



## **MEAC/SWAC Challenge has feel of HBCU Championship Game**

by Tony McLean  
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NEW YORK -- While it may be the opening act of the year for Grambling State and South Carolina State, Sunday's MEAC/SWAC Challenge has all the makings of a year-ending championship game.

The Bulldogs and Tigers, both defending league champions, will battle in the fifth annual HBCU showcase at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando (2 pm ET on ESPN2). While the MEAC had dominated the game (they've won three of the first four challenges), this year's matchup has the look of being the best in the game's brief history.

When you add the fact that GSU (11-2, 7-0 SWAC last year) and SCSU (10-3, 8-0 MEAC) are ranked 1-2 respectively in the inaugural BTRC/BASN HBCU FCS Coaches Top 10 Football Poll, it just adds to the excitement of the first full weekend of black college football.

Both offenses will feature two of black college football's outstanding stars. Grambling is led by quarterback Greg Dillon. He led the SWAC in passing efficiency while throwing for nearly 1,400 yards including 18 TDs and just 8 interceptions. Dillon also rushed for 667 yards and four touchdowns.

As for the Bulldogs, senior running back Will Ford looks to add more to his impressive credentials.

The 2008 [Boxtorow.com/BASN](http://Boxtorow.com/BASN) and MEAC Offensive Player of the Year, Ford led the MEAC and ranked 13th in the nation in rushing with 1,499 touchdowns. He also needs less than 1,000 yards to become the league's all-time leading rusher.

On the other side of the line, GSU defensive end Christian Anthony (a preseason BTRC/BASN All-American selection in 2008) and SCSU defensive end Markhee Hamlin will be the players to watch.

On a historic level, the GSU program can win its 500th game with a victory Sunday.

The Tigers, the third-winningest program in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), would be just the second SWAC team and fifth HBCU program to reach the milestone. Southern (531 victories) leads all SWAC teams, along with Florida A&M (531), Hampton (518), and Tennessee State (503).

In its' 67th season of football, Grambling State would reach the milestone faster than any other FCS program. It would be another milestone in an historic decade for the GSU program which has claimed five SWAC titles and four HBCU National Championships.

Grambling's 79 wins since 2000 is the fifth most in the FCS and its .738 winning percentage is the sixth highest in the FCS and leads all SWAC and HBCU programs this decade. The game can also be heard on the Internet at [www.classicsportsradio.com](http://www.classicsportsradio.com).

### **OTHER KEY GAMES**

#### N.C. A&T at WINSTON-SALEM STATE

Aggie head coach Alonzo Lee makes his debut for A&T in the I-40 Classic at Winston-Salem. The contest will mark the season-opener for both the Rams and the Aggies as the Rams look to earn a victory over their most bitter of rivals for the third time in four tries. The game can also be heard on the Internet at at [www.classicsportsradio.com](http://www.classicsportsradio.com).

#### TUSKEGEE at MILES COLLEGE

An interesting early season SIAC matchup in Birmingham. Both teams are coming off opening day wins. Billy Joe's squad was impressive last week in a 35-18 win over Lane College. As for the Golden Tigers, they defeated Benedict in their opener.

#### SHAW at BETHUNE-COOKMAN

The defending CIAA champs broke open a 24-24 game to outlast Elizabeth City State in last week's opener. They'll now travel to Daytona Beach to meet the Wildcats in another intriguing match-up. It's the first meeting ever between the two schools.