



Celebration Bowl logo

A ROUSING FINALE

ALCORN, NC A&T MEET IN FIRST BOWL GAME BETWEEN SWAC/MEAC CHAMPS

CELEBRATION BOWL: Inaugural bowl game, final game of 2015, could decide black college football national champion.



ALCORN STATE BRAVES (9-3)

CHAMPION
SOUTHWESTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE



Head Coach
JAY HOPSON

TEAM RECORD

2015 Overall:	9-3
SWAC Record:	8-2
2015 BCSP Ranking:	1st
All-Time vs. NC A&T:	1-0
Last Time vs. NC A&T:	16-13, W '04
SWAC Titles:	11
Last Title:	2015

COACH'S RECORD

Alma Mater: Mississippi ('91)
Record vs. NC A&T: 0-0
Record at Alcorn: 31-16, .659 (4th year)
Career Record: Same

2015 RESULTS

ALCORN STATE	9-3
6.....@ Georgia Tech.....	69 L
31.....@ Alabama State.....	14 W
55.....Miss. Valley State.....	14 W
40.....Concordia.....	7 W
61.....Arkansas-Pine Bluff.....	14 W
34.....Grambling State... 35, OT L	
48.....@ Southern.....	7 W
34.....Prairie View.....	40 L
65.....@ Texas Southern.....	13 W
44.....Alabama A&M.....	10 W
14.....@ Jackson State.....	10 W
49.....Grambling State.....	21 W

NORTH CAROLINA A&T AGGIES (9-2)

CO - CHAMPION
MID EASTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE



Head Coach
ROD BROADWAY

2015 RESULTS

NORTH CAROLINA A&T	9-2
61.....Shaw.....	7 W
14.....@ North Carolina.....	53 L
14.....@ Elon.....	7 W
45.....@ Hampton.....	31 W
27.....@ Norfolk State.....	3 W
24.....Bethune-Cookman.....	14 W
65.....Howard.....	14 W
28.....@ Florida A&M.....	10 W
9.....@ South Carolina State... 6 W	
27.....Delaware State.....	6 W
16.....Southern.....	21 L

TEAM RECORD

2015 Overall:	9-2
MEAC Record:	7-1
2015 BCSP Ranking:	3rd
All-Time vs. Alcorn:	0-1
Last Time vs. Alcorn:	16-13, L '04
MEAC Titles:	6
Last Title:	2015

COACH'S RECORD

Alma Mater: North Carolina ('77)
Record vs. Alcorn: 3-0 (at Grambling)
Record at A&T: 37-19, .660 (5th year)
Career Record: 105-42, .714

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2015 - ATLANTA, GA - GEORGIA DOME - 12 NOON ON ABC

First bowl, final game in Atlanta

BCSP FOOTBALL TOP TEN

- ALCORN STATE** (9-3) - SWAC East Division champ won SWAC championship game over West Division champ Grambling State, 49-21.
- NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL** (8-3) - Knocked off NC A&T in the last week of the regular season to earn tie with the Aggies and Bethune-Cookman for the MEAC crown.
- NORTH CAROLINA A&T** (9-2) - Shared MEAC title with N. C. Central and Bethune-Cookman. Earned bowl bid in tie-breaking procedure.
- BETHUNE-COOKMAN** (9-2) - Tied for MEAC title with N. C. A&T and N. C. Central.
- GRAMBLING STATE** (9-3) - SWAC West Division champ lost to East Division champ Alcorn State in SWAC title game.
- PRAIRIE VIEW A&M** (8-2) - Finished second behind Grambling in SWAC West.
- SOUTH CAROLINA STATE** (7-4) - Finished fourth behind MEAC tri-champions.
- SOUTHERN** (6-5) - Finished third in SWAC West behind Grambling and Prairie View A&M.
- TUSKEGEE** (10-3) - Finished second behind Miles in SIAC West but won two NCAA Div. II playoff games before bowing out in national quarterfinals (Super Region II final) to West Georgia.
- BOWIE STATE** (9-3) - CIAA North champion and runner-up to champ Winston-Salem State bowed out in first round of D2 playoffs.

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

After a long season, we're just about right back where we started.

Alcorn State, champion of the Southwestern Athletic Conference and North Carolina A&T, champion of the Mid Eastern Athletic Conference, entered the 2015 football season ranked first and third respectively in the BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE'S preseason Top Ten.

Neither was ranked below sixth during the regular season and they'll enter the last black college game of the year, Saturday's first annual *Celebration Bowl* in Atlanta (12 noon) pitting them as champions of the two conferences, in just about the same position where they began.

The winner has a great shot at being named the final 2015 BCSP No. 1 team.

Alcorn State

Head Coach **Jay Hopson's** 9-3 Alcorn State squad had a somewhat bumpy road finding its way back to the No. 1 spot.

After a season-opening 69-6 thumping by ACC member Georgia Tech that knocked them out of the top spot, the Braves handily won three straight and returned to No. 1 before a missed extra point resulted in a 35-34 homecoming loss to **Grambling State** in mid-October.

Two weeks later, after the Braves thumped SWAC contender **Southern** 48-7, they ran into a hot **Prairie View A&M** team and fell 40-34 and into sixth in the Top Ten.

But they closed the season with four straight wins including a dominating 49-21 win in a rematch with then No. 1 Grambling at the SWAC Championship Game in Houston two weeks ago.

North Carolina A&T

Rod Broadway's Aggies of A&T also had a stint at No. 1.

After losing 53-14 to ACC member North Carolina in the second week of the season, the Aggies ran off eight straight wins including a 24-14 decision at home over **Bethune-Cookman** on the same October weekend Alcorn State lost to Grambling. That win propelled the Aggies to the top spot.

They stayed at No. 1 until a season-ending 21-16 loss to rival **North Carolina Central** knocked them from that perch and into the No. 3 spot and into a tie with NCCU and Bethune-Cookman for the MEAC title. They earned the Celebration Bowl berth by virtue of the league's tie-breaking procedure.

The Matchup

Both teams feature potent running



CELEBRATION BOWL YARDSTICK

ALCORN STATE	TEAM	N. C. A&T
40.1 ppg. (3rd)	SCORING OFFENSE	30.0 ppg (2nd)
21.2 ppg. (1st)	SCORING DEFENSE	15.6 ppg. (2nd)
473.3 ypg. (2nd)	TOTAL OFFENSE	305.6 ypg. (6th)
274.3 ypg. (1st)	TOTAL DEFENSE	268.0 ypg. (1st)
309.0 ypg. (1st)	RUSHING OFFENSE	178.2 ypg. (2nd)
157.8 ypg. (3rd)	RUSHING DEFENSE	84.5 ypg. (1st)
163.3 ypg. (9th)	PASSING OFFENSE	127.5 ypg. (10th)
116.5 ypg. (1st)	PASSING DEFENSE	183.5 ypg. (5th)

INDIVIDUAL		
Lenorris Footman (QB - 2nd)	RUSHING	Tarik Cohen (RB - 1st)
961 yds., 7.6 ypc., 11 TDs		1,248 yds., 5.2 ypc., 12 TDs
Lenorris Footman (7th)	PASSING	Lamar Raynard (NR)
60-134-3, 962 yds., 12 TDs		55-122-1, 632 yds., 7 TDs
Marquis Warford	RECEIVING	Denzel Keyes (NR)
35 rec., 476 yds., 4 TDs		36 rec., 417 yds., 8 TDs
Darien Anderson (LB)	TACKLING	Angelo Keyes (DE)
69 tackles, 6.3 tpg.		50 tackles, 4.5 tpg
Ramonte Bell (DE)	SACKS	Angelo Keyes (DE)
7, 0.70		4.5, 0.41 spg.
Warren Gatewood (DB)	INTERCEPTIONS	Tony McRae (DB)
4, 0.33 pg.		3, 0.27 pg.
Anthony Williams Jr.	PUNT RETURNS	Khrist Gardin
20, 140 yds., 7.0 ypr., 0 TDs		30, 666 yds., 22.2 ypr., 2 TDs
Marquis Warford	KICK RETURNS	Tony McRae
11, 384 yds., 34.9 ypr., 1 TD		20, 562 yds., 28.1 ypr., 2 TDs
Haiden McRainey (3rd)	PUNTING	Steve Sawicki
38.9 avg.		38.2 avg.
Haiden McRainey (1st)	PLACEKICKING	Cody Jones
3-10 FGs, 58-67 PATs, 67 pts.		7-10 FGs, 39-41 PATs, 60 pts.



attacks led by standout players but are anemic throwing the ball.

Alcorn averages over 309 rushing yards per game, tops in the SWAC and third in FCS football. The Braves are led by senior running back **Darryan Ragsdale** and sophomore quarterback **Lenorris Footman**.

Ragsdale has rushed for 1,144 yards and averages 95.3 yards per game and a whopping 8.2 yards per carry. Footman, who replaced injured starter and 2014 SWAC Offensive Player of the Year, senior **John Gibbs Jr.** after six games, has rushed for 961 yards, averages 96.1 yards per game and a gaudy 7.6 yards per carry.

Footman ran for 11 TDs while Ragsdale had eight. The A&T offense is led by junior running back **Tarik Cohen** who ran for a league-best 1,248 yards and 12 TDs.

As a passer, Footman has only completed 44.8% of his throws (60 of 134), but he has amassed 962 yards with 12 TDs and only three interceptions. The Braves are next-to-last in the

SWAC in passing yards per game.

A&T senior **Kwashaun Quick**, who has battled injuries all season, is expected to be the starter for the Aggies. Quick, like Footman, a better runner than passer, has rushed for 308 yards in nine games and has passed for 512 yards (57 of 104, 54.8%) with four TDs and four picks. Like Alcorn State, the Aggies were next-to-last in passing yards in the MEAC.

The strategy for both teams will be to stop the run and force the other team to beat you through the air. In other words, the team that throws the ball best is likely to come out the winner.

Defensively, A&T tops the MEAC and is second in the FCS in rushing defense giving up just 84.5 yards per game. Alcorn State's run defense is no slouch but gives up 157 yards per game, third in the SWAC.

The Aggies defense is led by line-backer **Angelo Keyes** who tops the team in tackles (50) and sacks (4.5). Watch out for Alcorn defensive back **Warren Gatewood**, a two-time all-SWAC performer, who leads the teams with four interceptions.

If A&T has an edge it may be in the kicking game. The Aggies feature dynamic return men in **Tony McRae** (kick-offs) and **Khrist Gardin** (punts) who both have two returns for touchdowns. McRae, who also plays cornerback, leads the Aggies with three interceptions **Marquis Warford**, who is a triple threat as a receiver, runner and return man, is a wild card for the Braves.

The Bowl Game

The *Celebration Bowl* is meant to be just that – a celebration.

It is to celebrate the inauguration of what the sponsors and organizers call a 'first-class bowl experience' pitting championship teams from both NCAA Div. I black college conference.

It's also to celebrate the legacy, values and traditions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

Whether Saturday's game can live up to the hype, on or off the field, is the big question.

The conferences are getting \$1 million each from ESPN, the owner of the game. Each participating school could walk away with a \$500,000 payday, likely its largest single payout for an athletic event.

Additionally, *SportsCenter on the Road* will originate from the bowl game.

Jay Harris, Lisa Kerney and Cari Champion will anchor the program along with analyst Jerome Bettis.

While the game signals the end of the 2015 football season, the sponsors, hosts and conferences hope it's the beginning of something special.

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

HUGHES TO LEAD JACKSON STATE:

JACKSON, Miss. – **Jackson State University** has announced the hiring of **Tony Hughes** as the football program's 19th head coach during a Monday morning press conference in the Lee E. Williams Athletic and Assembly Center Hall of Fame Room.

Hughes, a Mississippi native, comes to Jackson State from Mississippi State, where he spent seven seasons as a key member of the Bulldog football coaching staff. Hughes is known as one of the top recruiting coordinators in the nation. In 2015, 247Sports.com tabbed him as one of America's top 10 recruiters after Mississippi State hauled in one of the nation's top 16 classes according to recruiting services. In the spring of 2013, he was named assistant head coach.

He spent two seasons at Louisiana Technical University and spent 10 years coaching at Hinds Community College in Raymond, Mississippi, where he served as the defensive coordinator and secondary coach. Hughes coached eight players who later went on to the NFL.

"We will recruit players from the state of Mississippi and the local Jackson area," Hughes said. "I believe that there are enough players in the state, if we recruit right and evaluate right, every year we will field a great football team."

Hughes takes over a Jackson State program that finished the 2015 season with a 3-8 overall record and a 3-6 **Southwestern Athletic Conference** mark. **Harold Jackson** was let go five games into the season and was replaced by interim head coach **Derrick McCall** who finished out the season.

NEW SID AT COPPIN STATE:

BALTIMORE, Md. - **Jason Pompey** has been named the new Sports Information Director at **Coppin State**, effective December 14, 2015. He succeeds **Rob Knox** who left for a position at Towson State University. Pompey will handle all communication efforts for all athletic programs for the Eagles.

Prior to Coppin State, Pompey served as the Sports Information Director & Media Specialist at **Lincoln** (Pa.) of the **Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association** (CIAA).

Before joining the Lincoln staff in October of 2013, Pompey, who earned an undergraduate degree from **Virginia Union** and a Masters from **Virginia State**, was the Sports Information Director at Hunter College.

He also served as the Sports Information Director at Virginia State from 2010-2013.

BCSP Notes

Brown named permanent Athletics Director at Jackson State

Wheeler Brown, who has served as **Jackson State University's** interim Director of Athletics since the first of October, has been named the university's full-time Director of Athletics.

Brown has more than two decades of athletics administration experience. Before coming to JSU, Brown served as the Associate Director of Athletics at **Coppin State University**, 2013-2015. He also served as Director of Athletics at his alma mater **North Carolina A&T State University** from 2007 to 2010.

Before being named interim Director of Athletics at JSU, he served as the university's Associate Athletic Director for Compliance.

Brown accepted his first collegiate athletics administration position in 1996, when he was named Assistant Athletics Director and assistant men's basketball coach at Wheeling Jesuit in West Virginia. Two years later, he was promoted to men's head basketball coach.

In 2001, Brown was named an Associate Athletics Director at **Bowie State University**. In 2002, he returned to the N.C. A&T Athletics Department.

Massey out leading Shaw football

RALEIGH, N.C. – The **Shaw University** Athletics Department announced last week that the contract for Bears Head Football Coach **Robert Massey** will not be renewed.

Massey completed four seasons as the Bears head coach, finishing the 2015 season with a 1-9 record, last in the CIAA West Division. Massey compiled a record of 14-26 during his time at the helm. He has a career record of 16-44 which includes two seasons as head coach at **Livingstone College**.

Massey was officially introduced as Shaw's head football coach on January 18, 2012 after serving on the Bears football staff for five years, including serving as the defensive coordinator for two years in which he was a part of the 2010 CIAA Championship team.

"We thank Coach Massey for his effort and dedication to the Bears football program and to our student-athletes over the last four seasons," said Director of Athletics **Dr. Alfonza Carter**.

"At this time, we believe the program needs to go in a new direction. We wish Coach Massey nothing but the best for the future."