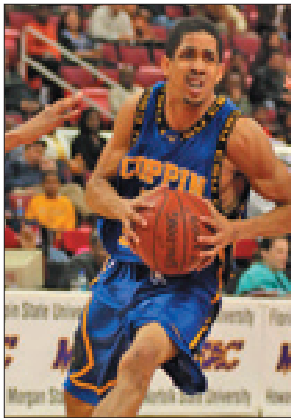


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SPORTS



Carroll Smith Photo

QUESTS BEGIN, CONTINUE

FOUR TEAMS IN NCAAs, FOUR IN NITs; BENEDICT LONE SURVIVOR IN NCAA D2

McKEE: After willing Coppin State to MEAC title, senior leads Eagles into NCAAs.

FINALS RECAPS

SWAC WOMEN

Jackson State 63, Prairie View 61

Jackson State's Tournament MVP **Erica Trahan** came back from an ankle injury to lead the Lady Tigers past defending champion and top-seed **Prairie View** in the SWAC title game in Birmingham.

Trahan's 17 points and 12 rebounds were key as second-seeded JSU held off a Prairie View comeback that began when she left the game with 14 minutes left on a sprained ankle and her team up seven. Prairie View scored seven straight points to tie the game and then exchanged the lead six times down the stretch.

Point guard **LaSharee Christian** controlled the tempo for the Tigers (18-13) getting 11 points, 7 rebounds and 6 assists while playing all 40 minutes. **Shavonne Smith** had 18 points and **Chari Smith** 13 to lead the Lady Panthers (22-11).

SWAC MEN

Mississippi Valley State 59, Jackson State 58

Tournament MVP **Carl Lucas** made two clutch free throws with 0.4 seconds remaining in regulation to lift second-seeded **Mississippi Valley State** (18-13) to victory over fourth-seed **Jackson State** in the SWAC Tournament Championship game in Birmingham.

JSU, who eliminated top-seed **Alabama State** in the tournament semifinals, trailed 34-26 at the half but fought back to take its first lead at 54-53 on a **Darrion Griffin** 3-pointer with 1:17 left. MVSU's **Standford Speech** (6 points) hit one of two free throws with 16 seconds left to leave the Devils trailing 58-57. Lucas was then fouled going to the basket by **Jeremy Caldwell** and calmly sank both charity tosses.

Chris Watson was the only Delta Devil to score in double-digits, with 10 points. **Michael Clark** scored nine while **Larry Cox** and **Eric Petty** each added eight points and combined for nine rebounds. Griffin scored a game-high 24 points to lead JSU while Caldwell added 11 points and eight rebounds.

MEAC WOMEN

Coppin State 72, North Carolina A&T 70

Rashida Suber's drive from half-court and swooping basket with 3.8 seconds to go broke a late-game tie and gave second-seed **Coppin State** a tough win over top-seed **North Carolina A&T** in the MEAC women's championship in Raleigh (N.C.) Saturday afternoon.

The Eagles (22-11) trailed 32-25 at the break before mounting a second-half comeback to tie the game at 47 on Suber's 3-pointer with 11:32 left. From there, the teams exchanged the lead seven times and had five ties.

The final tie came when A&T's **Amber Bland** drained a three from the left side to tie the score at 70 with 25 ticks on the clock. Suber penetrated down the middle of the court before veering to the right for the underhanded scoop shot.

Suber had a game-high 19 points, **Danielle Anders** had 18 and **Oakley**, named the tournament's MVP, chipped in 14 points. Six-three center **Whitney Cunningham** had 15 points and 16 rebounds. A&T (25-7) was led by center **Lamona Smalley** who had 18 points before fouling out with 1:02 to play. **Bland** and **Ta'Wuana Cook** each had 10.

MEAC MEN

Coppin State 62, Morgan State 60

Seven-seeded **Coppin State** (16-20) completed a run thru the tournament in Raleigh knocking off top-seed **Morgan State** (22-10) in the title game on a shot by senior guard **Tywain McKee** with 2.4 seconds left.

McKee shot 12 of 20 from the field, was 6 of 8 from 3-point range and canned all three of his free throws in a brilliant performance that garnered him the tourney's MVP award. He was the leader and catalyst, averaging 23.2 points in the tourney including a season-high 33 in the championship game. No other Eagle scored in double figures in the final game.

MSU tied the game at 60 on two **Jermaine Bolden** free throws with 29.3 seconds left. McKee dribbled the clock down before launching his floating game-winner with 1.7 seconds left. **Reggie Holmes'** attempt as the clock expired clanked off the backboard and began the Eagles' celebration. **Marquise Kately**'s 21 and **Holmes'** 14 points led MSU who played without scoring leader and MEAC Player of the Year, **Jamar Smith** (foot).

Coppin State won four games over five days by a combined six points beating the Nos. 1 (MSU), 2 (Hampton, 75-74 in OT) and 3 (Norfolk St., 67-65) seeds after beating **Howard** (55-54).



Pedraic Major Photo

CHRISTIAN: Point guard played all 40 minutes in title game.



Pedraic Major Photo

SPEECH: One of eight MVSU players to score between 5 and 11 points.



Carroll Smith Photo

SUBER: Swoops in for game-winner vs. NC A&T.



Carroll Smith Photo

McKEE: Launches game-winner over MSU defenders..

MEAC & SWAC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS (Men's and Women's Results and Honors)

MEAC MEN

OPENING ROUND
Coppin State 55, Howard 54
SC State 78, Bethune-Cookman 69
Florida A&M 70, UMES 61

QUARTERFINALS
Coppin State 75, Hampton 74, OT
Morgan State 77, SC State 68
Norfolk State 69, Florida A&M 61
Delaware State 64, NC A&T 64

SEMIFINALS
Coppin State 67, Norfolk State 65
Morgan State 61, Delaware State 55

CHAMPIONSHIP
Coppin State 62, Morgan State 60

ALL TOURNAMENT TEAM
Tywain McKee, Coppin State
Boubacar Coly, Morgan State
Marquise Kately, Morgan State
Roy Bright, Delaware State
Tony Murphy, Norfolk State

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
Tywain McKee, Coppin State

MEAC WOMEN

OPENING ROUND
SC State 68, Bethune-Cookman 45
Florida A&M 69, Howard 59
Morgan State 86, Norfolk State 65

QUARTERFINALS
NC A&T 76, Florida A&M 65
Coppin State 64, SC State 51
Delaware St. 67, Morgan St. 49
Hampton 56, UMES 49

SEMIFINALS
NC A&T 74, Hampton 71
Coppin St. 63, Delaware St. 56

CHAMPIONSHIP
Coppin State 72, NC A&T 70

ALL TOURNAMENT TEAM
Rashida Suber, Coppin State
Shalamar Oakley, Coppin State
Lamona Smalley, NC A&T
Rachel Butler, Hampton
Phycia Jones, Morgan State

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
Shalamar Oakley, Coppin State

SWAC MEN

QUARTERFINALS
Miss. Valley St. 79, Grambling 73
Alabama St. 67, Texas Southern 49
Arkansas-PB 72, Alabama A&M 59
Jackson St. 56, Southern 55

SEMIFINALS
Miss. Valley St. 70, Arkansas-PB 59
Jackson St. 77, Alabama St. 72, OT

CHAMPIONSHIP
Miss. Valley State 59, Jackson St. 58

ALL TOURNAMENT TEAM
Carl Lucas, Miss. Valley State
Darrion Griffin, Jackson State
Larry Cox, Miss. Valley State
Jeremy Caldwell, Jackson State
Andrew Hayles, Alabama State

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
Carl Lucas, Miss. Valley State

SWAC WOMEN

QUARTERFINALS
Jackson State 62, Alcorn State 51
Prairie View 74, Alabama State 57
Miss. Valley St. 67, Alabama A&M 61
Arkansas-PB 64, Southern 55

SEMIFINALS
Jackson State 69, Miss. Valley St. 62
Prairie View 83, Arkansas-PB 70

CHAMPIONSHIP
Jackson State 63, Prairie View 61

ALL TOURNAMENT TEAM
LaSharee Christian, Jackson State
Erica Trahan, Jackson State
Shavonne Smith, Prairie View
Delores Hughley, Arkansas-Pine Bluff
Portia Wilson, Miss. Valley State

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER
Erica Trahan, Jackson State

Upstarts punch tickets to Big Dance

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

Twos were wild Saturday as three second-seeded teams took home championships in men's and women's SWAC and MEAC tournaments and earned automatic berths to this week's NCAA play-offs.

The **Jackson State** women and **Mississippi Valley State** men in the SWAC and the **Coppin State** women in the MEAC all wound their way to their titles from *No. 2* seedings (See FINALS RECAPS).

Twos were even wilder for Coppin State.

The Coppin State men prevailed in the MEAC tournament from a seventh-seeding giving the Eagles *two* teams going to NCAA Tournaments. Perhaps even more ironic is that both men's and women's team won their titles by *two* points, on shots in the final seconds by senior guards who both wear #22 - the Lady Eagles' **Rashida Suber** and the Eagles' **Tywain McKee**.

The men's win returns the Eagles and 21-year head coach **Ron "Fang" Mitchell** to the Big Dance for the fourth time overall (1990, '93, '97) and the first time in over a decade.

It was in '97 that the 15th-seeded Eagles pulled off one of the biggest upsets in tournament history knocking off second-seeded and sixth-ranked South Carolina 78-65 in the East Regional. Then, with a chance to be the first black college team to reach the Sweet 16, Mitchell's Eagles lost a 82-81 heartbreaker to Texas.

This year, the Eagles are in the tournament's play-in game in Dayton, Ohio Tuesday (8 p.m., ESPN) against a somewhat familiar opponent in in-state neighbor Mount Saint Mary's, winner of the Northeast Conference tournament.

The Mount is coached by former **Howard** standout **Milan Brown**, who in his fifth season. Brown, who had his jersey retired at Howard in 2005, was a standout point guard on the 1992 Bison team that was the last to win the MEAC Tournament and a berth in the NCAAs. As a player, Brown competed all four of his years against teams coached by Mitchell. Brown replaced legendary coach Jim Phelan who had led The Mount for 49 years and had taken them to the NCAA Tournament on two occasions (1995 and '99).

Both coaches bring their teams in on hot streaks. The Mount (18-14) has won eight of its last nine games and knocked off NEC top seed Robert Morris in the semifinals of the conference tournament before defeat-

NCAA TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE	
MEN PLAY-IN	
Tues., March 18 - Dayton, OH	
Coppin State (12-20) vs. Mount St. Mary's (18-14)	8p
WEST REGIONAL	
Thur., March 20 - Anaheim, CA	
(1) UCLA (31-3) vs. (16) Miss. Valley St. (17-15)	9:55p
EAST REGIONAL	
Fri., March 21 - Raleigh, NC	
(1) North Carolina (32-2) vs. (16) Coppin St./Mt. St. Mary's :7:10p	
WOMEN	
NEW ORLEANS REGIONAL	
Sat, March 22 - Baton Rouge, LA	
(15) Jackson State (18-13) at (2) LSU (27-5)	10p
SPOKANE REGIONAL	
Sun., March 23 - College Park, MD	
(16) Coppin State (22-11) at (1) Maryland (30-3)	2:30p

DANCIN'



TAYLOR



GREEN



BROWN



MITCHELL

Lawrence Johnson, All-Pro Photo

Head coach **Derek Brown** returns his Coppin State women (22-11) to the NCAAs for the third time in four years and will be making his fourth straight postseason appearance. After first round NCAA losses in 2005 and '06, his Lady Eagles got a win in the first round of last season's WNIT Tournament over St. Joseph's before falling to South Florida in the second round.

They are seeded 16th this season in the women's Spokane Regional and will also face an in-state neighbor in top-seed Maryland (30-3) Sunday (2:30 p.m.) on the Lady Terrapins campus in College Park, Md.

Mississippi Valley State (17-15) received a 16th seed in the West Regional and has to travel to Anaheim, Ca., to face the region's top seed, UCLA (31-3). The Bruins/Delta Devils matchup is set for Thursday at 9:55 p.m. ET. This will be the first tournament appearance for MVSU head coach **James Green**, in his third season guiding the Delta Devils, who made three appearances under former head coach **Lafayette**

Stribling

Jackson State head coach **Denise Taylor** is taking her Lady Tigers to the Big Dance for the first time in her seven years at the helm. JSU (18-13) is seeded 15th in the New Orleans Regional and will face second-seed LSU (27-5) on its home floor in Baton Rouge (10 p.m.).

Under Taylor, JSU has made three WNIT appearances. The last time JSU played in the NCAA Tournament was in 1995 when **Andrew Pennington's** Lady Tigers won the SWAC tournament.

Howard has another connection in this year's NCAA Tournament in Georgia head coach **Dennis Felton** and assistant **Mike Jones**, who both played at Howard under former coach **A.B. Williamson**. Their SEC champion Bulldogs (17-16) will face Atlantic 10 champion Xavier (27-6) Thursday in the South Regionals at the Verizon Center (12:20 p.m.) in Washington, D.C. Xavier is seeded third while UGA is seeded 14th.

Top seeds fall, play on in NITs

A funny thing happened in the men's and women's SWAC and MEAC Basketball Tournaments this past weekend. All the regular season champs and tournament top seeds lost. But thankfully, all will play on.

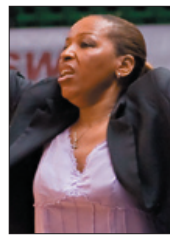
MEAC No. 1 seeds and regular season champs **Morgan State** (men) and **North Carolina A&T** (women), and the SWAC regular season No. 1 women of **Prairie View**, all made it to their title games, but none could complete the double. SWAC men's regular season winner **Alabama State** could not make it to the SWAC championship game, falling in overtime to **Jackson State** in the semifinals. But all the regular season champs will get to play on in the NIT and Women's NIT Tournaments that give automatic berths to regular season champs that don't get bids to the NCAA Tourney.

In the 32-team men's NIT, **Lewis Jackson's** Alabama State (20-10) team is seeded eighth in its bracket and travelled to top-seed Arizona State (19-12) for an 11 p.m. Tuesday game carried on ESPN2. **Todd Bozeman's** Morgan State (22-10) squad is also ranked eighth in its bracket and played at top seed, Virginia Tech (19-13), Wednesday at 7 p.m. on ESPN Classic. This will be Morgan State's first Division I postseason appearance in school history.

In the 48-team Women's NIT, **Prairie View** (22-11), under **Cynthia Cooper**, plays at Texas State (20-10) Thursday while **Patricia Cage-Bibbs'** A&T (25-7) Lady Aggies are at South Carolina (15-15) Friday. The 25-7 record in the best in A&T history and gets the Lady Aggies to the postseason for the first time in 14 years.



BOZEMAN



COOPER

Pedraic Major Photo

NIT AND WNIT SCHEDULES

MEN
Tues., March 18 - ESPN2
(8) **Alabama State** (20-10) at (1) Arizona State (19-12) 11p

Wed., March 19 - ESPN Classic
(8) **Morgan State** (22-10) at (1) Virginia Tech (19-13) 7p



WOMEN
Thur., March 20
(1) **Prairie View** (22-11) at (8) Texas State (20-10) TBD

Fri., March 21
(1) **NC A&T** (25-7) at (8) South Carolina (15-15) TBD



BCSP Notes

Benedict left to carry D2 Banner

This past weekend, eight black college basketball teams entered NCAA Div. II regional play. Come this week, only one was left standing.

SIAC men's regular season and tournament champion **Benedict**, playing in the South Region in Lakeland, Fla. on the campus of Florida Southern University, was the only team able to survive early round play. The Tigers crushed Eckerd 70-49 on Saturday before posting another dominant performance in a 73-59 win over Tampa on Sunday. The playoff wins were the first for an SIAC team since **Morehouse** advanced to the national semifinals in 1991.

Fred Watson's nationally eighth-ranked Tigers (28-4) played Tuesday night against North Alabama (26-8) for one of the spots in the Elite Eight, the Div. II national quarterfinals thru finals to be held next week

on March 26, 27 and 29 at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, Mass.

The deep and well-balanced Tigers were led by **Michael Holmes** with 19 points and six rebounds vs. Eckerd. Four players scored in double-figures led by 20 points from **Bennie Lewis** in the win over Tampa.

Shaw releases Brickey

Shaw University and head men's basketball coach have mutually agreed on a non-renewal of his contract effective last week. Brickey's team ended the 2007-08 season with a 5-23 record and he compiled an 8-48 mark over the past two years.

Athletics Director **Al Carter** thanked Brickey for his service and announced the launch of a national search to find a replacement.



WATSON



Shaw Sports Photo

BRICKEY: Out at Shaw after two seasons.