

Study: Black coaching ranks lowest since 1993

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Days after the election of the country's first Black president, a study shows the number of African-American coaches in major college football is the lowest in 15 years.

With the recent dismissals of Ty Willingham at Washington and Ron Prince at Kansas State, the number of Black head coaches in the 119-school NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision was reduced to four.

In 1997, there were eight Black head coaches, the most in history. In 1993, there were only three.

Fifty-five percent of all student athletes are minorities.

The report by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida polled every major college on the ethnicity of its coaches, athletic directors, presidents, faculty, student athletes and NCAA faculty representatives.

"While the percentages are slightly better, the general picture is still one of White men running college sport," said Richard Lapchick, the report's co-author. "Overall, the numbers simply do not reflect the diversity of our student-athletes. Moreover, they do not reflect the diversity of our nation where we have elected an African-American as president for the first time."

The report also looked at university leadership, including presidents and athletic directors. Ninety-one percent are White. Minority representation in all positions increased less than one percent last year.

Charlotte Westerhaus, NCAA vice president for diversity and inclusion, said she was disappointed in the figures, particularly considering the election.

"This moment on Tuesday reflected the

best of our country," Westerhaus said. "Our country showed the will and the way. We have to do the same."

Lapchick has asked the NCAA to adopt a rule to mandate that minorities be interviewed for head coaching jobs. Calling it the "Eddie Robinson Rule," in reference to the record-setting Grambling coach, Lapchick said it would be a college version of the NFL's Rooney Rule. The NFL sanctions teams that do not interview a minority candidate.

Westerhaus said the Rooney Rule is in practice, if not rule.

She added the NCAA cannot legally impose such penalties.

"The vast majority of institutions interviewed coaches of color," she said. "It think

it's 90 percent. We're doing some of the things the Rooney Rule calls for. What's disappointing is the hiring doesn't reflect that."

Last season, 30 percent of the candidates interviewed for 22 openings were minorities. Two were hired.

Since 1996, 12 Black coaches have been hired for 199 jobs. The only Black head coaches currently set to finish the season are Miami's Randy Shannon, Mississippi State's Sylvester Croom, Buffalo's Turner Gill and Houston's Kevin Sumlin. Florida International is coached by Mario Cristobal, a Hispanic, and Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo is Samoan.

Staffers for Michigan coach Rich Rodriguez told surveyors he is not Hispanic.

David Czesniuk of the Center for the Study of Sports in Society at Northeastern University, a program Lapchick founded, said he was struck by who controlled the money.

"What stood out to me, is that in the biggest component of dollars in college football is the BCS, and every single commissioner of a BCS conference is a White male," Czesniuk said.

Lapchick said the election of Barack Obama — a big sports fan — will have an influence.

"His presidency will get people's attention, whether or not he gets involved," he said. "People will wonder: How can we have an African-American president and the lowest number of coaches in 15 years?"

Inauguration

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about participating in the days-long celebration. People have already booked airline and bus tickets, even before inauguration tickets became available. And hotel rooms are filling up quickly.

William Hanbury, president of Destination DC, the District's convention and tourism arm, told *The Washington Post*, the area's 95,000 hotel rooms are filling up faster than for previous inaugurations. "There are still a lot of rooms available, but people need to be doing transactions now if they are serious about coming," Hanbury said, adding that people may soon have to resort to "innovative accommodations."

"The church group from Atlanta, the high school from Chicago — they're all trying to find places to stay. You're going

to have people sleeping in church basements and high school cafeterias," Hanbury predicted.

Already, people are hitting up long lost relatives and friends living in the District-Northern Virginia-Maryland metro area. And they are also appealing to strangers.

Sites like Craigslist are clogged with lodging commerce. "Housing swap: you ski in Utah, we do Inauguration," read one ad, mirroring others offering home exchanges in Malibu, Sausalito and Manhattan.

Others bargained their home for higher-rated commodities.

"I will provide 3 days/2 nights in my home for free to anyone who can provide two tickets to the official inaugural ball and two tickets to the swearing in ceremony," read another from someone living in Maryland.

The unprecedented interest in the 56th

inauguration is a testament to the man and his message but also the historic overtones.

Celebrated under the theme, "A New Birth of Freedom," Obama's inauguration commemorates the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. And for African-Americans, especially, the day is equally auspicious since it falls on the day after Dr. Martin Luther King Day.

Rev. Al Sharpton, civil rights leader and president of the National Action Network, said he plans to move his annual King Day celebration from New York to Washington and to stick around to celebrate Obama.

"We're going to have tens of thousands of people there," Sharpton told the *New York Daily News*. "It's going to be a four-day civil rights weekend."

Zenitha Prince writes for the *Afro-American Newspapers*.

Obama

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erty, foreclosures and crushing violence — are flush with the realization that a Black man has done the unplausible. Yet beyond the discussions of hope and change, people say they believe an Obama presidency might bring more concrete relief: jobs, affordable housing and safety.

Jobs and hope have long been scarce commodities in Liberty City. Its name comes from a housing project built in the 1930s for poor African-Americans and is known around Florida for a few things.

One is its high school football team, ranked tops in the country by ESPN last year. Another is grinding poverty. The median household income hovers around \$18,000 a year, some \$30,000 less than the U.S. average.

It's also known for riots.

In 1979, a Black insurance agent named Arthur McDuffie was beaten to death by White and Hispanic police officers. An all-White jury acquitted them of charges including second-degree murder, and Liberty City

exploded. The three-day riot left 18 dead, countless injured and 850 arrested.

Many of the neighborhood's businesses — including some of the buildings near Quinn's T-shirt tent — were destroyed, then rebuilt. Then in 1989, police killed another Black motorist, and rioters spewed into the streets just days before the Super Bowl was held in Miami.

The area has never fully recovered. Boarded-up buildings, drug dealers and, recently, foreclosures, have mushroomed. Racial tension among Blacks, Whites, Hispanics and even newer Black Caribbean arrivals have simmered for years.

But at least in Quinn's T-shirt tent, some of that tension seems to have eased.

"They are seeing people who don't look like them support Barack Obama, an African-American," said Al Dotson Jr., a Black man who grew up in Miami and is now one of the city's top lawyers. "It says, when I give it my all and apply myself, maybe good things will happen. It's not just hope, now people can

visualize it."

In Newark, N.J., Obama's election enlightened those at the most somber of gatherings: a funeral.

Tonya Worthy, 35, was the latest of dozens of victims killed in the city this year. Killings are so commonplace that earlier this year, a month without a murder was reason to celebrate. T-shirt shops carry "R.I.P." shirts in front windows.

As Osman Sharif, 70, and his friends left the service, they said they're tired of the shootings and tired of burying young people. They look to the president-elect to help leaders like Newark Mayor Cory A. Booker break the cycle of inner-city violence. They saw his election as the beginning of a long period of change.

"Economic development will stop all of this because the main industry here is drugs," said Sharif. "Obama's election is just the beginning. All of us have got to work together to address what's going on with the kids in the street and make sure there are good jobs available for them."

In Pittsburgh's Homewood neighborhood, an area on the east end where nearly every other home or building is boarded up, residents are reluctant to take down their election signs and they wear their Obama T-shirts and pins with pride.

"It's a status symbol to have an Obama pin," said Rashad Byrdson, a community activist who lives in Homewood. "Even my 3-year-old grandson, I asked him who is the first Black president and he said Barack Obama. He's been following this election for one year of his three years of life."

Byrdson, who is president of Pittsburgh's Community Empowerment Association, is hopeful but cautioned that change does not come quickly or easily.

"We have to be a little careful in looking prematurely at whether our lives will be changed or not," Byrdson said. "This is the first step in the process of people embracing the conception of hope and transformation."

Back at Quinn's T-shirt stand, William Roberts, 46,

had driven from a neighboring county to pick up a T-shirt.

"I'm buying history," he said. "Miami has been divided at times, where you have the cops killing your young Black kids. It's a time now where we can all come together as one. It shows you that we have grown."

Liberty City resident Victor Atkins also believes that time has come.

The 44-year-old government worker took off the day after Election Day to celebrate, rolled down the windows in his truck and blasted

"Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now," a '70s classic by McFadden and Whitehead. He had to buy a T-shirt.

"For me, it means that for all of those African-Americans who said the system kept us down, well, now, no matter what the system says, there's no more excuses," he said. "We truly can become anything we want."

As he looked through the dwindling pile of T-shirts, the stereo from his truck kept blasting from the window: "Don't you let nothin', nothin' stand in your waaaay..."



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