

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE



Tennessee State Sports Photo

FIVE TAKEN IN NFL DRAFT

FIFTEEN SIGN ROOKIE FREE AGENT CONTRACTS; SIAC COMMISH SUSPENDED?

RODGERS-CROMARTIE: Defensive back out of Tennessee State is 37th black college first round pick.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

NCCU CHOOSES NEW AD: North Carolina Central

has named **Ingrid Wicker-McCree** as its new director of athletics. She held the interim position for the past five months, replacing **William "Bill" Hayes** who announced his departure to the same position at **Florida A&M** in early December. Wicker-McCree, who joins the ranks of only a handful of women athletic directors in the UNC system, previously served as NCCU's associate athletics director for internal affairs. She has served in a variety of leadership positions in both conference and national level organizations, most notably as president of the **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA)** Executive Board from 2004-06, becoming only the second woman to ever hold that position in the league's history. In addition, she served as a member of the NCAA's Division II Legislation Committee from 2003-07. Now entering her 15th year at NCCU, Wicker-McCree has been one of the driving forces behind NCCU's reclassification to NCAA Division I. Since 1998, she has overseen the internal operations of the Athletics Department, including all compliance and eligibility programs.

STILLMAN HIRES GRANT: Former Southern coach, Michael Grant

has been officially named **Stillman's** head men's basketball coach, athletics director **Curtis Campbell** announced last weekend. Grant, an Ohio native, comes to Stillman after a recent two-year stint (2003-2005) at Southern where his teams were 26-31 during his tenure. Before his two-year stint at Southern, Grant coached for seven seasons at **Central State**, compiling an overall record of 126-94. Grant takes over for **Tim Waller** who was dismissed in March following his second season with the school. Other stops for Grant include assistant coaching stints at Allegheny College (PA), **Kentucky State**, and the University of Michigan under Steve Fisher. Grant is the older brother of former NBA star Gary Grant.



WICKER-McCREE



GRANT

Speed propels five into NFL Draft

LUT WILLIAMS
BCSP Editor

Five black college football players, including a couple of surprises, went off the boards over the weekend as the NFL completed its 2008 draft of college players. Speed was their common denominator.

As expected, **Tennessee State** defensive back **Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie** was the first to be selected, going to the Arizona Cardinals with the 16th pick of Saturday's first round.

Hampton defensive lineman **Kendall Langford**, the consensus second-best prospect among HBCU players, was next off going to Miami with the third pick of Sunday's third round.

The surprises began Sunday when **Winston-Salem State** defensive end **William Hayes** was selected with the fourth pick in the fourth round by Tennessee. Hayes, rated the 66th best defensive end according to draft guru Mel Kiper, was the 103rd overall selection.

Speedy **Jackson State** wide receiver/kick returner **Jaymar Johnson** was plucked with the 27th pick in the sixth round by Minnesota before Cleveland pulled another surprise, drafting **St. Augustine's** defensive end **Alex Hall** with the 24th pick of the seventh and final round.

Hayes and Hall were not invited to the NFL Combine and were therefore way down the list of players rated at their positions for the draft. But like the others, the ability to run fast and make plays factored into their selection.

Rodgers-Cromartie was the second defensive back to go off the boards, and is the first TSU player to be drafted since **Avion Black** was picked in the fifth round of the 2000 draft by Buffalo. He is also the Tigers' seventh first round selection overall, tying them for the lead amongst HBCUs with **Jackson State**. DRC is TSU's first first-rounder since **Ed "Too Tall" Jones** was the first overall selection in the 1974 draft by the Dallas Cowboys.

The 6-2, 185-pounder's size, speed (4.3 in the 40) and playmaking ability was just too good for Arizona to pass up.

"What stands out are his ball skills," said Arizona head coach Ken Whisenhunt in describing the Bradenton, Florida native. "I think that is something unique for his size. Someone that size, that speed, who makes plays on the football, that's become more and more important in this league."

Langford, who excelled at both defensive tackle and defensive end at Hampton, was also coveted for his size and quickness.

"He was on our radar pretty early," said Miami General Manager Jeff Ireland of Langford's selection. "Anybody that's 6-6 and 294 and runs 4.9 is going to be on our radar pretty quickly."

Tennessee moved up 21 spots to grab the 6-1, 260-pound Hayes, who may earn the title of 'biggest sleeper' in the '08 draft. Hayes, who totalled 78 tackles and 8.5 sacks for the Rams this year, caught the eye of Tennessee scout Cole Proctor last summer during two-a-days at WSSU and then later wowed Proctor, and others, with a 4.61 40-yard dash time during workouts at Wake Forest.

"We had William in, looked at William," Titans' coach Jeff Fisher said. "The entire scouting staff looked at William over the last couple of days. We feel like William can come in and help us immediately at the end position. Despite the fact that he came from a smaller school, he has some skills that are rare."

And 'speed' was again the word in explaining Johnson's selection by Minnesota.

"We just like what he brings in terms of return ability, speed burst and catch," Vikings coach Brad Childress said at his post-draft press conference of Johnson's 4.41 40 speed and production as a receiver and kick returner.

Hall, who became the third player in St. Augustine's history and the first since the school re-instated football in 2002 to be drafted, was sort of a future pick by Cleveland. Speed (4.55 in the

2008 NFL DRAFT



FIRST ROUND - 16th pick
Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie
6-2, 185, DB
Tennessee State
16th overall to Arizona



THIRD ROUND - 3rd pick
Kendall Langford
6-6, 285, DE
Hampton
66th overall to Miami



FOURTH ROUND - 4th pick
William Hayes
6-2, 258, DE
Winston-Salem State
103rd overall to Tennessee



SIXTH ROUND - 27th pick
Jaymar Johnson
5-11, 180, WR
Jackson State
193rd overall to Minnesota



SEVENTH ROUND - 24th pick
ALEX HALL
6-5, 255, DE
St. Augustine's
231st overall to Cleveland

40) and size (6-5, 255) were again the key elements.

"Realistically, you're looking at an '09 type of player," Cleveland GM Phil Savage said. "But this is a physical player. He looks the part."

As it stands, the five selections matches the number of black college players taken in last year's draft and represents the eighth straight year that HBCU selections have not reached double-figures. Thirteen (13) black college players were drafted in 2000 (See STAT CORNER).

BCSP Notes

Alabama State hoopster dies after pick-up game

Alabama State basketball player **Deshean Porchea** collapsed and died last week after playing in a pickup game on campus.

The 19-year-old sophomore passed out Wednesday afternoon after walking off the court and never regained consciousness, the university said. University spokeswoman **Janel Bell** said an autopsy was being performed Thursday to try to determine the cause of death. Alabama State planned a candlelight vigil Thursday.

"He was just a good all-around kid," said ASU coach **Lewis Jackson**, who heard the news while on a recruiting trip in Florida. "He played with a contagious fire that carried over to his teammates. He was a good person. It is a great loss to our team and our university."

Porchea, a reserve guard, averaged 2.1 points on the team that won the **Southwestern Athletic Conference** regular-season title.

School officials said Porchea had seemed in good spirits before passing out, and there was nothing unusual about his behavior.

"Absolutely no one saw this coming — there were no signs," ASU President **Joe Lee** told the *Montgomery Advertiser*. "This was a kid who was in the best shape of his life. He was in tremendous shape. The team had just come off a SWAC championship just a month ago. There was no reason for this. It's just baffling."

Lide status uncertain at SIAC

The status of **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** Commissioner **Dr. William Lide** is uncertain after press reports of his suspension surfaced last week.

Lide was out of the SIAC office in Tucker, Ga., on Monday and Tuesday of this week and attempts to reach him were unsuccessful. This was after *The Tuscaloosa (Ala.) News* reported last week he had been suspended by the presidents of the 12-member conference pending an audit of the league's finances. Lide was also absent from the SIAC's Spring Championships last week held in Tuscaloosa.

Calls to SIAC Council of Presidents chairman, **Dr. Benjamin Payton of Tuskegee**, had not been returned at press time. SIAC Communications Director **Harry Stinson III**, stood by the conference office's statement last week that the office was still "running as usual with Dr. Lide at the helm."

In the newspaper story last week, **Stillman** athletics director **Curtis Campbell** confirmed that athletic officials at member schools had been informed that Lide had been placed on administrative leave. Other athletic officials at member schools referred all inquiries to Payton.



PORCHEA

Pioneering coach Will Robinson succumbs

Will Robinson, who was the first black coach of a Division I college basketball program and a legendary evaluator of talent in both basketball and football, died on Monday. He was 96.

Robinson, who won 15 letters in four sports before graduating from **West Virginia State** in 1937, made history when he became the first black Div. I basketball coach, leading Illinois State in the 1970s. He died in a nursing home in the Detroit suburb of Harper Woods, said Detroit Pistons spokesman Matt Dobek. Robinson had been sick for 15 months and in a nursing home for more than a year, Dobek said.

He joined the Pistons as a scout in 1976 and discovered **Joe Dumars** and **Dennis Rodman**, key players on Detroit's 1989 and 1990 NBA championship teams coached by **Chuck Daly** — who took the job after Robinson declined former general manager **Jack McCloskey's** offer.

Robinson was a coach at Chicago's **DuSable High School** and was the first black high school coach in Michigan, coaching at both **Miller and Pershing High Schools**. He also joined **Spencer Haywood**, a member of his Detroit **Pershing 1967 state championship high school team** who had left the University of Detroit to sign with the **ABA's Denver Rockets**, in a successful legal challenge to the NBA's ban on underclassmen.

"He lived (96) years of greatness," Haywood said. "I wouldn't even exist, and all these players — **Julius Erving** to **LeBron James** and **Kevin Garnett** — they wouldn't have been able to do what they did," if not for Robinson's actions.

Scouting part-time for the **Detroit Lions** for 22 years, Robinson scoured black colleges in the South for talent. His finds included **Jackson State** cornerback **Lem Barney**, who went on to a Pro Football Hall of Fame career.

Heading the **Illinois State** basketball program from 1970-75, Robinson coached the Redbirds to a 78-51 record without a losing season. His best player was **Doug Collins**, the school's first consensus All-American who was taken by Philadelphia with the No. 1 overall pick in the 1973 NBA draft and now serves as a color commentator for NBA games.

Veteran administrator, coach J. D. Marshall passes

Former **Fayetteville State** athletic director **J. D. Marshall**, a member of the FSU and National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics Halls of Fame, passed Tuesday morning.

Marshall, 78, was athletic director at FSU from 1980 to 1989 before his retirement in 1995. He previously served as head football coach (1965-73) and athletic director at **Livingstone** and as assistant football coach at **Virginia Union**.



ROBINSON



LIDE

Spring Sports champs

SIAC

TRACK AND FIELD (men) - Morehouse dominated field events en route to takings its third consecutive and 14th overall **SIAC** Men's Track & Field Championships. Morehouse scored 294.5 points while **Albany State** finished second with 186 points.

First-place finishers for Morehouse include **Turner Coggins** (Shot Put), **Barry Batson** (Long Jump, Triple Jump), and **Damian Prince** (400m, 400m Hurdles). **Eric McCrary** was a bright spot for Albany State as he scored the most points in field events to win the SIAC Field Most Valuable Performer. **Oneil Williams** of **Benedict** dominated the track events winning the 800m, 10,000m, 1500m and 5000m and finishing second in the 3000m Steeplechase, scoring 48 points to win the SIAC Track Most Valuable Performer. He also received the *Cleve Abbott Award* given to the athlete that scores the most points in the SIAC Track & Field Championships.

Coach **Willie Hill** of Morehouse was named the

Outstanding Coach of the Championship Meet.

TRACK AND FIELD (women) - For the fourth consecutive year the **Albany State** women have taken home the **SIAC** Track & Field Championships. With the title ASU has won their 5th SIAC title.

Candace Camp of Albany State dominated the entire meet finishing first in the triple jump, finishing second in the heptathlon, sixth in the women's shot put, third in the long jump, third in the high jump, third in the javelin, en route to taking home the honor of Women's field events most valuable athlete award. Camp scored 33 of ASU's 294.5 points in the meet. **Clark Atlanta** finished second with 160 points.

Estella Moore (100m), **Cheri Brockington**, (Heptathlon), **Roxanne Griffin** (200m, 400m) **Candace Edmonds** (400m IH), **Tamika Kinchen**, (800m, 1500m), **Shanika Birdsong** (100 HH), 4x100m relay and 4x400m relay for Albany State all scored first place finishes in leading to the dominant victory.

Irine Chepkoech from **Benedict** had another stellar performance as she scored 30 points, the most of all

competitors in running events. She was named the SIAC women's track most valuable performer.

Coach **Marvin Oliver** of Albany State was named the outstanding coach.

SWAC

GOLF (men) - After leading by as many as 21 strokes, the **Jackson State** men's golf team held off 2007 champion **Texas Southern** to win the 2008 Men's Golf Championship by eight strokes.

Albert Kilgore III of JSU received top medalist honors with a three-day total of 222 (74-73-75). Teammate **Brett Benson** was third — three strokes behind (79-73-71-225). Second place went to TSU's **Jacob Schriener** with a three-day score of 223 (79-73-71) one behind the leader.

SOFTBALL - Mississippi Valley State defeated **Southern** 6-3 to claim the 2008 SWAC women's softball tournament championship, its fifth consecutive title. MVSU's **Brittany J. Franklin** was named the tournament's most outstanding player.

THE STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

NUMBER OF BLACK COLLEGE PLAYERS TAKEN IN NFL DRAFT

| | | | |
|------|---|------|----|
| 2008 | 5 | 2003 | 8 |
| 2007 | 5 | 2002 | 5 |
| 2006 | 3 | 2001 | 4 |
| 2005 | 6 | 2000 | 13 |
| 2004 | 2 | | |

UNDRAFTED ROOKIE FREE AGENT SIGNINGS

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| ARIZONA | JACKSONVILLE |
| DE Jason Banks (Grambling) | DB Brian Witherspoon (Stillman) |
| T Thaddeus Coleman (Mississippi Valley State) | WR Clyde Edwards (Grambling) |
| BUFFALO | PHILADELPHIA |
| WR Jason Jones (Arkansas-Pine Bluff) | WR Shaheer McBride (Delaware State) |
| CLEVELAND | SAN DIEGO |
| OL James Lee (South Carolina State) | DT Lamar Divens (Tennessee State) |
| DALLAS | ST. LOUIS |
| DT Marcus Dixon (Hampton) | DT Vernon Bryant (Hampton) |
| DETROIT | SEATTLE |
| S Bobbie Williams (Bethune-Cookman) | CB DeMichael Dizer (Grambling) |
| INDIANAPOLIS | WASHINGTON |
| DE Curtis Johnson (Clark Atlanta) | LB Bryan Wilson (Morgan State) |
| | WR Ed Williams (Lane) |