

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

STEPHEN A. ANSWERS NABJ; BCFHOF WATCH LIST; NEW AD AT A&T; SIAC COMMISH EXTENDED



vikings.com Photo

POSING!: Former N. C. A&T linebacker Jacob Roberts poses after picking off a pass in his NFL debut for Minnesota.

STEPHEN A. SMITH RESPONDS TO NABJ DISS, NAMES COMING BLACK COLLEGE PROJECT:

Prominent ESPN and podcast host and **Winston-Salem State** graduate **Stephen A. Smith** has responded to a diss by the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) with pointed commentary while announcing a series of projects he is helming.



Smith

Smith was given the 'Thumbs Down' award last week at the NABJ convention in Atlanta for what the organization dubbed "a pattern of disparaging commentary directed at prominent Black women across politics, sports and media." He said the award may be the "lowest" insult he has ever received.

In a 44-minute response on his YouTube channel Monday afternoon, Smith called the award bu-----! He chronicled his efforts to support the NABJ including bringing his *First Take ESPN* show twice to the conference and how his career began at the NABJ job fair.

"This is not about disparaging women," Smith said of the award. "I don't speak glowingly enough about the Democratic Party. This is political. If I said this about a black female conservative, any of the things that I've said about Jasmine Crockett, Kamala Harris, Michelle Obama, would we be having this conversation? Would you have given me the Thumbs Down award if I had said that about a Sage Steele, a Candace Owens, or if I had said this about a Condoleezza Rice.

"This is political."

Smith added at the end of the 44-minute response, "I'm about to ink a deal where we're broadcasting HBCU basketball games. I'm gonna need some Black folks working for me. As talent and producers and beyond." He did not say where the games will air. Smith teased more content coming for his Straight Shooter Media including deals that have been "greenlit" reportedly with ABC and Amazon.



BCFHOF ANNOUNCES WATCH LIST FOR 2026 DEACON JONES AWARD:

A total of 54 football players, including players from both the FCS and NCAA Div. II black college ranks, are on the initial Watch List announced Tuesday for the *Black College Football Hall of Fame* (BCFHOF) *Deacon Jones Trophy* given to the top player in black college football.

The Watch List candidates have been selected based on past performance and future potential. Additions to the list will be made as the 2026 season progresses. The finalists and the winner will be chosen by a Selection Committee.

The list includes 14 of the 20 FCS players on the *Stats Perform HBCU Player of the Year Watch List* unveiled last week.

The BCFHOF Watch List adds these players:

Joshua Barker, Sr., DT, S. C. State
Chance Bush, Jr., OL, Allen
Jamir Dismukes, Sr., QB, Fayetteville State
Jonas Fortlien, Gr., WR, Jackson State
Malik Gucake, Sr., DL, Prairie View A&M
Michael Joiner Jr., R-So., DT, Alabama State
Brian Lane, So., WR, J. C. Smith
Rahsaan Matthews Jr., Sr., QB, Virginia State
Ryan Nolan, R-Sr., OL, Norfolk State
Nate Rembert, WR, Jackson State
Cameron Rogers, Jr., OL, Alcorn State
Alex Simmons, Jr., TE, Morgan State
David Smith, R-Jr., RB, Benedict
Johnnarius Thomas, Sr., RB, Edward Waters
Darius Thompson, Jr., WR, S. C. State
Moses Umoren, Sr., OL, S. C. State
Mehki Wall, R-Jr., WR, N. C. Central
Jaylen Williams, R-Sr., DL, Norfolk State

Chase Bingmon, So., RB, Prairie View A&M
Jaden Cleveland, Jr., DL, Clark Atlanta
Derrick Drayton, Gr., DL, Albany State
Trevon French, Jr., LB, Edward Waters
Xzavier Jackson, So., QB, Clark Atlanta
Josh Jones, R-So., QB, NC Central
Isaiah Lawson, R-Sr., DB, NC Central
Arturo Mattocks, Sr., LB, Morgan State
James Reddick II, Gr., OL, S. C. State
D'Avery Robinson, Jr., WR, Ark.-Pine Bluff
Travion Searcy, Jr., DB, Central State
Tyler Smith, R-Sr., RB, S. C. State
Bobby Smith, R-So., RB, J. C. Smith
Eric Thomas Jr., So., DL, Alcorn State
Isaiah Turner, R-Sr., OL, Benedict
Zach Underwood, R-So., DL, Morehouse
Brandon Wiley, Jr., WR, Bluefield State
Wyatt Wright, Jr., LB, Alabama A&M

Notably absent from the list and likely to be added are a number of transfers expected to be key contributors this season.

They include:

Isaiah Knowles, Sr., QB, Florida A&M (transfer from Albany State)
Fabian Duncan, Jr., RB, Johnson C. Smith (transfer from Allen)
Brevin Caldwell, R-Sr., WR, Norfolk State (transfer from JC Smith)
Xavier Herndon, TE, Florida A&M (transfer from Albany State)
Daylin Lee, Sr., QB, Tennessee State (transfer from Winston-Salem State)
Chase Gillespie, Grad, RB, Florida A&M (transfer from Vanderbilt)

Four finalists will be unveiled after the season. The winner of the Black College Football Player of the Year Award, which will be announced during halftime of the 2027 Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl, will be presented with the *Deacon Jones Trophy*. The Allstate HBCU Legacy Bowl will take place on Saturday, February 27, 2027 in Atlanta, Georgia. The game will be broadcast live on NFL Network.

SIAC Commish Holloman gets extension

ATLANTA — The Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) Council of Presidents has unanimously approved a contract extension for Commissioner **Anthony Holloman**, Ed.D., through 2029, reaffirming its confidence in his leadership and vision for the future.

"I am deeply appreciative of the Council of Presidents' continued confidence in our leadership and the direction of the SIAC," Holloman said.

"Our conference stands on a tremendous legacy created by a cadre of institutional leaders, student-athletes, coaches and administrators. We have made meaningful strides in elevating the SIAC brand, strengthening the student-athlete experience,



ANTHONY HOLLAMAN: Gets contract extension as SIAC Commissioner until 2029.

expanding relationships with strategic partners and creating greater engagement for our fans. I look forward to continuing that momentum as we build upon our foundation, pursue new opportunities and further position the SIAC as the preeminent conference in all of NCAA Division II.

The extension was approved during the Council of Presidents' 2026 Summer Board

Meeting in Atlanta following its annual review of Holloman's performance.

Under Holloman's leadership, the SIAC has experienced a period of significant growth and achievement, including unprecedented progress in media and broadcasting, historic NCAA postseason success, expanded national relationships and increased representation within collegiate athletics leadership.

Among the conference's most significant accomplishments has been the formation and growth of the *SIAC Network*, creating a conference-wide platform to expand the visibility of SIAC athletics, member institutions and student-athletes.

The SIAC also experienced

historic competitive success as three conference programs advanced to the NCAA Division II football playoffs in 2025.

The conference has also strengthened its national relationships through its ACC Football Officiating Alliance affiliation, making the SIAC the only HBCU conference that is a member of the alliance.

Holloman's leadership has extended to the national level as well. He became the first person from an HBCU to chair the NCAA Men's Volleyball Committee, providing important representation for HBCU athletics within the NCAA governance structure and further establishing the SIAC as a leader in the continued growth of men's volleyball.

BCSP Notes

N. C. A&T names new athletics director

EAST GREENSBORO, N.C. (August 14, 2026) -- **North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University**



Louis-Verrett

has chosen a familiar face to serve as its director of Intercollegiate Athletics in one of the most dynamic periods in collegiate sports history: **Katreshia Louis-Verrett**, J.D., currently the deputy AD for the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

She starts in her new role Sept. 1, overseeing 17 A&T intercollegiate athletics teams involving more than 300 student athletes and nearly 50 coaches and staff members.

Louis-Verrett was associate AD for North Carolina A&T from 2011-2017, overseeing compliance, departmental human resources and 33 staff members, including seven head coaches. That experience helped her emerge from a highly competitive national search process as the top choice to succeed long-time AD **Earl Hilton**, who is stepping down after 15 years in the role.

Louis-Verrett earned high marks for her deep and up-to-the-minute understanding of intercollegiate athletics, knowledge she has amassed over a 20-year career that also saw her serve for five years as assistant AD for Georgia Tech and on key NCAA committees, helping to shape oversight of collegiate athletics nationwide.

As a former collegiate athlete Louis-Verrett was a track star at the University of Miami, where she was a Big East champion for two years. She understands the struggles and pressures of competing at a high level while balancing academic demands and campus life opportunities.

"At North Carolina A&T, our commitment to student success is our No. 1 priority, and that certainly includes the success of our student athletes," said North Carolina A&T Chancellor **James R. Martin II**. "Katreshia is equally passionate about that commitment, as well as ensuring that our athletics teams and student athletes have the resources, guidance and

Rookies, vets splash in 2026 NFL preseason debuts



buffalobills.com Photo

PAYDIRT!! Former **HOWARD** running back and UFL title game MVP **Ian Wheeler** (#27) scores on 6-yard run during Buffalo's 29-14 preseason opening win over Carolina Saturday. Wheeler averaged 5.9 yards per carry on his seven attempts to finish with 41 rushing yards. He opened the Bills' first fourth-quarter drive carrying on six of seven plays including his score.



jacksonvillejaguars.com Photo

ROOKIE WORKHORSE!! Jacksonville rookie running back **J'MARI TAYLOR** (#30, NC CENTRAL / Virginia) bowls over Saints cornerback Dalys Beanum (#37) in one of his 22 carries in Saturday's 24-20 win over New Orleans. The former **MEAC** rushing leader and rookie undrafted free agent ran for 78 yards and scored on a 2-yard fourth-quarter run as the Jags got a good look at him in his debut. Only Penn State product and Washington Commanders' rookie Katron Allen had more yards (85) or carries (23) than Taylor logged this week.

BCSP NFL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

For preseason games of August 15 - 18, 2025



OFFENSE

- #33 **IAN WHEELER**, RB, Buffalo (2nd season, **HOWARD**) - In Buffalo's 29-14 win over Carolina Saturday, Wheeler led the Bills with 41 yards on seven carries (5.9 yards per carry) and scored untouched on a 6-yard fourth-quarter run. In the drive that led to his scoring run, Wheeler had six of his carries for 32 yards (5.3 ypc.) with a long run of 10 yards. He was in for 15 offensive snaps (22%).



DEFENSE

- #41 **JAMES HOUSTON**, LB, Dallas (5th season, **JACKSON STATE**) - In the Cowboys' 17-7 win Saturday over Seattle, Houston had three tackles, two solos including a solo sack for -4 yards. He was in for 18 defensive snaps (32%) and five on special teams (28%).

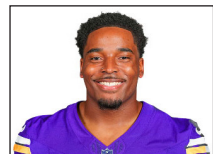
SPECIAL TEAMS

- #19 **XAVIER SMITH**, WR/KR, LA Rams (3rd season, **FLORIDA A&M**) - Started at wide receiver in 20-12 win Saturday over Kansas City and finished with four receptions on four targets for 26 yards (6.5 yards per catch). He also had three punt returns for 52 yards (17.3 yards per return) with a long return of 40 yards. He was in for 39 snaps on offense (72%) and five on special teams (19%).



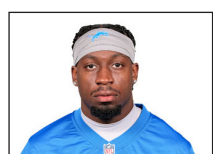
ROOKIES ON OFFENSE

- #30 **J'MARI TAYLOR**, RB, Jacksonville (Rookie, **NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL/Virginia**) - In Jacksonville's 24-20 win over New Orleans Saturday, Taylor led the Jaguars with 22 carries for 78 yards (3.5 yards per carry) with a long run of 14 yards and a 2-yard fourth-quarter touchdown. He was in for 44 offensive plays (65%) and two on special teams (7%).



ROOKIES ON DEFENSE

- #48 **JACOB ROBERTS**, LB, Minnesota (Rookie, **N. C. A&T/Wake Forest**) - Had three tackles, two solos and a third-quarter interception of a pass from QB Brandon Allen intended for Odell Beckham that he returned six yards in the Vikings' 13-10 win over the New York Giants Saturday. Roberts also posted back-to-back tackles in the third quarter. He was in for 18 defensive snaps (33%) and nine on special teams (38%).



- #48 **ERICK HUNTER**, LB, Detroit (Rookie, **MORGAN STATE**) - In Detroit's 16-14 loss to Cincinnati Thursday, Hunter had four solo tackles while playing 43 defensive snaps (61%) and 12 on special teams (48%).



ROOKIES ON SPECIAL TEAMS

- #21 **KARON PRUNTY**, CB, New England (Rookie, **N. C. A&T/Wake Forest**) - Started at cornerback Thursday in 13-13 tie with Indianapolis and finished with three tackles, one solo, and had two solo tackles on special teams. The rookie played 40 snaps on defense (62%) and ten on special teams (37%).