lyons capped off a dominant season by winning the 200 meters in 22.94, and the Howard team had time to soak it all in as emotions flowed during the final women's event of the evening. The Bison raced to victory in the 4x400-meter relay with a time of 3:35.30, finishing 8.07 seconds ahead of the competition.

The Bison collected their first gold medal of championship Saturday in the 4x100-meter relay, setting the tone for the rest of the evening as they went on to win eight additional gold medals.

**Marcia Sey** claimed the women's 100-meter hurdles crown in 12.96, while teammate **Zoe Turner** captured the 400-meter title in 53.15. In the women's 800 meters, **Tiffany Mugubai** clocked in at 2:05.19, while **Cenaiya Billups** won the 400-meter hurdles title in 56.86.

**Morgan State** senior **Brylan Carter** claimed Outstanding Field Athlete of the Meet honors.

### Spring Hill eliminated in NCAA Div. II Softball South Regional

SAINT LEO, Fla. — The **Spring Hill** softball team's 2026 season came to an end in the NCAA Regional as the Badgers lost to fifth-seeded University of Tampa, 14-2, in Friday afternoon's elimination game.

The Badgers fell 1-0 to No. 1 Saint Leo after being one-hit in the opening game Thursday of the 2026 NCAA Division II South Regional.

The Badgers finish the 2026 season with a 34-25 overall record after securing their third consecutive SIAC Tournament championship.

### Claflin shutout in NCAA Div. II Atlantic Softball Regional

CIAA champion **Claflin** was held to three hits in a 8-0 shutout loss to Shippensburg Thursday and could only master two more hits in a 13-0 shutout elimination loss to Glenville State Friday in NCAA Div. II Atlantic Regional. CIAA MVP **Aniyah Jackson** had one hit in each game.

The Panthers finished at 31-14 on the season.

### Edward Waters bows out in NCAA Div. II South Baseball Regional

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. – **SIAC** baseball champion **Edward Waters** fell to No. 1 seed West Florida 16-6 Thursday and dropped a close 3-2 decision to No. 4 seed Delta State Friday to be eliminated from the NCAA Div. II South Baseball Regional in Pensacola, Florida.

The Tigers fell behind 10-0 thru five innings vs. West Florida before scoring six runs over the final four innings. Designated hitter **Calvin Scott** had a solo home run and first baseman **Scott Torres** had a two-run single to lead EWU. Left fielder **Jordan Smith** scored two runs.

Delta State scored all three of its runs in the third inning Friday. Edward Waters answered with a sacrifice fly in the fourth inning and cut the deficit to one in the seventh on an RBI single by **Joseph Di Cesare**, but Delta State's bullpen shut the door late.

## SIAC returns to Macon for 2026 Football Media Day

ATLANTA, Ga. — The **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** will kick off its 2026 football season with a return to Macon, Georgia, for SIAC Football Media Day on Wednesday, July 22.

Coaches and student-athletes from the league's 13 football programs will open the two-day event with the SIAC Community Service and Outreach Day on Tuesday, July 21.

SIAC Football Media Day will follow on Wednesday, July 22, and will be open only to institutions and approved members of the media.

**Terry Sims** at **Clark Atlanta**, **David Bowser** at **Albany State** and **Brad Sherrod** at **Morehouse** are the new coaches in the conference that will be in attendance at Media Day.