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TENNESSEE STATE ATHLETICS **tsu**



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DR. MIKKI

ALLEN

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

ATHLETIC

**MOTTO:
"TIGERS FORWARD"**



IN THE LAND OF GOLDEN SUNSHINE, BY THE CUMBERLAND'S FERTILE SHORE,
STANDS A SCHOOL FOR GREATEST SERVICE, ONE THAT WE ADORE, ALMA MATER, HOW WE LOVE THEE,
LOVE THY WHITE AND BLUE, MAY WE STRIVE TO MEET THY MANDATES WITH FAITH THAT'S TRUE.

Dear Big Blue Family,

As I reflect on the tremendous momentum surrounding Tennessee State University Athletics, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude, pride, and excitement. It is an honor to introduce the very first edition of State of the Tigers, a quarterly digital magazine designed to connect, inform, and celebrate the many achievements across our athletics department.

This digital magazine was created with you in mind—our alumni, fans, supporters, corporate partners, and future Tigers. State of the Tigers will serve as an all-inclusive look into the heartbeat of our athletics program, providing updates on key developments, competitive successes, facility enhancements, and the outstanding accomplishments of our student-athletes. Simply put, this is your inside view into what it means to be a part of the Big Blue family.

Over the past five years, Tennessee State Athletics has experienced a powerful resurgence. Our programs have competed for and captured championships, elevated their presence on the national stage, and consistently demonstrated excellence across multiple sports. This success is no accident—it is the result of intentional leadership, dedicated coaches, and the relentless commitment of our student-athletes who represent Tennessee State University with pride and determination every single day.

Equally important to our competitive achievements is our continued investment in the future. Enhancements to our facilities, resources, and overall student-athlete experience have positioned us to recruit, develop, and support some of the most talented individuals in the country. Our student-athletes are not only excelling in competition, but also in the classroom and in the community—preparing themselves to become the next generation of leaders, innovators, and champions in the workforce and beyond.

None of this progress would be possible without the unwavering support of the Big Blue community. To our student-athletes, thank you for your dedication and for embodying the spirit of TSU. To our coaches and staff, your leadership and commitment continue to raise the standard of excellence across our programs. To our alumni, donors, corporate partners, and season ticket holders—your belief in our mission fuels everything we do. You are the foundation of our success, and we are deeply appreciative of your continued investment in our vision.

There is a renewed sense of pride across Tennessee State Athletics. Our return to national relevance is something we celebrate, but it is also something we are determined to sustain and build upon. The energy is real. The trajectory is upward. And the best is still ahead.

Thank you for being an essential part of this journey. I invite you to stay connected, stay engaged, and continue to stand with us as we write the next chapter of TSU Athletics together.

Go Big Blue and Tigers Forward,

Dr. Mikki Allen





TOL 3

HALF: 1

TOL 3



40

0 FOULS

BONUS

TEAM STATS

FG 57.7

3PT 40.0

FT 85.7

REB 16

AST 6

STL 7



26

0 FOULS

BONUS

TEAM STATS

FG 45.8

3PT 40.0

FT 0.0

REB 8

AST 6

STL 5



JOHN PARKHILL

WV'S BASKETBALL



WYOMIA TYUS

TRACK AND FIELD



CHANDRA CHEESEBOROUGH

TRACK AND FIELD



ED TEMPLE

TRACK AND FIELD



JEAN PATTON

TRACK AND FIELD



EDITH MCGUIRE

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SECTION H-1

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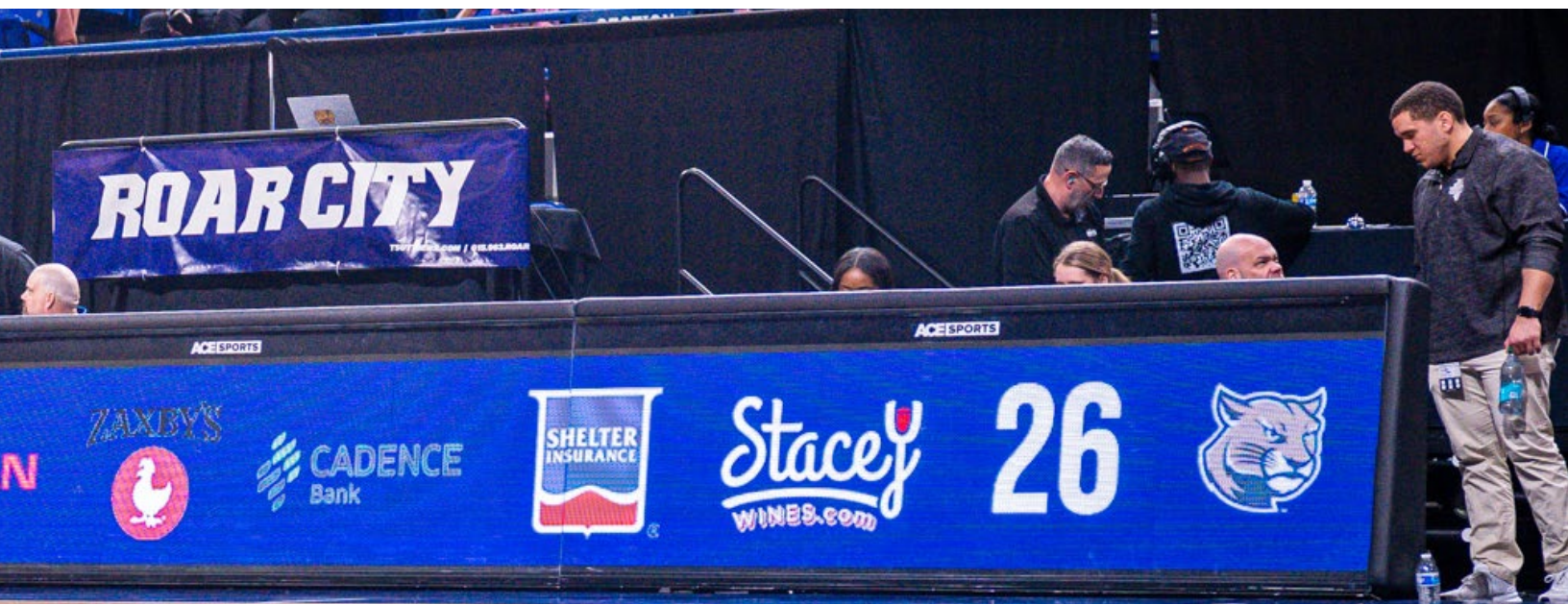
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GENTRY CENTER UPGRADES

Under the leadership of Dr. Mikki Allen, the Gentry Center continues to evolve as a premier game-day venue for Tennessee State University. Recent enhancements include the installation of new state-of-the-art video boards, elevating the in-game experience for fans and student-athletes. The addition of the Wall of Legends honors the rich history and tradition of Tennessee State athletics, connecting past excellence with the present. Courtside, new digital scoring tables modernize game operations and presentation, creating a more dynamic and professional atmosphere inside the Gentry Center. New arena LED lighting further enhances pregame introductions and in-game presentation, delivering a more immersive and high-energy environment. Looking ahead, the Arena Seating Project is expected to be completed by Oct. 1, 2026, continuing the transformation of the Gentry Center for future generations of Tigers.





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MARCH MADNESS

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CHAMPIONS

2025 OVC 2026
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2025 OVC 2026
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2025 OVC 2026
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2026 OVC CHAMPIONS
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ON 3

EXCELLENCE



OHIO VALLEY
CONFERENCE
CHAMPIONS

MEN'S
BASKETBALL
2025-26



STATE
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2026





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Basketball
MARCH
MADNESS
T&E Basketball



TENNESSEE STATE RETURNS TO NCAA TOURNAMENT RECONNECTS WITH HISTORIC LEGACY



The moment the bracket was revealed inside the Gentry Center, the reaction carried the weight of more than three decades. Players rose, coaches embraced and a roar echoed through the building as Tennessee State University saw its name appear on the NCAA Tournament screen for the first time in 32 years. It was not just a celebration of a season. It was the return of a program to a stage deeply rooted in its identity.

Tennessee State's 2025–26 season did more than end a drought. It reconnected the Tigers to one of college basketball's most influential legacies — a history shaped by national championships, pioneering coaches and generations of players who extended the program's impact far beyond Nashville.

"It really does mean more," head coach Nolan Smith said. "Seeing them do what they just accomplished ... it really does mean more."

The return to March Madness marked Tennessee State's third NCAA Tournament appearance in the Division I era and its first since 1994, when the Tigers were part of one of the most successful stretches in program history under head coach Frankie Allen. That era was defined by forward Carlos Rogers, a two-time Ohio Valley Conference Player of the Year who led Tennessee State to back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances in 1993 and 1994.

But the foundation of the program's significance stretches even deeper.

Long before the NCAA Tournament became the centerpiece of college basketball, Tennessee State — then known as Tennessee A&I — built one of the sport's earliest dynasties. Under legendary coach John McLendon, the Tigers captured three consecutive NAIA national championships from 1957 to 1959, becoming the first historically Black college to win a national

collegiate title. McLendon, a student of basketball inventor James Naismith, helped revolutionize the game with an up-tempo style built on the fast break and full-court pressure, innovations that would later become staples of modern basketball.

Led by guard Dick Barnett, those championship teams compiled a 94-8 record across three seasons and established Tennessee State as one of the most influential programs in early college basketball history. Barnett later won two NBA championships with the New York Knicks, becoming one of several Tigers to leave a lasting mark at the professional level. That lineage — from McLendon's innovation to Rogers' dominance in the 1990s — has long defined Tennessee State basketball. The challenge for decades was returning to the NCAA Tournament to reconnect with that legacy.

Under Smith, the Tigers finally did.



In his first season, Smith guided Tennessee State to a 23-10 record, a share of the Ohio Valley Conference regular-season championship and the No. 1 seed in the conference tournament — the program's first top seed in approximately 30 years. The Tigers followed with a decisive run in Evansville, defeating Morehead State 93-67 in the championship game to capture their first OVC Tournament title since 1994 and secure the league's automatic bid.

"They weren't scared of the moment," Smith said. "They were absolutely 100 percent ready."

The roster reflected a blend of production and experience that powered the turnaround. Aaron Nkrumah led the way as OVC Player of the Year, anchoring an offense that ranked among the most productive in the conference. Travis Harper II delivered explosive scoring performances, while

Dante Harris provided leadership at the guard position and was named the OVC Tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Together, they formed the core of a team that did more than win — it changed expectations.

By February, Tennessee State had climbed to the top of the conference standings for the first time that late in a season since 1994–95, signaling a shift from contender to favorite. By March, the Tigers were no longer chasing history. They were creating it.

"They're legends," Smith said. "That's how they'll be remembered."

On Selection Sunday, Tennessee State was awarded a No. 15 seed in the Midwest Region and matched up against Iowa State Cyclones men's basketball in St. Louis. The Tigers' season concluded with a 108-74 loss, but the result did little to diminish what

had already been accomplished. For students, alumni and fans, the moment extended beyond the game itself. It represented pride, visibility and a return to the national stage — a feeling that had not existed for a generation.

In a single season, Tennessee State reestablished itself within the landscape of college basketball. The Tigers tied their highest conference win total in the Division I era, captured both regular-season and tournament championships and returned to the NCAA Tournament for the first time in 32 years.

More importantly, they reconnected the present with the past.

A program built on innovation, excellence and national impact found its way back to March — not as a memory, but as a contender.

After three decades, Tennessee State is back where its history says it belongs.

BECOMING TENNESSEE STATE LAUNCHES PROGRAM TO PREPARE STUDENT ATHLETES FOR LIFE BEYOND THE GAME

Success for Tennessee State University is no longer defined solely by wins, championships or postseason appearances. With the launch of BECOMING, a comprehensive student-athlete development program, Tennessee State is placing equal emphasis on what happens after the final whistle.

Designed to support student-athletes throughout every stage of their collegiate experience, BECOMING represents a holistic approach to development — one that focuses on personal growth, career preparation and community engagement while preparing Tigers for life beyond athletics.

“We are very excited to launch BECOMING for all of our student-athletes,” Director of Athletics Mikki Allen said. “Preparing our student-athletes to transition successfully after sports is important to us here at Tennessee State University. The BECOMING program will help us accomplish this goal by empowering our student-athletes to develop and strengthen their individual brands, engage the community through servant leadership opportunities and emerge as career-ready professionals.”

The program arrives at a pivotal moment in college athletics, as student-athletes navigate an evolving landscape that extends beyond competition. From name, image and likeness opportunities to increased visibility across digital platforms, today’s athletes are expected to build personal brands, manage public presence and prepare for careers that may extend far beyond sports.

BECOMING was built with that reality in mind.

Structured across four years, the program provides a progressive roadmap tailored to each stage of a student-athlete’s journey. Freshmen are introduced to leadership development and identity building, laying a foundation that extends beyond the playing field. Sophomores are encouraged to engage more deeply with the community, developing a sense of purpose through service and outreach. Juniors receive specialized training aimed at career readiness, including professional development, networking and industry exposure. Seniors, meanwhile, focus on transition — preparing to enter the workforce or pursue advanced opportunities equipped with the tools and confidence to succeed.

The structure is intentional. Each phase builds on the last, creating a continuous path of development rather than isolated programming.



BECOMING reflects a shift in how Tennessee State views the student-athlete experience — not as a four-year window defined by competition, but as a launching point for lifelong success.

Central to that mission is the program's emphasis on identity.

In an era where student-athletes are increasingly recognized as public figures, BECOMING provides guidance on how to build and sustain a personal brand. Through NIL education, media training and strategic development, Tennessee State is equipping its athletes with the tools to navigate opportunities responsibly and effectively, ensuring they are prepared not just to participate in the evolving landscape, but to lead within it.

The program also reinforces the university's longstanding commitment to community engagement. Through structured service opportunities and outreach initiatives, student-athletes are encouraged to connect with the Nashville community, using their platform to create meaningful impact while developing leadership skills that extend far beyond athletics.

For Tennessee State, the launch of BECOMING is both a continuation of its mission and an evolution of it.

The university has long been recognized for developing leaders across industries, from professional sports to business and public service. BECOMING builds on that legacy, providing a modern framework that aligns with the demands of today's student-athlete experience.

More importantly, the initiative underscores a broader vision for what it means to be a student-athlete.

It is about preparation.

It is about opportunity.

And ultimately, it is about transformation.

Through BECOMING, Tennessee State is ensuring that when its student-athletes leave campus, they do so not only as competitors, but as leaders — equipped to succeed in every arena that awaits them.



The Blueprint: Building Your Career in Sports and Entertainment

Tennessee State University students connected with industry leaders and explored career pathways in sports and entertainment during “The Blueprint: Building Your Career in Sports and Entertainment,” a networking and professional development event held Oct. 23 inside the Health Sciences Building.

Presented by TSU Athletics in collaboration with the Department of Human Performance and Sports Sciences and the Becoming program, the interactive forum brought together students, faculty, and professionals from across the sports industry for panel discussions and a career fair featuring more than 30 organizations, including the Tennessee Titans, Memphis Grizzlies, Nashville Predators and Nashville Soccer Club.

“This is a great event; it truly serves as a blueprint for our students,” said Mikki Allen, Tennessee State’s director of athletics. “It’s a collaboration with HPSS, closely linked to our Becoming program under the TSU Athletics umbrella, aimed at preparing our student-athletes to thrive professionally after graduation. We equip them with essential life skills, social skills, and an understanding of community impact, while also providing direct access to industry leaders.”

Allen emphasized the importance of exposure to professionals working in the field, noting the event’s reach across Tennessee’s sports landscape. “Almost everyone in Tennessee sports is represented here,” he said. “We have leaders from teams across the city, and even TSU graduates working in professional sports. Our students see these brands all over Nashville, and now they’re meeting the people behind them. That kind of real-world exposure can be life changing.”

The event was conceived by senior HPSS major Cameron Tarront-McKitt, who also served as a panel moderator. Drawing from her own experience in the industry, Tarront-McKitt aimed to create a space where students could envision themselves in similar roles.

“I’ve always wanted to do something in the sports realm,” Tarront-McKitt said. “Over the summer, I had the incredible opportunity to work at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, for three months in the Hall of Fame Relations Department. I helped coordinate appearances for Hall of Famers like Emmitt Smith and Tony Dungy, which was an amazing experience, just being around those greats and learning from them. I wanted to build a space where students could not only network but also see themselves in these roles.”

For Jason Smith, chair of the Department of Human Performance and Sports Sciences, the event reflected the university’s mission to bridge classroom learning with real-world application.

“The Blueprint embodies what we teach every day in HPSS, the value of preparation, professionalism, and purpose,” Smith said. “It’s about bridging what students learn in the classroom with real-world experience and giving them access to the professionals who are shaping the sports and entertainment landscape.”

That connection between preparation and opportunity was echoed by Rolando Shannon, who leads the Becoming initiative within TSU Athletics.

“The Blueprint event not only connects our students with leaders in the sports industry, but it also empowers them with the tools and insights needed to navigate their

careers successfully,” Shannon said. “This opportunity is about building networks and fostering the next generation of sports professionals.”

Students in attendance said the experience provided both inspiration and tangible opportunities to pursue careers in the field. Senior HPSS major Kimora Esmon highlighted the impact of hearing directly from professionals.

“It was inspiring to hear from people who are doing what we hope to do one day,” Esmon said. “Events like this make a huge difference. They give us confidence, they give us connections, and they remind us that TSU is preparing us to compete and succeed in this industry. You never know where those relationships can lead.”

Senior mass communications major Faith Miniard described the inaugural event as both engaging and informative.

“My experience at the inaugural Blueprint Sports Career Fair was nothing short of inspiring, informative, and engaging,” Miniard said. “As a mass communication major seeking career opportunities in the sports industry, it was special to see and connect with numerous organizations and teams who participated in the fair, and to hear from industry professionals about their journeys and all they’ve accomplished to get where they are today.”

With participation from professional teams, legal experts, media representatives and TSU leadership, the event underscored the university’s growing presence in sports education and workforce development while reinforcing its commitment to preparing students for careers beyond graduation.

WELCOME
WELCOME
WELCOME

THE BLUEPRINT: BUILDING A CAREER
IN SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT



TENNESSEE STATE RECEIVES ACCELERATING ACADEMIC SUCCESS PROGRAM

Tennessee State University is proud to be a recipient of an NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (AASP) grant totaling \$100,000 for the 2025-26 academic year. This single-year investment supports Tennessee State's Student-Athlete Academic Success Initiatives, designed to strengthen student-athlete academic performance and improve graduation outcomes through targeted, student-centered services.

While the grant supports three major components—nutrition, on-site tutoring, and leadership development—this update spotlights one of the most impactful upgrades: the creation of a dedicated nutrition area for student-athletes through the “Fuel the Tigers: Nourishing Academic Excellence” initiative.

“The NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program Grant is pivotal for our academic services unit”, said Jennifer Bell, Executive Associate AD of Student-Athlete Services. “We have used the funding to increase the tutoring services available to our student-athletes, enhance the academic center, create a nutrition space, and provide an environment that elevates the student-athlete experience at Tennessee State University.”

Student-athletes often manage demanding schedules, balancing coursework, study time, training, and competition. The “Fuel the Tigers” initiative addresses a key, often overlooked need: consistent access to healthy nutrition options that support both the body and the brain.

By establishing a dedicated nutrition area within the Academic Services Center, TSU will turn an under-utilized space into a welcoming environment where student-athletes can access:

- Healthy snacks
- Hydration options
- Nutritional supplements aligned with student-athlete needs

This initiative is designed to support stable energy levels, promote better focus during academic work, and strengthen overall well-being, helping student-athletes show up prepared in the classroom and on the competitive stage.

The “Fuel the Tigers” project includes meaningful infrastructure improvements and specialized equipment installations to ensure the nutrition area is both functional and sustainable. Key scope items include:

- Partial wall demolition to create a new doorway, providing direct access to the adjacent learning and lounge area
- Ceiling and flooring rework
- Commercial-grade appliance installation
- Custom storage and workspace build-out.



TENNESSEE STATE ATHLETICS WELCOMES TAYMAR AND ERIC EVANS

Tennessee State Athletics and Taymar have signed a multiyear agreement for the firm to handle ticket sales and sponsorships.

"Partnering with Taymar gives us a strong advantage as we continue to expand our reach and impact," said Tennessee State Director of Athletics Dr. Mikki Allen. "The Taymar approach to revenue generation through ticketing and sponsorships will help us connect more deeply with our fans, alumni, and partners in the Nashville community."

Taymar has hired Eric Evans as Director of Sponsorship and Ticket Sales to work closely with Tennessee State Athletics and the university in the Nashville community.

"We're thrilled to work for Dr. Mikki Allen, Julius McNair and the entire team at Tennessee State Athletics," said Taymar President Joe Rickert. "Under the vision and leadership of Dr. Mikki Allen, the program is building tremendous momentum, and we look forward to engaging Tiger fans and corporate partners in new ways that enhance both the gameday atmosphere and their connection to the program."

Tennessee State is Taymar's second client school in the Ohio Valley Conference (Arkansas-Little Rock) and its second client in Tennes-



see (Middle Tennessee State).

"I grew up in Nashville and was well aware of Big John Merritt, Ed Temple and the Tigerbelles and the Aristocrat of Bands," said Taymar Founder/CEO Mark Dyer. "It is an honor for Taymar to go to work for Mikki Allen and his team at TSU."

About Taymar

Taymar is a North Carolina-based college sports marketing company focused on driving new revenue growth for athletic departments and organizations through ticket sales, sponsorship, ticket operations, and fundraising. Taymar is committed to serving clients and colleagues and was founded on the belief that organizations want senior-level counsel, more personalized service, and increased goal alignment.

MEET ERIC EVANS: DIRECTOR OF SPONSORSHIPS AND TICKET SALES



Eric Evans has built his career at the intersection of athletics, education and impact — shaping opportunities not just for programs, but for the people within them.

A fundraising and advancement professional with experience across higher education and collegiate athletics, Evans brings a relationship-driven approach to donor engagement and program development. His work has consistently focused on connecting institutional priorities with meaningful support, helping drive growth through both major gifts and strategic partnerships.

Before stepping into his current role, Evans served as Director of Philanthropy at Austin Peay State University, where he led major gift fundraising and corporate partnership initiatives for the College of Business and the Office of Military and Veteran Affairs. His work emphasized building long-term relationships and aligning donor interests with institutional impact.

Earlier in his career, Evans gained experience within the Business and Finance Department at the University of Tennessee Athletics, supporting budget management and financial operations while contributing to early name, image and likeness readiness efforts during a pivotal time in college athletics. He also held advancement roles at Lincoln Memorial University, focusing on donor engagement strategies and annual giving growth.

That perspective is grounded in his own experience as a student-athlete.

Evans was a four-year collegiate basketball player, competing at Albion College and Cornerstone University, where he was a member of the 2017 NAIA National Runner-Up team. His time as a student-athlete continues to shape his approach, reinforcing a commitment to creating opportunities that extend beyond competition.

He earned a Bachelor of Science in communications from Arizona State University and a Master of Science in sports administration from Arkansas State University.

The work has always been about more than fundraising — it is about building pathways, strengthening programs and creating lasting impact for student-athletes and institutions.

2026 JOHN A MERRITT CLASSIC

Tennessee State University and Jackson State University will renew a long-standing football rivalry when the two programs meet in the 2026 John A. Merritt Classic on Saturday, Aug. 29, as part of the Week 0 slate at Nissan Stadium.

The matchup marks the first-ever meeting between TSU and Jackson State at the John A. Merritt Classic, adding a new chapter to a series that dates back more than seven decades. Tennessee State holds a 30-23-2 all-time advantage in the series, which began with the teams' first meeting in 1949.

"The John A. Merritt Classic provides the perfect stage to renew our rivalry with Jackson State," said TSU Director of Athletics Dr. Mikki Allen. "Hosting the game in 2026 and returning to Jackson in 2027 reflects the tradition and excitement this matchup brings to both programs."

As part of a home-and-home series agreement, the rivalry will continue in 2027 when Tennessee State travels to Jackson, Mississippi, to face Jackson State.

"We are excited to renew our rivalry with Tennessee State in Nashville and next year at home," Jackson State Vice President and Director of Athletics Ashley Robinson said. "This is a great opportunity for our football program and our fans as we kick off the season at the John A. Merritt Classic."

The rivalry has a history of drawing large crowds and producing memorable moments. A meeting between the programs at Hale Stadium on Sept. 10, 1988, remains the fourth-most attended game in stadium history, as 18,954 fans witnessed a 26-26 tie. Two other TSU–Jackson State matchups also rank among the top 20 in Hale Stadium attendance.



The teams last met on Sept. 10, 2022, at the Southern Heritage Classic, where Jackson State earned a 16-3 victory.

The 2026 contest continues the tradition of showcasing two storied HBCU programs while honoring the legacy of John A. Merritt, the legendary head coach who helped shape Tennessee State football and college football history.

Additional details regarding game time, ticket information and John A. Merritt Classic events will be announced at a later date. Please visit johnmerrittclassic.com.

2026 HOMECOMING

Tennessee State has agreed to a home-and-home football series with Morgan State University beginning in the 2026 season, Director of Athletics Mikki Allen announced.

The Tigers will host the Bears on Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026, in Nashville, with the return game set for 2027 in Baltimore. The agreement brings together two historic HBCU programs and reconnects a series that has not been played in nearly four decades.

Tennessee State has held the upper hand in the all-time meetings, remaining unbeaten against Morgan State through a series of matchups that span multiple decades. The Tigers opened the series with a 14-0 victory in the 1972 Atlanta Ebony Classic at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium and added a 21-0 shutout at Vanderbilt Stadium in 1985.

The programs met twice more in the late 1980s, with Tennessee State earning a 52-10 win in Baltimore in 1986 before closing the series with a 37-17 victory at Hale Stadium in 1987. The upcoming matchup will mark the first meeting since that stretch, renewing a competitive history rooted in tradition and regional pride.

"This series reflects our commitment to scheduling meaningful matchups that honor our history and excite our fans," Allen said. "Morgan State is a respected program, and we look forward to welcoming them to Nashville and continuing the series in Baltimore."

The 2026 contest adds another notable non-conference game to Tennessee State's schedule while continuing a broader emphasis on showcasing HBCU football on prominent stages. It also provides an opportunity to reintroduce a matchup that once drew strong interest and competitive play.

For Tennessee State tickets and additional information, contact the TSU Athletics Ticket Office at TSUTigers.com or call 615-963-5841.

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AUG 29

UG
SEP 5

AA&M
SEP 12

FAMU
SEP 19

WIU
OCT 3

UTM
OCT 10

MSU
OCT 17

CSU
OCT 24

LU
OCT 31

SEMO
NOV 7

EIU
NOV 14

GWU
NOV 21

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Tennessee State University continues to expand its digital reach with the launch of the “TSU Tigers” mobile app, a platform designed to bring fans closer to their favorite teams with real-time access and personalized content.

Powered by SIDEARM Sports, the free app is available on both iOS and Android devices and serves as a centralized hub for Tennessee State athletics. From breaking news alerts to schedules and exclusive multimedia features, the app delivers a streamlined experience tailored to modern fans who expect instant access on the go.

Mikki Allen said the app represents a continued commitment to enhancing engagement across the department’s growing fan base.

“As a department, we are always looking for new ways to engage our fans and enhance their gameday experience, and this app accomplishes both goals,” Allen said. “This digital platform provides an easy and convenient way for our alumni, fans and supporters to stay up to date with the latest news, scores and original content surrounding their favorite teams.”

The app allows users to customize their experience by selecting favorite sports and enabling notifications for scores and breaking updates. Beyond traditional content, it also integrates ticket management and merchandise shopping, creating a one-stop destination for fans preparing for game day or following along remotely.

Designed with a user-friendly interface, the app connects directly with the official Tennessee State athletics website, delivering live stats, video and audio streams, and real-time social media feeds in a seamless format. The integration ensures fans can move effortlessly between platforms while staying connected to TSU athletics wherever they are.

As college athletics continues to evolve in the digital space, the “TSU Tigers” app positions Tennessee State to meet fans where they are — on their phones — while strengthening the connection between the university, its teams and its supporters.

2025-26 INDIVIDUAL ACHIEVEMENTS



AARON NKRUMAH, MEN'S BASKETBALL

Nkrumah led Tennessee State during a historic 2025–26 season, earning Ohio Valley Conference Player of the Year honors. The 6-foot-6 senior guard averaged 17.7 points, 5.6 rebounds and 2.9 assists per game while starting all 30 contests.

Nkrumah helped guide the Tigers to a share of the OVC regular-season championship, the program's first No. 1 seed in nearly 30 years and a return to the NCAA Tournament. He recorded multiple 20-point performances throughout the season, including several double-doubles, and was a four-time OVC Player of the Week selection.

A consistent presence on both ends, Nkrumah ranked among the team leaders in scoring, rebounding and assists, anchoring a Tennessee State team that won 23 games and captured the OVC Tournament title.



TAJ HIBBERT, MEN'S TENNIS

Hibbert delivered another milestone season in 2025-26, capturing the Men's A No. 1 Singles title at the HBCU National Championship while reaching a major career achievement. Hibbert recorded his 200th combined career victory across singles and doubles, further cementing his place among the program's top performers.

Competing in the No. 1 singles position throughout the season, Hibbert produced double-digit wins against top competition, showcasing consistency and leadership at the top of the lineup while representing Tennessee State on a national stage.



ROBERT HOOPER, MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Hooper represented Tennessee State at the 2025 NCAA Division I South Region Cross Country Championships, finishing 136th in the 10K with a time of 33:06.0.

Hooper showed steady progression throughout the season, highlighted by a season-best 8K time of 25:55.7 at the OVC Championships. He opened the year with a 15th-place finish at the Trevecca Nazarene / Michael Pretorius Memorial (26:43.4) and added a 25:58.6 performance at the UAH Chargers XC Invitational, consistently competing at a high level for the Tigers.

ATHLETIC ALUMNI IN THE NEWS



Baltimore Ravens Head Coach Jesse Minter named **Anthony Levine Sr.** the Ravens' special teams coordinator on for the 2026 season, turning to a former player who embodied what it meant to play like a Raven. Nicknamed "Co-Cap," Levine spent 10 seasons with the Ravens (2012-21) as a special teams ace and is the franchise's all-time leader in special tackles.

Levine spent one year with the Tennessee Titans in 2023 as an assistant special teams coach. Levine left Tennessee's staff after the 2024 season and returned to Baltimore, where he will remain a key member of the staff during Minter's first season as head coach.



Allergic To Failure: The **Robert Covington** Story chronicles the journey of Robert Covington from his days at Tennessee State to a 12-year NBA career defined by perseverance and resilience. The documentary explores Covington's path through adversity — including a career-threatening injury and going undrafted — before rising to become a key figure in the league while carrying the legacy of HBCU basketball at the professional level.

Through personal moments and insights from players, coaches and media voices, the film highlights themes of opportunity, representation and the lasting impact of HBCUs in shaping athletes both on and off the court.

The **Chandra Cheeseborough** Invitational is a premier track and field meet that brings together middle school and high school athletes for a full day of competition while honoring the legacy of Olympic gold medalist Chandra Cheeseborough. Hosted in Jacksonville, Florida, the event provides a competitive platform for developing athletes to showcase their talents across a wide range of events, from sprints and relays to field competitions.

Named in her honor, the invitational emphasizes excellence, sportsmanship and the continued growth of the sport. The meet serves as both a competitive showcase and a tribute to Cheeseborough's impact, uniting athletes, coaches and communities in an environment centered on performance, development and tradition.



UPCOMING TSU ATHLETIC EVENTS



TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
ROAR

CITY
TOUR 26

MEMPHIS **HUNTSVILLE** **NASHVILLE**
MAY 14 **MAY 21** **MAY 28**



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