

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



MLB.com Photo

MAN WITH A PLAN: Solomon's initiatives include a new baseball series matching Southern and Bethune-Cookman with UCLA and USC.

DIAMOND GEMS

▼ TEXAS SOUTHERN MAKES HOOPS COACHING CHANGE; MURPHY INTERESTED

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

COURTNEY OUT AT TSU: Texas Southern Athletics Director Alois Blackwell announced



TSU Sports Photo

COURTNEY: Released after seven years leading Texas Southern men's basketball.

last week that **Ronnie Courtney** has been released as head coach of the men's basketball program. Courtney had led the Tigers' basketball program for seven seasons with an overall record of 76-99. Texas Southern was 14-17 overall and 9-9 in the SWAC last season. He and his teams made four trips to the **Southwestern Athletic Conference** (SWAC) Championship Tournament. His 2002-2003 team was the SWAC tournament champions and went on to compete in the NCAA Tournament play-in game against UNC-Asheville. Men's Basketball Assistant Coaches **John Howie** and **Keith Berard** were also released. "Courtney did a good job for us here...his most successful season coming in his second year," said Blackwell. "However, we believe that it is time to move in a different direction under new leadership." The search for a new men's basketball head coach is to begin immediately.

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MURPHY INTERESTED IN TSU JOB:

According to a television report, former Houston Rockets star Calvin Murphy is interested in becoming the next head coach of the **Texas Southern** men's basketball program. TSU Athletic Director **Alois Blackwell** said the school wants to talk to Murphy, 59, about the opening and Murphy, who has never coached college basketball, said he wanted the job. "I can take TSU to the next level -- no question," Murphy told KRIV. Murphy played for the Rockets first in San Diego and then in Houston from 1970-83. He averaged 17.9 points and 4.4 assists and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1993. He still holds the NBA's single-season free-throw shooting record for shooting 96 percent in 1980-81. In 2004, Murphy was cleared by a jury of charges he sexually abused five of his daughters. He worked as a TV analyst for Rockets broadcasts from 1989 until 2004 when his contract was not renewed following the charges.

GRAMBLING BAND ON ESPN:

The famed **Grambling State University Marching Band** helped ESPN kick off its new college football show, "College Football Live," with an appearance on the network Monday. The band worked an earlier segment of the noted SportsCenter show demonstrating dance moves to guest hosts Mike Greenberg and Mike Golic before appearing with Rece Davis, Lee Corso and Kirk Herbstreit on the new show that debuted Monday afternoon. The 30-minute show will air Monday thru Friday at 3:30 p.m.

ERNIE BANKS SIGNS: Norfolk State



BANKS

Florida Marlins this past weekend and will report to the team's rookie league complex in Jupiter, Fla., later this week. Banks was selected by the Marlins in the 44th round of the 2007 Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft in June. "I just want to thank everyone in the athletics department at Norfolk State, especially my coaches and (Athletics Director) **Marty**

Miller, for making this possible," Banks said. "It's always been a dream of mine to play professional baseball." "We wish Ernie nothing but the best as he takes the next step in his playing career," NSU head coach **Claudell Clark** said. "He was a great player for us and I'm sure he'll do well at the next level." Banks (6-4, 215) was the first Spartan baseball player drafted since Clark was picked in the 28th round of the 2001 draft by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Overall, Banks was the 20th Spartan to be drafted by MLB. Banks, who just completed his junior season, was a two-time All-MEAC first team selection (2006 and 2007) and a two-time MEAC All-Tournament Team pick (2005 and 2007). This past season, he batted .363 with 13 doubles, two triples, two homers and 34 RBI. He also drew a team-leading 34 walks, and ranked second in the MEAC with a .475 on-base percentage. He also tied for seventh in the conference in batting.

Southern, B-CC part of MLB initiative

Black college diamond powers to be showcased in Los Angeles in February 2008

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

There have been plenty of stories and much discussion about the lack of African-American players in Major League Baseball. For the last several years, **Southern** head coach **Roger Cador** has been busy trying to do something about it.

In addition to running one of the best and most talented programs in black college baseball that has dominated play in the **Southwestern Athletic Conference** with a roster full of African-Americans, Cador has also worked closely with Major League Baseball officials speaking around the country on programs like his and the obstacles they face in attracting those players.



CADOR

Cador has spoken yearly on symposiums at black college venues covering the topic with the likes of Hall of Famer and home run king Hank Aaron, Hall of Famer Dave Parker, former San Francisco Giants star outfielder Bobby Bonds, the late father of current baseball star Barry Bonds, former Oakland A's World Series hero Dave Stewart, former Minnesota Twins pitching ace Jim "Mudcat" Grant and former Atlanta Braves hitting star Ralph Garr among others. After his death, the symposiums were named for Bobby Bonds.

Now, Cador - who has the only three black college players currently in the Major Leagues - in association with MLB, will have his program showcased another way next year.

The Jaguars will join **Mid Eastern Athletic Conference** power **Bethune-Cookman** in a series of games dubbed the **Freedom Games** to be staged in Los Angeles in late February or early March 2008 against big-time programs at UCLA and Southern Cal. **Mervyl Melendez** is the head coach at B-CC who has won nine of the last ten MEAC titles.

"This has never been done before," said Cador of the idea whose genesis came from Jimmie Lee Solomon, the highest-ranking African-American in Major League Baseball and a participant with Cador in several of the forums. As Executive Vice President of On-field Operations, Solomon is currently the No. 3 man in the league behind Commissioner Bud Selig and President of Baseball Operations Bob Dupuy.

"This is huge," said Cador, who credits



Chicago White Sox photo

HAMILTON: Former big leaguer and Baton Rouge native working with Major League Baseball to return African-Americans to a game they once populated.

Solomon with "doing more in three years (since he's been in the position) than had been done in the last 150 years."

"The Freedom Games will bring attention to the fact that not a lot of African-Americans are playing college baseball," said Darryl Hamilton, a 13-year Major League veteran who currently works under Solomon as Senior Specialist for On-field Operations with Major League Baseball.

Solomon played football at Dartmouth before earning a law degree at Harvard and is credited with founding the Futures Game, a matchup staged during Major League Baseball's All-Star Game break which showcases up-and-coming baseball talent and has become nearly as big a draw as the all-star game itself.

Solomon also championed the Major League Baseball Urban Youth Academy in Compton, Ca., an inner-city program run by Darrell Miller, the brother of NBA star Reggie and women's basketball star Cheryl Miller, that imparts knowledge, gives opportunities to play and teaches skills to underprivileged kids. According to Solomon, the Academy is drawing interest from a host of major league clubs that are contemplating similar facilities in their cities.

"I think that now that many of the players and the clubs know what we are trying to do here, from a grassroots level, here in Compton and with the RBI program [Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities] across the country, many clubs have decided that they want to bring the academy concept to their backyards," Solomon said in a recent MLB.com story. "We have the (Texas) Rangers, who are planning an academy for them-

selves. The Houston Astros, Philadelphia Phillies, Florida Marlins, Boston Red Sox and Washington Nationals are all planning an academy. I think soon you will have baseball academies in the shadows of a lot of ballparks."

Solomon also started the first "Civil Rights Game" in March of this year, an exhibition game played in Memphis, home to the National Civil Rights Museum and the city where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in 1968. The game was played between the World Champion St. Louis Cardinals and Cleveland Indians and was carried on ESPN.

Hamilton grew up in Baton Rouge, La., also the home of Cador's Jaguars, and is quite familiar with Southern University baseball. He was not recruited by Southern out of high school but attended Nichols State, another Louisiana school.

"If Coach Cador had been there, I would probably have attended Southern," said Hamilton whose parents both attended Southern. Hamilton's father, John Hamilton, was a Baton Rouge area high school baseball coach who was at one time up for the Southern head coaching job before Cador arrived.

Hamilton, who played for five teams in a 13-year career in the big leagues, says things have changed since the time he came up.

"African-Americans are not around like they were then," said Hamilton. "When I came up it was common for players to lay the groundwork for the youngsters, school them. I was mentored by the players that came before me. They showed you the ropes and what to watch out for. All the black players stuck together. And it was known that your job was to pass this on to someone else."

Now, because of so much competition for their jobs, the black players are not "sticking together," Hamilton said. Current statistics indicate that just 8.4 percent of major leaguers are black, down from 27 percent in 1975.

The **Freedom Games** are just one more effort to return young African-American athletes to a game they once all but dominated. Though the principals have not yet determined a specific date for the Games, plans call for national television coverage.

"I'm excited," said Cador, who attended this year's Futures Game and sat with Hall of Famer, Frank Robinson. "These are the kinds of things we needed to be doing and now we have Major League Baseball behind it. Now we have people in positions to get these things done. I think it's a great opportunity."

BCSP Notes

Preseason SIAC football picks unveiled

The **SIAC** Football Coaches Association's picks for the 2007 season were unveiled July 20 at the conference's annual Preseason Kickoff Luncheon.

The preseason all-SIAC team highlighted 29 returning players selected to the first and second teams. They included all but two first team honorees from last season. **Alabama State** was selected as the favorite to win its fifth consecutive conference title followed by **Tuskegee**, **Fort Valley State**, **Clark Atlanta** and **Lane**.

Sherard Ellis, a junior quarterback for Lane leads a list of nine Dragons named to the preseason all-SIAC teams including five named to the first team. **Tuskegee** finished a close second with eight players picked.

"Remember that coaches made these predictions," said **Stillman** head coach **Greg Thompson** in noting how spurious their predictions are. "Last year they picked us to finish seventh and we finished fourth."

The SIAC also welcomed new coaches, **Stan Connor** of **Benedict** and **Rich Freeman** of **Morehouse** to the conference. Connor comes to Benedict from former SIAC (now **SWAC** member) **Alabama A&M** and reflected on his time as a player when the Bulldogs were members of the conference. Freeman left **Lane**, where he was assistant head coach and defensive coordinator for the Dragons last year, to take over the Maroon Tiger program.

2007 PRESEASON ALL-SIAC FOOTBALL TEAM

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

QB - Sherard Ellis, Jr., Lane; **RB** - Elijah Clark, Sr., Benedict; Jeremy Spears, Sr., Miles; **WR** - Jerome Bryant, Sr., Kentucky State; Virgil Union, Sr., Lane; **TE** - Earnest Everett, Jr., Morehouse; **OL** - Jonathan Didier, Sr., Clark Atlanta; Nartavore Mitchell, Sr., Kentucky State; Stanley Wright, Jr., Benedict; Joseph Williams, So., Morehouse; Anthony Driver, Sr., Tuskegee

DEFENSE

DL - Curtis Johnson, Sr., Clark Atlanta; Donny Wilcher, Sr., Benedict; James Cooper, Sr., Lane; Clifford Stanford, Sr., Lane; **LB** - Michael Porter, Sr., Clark Atlanta; Alex Dumeus, Sr., Stillman; Brandon Parnell, Sr., Miles **DB** - Carl Spellman, Sr., Benedict; Ivan Diggs, Sr., Fort Valley State; Denatay Heard, Sr., Stillman; Harvey Scott, Sr., Lane

SPECIAL TEAMS

KR - Jerome Bryant, Sr., Kentucky State; **PR** - Denatay Heard, Sr., Stillman; **PK** - Jake Grubbs, Jr., Fort Valley State; **P** - Brandon Larkin, Sr., Clark Atlanta

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

QB - Charles McCullum, Sr., SC; **RB** - Gary Neavins, So., ASU; Richard Fitzhugh Sr., TU; **WR** - Lorenzo Crawford, Sr., TU; Ed Williams, Sr., LC; **TE** - Jarell Hall, So., FVUSU; **OL** - James Jenkins, Jr., KSU; Ramon Harwood, So., MHC; Lary Peoples, Sr., TU; Kevin Jones, Sr., TU; Eric Mortinear, So., LC

DEFENSE

DL - Anthony Richardson, Sr., KSU; Jason Marshall, Sr., ASU; Sammi Hill, Jr., SC; Anthony Clayton, So., LC; **LB** - Jonathan Hall, So., TU; Roderick Cummings, Jr., ASU; Clifton Sanders, Jr., TU; **DB** - Leo Spears, Sr., LC; Deaveon McCord, Sr., SC; Terrance Stringer, Sr., TU; Jarrod Simpson, Sr., TU

SPECIAL TEAMS

KR - Brian Witherspoon, Sr., SC; **PR** - Jason Marshall, Sr., ASU; **PK** - Mauricio Garcia, Sr., KSU; **P** - Randy Allen, Sr., ASU

Joe, Kendall enter College Football HOF

Former **Florida A&M** head football coach **William "Billy" Joe** and former **Kentucky State** star quarterback **Joe Kendall** were formally inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame, during enshrinement ceremonies, July 19-21, in South Bend, Indiana.

Joe and Kendall, who was honored posthumously, were among six honorees in this year's Hall of Fame Divisional Class for 2007

Nicknamed "Tarzan" for his athletic prowess, Kendall dominated black college football in the 1930s while leading Kentucky State to a national championship in 1934. He led the Thorobreds to a 1935 Orange Blossom Classic victory over Florida A&M en route to an impressive 29-7-3 overall record during his playing years.

A three-time First Team All-America selection from 1934-36 by the **Pittsburgh Courier**, Kendall is the first person in KSU history to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. He was inducted into the Kentucky State Athletics Hall of Fame in 1975.

Following his player career, Kendall served as a coach, teacher and school principal. As a result of his significant contributions as a recreational director in Owensboro, Ky., a park was named in his honor.

Few coaches can match the unparalleled gridiron success of Joe's storied career. Having captured seven National Black College Football Championships and two NAIA national titles, he entered the College Football Hall of Fame as one of the most highly decorated black college football coaches in history.

Joe's 237 career victories place him fourth on the Football Championship Subdivision's all-time winningest coaches ranks and position him second only to the legendary **Eddie Robinson** in the black college football standings.

At Florida A&M, he led the Rattlers to an unprecedented five **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** (MEAC) titles, while garnering three of the conference's Coach of the Year accolades. He also spent ten consecutive seasons in the NAIA playoffs while at **Central State**.

Throughout his 31 years as a head coach, Joe compiled 26 winning seasons and coached five Black College National Players of the Year. Highly respected among his peers, he served as vice president of the American Football Coaches Association in 1993 and was elected president of the organization in 1995.

The 2007 class includes:

PLAYERS

Tracy Ham - QB, Georgia Southern, 1983-86

Joe Kendall - QB, **Kentucky State**, 1934-36

Frank Sheptock - LB, Bloomsburg (Pa.), 1982-85

Jessie Tuggle - LB, Valdosta State (Ga.), 1983-86

COACHES

Jim Christopherson - Concordia College (Minn.) (1969-2000), 218-101-7

William "Billy" Joe - **Florida A&M** (1994-2004), **Central State** (Ohio)

(1981-93), **Cheyney (Pa.)** (1972-78), 237-108-4