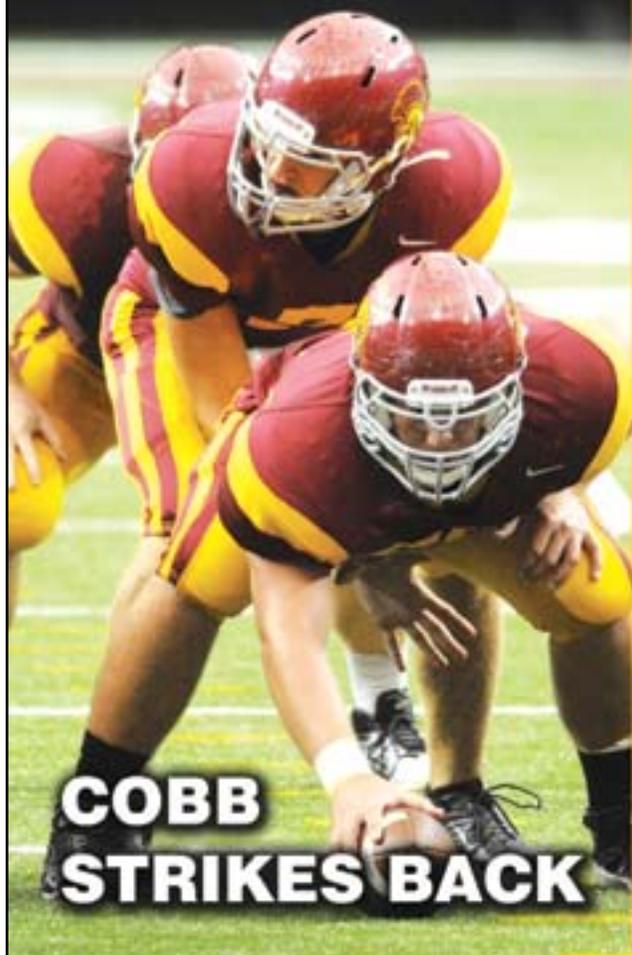


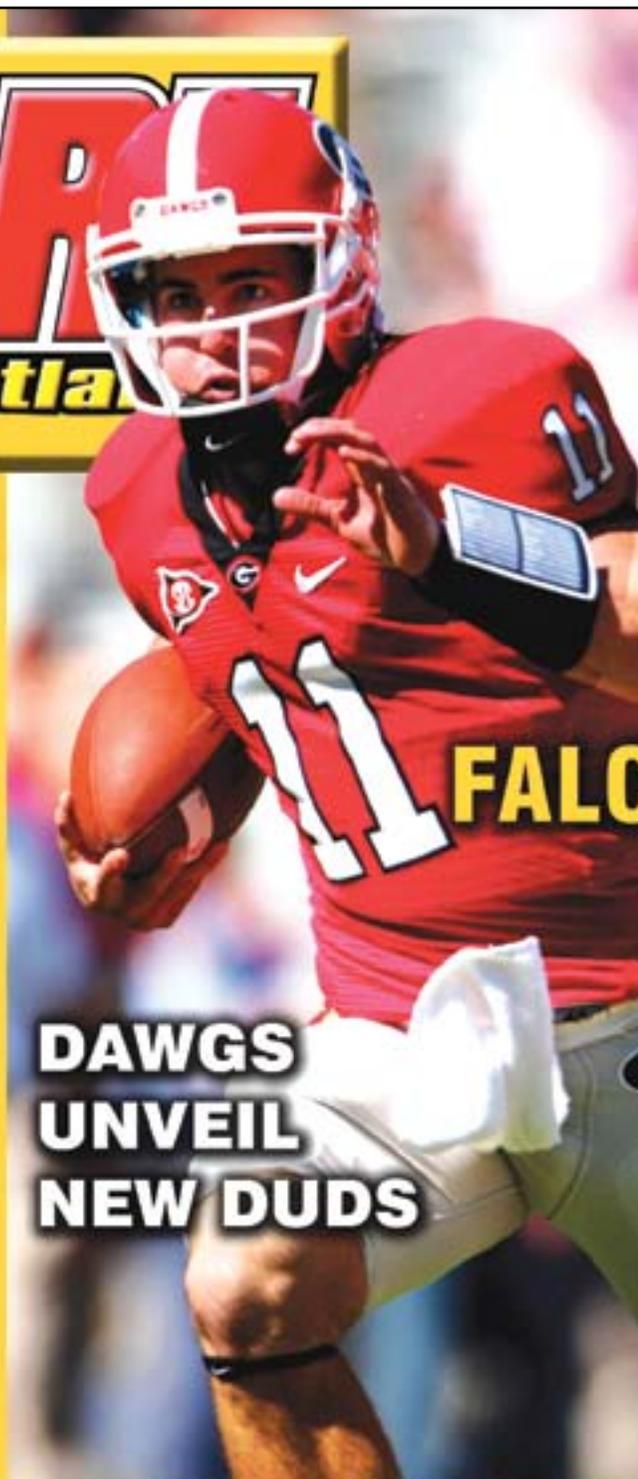
SCORE

Vol. 7 | Iss. 28 | Aug. 26 - Sept. 8

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TV: Lambert @ Chattahoochee

WEB: Blessed Trinity @ Grady

FRIDAY, SEPT. 9

TV: Newnan @ Peachtree Ridge

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Stephen Black (UGA), Sean Conway (Falcons),

Joe Deighton (Hawks), Ricky Dimon (Cross Country),

Fletcher Proctor (Braves), Scott St. Lifer (Softball),

Thomas Watson (Tech)

STAFF WRITERS Joe McCollum, Jack Morbitzer,

Jason Parker, Jay Thomason

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**CAN'T MISS
THIS WEEK**

- 5** In our cover story, Josh Bagriansky analyzes the Falcons' preseason performances thus far.
- 7** Scott St. Lifer debuts his "Saint Sports" column by reviewing recent events in Atlanta sports.
- 11** In our new and improved prep section, our writers debut their respective beats in the four fall sports - football, cross country, softball and volleyball.
- 14** Check out our "Picking Winners" feature where our staff gives their picks for this week-end's biggest games.

**SHOT OF THE
WEEK...**

FUN IN THE DOME: Grayson celebrated a 7-0 win over Kell in the opening game of the Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic Saturday in the Georgia Dome. A fourth-quarter Longhorn fumble gave the Rams the ball on the five, and Robert Nkemdiche took it from there for the game's only score. *Photo courtesy of Jon Barash.*

INSIDE AT SCORE

ON THE Score Atlanta is looking for new sales associates as well as writing and graphic design interns. For sales positions, e-mail Bob Houghton at bhoughton@scoreatl.com. For writing internships, e-mail Stephen Black at sblack@scoreatl.com. For graphic design internships, e-mail DJ Galbiati at djgalbiati@scoreatl.com. Feel free to call 404-256-1572 to speak with someone about any of these positions.

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AND VOICES**

*COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI
COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF WALTER PINION, ROB SAYE
AND JIMMY CRIBB/ATLANTA FALCONS*

- 6** OUR THOUGHTS
15-17 SCORE MORE
18 PHOTOS OF THE WEEK

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THE FLETCH



PGA trumps British as a major tournament

By Fletcher Proctor



Glory's Last Shot, aka the 93rd PGA Championship, was held two weeks back, and 680 The Fan was all over it as the "Home of the PGA Championship." The radio station broadcast from Johns Creek's Atlanta Athletic Club all week and the Rude Awakening scored an interview with rookie winner Keegan Bradley the day after he won. I am still not certain why the Fan didn't do any play-by-play as the "home" of the championship, but regardless, the interview was huge.

PECKING ORDER ...

Speaking of the PGA Championship, I went to the second round and had several discussions over the tournament's place among the four major tournaments. As I am sure everyone knows golf's "Grand Slam" consists of the Masters, the US Open, the British Open and the PGA Championship. Several golf buffs that I spoke with at the event put Augusta No. 1, followed by the US Open, the British and then the PGA. Several others "in the know" that I spoke with actually held the US Open in a higher regard than the Masters. The reasoning was that the US Open is America's "national championship" and can be won more or less by anybody, as any random Joe can qualify for the event through a series of play-ins. The British Open was always ranked third with

the PGA Championship coming in last.

I must say that I disagree with this common ranking of No. 3 and No. 4 because I would flip them if I were to rank the majors. I love watching the Masters, but I would probably rank the US Open first, followed closely by the Masters, but then I'd place the PGA Championship third followed by the British Open. What? You are crazy!

I am not. And with all due respect "Great" Britain, golf may have been born there, but it resides in America now. Deal with it. I feel as though the British Open is almost charity that we give that portion of Europe after we took golf away from them. (I am not sure if we won golf when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, if it was a part of the settlement from the War of 1812, if they gave it to us for helping them in WWII, or even if we won it in a bet, but golf is ours now.) In fact, I believe it is nicknamed "The Open Championship," because they want to fool people into watching it for four straight days. If we don't bring attention to the fact that it is being played in a cow pasture in Scotland, perhaps the ratings will be higher!

Take a look at the courses that make up the British Open rotation. St. Andrews is known for a hole that has pavement running up one side of it. That's a cartpath, and that is your claim to fame? Carnoustie is another

course in the British Open rotation. It's nickname is Carnasty. Oh BOY! I want to play THERE! Royal Troon, Turnberry, Royal Liverpool, Muirfield, Royal fill-in-the-blank... call me anti-Scottish, but they all look the same to me. I am with Rory McIlroy on this one: links golf is boring.

I realize that golf was invented in Great Britain, but it lives here now and it might be time to take its charity "Major" status away and give it to a more deserving course. Newer courses are prettier to look at and more fun to watch pro golfers play on for a major title. Sometimes it is just time to move on from tradition to what is better. England/Scotland/Ireland, it is time we moved on from you. Bring the fourth major to America, because golf lives here now.

BELL AND ? ...

It was announced recently that David Pollack will be leaving Pollack & Bell, 790 The Zone's afternoon drive show to pursue work at ESPN full-time. This move could be seen coming down the pipe for quite some time, considering last football season, Pollack was barely on the air during his own "Pollack & Bell" show. ESPN seemed to love "Davey" Pollack and to be honest, he was much better on television than he was for three or four hours everyday on the radio. According to the AJC, Pollack will still randomly appear on 790, most likely on Mayhem in the AM to discuss college football as he did last year.

As for Pollack's replacement, no announcement has been made as of Wednesday but it will probably end up being David Archer, who has been filling in for Pollack over the last year. Archer and Mike Bell have a rapport that isn't forced and seem to have clicked from minute one. Bell and Pollack eventually found chemistry, but the "odd couple" relationship always seemed awkward. Archer and Bell really play off one another and Archer can still talk football, just like Pollack. Odds are the two will also be hitting the road too as "Arch" works with the Falcons' radio network along with Wes Durham, which could lead to shenanigans on the road for Mike Bell.

SIDELINE GUY ...

Speaking of the Falcons' Radio network, congrats to John Michaels for snagging the sidelines gig for Falcons broadcasts. Michaels started at 790 doing promotions before even-

tually getting airtime and working his way up to now hosting Football Night In Atlanta.

ALL ABOUT THE DAWGS ...

A few years back Caleb King wore an "Eye Black" that said "I RUN THIS STATE," and after last weekend, truer words were never said. During the interactive chat on GPB's webcast of the Corky Kell Classic, the topic of Georgia's new Nike Pro Combat uniforms came up several times, dominating the discussion for large stretches. Great high school football was being played (which you can watch on-demand at GPB.org/sports) but the talk was all about the University of Georgia uniforms. In a state with three major pro teams, it is wild that uniforms of one of the college football teams would be the talk of the town.

And speaking of GPB.org webcasts, high school football is back on the website starting this Friday as Bob Houghton and Fletcher Proctor return for a full slate of games. You can also catch an additional game on GPB-TV with Gil Tyree and Dave Hunter.

Photo courtesy of Rob Saye. Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

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

"Sometimes I feel like I do this show with two women, not just one"

That was Perry Laurentino on 680 The Fan's The Rude Awakening after Sandra Golden and Christopher Rude were gushing over Kim Kardashian's wedding as well as oohing and ahing over Georgia's new uniforms. Perry, sometimes it feels like I'm listening to two women as well. Can Rude go on vacation more often, leaving Perry to run the SPORTS SHOW?

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MAKING PROGRESS



Falcons blend of talent coming together

By Josh Bagriansky



On Jan. 15, The Atlanta Falcons' promising season came to a screeching halt in an embarrassing 48-21 home defeat to the Green Bay Packers. Seven months later, it's become clear that the Birds have put that loss behind them, and the word out of training camp is that they're ready to take another step forward and become true Super Bowl contenders for the first time under fourth-year head coach Mike Smith.

Coming off a 13-3 season, the Falcons needed some tweaking over the summer, rather than an overhaul. And with the arrival of several promising young rookies, a continually progressing defensive unit could find itself in the top-half of the league this season. Coupled with a potentially dynamic offense, this is clearly a team in the early mix for a spot in Indianapolis at Super Bowl XLVI.

YOUTH IS SERVED ...

Falcons general manager Thomas Dimitroff made perhaps the boldest move of the off-season on draft day, trading a plethora of future picks in order to move into the top ten and draft

former Alabama wideout Julio Jones. These sorts of deals have not exactly been routine under the two-time NFL Executive of the Year, who has typically been conservative when it comes to draft day deals. But the prospect of having a 6-foot-3, 220-pound wideout oozing with talent was simply too much to pass up.

Four months later, all signs point to the Jones move being yet another notch on the belt of Dimitroff, who has nabbed an array of young talent for the team during his time, building an impressive young core on both sides of the football. The rookie was present for all of the optional practices over the summer, working with the likes of Matt Ryan, Roddy White and Tony Gonzalez, despite the impending lockout looming over their heads.

And when it came time for Jones to hit the field, he hit the ground running. The rookie showed off some speed that Falcons fans haven't seen on the outside for some time with his two catches that went for 43 yards, and a 12-yard run off a reverse that went for a first down.

Obviously it's early, but the idea of the big and fast Jones lining up across from one

of the league's elite wideouts in White has to have the Falcons licking their chops, and opposing defenses shaking in their boots.

Although Jones may be the prize of the bunch, he isn't the only youngster making noise in camp. Sean Weatherspoon showed signs of promise at outside linebacker and just needs to stay healthy this time around. Everyone at camp is also raving about the up-and-coming safety tandem of William Moore and Thomas DeCoud.

NOT A "WEAKNESS" ANYMORE ...

While the addition of Jones to an already strong offense is sure to excite, the progress on the defensive side should have fans just as giddy. Once seen as Atlanta's Achilles' heel, Brian Van Gorder's bunch has made steady progress over the past few seasons and is looking to make the jump and become a truly reliable unit this season. The acquisition of defensive end Ray Edwards (16.5 sacks over the last two seasons) speaks volumes about their expectations for this year, as he could be the final piece required in turning the defense into one of the league's better units.

Just look at how the first-team defense performed in their first two preseason matchups. It didn't take long for the birds to impress in their first matchup of the preseason against the Miami Dolphins. The "D" forced Chad Henne into two interceptions (courtesy of John Abraham and Brent Grimes) and a three-and-out during their time on the field. Their play helped the first team to an impressive 17-0 lead after one before Smith brought in the second-teamers.

Game 2 against Jacksonville brought similar results, as the defense played most of the first half and held the Jags to just three points. The Falcons forced turnovers on two of the Jags' first three possessions, getting an interception from Brent Grimes and a fumble recovery from Weatherspoon, and then forced the home team into four consecutive punts by halftime.

AS FOR THE OFFENSE ...

The emergence of a multitude of young

stars and the continued improvement of the defense are certainly reasons for optimism. But if all goes to plan, it's the offense that should be the teams' strength this season.

Michael Turner, Roddy White and Tony Gonzalez are all back while franchise QB Matt Ryan has another year of experience under his belt (with postseason experience included). Ryan is looking to make the leap into that elite group of quarterbacks. All four of those players should contend for a Pro Bowl spot this season.

Much like the defense, the first-team offense has impressed thus far. They looked dominant against Miami, getting the aforementioned fine performance from Jones, while Ryan looked accurate and poised, and Turner was strong with a touchdown run and 21 yards on four carries.

Meanwhile, Harry Douglas seems to have returned to his form of his rookie season, as the speedy slot receiver caught touchdowns of 20 and 76 yards in the first two preseason victories. Douglas adds yet another weapon to an offense that looks next to impossible to stop thanks to a versatile collection of weapons all over the field.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? ...

Sure, it's just preseason. And yes, we've seen similarly fine performances in training camp mean absolutely nothing once the season starts. But this Falcons team was a good one last year despite the playoff blowout, and they've only added quality pieces such as Jones and Edwards. Veterans Ryan, Grimes, Weatherspoon, Douglas and other key pieces all look to be heading into the best football of their careers.

Couple that season emerging youth with the calming veteran hands of perhaps the top tight end of all time in Gonzalez, a perennial Pro Bowler in White and the return of the likes of Curtis Lofton, Abraham and more on the defensive side, and this is clearly a team to be reckoned with this fall.

Photo of Julie Jones and Roddy White courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons. Bagriansky can be reached at jbagriansky@scoreatl.com.

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WHOS HOT

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FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS**



High School Football

This is the first “full” weekend of high school football this fall. Fans all over the state are pumped with good reason. While the states of Florida, Texas and California produce excellent college prospects, Georgia is produces the most players per capita. In Georgia, you don’t have to wait for Saturday to see some great football.

Julio Jones

Julio has a great year, and we’re still in the preseason. First, he had an amazing combine in the spring and was drafted by the Falcons. Now, he’s earned praise from coach Mike Smith and giving fans more than you’d expect from a rookie. We knew he was fast, but the blocking and yards after the catch are great add-ons.

The Braves

These guys just keep winning. Last week, they ran roughshod over NL West leaders San Francisco and Arizona. This week they’re pummeling Chicago. The Braves have now won 15 of the last their last 19. With O’Flaherty, Venters and Kimbrel in the bullpen, it’s like the team three has extra innings to hit in every close game.

Wild card/ Pennant races

The Braves have all but locked up the National League wild card, and whoever doesn’t win the AL East (Boston or New York) will cruise to the league’s bonus spot. Aside from the AL East race, there are really no pennant races worth watching as it stands right now. But as we have seen in the past, that can change very quickly.

Roster Cuts

The downside of camp ending is the inevitable downsizing of personnel on a football team. Some guys get cut and are quickly picked up by another team. Other guys will catch on as a practice squad player. Others will get the hint and retire. But for some, it’s the end of a dream. And that just flat out stinks.

Georgia’s new uniforms

Nike unveiled Georgia’s Pro Combat uniforms that they will wear against Boise St. and the reaction was one of dismay and anger from many Bulldog fans. While the players like their new digs, the Bulldog Nation mostly disagrees. And we have to ask – why would Nike want to change one of college football’s best uniforms to something that looks like a Power Ranger?



WHOS NOT

**THUMBS DOWN TO
NIKE PRO COMBAT**

SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 STEEL TOWN: The Falcons will travel to Pittsburgh on Saturday to face the Steelers in their third preseason game. This is the game where the starters will play into the second half so fans will see a deeper look at the newer acquisitions such as Julio Jones and possibly Ray Edwards. The Falcons want to play better than their showing against Jacksonville, but please, get out of Pittsburgh healthy!!

2 A CLASSIC SATURDAY: The Kell Classic took place this past Saturday and it was a day that will go down in the record books. McEachern, Lassiter and Walton won their games which led to Cobb County winning the classic with a 3-1 record. As for the first game, Grayson and Kell, the Rams were able to get a late touchdown to win the game 7-0. I’m so looking forward to the rest of the high school football season.

3 CALEB VIKING: Caleb King’s UGA career is over, but his NFL career is just beginning. King signed a deal to play for the Minnesota Vikings after not being taken in the Supplemental Draft. During his career, King rushed for over 1,200 yards and scored 11 touchdowns while splitting time with Washaun Ealey. It’s going to be a long road for King, but we do wish him the best.

4 AUGUST DREAMING: The Dream has played outstanding basketball in the month of August. They have compiled a 6-3 record and they are now in fourth place in the Eastern Conference. The Dream has two big games against the Indiana Fever coming up, and if they are able to win those two games, they will be a dangerous team come playoff time. It should be a fun two weeks.

5 IT’S SHOWTIME: After a successful Kell Classic, the high school football seasons will really get going this Friday the first week of a full schedule of games kicks off. Be sure to check out GPB.org/sports to watch St. Pius take on Westminster. And, for the first time in GPB history, a Friday night game will be on TV as Collins Hill travels to Roswell. Oh man I can’t wait!

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY SCOTT ST. LIFER

30 Consecutive scoreless innings by the Braves, the longest franchise streak since 1992

40 Saves for Craig Kimbrel, matching Neftali Feliz’s rookie record set in 2010

\$8MIL Total purse for winning the 2011 TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola

28 Doubles by rookie Freddie Freeman, leading all rookies in the category

5 Amount of 30 or more home run seasons by Dan Uggla, most by a second baseman in MLB history

11 Successive TOUR Championships at East Lake Golf Course

1 Career grand slams for Jason Heyward, hit on Tuesday against the Chicago Cubs

9.5 Braves lead in the wild card standings through Tuesday

6.5 Phillies lead over the Braves in the NL East as of Tuesday

.698 Braves winning percentage against the Cubs since 2001, the best of any NL team

TRIVIA QUESTION

Georgia’s first two 2011 opponents are ranked in the top 12 (Boise St. No. 5, South Carolina No. 12). When was the last time the Bulldogs opened with two teams ranked as highly?

Answer on Page 19

SANITY AT LAST

“I haven’t ever not started.”

- Georgia freshman tailback Isaiah Crowell about being the starter in his first college game

MY TWO CENTS

The Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic was, for the 20th straight year, a roaring success. Thousands of fans attended the four games between eight of the top local high school football programs and were treated to some exciting football. But this year’s Classic was different as, for the first time ever, the games were televised.

Georgia Public Broadcasting and Score Atlanta did a wonderful service to football fans from across the state and the world by putting the event on not only statewide TV, but also a webcast that was viewed not only throughout the U.S. but also in countries like China, Australia and the Philippines.



I personally helped moderate the chat room

on the webcast and talked football with fans from all walks of life. Relatives of players showed their gratitude to GPB for airing the games and several Arkansas Razorback fans were online to watch the announcement of Peachtree Ridge DB Ray Buchanan Jr. who committed to the Hogs at halftime of the McEachern-North Gwinnett game.

Buchanan’s on-air commitment is something the Kell Classic expects to happen much more frequently in future games. The goal is to try to be a destination for players to the college of their choice as they do at the U.S. Army All-America game.

Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.

SAINT SPORTS



Weekend full of exciting sports action

By Scott St. Lifer



"Despite the loss in a preseason matchup, the first-team defense continued to impress. They recorded two turnovers in the first quarter, a Brent Grimes 62-yard interception and a Sean Weatherspoon fumble recovery, to generate five turnovers in as many quarters of play in the preseason."

This past week included a jam-packed schedule for the city of Atlanta and the sports teams it yields. Events held in this great city this week ranged from the Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic to the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola press conference. Let's not forget that the Falcons played a preseason matchup in Jacksonville.

CAUSING TURNOVERS ...

On Friday night, the Falcons faced off against the Jacksonville Jaguars in a 15-13 defeat. Despite the loss in a preseason matchup, the first-team defense continued to impress. They recorded two turnovers in the first quarter, a Brent Grimes 62-yard interception and a Sean Weatherspoon fumble recovery, to generate five turnovers in as many quarters of play in the preseason. The offense also performed well as Matt Ryan completed 7-for-15 for 116 yards and a touchdown; the lone

touchdown was a 76-yard touchdown reception by Harry Douglas.

REVENGE OF COBB ...

Continuing on the gridiron, the Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic took place at the Georgia Dome on Saturday with four separate games. The opening game slated a rematch from last year's event between No. 4 Grayson and No. 6 Kell. The Rams avenged last season's 13-10 loss to the Longhorns in this year's grudge match. Grayson's only scoring drive occurred after they recovered a muffed punt on the Kell five. It was a one play run by Robert Nkemdiche. This week Kell has a bye while the Rams play Edgewater (Fla.) in the Progressive Football Challenge hosted by North Gwinnett.

The second game of the Kell Classic featured Lassiter and the defending state champions, Brookwood. The Trojans upset the

Broncos 14-6 despite trailing 6-0 at the half. Lassiter, however, did not gain the lead until a 43-yard touchdown reception by WR Juwan Dickey and extra point by Alex Hanks in the fourth quarter. Brookwood then moved into Lassiter territory, but was soon stifled when Lassiter's Ryan Gildea forced a fumble that was recovered by teammate Zach Word. This ended up turning into the final blow for the Broncos as Lassiter would end up scoring another touchdown and forcing a turnover on downs to end the game. Brookwood and Lassiter do not play again until Sept. 2 when they face Collins Hill and Sprayberry respectively.

Game 3 on Saturday pitted a matchup of McEachern versus North Gwinnett. The Indians came up on top in a 26-17 victory in which they scored their last two touchdowns in the game's final 10 seconds. The first touchdown gave McEachern a 20-17 lead when Chris Nwagbara scored a 4-yard touchdown run to cap off a 75-yard drive. In order to come back with limited time at hand, North Gwinnett's Scott Hosch made a pass down field but was picked off by C.J. Cody for six. This marks only the second victory in the last six Kell Classics for the Indians. The Bulldogs face off against East St. Louis (Ill.) this week in the Progressive Football Challenge while McEachern plays at Lowndes on Sept. 2.

To wrap up the Kell Classic, Walton defeated Peachtree Ridge 26-14. The Raider victory came with the emergence of junior running back Tyren Jones. The Lassiter rushed for 213 yards and two touchdowns. However, he truly turned up the heat in the second half when he compiled 175 yards of his total. The play of the day for Jones occurred on an 80-yard touchdown run to untie the game at 20-14 in third quarter. Both teams next play on Sept. 2 with Walton facing off at Milton and Peachtree Ridge at Roswell.

TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP ...

After the busy weekend at the Dome, the attention shifted to East Lake Golf Course in the eastern part of the city where the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola held its annual press conference. Sept. 22-

25 marks the 11th consecutive Tour Championship held at East Lake and the fifth final to the PGA TOUR Playoffs for the FedEx Cup. Since it is the final event of the playoffs, 30 players partake in the event thus there is no cut and FedEx Cup points are reset to give all players a mathematical chance of winning the Cup.

This year, the tournament unveiled a new name and logo. Now called the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola, the tournament explained their renewed partnership with Coca-Cola and Southern Company through 2016. Coca-Cola resembles the presenting sponsor while Southern Company is proud supporter of the event. The logo features Coca-Cola's classic bottle and a golf ball juxtaposing each other.

"The Coca-Cola Company's strong leadership in the Atlanta community continues to help grow the tournament which ultimately increases our ability to raise more money for charity," exclaimed Todd Rhinehart, executive director of the TOUR Championship by Coca-Cola. "As we prepare to host the tournament at East Lake Golf Club for the 11th time, we believe this new logo symbolizes The Coca-Cola Company's commitment to increasing the reach and impact of the culmination of the FedExCup, which will allow us to create a new on-site experience for our fans this September at East Lake."

Also new this year is active, retired and Reserve military members and their families receive free admission to the event all weekend with a valid military ID. Thursday, Sept. 22, will be known as Military Appreciation Day when a military appreciation ceremony will take place on the first tee an hour prior to the first tee time.

"We are happy to support our nation's men and women in uniform and their families," said Rhinehart. "The tournament, the PGA TOUR and our players value the sacrifice that the men and women in uniform and their families make for our country."

St. Lifer can be reached at sslifer@scoreatl.com.



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GAINING EXPOSURE



ASA helps grads earn scholarships

By Lakisha Brooks

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 students 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."

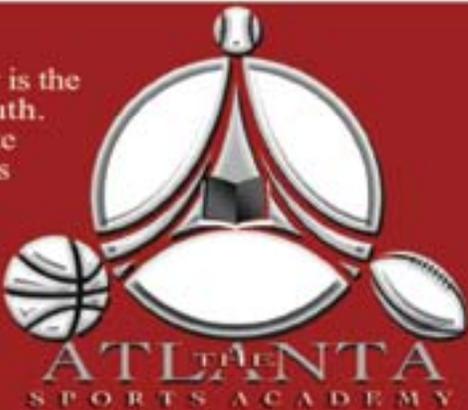
Brooks can be reached at lbrooks@atlantasportsacademy.org.

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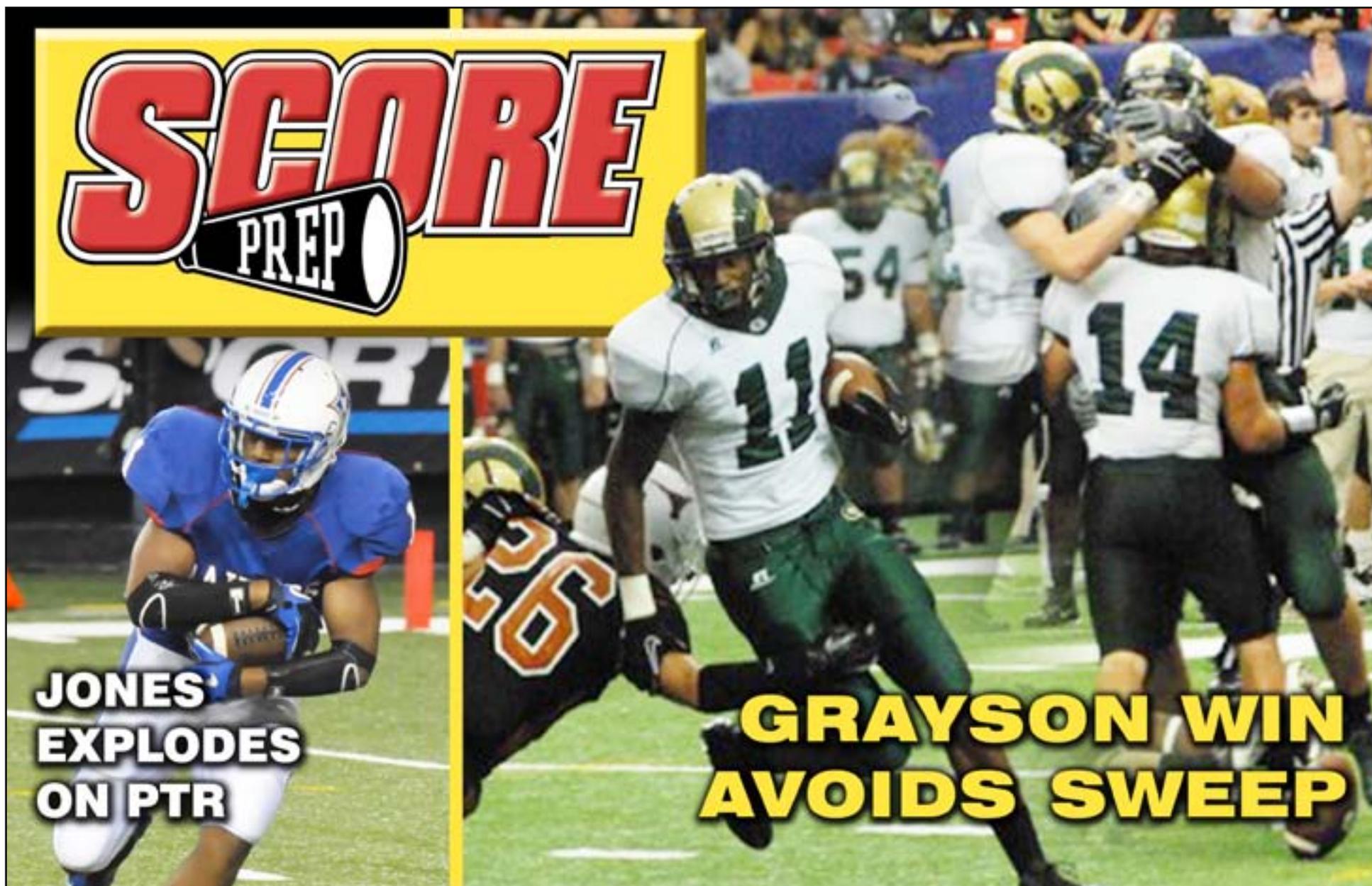




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**JONES
EXPLODES
ON PTR**

**GRAYSON WIN
AVOIDS SWEEP**

Kell Classic showcases local talent

By Fletcher Proctor

The 20th Annual Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic was quite the showcase for some of the under-the-radar players coming into the 2011 season. While everyone was talking about Lassiter wide receiver Charlie Hegedus coming into the game, it was a nice catch in traffic, swipe move and 43-yard dash to the end zone by junior Juwan Dickey that had Trojan Nation as well as the pressbox buzzing. If Dickey can emerge opposite Hegedus (and the Lassiter defense continues to play as well as it did in the second half), Eddie Printz and the Trojans will be hard to beat come playoff time. Lassiter defeated defending state champion Brookwood 14-6.

FLASHING GAME ...

DiAndre Atwater was certainly a player

to watch one year ago. However, he was also splitting time in the backfield with up to three other backs in former coach Bill Ballard's offense. In Mark Fleetwood's offense, it appears that Atwater will get a majority of the touches and he showed that he can delight with the ball in his hand. Lions teammate Ray Buchanan Jr. committed to Arkansas on Saturday before the game; perhaps head Hog Bobby Petrino should think about a package deal.

Walton running back Tyren Jones led his team past Peachtree Ridge 26-14 in the nightcap on Saturday. Jones rushed for 213 yards on 20 carries including an 80-yard touchdown jaunt that gave the Raiders a 20-14 lead. Then, another Raider who created quite a buzz, Dakota Richardson, returned a Lions punt 90 yards to close the scoring.

QB CRUNCH ...

Quarterbacks across the state of Georgia are taking quite a beating lately as several high-profile signal-callers are feared lost for the season with a full weekend of games having not even taken place. South Gwinnett needed to replace two-sport star Kent Rollins and thought they had the next big thing at quarterback in 6-foot-4 junior Jordan Ramey. Comets head coach John Small told various media outlets that he thought Ramey could be a big-time recruit in the 2013 class, but Ramey was potentially lost for the season after breaking an arm in a scrimmage against Mill Creek. Small went with 5-foot-10 junior Mason Hart, a projected safety, under center against Lowndes in a 45-13 loss. He completed 17 of 25 passes for 108 yards, one score and two interceptions.

Will Gardner, who has pledged to the Louisville Cardinals, was probably lost for the season in Coffee's win over Brunswick. Gardner left near halftime with a ruptured ACL and

could be at the end of his high school career. Santory Long filled in, passing for a score and running for another in the victory.

The Fitzgerald/Tift County football game featured a moment of silence and a prayer to honor the memory of Fitzgerald player D.J. Searcy, who recently passed away at a football camp. Tift County came away with the 29-22 win, but the Blue Devils needed a strong effort from backup quarterback Kris Miller after Tadic Jackson left with a minor ankle injury, according to the Valdosta Daily Times.

Lastly, Kayla Floor is at it again for Collins Hill. Monday, Floor struck out five batters and gave up just one unearned run in the Lady Eagles' 9-1 softball win over Peachtree Ridge. Floor is 4-1 on the year after winning 20 games one year ago and being named Class 5A pitcher of the year.

Photos courtesy of Walter Pinion and Jon Barash. Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.



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PREP SOFTBALL



Broncos take over top spot in second poll

By Scott St. Lifer

With one week down, high school softball is back for another full-fledged season of action. On Tuesday, PrepCountry.com/GACA released the week two Coaches Softball Poll with Brookwood swapping with Collins Hill at the top after the Broncos defeated the Eagles 2-1 on Aug. 17. Archer moved up two slots to No. 3, while Mill Creek climbed to No. 5 and North Gwinnett to No. 7. The Warriors of North Cobb debuted at No. 6 while West Forsyth entered at No. 10.

HAWK-BULLDOG ...

The weekend of Aug. 19 included many important tournaments. The Hawk-Bulldog Tournament was hosted by Mill Creek and North Gwinnett. The tournament began Aug. 17 with pool play of six different pools at Mill Creek, North Gwinnett and West Jackson Park. Pool play continued until the weekend where the teams were divided into six brackets based on their record in pool play. The brackets included a diamond, platinum, gold, silver, bronze and black divisions.

One of the hosts, Mill Creek, won the silver division. They beat Apalachee, Jefferson and No.

3 Archer to clinch it. "[Our MVP for the weekend] would probably be Nikki Sagermann," said Mill Creek head coach Roger Parham. "She hit over .600 for the weekend, she hit for the cycle one game, had a homer, led the team in RBIs and slugging percentage for the weekend." The senior slugger plays third base for the Hawks.

BRONCO BLAST ...

Brookwood also took part in the Hawk-Bulldog tourney. The Broncos went 5-1 in the tournament and 3-0 over the weekend to win their bracket. The lone loss was to No. 10 West Laurens (AAA) in a 3-1 affair. Brandi Jones ended up going 2-1 in the tournament while her partner in crime, Rachel Hill, went 3-0. Jones is now 5-1 with a 0.85 ERA on the year, while Hill is 5-0 with a 1.66 ERA and a save through Sunday. Megan Litumbe went 4-for-4 to help lead the Broncos to a 9-2 victory against Houston County. Litumbe is currently hitting .370 with seven RBIs through Sunday. Brookwood began region play on Tuesday at Dacula with a 5-0 victory.

St. Lifer can be reached at 404-256-1572.

PREP CROSS COUNTRY



Season begins with Kosh Classic thriller

By Ricky Dimon

The 2011 high school cross country season began in earnest last Saturday, and perhaps no meet was more exciting than the varsity girls' competition at Westminster's annual Kosh Classic.

First through third were separated by a mere three points, with Alexander (42) edging Wesleyan (44) by two points followed by Lovett (45) just one point out of second. Brittany Truitt led Alexander's effort by finishing second overall, while teammates Chloe Camp and Amber Jent came in fourth and fifth, respectively. Wesleyan's Caroline Reed won individual honors in a time of 22:17.

Lovett was led by Emmala Moffett, who recorded a time of 22:45 and finished only three seconds out of second place overall. Next in for the Lions were Caroline Butler (seventh place), Margaret Flock (eighth), Clara Easterlin (13th) and Tessa Allen (14th).

Westminster's girls may not have participated, but the boys took care of business on their home turf and hammered the rest of the competition. The Wildcats compiled a dominant score of 32 points to second-place Alexander's 74. The hosts put five runners in the Top 10 overall, led by Jake Candler's third-place run in 18:10. Westminster again thrived on its grouping, with its top eight runners crossing the line in a span of 44 seconds.

Sean Smith, Jordan Flowers, Kyle Dhillon and Adam Willis all finished in the Top 10 individually.

Lovett placed fourth in the team competition, not far behind Alexander and Wesleyan. The Lions got a second-place overall performance from Hugh van Heesewijk. Blessed Trinity, in fifth just six points behind Lovett, was led by Will Murray's fourth-place showing.

MARIST READY TO RACE ...

Marist will begin its 2011 campaign at the Mercy Invitational at Our Lady of Mercy on Saturday. The War Eagles are three-time defending Class 4A state champions in both boys and girls cross country. Blessed Trinity and the Atlanta International School are also part of the Mercy field.

This weekend's biggest race for metro Atlanta schools is the Bob Blastow. Early Bird at Alexander. Among the participating schools are Chamblee, Chattahoochee, Lakeside-DeKalb, Lovett, Riverwood, St. Pius X and Woodward. Lakeside finished second in both the boys and girls competitions last year. The Viking boys came up just short against Eagle's Landing by the narrowest of margins, 147 points to 148.

Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.

PREP FOOTBALL



Wolves loaded for another state title run

By Fletcher Proctor

The Buford Wolves have won four straight Class 2A state titles but the 2011 edition may just be head coach Jess Simpson's most talented team yet. In addition to three members of the Score 44 in Vadal Alexander, Dillon Lee and Kurt Freitag, the Wolves also boast two other players with BCS connections. Cornerback CJ Moore is headed to Virginia and offensive lineman Reid Ferguson will head to LSU to be the team's next long snapper. The team looks poised to bring home yet another title.

TRIAL BY FIRE ...

Sometimes quarterbacks need a big break in order to get playing time. Unfortunately, that is exactly what happened at South Gwinnett for Mason Hart. After Kent Rollins graduated and headed west, 6-foot-4 junior Jordan Ramey was expected to be the starter in John Small's offense. However, a broken arm for Ramey in the team's scrimmage against Mill Creek thrust Hart, a 5-foot-10 safety under center. Hart threw an early touchdown but finished 17-for-25 for 108 yards with the one score and two interceptions in his team's 45-13 loss to Lowndes.

COBB REIGN ...

The rankings were shaken up after the first weekend of play as upsets reigned down

at the Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic. Grayson scratched and clawed for a 7-0 win over Kell, a team that lost Georgia 2010 Gatorade Player of the year Brian Randolph. The Rams picked up the game's only score after the Longhorns muffed a punt deep in its own territory. Junior standout Robert Nkemdiche bulldozed him way into the end zone for the score. Devin Gillespie led the Grayson rushing attack with 59 yards.

Grayson's region rival Brookwood came into the classic the defending Class 5A champion and winners of two straight on the Georgia Dome carpet and 12 straight dating back to last season. In one poll, the Broncos were No. 1 despite the loss of 12 starters from one year ago. Lassiter quickly dropped Brookwood from the polls by delivering a 14-6 knockout blow, scoring both touchdowns in the second half to rally from down 6-0. Eddie Printz hit Juwan Dickey for a 42-yard score and later Isaiah Willis found the end zone for the final margin.

Cobb County would claim three of the four Corky Kell match-ups as Walton and McEachern also claimed victories over Peachtree Ridge and North Gwinnett, respectively. Walton was sparked by Lassiter-transfer Tyren Jones' 213 yards and two touchdowns.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

PREP VOLLEYBALL



Pope loaded for bear once again

By Joe Deighton

Pope vying for a third straight Class 3A state title this season despite losing three top players from last year. Senior outside hitter Mary Hannah Arrington had 452 kills, 275 digs and 92 aces a season ago and is the leader of the squad. However, the most valuable player might be 6-foot-4 senior right hitter Katie Barge. At the libero position is Georgia Tech commit Wimberly Wilson. The Lady Greyhounds have started off typically with a 9-1 overall record but lost their first match of the game Tuesday night to McIntosh.

HORNETS STREAKING ...

Roswell started the season 0-2 after losing their first two matches against Whitewater and Milton. They have since rattled off six straight victories. The winning streak is due in large part to their senior outside hitter Jennifer Shults. She leads the team with 110 kills and an average of 5.5 kills per game. The 5-foot-11 Shults also serves as a defensive specialist, owning 75 digs and averaging 8.5 blocks per game, good enough for second on the team in both categories. Shults is also a fantastic student and is committed to play volleyball for Harvard University in the fall of 2012.

OPENING EYES ...

Junior setter Mary Katherine Schmitz of Our Lady of Mercy might be one of the best players in the state. She already holds five school records and those were set in her freshman year. In leading the Bobcats to eight wins in 10 matches so far this season, Schmitz has put her teammates in a great position to succeed by providing 171 assists. On the receiving end of those assists has been senior outside hitter Olivia Schmitz, who has 149 kills this year. Mary Katherine has also done some solo work by notching 25 aces. Junior defensive specialist Jenny Bui is right behind Schmitz with 24 aces so far. These two juniors should be highly sought after by colleges in the near future.

THE HOOCH ...

Chattahoochee has also started fast with an early 9-2 mark. The 'Hooch passed an early test by sweeping through the Sequoyah Tournament and defeating Sandy Creek to take the tournament title. Senior outside hitter Emily Corrigan has been outstanding so far, leading the team with 102 kills. Corrigan was unable to lead Chattahoochee to a win in its last match against Pope.

Deighton can be reached at jdeighton@scoreatl.com.



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Because a child's brain is still developing, any head injury could be serious. If your child shows signs of a concussion, like dizziness, nausea, blurred vision or headaches, play it safe and bring him to Children's.* Our specialists are trained to make the right diagnosis and put your child on the path to recovery. To learn more about concussion symptoms and treatment, visit choa.org/concussion

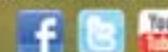
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CONCUSSIONS & HEAD INJURIES



CHOA helps children with concussions

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta has developed a comprehensive Concussion Program to provide care for mild concussions and traumatic brain injuries in children and teenagers. This new program features a dedicated nurse coordinator to help organize—and communicate—each child's care across the system.

Concussions and head injuries should be taken seriously, and treated by a team of professionals trained in the management of concussions. Children's pediatric-trained team is experienced in treating children and teenagers with mild to severe head injuries.

Your child does not have to lose consciousness, or pass out, to have a concussion. There are many signs associated with a concussion and your child may not show any symptoms until a few days after the injury.

Symptoms may include:

- Confusion
- Clumsy movement or dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Memory loss
- Tiredness
- Upset stomach
- Vision problems
- Sensitivity to noise and light
- Numbness or tingling anywhere on the body

- Loss of balance or trouble walking
- Feel mentally foggy, cannot think clearly or remember things
- Slurred speech or other changes in speech
- Be irritable or more fussy than usual
- Acts differently than normal (does not play, acts fussy, or seems confused)
- Feel more emotional, like very sad or nervous
- Change in sleeping patterns

Your child should stop all physical activities until his doctor says it is OK. Your child's doctor may keep him from sports, school or other activities. This may last for days, weeks or months and depends on how severe the concussion is.

Your child should not return to competitive sports or recreational activities in the

same day or while experiencing any lingering or persisting symptoms. He should be completely symptom-free at rest and with physical exertion before returning to sports or recreational activities.

Cognitive testing is available to help assess a patient's baseline. Children's uses Immediate Postconcussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT™), a computer-based evaluation for sports concussion. ImPACT testing is recommended for athletes participating in contact sports such as football, lacrosse, soccer, basketball, cheerleading and gymnastics.

Normal activities like watching television, texting, playing video games and using a computer may worsen concussion symptoms. Reading and studying can be equally as stressful to the brain; therefore, school schedules may need to be modified. This limiting of activities is known as cognitive rest.

Visit www.choa.org/concussion or call 404-785-1111 to learn more about the Children's Concussion Program.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

“Normal activities like watching television, texting, playing video games and using a computer may worsen concussion symptoms. Reading and studying can be equally as stressful to the brain; therefore, school schedules may need to be modified. This limiting of activities is known as cognitive rest.”

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CORKY KELL PHOTOS

Courtesy of Walter Pinion and Jon Barash



PICKING WINNERS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL EDITION



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Collins Hill

St. Pius X @ Westminster
St. Pius X

Whitewater @ Sandy Creek
Sandy Creek

Parkview @ Stephenson
Parkview

Brunswick @ Statesboro
Statesboro

Westlake @ Washington
Westlake

Alpharetta @ North Cobb
Alpharetta



Bob Houghton
General Manager

Collins Hill @ Roswell
Collins Hill

St. Pius X @ Westminster
St. Pius X

Whitewater @ Sandy Creek
Sandy Creek

Parkview @ Stephenson
Stephenson

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Westlake

Alpharetta @ North Cobb
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Stephen Black
Managing Editor

Collins Hill @ Roswell
Collins Hill

St. Pius X @ Westminster
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Whitewater @ Sandy Creek
Sandy Creek

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Alpharetta @ North Cobb
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Brian Jones
"Big B"

Collins Hill @ Roswell
Roswell

St. Pius X @ Westminster
St. Pius X

Whitewater @ Sandy Creek
Sandy Creek

Parkview @ Stephenson
Stephenson

Brunswick @ Statesboro
Statesboro

Westlake @ Washington
Washington

Alpharetta @ North Cobb
Alpharetta



Fletcher Proctor
"The Fletch"

Collins Hill @ Roswell
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St. Pius X @ Westminster
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Westlake

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Alpharetta

HAWKS HAVEN



Meruelo the marketer; Benson overseas

By Josh Bagriansky

The topsy-turvy era of the Atlanta Spirit Group heading up the Atlanta Hawks has now come to an end. And for what it's worth, fans can take solace in the fact that it will be one man alone leading the way, after Los Angeles based businessman Alex Meruelo bought the team from the previous group (who were well known for often disagreeing with each other and making little progress as a result). Enter, Meruelo, the owner of a well-known pizza chain on the West Coast that sparked a plethora of other successful business ventures ranging from real estate to casinos.

The decision to buy for Meruelo couldn't have been an easy one. The Hawks have steadily lost money every season since ASG purchased them in 2004, including a \$7.3 million loss in 2009-10 according to Forbes Magazine.

Due to the lockout, Meruelo has been unable to comment extensively on his plans to improve revenue. But Marc Ganis, president of the sports business consulting firm SportsCorps, sees reasons for optimism surrounding Meruelo's purchase.

"The Hawks have been one of the lesser teams in NBA over a long period of time in terms of attendance and consistent fan support," Ganis told the AJC. "That offers upside to someone who believes he has the business

acumen and marketing ability to turn them around and make them more of a consistent winner and a consistent draw."

Meruelo's plans to expand the fan base are largely based on simply winning games, but he also told the press that he hopes to inspire more interest by earning the "respect and loyalty" of the fans.

Meanwhile, Ganis says he just might be the right man for the job.

"He's not a neophyte," Ganis said. "He's done a lot of homework, more than a lot of owners who get into this."

BENSON TO ITALY ...

Hopefully, Hawks fans will get their first look at second-round pick Keith Benson on an NBA Court. But Benson made sure he will be playing basketball this fall no matter what the state of the NBA Collective Bargaining Agreement might be. He signed a deal to play for Sassari in the top Italian League this season, should the current lockout carry into the season.

Like most NBA players who have signed deals overseas, Benson's agreement includes an opt-out clause should the NBA return to action.

Bagriansky can be reached at jbagriansky@scoreatl.com.

FALCONS FLIGHT



Falcons leadership shines like team's record

By Sean Conway

Even with two losses to begin the preseason, the Falcons are in prime position to build upon last season's successful 13-3 campaign. Traditionally, Atlanta sports fans have been trained to set the cruise control of their expectations at exactly "cautiously optimistic." Fans of the Atlanta teams have repeatedly said or heard phrases like, "If Josh Smith can learn to ... then we'll be more than a second round team" or "With a little more timely hitting" (Hopefully, those sentiments may be changing with the Hawks new ownership and the Braves configuration of strong pitching, added speed and a fantastic pipeline from the minors), but the were the first pro team Falcons to eliminate the pessimistic mindset. With pre-season wrapping up, Falcon fans should be most thankful for the team's core leaders heading into 2011.

First, fans should be thankful for owner Arthur Blank's perseverance. Blank didn't stumble upon success at Home Depot or with the Falcons. It's funny to think that Bobby Petrino was the head coach not too long ago. Now, management is firmly entrenched in all the proper slots. Rich McKay transitioned from general manager to president. NFL commissioner Roger Godell bent over backwards to pat the trained lawyer, McKay for his role

in the collective bargaining agreement.

If Arthur Blank is a master of perseverance, general manager Thomas Dimitroff is a master planner. Most speculators believed the NFL owners and the union would make a deal before the season, but know one knew exactly how and when. Dimitroff's first brilliant move was drafting wide receiver Julio Jones. Most of us (your author included) thought the price was too high for an expensive draft pick in the early first round. Sure, the Falcons gave up some picks in next year's draft, but with the new rookie salary system in place as a result of the new labor agreement, Atlanta freed up cash for more free agents. Dimitroff then acquired the Viking's defensive end Ray Edwards, in the truncated free agent grab. He also kept the offensive line in tact (mostly) and convinced omni-back Jason Snelling and cornerback Brent Grimes to re-sign. Be thankful.

If Dimitroff is the master planner, then head coach Mike Smith may prove to be, quite frankly, the master chef. Smith has proven an uncanny ability to survey the ingredients of his team, mix them together and prepare the best possible product.

Conway can be reached at sconway@scoreatl.com.

CHOP SHOP



Braves take control of wild card race

By Fletcher Proctor

The Atlanta Braves earned a little breathing room in the chase for the wild card after taking apart the NL West in a recent seven-game stretch. After welcoming in the San Francisco Giants only to send them home losers of three of four, the Braves were rude hosts to the Arizona Diamondbacks, sweeping the Snakes out of Turner Field, including a 1-0 decision in last Sunday's finale.

The Braves received seven scoreless innings of three-hit ball from Tim Hudson before the bullpen slammed the door on the Diamondbacks. Craig Kimbrel picked up his 39th save of the year, moving just one away from the all-time rookie save record set last year by former Braves farmhand Neftali Feliz. Alex Gonzalez provided the Braves lone run on a solo home run in the third inning, his 11th home run of the year.

Dan Uggla provided his 30th home run in the series-opener against Chicago in the Braves 3-0 win. Jonny Venters saved Jair Jurrjens starting effort as Atlanta extended its scoreless streak to 26 straight innings, dating back to the Diamondbacks series. Jurrjens earned his 13th win of the year and Venters collected his fifth save of the year as Kim-

brel was given the day off. Uggla's homer gave him 30 for the fifth straight year. No other second baseman in MLB history has had more than three straight years of 30 taters. The scoreless streak, after extending to 30 innings, would end in the Braves 5-4 win Wednesday. Kimbrel tied Feliz with his 40th save. Jason Heyward hit a grand slam in the win.

Meanwhile, the Braves rotation seems to be getting younger and younger. Mike Minor has stayed with the club now that Tommy Hanson has had to miss a few stats with tendonitis in his throwing shoulder. Minor originally drove south from Gwinnett to fill in for Jair Jurrjens but he has stuck around due to several strong starts and has manager Fredi Gonzalez toying with the idea of a six-man rotation down the stretch. Randall Delgado also threw six innings of no-hit baseball against the San Francisco Giants before receiving a no-decision in a Braves victory. Finally, Peter Moylan threw a scoreless inning in a rehab assignment in Class AAA-Gwinnett as he tries to come-back from back surgery.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

ON THE DREAM BEAT



Dream rolling; playoff berth seems certain

By Brian Jones

With two weeks remaining in the regular season, the Dream are looking stronger each time they step on the court. The month of August has treated the Dream well, losing only three of the nine games they played, including a huge win against the No. 2 team in the Eastern Conference, the Connecticut Sun. Last Sunday, the Sun and the Dream met again, and this time, the Dream was on the losing end as Connecticut was able to come away with a 96-87 win.

The Dream jumped to a 26-16 first quarter lead, but Connecticut went on a 14-0 run early in the second quarter and never looked back. Renee Montgomery led the Sun with 21 points and seven assists. Asjha Jones and Tina Charles each added 18 points and nine rebounds in the game for Connecticut.

For the Dream, Angel McCoughtry scored 22 points while Erika de Souza added 17 points and 10 rebounds.

The Dream looked to bounce back against the Chicago Sky a couple days later, and it was a game that was decided in the final seconds. McCoughtry nailed two free-throws with 2.5 seconds left in the game to

give the Dream the 83-80 win. McCoughtry ended her day with 22 points, while Lindsey Harding added 15. It was a much needed win for the Dream because it gives them more separation between them and the Sky for the final playoff spot. The Dream now have a two game lead over Chicago for the No. 4 seed.

PLAYOFF PICTURE ...

So here's how the playoff picture would look if it started today. The Dream would be in as a No. 4 seed. However, with two weeks left in the regular season, they could gain some ground and clinch a No. 3 seed which is held by the New York Liberty. The Dream does not play New York anymore this year, but they are only a game and a half behind the Liberty for the No. 3 seed in the Eastern Conference.

There's also an outside chance the Dream could get the No. 1 spot which is now claimed by the Indiana Fever. Atlanta is five games out, but they do play the Fever on Saturday and again on Tuesday. If they win both those games, then a No. 1 seed won't be out of the question.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

BULLDOG BEAT



Fall sports underway; football on tap

By Brian Jones

With a week left until the Bulldogs kickoff the 2011 season at the Georgia Dome against Boise State, the action at practice is heating up. One of the bigger stories coming out of camp is whether freshman running back Isaiah Crowell will be named the No. 1 back or not.

"Starting is not a big deal to me," Crowell told the AJC. "I just want to do whatever I can do to help my team win."

Crowell has been working with the first team and is getting the majority of snaps. Richard Samuel has also been working with the first team, but he has been slowed by a quadriceps injury.

In other injury news, John Jenkins suffered a minor hamstring pull last week and has not practiced all week. Ray Drew suffered a separated shoulder in a scooter accident and has been limited in practice this week. Malcolm Mitchell pulled a leg muscle last week but returned to practice last Tuesday.

CHANGE OF STYLE ...

Last week, Georgia officials revealed the new Nike Pro Combat uniforms that will be worn by the team during the game against Boise State. The uniforms look very different from what the Bulldogs normally wear. The helmet is red and silver while the jersey and the pants are all red.

Most fans don't like the new uniforms, but it comes as no surprise to head coach Mark Richt.

"I think there are a lot of people that just don't want to get away from [tradition] and I don't blame them," Richt told the AJC. "That's the reason we're sticking it out there two weeks in advance, so everybody can get over it."

However, the players spoke out in support of the new gear.

"I love them. I think they're awesome," Tavarres King said. "We've still got to play so it's not a magic potion or anything."

GETTING STARTED ...

While the football team has one week before its season begins, the soccer team got their season started last Friday with a 3-1 win over Furman. Jamie Pollock, Madeline Barker and Nicole Locandro scored for the Bulldogs while the defense limited Furman to five shots on goal. The Bulldogs will be back at home on Friday to face Texas.

The volleyball team will kick off the 2011 season on Friday as the Bulldogs host the Hotel Indigo Bulldog Invitational. They will face Liberty on Friday and Florida A&M and Kansas on Saturday.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

G-BRAVES JOURNAL



Gwinnett in thick of wild-card race

By Jack Morbitzer

Fighting to stay in the playoff hunt, the Gwinnett Braves (71-60) won four of their last seven games, earning an extra-innings victory before a day off.

KNIGHTS DENIED ...

The G-Braves defeated the Charlotte Knights 7-6 in 13 innings Tuesday. Brandon Hicks scored the winning run and Gwinnett split the home-and-home series. After two road losses, the homestand started with a win Monday where Peter Moylan made a one-inning rehab start. League ERA leader Julio Teheran followed and gave up two runs in the second inning before working until the fifth.

The Braves posted three runs in the first inning and the bullpen held strong through the end.

"It was a much-needed win," manager Dave Brundage told the Gwinnett Daily post following Monday's game. "We have our backs against the wall. We are not in the driver's seat."

Currently, the G-Braves trail Lehigh Valley by two games in the Wild Card race and sit 5 games back of Durham, who lead the International League South Division. In the first game of the series Saturday, Gwinnett lost in Charlotte 8-5. A three-run home run by Charlotte's Dallas McPherson put the Knights ahead in the bottom of the third. McPherson finished 4-for-4 with two homers and four RBIs.

The G-Braves didn't fare much better Sunday as the Knights scored 13 runs on 16 hits. Charlotte outfielder Dayan Viciedo had two home runs in the victory.

SYRACUSE SPLIT ...

Before the series in Charlotte, the Braves were in Syracuse for a four-game series against the Chiefs. The first game ended in a 13-4 loss before the G-Braves rallied for 3-1 and 1-0 victories. Teheran pitched seven complete innings in his 13th win of the season, which included two successful pick-offs at first base in the third inning of Game 2. The final runs came in the seventh inning when Stefan Gartrell singled in two with the bases loaded.

G-Braves pitcher J.J. Hoover earned his first Triple-A victory in Game 3 Thursday, striking out five of the six batters he faced in two scoreless relief innings. First baseman Wilkin Castillo singled in Gartrell for the winning run in the eighth. Syracuse finished the series with a 5-2 win Friday. The G-Braves recorded 11 hits but only pushed across two runs to split the series with the Chiefs.

After a day off, Gwinnett hosts Norfolk for a four-game homestand before two games in Durham.

Morbitzer can be reached at 404-256-1572.

TECH TALK



Jackets wind down in preparation for opener

By Thomas Watson

Twelve days before the first game of the season, Georgia Tech concluded their pre-season practices with a scrimmage at Bobby Dodd Stadium. All of the scoring came from the quarterback position as each signal-caller scored a rushing touchdown. Tevin Washington, who has officially been declared the starter, had the longest rushing score when he took off and went 36 yards for the score. Backup Synjyn Days score on an eight-yard run and true freshman Vad Lee dove in from a yard out.

QB PRAISE ...

Head coach Paul Johnson praised Lee, but was realistic in his evaluation. "He [Vad] made the freshman mistake at the end and made a poor decision, but he is coming so we will just see. We will evaluate him and see where he is at each week."

When addressing the overall situation at quarterback, Johnson liked what he saw. "A lot of guys did some good things (today). Clearly Synjyn [Days] can run the ball. I thought Tevin [Washington] threw the ball fairly well again, and Vad [Lee] continues to do some good things."

Lee showed a flash of what all the hype has been about when he hit Jeff Greene on a 30-yard pass. The freshman wide receiver has impressed coaches throughout the preseason. Greene has not only earned a spot in the rotation at wide receiver, but is pushing Tyler Melton for the starting spot.

Another spot has already been overtaken by a guy who was fourth on the depth chart heading into spring practice. David Sims is a converted quarterback who has shot up the ranks and been named starting B-back for the opener against Western Carolina. This does not mean that Preston Lyons will not still get playing time, but Johnson is rewarding a player for putting in the effort and is putting the best man out there for the job.

"He worked his tail off. He earned it," Johnson said. "He just runs hard."

Fellow B-back Charles Perkins has not found the same success as Sims, but is receiving just as much attention from Johnson, albeit not attention Perkins would like. "His idea of working hard and mine aren't the same," Johnson said.

Watson can be reached at twatson@scoreatl.com.

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PANTHER PROWL



Panther football holds final scrimmage

By Dave Cohen

With the start of the season now less than two weeks away, the Georgia State football team held its final scrimmage of fall camp last Saturday morning at their practice facility. For the Panthers, they'll next begin game preparations for their opener against Clark Atlanta.

"We make it clear that every time we have a scrimmage, the only team that is winning is Georgia State," said head coach Bill

Curry. "It's not offense or defense because things can change so quickly. I was happy to see the offense execute the way it ought to execute for the first time since training camp started. And it looked good. But down the stretch the defense made a couple of big plays, one for a touchdown, that would have changed everything. So you learn you have to keep fighting no matter the situation. As of

today, we're better at ball security, but that's been too long coming," said Curry. "Defensively, we've still got a way to go with our tackling, but we've gotten better. We've gotten better at alignment and assignment."

Georgia State football opens the season Friday night Sept. 2 vs. Clark Atlanta in the Georgia Dome. (Listen on WCFO-AM 1160, WMLB-AM 1690, and WRAS-FM 88.5).

ON THE PITCH ...

The Georgia State men's soccer team earned a 1-0 victory over Gardner-Webb at the Panthersville Soccer Complex last Saturday in its only preseason exhibition game before the 2011 regular season begins. Junior goalkeeper Vincent Foermer made three saves in the win-

ning effort as the Panther defense posted the shutout. ... The Panther volleyball team, in preparation for their opener, welcomed more than 30 former team members back last Saturday for a full day of competition, including a five-set match featuring an alumni "All-Star" team against the current squad.

"Being back on the court with GSU teammates brought back so many memories and nobody left on crutches," said Panthers assistant Beth Van Fleet, who played from 1995-98 and helped organize the event. "It was a great experience."

GSU will open their regular season on Aug. 26 against Arkansas-Little Rock.

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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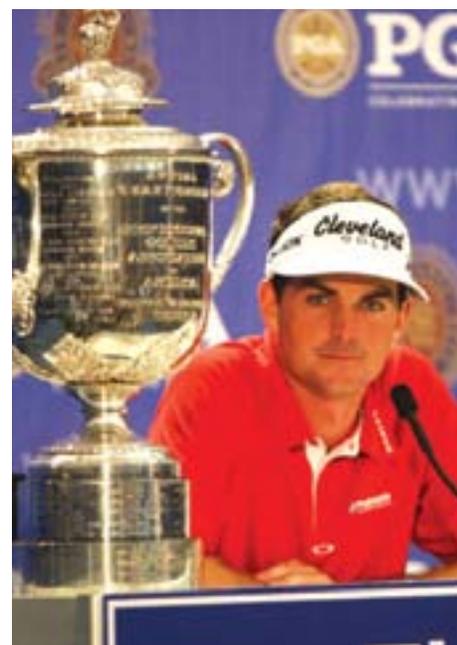


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Courtesy of Rob Saye



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