

FOR THE WEEK OF JUNE 19 THROUGH JUNE 25, 2001



Hampton U. Photo
TOP PICK: MEAC's and black college's top player looks to go in next Wednesday's NBA Draft.

LOOKING FOR A SHOT

SWAC, FIRED COMMISSIONER HEADED TO COURT ON JULY 10 IN BIRMINGHAM

2001 MEAC FOOTBALL TELEVISION SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Hampton at Howard
12 noon

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Delaware State at N. C. A&T
12 noon

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Howard at Morgan State
12 noon

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

Florida A&M at Howard
12 noon

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

Bethune-Cookman at Delaware State
12 noon

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

Florida A&M at N. C. A&T
12 noon

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20

NO TV GAME SCHEDULED

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27

Florida A&M at Hampton
12 noon

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

S. C. State at Howard
or
Hampton at Bethune-Cookman
12 noon

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 10

Bethune-Cookman at Howard
or
Hampton at N. C. A&T
12 noon

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

NO TV GAME SCHEDULED

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 24

I-AA Playoff Game
TBA

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

O'NEAL, THORPE GO LOW:

Former Jackson State golfer **Tim O'Neal** continued his success on the BUY.COM Tour with a tie for 13th at the Greater Cleveland Open last week. O'Neal posted scores of 66-71-72-70 for a 72-hole total of nine-under par 279 and took home \$6,847.23 for his efforts, the third biggest payday in this his first year on the Tour. That take raises his total to \$39,400 in ten events this year, good for 34th on the BUY.COM's 2001 Money List. O'Neal, the only African-American on the BUY.COM Tour, the professional circuit just below the PGA Tour, was featured on ESPN's "Outside the Lines" last week on a segment about African-Americans and golf. He will remain in Ohio this week to compete in the Tour's Dayton Open, which will be held at The Golf Club at Yankee Trace, in Centerville, Ohio. The other professional golfer with black college roots, **Jim Thorpe**, who attended **Morgan State**, also had a successful week on the PGA Senior Tour. Thorpe fired successive 68s over three rounds to finish fourth in the Instinet Classic in Princeton, N.J., his sixth top ten finish in 18 events. He took home \$90,000 this weekend, thrusting him up one place to eighth on the year's Money List at \$766,906. Thorpe is headed to Boston this week for the Fleet Boston Classic at the Nashawtuc Country Club in Concord.

PGA.com Photo

THORPE: Fourth place finish at Instinet Classic raises 2001 total winnings to \$766,906.

Contract at heart of SWAC, Washington split

LUT WILLIAMS
BCSP Editor

The battle between ousted **Southwestern Athletic Conference** Commissioner **Rudy Washington** and the conference's Council of Presidents could come down to whether a judge rules Washington's unsigned contract is valid.

That could hinge on where the judge rules the contract originated and, even then, which of its provisions are binding.

Washington's lawyers contend that the contract, drafted but never signed in 1998 when the conference office was in New Orleans, constitutes an oral agreement under Louisiana law.

The SWAC counters through its

attorneys that, because the contract was never signed, there was not a "meeting of the minds" over the specific terms of his employment and under Alabama law Washington could be fired "at-will."

Those interpretations will primarily be at issue July 10 in Jefferson County (AL) Circuit Court when Judge Jack Carl hears the SWAC's motion to dismiss Washington's lawsuit against the conference.

The conference filed the motion June 14 following Washington's May 17 suit asking the judge to order that he be reinstated as commissioner.

If Judge Carl grants the conference's motion, Washington's suit is over. If he does not grant it, the SWAC has ten days to file an answer to the suit.

The conference office relocated from New Orleans to Birmingham last year thus producing the arguments on which state has jurisdiction. Washington, after being placed on leave in late April, was notified in writing on May 4 in a letter from Council President, **Dr. Clinton Bristow**, that his employment would end June 8. A memo attached to the termination letter listed a host of financial and management issues for his firing.

SWAC attorney Kenneth L. Thomas said from his office Tuesday in Birmingham, that Washington did send a contract to conference officials in May of 1998 before he began employment on July 1 of that year. That contract included a salary of \$135,000 for Washington.

While saying he did not know why

the contract was never signed, he did say it contained provisions, such as first class travel for Washington and his spouse, that were against existing conference practices. He also said the contract had no provisions for termination.

Thomas said the contract was never consummated and though Washington began work, he was an employee "at-will," meaning the conference could fire him at any time for any cause. Thomas said it was Washington's responsibility to make sure a signed contract was in place.

Washington's attorney John Falkenberg of Birmingham said he looked at the issue of which state had jurisdiction before filing the suit and he believes, according to Louisiana law, that the parties have a verbal contract.

Williams looking for NBA opportunity

LUT WILLIAMS
BCSP Editor

Hampton University's six-foot, eight-inch senior center **Tarvis Williams** did just about all he could do in his college career to show he was ready to play on the next level.

He led the nation in blocked shots three straight years. He improved his scoring average each year of the three he played. He capped his career this season averaging 21 points, six rebounds and 4.6 blocked shots to lead his team to the **Mid Eastern Athletic Conference** title and garner regular season and tournament most valuable player awards.

He then vaulted himself into the national headlines when he sank the shot heard around the country, a four-footer in the last seven seconds of the game as the 15th seeded Pirates pulled off a thrilling, come-from-behind upset win over second seed Iowa State in a Midwest Regional first round tournament game in March.

Though the Pirates bowed out in the next round against Georgetown - where Williams had another good game - Hampton and particularly their soft-spoken leader, made a lasting impression on a lot of hearts and minds, including a lot of pro scouts.

That was before the season ended and a record number of underclassmen and high schoolers decided they would make early entry to the NBA's June 27 Draft. Since then, Williams has played in the first pro camp, the Portsmouth (Va.) Invitational, where he didn't play particularly well, and concentrated on individual workouts.

"Sure, it's affected my draft status," Williams said of the early entrants Tuesday while taking a break from a workout in Las Vegas. He is at UNLV working on his game with one of the high schoolers, Tony Key of Kentucky. They are both represented by Las Vegas-based agent, Ron Delpit, who also represents Southern Cal guard Jeff Trepagnier.

"Without them (the underclassmen and high school players), I'm sure I would have gone earlier. Now, I don't know where I'll go. I think I'll definitely go in the second round. But I think they have mostly affected the seniors, like me."

Indeed, even the top-rated seniors like Duke's Shane Battier and Arizona's Loren Woods have been



WILLIAMS: Sinking the winning shot in first round NCAA tournament game against Iowa State, now looking for shot in NBA.

pushed back from the top of draft lists in favor of the youngsters. Williams, this year's top black college NBA prospect by a long shot, says all he's looking for is an opportunity.

He changed agents recently from former Wake Forest and NBA player Delaney Rudd's Courtside Management to Delpit because he said Rudd seemed to be more focused on him playing overseas. Williams says Delpit, who has relationships with NBA teams going back to the days of Wilt Chamberlain, knows a lot of NBA general managers.

"I wanted to see what I could do over here first," said Williams who made the change about three weeks ago. "I wanted to get an opportunity and make the best of it. As long as I get an opportunity, I'll be fine."

The Charlotte Hornets came to Las Vegas to work him out and he's worked out at Phoenix and Denver. He's scheduled to work out again for the Hornets in Charlotte and has sessions scheduled in Boston,

Orlando and New York before next week's draft.

Phoenix, who does not have a first round pick, has expressed the most interest. They reportedly told him that if he's available with the 51st selection, they'll take him.

Williams says he's been working on his ball-handling and shooting skills. Though among the best at blocking shots, he's still listed at only six-eight, 210 pounds, and may be even shorter. But he plays much bigger because of a huge wing span and quick jumping ability.

"I've been told that they are looking at me as a two or three," said Williams, referring to either the shooting guard or small forward spots. "I've been working on taking one, two or three dribbles and then shooting pull-ups. I'd also like to get up to about 230."

His college coach, **Hampton's Steve Merfeld**, feels he has something that's hard to come by.

"What sticks out with Tarvis is his ability to block shots," Merfeld said, comparing him to former Philadelphia and current Atlanta shot blocker, **Theo Ratliff**. "That can't be taught. That's just his natural ability. There are not too many of those around and quite a few have made a living doing that. It's his timing, and his ability to go up two or three times in succession and bounce like he does."

"His upside is he has NBA athletic ability. The downside is he didn't, out of necessity, get a chance to play on the perimeter with us. That's what he has to work on. And the fact that he doesn't have the size or body weight to bang with the NBA centers like Shaq, and even Mutombo."

Merfeld was also not surprised that Williams didn't play well in Portsmouth.

"He's not going to play well in those settings because to do so you've got to be selfish, and Tarvis is not selfish," said Merfeld.

Unselfishness, special skills with the determination and desire to work hard have made NBA mainstays of several former black college players. **Virginia Union's Ben Wallace**, now a defensive and rebounding force for the Detroit Pistons, and **Fayetteville State's Darrell Armstrong**, a top-notch lead guard for the Orlando Magic, are two examples.

Williams combines many of those same traits. Here's hoping he gets a chance to prove it.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

TIM O'NEAL'S SCORES AND FINISH IN THE BUY.COM GREATER CLEVELAND OPEN

Heath Slocum	1	64-66-69-68	267	\$76,500.00
Ryuji Imada	2	66-64-66-72	268	\$45,900.00
Jim Benepe	3	66-66-68-70	270	\$28,900.00
Jay Hobby	4	69-66-66-70	271	\$20,400.00
Mike Brisky	5	67-67-67-72	273	\$17,000.00
Todd Barranger	T6	69-69-69-68	275	\$14,768.75
Anthony Painter	T6	74-67-67-67	275	\$14,768.75
Danny Briggs	T8	70-68-68-70	276	\$12,750.00
Darron Stiles	T8	71-67-67-71	276	\$12,750.00
Andrew McLardy	T10	66-70-70-71	277	\$11,050.00
Rob McMillan	T10	69-69-65-74	277	\$11,050.00
Paul Claxton	12	66-71-66-75	278	\$9,775.00
Keoke Cotner	T13	71-69-70-69	279	\$6,847.23
TIM O'NEAL	T13	66-71-72-70	279	\$6,847.23
Rob Bradley	T13	65-73-68-73	279	\$6,847.22
Ben Curtis	T13	70-67-70-72	279	\$6,847.22
Bob Friend	T13	66-70-70-73	279	\$6,847.22
Jeff Gove	T13	69-69-71-70	279	\$6,847.22
Rob McKelvey	T13	70-67-69-73	279	\$6,847.22
Jeff Sanday	T13	68-68-72-71	279	\$6,847.22
Sonny Skinner	T13	74-67-67-71	279	\$6,847.22

BCSP Notes

Stitt expected to take over at Winston-Salem State

The athletic department at **Winston-Salem State University** has called a press conference for Wednesday, June 20 and is expected to announce **Phillip Stitt** as the school's interim men's head basketball coach.

Stitt served as the top assistant under head coach **Rick Duckett** for the last three years in the Rams' program and also served under Duckett at **Fayetteville State**. Duckett, who left WSSU last month to take an assistant's position at South Carolina under former Wake Forest coach Dave Odom, had endorsed Stitt for the WSSU head coach's job.

The WSSU program has grown to prominence in the **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association**, winning back-to-back titles in 1999 and 2000 and advancing to the NCAA Div. II regionals in all three of Duckett's seasons.

Delaware State Hires New Baseball Coach

Delaware State Director of Athletics **Dr. Hallie Gregory** has announced that **Jean-Paul "J.P." Blandin** has agreed to a three-year contract as the university's head baseball coach. Under the contract, Blandin will guide the Hornets through the 2004 season. Blandin, 31, led the Hornets to a 37-10 overall record and a third consecutive **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC)** Northern Division championship as interim head coach during the 2001 season. The 37 wins were a single-season record for the team. The Hornets were 17-1 in MEAC North games.



STITT



MARTIN



BLANDIN

Martin Earns Baseball All-American Status

Delaware State third baseman **Scott Martin** (so, Middletown HS/Middletown, DE) has been selected to the 2001 American Baseball Coaches Association (ABCA)/Rawlings Division I All-America Third Team, the first DSU player to earn All-America recognition. Martin, a 2001 ABCA/Rawlings All-East First Team selection, led all Division I players in runs batted in, averaging 1.75 per game. He was also 10th in the nation in batting (.432) and 15th in doubles (0.44 per game). The right-handed slugger set Delaware State single-season records with 16 home runs and 77 RBI during the 2001 season. His slugging percentage of .870 was also a DSU all-time high. Martin, who led the Hornets to an all-time best 37-10 record this past season, was also named 2001 Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Player-of-the-Year. In addition, he was selected to the All-ECAC First Team and All-Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) First Team.