



Robert Mathis
Indianapolis
Alabama A&M



Antoine Bethea
San Francisco
Howard



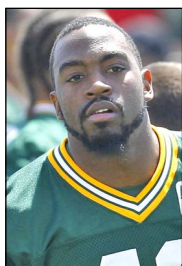
Javon Hargrave
Pittsburgh
South Carolina State



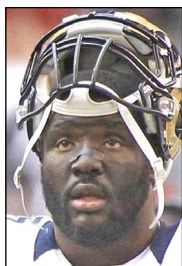
Ryan Smith
Tampa Bay
North Carolina Central



Temarrick Hemingway
Los Angeles
South Carolina State



Joe Thomas
Green Bay
South Carolina State



William Hayes
Los Angeles
Winston-Salem State

2016 BCSP NFL REPORT

Black college products in NFL down by four to 32

South Carolina State tops list with six players; Washington leads NFL teams with four; Also, 11 rookies make the grade

LUT WILLIAMS

BCSP Editor

Thirty-two (32) players from the black college ranks appear on NFL rosters after final cuts were made over the weekend in preparation the start of the 2016 NFL season that kicks off with Thursday's rematch of Super Bowl 50 with the champion Denver Broncos hosting the Carolina Panthers.

Veterans like 14-year Indianapolis Colts linebacker **Robert Mathis** out of **Alabama A&M** and San Francisco safety **Antoine Bethea** in his 11th year out of **Howard** were joined by an unprecedented 11 rookies from the HBCU ranks that made either 53-man opening day active rosters or 10-man practice squads.

The compilation of such data is part of the *Black College Sports Page NFL Report* that each year breaks down HBCU players on opening day rosters, the schools they attended, the positions they play and the HBCU conferences from which they come.

Thirty-six (36) HBCU players were on opening day rosters a year ago.

That's a 50-player drop from back in 1994 when the BCSP began publishing its report. There were a whopping 86 HBCU players on opening day active rosters that year. That list included HBCU legends such as future Hall of Famers **Jackie Slater** (**Jackson State**), **Jerry Rice** (**Mississippi Valley State**) and **Michael Strahan** (**Texas Southern**).

The numbers have steadily declined since.

Former **Grambling State** and NFL quarterback and former Grambling and **Morehouse** head coach **Doug Williams**, now a senior personnel executive with the Washington Redskins, explains the trend.

"Number one, I think we as a league and as scouts got to play a little more attention to the historical black colleges, maybe not like in the past before integration, but I still think you're still going to come up with 1, 2, 3 or 4 guys that can play at this level.

"I know since I've been in the administration part of it that some of these scouts are inclined to give a guy at an FBS school who has not played at all more of an opportunity than a guy who's played four years at a historically black college," said Williams, who had a nine-year NFL career and was the MVP of Super Bowl XXII in 1988 while playing for Washington.

"I think what we have to do is don't judge the school. We've got to start judging the player. It's all about opportunity."

Washington, in no small part to Williams' efforts, had a league-high seven former HBCU players in preseason camp and topped the league with four that made opening day rosters.

"I think it's pretty obvious that we are getting a little less of that type of player, the kinds of players that have those of abilities to play at the next level," said **South Carolina State** head coach **Oliver "Buddy" Pough**, the dean of black college coaches entering his 15th year leading the Bulldogs.

"I think it's just kind of a sign of the times. You have to continue to work hard to evaluate guys that might not have some of the measurables to give them an opportunity to play in the league.

"And, there are just so many schools playing college football right now, more than there were back in those days."

BLACK COLLEGE PLAYERS ON 2016 OPENING DAY NFL ROSTERS

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONFERENCE (AFC - 9)

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----|----------------------|
| BALTIMORE (1) | | | |
| 41 | Anthony Levine Sr. | DB | 5 Tennessee State |
| CLEVELAND (1) | | | |
| 34 | Isaiah Crowell | RB | 3 Alabama State |
| CINCINNATI (1) | | | |
| 29 | Tony McRae (PS) | DB | R North Carolina A&T |
| INDIANAPOLIS (3) | | | |
| 90 | Kendall Langford | DE | 9 Hampton |
| 98 | Robert Mathis | OLB | 14 Alabama A&M |
| 3 | Chester Rogers | WR | R Grambling State |
| OAKLAND (2) | | | |
| 32 | Antonio Hamilton (PS) | CB | R S. Carolina State |
| 7 | Marquette King | P | 5 Fort Valley State |
| PITTSBURGH (1) | | | |
| 79 | Javon Hargrave | DT | R S. Carolina State |

NATIONAL FOOTBALL CONFERENCE (NFC - 23)

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| ARIZONA (2) | | | |
| 95 | Rodney Gunter | DT | 2 Delaware State |
| 19 | Chris Hubert (PS) | WR | R Fayetteville State |
| ATLANTA (1) | | | |
| 14 | Eric Weems | WR | 10 Bethune-Cookman |
| 30 | Deji Olatoye | DB | 1 N. Carolina A&T |
| DALLAS (2) | | | |
| 56 | Justin Durant | LB | 10 Hampton |
| 47 | Deon King (PS) | LB | R Norfolk State |
| CAROLINA (1) | | | |
| 38 | Jalen Simmons (PS) | RB | R S. Carolina State |
| DETROIT (2) | | | |
| 31 | Rafael Bush | S | 6 S. Carolina State |
| 26 | Don Carey | S | 8 Norfolk State |
| GREEN BAY (1) | | | |
| 48 | Joe Thomas | LB | 2 S. Carolina State |
| LOS ANGELES (3) | | | |
| 95 | William Hayes | DE | 9 Winston-Salem State |
| 84 | Temarrick Hemingway | TE | R S. Carolina State |
| 65 | Demetrius Rhaney | OG | 3 Tennessee State |
| NEW ORLEANS (1) | | | |
| 72 | Terron Armstead | T | 4 Arkansas-Pine Bluff |
| NEW YORK GIANTS (2) | | | |
| 84 | Larry Donnell | TE | 4 Grambling State |
| 41 | Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie | CB | 8 Tennessee State |
| PHILADELPHIA (1) | | | |
| 9 | Lavelle Watford (PS) | WR | R Hampton |
| SAN FRANCISCO (1) | | | |
| 41 | Antoine Bethea | S | 11 Howard |
| TAMPA BAY (1) | | | |
| 29 | Ryan Smith | DB | R N. Carolina Central |
| WASHINGTON (4) | | | |
| 92 | Chris Baker | DE | 5 Hampton |
| 72 | Anthony Lanier | DE | R Alabama A&M |
| 20 | Greg Toler | CB | 8 St. Paul's |
| 48 | Lynden Trail (PS) | LB | R Norfolk State |



Indianapolis Colts Photo



Washington Photo

MAKING THE GRADE: Undrafted rookies Chester Rogers (l.) out of Grambling State and Anthony Lanier (r.) out of Alabama A&M surprisingly made Indianapolis and Washington opening day active rosters respectively.

Leading the rookies on active rosters this season is one of Pough's pupils, former **South Carolina State** standout defensive tackle and two-time **Mid Eastern Athletic Conference** Defensive Player of the Year, **Javon Hargrave**. The 6-3, 305-pounder, the first HBCU player taken in the April NFL Draft in the third round by Pittsburgh, showed tremendous pass rushing ability and technique during the preseason and may start when the Steelers face Washington in the year's first installment of Monday Night Football on Sept. 12.

Also on active rosters are the two other HBCU players taken in this year's draft, **North Carolina Central** defensive back **Ryan Smith** at Tampa Bay and S.C. State tight end **Temarrick Hemingway** with the new Los Angeles Rams.

Wide receiver **Chester Rogers** of the Colts and defensive end **Anthony Lanier** of Washington are two undrafted HBCU rookies who earned active roster spots. Rogers (6-1, 180), a former all-SWAC receiver at Grambling State, consistently made big catches during the Colts' preseason, finishing with 14 receptions for 174 yards, second most among all rookie receivers. He stood out from the beginning to the end of camp including grabbing seven passes in the preseason finale against Cincinnati.

Lanier, with good size at 6-6, 282, showed the ability to stuff the run, rush the passer and swat down passes during the preseason. Washington waived veteran defensive tackle Cullen Jenkins and fifth-round draft choice Matt Ionidis to keep the former Alabama A&M Bulldog. Lanier's surprising ascension somewhat lessens the sting of Washington losing 10-year veteran defensive end **Jason Hatcher** of Grambling, who abruptly decided to retire after the 2015 season.

Six first-year players from the HBCU ranks were named to 2016 practice squads. These are players that practice with the teams and many times have first shots at being added to active rosters. It can be a stepping stone to catching on and becoming an impact player. Tony Romo, Danny Amendola and Denver linebacker Brandon Marshall are former practice squad members who've gone on to NFL stardom.

After a sparkling preseason, 5-9, 160-pound wide receiver **Chris Hubert** out of **Fayetteville State** was named to the Arizona Cardinals practice squad. Hubert is one of three former CIAA players to make an NFL roster. The LA Rams ninth-year linebacker **William Hayes** out of **Winston-Salem State** and eighth-year Washington defensive back **Greg Toler** out of **Saint Paul's** made their team's active rosters.

The other five practice squad rookies are all out of the MEAC. They include South Carolina State running back **Jalen "Scoot" Simmons** (Carolina) and defensive back **Antonio Hamilton** (Oakland), **Norfolk State** linebacker **Deon King** (Dallas), **North Carolina A&T** defensive back **Tony McRae** (Cincinnati) and former **Hampton** quarterback **David Watford** who made Philadelphia's practice squad at wide receiver.

Two other former MEAC players in their second years, linebacker **Lynden Trail** from **Norfolk State** and defensive back **Deji Olatoye** from N. C. A&T, made practice squads for Washington and Atlanta respectively. Olatoye was first waived by Dallas before being picked up by the Falcons.

Second-year linebacker **Joe Thomas** out of South Carolina State, who played on Green Bay's practice squad last season, made the Packers' active roster this year.

Continuing a recent trend, the MEAC has by far the most players in the league among HBCU conferences with 18. Just six hail from the Southwestern Athletic Conference, the league that historically placed the most players in the league. South Carolina State tops this year's list with six players on NFL rosters. Two other



Washington Photo
Doug Williams
NFL Personnel Exec
Grambling State



SC State Photo
Buddy Pough
Head Coach
South Carolina State

BLACK COLLEGE PLAYERS IN THE NFL BY SCHOOL

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| SOUTH CAROLINA STATE (6) | |
| Rafael Bush | Detroit |
| Antonio Hamilton | Oakland |
| Javon Hargrave | Pittsburgh |
| Temarrick Hemingway | Los Angeles |
| Jalen Simmons | Carolina |
| Joe Thomas | Green Bay |
| HAMPTON (4) | |
| Chris Baker | Washington |
| Justin Durant | Dallas |
| Kendall Langford | Indianapolis |
| David Watford | Philadelphia |
| NORFOLK STATE (3) | |
| Don Carey | Detroit |
| Deon King | Dallas |
| Lynden Trail | Washington |
| TENNESSEE STATE (3) | |
| Dominique Rodgers-Cromartie | NY Giant |
| Anthony Levine | Baltimore |
| Demetrius Rhaney | Los Angeles |
| ALABAMA A&M (2) | |
| Robert Mathis | Indianapolis |
| Anthony Lanier | Washington |
| GRAMBLING (2) | |
| Larry Donnell | NY Giants |
| Chester Rogers | Indianapolis |
| ALABAMA STATE (1) | |
| Isaiah Crowell | Cleveland |
| ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF (1) | |
| Terron Armstead | New Orleans |
| BETHUNE-COOKMAN (1) | |
| Eric Weems | Atlanta |
| DELAWARE STATE (1) | |
| Rodney Gunter | Arizona |
| FAYETTEVILLE STATE (1) | |
| Chris Hubert | Arizona |
| FORT VALLEY STATE (1) | |
| Marquette King | Oakland |
| HOWARD (1) | |
| Antoine Bethea | San Francisco |
| NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL (1) | |
| Ryan Smith | Tampa Bay |
| NORTH CAROLINA A&T (1) | |
| Tony McRae | Cincinnati |
| Deji Olatoye | Atlanta |
| SAINT PAUL'S (1) | |
| Greg Toler | Washington |
| WINSTON-SALEM STATE (1) | |
| William Hayes | St. Louis |

SCHOOLS WITH MOST PLAYERS IN NFL

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| South Carolina State | 6 |
| Hampton | 4 |
| Tennessee State, Norfolk State | 3 |

BY POSITION

| | |
|--------------------|----|
| DB (CB or S, +1) | 10 |
| DL (DT or DE, -4) | 6 |
| REC (TE or WR, -2) | 6 |
| LB (+2) | 5 |
| OL (T or G, -2) | 2 |
| RB (FB or RB, +1) | 2 |
| QB (NC, -1) | 0 |
| Punter (NC) | 1 |

MEAC programs are next as Hampton has four players in the league and Norfolk State is tied with Tennessee State with three.

"I guess we've got better players in the MEAC, right now," said Pough who says he was not aware of his league's stats vs. the SWAC. "As I see teams, I see programs and facilities, I see teams over on that side (SWAC) that have the potential to have good players just as we have. I just think maybe they haven't had the success that we've had. We've had a little of an edge that way."

Williams recognizes another contributing factor.

"I think it goes to the SWAC does not do what they should do in as far as sending video into the league so everybody can view it," said Williams. "It's awfully tough when people tell you about a player and you don't have anything to go on."

"Unfortunately, a lot of these kids think that you can go on HUDL (a popular site for high school or college game tape). We don't do HUDL," he said of the NFL. "They think they can send you DVDs. We don't do DVDs." He said all tape should be sent to a central location at the NFL office in New York that then uploads it to every team in the league.

Defensive back (cornerbacks and safeties) is the most popular position manned by HBCU players. There are nine players at that position. Six play on the defensive line (tackles and ends) and another six are receivers (wideouts and tight ends). Five play linebacker.

Washington is the team with the most HBCU products (4). Los Angeles and Indianapolis both have three.

BY TEAM TOTAL 32 (-4) BY CONFERENCE

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|----------|-------|---------|
| Washington | 4 | NFC | 23 (NC) | MEAC | 19 (+6) |
| Indianapolis, Los Angeles | 3 | AFC | 9 (-5) | SWAC | 6 (-6) |
| Arizona, Atlanta, Dallas, NY Giants, Oakland | 2 | BY EXPERIENCE | | CIAA | 3 (NC) |
| | | Robert Mathis | 14 years | INDYS | 3 (-3) |
| | | Antoine Bethea | 11 | SIAC | 1 (-4) |
| | | Justin Durant, Eric Weems | 10 | | |