



Virginia Union Sports Photo

TITLE SEEKING: Virginia Union head coach Ann Marie Gilbert looks for two wins this week to earn spot in NCAA Div. II title game on April 4.

STILL PLAYING

VIRGINIA UNION BATTLES IN D2 ELITE EIGHT; KIANA JOHNSON NAMED DIV. II'S TOP PLAYER

UNDER THE BANNER

WHAT'S GOING ON IN AND AROUND BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

WALKER KILLED IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENT:

MIAMI, Florida -- Former **Texas Southern** and Baltimore Ravens cornerback Tray Walker died Friday from injuries he suffered when his motorbike collided with an SUV near Miami the night before.



Walker

Walker, who grew up in Miami and graduated from Miami Northwestern High, was pronounced dead at around 5 p.m., Walker's agent Ron Butler told the Miami Herald.

Walker played in eight games with the Ravens during his rookie season. He was 23.

He attended Texas Southern and made an immediate impact for the Tigers as a true freshman in 2011 when he recorded 22 tackles and three interceptions. During his senior season in 2014, he finished with 41 tackles and three interceptions en route to Second Team All-Southwestern Athletic Conference team honors. Walker compiled 159 tackles, nine interceptions and 17 broken up passes during his four years with the Tigers.

The Ravens selected Walker in the fourth round of the 2015 draft at No. 136 overall, making him the first Texas Southern player to be drafted by an NFL team since receiver **Joey Jamison** was selected by the Green Bay Packers in 2000. He was the second of four black college players taken in the 2015 draft.

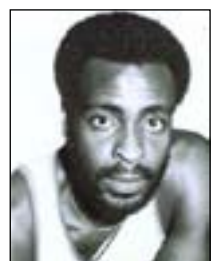
Walker was the first SWAC player drafted since **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** offensive tackle **Terron Armstead**, who was selected by the New Orleans Saints in the third round of the 2013 draft.

Ravens coach John Harbaugh said Tuesday that owner Steve Bisciotti will charter a plane in Baltimore to allow players, coaches and team officials to attend the Walker's funeral on Saturday.

The funeral is Saturday at 1 p.m. at 93rd St. Baptist Church in Miami, where Walker grew up.

EUGENE SHORT, JSU LEGEND, PASSES:

HATTIESBURG, Mississippi -- **Eugene Short**, one of the best basketball players in **Jackson State** history, died last week in Houston, Texas, following a long battle with diabetes. Short was 62 years old.



Short

The 6-foot-6 Short, along with his younger brother, **Purvis**, helped lead Hattiesburg High to the school's first state championship in the 1972-73 season.

"Eugene was so instrumental in Hattiesburg High's success then," said Hattiesburg High athletic director Cheyenne Trussell. "But it was also a unique time since it was right after integration. He helped bring the community together. It wasn't about black and white. It was about Hattiesburg High School."

After graduating from Hattiesburg High, Short was a star player at JSU, earning SWAC Player of the Year honors twice. He was inducted into the Jackson State Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.

Short was picked by the New York Knicks in the first round (ninth overall) of the 1975 NBA Draft. The year before, he was chosen in the fifth round by the San Antonio Spurs of the American Basketball Association. Short also played for the Seattle SuperSonics during his two-year NBA career. He was also a member of the U.S. national team at the FIBA World Championship in 1974.

Johnson named D2 Player of the Year



RARE TALENT: Virginia Union guard Kiana Johnson led the nation in scoring (29.3 ppg.) and is second in assists (8.7 app.) while leading her Lady Panthers to a 28-2 record, the CIAA championship and into the NCAA Div. II Elite Eight.

ATLANTA -- **Kiana Johnson** of **Virginia Union** is the 2016 WBCA National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Player of the Year and headlines the 2016 WBCA NCAA Division II All-America Team, the Women's Basketball Coaches Association announced this week. She was the only player from an HBCU to make the all-America team.

In her first and only season at VUU, Johnson, a 5-foot-6 senior guard, leads the NCAA Division II in scoring averaging at 29.3 points per game and is second nationally in assists averaging 8.7 per game. Johnson broke the school record for points (671) and assists (219). She posted a school record 45 points on Feb. 13 and 17 assists on Jan. 11. She also broke the Div. II playoff single-game scoring record with a 49-point outburst in the Atlantic Region championship game.

Johnson was recently named Virginia State Player of the Year by the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, while also being named to its all-state team. She also earned CIAA Player of the Year and NCAA Division II Atlantic Region most outstanding player honors. Johnson led the Panthers as they played Bentley University in the Elite Eight of the NCAA Division II Tournament on Tuesday, March 22nd. (see story below).

The WBCA presents the player of the year award annually to the top player in five WBCA membership divisions (NCAA Divisions II, III, NAIA, junior/community college and high school).

"The WBCA is delighted to name Kiana as the 2016 WBCA NCAA Division II Player of the Year," said WBCA Executive Director Danielle Donehew. "Kiana has played an integral role in guiding her team to an extraordinary season, and is very deserving of this distinguished honor. The WBCA applauds Kiana for her hard work, dedication and contributions to the game during the 2015-16 season."

The 10-member team was selected by a vote of the selection committee. The committee is composed of one representative from each of the nine geographical regions and a chairperson.

The members of the 2016 WBCA NCAA Division II Coaches' All-America Team are as follows:

Mariah Brawner-Henley, 6-0, Sr., F, Lewis

Jennifer Gemma, 6-0, Jr., C, Bentley

Miki Glenn, 5-7, Jr., G, California (Pa.)

Nicole Hampton, 5-10, Sr., G, Lubbock Christian

LaQuinta Jefferson, 6-0, Sr., G, Missouri Western St.

Kiana Johnson, 5-6, Sr., G, **Virginia Union**

Jasmine Kearse, 5-6, Jr., G, Limestone College

Michelle Mitchell, 5-9, Sr., G, Columbus State

Chelsey Rhodes, 5-7, Sr., G, Delta State

Farrah Shokoor, 5-11, Sr., F, California - San Diego

Virginia Union carries HBCU mantle into D2 Elite 8

LUT WILLIAMS
BCSP Editor

Nineteen (19) black college basketball teams -- ten men's squads and nine from the women's side -- entered post-conference tournament play about two weeks ago seeking national titles.

Only one has survived.

The Lady Panthers of **Virginia Union** (28-2), after winning tournament championships in the CIAA and in the NCAA Div. II Atlantic Region, continued their quest for the women's Div. II national championship Tuesday, March 22 (before press time) in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

That's where they faced East Region champion Bentley (28-5) at 3:30 p.m. in the Elite Eight, the national quarterfinals.

A win Tuesday would put VUU in the national semifinals on Wednesday, March 22 vs. South Central Region titleist Lubbock Christian (32-0), who defeated South Region champ Florida Southern 73-69 in Tuesday's 12 noon game.

The women's Div. II national championship game is not to be played until 12 days later on April 4 in Indianapolis. Because the 2015-16 season is the 25th in which the NCAA has sponsored national championships in women's basketball, the Division II and Division III championship games will be held at the site of this year's Division I Final Four at Bankers Life Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

THE LADY PANTHERS

First-year head coach **Ann Marie Gilbert**, 5-6 transfer senior point guard **Kiana Johnson**, recently named the NCAA Div. II player of the year (see related story), and a pair of 6-2 twin towers, junior **Lady Walker** and senior **Taylor White**, are leading the Lady Panthers in their championship quest.

Gilbert, the former head coach at Div. I Eastern Michigan, has deftly guided the squad from the bench, mixing in a three-quarter court 2-2-1 press with a 2-3 half court zone defense to keep teams off balance. The team scores 85.0 points per game, second best in the nation.

On offense, the show belongs to Johnson, the former three-year starter at point guard at Big 10 power Michigan State, who leads the nation in scoring at 29.3 points per game and is second in assists at 8.7 per game. Those stats alone are deadly. But what makes Johnson an even bigger threat is that she shoots 46.2% from the field, 41.3% from behind the arc and hits 82.7% of her free throws.

The indefatigable Johnson also is third nationally in steals at 4.17 per game while playing 38.27 minutes per game, seventh highest in the



Gilbert



Walker



White



Johnson

NCAA DIV. II WOMEN'S ELITE EIGHT

TUESDAY, MARCH 22, SIOUX FALLS, SD QUARTERFINALS (ELITE EIGHT)

AFTERNOON SESSION

1 p.m. - Florida Southern (27-5) vs. Lubbock Christian (32-0)

3:30 p.m. - **Virginia Union** (28-2) vs. Bentley (28-5)

EVENING SESSION

7 p.m. - Alaska-Anchorage (36-2) vs. Francis Marion (24-8)

9:30 p.m. - Grand Valley St. (25-9) vs. Pittsburg State (29-5)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23 - SEMIFINALS

7 p.m. and 9:30 pm

MONDAY, APRIL 4 - CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

3 p.m. (In Indianapolis)

nation.

Johnson has had five 40-plus-point games this season, four in the last 12 games and two in the postseason including a season-best 49 points in the Atlantic Region final vs. West Liberty on March 14. That output broke the women's Div. II playoffs single-game scoring mark. She is averaging 34.6 points per game since the postseason began.

Walker is a double-double machine. She scores 18.2 points per game and is third in the NCAA at 13.2 rebounds per game. She is tied for fifth nationally with 20 double-doubles in 30 games. Johnson has 14 double-doubles of points and assists

Walker's counterpart, White, puts in 9.0 points per game and pulls down 10.2 rebounds per game. Both Walker and White shoot 53% from the floor

Bentley won the Northeast-10 Tournament championship before taking the East Region title over New York Tech (79-74). Bentley, under head coach Barbara Stevens, is led by 6-0 junior center Jennifer Gemma, who like Johnson was selected to the WBCA all-America team.

Gemma averages 19.9 points and 9.4 rebounds per game. Six-foot freshman guard Megan Lewis (10.0 ppg.) and 5-9 sophomore

guard Lauren Green (9.8 ppg.) are the next highest scorers.

HISTORY

VUU will be trying to win its second NCAA Div. II women's national title and fourth for the CIAA (see STAT CORNER).

The 1983 Virginia Union squad coached by the late **Lou Hearn** with star players **Paris McWhirter** and **Barvenia Wooten** (now Wooten-Cherry) captured that year's title over Cal Poly Pomona (73-60). Gilbert replaced Wooten-Cherry this year as VUU's head coach. VUU returned to the title game the following year (1984) but fell to Central Missouri (70-63).

Black college teams, in fact, played in the first three NCAA Div. II championship games. **Tuskegee**, out of the SIAC, reached the Div. II championship game in 1982, the first year of the championship. The Lady Tigers fell to Cal Poly Pomona (93-74) in the title game.

Hampton, then playing in the CIAA and Div. II under head coach **James Sweat** before moving to the MEAC and Div. I, took the 1988 title over West Texas A&M (65-48).

Shaw out of the CIAA, under head coach **Jacques Curtis**, defeated Ashland 88-82 for the 2012 crown.

2016 NCAA DIV. I POSTSEASON BASKETBALL SCORES (FINAL RECORDS)

MEN

NCAA

Holy Cross 59, **Southern** 55 (22-13)
Virginia 81, **Hampton** 45 (21-11)

NIT

Valparaiso 84, **Texas Southern** 73 (18-15)

CIT - FIRST ROUND

Jackson State 81, Sam Houston State 77, OT
Grand Canyon 78, **South Carolina State** 74 (19-15)
Ball State 78, Tennessee State 73, 2 OTs (18-16).
UT Arlington 75, **Savannah State** 59 (16-16)
Columbia 86, **Norfolk State** 54 (17-17)

CIT - SECOND ROUND

Grand Canyon 64, **Jackson State** 54 (20-16)

WOMEN

NCAA

Texas 86, **Alabama State** 42 (19-12)
Notre Dame 95, **North Carolina A&T** 61 (19-12)

WNIT

Arkansas State 68, **Southern** 45 (19-12)
Florida Gulf Coast 78, **Bethune-Cookman** 51 (18-13)

STAT CORNER

WHO ARE THE BEST PERFORMERS IN BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS

BLACK COLLEGE TEAMS IN NCAA. DIV. II WOMEN'S CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

YEAR	CHAMPION (RECORD)	COACH	RUNNER-UP
2012	Shaw (29-6)	Jacques Curtis	Ashland
1988	Hampton (33-1)	James Sweat	West Texas A&M
1983	Virginia Union (27-2)	Louis Hearn	Cal Poly Pomona
1984	Central Missouri (27-5)	Jorja Hoehn	Virginia Union
1982	Cal Poly Pomona (29-7)	Darlene May	Tuskegee

BCSP Notes

Hall resigns as WSSU women's hoops coach

Winston-Salem State announced that women's basketball coach, **A.G. Hall** has submitted his letter of resignation as head of the program.

WSSU finished fifth in the CIAA's Southern Division this year with a record of 12-16 overall and 6-10 in the CIAA.

Hall compiled a 53-58 record at WSSU. He produced back to back 15 win seasons from 2012-14, but the Rams were just 23-33 (12-20 in the CIAA) in the last two seasons.

The search for a new basketball coach will begin immediately. **Anitra Cole** will serve as interim coach until a replacement is hired.

Pierre of St. Aug's wins world indoor title

PORTLAND, Ore. - **Saint Augustine's** graduate **Barbara Pierre** of the United States won the women's 60-meter title in the IAAF World Indoor Track and Field Championships at the Oregon Convention Center late Saturday night. Pierre outran Dafne Schippers of the Netherlands and Elaine Thompson of Jamaica to win the gold medal in a winning time of 7.02 seconds. Schippers was second in 7.04 and Thompson placed third in 7.08.

