

Shadeur joins father at JSU

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When you think of colleges that send players to the NFL, your mind probably flashes to Power Five programs from money-stacking conferences like the SEC. However, if you take a trip to Canton, Ohio, to browse the bronze busts of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Jackson State University will have its name scrawled throughout the prestigious building.

Four Tigers are immortalized in Canton, out-pacing recognizable programs like Florida, Ole Miss, Mississippi State, Clemson, Tennessee, and Texas A&M. Their success has gone largely unnoticed throughout the college football landscape until now. The local college so accus-

tomed to national success has added another Hall of Famer, this time as a coach. Deion Sanders, Mr. Prime Time himself is in Jackson, and he is bringing the hype train with him.

The first family of flashiness are not strangers to the spotlight. Deion's confidence and style is shared by his son Shadeur, who stands as the crown jewel of his father's first recruiting class. Shadeur is ranked as the 60th best player in the country and the 2nd best quarterback in Texas by ESPN, making him the most touted Jackson State recruit since scouting services began ranking players.

The young Sanders switched his commitment from Florida Atlantic to the historically black university after his father accepted the job in Jackson, citing their shared commitment to

bringing HBCUs back on the national stage.

Shadeur believes that his career in Jackson will naturally lead to a lengthy NFL tenure like his father's. As Deion was introduced as the head coach, he said, "These kids need the playing field leveled. I cannot wait for this opportunity. If you give us the resources, if you give us the same resources that these other schools have, we're going to prove that there is a highway that takes you from Jackson State all the way to the NFL. We're not just raising professional football players, we're raising professionals."

If anyone is capable of bringing resources to Jackson State, it is Sanders. His connections over his lengthy NFL career will certainly aid him in forming his coaching staff, which he claims will have 84 years of NFL coaching experience.

Shadeur and Deion serve as the foremost example of a greater trend that has been sweeping across the college recruiting world. Highly touted recruits have begun to place HBCUs like Jackson State among their top college choices, hoping to bring the revenue and attention that these institutions have lacked in recent years. Such a change is noticeable at Jackson State, where new athletic and academic facilities are being built with the aid of skyrocketing season ticket demand.

As Deion has said, he is a character that "puts butts in seats." Memorial Stadium on North State Street will be a canvas for Sanders' electric personality.



Coach Deion Sanders embraces his new home football field at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson. Photo courtesy of Deion Sanders' Instagram