

ESPN cameras to record Hampton U. lacrosse history

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ESPN cameramen tiptoed into class right behind student Darrel Kidd. Students quickly turned their attention to the large lenses and boom mics. With class ongoing, the professor attempted to continue class until one curious student asked, "What's going on?"

Little did she know, these cameramen were documenting history.



Darrell Kidd of Hampton University is a player on the only Division I men's lacrosse program at a HBCU [Historically Black College or University]. The team will officially take the field for the first time this at 12:30 p.m. Saturday against **Roberts Wesleyan College**. The event will be broadcasted on ESPN's "Sports Center on the Road." Kidd is to be profiled in "All Access" segments between 10 a.m. and noon.

The Pirates' lacrosse program began as a club team initiated by former student **Michael Crawford** in 2010. Before Crawford could see the outcome of his efforts, he died in his family's home due to issues with an enlarged heart.

After the death, Crawford's parents persistently sought to continue Mike's lacrosse legacy at Hampton. According to Head Coach Lloyd Carter, the couple contacted him and asked about the steps they needed to take in order to see their son's vision through. Crawford replied saying, "I think God told you to call me." After receiving the call, the Baltimore resident began making weekly trips to Hampton University to assist with the lacrosse club.

Carter's sacrifice wasn't taken for granted. Though the program was a club, players were just as committed as players on varsity teams. "I took the club team very seriously because Coach Carter took time out of his schedule to coach us for no pay," said Kidd, the captain. "I saw it as disrespect if I didn't show up to practices."

Last spring, Hampton U. hosted **Lacrosse Day** and club teams from Morgan State University, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore and Morehouse College competed.

After about a year and a half of Carter's weekly commutes from Maryland, Hampton University President William R. Harvey and Athletic Director Eugene Marshall, Jr. declared the club a NCAA varsity team.

Carter played varsity lacrosse at **Morgan State**, the previous NCAA varsity

program at an HBCU, that existed from 1970-1981, reported the Baltimore Sun.

With the NCAA membership came many changes. Kidd of Westchester, New York said, "Everything seemed like it got much more serious." According to Kidd, a senior, the transition meant various NCAA meetings, paperwork, and clearing house registration.

While Kidd believed that the administrative process was the hardest, Carter spoke about the physical transition. "We are playing at a much higher competition level now and because of that we really have to focus on the fundamentals," said Carter. "And we were prepared for the challenge."

As the Pirates take on the challenge of becoming a NCAA team, the team hopes to take their influence beyond the university. The team has conducted camps at local schools in order to expose the sport to young African-Americans. "We hope to expose the sports and give [students] other opportunities for higher learning," said Carter.

With the season officially kicking off this weekend, the cameras will turn their attention to the field as the Pirate's first NCAA season begins.

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