



Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

The non-playing players behind the Las Vegas Classic gathered recently for a Rio hotel press conference announcing activities for the black college football game. From left to right: Southern University A&M coach Pete Richardson, LV Classic Executive Director Jonathan Simon, North Carolina A&T coach George Small, Assemblyman Wendell Williams, D-Nev., and Las Vegas City Councilman Lawrence Weekly.

## Classic

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On Saturday, there will be a pre-game tailgate jam followed by the clash between the Aggies of Greensboro, N.C. and Jaguars of Baton Rouge, La. Clint Holmes, 2002 Las Vegas entertainer of the year, will sing the national anthem.

"This game is designed to be a unique and diverse cultural experience for the student-athletes participating, the schools, the fans and especially the African-American community of Las Vegas," said Charlie Davis, athletic director at North Carolina A&T.

"This event means giving young people the opportunity to receive an education and experience they would never be able to receive," said Wendell P. Williams, a Nevada State Legislator and Southern University alumni.

While the game is in progress, there will be a Vendor Marketplace at Sam Boyd Stadium featuring jewelry, African art and clothes.

The Neville Brothers will perform at the official after party at the Stardust Hotel. Also adding excitement to the weekend is a Celebrity Golf Tournament, to benefit the NAACP and a "Taste of the South" fashion show sponsored by the Lady Aggies & Jaguars. Proceeds will benefit the Urban Chamber of Commerce.

The 2003 Las Vegas Football Classic has guaranteed \$375,000 to each school, including expenses, making it one of the highest classic pay outs in black college sports. Clark County high school seniors will also receive \$10,000 in minority scholarships from the classic.

"The planners and organizers of this classic have honored their commitments to our community from the very beginning," said Las Vegas City Councilman Lawrence Weekly, echoing the mantra of his alma mater, Grambling State University: "the blacker the college, the sweeter the knowledge."

"This game is a great reason for African-Americans from all over the country to visit Vegas, America's most glamorous city. We are delighted to be associated with this event and hope to make the Jaguar Nation proud," said Southern Athletic Director Floyd Kerr.

With more than 50,000 alumni and fans expected, the estimated economic impact for the Las Vegas area is \$20 million. But speaking as the voice of experience, Chancellor Edward Jackson, of Southern University, had this to say.

"Southern University has been involved in classics for many years," said Jackson. "The economic impact of the Las Vegas Classic, based on the long running history of the Bayou Classic in New Orleans, is great. Last year, the Bayou Classic impacted the city of New Orleans to the tune of \$85 million. But the greatest impression of all is the impact on the young people that you can't begin to measure in dollars and cents."

Tickets for the game begin at \$13, while the Battle of the Bands is \$20. Game time for the Jaguars and the Aggies is 6 p.m.

With just 30 days to the big Las Vegas Classic showdown, you can call 702-804-5529 for more information or visit [www.vegasfootballclassic.com](http://www.vegasfootballclassic.com).

## Pro baseball building first youth facility in Compton

COMPTON, Calif. (AP) - Major league baseball will build its first youth baseball academy in the United States, a \$3 million facility at Compton Community College projected to open next summer.

"This will be the culmination of a vision we have had for the last four years," commissioner Bud Selig said Tuesday at a news conference at the college.

"It is our intention to bring baseball back to urban America."

Plans call for four fields - two regulation baseball fields, one softball field and one youth field - on more than 20 acres.

"We were looking at revitalizing the game in inner cities, with the African-American community in particular," said Sandy Alderson, major league's baseball's executive vice president of operations.

The academy is for youngsters 11 to 17. Baseball and softball instruction will be provided for boys and girls as well as clinics and classroom instruction on such activities as coaching, umpiring, scouting, ground crew work, sports journalism and public relations.

"The demographics are perfect for what baseball is trying to do," Alderson said. "The commissioner has been very supportive of the entire diversity issue, and not only

for on-field positions. This is an effort to address the issue at the grass-roots level."

Alderson expects an operating budget each year of about \$1 million. Jimmie Lee Solomon, senior vice president of baseball operations, said the goal is to break ground this fall, with the academy operating eight-to-10 months later.

"Baseball has always served as a bridge that binds generations," Selig said. "We are creating this academy to shore up that bridge in the urban communities. There is nothing more important than bringing kids to our game. Kids are our lifeblood."

Baseball runs an academy in Australia that's open six weeks a year and funds another academy in Puerto Rico. Plans call for the new academy to be open all year.

Many teams have academies in the Dominican Republic, where the incentive is to develop their own players. In recent years, an influx of players have reached the major leagues from Latin America.

"This will be a major league academy," Alderson said. "The purpose isn't to develop players for individual clubs but for college and professional teams generally."

Ulis Williams, one of the world's top quarter-milers in the 1960s and an Olympic gold medalist in 1964, is superintendent of the Compton

Community College District and president of the school. He thinks the academy will serve about 3,000 youngsters a year. "Everybody's not going to make it, but now you have an opportunity to try," he said.

"They'll be teaching the fundamentals, that's very important in baseball. And an academic component should be a part of it."

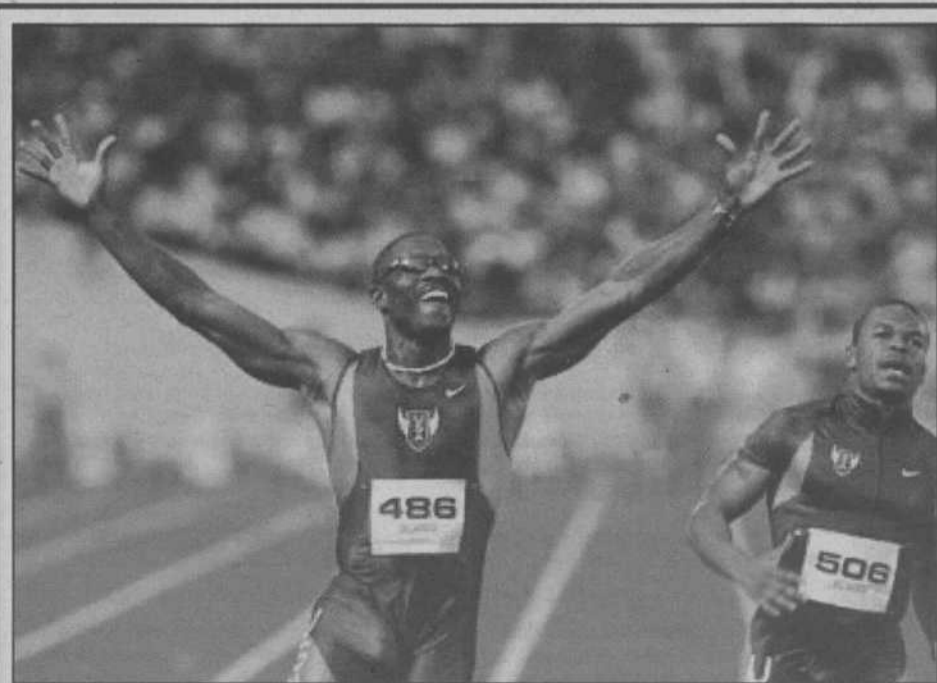
Also at the news conference were Angels owner Arte Moreno; Dodgers chairman and chief executive Bob Daly; former players Don Newcombe, Al Downing, Lou Johnson and Steve Yeager; and dozens of youngsters who will be involved.

"I think it's a great opportunity," said 16-year-old Tremain Shelton of Compton. "They're going to give us an opportunity to play baseball."

Major league baseball began the RBI Program - Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities - in 1989. More than 120,000 youngsters participate, and this year's RBI World Series begins Wednesday in Houston.

Daly contributed \$12,000 of his own money to help finance the participation of Los Angeles area teams in the RBI World Series.

"Compton has embraced this project," Daly said. "Our players will come here whenever they can to work with these players. We will totally support it."



### TAINTED VICTORY

American sprinter Mickey Grimes (486) waves after crossing the finish line to win the 100 meter-race, as Marcelle Scales (506), also an American, takes the bronze, during the Pan American Games in this Aug. 6 file photo in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Grimes has failed a doping test after testing positive for ephedrine, the Pan American Sports Organization reported on Tuesday. Grimes was stripped of his medal.