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With lockout lifted, Falcons revving up for 2011 season



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GWINNETT: Berkmar, Brookwood, Buford, C. Gwinnett, Collins Hill, Dacula, Grayson, Greater Atlanta Christian, Meadowcreek, Mill Creek, Norcross, North Gwinnett, Parkview, Peachtree Ridge, South Gwinnett, Wesleyan
FAYETTE: Whitewater, Sandy Creek, Starr's Mill
NEWTON: Eastside

CAN'T MISS THIS WEEK

- 4** The Fletch gives his opinion on the Braves' blown call and also weighs in on a major shift in Atlanta sports radio.
- 5** In our cover story, Evan Shapiro breaks down the NFL labor agreement and how it affects the Falcons.
- 7** "Big B" gives his insight on recent Atlanta sports news in his column.
- 12** The Sunbelt Baseball League is in the midst of their playoff season, as Jason Parker reports.

SHOT OF THE WEEK...



FUNDAMENTAL LEARNING: The Hawks are winding down their Kia Hawks Summer Tour, which began on July 7 in LaGrange. The tour consisted of 20 clinics in 25 days throughout the Atlanta metro area. The clinics focused on teaching the fundamentals of basketball to youths at recreation centers in LaGrange, Doraville, Stone Mountain, Scottdale, Decatur, College Park, Lithonia and Covington. Photo courtesy of the Atlanta Hawks.

TEAM SCOOP AND VOICES

COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI
 COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIMMY CRIBB/ATLANTA FALCONS

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INSIDE AT SCORE

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THE FLETCH

ATLANTA'S
ONLY SPORTS
MEDIA COLUMN

SCORE



Blown call being overblown; Zone wins drive-time battle, causes lineup changes

After six hours, 39 minutes and 19 innings, a bad call on a play at the plate ended a marathon Atlanta Braves/Pittsburgh Pirates game and apparently signified the end of the world. At 1:50 A.M., Twitter was about to explode with #worstcallever messages flooding cyberspace. (Do we still call it cyberspace?) The obviously missed call was the topic of both sports radio morning shows the next day and even ESPN.com ran a story called "Worst Call Ever."

My response: really? The "worst call ever?" Are you serious? This is a July series between the Braves and the Pirates. I realize the Pirates are struggling to finish above .500 for the first time since 1992 while competing for the NL Central crown (and the right to lose to Philadelphia in the NLDS), but come on. Worst call ever? How about last year when Jim Joyce called a runner safe, ruining a perfect game? How about the Cardinals/Royals World Series in 1985? How about a game that actually mattered? If the situation was reversed, I would probably be miffed... for about 20 minutes. Then I'd move on.

Perry Laurentino of 680 The Fan's The Rude Awakening was calling for instant replay on all plays. I am sure 790 The Zone's Mike Bell will now continue to beat the drum for "lasers and sensors on the uniforms!"

Can people just relax? Every year there are maybe two bad calls like this OVER THE ENTIRE SEASON. Each team plays 162 games. There are 30 teams. Think about that. It is like plane crashes. You only hear about them because they are so rare. Unless every call, including balls and strikes, is reviewed, then people need to stop calling for replay. And if baseball ever DOES start instigating replay after every play, like college football, those who called for it are not allowed to say ONE WORD about five-hour nine-inning games.

SHUFFLING DECK ...

Speaking of Mike Bell, his radio show received a new time slot, apparently responding to 680 The Fan's response to 790's rising ratings. Even though 680 didn't do it because of ratings (per an AJC article), and I am sure 790 isn't doing it in response to 680's schedule change (because Steak wouldn't make fun of the station he works for, right?). Pollack & Bell grew by 33 percent (it took a while for the duo to figure out how much longer they'd be on the air), going from three hours (4-7 p.m.) to four hours (3-7 p.m.). This also means that a bad past few months for the 2 Live Stews just continued. First the 2LS's deal with Sporting News Radio ended and they returned to simply being live and local in Atlanta, then the show's hours were reduced by one. Doug and Ryan now just punch the clock from 1-3 p.m. every day. I haven't tuned in much since the hour reduction, but I will be interested in hearing if the original callers, some of which were ignored with the national show, will still call in now that the Stews have returned to their Atlanta roots.

The reason for the Pollack & Bell switch probably has something to do with Chuck & Chernoff's move to afternoon drive, and after two weeks of listening, I will say that Pollack & Bell might just be in trouble. The Zone was clearly going after the younger audience while going against Buck & Kincaid, but now Chuck & Chernoff can court that demographic. The Zone might be in a bit of a pickle. Chuck & Chernoff's chemistry doesn't seem as forced as Pollack & Bell's but you cannot split those two up because Pollack is your tie to college football, moreso than Dave Archer would be. Arch and Bell do have the better chemistry, but with college football approaching, you would hate to lose out to the Kang, Chuck Oliver. And P.S., not since Brandon Adams have I been

so tied to listening through commercials to hear the outcome of teases like I have been recently with Matt Chernoff throwing out teases during the afternoon drive. If he stays creative, fewer dials will be switched over to P&B, considering the two seem synched up commercial-wise these days.

HEWITT BEING HEWITT ...

Did I read correctly in a recent *Sports Illustrated* that Paul Hewitt was the coach of the US's U-19 team? I guess I shouldn't be surprised that the team finished fifth in the recent 2011 FIBA U19, probably because the timeouts were used incorrectly. Hewitt, who now coaches George Mason, had some interesting quotes in the *SI* piece, especially in regards to a player he missed out on while at Georgia Tech, Jeremy Lamb, the former Norcross standout who just helped UConn win the national title. Hewitt at one point questioned Lamb's desire to be there. Lamb went out and scored 35 points in one of the elimination games, following it up with a 21-point effort, so I wouldn't question his desire to be there. Hewitt continues to astound and amaze even though he isn't even at Tech anymore. Hmm.

SEC Media days was last week and I am amazed that no one locally called out Georgia head coach Mark Richt. As a Georgia grad and diehard Bulldogs football fan, even I can recognize that Richt is on the hotseat. I have defended him the last two years from being called "on the hotseat" by various media members, but there is no question about it now. Richt said at one point there is "not one sense of doom or gloom" in Athens. As a Georgia fan, that is great. But come on, your head would be in the sand if you didn't know there was heat. I hope Richt turns it around in a big way and Georgia winds up playing in the

CAN YOU BELIEVE...
...HE SAID THAT?

"There is not one sense of doom or gloom."

That was Georgia head coach Mark Richt at SEC Media Days. As a Georgia alum and diehard Bulldog football fan, I want nothing more than for this to be true, but if Richt really cannot feel the pressure on him then his head is in the sand. I hope Richt turns it around but there is pressure, Coach. Sorry.

Georgia Dome in EARLY December (SEC Championship game) and in a bowl game on or after January 1. I would have thought that the AJC's Mark Bradley would have jumped on this, but instead I guess he jumped off the "RICHT MUST GO" bandwagon to stand up for him. Wow, things must be turning around for Coach Richt.

Finally, the ACC media days also took place earlier this week. I wonder if any trees fell during the media days and if they made any noise. After all of the SEC coverage, it seemed no one was there.

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FALCONS FOOTBALL

SCORE
EVAN SHAPIRO


NFL ends lockout; Falcons benefit from new CBA, look to re-sign free agents

The NFL lockout is over, football is back in action, and fans haven't had to miss much (save for the cancelled Pro Football Hall of Fame game). Atlanta fans can rest assured that Falcons players are satisfied, owner Arthur Blank is happy, and everything is copasetic. Many people still don't know what the lockout was all about, though. In short, it was about money and the distribution of NFL revenue. The previous collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the National Football League Players' Association and the NFL owners had the owners taking \$1 billion of the league's \$9 billion revenue for growth and development and players then getting 57 percent of the remaining \$8 billion. Basically, owners and players ended up splitting the \$9 billion 50-50.

After the 2010 season, however, the owners voted not to continue the CBA with the NFLPA because they wanted a bigger cut of the revenue to help pay for investments for new stadiums and other expenditures. The players didn't believe that the owners were losing money as a result of paying player salaries. They thought maybe some of the owners had fabricated pay disputes as a front to renegotiate their own revenue-sharing agreements. Whether this is true or not is impossible to say, but nonetheless the players soundly resisted any pay cuts.

The owners tried to bargain and work out an agreement, but the players remained stalwart. On March 11, the players' union officially decertified, the first in a series of moves resulting in 10 NFL players (including Peyton Manning, Tom Brady and Drew Brees) filing an anti-trust lawsuit against the league and owners. In response to this lawsuit, the league locked out all of the players.

On April 25, though, the Minnesota U.S. District Court ruled the lockout as invalid and ordered the league to resume operations.

Without a CBA and rules concerning salaries, free agency and other labor issues, the league was in disarray. The chaos was short-lived, however, as the league appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, which stayed the ruling on April 29 and ultimately vacated it on July 8. The lockout was official.

THE NEGOTIATING TABLE ...

Neither side wanted to continue the lockout and, in the following weeks, representatives from the players' union negotiated with the owners, including Atlanta's own Arthur Blank, to reach a compromise. Throughout these talks, Blank updated fans through letters, assuring them that he and the other owners were being reasonable in their requests and that everyone wanted to resolve things peacefully. Thankfully, he was right, and on July 25 right here in Atlanta, the owners and players reached an agreement on a new 10-year CBA. Both sides fared well.

The most important change, the issue that sparked the entire fiasco, is the new revenue split. Now owners get a slightly larger cut, 53 percent, leaving players with 47 percent. While the players get a marginally smaller cut of the pie, though, they actually end up with better salary deals. There is now a salary cap of \$120 million (plus \$22 million in benefits) per team, and owners must spend 99 percent of that cap in the 2011-2012 season. Not only does this mean that all teams will now have relatively equal payrolls for players but also that the money will be distributed more fairly throughout the team, with the star players shaving a little bit off of their fortunes to bolster the other players' salaries. Also, the minimum salary will increase \$50,000 this year, with further increases annually. In addition to these salary changes, new work rules, shortened offseason workouts and five consecutive days off during bye weeks should hopefully

result in fewer injuries and longer careers for players. This was a crucial point for the players. As Falcons QB Matt Ryan told the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, "I think it's good for the wear and tear on the body. From a player safety standpoint, it was something that is very important to the NFLPA." Players will receive greater health benefits, too, including over \$1 billion for post-career injuries.

Despite both sides winning their major demands, there was some compromise as players did not get the opt-out clause they wanted (meaning they cannot back out of the 10-year deal early), and owners did not get the extra two games per season they wanted (it remains at 16 per season).

EFFECT ON FALCONS ...

It is appropriate that the new CBA passed in Atlanta, because the Falcons should benefit greatly from the new rules, particularly financially. The Falcons, with their frugal spending, will fall \$18 million under the \$120 million salary cap this season, and if necessary, can go even lower by renegotiating veterans' contracts. "We won't be in a situation where the cap will mandate those decisions," team president Rich McKay told the *AJC*. "We'll be in a good place." So, while other teams will have to cut players to meet the cap, the Birds can focus on signing the players they need and negotiating with free agents.

One major new player is WR Julio Jones, the sixth pick of the NFL draft. Due to the "entry-level compensation system" in the CBA, rookie pay is greatly reduced, so the Falcons won't pay nearly as much for Jones as with previous draft picks. As for free agents, the Falcons had 11 at press time. While they have enough money to comfortably re-sign many of them, they also need to sign a high first-round draft pick for their defense, meaning they might have to sacrifice

re-signing some free agents. Right tackle Tyson Clabo is enjoying his new free agency but hopes to stay with the Falcons. "I'm excited [about free agency]," he told the *AJC*. "Hopefully, Atlanta will do what they need to do to keep me."

Unfortunately, Clabo may be too expensive now for the Falcons to re-sign, especially if they sign a new defensive end. Amongst the other free agents, most will probably be re-signed, though with some exceptions. Michael Koenen is an excellent kickoff guy, but the new rule pushing the kickoff point to the 35-yard line may render his skills less valuable. Koenen is also the team's punter, and the Falcons took Miami punter Matt Boshier in the draft, so Koenen probably won't be back with Atlanta. Also, running back Jerrius Norwood has played well but has been frequently injured, playing in only 57 of his 80 regular season games. With another running back (fifth-round pick Jacquizz Rodgers) already signed, it's unlikely the Falcons will re-sign Norwood. The other free agents, Justin Blalock, Matt Bryant, Harvey Dahl, Brent Grimes, Mike Peterson, Jason Snelling and Eric Weems, look like they will return, though it's not a sure thing. Linebacker Stephen Nicholas just re-signed for a 5-year, \$17.5 million dollar deal, so Atlanta fans can expect to have him around for a while.

One last major perk of the new CBA for the Falcons is a possible new stadium. With the extra cut of the revenue Blank is getting, he and the club are planning a \$700 million open-air stadium, about a half mile north of the Georgia Dome downtown. The stadium could be finished as early as 2017, so Falcons fans should start looking forward to new digs. Hopefully, there won't be a lockout in six years.

Shapiro can be reached at 404-256-1572.

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SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 **FOOTBALL IS BACK:** After 130 days of the lockout, the NFL more than went back to work this past Tuesday, which means the Falcons are now defending their NFC South title. Players start practicing on Friday and will have their first preseason game on Aug. 12. I'm happy that the NFL is back, but honestly, I wasn't too worried that we would miss any games.

2 **SECONDARY DAWGS:** The SEC Media Days took place last week in Birmingham and media members who covered the event picked Georgia to finish second in the SEC East behind South Carolina. The Gamecocks had 114 first-place votes while Georgia tallied 38. I have to say the Boise State game is big for UGA, but the game next against South Carolina is gigantic for many reasons.

3 **NO RESPECT:** ACC Media Days took place this week and the media members did not have a lot of love for the Jackets. In the ACC Coastal Division, Georgia Tech was predicted to come in fourth place. That's not a big deal because when Paul Johnson took over in 2008, Tech was picked to come in fourth and they ended up tied for first.

4 **PLAYOFF TIME:** While the Falcons are gearing up for the 2011 season, the Force are in the playoffs and looking to end the season with an Arena Bowl win. They have reached the playoffs and will face the Cleveland Gladiators on Sunday at 3 p.m. If you can't make it to Cleveland, you can watch the game live on www.arenafootball.com.

5 **TALENT GALORE:** What's in the water at Stephenson High School? As of Tuesday, 11 players from the Jaguars' football team have committed to Division 1 schools. Mike Davis (Florida) and Jafar Mann (Florida) are the most notable of the bunch and it's projected Stephenson will have 14 to 17 players sign Division 1 scholarships. Head coach Ron Gartrell has to be feeling pretty good about his team.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY SCOTT ST. LIFER

132 Days it took for the NFL's owners and players to reach a collective-bargaining agreement

6:39 Length of the Braves-Pirates 19-inning game, the longest for both franchises

608 Total pitches thrown in the game

0.94 Eric O'Flaherty's minuscule ERA which leads all of baseball

14.29 Craig Kimbrel's strikeouts per nine innings, the most out of any on the Braves' staff

31 Saves by Kimbrel thus far, a franchise rookie record for saves in a season

17 Consecutive games in which Dan Uggla has reached base safely

19-17 Braves record against the National League East, second best behind Philadelphia

6 Georgia players on the preseason All-SEC first team, second most in the league

1 Running backs (Richard Samuel) on Georgia's roster to have carried the ball in college

WHO'S HOT

THUMBS UP TO HITTING STREAKS



Dan Uggla

The two-time All Star's bat has finally come around. Currently in the middle of a career-high 17-game hit streak, Dan Uggla has regained his renowned swing. During the streak, Uggla is hitting a gaudy .328 (21 for 64) and has raised his average up 26 points to .199.

NFL

After over four months of discussions, the lockout has been lifted. On Monday, the owners and player representatives signed a 10-year collective-bargaining agreement. This paves the way for training camps and free agency to begin by the end of the weekend.

Atlanta Tennis Championships

After accumulating temperatures of 140 degrees on the court last year at the Atlanta Athletic Club, the tournament took full advantage of its new arena, Racquet Club of the South, in Norcross. The new venue provided spectators with more natural shade and a larger indoor space.

WHO'S NOT

THUMBS DOWN TO INCOMPETENCE



Jerry Meals

The duration of the 19-inning marathon on Tuesday between Atlanta and Pittsburgh must have caused umpire Jerry Meals to lose some of his edge. Some are calling his missed call that ended the game the worst thing to happen to the Steel City since Sid Bream's slide.

Ramblin' Wreck

Georgia Tech athletics are in one big "rambling wreck" after the NCAA placed the school on four year's probation and issued other sanctions for the football and men's basketball programs. The football team must vacate their 2009 ACC championship triumph over Clemson, while basketball will have limitations on scholarships.

Rose's Thorn

Former NBA guard Jalen Rose received a 20-day jail sentence for a drunk driving accident last March. He also received a year of probation. His blood-alcohol level was at 0.12 percent, over the legal Michigan limit of 0.08 percent. He goes down as this week's "Fab Flop."

TRIVIA QUESTION

The Braves defeated the Pirates, 4-3, on Tuesday night in 19 innings. What is the last time the Braves played 19 innings?

Answer on Page 14

MY TWO CENTS

Are fans too hard on umpires and officials in general? I think they are. In the wake of Jerry Meals' blown call that gave the Braves an extra-innings win over Pittsburgh, some of the national media called it the worst call ever. Like The Fletch, I think that a lot of our fellow media members are overreacting.

When I first saw the play, it was not easy to tell if Pirates catcher Michael McKenry got Braves runner Julio Lugo with the tag. He kind of "Ole'd" the tag, as Meals said after the game. Lugo thought he was safe, as he didn't feel the tag on his leg.



Maybe I'm being a Braves homer here, but I think McKenry should've left no doubt and put a real tag on Lugo. I realize MLB teams want their catchers to avoid contact as much as possible these days, but tagging the sliding Lugo a bit harder wouldn't have endangered either player.

Yes, the call was wrong, but I can easily see how Meals could've been confused. After 19 inning of umpiring a game in this heat and humidity, I can't put much blame on the guy for missing a call like that.

Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.

SANITY AT LAST

"We've missed OTAs. We've missed some very important things, especially for our younger players who are just now coming into the system. We're trying to cram a lot of things that we've missed into a few weeks. It's going to be tough, but they don't call us professionals for nothing."

- Falcons CB Dunta Robinson on the end of the lockout

KEEPING UP WITH BIG B

SCORE

BRIAN JONES



Falcons don't need to sign a big-name free agent; Tech, UGA predictions made

Football is back! Those three words were something NFL fans have wanted to hear since the lockout began in early March. I have to say it was a very interesting four months because no one really knew how it was going to play out. There were many experts who thought the lockout would end after the Fourth of July weekend. But in reality, July 25, 2011 will go down in the NFL history as the day players and owners agreed to a historical Collective Bargaining Agreement that will last for 10 years.

At the end of the day, the only event that was cancelled was the Hall of Fame Game: teams will report to training camp on time and a full season will be played. With that said, these next couple of weeks will be crazy because teams are trying to sign veteran free agents, rookie free agents and draft picks while grinding it out in training camp to get ready for the upcoming season.

cause of the new rule that was implemented, the Falcons could be without these players until next week because free agents can't sign with a team until Friday at 6 p.m. It's important to sign the draft picks, especially Julio Jones, but the Falcons have to find a way to get some



LOCKOUT LIFTED: Mike Smith and Thomas Dimitroff are in good spirits knowing there will be a full NFL season this year. The interesting thing to come is free agency which has still yet to take place. The Falcons have 11 free agents who need to either be re-signed or let go. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons.

“Here's what I think: the Falcons are not going to sign a big-name free agent because they feel comfortable with the players they have on the roster. 'Do they need another defensive end? Yes, but they feel the current defensive ends they have on the roster can contribute just as effectively as one big name player.' ”

TIME TO FLY ...

So with the lockout officially over, the Falcons are ready to take flight for the 2011 season. Players started to report to Flowery Branch on Tuesday and should begin practice on Friday. As the Birds get ready for the season, there are plenty of signings that have to be made.

There are nine Falcons players who are free agents including Tyson Clabo, Harvey Dahl, Matt Bryant and Justin Blaylock. Be-

ing to sign a big-name free agent because they feel comfortable with the players they have on the roster. Do they need another defensive end? Yes, but they feel the current defensive ends they have on the roster can contribute just as effectively as one big name player. Head coach Mike Smith always said he has eight starters on the defensive line because they are always rotating players. So Smith, along with Falcons GM Thomas Dimitroff, wants to focus on other areas of the team such as re-signing Blaylock, Dahl and Clabo, which is a very good possibility since the Falcons are well under the salary cap.

of the veteran free agents back in a Falcons uniform, especially Clabo, because he was the team's best offensive lineman last year. But what about other free agents in the market? The top free agent could be Oakland Raiders CB Nnamdi Asomugha, who the Falcons could be going after. There were even talks that the Falcons were looking at Ray Edwards from Minnesota at one point.

Here's what I think: the Falcons are not

going to sign a big-name free agent because they feel comfortable with the players they have on the roster. Do they need another defensive end? Yes, but they feel the current defensive ends they have on the roster can contribute just as effectively as one big name player. Head coach Mike Smith always said he has eight starters on the defensive line because they are always rotating players. So Smith, along with Falcons GM Thomas Dimitroff, wants to focus on other areas of the team such as re-signing Blaylock, Dahl and Clabo, which is a very good possibility since the Falcons are well under the salary cap.

And one more thing on the Falcons; make sure you make it out to Norcross High School on Aug. 5 for the Falcons' annual Friday Night Lights event. Fans can watch the team take part in a scrimmage and get the player's autographs after the event. There is also a fireworks display when the scrimmage ends. This is the fourth consecutive year the Falcons have done Friday Night Lights and each year it has been a major success.

LOCAL FOOTBALL ...

SEC Media Days took place last week and the media members were pretty high on Georgia. They chose the Bulldogs to finish in second place in the SEC East behind South Carolina and nine players were selected to the All-SEC team, including first-team selections Aaron Murray and Cordy Glenn.

As big as the game against Boise State is on Sept. 3, the contest against South Caro-

lina the following week is huge in so many ways. If the Bulldogs find a way to beat the Gamecocks, that would give them a lot of momentum for the rest of the season and they could very well represent the SEC East in the conference championship game in December.

As for the Yellow Jackets, the ACC Media Days are wrapping up and the ACC media members selected Tech to finish fourth in the ACC Coastal division. Is that a little low? I think so, because Tech has a chance to go 8-4 and finish third in the division. It's not so much about the talent on the team, the schedule just favors the Yellow Jackets. They don't have to play Florida State and their toughest game is at Virginia Tech. Other than that, they can win the rest of their games if the defense shows improvement.

PLAYOFF ACTION ...

One team that doesn't need to improve is the Georgia Force, as they have reached the playoffs and will play their first round contest against the Cleveland Gladiators on Sunday at 3 p.m. The Force finish the regular season with an 11-7 record and have a chance to win their first ever Arena Bowl Championship if they win the next two games. The Force came back this year after a three-year hiatus, and since their return, the attendance for the home games has increased. In fact, in their final home game of the season, the Force had close to 10,000 fans, which was the largest crowd of the season. The Force is a very good Arena Football team, and if you have not watched them play, make sure you log on to arenafootball.com on Sunday and support the boys in black and blue.

Deighton can be reached at jdeighton@scoreatl.com.



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GAINING EXPOSURE



Lakisha Brooks

Atlanta Sports Academy helps local athletes earn college scholarships

The Atlanta Sports Academy (ASA) offers post-graduate sports programs for students who have completed their high school eligibility and are seeking assistance with obtaining athletic scholarships at four-year colleges and universities. The student-athletes who enroll in Atlanta Sports Academy's program benefit by: earning higher scores and grades for college acceptance, building better self-discipline for further success in college, and providing more time for students to mature prior to playing collegiate sports. The program pushes students in practice, tests their character and leadership, and gets them more focus on their education.

Founded in 2009 by former University of North Carolina football player Damon Dawson and former Auburn University football player Viondi Pate, Atlanta Sports Academy is the only sports academy in the state of Georgia. With little funding, Dawson and Pate initially worked from their virtual office in downtown Atlanta. The primary focus of the program was to assist high school students with obtaining and maintaining their football development, while supporting stu-

dents in the transition from high school to collegiate athletics.

Though the two were successful with focusing on athletics, they were not completely satisfied. In April 2010, with the aid of Ira Dawson, the Atlanta Sports Academy began the academic portion of the institution. This addition included study hall, ACT/SAT preparation through Kaplan and GED completion assistance. With these changes came a location move as well, as the academy moved into a townhouse in Hampton, Ga. Subsequently, all the hard work and dedication of the founders led to a full campus in 2011, which houses over 200 student-athletes.

The Atlanta Sports Academy now has more than 25 coaching and staff members, including its own academic department with accreditation partnerships with National High School and Word of Life Christian Academy and three athletic programs: football, basketball and baseball.

"This is a dream come true," stated CEO and Co-Founder Damon Dawson. "We are making a difference in so many kids' lives."

Atlanta Sports Academy is not only a

place for those athletes who did not qualify academically to play collegiate athletics, but also for those who were lightly recruited. A number of Atlanta Sports Academy's students were high school honor graduates.

Last year, in its first season its first season, Atlanta Sports Academy's football team finished with an impressive 8-2 season. This year they expanded to two teams, Black and Silver, and will play teams such as Shorter College and Valdosta State University. ASA's basketball team finished with a 23-7 record in 2011. This year marks the inaugural baseball season.

In June 2011, Atlanta Sports Academy held its official ribbon cutting ceremony.

ASA celebrated this groundbreaking event with more than 75 friends, family, city officials, business owners and media. During the ceremony, ASA honored a special young man, Kenny Stewart. He was recognized as an honorary 12th man for the upcoming 2011 football season. Stewart was diagnosed with cancer two years ago. After initially beating his illness, it returned and found the young man fighting for his life.

Not only does Atlanta Sports Academy look to help its students through athletics and leadership, but ASA participates in a number of community service projects. In May 2011, Atlanta Sports Academy joined the Dawson County community for Walk for Kenny Stewart, a walk that raised money for the medical care for Stewart, an 11-year-old cancer patient. Additionally, Atlanta Sports Academy volunteered at CHOICE for Kids in DeKalb County.

"Giving back to the community and assisting others is a mission of ASA. We believe in order to be success in business and life, we must lend a hand to others," said Marketing and Communication Director, Lakisha Brooks.

Though Atlanta Sports Academy has impressively grown over the past two years, we can only expect greater things in the future. "The best is yet to come," said Dawson. "We work diligently to expand and make a name for Atlanta Sports Academy. I'm excited to see where we go from here."

Brooks can be reached at lbrooks@atlantasportsacademy.org.

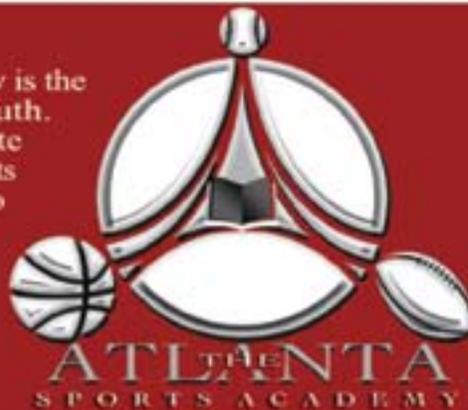
Atlanta Sports Academy is the premier prep school in the South. We have rigorous post-graduate academic-athletic program for students who wish to continue their desire to earn a four-year scholarship at an accredited four year college.

The mission of The Atlanta Sports Academy's Post-Graduate sports program is to provide young men with the opportunity to continue their education and to obtain a college degree, while participating in collegiate sports.

Unlike a junior college, you can attend Atlanta Sports Academy, take college courses and not lose any NCAA eligibility. Our state of the art campus comes with amenities such as, a dining hall, apartment style dorms, a chapel and a study hall.

For more information
Please visit us at
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Dream stay hot after All-Star weekend

It looks like the Dream have come alive. Since losing to the New York Liberty on July 13, they have won four consecutive games. On July 16, the Dream took on the Chicago Sky and, thanks to 24 points by Angel McCoughtry, Atlanta took down the Sky, 76-68. Three days later, the Dream took on Indiana and won big, 84-74. McCoughtry had a solid game, scoring 15 points in the win, but three other Dream players scored in double digits, including Erika de Souza (15), Iziane Castro Marques (10) and Lindsey Harding (19).

The following day, the Dream packed their bags and traveled to Washington to face the Mystics, and with a huge performance by McCoughtry, the Dream won, 86-79. McCoughtry scored a season-high 33 points.

"Before the game, I was thinking how I heard Michael Jordan say one time, he always picked his spots before the game - and that's what I did," McCoughtry told reporters after the game. "I picked my spots where I would probably hit the most shots."

After the All-Star break, McCoughtry outdid herself, scoring a season-high 37

points to help the Dream take down the Tulsa Shock, 76-68.

It was another good shooting day for McCoughtry, who was 11-of-22 from the field and 15-of-19 from the free throw line.

With the win, the Dream improve their record to 7-9, which puts them in fifth place in the Eastern Conference. This should be a crucial weekend for the Dream, who will take on a struggling Los Angeles Sparks team on Friday and will have a Sunday afternoon contest with the Sun.

LEARN FROM THE DREAM ...

If you want to learn from a season pro like McCoughtry, then head over to the Chastain Park Gym on Aug. 5, as the Dream will hold a Skills Academy for boys and girls grades 3-8. The kids will get training sessions with the players, a t-shirt and a ticket for a future game. For more information, go to wnba.com/dream or send an email to SkillsAcademy@atlantadream.net.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

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AUGUST	12	FRIDAY 7:30 PM CHICAGO CUBS	13	SATURDAY 7:00 PM CHICAGO CUBS	14	SUNDAY 1:30 PM CHICAGO CUBS
	ALUMNI WEEKEND Bobby Cox Jersey Retirement at 7 PM. Enjoy a spectacular fireworks display following the game. Presented by		ALUMNI WEEKEND Join us as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the 1991 "Worst to First" team with the Braves Legends game.		ALUMNI WEEKEND Kids ages 4-14 are invited to run the bases after the game. Presented by Get Braves Alumni Autographs	

FOR TICKETS CALL **800.745.3000** OR VISIT braves.com/tickets

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A promotional poster for the Atlanta Falcons' Friday Night Lights game. The background is black with several stadium lights at the top. In the center, the KIA logo is above the text 'KIA MOTORS'. Below that, the words 'FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS' are written in a large, white, distressed font. Underneath is the Atlanta Falcons logo, a stylized falcon head. To the left, a player in a red jersey with the number 2 is shown in a three-point stance, holding a football. To the right, a player in a red jersey with the number 84 is shown running with the ball. At the bottom, the date and time 'AUGUST 5, 2011 • 7:30PM' and the location 'NORCROSS HIGH SCHOOL' are displayed in a white, distressed font. A row of logos for sponsors is at the very bottom.

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SCORE MORE



Wilkins in Brazil; ASG shopping Hawks

Former Hawk great Dominique Wilkins will lead a group of ex-NBA players to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil later this month. The trip is a part of the league's "Basketball without Borders" program, which serves as a "global development program" for the NBA and FIBA, inspiring positive social changes through the world via the game of basketball.

"Basketball without Borders has seen amazing success over the last decade thanks to the tremendous efforts of FIBA, our marketing and community partners, and the many members of the NBA Family who have joined us along the way," said Kathleen Behrens, NBA Executive Vice President of Social Responsibility and Player Programs. "This program embodies the NBA's commitment to growing the game of basketball globally while also using our sport to address critical social issues in communities around the world."

Wilkins will be heading up a basketball camp for youths in Rio during his time in Brazil. Among those joining him are former NBA players Aylan Houston, Sam Perkins and Adonal Foyle. The camp runs July 29-Aug. 1.

HAWKS TO BE SOLD? ...

The Atlanta Spirit Group have long been rumored to be looking for a buyer for the Atlanta Hawks, and reports in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution say that there may be lingering interest in buying the team. Sources told the AJC that the buyer is moving quickly and has the ability to purchase an NBA Franchise.

Despite the rumors, this would still only be the beginning of a long process, as buying an NBA team is a tedious and extensive process. If a buyer shows legitimate interest, he or she would have 30 to 90 days to negotiate the details of a deal.

The Spirit Group took nine months to purchase the Hawks back in 2004.

INVESTIGATION CONTINUES ...

The NBA mourned last year when former Hawk center Lorenzen Wright's body was found in a secluded field in Memphis. Wright was apparently shot to death, but police have had trouble finding any legitimate leads.

"We are a long way from solving this crime," said Memphis Police Director Toney Armstrong last week.

Bagriansky can be reached at jbagriansky@scoreatl.com.



Lockout ends, Falcons report to camp

After 132 days, the NFL lockout ended on Monday. It did not take long for players to report to team headquarters in Flowery Branch, as they arrived in bunches on Tuesday morning. Training camp officially kicked off on Thursday, 15 days before the Falcons' first preseason game against Miami on Aug. 12.

"It's back to football and back to work," head coach Mike Smith told the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "I look forward to getting back out there on the practice field with my coaches and our players."

Quarterback Matt Ryan was the first player to arrive on Tuesday.

"I think everybody is excited to finally get back to work and all of this stuff is behind us at this point," Ryan said in his opening press conference. "I was very excited to get up here. We put in a lot of hard work this offseason as players. I know that the coaches put in a lot of hard work this offseason as well. I just wanted the opportunity to kind of talk to them about some things. I was just kind of like a kid on Christmas morning."

During the lockout, approximately 30 players participated in twice-a-week

practices throughout May and June at Buford High School. Most of those same guys took part in a strength and conditioning program with Jim Launer of Ignite Elite Athletic Training. Finally, however, all systems are go for players and coaches to return to their normal offseason routine.

FREE-AGENT FRENZY ...

The Falcons could begin negotiations with their free agents on Tuesday evening, but they were not allowed to make any re-signings until Friday evening. Under terms of the new collective bargaining agreement, the team could be without nine of its free agents in camp until Aug. 4, when the league's new business calendar begins.

Atlanta did not waste any time making sure free-agent linebacker Stephen Nicholas will be back on board. ESPN's Adam Schefter reported on Wednesday that Nicholas and the Falcons agreed on terms of a five-year contract. A fourth-round draft choice in 2007 out of South Florida, Nicholas recorded 78 tackles and one interception last season.

Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.



Beltran move could energize lineup

Earlier this month around the All-Star break, the popular trade rumor involving the Braves dealt with the team looking to move pitcher Derek Lowe. Now with the trading deadline upon us the Braves, as of Wednesday, were waist-deep in Carlos Beltran trade rumors. The Mets outfielder is a switch-hitter who is having quite a year while seeking a new contract. The career .282 hitter is hitting over .290 with the highest on-base, slugging and OPS percentages of his 14-year career.

BIG BAT ...

Beltran has missed a large portion of the last two seasons, but seems healthy this year and has hit 15 home runs as of Monday. ESPN.com is reporting that the Braves have considered dangling former first-round draftee Mike Minor, a left-handed starting pitcher, in trying to acquire Beltran, who could platoon in centerfield or in right field. The Phillies, Red Sox and Giants are also in the chase for Beltran. Now, it may be necessary to make a move with Chipper Jones still ailing and All-Star catcher Brian McCann on the DL due to a strained oblique.

What would Beltran mean for Atlanta? The Dan Uggla trade and signing

was supposed to give the lineup a powerful right-handed bat, and while Uggla had slugged 18 home runs entering the Pirates series, his average is still around .200 instead of .260. His RBI count is only at 40, a pace well below the 93 he averages per season. Martin Prado is the only other starter who is a regular righty and while Jones is also a switch-hitter, Beltran would be nice to have in there as a right-handed bat.

Beltran also seems to rise up when the calendar switches to October. In 2004, when Beltran was acquired by the Astros for the playoff run, the outfielder slugged 23 home runs with 53 RBIs in 90 games, then hit four home runs against the Braves in the NLDS. Beltran followed that up with four more home runs in the NLCS against St. Louis. In 2006, after slugging 41 home runs for the Mets in the regular season, Beltran knocked three more dingers in the NLCS but his team fell again to the Cardinals. In 22 postseason games, Beltran has 11 home runs.

The Braves have plenty of pitching prospects in the system with Julio Teheran, Randall Delgado, Arodys Vizcaino and 2011 first-round pick Sean Gilmartin (not to mention Brandon Beachy).

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.



G-Braves fan experience second to none

The Atlanta Braves are in the thick of a playoff push. Their stadium, Turner Field, was grand enough to host the 1996 Olympics and is updated often; the big-screen monitor looking down from above centerfield is an example.

While, it's great to catch a game at Turner Field, the scene can't compare to the baseball experience up I-85 in Lawrenceville. Just off the intersection of Ga. Highway 20, The Gwinnett, or G-Braves, offer their own very special show. Coolray Field hosts teams from the AAA International League from April through August. Being a minor league park in a major metro area has advantages.

EASY ACCESS ...

The commute to Coolray (especially when you factor in the usual bottlenecking heading into Turner Field parking lots and then the "healthy" walk to the ballpark) is surprisingly efficient from anywhere north of I-20 in the metro area. Ticket prices are a fraction of the prices of the big league club. And, although the stadium lacks the brick facade at Turner Field, every seat is a good one. Adam Haber, an eight-year-old fan from East Cobb, appreciates the view: "Going to Gwinnett games is always fun [because] we like sitting close to the action." Don Griffin and his son, Trey, came

to the game with the Habers. Don noted a couple things: "The draft beer was extremely cold and tasty. Trey had a special experience at seven-years old. He'll never forget it."

The G-Braves provide entertainment for the fans between every half inning.

UNIQUE PROMOTIONS ...

Don't be surprised to see a dance contest between teens from a church youth group and senior citizens above one of the dugouts as the teams switch sides. Every game, in about the third or fourth inning, fans will embarrass themselves while entertaining the crowd in inflatable sumo wrestling suits. Young fans that don't get selected to race in circles until they achieve maximum dizziness can do an 80s dance and almost certainly see themselves on one of the biggest big screens in the minors.

And, oh yeah, the product on the field is pretty good, too. The G-Braves are anchored by top-level starting pitcher prospects Julio Teheran and Mike Minor. The future stars are one game out of first place in the Southern Division and a half game out in the wild card race.

Conway can be reached at sconway@scoreatl.com.

SCORE MORE

PANTHER PROWL



DAVE COHEN



Panthers recognized in preseason publications; Former golfer Fowler honored

Most of the college football preseason magazines focus primarily on the FBS conference teams, but there are a couple that do a pretty good job of covering the FCS conferences. *The Sporting News* has a page for each league including the Independent schools, of which Georgia State is until the 2012 season.

The year's publication features a write-up on the Panthers, South Alabama and Texas-San Antonio and the players to watch include GSU running back Travis Evans, Jaguars linebackers Enrique Williams and Roadrunners quarterback Eric Soza. We will see both Williams and Soza this season.

Another magazine that does a nice job with the FCS coverage is Phil Steele's college preview. In this year's issue nine Panthers were recognized. Punter Bo Schlechter was named to the magazine's preseason All-America fourth team after averaging 44.5 yards per punt during the Panthers' inaugural season. Three standouts from the Georgia State offense were named to the Phil Steele Preseason All-Independent team in sophomore running back Travis Evans, sophomore wide receiver Danny Williams and senior guard Joseph Gilbert. Defensive lineman Christo Bilukidi and outside linebacker Jake Muasau, both seniors, were named to the

first-team defense. GSU also had two special teams performers honored in Schlechter and sophomore return specialist Albert Wilson. Senior tight end Arthur Williams and senior offensive tackle Clyde Yandell were recognized as Players to Watch among independent teams. Georgia State football opens the season Friday night Sept. 2 vs. Clark Atlanta in the Georgia Dome. (WCFO-AM 1160 and WMLB-AM 1690)

NEWS AND NOTES ...

The *AJC* was reporting that Georgia State football had picked up two transfers from the University of Kentucky. They are

running back Donald Russell and tight end Alex Smith. Russell rushed for 430 yards and three touchdowns last season.

Alan Fowler, a recent men's golf graduate, has been named a Cleveland Golf/Srixon All-America Scholar. The honor was recently announced by the Golf Coaches Association of America. It is the second straight year that Fowler has been selected. He concluded his career this past April finishing in the top 20 at the CAA Championship for the fourth year in a row.

Dave Cohen is in his 28th season as the "Voice of Georgia State Athletics" on WRAS-FM (88.5) and WCFO-AM, Newstalk 1160.

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SUNBELT LEAGUE

SCORE

JASON PARKER



League prepares for playoff season as Douglasville and Berkeley Lake lead

We are nearing the end of July, which means the Sunbelt Baseball League is nearing its playoffs. The SBL is a collegiate summer baseball league that allows college baseball players a chance to remain competitive in their sport after the college season ends. The league was established in 2005 and is represented by more than 50 universities in the southeast United States. The league uses wood bats versus aluminum to give the league more of a professional feel, as many alumni of the Sun Belt league have gone on to sign professional contracts.

LEADING THE PACK ...

As the playoffs draw near, the top two teams in the league are former MLB catcher Todd Pratt's Douglasville Bulls and coach Karl Garcia's Berkeley Lake Tides. If these two teams hold their current positions, they will receive a bye in the first best-of-three round of the upcoming playoffs (a six-team format with two teams receiving byes). Pratt's Bulls have been nearly invincible this season, losing only three of 25 games. The Lake Tides are in a tighter race with the Brookhaven Bucks. As of press time, the Lake Tides and

Bucks had identical records at 17-9, and met Wednesday during the final night of the regular season. The two teams played in a virtual playoff game for the league's coveted bye.

While some might think that wins and losses aren't as important in a summer league, the players and managers feel otherwise. "Although our main objective in this league is for each individual player to improve and get ready for next year's college season, winning is still a huge goal," said Lake Tides pitcher Ross Ripple. "Collegiate athletes cannot just hide our competitive instincts just because it's

summer ball".

"As the [Sunbelt] league has developed the past couple years, each team has sort of developed their own identity, their own way of doing things. It has gotten to become a real fun, competitive atmosphere," Garcia said.

While all the players have had fun and gotten in good work this summer without having to worry about school, the teams still want to finish the season out on top of the league. The question is: can anybody beat the Bulls or Tides?

Parker can be reached at 404-256-1572.

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Dream. July 31 at Connecticut 5 PM. August 2 vs. New York 7:30 PM. August 7 vs. Seattle 3 PM. August 9 at Washington 7 PM. August 11 at Phoenix 10 PM.

Club Sport, "Where Atlanta Comes To Play!" Registration Ongoing - Men's League plays on Sunday evenings at the Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club. For more info or to register visit www.usclubsport.com

Open Recreational Basketball. GSL — Georgia Sports Leagues. Georgia's Best Sports Leagues. Registration ongoing. We offer "Top Gun," "B," "C" and Co-Ed styles of play around Atlanta. We play ALL year round. For more information please contact (678)799-0159 or email mark@georgiasportsleagues.org. Visit www.georgiasportsleagues.org.

Roundtable Fundamental Basketball Camp Boys and Girls. Rising 6th-10th Graders (Current 5th-9th Graders) June 7-11, 9am-2pm. St. Francis High School, Alpharetta. Contact Coach Huff sfrancisbball@yahoo.com.

BASEBALL

Braves. July 29 vs. Florida 7:35 PM. July 30 vs. Florida 7:10 PM. July 31 vs. Florida 1:35 PM. August 1 at Washington 7:05 PM. August 2 at Washington 7:05 PM. August 3 at Washington 1:05 PM. August 5 at New York Mets 7:10 PM. August 6 at New York Mets 7:10 PM. August 7 at New York Mets 1:10 PM. August 8 at Florida 7:10 PM. August 9 at Florida 7:10 PM. August 10 at Florida 7:10 PM.

Gwinnett Braves. July 29 at Durham 7:05 PM. July 30 vs. Indianapolis 7:05 PM. July 31 vs. Indianapolis 2:05 PM. August 1 vs. Indianapolis 7:05 PM. July 2 vs. Indianapolis 7:05 PM. August 4 at Charlotte 7:15 PM. August 5 at Charlotte 7:15 PM. August 6 vs. Charlotte 7:05 PM. August 7 vs. Charlotte 2:05 PM. August 8 at Scranton Wilkes-Barre 7:05 PM. August 9 at Scranton Wilkes-Barre 5:35 PM. August 10 at Scranton Wilkes-Barre 7:05 PM. August 11 at Scranton Wilkes-Barre 7:05 PM.

Prospect Watch. Ongoing - Buckhead. Baseball pitching and hitting lessons by a former college and minor league coach. For information call 404-869-7966 or visit www.eteamz.com/tryouts.

Adult Baseball League Metro Atlanta. Ongoing. MSBL 18+, 28+, 38+, and 48+. Sunday League contact info is 770.785.2588, e-mail info@AtlantaMSBL.com. MSBL 18+ Saturday League contact info is 770-436-8114, e-mail AtlantaMABL@aol.com. MSBL 18+ Midweek Wood bat league contact info is 770-436-8114, e-mail AtlantaMABL@aol.com. MSBL 18+ Fall League contact info is 770-436-8114, e-mail AtlantaMABL@aol.com. For more information about our Atlanta Adult Baseball League, please visit our website at www.AtlantaMSBL.com.

TNT Sports. Ongoing. Baseball pitching and hitting lessons by Rob Blair, former college coach, Snellville. To set up a free pitching or hitting analysis call: 678-344-5876.

Jack City Baseball. Ongoing. Baseball pitching and hitting. Instruction with former pro Keith Whitner. 18-y looking for high school players. The new location is inside Velocity Sports in North Gwinnett. For more information call 770-633-0948 or visit jackcity.net.

Jack City Sports Center. Indoor T-Ball League being offered at Jack City Sports Center. 10 game season with games on Sundays. \$125 per player. Team rates available and questions can be directed to 770-513-4121.

FOOTBALL

Force. July 16 at Tampa Bay 7:30 PM. July 23 at Iowa 8:05 PM.

Collins Hill Athletic Association. Ongoing. Accepting applica-

tions for qualified coaches in all age groups. For information email Craig Deneau at deneauc@charter.net

Grayson Athletic Association. Ongoing. Football coaches needed for eighth grade and all age groups. For information call Duane Davis at 678-300-0282 or visit www.gaasports.org.

Flag Football. GSL - Georgia Sports Leagues. Georgia's Largest Flag League. Registration ongoing. We offer 7-Man, 8-man, Youth and Co-Ed styles of play around Atlanta. We play ALL year round. For information please contact (678)799-0159 or email mark@georgiasportsleagues.org. Visit www.georgiasportsleagues.org.

Arena Indoor Football. Ongoing. Youth and Adult Leagues. Youth 7 vs. 7; Adult 6 vs. 6. For information, call 678-714-7454 or e-mail info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com. www.atlantasilverbacks.com/indoor.

Capitol City Officials Association. CCOA is accepting ongoing registration for the upcoming GHSA High School season in football. We hold weekly training meetings. For more information, contact Irvin Seabrook at 404-957-3331 or e-mail lrv_Seabrook@yahoo.com.

HOCKEY

Peachtree Booster Club. Ongoing - Pickneyville Roller Hockey Rink. Fees: \$95 for 12-game season, \$30 out-of-county fee. For information visit www.pbcsports.org.

SOCCER

Challenged Soccer. Ongoing. For mentally and physically disabled youngsters. For information call Ken Higgins at 770-985-0434.

Hall of Fame soccer clinics. Ongoing on Fridays Clarkston Community Center. For under-6 through under-12 players. Fees: Free. For information call 404-508-1050 or visit www.clarkstoncommunitycenter.org. 5:30-7 PM.

TENNIS

Technique Clinics. Ongoing - Bitsy Grant Tennis Center. Tuesdays (serve/volley) and Saturdays (forehand/backhand). Fees: \$18. For information call 404-790-4772 or email jimhines01@yahoo.com. 2 PM on Saturdays, 6:30PM on Tuesdays.

Tennis camps for kids. Ongoing weekly. Lost Mountain Tennis Center. For information call 770-528-8525.

LACROSSE

Lacrosse. Ongoing. Registration for 1st-8th grades. For information call 404-216-5870, email jasona@bagatawaylacrosse.com or visit www.bagatawaylacrosse.com.

Double Stix Lacrosse. Ongoing - Leagues, Travel Teams and Tournaments for youth, high school and adult's boys and girls. More information about the best lacrosse programs in Georgia can be found at www.doblestixlacrosse.com or by contacting Chris Smith at chris@doblestixlacrosse.com or 404-550-5322.

RUNNING

2nd Annual Hope Center 5K and 1K Fun Run. Aug. 6. Loganville, 8:00 PM. 770-601-3782.

Falcon 5K. Aug. 6. Flowery Branch, 7:30 AM. 770-633-2863.

Viking 5K Run & 1K Fun Run. Aug. 6. Gainesville, 8:30 AM. 770-561-1050.

Atlanta Finest 5K/1K/Fun Run. Aug. 6. Atlanta, 7:30 AM. 404-231-9064.

Dennis McCormick 5K and Fun Run. Aug. 6. Suwanee, 8:00 AM. 770-962-8425.

Rev. George Moore Strok Awareness 5K Run/Walk. Aug. 6. Atlanta, St. Philip AME Church, 8:00 AM. 404-432-2616.

Hip Hip Hooray Schools Back 5K. Aug. 6. Canton, 8:00 AM. 770-633-5511.

CAMPS

Nike Basketball Camps. Camps located in Snellville, Roswell, Kennesaw, Oxford and Jonesboro. For more information or a free brochure, visit 1-800-645-3226 or visit www.usportscamps.com.

Club Sport, "Where Atlanta Comes To Play!" Registration Ongoing for Sand & Indoor Leagues and Tournaments League games played every day and night at the Brookhaven Boys and Girls Club. For more info or to register visit <http://www.usclubsport.com/>

Jack City Baseball. Ongoing. Atlanta Braves pitcher Vladimir Nunez is now conducting pitching lessons. To schedule a lesson, call 770-513-4121.

VOLLEYBALL

Gwinnett Sports Center. Registration ongoing. For information call Jerry Robison at 678-491-0203 or visit www.gsfun.com.

SWIMMING & DIVING

Swimming lessons. Ongoing - Alpharetta City Pool - Alpharetta, Ga. - 1825 Old Milton Parkway. For information call 678-297-6107.

Dynamo Swim School. DynaBabies, Preschool, Grade School, Adult Classes. Youth Swim Team. Call us (770) 457-7946 Ext 16 www.dynamoswimschool.com

Gwinnett Aquatics. Ongoing - 2800 Quinberry Drive and Bethany Church Road. For ages 5-18. Swim team and lessons available. For information call 770-972-4055.

Senior Water-Exercise class. Ongoing - Mountain Park pool - Lilburn, Ga. Fees: \$1 per class. For information call 770-546-4650. 10-10:50 AM.

SwimAtlanta Sugarloaf at Kid's Village. Ongoing. Swim team, lessons, lap swimming, master's program, water aerobics and scuba available. For information call 678-442-7946.

YOUTH REGISTRATION

Soccer-Soccer Alley. Ongoing - 3265 Roswell Road- Atlanta. For information call 404-266-0762 or visit www.starsoccerclub.com.

Tucker Youth Soccer. Ongoing - 2803 Henderson Road Tucker, Ga. For information call 770-414-0538 or visit www.tysa.com.

Track and Field - Peachtree City Flash Youth Track Team registration. Ongoing - Riley Field - Peachtree City, Ga. For ages 6-14. For information call 770-631-3552 or email ptcf@bellsouth.net.

Gymnastics - Georgia Gymnastics Academy. Ongoing. For registration in Lawrenceville call 770-962-5867; in Suwanee call 770-945-3424.

Gym Elite. Ongoing. Registration for ages 2 and older. Cheerleading for ages 6 and older. For information call 770-242-0678.

Youth Soccer Training. Ongoing. Start age 3 and up. For information, call 678-714-7454, e-mail info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com, or visit www.atlantasilverbacks.com/indoor.

Corpus Christi Youth Basketball League. Registration is now underway for our 29th season! Boys and girls ages 5 through 14, any skill level, are welcome. Cost: \$90 per child/\$85 for siblings. Fee includes uniforms, field trips, skills clinics, 9 games and more! Register while space is still available Saturdays October 11 & 18, 2008, 10 AM to 12 PM. Location: Corpus Christi Church Sports Arena, 600 Mountain View Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30083. For info, call 770-469-0395, email ccyb1@gmail.com or visit the league's website (www.ccybl.net).

SOFTBALL

AYSA Spring Season. Ongoing - North Park - Cogburn and Bethany - Alpharetta. Fees: If Alpharetta Residential Property Tax IS NOT PAID at the primary residence of the player, then the Non-City Resident Fee must be paid. After Jan. 13, \$10 late fee is charged.

GYMNASTICS

Gymnastics Classes at Gymnastics Academy of Atlanta. Ongoing - 3126 Cobb Parkway Kennesaw, Ga. For information call 770-975-8337 or visit www.gymnasticsacademyofatlanta.com.

Gymnastics Classes at Gwinnett Gymnastics Center Ongoing - 927 Killian Hill Road Lilburn, Ga. For information call 770-921-5630.

Atlanta School of Gymnastics in Lawrenceville. Ongoing. Classes for tots through teens. Cheerleading classes for ages 5 and older. For information call 770-277-9434.

The Little Gym of Snellville. Ongoing. Noncompetitive gymnastics and motor-skills development classes and camps. For ages 10 months-12 years. For information call 770-982-0901 or visit www.tlgsnellville.com.

RACING

Friday Night Drags & MCR Safety Show-N-Shine. July 29 at Atlanta Motor Speedway

SpeedTech Racing School. July 30-31 at Atlanta Motor Speedway

Thursday Thunder. August 4 at Atlanta Motor Speedway

Friday Night Drags & MCR Safety Show-N-Shine. August 5 at Atlanta Motor Speedway

NASA. August 5-7 at Road Atlanta

OFFICIATING

9RCorp Sports Officials. Ongoing. Provider of sports officials for multiple sports including basketball, flag football, & softball. Looking for additional officials. For information call Dennis Reagan at 404-213-0588 or email 9rcorp@150mail.com.

Georgia Lacrosse Officials Association. Needs boys youth and High School officials for 2010 season. Games are played Spring, Summer, and Fall. Great way to earn extra money and get some fun aerobic exercise. For more information, please visit www.GALAXREF.com or email recruit@galaxref.com.

Atlanta Peachstate Football Officials Association. High School Football Officials needed. We are in need of people who want to officiate high school football in the Atlanta Metro area. No experience is necessary. We have weekly training sessions. For more information go on our web site www.apfoa.com or call Keith @ 678.592.1194.

ATLANTA SPORTS COUNCIL

Chick-Fil-A Bowl. Dec. 31, 2011. Georgia Dome. For tickets, call 404-444-4444. To reach the Atlanta Sports Council call 404-586-8510 or visit www.atlantasportscouncil.com.

MISC.

Club Sport. Club Sport opens registration for summer leagues on May 1st with league play beginning in June. Club Sport is Atlanta's recreational sports and social group with over 10,000 participants each year on 1200 teams in 120 leagues. Each season Club Sport offers leagues in flag football, softball, soccer, sand and indoor volleyball, basketball and more. Club Sport is where Atlanta comes to play! For more information about Club Sport, upcoming events, photos or interviews with the owner, please contact Rich Alvarez at 678-994-0793 ext. 818 or visit www.usclubsport.com.

GOKickball "Atlanta's Premier Social Experience". Providing social, co-ed adult kickball leagues throughout metro-Atlanta centered around having a good time, meeting new people, and playing recreational games of kickball at local parks. Registration is open now for summer season. Join the fun! For more information and to register, go to www.gokickball.com/atlanta.

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BULLDOG BEAT

STEPHEN BLACK



Eight Dawgs named All-SEC; football picked to finish second

Eight Georgia footballers were named to the preseason All-SEC team during media days in Hoover, Ala. Six Dawgs were named to the first team, which was the second-most among all SEC programs. Quarterback Aaron Murray, tight end Orson Charles, offensive tackle Cordy Glenn, kicker Blair Walsh, punter Drew Butler and return specialist Brandon Boykin made the first team. Center Ben Jones and defensive tackle DeAngelo Tyson made the second team.

Also at media days, Georgia was picked to finish second in the East.

CROSS COUNTRY ...

The Georgia cross country team announced its 2011 schedule on Tuesday. The slate is highlighted with the season-opening home meet at the team's home course in Bishop. The Georgia Invitational will take place on Sept. 3.

"We have some quality competition coming to town with Alabama, Mississippi State, Georgia Tech and others," said distance coach Jeff Pigg. "It will be a fun opportunity for our freshmen and some other newcomers to the program to start the year off and their collegiate careers off at home. We will get a chance to see where everyone is and what they need to do to get where they need to be for later in the season."

Other meets include the Georgia State Invitational in Hampton, a trip to South Bend, Ind., for the Notre Dame Invitational and a trip to Madison, Wis., for the Wisconsin Invitational before heading to Knoxville, Tenn., for the SEC Championships on Oct. 29. The NCAA Regionals will take place in Tuscaloosa, Ala., on Nov. 12, where the Bulldog harriers will have a shot at qualifying for the NCAA Championships.

BRAVES HONOR MCGILL ...

Former tennis coach and Georgia athletics legend Dan McGill will throw out the first pitch at the Braves game on Sunday. The honor was bestowed as one of McGill's 90th birthday gifts.

McGill coached the men's tennis squad for 34 years, winning two national titles and cementing the Bulldogs as one of the nation's top college programs. The Athens native also served as the school's sports information director and started the athletic department's fundraising branch, the Georgia Bulldog Club.

Currently, McGill is the curator of the Intercollegiate Tennis Association's Hall of Fame, which is housed in Athens.

Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.

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TECH TALK

THOMAS WATSON



ACC coaches, players meet in Pinehurst as football season nears

Members of the media were on hand as ACC coaches and officials gathered for the ACC Kickoff, which is one more sign that college football season is close. With Georgia Tech in the headlines because of their recent NCAA violations, the meetings promised to be provocative for head coach Paul Johnson and company.

SHOWING SUPPORT ...

ACC commissioner John Swofford had a few positive words to say to reporters about Georgia Tech officials in the wake of the NCAA probation announcement. "I think at Georgia Tech, you've got people in (president G.P.) 'Bud' Peterson and (athletic director) Dan Radakovich who are very ethical people who are committed to doing things the right way," Swofford said.

Swofford also made mention of the hefty fine levied against the Yellow Jackets. "I will say it's the biggest fine that I'm aware of that the NCAA has levied, and the fine, relative to what actually occurred in terms of the players, was big."

JOHNSON FRUSTRATED ...

Despite the words of encouragement from the commissioner, Johnson was bombarded with questions about the NCAA's ruling during his hour-long session at the mic. As usual, Johnson didn't pull any punches when he grew tired of the onslaught.

"I'm not even going to comment on that anymore," Johnson said at one point. "I've answered all I'm going to answer about that." When reporters didn't stop, the coach got especially brash. "I take away that I'm going to move on,

how about you?" Johnson asked a reporter.

PRESEASON PICKS ...

Georgia Tech was picked to finish fourth in the ACC Coastal Division. Virginia Tech was picked to finish first, followed by Miami and North Carolina. The Yellow Jackets were picked to finish ahead of Virginia and Duke. The Hokies received 66 of 71 first-place votes from members of the media. Florida State received 65 of 71 first place votes in the Atlantic Division and was picked to win the ACC championship. "We don't pay much attention to the preseason polls," said Johnson. "Whether we are picked high or low, in the end, you have to do it on the field."

Watson can be reached at 404-256-1572.

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TRIVIA ANSWER The Braves beat the Cardinals, 7-5, in 19 innings on May 14, 1988 in St. Louis.

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