BCA may take fight for Black coaches to court

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Floyd Keith is tired of waiting for more Black coaches to be hired to lead major college football programs and is hoping to make a federal case out of the issue.

After years of attempting to persuade university administrators into hiring minority football coaches, the executive director of the Black Coaches and Administrators has started searching for a potential lawsuit.

Last week, the BCA opened a national telephone hotline that offers legal advice to coaches, a move that could eventually lead to a landmark case against universities under civil rights legislation.

"I think someone is going to get tired of listening to the excuses," Keith told The Associated Press. "We're giving them (the coaches) every opportunity, but we can't select the individuals. The individuals have to bring this forward. We are looking very strongly at every case, and we're taking it on an individual basis."

Keith and others consider the number of minority coaches in college football an outright disgrace.

Yes, Keith acknowledges, more Black coaches have been granted interviews in recent years, but when compared to the number of minority coaches in college basketball or the NFL, college football lags far behind.

A year ago, Keith estimated 23 to 26 percent of college basketball coaches were minorities, while college football is now down to four Blacks among the 119 Football Bowl Subdivision teams, or 3.4 percent.

By comparison, nearly one-fourth of the NFL's 32 teams (seven) have minority head coaches and the only Black coach hired during this recent round comings and goings has been Mike Locksley at New Mexico.
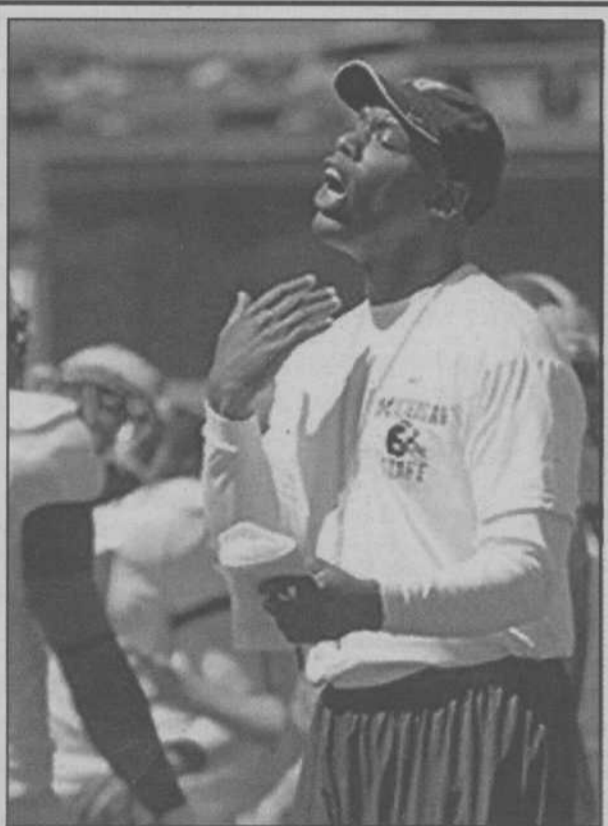
So Keith, who implemented the BCA's annual hiring report card and for years has threatened to use the court system, is now actively seeking information from coaches.

Everette L. Scott, who practices law in Philadelphia and New Jersey and is a former linebacker at Howard University, offers legal advice.

The intent of the hotline is to be informative and educational, but Scott said he's already taken some calls — he wouldn't provide names or numbers — from coaches whose situations raise questions about violations under the federal Civil Rights Act.

"What you typically look for are facts that might be a violation of that category,"

Ron English became the fifth Black head coach in NCAA football with his hiring at Eastern Michigan.

Eastern Michigan hires Ron English

DETROIT (AP) — Eastern Michigan has hired Ron English, making him the fifth Black head football coach in major college football, a person familiar with the contract agreement told The Associated Press.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the school hasn't announced its decision.

Eastern Michigan had scheduled a news conference.

The other Black coaches among the 119 teams in the NCAA's Football Bowl Subdivision are Buffalo's Turner Gill, Miami's Randy Shannon, Houston's Kevin Sumlin and New Mexico's Mike Locksley.

The 40-year-old English was Louisville's defensive coordinator in 2008 after serving on Lloyd Carr's staff at Michigan for five seasons.

English turned the Cardinals' inexperienced defense around before an injury-depleted unit was overmatched in a lopsided loss to end the season at Rutgers.

After helping Michigan beat Florida 41-35 in the 2008 Capital One Bowl, English chose to accept an offer from Louisville after being aggressively pursued by schools such as UCLA.

English was on Carr's staff for five seasons, the last two as defensive coordinator. He began at Michigan as the secondary coach after being an assistant at Arizona State, San Diego State and Northern Arizona.

He earned four letters at California, starting at safety for the Bears as a senior and ending his playing career in the 1990 Copper Bowl.

English replaces Jeff Genyk, who was fired last month and went 16-42 in five seasons.