

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS



Virginia Union Sports Photo

AXES START TO FALL

HOOPS COACHES OUT AT COPPIN STATE, FAMU, ALABAMA A&M, TENN STATE AND B-COOKMAN

PANTHERS MOVE ON! Junior forward Alexis Johnson had 22 points to lead Virginia Union ladies to Div. II Final Four.

POSTSEASON TOURNAMENT RECAPS

NCAA DIV. I MEN MIDWEST REGION - FIRST FOUR

UC Davis 67, North Carolina Central 63

DAYTON, Oh. – MEAC champion North Carolina Central had its chances but missed opportunities doomed its effort to pull off a win against Big West champion UC Davis in the First Four game last Tuesday between 16th seeds.

The Eagles, who trailed early 18-9, appeared in good shape as they went into the halftime break with a 34-31 lead. Even with that lead, they had several misses in close that could have expanded the lead. That pattern continued in a second half that saw the Eagles go down by as much as 9 on several occasions before fighting back. They got as close as 64-63 on a **Dajuan Graf** 3-pointer with 1:50 left. NCCU tried four 3-pointers over the 90 seconds but could not connect. UCD got its final points at the free throw line.

Senior guards Graf and **Patrick Cole** led NCCU (25-9) with 15 and 13 points respectively while senior center **Kyle Benton** also had 13. Reserve **Pablo Rivas** had 12. Graf had five assists.

NCAA DIV. I MEN - SOUTH REGION SECOND ROUND

North Carolina 103, Texas Southern 64

GREENVILLE, SC – Top-seed North Carolina had five players score in double-digits while doubling 16th-seed SWAC champion Texas Southern on the backboards en route to a blowout win in a second round NCAA South Region game.

The taller Tar Heels had a 54-27 edge on the boards and shot 50.7% (38 of 75) for the game while holding the Tigers to 36.7% (22 of 60).

UNC (28-7) led 52-27 at the break and expanded the lead in the second half. **Kevin Scott** had 19 points and **Demontreae Jefferson** 13 to lead the Tigers (23-12).

NCAA DIV. I WOMEN - BRIDGEPORT REGION FIRST ROUND

Duke 94, Hampton 31

DURHAM, NC – Second-seed Duke held MEAC champion Hampton to single-digits in all but the last quarter in a blowout first round NCAA Tournament win on its home court.

The Blue Devils (28-5) led 48-10 at the half and 76-17 after three quarters. Duke outscored 15-seed Hampton (20-13) 18-14 in the fourth quarter for the final margin. MEAC Tournament MVP **Jephany Brown** was the only Lady Pirate to score in double digits with 18 points.

NCAA DIV. I WOMEN - OKLAHOMA CITY REGION FIRST ROUND

Baylor 119, Texas Southern 30

WACO, Tx. – SWAC champion Texas Southern also managed to score double-digits in only one quarter as top-seed Baylor smashed the Lady Tigers on its home court.

TSU (23-10), seeded 16th, had 11 points in the third quarter, the highest output after scoring 5 and 8 points in the first two quarters and 6 in the final period. The Lady Tigers trailed 61-13 at the half. SWAC Tourney MVP **Joyce Kennerson** led TSU with 7 points.

WNIT - FIRST ROUND

Grambling State 78, Ole Miss 75

OXFORD, Ms. – Grambling State became the first SWAC women's team in the modern era to win a postseason basketball game as the Lady Tigers upset Mississippi 78-75 in a first round WNIT game on the Lady Rebels homecourt last Thursday.

GSU (19-14) got a team-high 23 points from **Jasmine Torian**, 17 each from **Monisha Neal** and **Shakyla Hill** and big baskets late from **John'ea Thompson** in pulling out the win.

Down 75-72 with 1:54 left, Thompson drained a 3-pointer to tie the score at 75 and then scored off a feed from **Chantiana Lewis** to put GSU up 77-75. Neal got a steal and was fouled and sank the second of two free throws. Ole Miss (17-14) couldn't get off a final shot.

Neal had four 3-pointers and Torian had three. Thompson finished with 10 points. Lewis did not score but had team-highs of 11 assists and 7 rebounds.



Thompson

WNIT - SECOND ROUND

Tulane 66, Grambling State 49

NEW ORLEANS, La. – Grambling State connected on just 17 of 58 shots (29.3%) in losing to the Green Wave on the Tulane homecourt in a second round WNIT game.

Monisha Neal shot 3 of 16 and **Shakyla Hill** was 5 of 13 as the Lady Tigers (19-15) struggled to get into a rhythm. They trailed 38-19 at the half and could never really cut into the lead in the second half. Neal and Hill finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds to pace GSU.

WNIT - FIRST ROUND

Wake Forest 66, Bethune-Cookman 49

WINSTON-SALEM, NC – Bethune-Cookman could connect on only 25.9% (14 of 54) in falling to Wake Forest in a first round WNIT game. **Kendra Cooper** was the only Lady Wildcat to reach double-digits with 11 points.

MEN CBI

Coastal Carolina 83, Hampton 67

CONWAY, NC – Coastal Carolina broke from a 31-all half-time tie to outscore Hampton 52-36 in the second half and pull out a first round CBI Tournament win last Wednesday. **Jermaine Marrow** had 19 points to pace the Pirates (14-17). **Akim Mitchell** had 12 and **A. J. Astroth** 10.

VUU ladies advance to Div. II Final Four

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

COLUMBUS, Oh. – The second time was the charm for the ladies of Virginia Union and as a result one black college basketball team was still alive on Wednesday.

The Virginia Union Lady Panthers out of the CIAA, repeat champions of the Atlantic Region and in the NCAA Div. II Elite Eight for the second straight year, pulled out a heart-throbbing 78-73 win Tuesday afternoon over Peach Belt Conference and Southeast Region champ Columbus State to advance to the NCAA Div. II Final Four national semifinals on Wednesday.

Down 63-57 entering the final quarter, VUU outscored CSU 21-10 in the final period, holding them scoreless over the last 4:45 to get the win. CSU led 73-70 before VUU closed on an 8-0 run.

VUU (27-4) took the lead for good at 74-73 on junior **Alexis Johnson's** jumper in the lane with 1:43 to go. Johnson canned one of two free throws with just under a minute left to put the Panthers up 75-73 before freshman **Kishona Sutton** drained two free throws with 20 seconds left to stretch the lead to 77-73.

CSU continued to misfire, in one sequence missing three straight shots from in close. Johnson capped the win with a free throw in the final seconds.

The loss snapped a 21-game win streak for the Lady Cougars (30-2). VUU and head coach **AnnMarie Gilbert** were facing a familiar foe



in CSU head coach **Anita Howard**, who last year was the head coach at CIAA member Livingstone.

VUU played the winner of Tuesday's 2:30 p.m. quarterfinal Elite Eight game between 2nd-seed Cal Baptist (34-2) and 7th-seed West Florida (28-6). The semifinal game was set for Wednesday at 6 p.m. and was to be carried live on CBS.

The Div. II championship game is Friday at 7 p.m. and will also be carried live on CBS.

Johnson, a 6-foot junior from Hamilton, New Jersey, led a balanced attack for the Lady Panthers (27-4) with 22 points. She also had a team-high 11 rebounds. CIAA Player of the Year and Tournament MVP, 6-2 senior **Lady Walker** had only 4 first-half points but was a key factor in the second half finishing with 17 points and 10 rebounds.

Walker, Johnson, **Rachael Pecota** and 6-2 sophomore **Jasmine Carter** did a good job limiting CSU standout center Alexis Carter.

BLACK COLLEGES IN NCAA TOURNAMENT

WOMEN

NCAA DIV. II FINAL FOUR

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 6 p. m. - Columbus, OH

#6 Virginia Union (27-4) vs. #2 Cal Baptist vs. #7 West Florida winner

NCAA DIV. II ELITE EIGHT

#6 Virginia Union 78, #3 Columbus State 73

Carter had 17 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Cougars but shot just 5 of 16 from the field. Britteny Tatum led CSU with 18 points.

VUU senior guard **Ashley Smith** and Johnson had 11 big first-half points that kept VUU in striking distance. Smith finished with 14 points while Pecota had 10.

The Lady Panthers pushed the pace continuously in the first half but were plagued by 18 turnovers. They trailed 22-16 after one period and 45-41 at the half.

They were down 29-17 in the second quarter but went on a 12-0 run, with nine by Smith to pull even at 29. The run grew to 18-3 as they took their biggest first-half lead at 35-32 with 3:26 left in the half.

VUU turned the ball over only nine times in the second half.

Last year in the Elite Eight, the Lady Panthers led by Div. II Player of the Year **Kiana Johnson**, lost to Bentley 53-52.

BCSP Notes

Hayes resigns at Alabama A&M

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. – Alabama A&M Men's Basketball Head Coach **Willie Hayes** has announced his resignation, effective immediately. Hayes, who played at Alabama A&M, was head coach for six years and accumulated a record of 53-118.

Hayes also served for 16 years as former coach **Vann Pettaway's** top assistant following a stellar career as a player for the Bulldogs.

In 116 games as a player, Hayes averaged 14.6 points, 2.5 rebounds, 5.8 assists and 2.0 steals per game.

During his senior season, Hayes averaged 24 points, seven assists, and five rebounds per outing. He finished his playing career with 1,688 points in the Maroon & White.

"We thank Coach Hayes for his service and commitment to Alabama A&M University," Director of Athletics **Bryan Hicks** said. "We wish him the best in his future endeavors."

A search for a replacement will begin immediately.

Coppin State parts ways with Michael Grant

The *Baltimore Sun* reported Monday that Coppin State has decided not to renew the contract of Head Basketball Coach **Michael Grant** for the 2017-18 season.

Coppin State athletic director **Derek Carter**, announced the move in a news release and said a national search will begin immediately.

The *Sun* said Grant was informed Friday that the school would not retain him. Grant, who earned \$144,000 in 2015 according to the state's public salary database, told the newspaper he was not terribly surprised by that development after the university hired Carter as athletic director last August.

"Anytime you have a new administration in place as far as a new AD, you just never know what's going to happen because a lot of times when they get that position, they want to bring their own person in," Grant said.

He compiled a 25-69 overall record and a 19-29 mark in the **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** in three years leading the Eagles. Coppin State finished 8-24 overall this season, 7-10 in MEAC play. They were seeded sixth in the MEAC Tournament and were knocked off in the first round by the No. 11 seed **Howard**, 79-73.

Grant, 54, had previous HBCU head coaching stints at **Central State University** (1996-2003), **Southern University** (2003-05) and **Stillman College** (2008-13). Grant was brought to Coppin State after posting a 100-73 record in six seasons at Stillman.

He was hired in May 2014 to succeed longtime Coppin State head coach **Ron "Fang" Mitchell** after his contract was not renewed. Mitchell had led the Eagles for 28 years, won six MEAC Coach of the Year awards, ten MEAC regular season titles, four tournament titles and taken those four teams to the NCAA Tournament. He had posted sub .500 seasons in nine of his last ten years leading CSU.

Grant was quoted saying he has no plans in place to coach again, but plans to go to the NCAA Final Four in Glendale, Ariz., from April 1-3 to see if there are openings.

"I just want to thank Coppin for giving me an opportunity," he said. "It's been a fun three years. Honestly, I think it takes a little bit more than three years to build a program, but that's their choice. They feel they want to move in another direction, and they have that opportunity to do that."

Byron Samuels out at Florida A&M

Despite ushering Florida A&M through NCAA APR sanctions in the first two of his three seasons, Florida A&M announced Friday that head basketball coach **Byron Samuels'** contract will not be renewed.

Samuels compiled a 17-71 overall record as FAMU's head coach after taking over before the 2014-15 season. The Rattlers went 7-23 this season and lost to South Carolina State in the first round of the MEAC tournament.

The school was ineligible for postseason play in his first two seasons because of the APR penalties and dealt with leading scorers departing the program because of it. Former FAMU standout **Malcolm Bernard** and others left the program because of the sanctions. Bernard is a starter for Xavier's team now playing in the NCAA Tournament's Sweet 16.

Samuels was able to get the APR sanctions against the men's basketball team lifted prior to the 2016-2017 season, and the Rattlers returned to the postseason for the first time since 2014.

"After review and evaluation of the Florida A&M University men's basketball program, FAMU Athletics has decided to take its program in a different direction," Athletic Director **Milton Overton Jr.** said in the statement released by the school.

"Restructuring our program with a continued emphasis on academic achievement and competitive success will be key components in moving FAMU basketball forward. We would like to thank Coach Byron Samuels



Hayes



Grant



Samuels



Inman

for his contributions to our men's basketball program and student-athletes over the past three seasons."

Assistant Coach **Lamont Franklin** was named interim head coach while a national search is conducted for a replacement.

Inman resigns as women's coach at Tenn State

NASHVILLE -(March 9, 2017) -- **Larry Joe Inman**, the winningest coach in Ohio Valley Conference history, has announced his resignation as the head women's basketball coach at Tennessee State University.

"I am resigning for personal reasons and want to thank Ms. (Teresa) Phillips for the opportunity to coach at Tennessee State University," said Inman. "I've had a very positive experience here and I will always cherish the memories and relationships that I've had the opportunity to develop."

Inman, who has spent the past five seasons at the helm of the women's basketball program, led the Lady Tigers to an OVC Tournament Championship in 2015 and helped the team earn a NCAA Tournament berth for the first time in 20 years.

An eight-time Ohio Valley Conference Coach of the Year, Inman has won seven OVC Tournament championships at three different schools and has 10 regular season titles under his belt. Inman began his collegiate coaching career at Middle Tennessee in 1978 before spending 20 years at Eastern Kentucky. Entering this season, with a total of 535 wins, he was the 24th all-time winningest coach among active Division I coaches. He is also a member of three Halls of Fame - Ohio Valley Conference, Middle Tennessee and Eastern Kentucky.

"We are thankful to Coach Inman for guiding the Lady Tiger program and taking TSU women's basketball back to the top with the 2015 OVC championship and NCAA tournament berth," said Phillips. "I view Larry both as a friend and colleague and personally wish him all the best as he moves into a new phase in his life's journey."

The university will conduct a national search to identify the next head coach of the women's basketball program.

Gravelle Craig let go at Bethune-Cookman

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. – After spending six years at the helm of the men's basketball program, **Gravelle Craig** and **Bethune-Cookman University** agreed Monday evening to part ways, allowing for Craig to seek fresher and different opportunities in the field of athletics, as his contract expires at the end of the month.

"At the end of the season, we sat down as always to evaluate the state of our program; and after discussion, Coach Craig and I arrived at the decision that the timing was right for him to pursue new career opportunities, while we seek new leadership of the Wildcats basketball program for the future," said **Lynn W. Thompson**, BCU Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics.

After taking over the program in 2011, Craig compiled an overall record of 74-123 across six seasons in Daytona Beach. His **Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference** record stood at 46-50 through the 2016-17 campaign. During his first season, Craig helped the Wildcats to the 2012 MEAC title game against Norfolk State. The following year, the Wildcats advanced to the MEAC semifinals of the tournament against Morgan State.

"Bethune-Cookman afforded me an opportunity to become a Division I men's basketball head coach," said Craig in a statement Monday evening. "It was an opportunity that I will forever cherish, and one that allowed me to experience something that had never been done at BCU before – advancing to the MEAC Tournament championship game."

Twice during Craig's tenure, the Wildcats finished in the top five of the MEAC final standings, including a fourth place finish and an 11-5 MEAC mark in 2011-12. That same season, BCU amassed a winning season with an overall mark of 18-17.

Prior to his appointment as head coach in 2011, Craig served for seven years as an assistant coach for the Wildcats under former head coach **Clifford Reed Jr.** Craig came to Bethune-Cookman after spending the 2003-04 season at Chicago State University as an assistant coach. Prior to that, he was an assistant coach at **Morris Brown College** in Atlanta, Georgia for two seasons throughout the 2001-02 and 2002-03 campaigns.

A search for the new men's basketball head coach will begin immediately.

The current staff of assistant coaches remains intact, and will continue to serve in that capacity until a successor for the program is named.



Craig