



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

**AN OPEN LETTER TO COACH DEION SANDERS,
JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY**

December 25, 2020

Mr. Deion Sanders
Head Coach, Football
Jackson State University
1400 John R. Lynch Street
Jackson, MS 39217

Merry Christmas Coach Sanders.

I am spending the holidays in Mississippi and have read with great interest the various news articles about your celebrated appointment as Jackson State University's new head football coach. Please allow me to add my congratulations to the chorus of well-wishers, as well as season's greetings after an unprecedented calendar year.

Having served as president of Alcorn State University during the previous decade, I know firsthand the potential your presence portends for the state of Mississippi, historically black college football, and HBCUs at large.

The media surrounding your decision to respond to God's calling on your life to continue your sports ministry in the Capital City has ignited a fire in the black college and NCAA collegiate sports communities. The growing buzz about "Prime Time" and Jackson State University rejuvenated the excitement about HBCU sports that has been missing over the course of this pandemic. As one of the best cornerbacks in NFL history, you have brought energy, anticipation, and focus to all HBCUs – the Prime Time era at Jackson State is a rising tide that will help all boats in the sector to float towards success and positive branding for years to come.

No doubt your advisors and premier fans in the Capital City have alerted you to prevailing expectations for the Tiger football program – continuing academic performance gains via graduation completion, recruiting and signing a high caliber of top talent nationwide, signature wins over rivals in the Southwestern Athletic Conference, and positive branding throughout the institutional geographic footprint as a campus ambassador.

As an HBCU sports fan and administrator, I am writing this open letter to invite you to prioritize scheduling of a football rematch between Jackson State University and my current institution, Kentucky State University as one of your first acts as head coach. If you are not fearful of failing to meet Tiger expectations early into your tenure, you are welcome to meet the Kentucky State University Thoroughbreds in Indianapolis for the 2021 Circle City Classic – one of the nation's premier black college football classics outside of the southeastern United States and one of Indiana's signature sporting events.

As the flagship HBCU of our region and one of the nation's most diverse HBCUs, the Kentucky State University Thoroughbreds were privileged to face the Tigers in the 2019 edition of the Circle City Classic. During our meeting on the gridiron two years ago, Kentucky State defeated Jackson State 33-25 in a spirited contest, representing just one of our two victories over Division I competition in our successful 7-3 2019 campaign. We learned that, at least on that day, Thoroughbreds are faster, stronger and more resilient than Tigers. We welcome the opportunity to verify the natural order of the animal kingdom at the 2021 Circle City Classic during "Prime Time".

According to news reports, you have been busy signing and training your new crop of Tigers. Let me share that your Kentucky State University counterpart, former Atlanta Falcons defensive backs coach Charlie Jackson, is equally eager about the prospects of his second full season here in Thoroughbred Country. As the prohibitive favorite in the SWAC, only you know as the new head coach if the Tigers are prepared to face the Thoroughbreds in a 2021 rematch. The Thoroughbreds fully understand if the stakes are too high at this time.

Again, welcome to HBCU football and Merry Christmas to you and the entire Tiger family. The Kentucky State University Division of Intercollegiate Athletics would welcome the opportunity to confirm with you and the esteemed members of the JSU Department of Athletics a rematch in which you can launch the Prime Time era.

In the yuletide spirit of peace and goodwill, the Kentucky State University Thoroughbred family and I wish you only good and positive things during your tenure in Tiger Country.

Onward, Upward, and Forward,



M. Christopher Brown II, Ph.D.
Eighteenth President
Kentucky State University