FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 17 - 23, 2018

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS PAGE

SUMMER KICKOFFS

TWIN TOWERS: Coaches and SIDs in the SIAC and SWAC make their picks for 2018 football honors.

SIAC, SWAC MEDIA DAYS KICKOFF 2018 FOOTBALL; FOUR NEW HBCU HOOPS COACHES

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

Watson

Gayle

Jones

Stanton

GO FIGURE!: As football season looms, four new basketball coaches are named at Miles (Watson), Albany State (Gayle), St. Augustine's (Jones) and Allen (Stanton).

WATSON LEAVES BENEDICT FOR MILES:

Highly successful head coach **Fred Watson**, a six-time coach of the year in the **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** (SIAC), is leaving **Benedict**, his alma mater, after 16 years to take over the men's head coaching job at fellow conference member **Miles College**.

Watson succeeds **Leon Douglas** who was let go last spring following a 27-57 overall record at Miles.

"This is a great opportunity for myself and my family," Watson said. "We're excited to join the Miles College family and look forward to embracing the Fairfield and Birmingham communities. Having been in the SIAC for the past 16 years, I've been impressed by the tremendous support this program has received."

Last season, Watson won his 300th game and will take a career record of 350-150 (.681 winning percentage) to the Golden Bears program. He has 15 consecutive winning seasons, eight 20-win seasons, five regular season and five SIAC tournament titles, and has made nine appearances in the NCAA Div. II South Region Tournament with one Sweet 16 appearance.

Newly named athletics director **Reginald Ruffin**, also the head football coach at Miles, pulled off a major coup with the hiring of Watson.

"With Coach Watson, we not only found a proven recruiter and winner, but we also found someone with an unwavering commitment to engaging and motivating communities through basketball," said Ruffin.

GAYLE TO LEAD ALBANY STATE HOOPS:

ALBANY, GA – **Albany State University** (ASU) announced at a press conference last Thursday that **Patrick Gayle** has been named the new head men's basketball coach. Gayle is a coaching veteran that brings over a decade of experience as both a head and assistant coach at the NAIA and high school levels.

Gayle was selected from a pool of over 100 applicants and after a national search. He is the seventh men's basketball coach in ASU history and will begin his duties immediately.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Gayle comes to Albany State after a successful thirteen year run as an assistant and most recently, the head coach at St. Thomas University in Miami, Gardens Florida. From 2008-2012 he was an assistant before being promoted in July of 2012 where he went on to compile an overall record of 125-51 over six seasons as the head coach.

In his first three years at the helm of the program, Gayle guided the Bobcats to the NAIA Division II Tournament advancing to the Sweet 16 twice (2013, 2014). He was twice named Sun Conference Coach of the Year after leading the Bobcats to Sun Conference Regular Season titles during the 2013-2014 and 2017-2018 seasons.

His team also made history during the 2013-2014 season as they set a new school record for wins (26).

JONES NEW ST. AUG WOMEN'S COACH:

RALEIGH, N.C. (July 16) – After two seasons as the men's lead assistant, **Montel Jones** is the new head women's basketball coach at **Saint Augustine's University**, the athletic department announced last week.

Jones has eight years of coaching experience including the past two seasons as an assistant under SAU head men's basketball coach **MarQus Johnson**.

A Kinston, N.C., native, Jones was previously on the men's basketball staffs at the University of Mount Olive and Wingate University before also coaching at **Virginia State** and SAU. Before entering the coaching profession, Jones was a basketball student-athlete at Mount Olive, where he graduated in 2008 with a criminal justice degree.

STANTON TAKES OVER AT ALLEN:

COLUMBIA, SC - **Allen University** has announced that **Akia Stanton** has been named the head coach of the Lady Yellow Jackets basketball team. She succeeds **Jason James**, who became head men's coach in March.

Stanton comes to Allen from Jarvis Christian College where she was the head women's basketball coach for the past four years. Prior, to coaching at Jarvis Christian she was the assistant basketball and volleyball coach at her Alma Mater **Paine College** for three years.

Coaches pick Grambling, Alcorn State in SWAC

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The **Southwestern Athletic Conference** released its 2018 All-SWAC Preseason Football Teams Friday at its preseason Media Day with two-time defending SWAC Champion and *Celebration Bowl* representative **Grambling State** tabbed with the most individual honors with 15 overall selections including 10 first team nods.

Senior running back **P.J. Simmons** of **Alcorn State** was the head coaches and SIDs choice for the SWAC Preseason Offensive Player of the Year award. Simmons averaged 8.6 yards per carry to total 80 carries for 687 yards and seven touchdowns.

Grambling State linebacker **De'Arius Christmas** was tabbed as the SWAC Preseason Defensive Player of the Year after amassing 88 tackles, 4.5 sacks and two forced fumbles a year ago.

East Division four-time defending champion **Alcorn State** totaled 95 points as it was named the preseason favorite to win the East once again.

In the West Division, reigning two-time SWAC champion Grambling State was chosen as the overall favorite after amassing a conference-best 96 points in the voting.

Preseason Offensive Player of the Year: P.J. Simmons (RB) – Alcorn State
Preseason Defensive Player of the Year: De'Arius Christmas (LB) – Grambling State

2018 PRESEASON ALL-SWAC FOOTBALL TEAM

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE	SECOND TEAM OFFENSE
QB - Noah Johnson, ALC	QB - Darryl Pearson Jr., ALS
RB - P.J. Simmons, ALC	RB - Jordan Bentley, AA&M
RB - KeShawn Williams, UAPB	RB - Dawonya Tucker, PVA&M
OL - Mustaffa Ibrahim, ALC	OL - Deonte Brooks, ALC
OL - Jeremiah Abby, SU	OL - Kevin Hall, ALC
OL - William Waddell, GSU	OL - Roderick Smith, PVA&M
OL - Kyle Davis, GSU	OL - Jimmy White, TSU
OL - Corbin Finlayson, PVA&M	OL - Tytus Howard, ALS
WR - Quinn McElfresh, MVSU	WR - Quintin Guice, GSU
WR - Darrell Clark, GSU	WR - Markcus Hardy, PVA&M
TE - Jordan Jones, GSU	TE - Zarrian Holcombe, PVA&M
DEFENSE	**DEFENSE**
DL - Linwood Banks, GSU	DL - Anfernee Mullins, GSU
DL - La'Allan Clark, GSU	DL - Sterling Shippy, ALC
DL - Brandon Varner, GSU	DL - Kevin Agee, UAPB
DL - Vernon Moland, AA&M	DL - Christian Clark, ALS
LB - Patrick Harbin, MVSU	LB - De'Andre Hogues, GSU
LB - Trae Ferrell, ALC	LB - Malcolm Williams, GSU
LB - De'Arius Christmas, GSU	LB - Solomon Muhammad, ALC
DB - Dylan Hamilton, AA&M	(tie) Darron Johnson, ALS
DB - Andre Augustine, SU	DB - Reggie Stubblefield, PVA&M
DB - Ju'Anthony Parker, PVA&M	DB - Jeffrey Hill, ALS
DB - Percy Cargo, GSU	DB - Brady Smith, ALC
	DB - Dedrick Shy, GSU

SPECIAL TEAMS (1st TEAM)
K - Marc Orozco, GSU
P - Jamie Gillan, UAPB
RS - KeShawn Williams, UAPB

SPECIAL TEAMS (2nd TEAM)
PK/P - Corey McCullough, ALC
RS - George Golden, ALS

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

EAST DIVISION	
Alcorn State	95
Alabama State	72
Jackson State	55
Alabama A&M	51
Miss. Valley State	27
WEST DIVISION	
Grambling State	96
Southern	78
Prairie View A&M	65
Texas Southern	30
Arkansas-Pine Bluff	30

SWAC Football, Basketball Championships back in Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. – The **Southwestern Athletic Conference** (SWAC) has announced a partnership with the City of Birmingham that will bring two of its high-profile championships back to the Magic City.

As a result of the agreement, the 2018 Toyota SWAC Football Championship and 2019 Men's and Women's Basketball Tournament will return to Legion Field and Bill Harris Arena respectively.

"I'm grateful to Mayor Randall Woodfin and City of Birmingham on this renewed partnership to bring the SWAC football and basketball championships back to the Magic City," Interim Commissioner **Edgar Gantt** said. "The city has made many improvements to its sports infrastructure here in Birmingham. This next year will play an important part as the SWAC prepares for its centennial celebration."

Legion Field served as the initial site for the SWAC Football Championship from 1999 to 2012. Birmingham served as the home of the SWAC Basketball tournament during the mid-2000s, with Bill Harris Arena hosting the event as recently as 2009.

The SWAC Football Championship game will be held on Dec. 1, and the SWAC Basketball Tournament will take place March 13-16.

Tuskegee and Albany State picked again in SIAC football

But the 2018 favorites are much less than shoo-ins in what are expected to be competitive races

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH
(First-place votes in parenthesis)

WEST DIVISION	EAST DIVISION
1. Tuskegee (6)	1. Albany State (7)
2. Miles (3)	2. Benedict (2)
3. Kentucky State (1)	3. Fort Valley State (1)
4. Central State	4. Morehouse
5. Lane	5. Clark Atlanta

SIAC STANDOUTS: (Above l.) QB Jamarcus Ezell and head coach Willie Slater of West Div. favorite Tuskegee. (Above r.) Head coach Gabe Giardina of East Div. favorite Albany State. (L.) Preseason Offensive POY, Miles RB Justin Hardy.

LUT WILLIAMS
BCSP Editor

ATLANTA – The news coming out of the **Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference** Tuesday when head football coaches and players descended on the College Football Hall of Fame for the second straight year for the annual preseason Media Day was not a surprise.

Though **Fort Valley State** and **Miles** have found their way into the championship circle in recent years, **Tuskegee** in the West and **Albany State** in the East are the perennial kingpins of the SIAC having a hand in 22 conference crowns between them, some they shared, since 1994.

They are picked again by conference coaches to be the top teams in 2018.

What is interesting is the slew of underclassmen that made their mark last season and are poised to be difference makers and make the division races competitive again this year.

Here's how the teams break down.

WEST DIVISION

TUSKEGEE (9-2, 7-1 SIAC) – The Golden Tigers emerged with the 2017 SIAC crown beating a game **Fort Valley State** team 13-6 in the championship contest. They lost two of their first four games last season including an embarrassing 61-0 loss to Findlay that head coach **Willie Slater** called "the worst loss in my (40-year coaching) history."

"You build off of those," said Slater, who is the dean of SIAC coaches entering his 13th year on the job. "We haven't lost since then." His team won its last seven games including a big (33-7) win over **SWAC** member **Jackson State** and a 50-20 thrashing of **Miles** that clinched the West Division crown.

The Golden Tigers, will be without RB **Hoderick Lowe** (701 yards, 8 TDs) and all-everything linebacker **Osband Thompson** (117 tackles, 4 interceptions), but return junior quarterback **Jamarcus Ezell**, a mechanical engineering major who was selected as the preseason first team signal-caller. Ezell passed for 1,105 yards and 7 TDs and ran for 274 yards and another two scores. Senior RB **Justice Owens**, who had seven rushing TDs, is also back.

Linebacker **Davoris Thomas** (72 tackles), the preseason defensive player of the year, and lineman **Kali James** are among nine Golden Tigers on preseason all-conference teams.

MILES (6-4, 6-2) – The Golden Bears persevered and had a late run at the West Division title despite head coach **Reginald Ruffin** going through a tough 2017. He lost his wife of 17 years, Monica, early in the year, lost Assistant Head Coach **Tony Oglesby** before the season began and the young 3-year old son of another assistant in September.

"It was a tough year, but I was blessed to have a resilient group of young men," said Ruffin.

Leading the charge in 2018 is preseason Offensive Player of the Year, senior RB **Justin Hardy** (5-8, 185), who led the conference last season with 1,197 rushing yards and 12 TDs. **Joseph Cambridge** returns at quarterback.

Austin Stephens, who racked up 80 tackles as a sophomore, is back to lead the defense that includes preseason first-teamer **Marquell Shelton** at defensive tackle.

KENTUCKY STATE (3-8, 2-5) – Third-year head coach **John L. Smith** has a 17-member senior class that he hopes will help turn around a 2017 squad that he said lacked senior leadership. **Ken Ackerman** is the new offensive coordinator.

First team all-SIAC RB/KR **Brett Sylve** (995 rushing yds., 6 TDs) was the breakout star for the Thorobreds leading the league with 179 all-purpose yards per game and three return TDs (2 punts, 1 kickoff). Also returning is former QB **Jules St. Gee** who led the 'Breds to the 2016 SIAC title game in Smith's first season before sitting out last season. He'll compete with holdover **Paul Campbell** for the signal-caller duties.

CENTRAL STATE (1-9, 0-8) – The only win on the Marauders ledger was a 40-35 victory at SWAC member **Arkansas-Pine Bluff**. "That's the day we put it all together and we finished," said head coach **Cedric Pearl**. "That shows what we're capable of."

Incumbent **Trent Mays** will get competition from several transfers at quarterback. Running back **Terraris Saffold** (869 rushing yards, 6 TDs) is back to lead the ground game. Second team preseason linebacker **Kailen Abrams** is a prolific tackler (86 stops) but needs defensive help. CSU gave up 35.2 points per game a season ago

LANE (2-8, 1-7) – "We started but we didn't finish the games," is how Assistant Head Coach **Fred Manuel** explained the Dragons' 2-8 2017 season that saw them lose five games by 10 points or less. Manuel was at Media Day in place of head coach **Derrick Burroughs**.

Quarterback **Marcus Reynolds**, who missed parts of several games last season, is back to lead the offense and has a prolific receiving corps that includes **Ahmad Isaac** (35 rec.). **Omari Hampton** (30 rec.) and **Micah Grigsby** (25 rec.). Beefing up the offensive line that produced just 7 rushing TDs and gave up 25 sacks will be key to improving upon a league-worst 18.2 points per game.

.

EAST DIVISION

ALBANY STATE (6-4, 4-2) – In **Gabe Giardina's** first year, the Golden Rams beat **Tuskege**e (20-7) but lost close games to **Clark Atlanta** (44-36) and **Benedict** (17-12) down the stretch that cost them a shot at the E. Div. title. Employing Giardina's option attack out of the shotgun, ASU ran for 193 yards per game and led the league averaging 27 points per game.

They return the dynamic senior RB duo of **McKinley Habersham** (850 yards, 6.0 yards per carry, 8 TDs) and **Kelan Fraise** (620 yds., 7.5 ypc., 6 TDs). Wide receiver **Mike Green** (44 rec., 3 TDs) is a preseason first team All-SIAC selection as is **Jamie Glenn** who anchors four returning starters on the offensive line.

BENEDICT (7-2, 6-1) – In its third year under former **Albany State** head coach **James "Mike" White**, the Tigers won their last five games and were a 31-28 overtime loss to **Fort Valley State** in late September short of taking the East Division title. The only other loss on the season was in overtime to Limestone (20-17) on Sept. 9.

White, who won six SIAC championships and made seven Div. II playoff appearances in 15 years at ASU, believes this will be his best team at Benedict. He returns eight starters on offense and eight on defense. The defensive unit led the league in scoring, total and rushing defense. Three defenders (LB **Xavier George**, DL **Charles Williams** and DB **Travionte Brown**) are preseason first teamers.

White also believes he has the best quarterback in the league in 6-4, 265-pound senior **Dominique Harris**. "He's legit," said White of Harris who only played in five games last season.

FORT VALLEY STATE (5-5, 5-3 SIAC) - An early (31-28) win in overtime vs. a resurgent Benedict team set up FVSU for its second straight East Division title. They clinched the title with a late October (52-7) pasting of **Morehouse** before dropping a meaningless season-ender to rival **Albany State**.

Six-four, 220-pound QB **Slade Jarman** (1,640 passing yards, 57.5 completion percentage, 14 TDs) earned newcomer of the year honors while leading the Wildcat offense. He's back along with WR **Loren Smothers**, his top target (33 rec., 3 TDs) who also had two punt return TDs.

Linebacker **David Brown** and defensive backs **Cameron Young** and **Aaron Dore** are preseason first teamers on defense.

MOREHOUSE (4-6, 4-5) – The Maroon Tigers lost three of their final four games to fall out of the E. Div. race but finished on a high note with a 40-0 win over Atlanta neighbor and rival **Clark Atlanta**. Two of those three losses were in extra sessions, to **Benedict** (29-26) in two overtimes and to **Tuskegee** (23-17) in one.

Mike Sims will compete at the quarterback position with NAIA all-American transfer **Cedric Phillips**. Wide receiver/kick returner **Amyr Smith** is only 5-7, 175, but he's a big part of the Maroon Tigers' title hopes. He caught 41 passes last season for 527 yards and 5 TDs and averaged 25 yards on 12 kick returns. "We move the way he's able to move offensively and kicking-game wise," said 12-year head coach **Rich Freeman** of Smith.

CLARK ATLANTA (4-6, 3-5) – First team all-SIAC QB **Jonathan McCrary** (2,445 passing yards, 18 TDs) is gone from the league's top offense but head coach **Kevin Ramsey** believes he has an adequate replacement in 6-3, 225-pound **Charles Stafford**, a transfer from Albany State. The new QB has a qualified mentor in record-setting former **Mississippi Valley State** QB **Willie "Satellite" Totten**, the new coordinator of the Panthers' offense.

Senior **Roger Thomas** (364 rushing yards, 4 TDs) is back to lead the ground attack while **Jonathan Sanders** (40 rec., 4.4 rpg., 4 TDs) is the league's top returning receiver.

PRESEASON ALL-SIAC TEAMS

FIRST TEAM OFFENSE	SECOND TEAM OFFENSE
Jamarcus Ezell, QB, TU	Slade Jarmon, QB, FVSU
Joseph Castellanos, TE, KSU	Ryan Edwards, TE, MHC
Javarrius Cheatham, WR, TU	Johnathon Sanders, WR, CAU
Mike Green, WR, ASU	Amyr Smith, WR, MHC
Justin Hardy, RB, MC	Terraris Saffold, RB, CSU
Brett Sylve, RB, KSU	McKinley Habersham, RB, ASU
Jamie Glenn, OL, ASU	Marcus Campbell, OL, KSU
Jean Cyriaque, OL, MHC	Roger Womack, OL, MC
Justin Brown, OL, BEN	Craig Hinson, OL, BEN
Darrius Hicks, OL, FVSU	Rochelin Romain, OL, TU
Lowell Richardson, OL, TU	Jah-Mai Davidson, OL, CAU
DEFENSE	**DEFENSE**
Antonio Johnson, DL, MHC	Demetrius Harris, DL, FVSU
Marquel Shelton, DL, MC	Kamari Jones-Hunter, DL, MHC
Terrance Leatherwood, DL, TU	Bundrea Conway, DL, MHC
Charles Williams, DL, BEN	Kali James, DL, TU
David Brown, LB, FVSU	Austin Stephens, LB, MC
Davoris Thomas, LB, TU	Kailen Abrams, LB, CSU
Xavier George, LB, BEN	Kevin Dawson, LB, TU
Aaron Dore, DB, FVSU	Quantavious Singletary, DB, CAU
Darnell Hill, DB, TU	Nicco Whigham, DB, FVSU
Cameron Young, DB, FVSU	Jaylin Boyd, DB, ASU
Travionte Brown, DB, BEN	Macaiah Page, DB, MHC
Dalton Hall, PK, TU	Carlos Saldana, PK, CAU
Gabriel Ballinas, P, ASU	Vincente Luis Juan-Pena, P, LC
Brett Sylve, KR, KSU	Lorenzo Smothers, KR, FVSU
Lorenzo Smothers, PR, FVSU	Brett Sylve, PR, KSU

© AZEEZ Communications, Inc.