

First FAMU Scrimmage Reveals New Focus

Contributed by Marrita Royster-Crockett and Jay Christie - Black College Wire
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Team shows 'improvement, discipline'

The Florida A & M football team has officially begun its first scrimmages and is preparing for the season ahead. Last season, the team endured a rocky year with only three wins and eight losses.

To avoid the same fate, this year's team has been equipped with a new head coach and seems to agree that organization has become a key ingredient to its pursuit for success. Saturday was the first day of scrimmages and the football team looked to have gotten off to a great start.

Non-MEAC officials were brought in to supervise the scrimmage and help sharpen the players' game. Among the officials was George Stanley, a FAMU Developmental Research School graduate.

Stanley said the players have shown improvement and have become very organized.

"They seem to have a lot more discipline, and what they're doing now is just working out the kinks," he said.

Joe Taylor, who replaced former head coach Ruben Carter, said he can see a definite improvement.

"Everybody is becoming aware of the fact that the people in the group is the organization and the more they know about what is expected, the more they can take the organization forward," said Taylor, who has more than 20 years of coaching experience. "They are understanding now that they do have a responsibility and people are getting to places where they need to be."

Donovan Johnson, a junior cornerback, agreed. The Miami native said a change is evident.

"Everything's different," said Johnson, 22. "Practice is faster and more physical. We're having more fun out here than we did last year. Everybody has gotten better together."

Taylor said in order for the team to succeed in the upcoming season, the football players must utilize teamwork.

"It's all about being smart and understanding that it is a team effort," Taylor said. "You can't be selfish because anytime you do dumb things that's being selfish. Those who learn will play and those who don't, won't play."

Offensive lineman Anthony Collins said not everyone was behind last year's coaching staff, but now everyone is starting to come together.

"Coach Taylor came in and he's done everything he said he was going to do, so now it's up to us to follow through," said Collins, 21, a sociology student from Miami. "Now I think everyone is starting to gel together. Everyone is turning into a family."

Stanley said the players' quick response to the new staff is very surprising.

"Usually it takes a while, but I can tell by the way he's talking to them that he (Taylor) has ultimate, complete control, and it's very impressive."

Sophomore quarterback

Eddie Battle, 20, said the team's mentality is completely different from last season and the team has no intentions on settling for anything less than a champion's attitude.

"Everyone has got this championship goal," said Battle, a business administration student from Titusville. "We're not looking at winning more than three games or winning the MEAC, we're focusing on championships, and we have to practice like champions because that's what we want to be."

The first football game of the season is scheduled for August 30 against Alabama State.

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write for The Famuan, which originally published this article.

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