

Willingham Played It Smart

TMS Campus Report

One important thing we learned recently: In the unlikely scenario that Tyrone Willingham ever approaches you about a game of five-card stud, run away. Very fast.

For a month, Willingham played his cards close to his vest. The unflamboyant non-flamboyant coach pulled the most razzle-dazzle play collegiate sports has seen in some time, signing a six-year contract with Notre Dame just when everyone was ready to anoint him the Farm's Joe Paterno.

Despite the abruptness of the move, there is no bitterness at Stanford. Disappointment? Sure. A few hurt feelings from players? Undoubtedly. But no hard feelings. No anger.

Everyone associated with Willingham knew he would eventually need a fresh challenge. Stanford hoped it could continue to be it. But in reality Ted Leland — who had the vision to hire Willingham in November 1994 — knew he was lucky to have employed Willingham for seven long, successful seasons. Willingham proved what he could do at Stanford. He wasn't going to settle for that.



Willingham

In the three days since Willingham signed on with Notre Dame there has been some revisionist history. He wasn't that good at Stanford, he doesn't have the personality for Notre Dame, Notre Dame hired a black coach to cover up its embarrassment. Those theories have about the same credibility as Notre Dame's December rumor mill did.

In seven seasons at Stanford, Willingham did much more than required. He never lost to Cal, fulfilling the most basic Cardinal hope. He took Stanford to three bowl games. Most importantly, he took Stanford to the Rose Bowl.

He leaves his successor a legacy that won't allow excuses. Willingham proved that Stanford — even in the modern, big business era of college football — could field a successful football program. He proved that you could run the program and never whine about academics. He leaves behind some daunting shoes to fill.

After Years Of Frustration, Black College Coaches Beginning To See Hope

TMS Campus Report

There are no signs posted to warn him, but Curtis Modkins recognizes this bumpy road filled with potholes.

It very well could be an unlit, dead-end street, Modkins surmises, as he sits behind the wheel of his future.

Modkins isn't driving, but he is driven. Only 31 years old and married with children, the New Mexico assistant football coach questions what more his chosen profession will offer him in terms of future opportunities.

The realization that his status as a position coach — he coaches the cornerbacks — might be as good as it gets disturbs him and leaves him disillusioned.

"At times, it makes you wonder if you have a realistic chance of attaining your goals," he said. "It makes me work harder, but you look at the numbers and you see what's ahead of you."

Modkins harbors aspirations of serving as an offensive coordinator and working toward the logical progression to head coach in NCAA Division I-A. As an African-American, the statistics suggest his ambitions

merit little more than an empty, meaningless dream.

Of Division I-A's 117 football programs, only four African-Americans call the shots. Positions of authority — such as associate and assistant head coaches and offensive and defensive coordinators — remain nearly as foreign to African-Americans.

Nevertheless, Notre Dame's hiring of Tyrone Willingham provided African-American coaches a shot in the arm.

"It's huge," Tennessee receivers coach Pat Washington said. "There's finally a guy in a position to win a national championship."

All eyes will be fixed on Willingham's progress at perhaps this country's most glamorous program. Many view it as imperative that Willingham succeed to unlock doors slammed shut to minorities in the estimation of most African-American coaches.

"I think it's critically important," Modkins said. "Anytime there's such a disparity in the numbers as there is in college football and you get this opportunity, I think it's important

that you succeed. It's definitely the most high-profile job in the country. For Notre Dame to take a step like that and give a Tyrone Willingham a chance, I think that's significant.

"That's as high as you can get — maybe in football period, not just college football. It may be as high as you can go as far as prestige and notoriety. For him to be entrusted with that program is significant."

Willingham recognizes the social ramifications of his hiring at Notre Dame, and yet he described it as "significant, but not Jackie Robinson significant."

San Jose State's Fitz Hill, one of the African-American head coaches in Division I-A, bristles at that assessment.

"As unfortunate as it is, African-American coaches are evaluated collectively," said Hill, who along with Willingham, Michigan State's Bobby Williams and New Mexico State's Tony Samuel rank as the only African-American head coaches in Division I-A. "So, of course, it's going to help if he's successful. There are many ways that he will be able to benefit the profession by the place he is at."

Lewis Wanted \$300,000 For Alleged Bite

TMS Campus Report

Mike Tyson's act might not play in Las Vegas, but that doesn't mean other places don't want him on stage. Tyson's and Lennox Lewis' representatives fielded calls recently from at home and abroad about the possibility of playing host to the proposed Lewis-Tyson match.

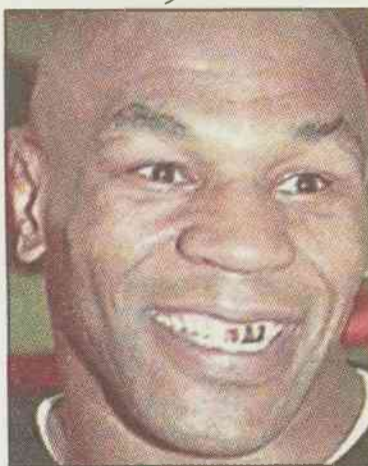
The backdrop to all this was a revelation by Frank Warren, a London-based boxing promoter, who said Lewis had tried to negotiate a \$300,000 settlement for the bite Tyson inflicted on him at the Jan. 24 Manhattan press conference in exchange for Lewis' support of Tyson in his licensing hearing before the Nevada commission recently.

"He said if he (Tyson) did that,

he would have gone to Nevada, stood up for him and said the fight was important to him because of his legacy and because he was getting \$20 million," Warren said. "He wanted the money whether Tyson got his license or not."

Judd Burstein, Lewis' lawyer, said Warren is misrepresenting what happened.

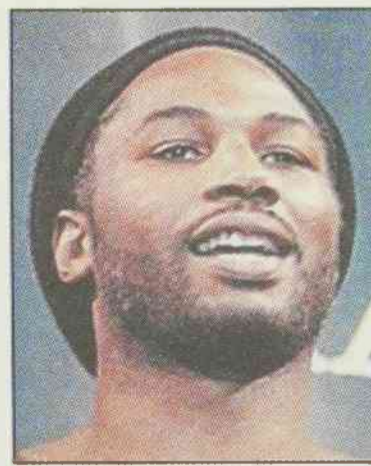
"That's not accurate," Burstein said. "There were discussions between the Lewis and Tyson camps about the Tyson camp giving adequate assurances that Mike Tyson would act appropriately at the fight and leading up to it. And one component of that was compensation for the bite. It's a complete misrepresentation of



Tyson

the facts to say that Lennox Lewis was willing to support the application for \$300,000."

Warren promoted two Tyson fights in Britain, but said he isn't close to Tyson anymore. The two



Lewis

of them were involved in an altercation in London a few days before Tyson fought Lou Savarese in Glasgow. Warren said Tyson has virtually no chance of fighting in Britain. Tyson pushed

referee John Coyles to the ground to go after Savarese after Coyles had stopped the fight.

"The British Boxing Board won't license him and he wouldn't be granted permission to enter the country," Warren said.

Britain, and some other U.S. states, will follow the lead set by Nevada in denying Tyson's application for a boxing license, but don't count Texas among those locales.

Dickie Cole, the boxing administrator for the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulations, said Tyson is welcome to the state anytime he wants to fight there.



FSU

vs.

WSSU



Feb. 16th on UPN 28 @ 7:30pm