

# All-American Holiday Sets Sights on Gridiron

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By Nate Rau / Special to  
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## **MURFREESBORO, Tenn. --**

In football circles the term "track guy" carries a negative connotation. What, then, must track circles think of sophomore sprinter Pedro Holiday.

After transferring from Southwest Mississippi Community College in January to play football for the Blue Raiders, Holiday was contacted by an old acquaintance. Track coach Dean Hayes had recruited Holiday in high school, but Holiday was dead set on playing football for Auburn, where he'd given a verbal commitment.

"I was going to go to Auburn," Holiday said. "When I didn't make the grades, I decided to go the JUCO route. Basically, that's when I heard from (football) coach (Andy) McCollum.

"If it wasn't for him I wouldn't be here."

At SWMCC, Holiday got himself together academically and after a year-and-a-half found himself in Murfreesboro on a football scholarship. Coach Hayes remembered Holiday's name and gave him a call.

"Coach Hayes didn't know I was here," Holiday said. "I'd been here a few weeks before he called me



and asked me to run."

It's no wonder Holiday's name stuck in coach Hayes' mind. As a prep star in Georgia, Holiday ran a 10.39 personal-best in the 100-meters.

Still, after agreeing to run, Holiday was thrust into the awkward predicament of fitting in with an already successful and closely-knit 4x100-meter relay team of DJ Spann, Mardy Scales and Brad Orr.

"Fitting into a relay team is always a tricky thing," Hayes said before the team went to the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Sacramento, Calif., on June 11. "It took some time, but it worked out really, really well. (Holiday) is a gifted runner."

It worked out so well that Holiday, who just completed his sophomore year and has two more years of track eligibility remaining, was an All-American after only two months as a Blue Raider sprinter when the relay team finished third at the NCAA Championships. It marked the first relay squad to garner All-American honors at Middle Tennessee since 1982.

"It was awesome," Holiday said of his experience in Sacramento. "I've always pretty much just used track to stay in shape for football. I didn't really get to do it in junior college, so when he asked me I thought, 'Why not?' I'm really glad I did, it was a real honor."

Now Holiday turns his sights squarely to the gridiron where, as a wide receiver, he's expecting to contribute immediately.

"I really love our offense. We run a lot of four-wide (receiver sets)," Holiday said. "My goal is just to make an impact. I want (quarterback Andrico Hines) to know that whenever he's in trouble or looking for someone, he knows that I'm his guy. I'm just looking to step in right away and make an impact."

Holiday will get his first opportunity to make an impact when the Blue Raiders open the season August 28 against Florida Atlantic at Floyd Stadium.

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