

FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 20 THROUGH AUGUST 26, 1996

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE

SHIFTIN' INTO HIGH GEAR

HAMPTON, GRAMBLING, NEW COMMISH AMONG THOSE FACING NEW CHALLENGES
HOMECOMINGS, CLASSICS & TV



Hampton U. Sports Photo TAYLOR: His Pirates face a formidable MEAC and Classic schedule.

Important shifts to mark 1996 grid season

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With no visible Heisman candidate and no 400-victory milestone to reach, there appears to be no clear cut lead story for the 1996 black college football season

Instead, a lot of important questions are up to be answered related to shifts in the game.

1) Is legendary Grambling coach Eddie Robinson about to shift downward losing some luster off his sterling career through a damning NCAA investigation?

2) Is Hampton up to the challenge of a shift to a full NCAA Div. I-AA/Mid Eastern Athletic Conference schedule? Are the Spartans of Norfolk State prepared to make a similar shift upward?

3) Will changes at the head coaching position shift Tennessee State, Tuskegee and Morgan State back into the upper echelon of their respective conferences?

4) Is new commissioner Charles S. Harris the man to take the Mid Eastern Athletic Conference to the next level now that he has the commissioner's chair?

These are just a few lingering questions as the 104th year of black college football begins.

With Hampton out and Norfolk State nearly out, Virginia State could be poised to shift into the front seat of the CIAA. The Trojans took the league title a year ago and look to land their first ever NCAA Div. II playoff spot.

Robinson's Tigers may be on a free fall downward. Despite getting Coach Rob's 400th victory last year, the G-Men could only muster a 5-6 record, the Coach's sixth losing record in 55 years. This year prognosticators have picked Grambling to finish in the middle of the Southwestern Athletic Conference pack. Meanwhile, the NCAA has announced an investigation of the

school for changing grades of 75 student/athletes over the last two years. Robinson says it's no big deal but some say it could cost him some of those 400+ victories.

Shifting into head coaching positions are seven newcomers, five of whom are beginning their head coaching careers while two have moved over from other programs.

Rick Comey left Central State an NAIA championship last season before moving to Tuskegee while Joe Crosby returns to the SIAC at Morris Brown following a controversial departure from Savannah State. First-time head coaches are in place at Tennessee State (L. C. Cole), Morgan State (LaVonja "Stump" Mitchell), Central State (Jack Busch), West Virginia State (Carl Lee) and Elizabeth City State (Elisha Harris).

With a television deal in place and all the makings of an exciting race in his conference, it looks as if Harris' first year as MEAC commish will get off to a good start. He's also fortunate to have Norfolk State waiting in the wings to join the conference and a deal already in place

UPS AND DOWNS. SMILES AND FROWNS: While Virginia State head coach Lou Anderson ponders a move up to the NCAA Div. II playoffs, legendary Grambling head coach Eddie Robinson has to deal with the downer of a looming NCAA investigation.

to take the conference basketball tournament to NSU's campus this Spring. Harris brings a resume loaded with big-time college administrative experience but it's former commish Ken Free's work he inherits. Whether Hampton is a con-

tender or pretender should be apparent by early October. Joe Taylor's troops face Howard, NC A&T, Virginia State and Florida A&M on successive weekends. It was Howard that rudely welcomed them to I-AA play last season.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

DISSED: First it was Hampton and Grambling set for the 19th Whitney Young Urban League Classic at the Meadowlands, Sept. 28. That was before Eddie Robinson's Tigers found they had also scheduled Prairie View on the same date. So defending NAIA champion Central State was invited to replace Grambling. But wait a minute! Last week New York Urban League officials, citing recent negative publicity related to CSU, sent a letter to Athletic Director Ken Hudson, officially dis-inviting the Marauders. Spokesperson Anna Taylor-Clarke says the decision is "embarrassing ... a crushing blow and ... a slap in the face" given the fact that the school is "responding to current challenges." She said the institution is examining their options. The Wilberforce, Ohio school has endured the resignation of its board of trustees, a president's firing and the condemnation of all nine dormitories by the Fire Marshall recently in the wake of an \$8 million budget deficit. Ohio Gov. George Voinovich has pledged to keep the school open. For now, pencil in defending Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association champ Virginia State for the game that usually draws over 60,000 to the New Jersey meadow.

TV GAME OF THAT WEEK: Television returns to black college football this year, (or is it black college football returns to television). Regardless of how you look at it, there's almost a black college television game of the week scheduled for the 1996 football season. This year it's a combination of BET, ABC and CIAA telecasts on the tube. Here's the schedule with at least two games (one ABC game and another CIAA telecast) to be added.

- SATURDAY, AUG. 31 - Norfolk State vs. Virginia State (Labor Day Classic, CIAA Regional)
SATURDAY, SEPT., 14 - Tenn. State vs. Jackson State (Southern Heritage Classic, BET)
SATURDAY, SEPT., 28 - Virginia State vs. Hampton (Whitney Young Classic, BET)
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 - W-S State vs. NC Central (Durham, NC - CIAA Regional)
SATURDAY, SEPT., 14 - Hampton vs. Florida A&M (Circle City Classic, BET)
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 - Southern vs. Jackson State (Baton Rouge, LA, ABC)
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9 - Southern vs. Florida A&M (Baton Rouge, LA, ABC)

The homecoming menu

The objective is to win your homecoming game, maybe that's why Bethune-Cookman and Knoxville have the most homecoming appearances in 1996.

BCC finished 3-8 a year ago, while Knoxville managed only one win in 12 games. They each have four homecoming dates this year.

Opponents better watch out for BCC. They are developing a reputation for ruining the festive affairs. Two years ago they upset North Carolina A&T's homecoming, and had two-point losses to South Carolina State and Howard on their special days. Last year they pulled the cover off the SIAC champion Albany State Rams, 40-28 on their homecoming.

Table listing homecoming games with dates, teams, and times. Includes dates from September 21, 1996 to November 16, 1996.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

FINAL 1995 INDIVIDUAL OFFENSIVE STATS

Table of rushing and passing stats for 1995. Columns include Name, G, AT, YDS, AV, TD, YPG for rushing and Name, G, A, C, INT, TD, YDS, YPG for passing.

Table of receiving stats for 1995. Columns include Name, G, R, YDS, TD, R/G, YDS/G.

Table of scoring stats for 1995. Columns include Name, G, TD, X, 2X, PTS, P/G.

RETURNING PLAYERS IN BOLD

THE WAY THEY FINISHED IN 1995 - FINAL CONFERENCE STANDINGS, YEARLY HONORS AND BCSP POLL

Summary of final conference standings for BCSP, CIAA, MEAC, SIAC, SWAC, and Independents. Includes BCSP Final Poll and lists of outstanding performers.