

FOR THE WEEK OF NOV. 12 THROUGH NOV. 18, 2002

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



TITLE TIME IN CIAA

NEW PLAYERS IN CIAA CHAMPIONSHIP GAME; ABRAMS STEPS DOWN AT NCCU

Photok by Lut Williams EAST MEETS WEST: Bowie State's Frazier and Fayetteville State's Phillips meet in Winston-Salem for CIAA title.

2002 BLACK COLLEGE FOOTBALL (Results, Standings and Weekly Honors)

SCORES

Table with columns for DATE, HOME TEAM, VISITOR TEAM, and SCORE. Includes results for November 2nd games across various conferences.

CIAA

Standings table for CIAA conference, showing DIVISION, CONF, and ALL columns with team names and records.

MEAC

Standings table for MEAC conference, showing CONF, ALL, and MEAC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK information.

SIAC

Standings table for SIAC conference, showing CONF, ALL, and SIAC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK information.

SWAC

Standings table for SWAC conference, showing DIV, ALL, and SWAC PLAYERS OF THE WEEK information.

INDEPENDENTS

Standings table for Independent conferences, showing PLAYERS OF THE WEEK information.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

ABRAMS STEPS DOWN: North Carolina Central University head football coach Rudy Abrams announced his retirement from the Eagle football program Saturday, immediately following a disheartening 29-14 home loss to Johnson C. Smith that concluded an emotional roller coaster ride through the 2002 season.



Photo by Lut Williams

ABRAMS: Decides to retire after 4-6 record at N.C. Central this year. Abrams said he has been considering this decision for a few months, but made it official on Friday (Nov. 8) when he submitted a letter of retirement to NCCU Athletic Director Lin Dawson.

CIAA set, SWAC E., MEAC still TBD

LUT WILLIAMS

After last weekend's games, all the players for the 2002 postseason in black college football are in place except representatives from the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference and the Southwestern Athletic Conference's East Division.

Bowie State (6-4, 5-2 CIAA E) pulled out a 10-6 win over Virginia State (7-3, 5-2 CIAA E) Saturday to claim the CIAA East Division title.

Fayetteville State is up to third in the latest NCAA Div. II South Region Poll (16th nationally) and, with a win over Bowie State, will assure itself of a spot in the national playoffs.

Win or lose, Bowie State will play opposite

Tuskegee in the Pioneer Bowl.

PREDICTION: Kenny Phillips' Fayetteville State team beat Bowie State 13-7 on Nov. 2 in a defensive struggle decided on an interception return for a touchdown in the final 90 seconds.

Bethune-Cookman playing without star quarterback Allen Suber last week vs. Hampton and his absence was key in a 37-7 loss, the Wildcats' (9-1, 5-1) first of the season.

Alvin Wyatt's B-CC Wildcats control their own destiny. Win their last two games, this week at home against Howard and in Orlando on Nov. 23 vs. Florida A&M.

Billy Joe's Florida A&M Rattlers need B-CC to beat Howard this week and then defeat B-CC themselves to win the crown.

2002 BCSP TOP TEN

- 1. GRAMLING (9-1) - Handled Alabama State, 34-21 to clinch SWAC West title. NEXT: At Morris Brown.
2. BETHUNE-COOKMAN (9-1) - Without (QB) Suber, falls 37-7 to Hampton. NEXT: Hosting Howard.

GAMES THIS WEEK

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2002. Schedule of games including Alabama A&M vs. Alcorn St. in Huntsville, AL, Alabama St. vs. MVSU in Montgomery, AL, etc.

Saturday with the winner in position to clinch the title with a win on the last weekend of the regular season (see story below). A&M closes against Arkansas-Pine Bluff while Alcorn ends the season at Jackson State.

JSU (5-4, 3-2), which got a big win over A&M last week to keep its division title hopes alive, has what should be an easy date hosting Prairie View (1-9, 0-6) this week.

Tuskegee (9-1, 7-1) clinched its fourth straight Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference title with a close 28-26 win over Kentucky State Saturday night.

Alcorn, Alabama A&M in battle for SWAC East title

ROSCOE NANCE

It has come down to cases for Alcorn State and Alabama A&M. After confounding the experts all season by staying at or near the top of the SWAC Eastern Division standings, this pair of unlikely championship contenders faces their day of reckoning Saturday when they meet in Normal, Ala.

The winner will stay alive in a division race that became tighter than a pair of cheap leather pants last weekend when Jackson State (5-4, 3-2) beat Alabama A&M (6-3, 4-1) and Alcorn State (6-3, 3-2) lost to in-state rival Mississippi Valley State.

A&M and Alcorn control their own destiny. Either can punch its ticket for Birmingham and a date with Grambling State in the fourth annual SWAC Championship Game on Dec. 14.

One of the greatest feelings is to have the chance to control your own destiny," said first-year Alabama A&M head coach Anthony Jones. "That's what your fight in life is to do."

When I saw the preseason selection, it didn't bother me," Jones says. "With a new coaching staff and a 4-7 record how can you be upset with people thinking you're not going to do anything?"

A&M ran off six consecutive victories and dealt themselves a hand in the division race by relying on defense, field



SWAC Photos

GUNNING FOR A TITLE: Alabama A&M head coach Anthony Jones (l.) and Alcorn State head coach Johnny Thomas have their teams in line for a SWAC East Division title and a shot at Grambling in the Dec. 14 SWAC title game.

position and an opportunistic offense. A&M leads the SWAC in scoring defense and is No. 14 in Division I-AA, allowing 16.3 points a game.

The Bulldogs boast a +10 turnover margin for the season. Offensively, they are last in SWAC first downs (115), but first in red zone offense, scoring 80% of the time they get inside the 20.

"The kids are playing well and understanding the concept of team," says Jones. "The big thing is taking advantage of turnovers and taking care of the football."

Jones points to the Bulldogs' 23-13 loss to Grambling in the second game of the season as the turning point for his team. "We played Grambling tough even though we came away with a loss," says Jones.

about effort, not talent. Guys wanted to win. Once you get a taste of winning, you will do the things necessary to win."

Meanwhile, Alcorn State is trying to finish off its own rags-to-riches tale. The Braves were winless for the first time in school history two years ago with virtually the same players who have them on the brink of playing for the championship.

"Maturity, spirit and the will to win of players has made the difference," says Head Coach Johnny Thomas. "We're playing with the same people. We didn't have any people transfer or become academically ineligible. You can tell the difference in terms of maturity and experience and will to win. No situation fazes them."

The Braves showed just how unflappable they are two weeks ago when they blew a 22-6 lead against Southern and held on to win 22-20. It was their first win at Mumford Stadium since 1991 and their first victory over SU since 1994.

"Two years ago we would have lost to Southern," says Thomas. "We don't panic. They get tenacious and rise to the occasion, but we need to get a killer instinct."

Thomas says the Braves' victory against Southern is a microcosm of their season. They have yet to play a complete game.

"When we didn't do so well defensively, the offense rose to the occasion," he says. "Or the special teams put the offense in good position. When one (unit) or the other would breakdown the other would rise up, or a combination of both, to compensate for the other's inability to rise up. If we can get them all to jell we can be very difficult to deal with. We haven't had all three units to play to their potential for four quarters."

against Southern. He had his most productive game of the season the previous week, completing 22 of 37 attempts for 335 yards and one touchdown.

"He looks good for 2-3 series," says Thomas. "Then he'll not look good."

For the season Carrie has completed 122 of 261 attempts (46.7%) for 1,750 yards. He has thrown 13 interceptions and 15 touchdowns, and averages 194.4 yards a game, fourth best in the conference.

That has forced Alcorn to rely more on the running game than Thomas had anticipated. He has been satisfied with the results as the Braves are No.3 in the conference in rushing (135 yards a game). He is optimistic that the Braves' running game can continue to carry enough of the load to win the East. Five backs, led by sophomore Andrew Burks with 560 yards, have rushed for more than 120 yards and average at least 4.0 yards a carry.

"We have quick and elusive tailbacks, a veteran offensive line that has been together three years and good blocking fullbacks," he says.

The Braves have remained in the championship hunt while enduring an unfathomable number of injuries. They have lost seven starters or projected starters for the season since the start of preseason practice.

"If we can stay healthy, we have a great chance," Thomas says. "I'm confident we can get to Birmingham."