



Arkansas-Pine Bluff Football History

The late Charles McClurkin is credited with organizing the initial football team at Branch Normal College in 1915. McClurkin, who organized the school's first sport (baseball) in 1912, had his baseball team practicing and said to them "lets' start another sport," according to the late Walter Johnson of Pine Bluff, a 1918 graduate of Branch Normal who was the team's catcher.

He got in touch with Marion Perry, who was Merrill's (High School) coach at the time, and decided to play a football game," Johnson stated. "Merrill beat us pretty bad, but I don't know the score."

Although football had started, baseball continued to be the dominant sport, according to Johnson, who also provided many of the team's baseball bats.

After Branch Normal was designated Arkansas AM&N College in 1927, football quickly gained recognition. The legendary C. Felton "Zip" Gayles posted an 8-8-2 record during his two-year tenure. He also produced the first winning football team in 1929 with a 6-1-2 record.

Beginning with the 1929 season, football was on the upswing, with men's basketball and track starting to mold. Bill Taylor was head football coach for five years in the late 1930s and guided the Lions to their first and only undefeated season with a 7-0-3 record in 1937. For almost a decade, beginning in the early 1940s, Lamar "Buddy" Allen coached nearly every sport at AM&N while teaching health, physical education and recreation courses, according to newspaper articles kept by the late Mrs. Vhaness McHenry. Allen, who played halfback on the Lions' 1937 squad, guided his 1946 team to an 8-2-1 record, which was the best mark since 1937.

Dr. Vannette W. Johnson, a former Golden Lion All-American quarterback, served as head football coach and athletic director for 11 years while posting the best record of any Golden Lion football coach. His overall record was 54-46-6. Johnson joined the AM&N staff in 1957 as assistant football and head track coach. He was named head football coach and athletic director in 1962.

During his tenure, many great running backs emerged. But Charles "Monk" Williams was probably the most renowned rusher in the Lions' modern football history. As a sophomore in 1967, Williams rewrote the AM&N record books by collecting 1592 total offensive yards. Williams was a two-time NAIA All-American running back and was named to the first Pittsburgh Courier newspaper All-American team in 1966.

Johnson produced 32 professional football signees and pro scouts practically camped out each fall on the AM&N campus, seeking to lure many of the Lions into the pro ranks. In 1969, a record number of seven players were drafted. One player, the late Ed Cross, a wide receiver, was drafted in the second round after his brilliant 1968 season.

No other Arkansas college or university had the number of pro football signees than AM&N during Johnson's tenure. Among the Johnson era signees, L.C. Greenwood, a 1969 graduate, is probably the most widely known. The 6-7, 250-pound Greenwood was a member of the famed "Steel Curtain" defensive line of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was named to the Sporting News All-American Football Conference first team and was placed on the United Press International second team in 1978.

Other notable former AM&N professional players during Johnson's era included the late Bob Brown, defensive tackle with the Green Bay Packers; Willie Frazier, Houston tight end; Ceasar Belser, Kansas City Chiefs linebacker; Terry Nelson, Los Angeles Rams tight end; Cleo Miller, Cleveland Browns running back; Wallace Francis, Buffalo Bills and Atlanta Falcons wide receiver; Manuel Sistrunk, Washington Redskins defensive tackle; Willie Parker, Houston Oilers defensive tackle; Eugene Jeter, Denver Broncos linebacker; and Michael Lewis, Atlanta Falcon defensive tackle.

Since Johnson's last season in 1972, the Golden Lion fortunes in football have been up-and-down with five different head coaches—from 1973 until 1990. Wide receiver Ronald McCall was a bright spot for the Lions during the 1979 season when he became the first-ever UAPB player chosen to play in the prestigious Senior Bowl All-Star game in Mobile, Alabama. He also was selected in the ninth round by the Pittsburgh Steelers.

During the late 1980's, things began to blossom under Archie "Gunslinger" Cooley. However, NAIA rules violations led to forfeiture of games won on the field and the first ever "death" penalty prevented UAPB from competing in football during the 1991 season. The university decided against fielding a team in 1992 due to fiscal constraints.

While Cooley coached the Lions, nine players were drafted or signed as free agents by professional teams. In only two seasons, running back Ivory Lee Brown drew a tremendous amount of national recognition. He was chosen by the Phoenix (now Arizona) Cardinals in the seventh round of the 1991 draft.

Lee Hardman, a former Golden Lion defensive back and one of the most successful high school football coaches in Arkansas, took over as the Golden Lions' 14th head coach in December of 1992.



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Hardman, who served as the Lions head coach for 11 seasons (1993-2003), became the schools all-time winningest coach, surpassing Johnson. During his tenure, Hardman compiled a 60-50 record and rebuilt the Lions' program.

In his first season at UAPB, Hardman revived life back into the program by guiding the Lions to a 5-6 record and surpassed that with a 9-4 mark the next season. In fact, his 1994 squad came up only two points shy of winning the NAIA national championship, losing 13-12 to Northeastern (OK) State in the championship game.

Hardman, who played defensive back for UAPB from 1968 to 1971, led the Lions to a 6-4 record and a berth in the NAIA playoffs during the 1995 season that saw the Golden Lions finished the year ranked 10th in the Sheridan Broadcasting Network's final poll among Black colleges and universities.

In 1996, Hardman led the Lions to a respectable 5-5 mark as tailback Ray Nealy became the first-ever UAPB football player to appear in the Kelly Tires Blue Gray All-Star Classic.

Successive 8-3 records during the 1997 and 1998 seasons, including identical 6-2 conference marks in the Southwestern Athletic Conference, have given fans hope and optimism of an eventual SWAC championship.

In 1999, Hardman's ball club finished on a three-game winning streak and posted a 6-5 record. The 1999 season also was the first time in more than 25 years in which three UAPB players, defensive tackle Earnest Grant, strong safety Gregory Wesley and offensive lineman Terrance Beadles, were drafted or signed as free agents in the National Football League.

Hardman and the Lions duplicated the 1999 season with a 6-5 mark during the 2000 season. In 2001, Hardman's ball club registered a disappointing 4-7 ledger.

While Hardman has been at the helm, Arkansas-Pine Bluff has enjoyed incredible success and fan support. During the 2000 season, UAPB ranked among the top 50 NCAA Division I-AA schools in average home football attendance, averaging 9,278 fans for a 37th ranking.

The former Dollarway High School coach was one of Arkansas' winningest coaches during his 11-year tenure. He compiled an impressive 120-20-1 record at the school.

Hardman captured four state championships while at Dollarway. He won three consecutive titles from 1988-90 that included a then state record of a 51-game winning streak, which ended in the 1991 Class AA championship game. To Hardman's credit, his ball clubs made six appearances in state championship games, won nine conference titles, and compiled a 34-0 record. After posting a 4-7 record in 2003, Hardman resigned his duties as coach.

On January 27, 2004 Coach Maurice Forte was named the 18th coach in UAPB's rich history. Forte compiled a 21-22 overall record during his four seasons as head coach making one SWAC Championship Game appearance in 2006 losing to Alabama A&M 22-13.

Monte Coleman became the 19th head football coach in Arkansas-Pine Bluff history on November 19, 2007 and immediately began working to return the Golden Lions football program to the upper echelon of the Southwestern Athletic Conference.



Arkansas-Pine Bluff Professional Signees

Name	Position	Team
Paul McPherson	Halfback	Kansas City Chiefs
Bob Brown	Defensive Tackle	Green Bay Packers
Willie Frazier	Tight End	Houston Oilers
Eugene Jeter	Linebacker	Denver Broncos
Caesar Belser	Linebacker	Washington Redskins
Horace Watkins	Offensive Tackle	Pittsburgh Steelers
Willie Parker	Defensive Tackle	Houston Oilers
Charles Williams	Halfback	Cincinnati Bengals
Cleo Miller	Halfback	Kansas City Chiefs
Billy Jones	Defensive Back	Kansas City Chiefs
Larry Higgins	Halfback	Kansas City Chiefs
Shannon Beard	Defensive Back	Kansas City Chiefs
Charles Burrell Sr.	Defensive Tackle	Green Bay Packers
Ed Cross	Wide Receiver	Washington Redskins
Manuel Sistrunk	Defensive Tackle	Washington Redskins
L.C. Greenwood	Defensive End	Pittsburgh Steelers
Clarence Washington	Defensive Tackle	Pittsburgh Steelers
Wayne Phillips	Linebacker	Cincinnati Bengals
Robert Brown	Halfback	Dallas Cowboys
Melvin Simons	Defensive Tackle	Dallas Cowboys
Bryan White	Defensive Back	Dallas Cowboys
Michael Lewis	Linebacker	Atlanta Falcons
James Montgomery	Quarterback	Atlanta Falcons
George Miller	Linebacker	Atlanta Falcons
Dedrick Murry	Defensive Back	Atlanta Falcons
Ken Smith	Wide Receiver	New England Patriots
Andre Agee	Wide Receiver	New England Patriots
Wallace Francis	Wide Receiver	Buffalo Bills
James White	Halfback	San Diego Chargers
Tommy Gay	Defensive Tackle	St. Louis Rams
Amos Ayers	Defensive Back	Miami Dolphins
Leroy Johnson	Wide Receiver	Philadelphia Eagles
Willie King	Defensive Back	San Francisco 49ers
Charles Harkless	Fullback	Detroit Lions
Terry Nelson	Tight End	Los Angeles Rams
Billy Austin	Tight End	Oakland Raiders
Clarence Stewart	Linebacker	Seattle Seahawks
Donald Evans	Offensive Tackle	Minnesota Vikings
Ronald McCall	Wide Receiver	Pittsburgh Steelers
Bennie Bowers	Tight End	Houston Oilers
Clyde Jones	Defensive Back	Baltimore Colts
Michael McInnis	Defensive Tackle	Philadelphia Eagles
Rickey Parks	Wide Receiver	Minnesota Vikings
Robert Marshall	Wide Receiver	Dallas Cowboys
Lawrence Hill	Wide Receiver	Toronto (CFL)
Al Higgs	Defensive Back	Miami Dolphins
Stanley James	Defensive Back	New York Giants
Rapier Porter	Tight End	Green Bay Packers
Ivory Lee Brown	Running Back	Arizona Cardinals
Michael Finn	Defensive Back	Green Bay Packers
Gregory Eaglin	Defensive Back	Toronto (CFL)
Jerry Williams	Defensive Tackle	Green Bay Packers
Rodney Duhon	Defensive Back	Toronto (CFL)
Charles Burrell Jr.	Defensive Back	Baltimore Ravens
Ray Nealy	Running Back	Miami Dolphins
Chris Atkins	Defensive Back	Green Bay Packers
Sam Simmons	Defensive End	Dallas Cowboys
Rod Robinson	Quarterback	Indianapolis Colts
Greg Wesley	Defensive Back	Kansas City Chiefs
Earnest Grant	Defensive Tackle	Miami Dolphins



Arkansas-Pine Bluff Professional Signees

Terrance Beadles	Offensive Lineman	New England Patriots
Dante Wesley	Defensive Back	Carolina Panthers
Courtney Van Buren	Offensive Line	San Diego Chargers
Brian Jones	Receiver	Jacksonville Jaguars
Jason Jones	Receiver	Buffalo Bills
Martell Mallet	Running Back	B.C. Lions (CFL)



UAPB's Mallet Signs Free Agent Contract With Philadelphia Eagles

PINE BLUFF, Ark.- Former University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff running back Martell Mallett signed a contract to play for the National Football League's Philadelphia Eagles on January 19, 2010.

"It feels good to be given the opportunity to play football in the NFL," said Mallet. "I must give the Lord all the praise because without him none of this would have ever been possible."

The Pine Bluff native spent the 2009 season as a member of the CFL's B.C. Lions. Mallett caught the Canadian Football League by storm rushing for over 1,200 yards. For his outstanding contributions on the field of play Mallett was named the leagues' Most Outstanding Rookie following the conclusion of the regular season.

"I'm extremely excited about the chance to showcase my ability at the next level," Mallett stated. "I think the Eagles will be a great fit for me. They have a lot of talented players on their team and I feel that I will be able to excel in their system." Mallett now joins an impressive list of former UAPB football players to make it to the National Football League.



Arkansas-Pine Bluff Records

MOST TOUCHDOWNS SCORED IN A GAME (Individual)

NAME	NO.	OPPONENT	YEAR
Charles "Monk" Williams	5	Prairie View	1967
Charles Williams	4	Jackson State	1967
Tracey Crowley	4	Lincoln	1987
Ivory Lee Brown	4	Mississippi Valley	1990
Anthony Morris	4	Western Montana	1994
Ray Nealy	4	Morris Brown	1995

MOST TOUCHDOWNS SCORED IN A SEASON

NAME	NO.	YEAR
Charles "Monk" Williams	22	1966
Martell Mallet	15	2006
Jason Jones	11	2006

MOST TOUCHDOWNS SCORED IN A CAREER

NAME	NO.	YEARS
Charles "Monk" Williams	41	1965-67
Ivory Lee Brown	38	1989-90
Ray Nealy	34	1993-96

MOST POINTS SCORED IN A GAME (Individual)

NAME	PTS.	OPPONENT	YEAR
Charles "Monk" Williams	30	Prairie View	1967

MOST POINTS SCORED IN A SEASON (Individual)

NAME	PTS.	YEAR
Charles "Monk" Williams	136	1966
Ivory Lee Brown	114	1989

MOST RUSHING ATTEMPTS IN A GAME (Individual)

NAME	ATT.	OPPONENT	YEAR
Charles Hackless	36	Jackson State	1969
Andre Tolefree	32	Alcorn State	1997
Ray Nealy	30	Mississippi Valley	1996
Martell Mallet	30	Alcorn State	2006
Ray Nealy	27	Northeastern State	1995
Ivory Lee Brown	27	Mississippi Valley	1990
Rickey Anderson	27	Prairie View	1977

LONGEST PUNT IN A GAME

NAME	YDS.	OPPONENT	YEAR
Byron White	76	Lane College	1997
Odis Crudup	72	Prairie View A&M	1969
Andrew Bergeron	66	Grambling State	2006

BEST PUNTING AVERAGE IN A SEASON

NAME	AVG.	YEAR
Andrew Bergeron	41.4	2006
John Keflin	40.2	2007
Dennis Vaughn	39.2	1987
Michael White	38.8	1978

LONGEST INTERCEPTION RETURN

NAME	YDS.	OPPONENT	YEAR
Chris Akins	100	Alcorn State	1998
William Robinson	95	Ouachita Baptist	1971
Shannon Beard	83	Kentucky State	1975
James Dobson	69	Harding	1993
Sam Simmons	69	Lane College	1996