

The MEAC Welcomes Savannah State and N.C. Central

Contributed by Paul Douglas -- Black College Wire
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Tigers might just be out of their league

Savannah State University and North Carolina Central University athletic programs now call the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference home.

The MEAC had granted these two universities membership into the historically black conference this year, and their athletics are eligible to compete this season. These two programs mark the second expansion of the MEAC since the addition of Winston Salem State University back in 2007, which dropped this season to Division II. Savannah State University will make its MEAC football debut against Bethune-Cookman University, at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 18, in Daytona Beach. This obviously will be the ultimate test for the Tigers, who have not competed in conference play since leaving the Division II Southern Intercollegiate Conference in 2002. [Ed. note: Tigers lost 42-7.]

Last season, the Tigers were an NCAA Division I football program. That alone should have muted critics, who questioned their stability in the MEAC; but apparently their previous Division I resume didn't amuse the doubters.

This season, the Tigers suffered their worst defeat at the hands of Division II Fort Valley State University in a 41-10 blowout. So maybe the critics weren't so misleading after all. Moreover, the second game against Division I Championship Subdivision's (formerly Division I-AA) Georgia Southern University ended in a 48-3 loss.

So it's quite evident that the Tigers might just be out of their league, and will have to obviously earn their respect out on the gridiron during their inaugural year in the conference.

However, joining the MEAC might not have been such a great decision for the Tigers after all because last season they lost to Bethune-Cookman University and North Carolina Central University, who are both now conference contenders.

Furthermore, things aren't looking so great for other MEAC newcomer North Carolina Central State either, who also was a NCAA Division I program last year. The Eagles finished last season with a 4-7 overall record. The struggles for the Eagles have already started, as they were defeated by Division II Winston-Salem State in a 34-27 loss last week.

So the question that still remains is whether or not the Eagles can survive in the MEAC with conference powerhouse and back-to-back champion South Carolina State or FAMU? Savannah State or North Carolina Central State won't stand a chance matching up with the MEAC's premier teams if they keep performing in this fashion.

So what does this mean for the Rattlers? Will these two newcomers compete with FAMU in a MEAC showdown? Well, quite frankly, the answer would unanimously be no.

Paul Douglas writes for The Famuan, the Florida A&M University student newspaper, which originally published this article.

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