

SCORE

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atlanta



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CAN'T MISS THIS WEEK

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- 5** In our cover story, Ricky Dimon pays tribute to Atlanta legend Chipper Jones.
- 7** Stephen Blacks digs deep into the growing trend of transfers in high school athletics.
- 8** We break down the world of high school sports in our prep section.

TEAM SCOOP AND VOICES

*COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI
 COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELISA HERRING, DJ GALBIATI
 AND POUYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES*

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INSIDE AT SCORE

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SHOT OF THE WEEK...



GURLEY MAN: Georgia RB Todd Gurley looks for daylight against Tennessee. The freshman found plenty of it, rumbling for 130 rushing yards and three scores. Photo courtesy of Rob Saye.

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THE FLETCH



Heat turning up on Paul Johnson

By Fletcher Proctor

When Georgia Tech hired Paul Johnson as its head coach before the 2008 season, plenty of eyebrows were raised. Could his offense really work at a big school? Will he go over well with the boosters? Can he recruit well enough to have success in the ACC? Georgia Tech fans seemed to think the answers were yes, yes and yes after beating Georgia in 2008 then going to the Orange Bowl in 2009 after winning the ACC title.

Things have gotten a little rocky since then. As Chan Gailey's players began leaving for the NFL, Johnson's record has taken a sharp detour south, and suddenly the gruff and pointed answers aren't as fun when the team is struggling to make a bowl game. Johnson has long been

a character in the media with various personalities doing impressions or calling him out for not making radio appearances for one reason or another. Now the AJC is taking a shot or two at Johnson after Georgia Tech blew a second lead to an ACC foe to drop to 1-2 in conference play then fell to Middle Tennessee State.

THE HATE RAY ...

The AJC's Mark Bradley, long known for needling local coaches (see: Hewitt, Paul; Richt, Mark), recently turned his hate ray on Johnson, arguing that the Tech coach is "dragging Tech back to mediocrity."

"Yes, he's the same coach who went 20-7 in his first two seasons here, beating Georgia

in Year 1 and winning the ACC title (since vacated) in Year 2," Bradley wrote in an AJC.com column. "That's the trouble: He's still the same coach and he's coaching the same way."

Bradley criticizes the way Johnson recruits and puts his players in positions to perform. He seems to believe that Johnson is simply trying to outsmart the opposition instead of getting the best players to run his offense, which he had earlier in his career at Georgia Tech.

"Johnson might think recruiting rankings don't matter, but we're seeing now the limits of a team that has talent closer to Georgia Southern's than, say, Georgia's," finished Bradley.

Johnson's gruffness continued last week at his weekly press conference, heard on Tech's flagship radio station, 790 The Zone. When asked by a reporter if he felt he still had the confidence of Tech's administration, Johnson quickly spat back at the reporter that he'd have to ask the administration after a scoff of disbelief. After several seconds of silence the reporter followed up asking if Johnson thought he still had the support of the fans, and Johnson once again pointedly responded that there seemed to be plenty of fans in the stadium Saturday.

Johnson may not like doing press conferences and interviews, but in the past, remarks

such as his now-infamous Walmart reference have been a source of smiles for Georgia Tech fans. Now that things are a bit rocky, the uneasiness with the media may turn out to hurt Johnson, as folks could begin to turn on him. He certainly did himself no favors losing to Middle Tennessee State last Saturday. The underlying feeling is defensive coordinator Al Groh is certainly gone, but Johnson may receive another year. The seat, however, is very hot on the Flats.

A WELCOME ADDITION ...

Brian Finneran joined 680 The Fan's Rude Awakening recently and it has been a refreshing change to hear someone with a sports background that doesn't easily relent to Christopher Rude's antics. Rude's personality on the sports radio station has often veered away from sports, as he highlights pop culture with talk of popular singing competitions and other random non-sports stories. He and Sandra Golden constantly slip into a Bert Show knockoff and often rope Leo Mazzone into non-sports fodder. It is refreshing that Finneran has yet to fall victim to the mindless drivel that the show sometimes slips into when listeners tune in to hear sports talk.

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LIONETTI'S SHARE



Georgia defense needs improvement

By Chris Lionetti

What a year 2011 was for the Georgia Bulldogs. What a year indeed. The Bulldogs started the season 0-2 after a horrific loss to South Carolina, but won their next 10 games to get to the SEC Championship game. That stretch, aided by one of the nation's best returning defenses, catapulted the team into the preseason top 10.

However, five games into the 2012 season, that stellar defense has yet to make an appearance.

LEAKING WATER ...

Yes, the Dawgs are 5-0 and are averaging over 47 points scored a game, but last week's game against Tennessee exposed some serious chinks in the Bulldogs' armor. Tennessee has one of the better offenses in the SEC, but

the fact that the Volunteers scored 44 points on Georgia was a surprise to everyone. The Vols were able to run the ball at will and got the big play when they needed it.

What happened to a defense that held opponents to fewer than 80 rushing yards per game last year and was considered to be among the elite?

PLENTY OF EXCUSES ...

Some will blame the suspensions for Georgia's subpar defensive efforts in 2012 and while there is some truth to that, it cannot shoulder the blame. Any defense would perform at less than 100 percent without players such as Alec Ogletree, Bacarri Rambo and Sanders Commings, but in professional and collegiate football, you make no excuses. Todd Grantham made it a

point earlier in the season that Georgia had to play who it had and he expected his players' best efforts. Yes, the suspensions hurt the defense, but saying they are the reason for a mediocre defense is the same as saying a child failed a test because he didn't have his crayon. There are multiple crayons in the crayon box and they all perform the same task.

Last season, the Georgia Bulldogs took great pride in their defense. When asked to describe the defense, Georgia coaches used the words "top" or "elite." This year, the coaches tend to stay away from those words.

"People wanted to talk about our defense and whether it was going to be a great defense," head coach Mark Richt said at his Tuesday press conference. "What I said was what I'm most concerned about is when the game is on the line, are we going to be able to make the play in the moment of truth?"

Like it or not, in the SEC, teams cannot get by with poor defensive efforts. In football, the mantra many live by is "defense wins championships." Georgia simply doesn't have a championship defense at this point.

SEC-CALIBER? ...

Most would counter the aforementioned statement with the fact that Georgia is enjoying one of its better offensive years in recent memory.

Georgia currently boasts the SEC's top offense and it is largely due to the perfor-

mances of Todd Gurley, Keith Marshall and Aaron Murray. Though, in a league full of top defenses, can Georgia really rely on its offense to outscore opponents?

The answer is possibly. Games are won by putting points on the board. Numerous teams have taken this route to the national championship game in recent years. Oregon did it two years ago and Oklahoma did the same thing four years ago. Both teams failed to win the championship because they matched up poorly against SEC defenses.

Georgia is an SEC team, so it should matchup with SEC defenses, right? Yes, but that is not my point.

My point is Georgia is performing like a team in the Pac-12 or Big XII. Great offense, but little defense. The teams in those conferences are often viewed as inferior to SEC teams because it is believed that their offenses won't be as electric against an SEC-caliber defense. That and their defense couldn't stop their SEC opponent from running up the score.

Georgia, I feel, is in this position. The Bulldogs can score points like the rest of the top offenses, but if they want to win a championship, they need to find the pixie dust that turns the defense into the 2011 version. If not, a Florida or South Carolina may cut their championship run short.

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SO LONG CHIPPER



Baseball legend nears last hurrah

By Ricky Dimon



National League switch-hitters (third overall among switch-hitters behind Mickey Mantle and Eddie Murray). Other records held by the Atlanta legend include most home runs in a season by an NL switch-hitter (45 in 1999), most consecutive games with an extra-base hit (14 in 2007) and most consecutive 20-homer seasons to begin a career (14). As of Wednesday afternoon, Jones owns 2,726 career hits, 1,623 RBIs and 1,619 runs scored to go along with a lifetime .303 batting average.

None of those gaudy numbers and statistics, however, can accurately measure what he has accomplished as a team player. Jones helped lead the Braves to 11 of their 14 consecutive division titles from 1991 to 2005 (his first full season was 1995). He has delivered three National League pennants to Atlanta in addition to the 1995 World Series title. He punched a ticket to 12 postseasons—all, of course, with the Braves.

Jones is on the brink, relatively speaking, of two career milestones. He is two productive seasons away from both 3,000 hits and 500 home runs. He's also on a young team that just made the playoffs for the second time in three years, a clear sign that Atlanta is on the rise. Alas, much to the chagrin of Braves fans, the end is here.

"Nights like tonight are really cool and I'll never forget them," Jones said back in August on Chipper Jones Bobblehead Day at Turner Field. "But I'm ready to do something else. Do I think I can come back next year and play? Yes. I don't want to. That's what people don't get. I've made promises to the most important people in my life, and I'm not going back on that promise."

SWEET SWANSONG ...

Even at 40-years old, really cool nights were the norm for Jones during the regular season. On May 2 at home he ended an ab-

solutely outrageous game against the Phillies with a two-run walkoff homer in the bottom of the 11th inning to win it 15-13. Three days later in Colorado, he tied his career high with five RBIs as the Braves erased a 6-0 deficit and won 13-9. On July 3 at Turner Field he came up with the third five-hit game of his illustrious career, going 5-for-5 with four RBIs in a 10-3 blowout of the Cubs. On Aug. 16 he treated the home crowd to his first multi-homer game since June 7, 2009, blasting two dingers in a 6-0 shutout of San Diego.

All of that led to Sept. 25, when the Braves clinched a playoff spot in pulsating fashion. Trailing Miami 3-2 going into the bottom of the ninth, Jones led off the final frame with a scorching double to right-center. Next up was Freddie Freeman, who promptly delivered a two-run, 411-foot shot that sent the Turner Field faithful into delirium—and Atlanta straight into the postseason.

"Chipper's last year...it couldn't be a better story," Brian McCann exclaimed in the midst of a champagne-drenched celebration. "We were all saying that he's going to do something special."

CHOPPING FOR CHIPPER ...

Braves' manager Fredi Gonzalez was not about to sit Jones last week at Turner Field—not even once. That the Nationals had not yet clinched the NL East made the decision a no-brainer, but it's safe to say Jones would have been out there, no matter what, for his final regular season homestand. He took to Twitter before the homestand and posted the following: "To answer all ur questions....Im playing every day this week.....get ur butts to the Ted!!!"

They got their butts to the Ted alright, even though Tuesday's victory assured that the homestand would not be Jones' last appearance in Atlanta. It may not have been his last, but it was memorable.

What began with the wild win over the Marlins ended in a 5-1 record over six games and gave Braves County something to celebrate every single day. The only game Atlanta lost happened to be part of "Chipper Jones Tribute Night" last Friday.

"I was an emotional wreck," Jones told the AJC after going hitless in a 3-1 loss to the Mets. "I think I had a tear planted in the corner of my eye basically all night. It's pretty tough to hit when you're misty like that.... It's so overwhelming. And the support and

the love in the ballpark tonight was just something that it's hard to prepare yourself for."

Some of that love came from former manager Bobby Cox during pregame festivities. "I simply want to thank Chip for allowing me to be his manager for so many years," Cox said. "Players go through free agency, and many times when free agency came up, Chipper elected to stay loyal to the organization and you, the fans. I want to say to Chipper to keep that rope in his mouth and keep pulling Fredi and his troops to 12 more games and the World Series."

Another World Series would be nice, but one is enough to ensure that Jones has literally done it all. He's an MVP (1999), a batting champion (2008), a division winner, a pennant winner and, to top it all, a world champion. Thanks for everything, Chipper.

Photos courtesy of DJ Galbiati and Pouya Dianat/Atlanta Braves. Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.



COOPERSTOWN CALLING ...

What he has done over those 19 seasons is sure to send him to the Hall of Fame, likely on the first ballot in 2017. Jones has belted 468 career home runs, the most ever among

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WHO'S HOT

THUMBS UP TO GURSHALL



Freshmen sensations

The two Bulldog freshman running backs from North Carolina, Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall, are drawing comparisons to — dare we say the name — Herschel Walker. Herschel wore jersey No. 34. Gurley wears No. 3 and Marshall No. 4. Gurley leads the SEC in scoring and rushing yards. Marshall had a breakout game (164 yards, two touchdowns) against who else? Tennessee.

Craig Kimbrel

Kimbrel probably won't win the Cy Young award because relievers rarely receive more than token consideration, but he's worthy of attention in 2012. His strikeouts-to-innings pitched ratio is the best ever. He's allowed 19 hits and eight walks... since April. His ERA is 1.12 for the season. That's all-time stuff.

Matt Ryan

While the American Ryder Cup team couldn't handle the Sunday pressure, at least one avid golfer did. Matty Ice was beaten down after seven sacks by Carolina, yet led a last-minute drive 77 yards from his own one-yard line to set up the winning field goal. His 112.1 rating leads NFL quarterbacks.

Brian Downing

This is the Alabama fan who infamously exposed his male parts and made obscene movements near/on a passed out LSU fan after the national championship game in January. Downing has been sentenced two years of jail time. That guy is a disgrace and embarrassment to Alabama and SEC fans everywhere. Enjoy the slammer, Downing.

Ryder Cup meltdown

Are these guys for real? The Americans (with the exception of Tiger Woods and his hand-picked partner, Steve Stricker) dominated Medinah for the first four sessions only to implode in historic fashion during the Sunday singles matches. Woods and Stricker finished the weekend a combined 0-7-1. Not exactly a dream team.

One-game wildcard

Last year, we would have clamored for a one-game playoff after the Braves' September swoon left them out of the postseason, but this year we don't like the idea of 93 wins being washed away by just one game. And with Kris Medlen starting the play-in game, we'll miss him early in the NLDS.



WHO'S NOT

THUMBS DOWN TO MELTING DOWN

SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 **BATTLE IN CAROLINA:** This is the game that SEC fans have been waiting for as Georgia plays South Carolina in what could be one of the biggest SEC games of the year. Can Aaron Murray finally get that big win everyone's been waiting for or will the Gamecocks defeat the Bulldogs for the third consecutive year?

2 **MAJOR ISSUES:** Georgia Tech looked to get an easy win over MTSU. Well, it was an easy win for the Blue Raiders as they dominated Tech 49-28. It's easy to say the defense is hurting Tech this season, but something is just not right about this team. Something isn't clicking and head coach Paul Johnson has to get it fixed right away. The Jackets play Clemson on Saturday.

3 **THRILLER IN THE DOME:** The Falcons are 4-0 thanks to Matt Ryan hitting Roddy White for a 59-yard pass play with 59 seconds left, ultimately setting up Matt Bryant's game-winning field goal with 10 seconds left to beat the Carolina Panthers. A win like that shows how resilient this team is and will pay dividends down the road. However, they hope to play better against RGIII and the Washington Redskins on Sunday.

4 **PLAYOFF TIME:** It's do or die time for the Braves as they play their one-game wild card play-in game tonight. The Braves will face the St. Louis Cardinals and nothing would be sweeter than eliminating the defending World Series Champions at Turner Field. Kris Medlen will be on the mound for the Braves. The Braves have not lost when he is on the mound since 2010.

5 **EAST COBB WAR:** This is a game everyone in the state has been waiting for as Walton takes on Lassiter tonight. The Raiders beat the Trojans in the state semifinals last year, but Lassiter is a lot stronger this year and ready to take that next step. This game could determine the winner of Region 5-AAAAAA, so to say it's a crucial game is an understatement. You can watch the game on GPB.org/sports.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY RICKY DIMON

3	Times in franchise history the Falcons have started a season 4-0 (1986, 2004, 2012)
3	The Falcons' division lead after four games, the largest such margin in the NFL
15	Consecutive field goals made by Matt Bryant, dating to December of last year
112.1	Matt Ryan's NFL-best quarterback rating through four games
183	Consecutive minutes led by the Falcons to begin the season until Carolina led 7-0
0	Runs allowed by Craig Kimbrel in September (13 appearances & 12.2 innings)
7	Walkoff home runs in MLB history that have clinched a postseason berth
23	Consecutive Kris Medlen starts won by the Braves, setting a MLB record
27	Consecutive scoreless appearances by Eric O'Flaherty, dating to July 15
92	Playoff games — before Friday — for Chipper Jones, ninth most in MLB history

TRIVIA QUESTION

How many closers have won the Cy Young in the history of the award?

Answer on Page 14

SANITY AT LAST

"And then, on the very last play of the (practice), he was engaged in a block and was just working it. And as he was moving — no one ran into him or rolled into him or anything like that — his knee buckled. And there it was."

- UGA coach Mark Richt on WR Michael Bennett's season-ending knee injury.

COACH'S DIARY

New Centennial football coach Jeffrey Carlberg is in the middle of his first year as head coach of the Knights, and he has invited Score along for the ride during his first year at the helm. Here are highlights from the past week:

After our impressive offensive output against Johns Creek, we could not slow down one of the better teams in the state, West Forsyth. Chase Rosenberg and Christian Robinson connected for another touchdown as those two have really found a rhythm.

The bye week comes at a good time

and the team can take a Friday night off to recharge the batteries. After three straight road games, it will be nice to play in front of the Centennial community at the Fortress for three straight games. It is hard to believe that we've only played one home game so far this season.

Our homecoming game next Friday should be a good one against a great opponent. We will host Lambert in front of our incredible fans with the world watching on GPB.org. We are excited for the game and hope that our fans pack the Fortress in a big way.





Transfers a “fact of life” in Atlanta

By Stephen Black

High school coaches in this state have a lot to worry about when it comes to transfers. According to GHSA rules, if a transfer was persuaded at all by “undue influence,” schools can be in violation of the transfer and recruiting by-laws. As discussed in a previous story in Score Atlanta, “undue influence” covers a lot of areas.

In light of the David Boyd investigation at Milton, one of the state’s most prominent basketball programs, the rules regarding transfers and recruiting have been a hot topic of late.

ON THE MOVE ...

In a transient area like Atlanta, schools are almost on top of each other due to population clusters and people are more likely to move for a variety of reasons. One of those reasons is for kids to get the best education, and sometimes, to play for the best local program.

“There’s probably not a school in the state that doesn’t have somebody move in or somebody leave,” said Lassiter coach Jep Irwin. “I think it’s just a fact of life in high school football, especially in the metro area where parents are willing to move and it’s not that far of a move. ... Parents are more willing to do that and they want to take their kids to a place where they can be successful.”

Irwin knows, as his program took in five transfers during the offseason from area programs. The influx of transfers to Lassiter came just one year after running back Tyren Jones left the Lassiter district to move further south in the eastern part of Cobb County to rival Walton, where Jones has starred the past two seasons. While many in the Trojan Nation were furious about the loss of a future star to a rival program, Irwin can understand why families transfer.

“I think transfers are a fact of life. I think

it’s the parents’ right, if they want to move somewhere and take a kid somewhere, then they just want what’s best for their kid,” said Irwin. “Obviously, we have a tremendous school just like Walton does, so it’s a lot more attractive for someone to think about moving into an area where it’s a great place to live and a great school. It’s just kind of a trend we’re going through right now.”

HOOPS HOTBEDS ...

While football coaches are just now adjusting to the trend, basketball coaches have perfected the art of the transfer over the last decade or two. Some of the top high school players in the nation move to better high school programs during their careers, sometimes on multiple occasions.

Making sure the new transfers are enrolled and moved in according to GHSA rules is of high importance to Wheeler’s Doug Lipscomb and Norcross’ Jesse McMillan, coaches of two of the top programs in the state.

McMillan detailed the process Norcross uses to make sure all Blue Devils transfers are

handled well within GHSA rules.

“Basically what happens, and what is normal, is when the parents call the school or come by the school to talk, normally, they’re directed to our counseling office and our athletic director, and they’ll sit and talk to the athletic director and he’ll lay everything out as far as what the requirements are for admissions,” said McMillan. “So the counseling department will provide them with the requirements they need to gain admission, which is the residency in our district, the proof of utilities and the official withdrawal from the previous school.”

Lipscomb goes far to make sure his kids are moved into the Wheeler district.

“I’m going to take (the player) home and make sure that’s where he lives,” said Lipscomb. “I don’t have a problem with giving a kid a ride home.”

While transfers remain a growing trend in high school athletics, investigations are rare, which shows that most coaches and programs do take the right path to success.

Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.

GPB TV

BLESSED TRINITY VS. DECATUR

Titans, Bulldogs set for region showdown

By Ricky Dimon

Playoff positioning will be at stake when Blessed Trinity hosts Decatur in a crucial Region 6-AAA matchup next Friday night. The Titans and Bulldogs are part of a loaded region that also includes St. Pius X (4-1, 1-0), Cedar Grove (3-2, 1-0) and Woodward Academy (3-2, 0-1), so every game matters as the battle for four postseason spots heats up.

Blessed Trinity (4-1, 1-0) kicked off the season with a 25-20 victory over Westminster and the Titans have bounced back impressively from a 24-7 loss to Lovett in their second game. The Titans took care of Hart County and White County, then opened region play by defeating Woodward 21-14 on Sept. 28. Coming off of a bye week, they will be well-rested and energized for Decatur.

STELLAR SENIOR ...

The Titans are led by senior quarterback Spencer McManes, who struggled against Lovett, but has otherwise been stellar. McManes has completed 37 of 82 passes for 509 yards, six touchdowns and six interceptions. In four wins, he has completed almost half of his attempts while throwing for six scores compared to just two picks. McManes spreads the wealth around, having tossed all six touchdowns to six different receivers. But his favorite target is senior Sam Roberts, who has 14 receptions for 264 yards and a score. On the ground, freshman running back Milton Shelton

has torched opposing defenses for 431 yards and three touchdowns on 80 carries.

Decatur (3-2, 0-1) lost its opener to Grady and fell to Cedar Grove on Sept. 29, but in between those setbacks the team reeled off three straight wins—at the expense of Therrell, Greenville and Clarkston. The Bulldogs hosted Woodward on Friday night, but results were not available at press time.

DUAL THREAT ...

An effort to stop Blessed Trinity's attack will be spearheaded by junior cornerback Terryon Robinson, who suffered a high-ankle sprain in early September, but looked close to 100 percent when he picked off two passes against Cedar Grove. Robinson also returned an interception 101 yards for a touchdown in a 46-7 blowout of Therrell.

Robinson stars on offense as well, along with fellow receivers Perez and Terez Cowan, who are identical twins. Highly-touted sophomore quarterback Devontae Carter is dangerous by himself, but with those weapons at his disposal he is an even bigger threat on every play. Additionally, Blessed Trinity will have to watch out for halfback Elijah Rachel and fullback Nic Bentley, who also roams the middle of Decatur's defense at linebacker.

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CENTENNIAL VS. LAMBERT

Centennial hoping to turn fortunes at home

By Fletcher Proctor

The Centennial Knights return to the Fortress for just their second home game of the season seeking their first win. Centennial last suited up at home back on Sept. 7 in a loss to Etowah before hitting the road to face Milton, Johns Creek and West Forsyth. The Knights will welcome in Lambert as the 2012 Homecoming opponent on Oct. 12, an opponent that is not a typical homecoming foe. Lambert has jumped out to a 5-0 start after dispatching Etowah, Roswell, Northview, South Forsyth and North Forsyth.

Sid Maxwell's team is anchored by son Brock Maxwell, the team's quarterback. Maxwell rushed for a pair of scores in the 21-7 win over North Forsyth and he has seven rushing scores and two passing touchdowns on the season. Daniel Myers is also a strong and capable runner coming out of the backfield. Myers put up nearly 150 yards and two scores in the win against Northview. Jake Vazquez is another weapon in the running attack.

Should the game come down to a kick, Maxwell can turn to either his son or Ryan Karjala, who helped Lambert to a 19-17 win over Roswell with a late 35-yard field goal.

NEW-LOOK KNIGHTS ...

Jeff Carlberg switched up the offensive attack when he came to Centennial during the

offseason. Senior Chase Rosenberg took over at quarterback as the offense moved to a spread attack. Rosenberg went off against Johns Creek, putting up 409 all-purpose yards with 347 passing yards and three scores. Rosenberg has found reliable targets in Christian Robinson and Matthew Harries. Robinson hauled in a long scoring reception against West Forsyth and two others against Johns Creek. Harries snagged five passes for 121 yards against Johns Creek. The offensive line is anchored by Vincent Calhoun and Alexander Yankey.

Carlberg's forte is defense and his unit is led by co-captain Ryan Bennett at linebacker with Andrew and Alex Estes up front alongside Caleb Howard. Nick Barton is a capable defensive back.

QUARTERBACK SHOWDOWN ...

Both quarterbacks will play at the next level as Rosenberg has gone on several visits to Ivy League schools and has been invited to visit Vanderbilt. Meanwhile, Maxwell will play baseball at South Carolina, though the football team could try to impress him much the way Steve Spurrier snagged Bruce Ellington from the basketball team.

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PREP

NOTEBOOK



No. 1 Buford softball reaches milestone

By Stephen Black

Class AAA No. 1 Buford clinched a berth in the state playoffs with wins over East Hall and Fannin County in the Region 7-AAA tournament Saturday. Emily Crocker earned the win against East Hall while Briana Bush got her 13th win against Fannin County. Jordan Deep was 6-for-8 with five RBIs in the two games. The win over Fannin County gave Buford its 300th all-time win in fastpitch softball. The Wolves are hitting .357 as a team and are holding opponents to a .201 average. Buford was set to face Dawson County in the region tournament, but the result was not available at press deadline.

In other softball action, Creekview shut out Northview 12-0 last week to clinch a berth in the Region 7-AAAAA region finals at Pope. The Grizzlies were set to face the Greyhounds in a three-game series. Class AAAAAA No. 1 Lassiter finished the regular season 25-2-1 and won its first game in the Region 5-AAAAAA tournament over Roswell 7-0. The Trojans have won 10 straight games.

Walker struggled to a 10-13 regular-season

record but improved greatly on last year's 3-22 finish. Sophomore Katlin Seger has helped the Wolverines by hitting .594 with 15 doubles and a home run. Meanwhile, Fellowship Christian's Dariean Ward, a junior, and Olivia Karam, a freshman, are among the state leaders in batting average. In 11 games, Ward is hitting .784 and Karam is batting .771. Ward has also homered 10 times.

South Paulding sophomore pitcher Madason Messer has 15 of her team's 19 wins this season. Messer carries a 15-4 record with 16 complete games and seven shutouts.

BOUNCING BACK ...

Class AAA No. 2 Woodward Academy volleyball bounced back nicely after taking a loss in the Tournament of Champions Finals in South Carolina. Coach Tad Sahara's squad won five matches between Thursday and Saturday without dropping a set. The War Eagles beat Class AAAAAA No. 2 Harrison, Class AAAA No. 4 Southeast Whitfield, Class AA No. 10 Lovett, Central-Carroll and Haralson County during the impressive three-day

stretch. The hitting duo of seniors Sydney Cooper and Lexie Norfleet continues to impress. Cooper leads the state in hitting percentage at .465 with 158 kills while Norfleet is third in hitting with a .414 percentage and 142 kills.

Senior outside hitter Amanda Dachs has led Northview this season to a 30-9 record and a No. 4 ranking in the Class AAAAA Score Atlanta volleyball poll. Dachs leads the state with 462 kills.

Class A No. 4 Landmark Christian has benefited from exceptional serving this season. The War Eagles, who are 28-14 and in first place in Region 3-A, feature possibly the state's top server in senior Tiffany Creamer, who has a state-best 115 service aces this season. When Creamer isn't aching opponents, junior Lilly Kessler is. Kessler has 59 aces in 86 games this year.

Finally, Class AAAAAA No. 1 Walton took care of business Tuesday on Senior Night by defeating region rivals Roswell and Etowah 2-0 in each match.

RUNNING FREE ...

Reilly Friedman, of Class A No. 3 Galloway, won the varsity blue race at the Aubrae Gunderson Invitational at Heritage-Conyers last Saturday. Friedman's Gaels came in sixth as a team, while Class A No. 1 Athens Academy won the meet and Class AA No. 1 Westminster came in second. In the boys varsity red race, Southwest DeKalb's Jacques Williams won the race and his team finished eighth.

Behind winner Winder-Barrow was Rockdale County in second and Mountain View at No. 3. Class AAAAAA No. 1 McIntosh came in second in the varsity white race as Brad Hort and Sidney Speir finished 1-2 for the Chiefs. Class AAAAA

No. 5 Flowery Branch won the race behind six harriers in the top 27 and seven in the top 31.

In the girls blue race, Class AAAAA No. 2 Alexander won as Brittany Truitt finished second and four other Cougars came in the top nine. Winder-Barrow won the girls red race while Class AAAAAA No. 4 Brookwood came in second and Mountain View finished third.

Photo courtesy of the GHSA. Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.





TV GAME OF THE WEEK

BLESSED TRINITY TITANS

Head Coach Tim McFarlin



#	Name	Gr.	Pos.
1	Jordan Denson	12	RB
2	Spencer McManes	12	QB/LB
3	Timmy Mertz	12	RB/DB
4	Carter McManes	11	RB/DB
5	Dylan Cote	12	WR/DB
6	Chris Keegan	11	QB/DB
7	Robert Voll	12	TE
8	Nathan Etheridge	12	P
9	Robert McQuaid	11	WR
10	John Davis	12	WR/DB
11	Ryan Mediate	11	QB/DB
12	Sam Roberts	12	RB/DB
14	Connor O'Neill	11	WR
16	Patrick Jasinski	10	TE/LB
17	Jared Porter	11	QB/DB
18	Conor Davis	9	QB
19	Will Galloway	10	QB/S
20	Chris Siebert	10	WR
21	Zach Stickney	11	WR/DB
22	Casey Bradley	12	RB/LB
23	Kyle Evans	11	DB
24	Conor Hargen	12	LB
26	Christian Wood	12	RB/LB
27	Patrick Holland	12	K
28	Colin Bradley	11	RB/DB
29	Mitchell Rostowsky	10	K
30	Will Check	12	RB/DB
31	Ryan Grady	11	LB
32	Chris Hagemeyer	11	LB
33	Milton Shelton	9	RB/LB
34	John Castro	10	TE/DE
35	Will Staten	12	LB
36	Chris Romero	12	RB/LB
37	Andrew O'Brien	10	WR/DB
38	Chad Manthey	11	RB/DB
40	Jon Jon Yu	12	DE
41	Cameron Nolan	10	RB/LB
42	Nick Casaburri	10	RB/LB
44	Garrett Dupuis	9	RB/LB
45	Joe Johnson	12	TE
47	Andrew Massaro	12	DB
48	Jake Bogosian	9	RB/LB
50	Adam Makuck	10	OL/LB
52	Myles Kinder	12	DL
55	Mike Olson	11	OL/DL
58	Joe Camacho	10	OL/DE
60	Tucker Etheridge	12	LS
62	Zach Mitchler	11	OL/LB
64	Nick McGraw	12	OL/DL
65	Jim Murphy	12	OL/DL
67	Joey Hurley	12	OL/DL
68	Ethan Cerone	11	DL
70	Will Janousek	10	OL/DL
72	Jack Crisafi	12	OL
74	Matt Castner	9	OL/DL
75	Austin Werkheiser	11	OL/DL
76	Crockett Hayes	11	OL
77	Joseph Martin	12	DL
78	Trey Caso	11	OL/DE
79	Michael Ortiz	11	OL/DE
80	Nathaniel Maggio	12	TE/DE
81	Davis Speltz	12	WR
82	CJ Brazil	12	WR/DB
85	Cameron Johnson	10	WR/DB
90	Marc Nolan	11	K/P

DECATUR BULLDOGS

Head Coach Brad Waggoner



#	Name	Gr.	Pos.
1	Perez Cowan	12	WR/DB
2	Demarcus Brundidge	12	RB/LB
3	Terryon Robinson	12	WR/DB
4	Andrew Brown	12	WR/DB
5	Vito Antinozzi	11	TE/LB
6	Terez Cowan	12	WR/DB
7	Derrick Crutchfield	9	WR/DB
8	Dianti Early	10	WR/DB
9	Devontae Carter	10	QB/DB
10	Tim Daniel	9	WR/DB
11	Joseph Comer	10	QB/DB
12	Jalen Sprull	9	QB/DB
13	Zac Moore	12	WR/DB
14	Kyhmanhe Jackson	11	RB/DB
15	Chase Crouse	12	TE/LB
16	Lamont Torres	12	WR/DB
17	Elijah Rachel	10	WR/DB
18	Adam Garlow	11	WR/LB
20	Andre Young	10	WR/DB
21	Chris McCoy	12	TE/LB
22	John Slappey	11	WR/DB
23	Cameron Franklin	9	RB/DB
24	Jordan Stewart	9	RB/LB
25	Nic Bentley	11	RB/LB
26	Zion Perryman	9	RB/LB
27	Tray Tice	9	WR/DB
28	Tommy Renfro	10	RB/LB
30	Devontae Meadows	11	TE/LB
31	Amir Outerbridge	10	WR/DB
32	Charles Cope	11	RB/LB
33	Demetrius Harris	10	RB/LB
34	Tre Jones	9	WR/DB
35	Javon Brown	10	RB/DB
40	Mac Speed	12	K
41	Ian Wiley	9	K
42	Sam Yates	12	WR/DB
43	Deangelo Watkins	11	WR/LB
44	Elijah Hayes	12	WR/DB
45	Alex Pelt	9	WR/DB
50	Mohamed Sheikh	11	OL/DL
53	Ed Henderson	11	OL/DL
54	Abdul Rasheed	11	OL/DL
55	Demetrius Cooley	10	OL/DL
56	Noah Fisher	11	OL/DL
57	Kirk Cole	10	OL/DL
58	Kyle Kitchens	11	OL/DL
60	Xyran Jackson	9	OL/DL
62	Joao Loureiro	11	K
63	Ronald Madison	10	OL/DL
64	Jake Copenhagen	12	OL/DL
65	Jaylen Campbell	9	OL/DL
66	Frankie Sanders	10	OL/DL
67	Travis Bland	9	OL/DL
68	Tyler Brett	9	OL/DL
70	Nigel White	12	OL/DL
71	Dominic Antinozzi	9	OL/DL
72	Noah Boyer	9	OL/DL
74	Jarod Grier	11	OL/DL
75	Curtis Smith	11	OL/DL
76	Brandon Crawford	9	OL/DL
77	Adonis Johnson	10	OL/DL
80	Tyler Washington	9	WR/DB
81	Joshua Faison	9	WR/DB
82	Noah Hull	9	WR/DB
83	Adarius Lucas	11	WR/DB
84	Reginald Vaughn	9	WR/DB
85	Khalid Aaron	11	WR/DB
99	Jacquez Cooper	9	WR/DB



WEBCAST GAME OF THE WEEK

CENTENNIAL KNIGHTS

Head Coach Jeff Carlberg



#	Name	Pos.	Gr.
1	Corey Grimes	CB	12
2	Michael Lopez	WR	12
3	Arnold Johnson	CB	12
4	Christian Robinson	WR	11
5	Cyril Teal	WR	11
6	Sha'Quan Hobes	WR	11
7	Devin O'Neill	K/P	11
8	Matthew Harries	QB	11
9	Patrick Inwood	RB	10
10	Montel Austin	WR	11
11	Hutchins Torre	QB	10
12	Kola Balogun	LB	12
13	Nick Barton	S	10
14	Chase Rosenberg	QB	12
16	Alexander Richemond	S	11
17	Luke Able	QB	10
20	Caden Herring	WR	9
21	Trey Schultz	WR	12
22	Austin Prescott	CB	11
24	Kenyon Russell	S	11
25	Marvin Taylor	CB	11
26	Jay Bowler	LB	10
27	Kyle Walker	CB	10
28	McKenzie Garrett	LB	10
29	Marcus Beck	WR	10
30	Thomas Dreesman	CB	10
31	Steven Albert	CB	11
32	CJ Mucker	WR	10
33	Shmar Burdick	RB	11
35	Ryan Bennett	LB	12
37	Tremaine Davis	S	12
38	Josh Bielenberg	LB	10
39	Gentry Washington	CB	10
40	Kody Davis	LB	10
41	Kendrick Washington	DT	10
42	Jordyn Coleman	CB	10
43	Jesse Anderson	LB	10
44	Lorenzo McWilliams	DL	12
45	Brett Schrafft	LB	12
47	Patrick Risse	LB	11
49	Jake Dahm	LB	10
51	Anthony Carey	OT	12
53	Alexander Yankey	OT	10
54	Lennard Vicente	DT	11
55	Chris Conway	C	11
56	Joel Smith	OT	10
57	Drew Blesse	DT	10
59	Vincent Calhoun	OT	12
60	Brad Koblit	C	10
61	Michael Bowcutt	G	10
62	Nick Krauter	G	11
71	Tyler Carey	OT	11
72	Austin Haynie	OT	12
73	Benito Abadie	G	11
75	Reggie Ben-Asemota	DT	12
76	Elijah Colon	DT	11
77	Jack Garner	OT	10
79	Vin Ouellet	OT	11
81	Terrell Dorton	WR	10
82	Jesse Warner	WR	10
85	Tyrael Lowery	WR	11
87	Christian Glynn	WR	10
88	Stuart Way	TE	11
89	Alex Estes	LB	11
90	Cameron Loi	TE	10
92	Rowdy Barber	DT	10
93	Will Ingersoll	DE	10
95	Chris Calhoun	DE	10
96	Garyn Grace	DE	10
97	Lloyd Glenn	DE	12
98	Andrew Estes	DE	11
99	Caleb Howard	DT	12

LAMBERT LONGHORNS

Head Coach Sid Maxwell



#	Name	Gr.	Pos.
1	Reid Gill	12	WB
2	Jake Vazquez	12	WB
3	Daniel Myers	12	TB
4	Russell Monyette	12	LB
5	Jordyn Jean-Felix	11	CB
6	TJ Russell	12	WR
7	Jake Carlson	11	WR
8	Eric Mengler	12	SS
9	Chandler Register	12	WB
10	Matt Spencer	12	DB
11	Tucker Maxwell	9	QB
12	Hayden McLeod	11	QB
13	Brock Maxwell	12	QB
14	Tanner Hall	9	QB
15	Zach Matthews	11	RB
16	Jason Markulike	12	RB
17	Matt Woodley	11	DB
18	Skip Sleister	11	DB
19	Drew Cole	10	QB
20	Zach Lance	10	SS
21	Houston Earnest	10	DB
22	Chris Burchett	12	SS
23	Danny Edgeworth	12	DB
24	Richard Abbey	12	WR
25	Chad Conner	10	CB
26	Ala Romman	12	DB
27	Will Dunavant	10	SS
28	Brandon Hardee	10	LB
29	Austin Eason	12	WR
30	Adison Schimmelpfennig	10	LB
31	Vito Teng	12	DB
32	Dylan Sapp	11	WB
33	Wesley Perterson	12	CB
34	Hunter Shepherd	10	DB
35	Nick Parham	11	RB
36	Brandon Miller	11	DB
37	Jake Stanford	10	WB
38	Conner McCann	11	DL
39	Devon Jones	12	DB
40	Thesis Sagues	10	RB
41	Aaron You	12	LB
42	Trey Arnold	9	RB
43	James Little	12	RB
44	Mitchell Gargosh	12	LB
45	Brandon Eastman	12	LB
46	Josh Becker	12	DE
47	Chris Laye	11	TE
48	Dillon Alexander	11	DL
49	Chris Cummings	10	RB
50	Ian Deck	12	OL
51	Cody Dreyer	11	OL
52	Jeremy Olson	11	OL
53	Walker Nunes	11	OL
54	Ryan Vojtasko	10	OL
55	Logan Wood	11	DL
56	Matt Peterson	12	DL
57	Monroe Heustess	12	OL
58	Alex Pigg	12	DL
59	JJ Clements	10	OL
60	Matt Corley	10	OL
61	Zac Benton	11	OL
62	Justin Covington	12	OL
63	Jeremy Zimmerman	11	OL
64	Gantt Bauer	12	OL
65	Jake Chickowski	11	DL
66	Trey LeBlanc	11	DL
67	Trey Barnwell	10	OL
68	Ben Crawford	10	OL
69	Cal Crawford	12	OL
70	Hunter Hastings	10	OL
71	Jake Taylor	12	OL
72	Christian Gray	12	OL
73	Sean Bailey	9	OL
74	Sean Courtney	11	OL
75	Sako Yermian	11	DL
76	Zach Barnwell	10	OL
77	Kevo Yermian	11	OL
78	Liam Edwards	12	OL
79	Brian Warstadt	12	OL
80	Anthony Ratliff	9	TE
81	Anson Cox	10	DL
82	Sam Fleming	9	TE
83	Patrick Noble	10	DB
84	Brayden Whitford	11	DB
85	Chris Martore	11	WR
86	Jacob Henry	10	DL
87	Jack Rampley	10	DB
88	Jackson Katina	10	DB
89	Chandler Rountree	12	WR
90	Gabe Guerra	10	DL
91	Ryan Karjala	12	K
92	Parker Allen	11	WR
93	Shane Duer	11	DB
94	Reece Perry	11	K
95	Jordan Stein	10	WR
96	Evan Lamb	10	WR
97	Nolan Karjala	10	K
98	Jack Carmichael	10	OL

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BULLDOG BEAT



Dawgs preparing for crucial matchup

By Chris Lionetti

After a hard-fought 51-44 victory over Tennessee, the Georgia Bulldogs have turned their focus to sixth-ranked South Carolina. The Bulldogs will head to Columbia this weekend to play the Gamecocks at 7 p.m. on ESPN.

Though the Bulldogs are 5-0 this season, some of their weaknesses were exposed in their game against Tennessee.

STOPPING LATTIMORE ...

Improving the run defense is the focus of the Bulldogs this week because they will face South Carolina star running back Marcus Lattimore. The junior has been a thorn in the side of the Bulldogs, rushing for 358 yards and three touchdowns in two games against Georgia. One hundred of those yards came in the fourth quarter of last year's game, added proof that Lattimore gets stronger as the game wears on.

For the past two years Georgia has not been able to counter the Gamecocks' use of Lattimore, but this year is a different story. Unlike previous editions, the 2012 Bulldogs possess a formidable running attack in the freshman duo of Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall. The duo generated nearly 300 yards of offense last week against Tennessee and will seek to do the same against South Carolina.

"They are doing a phenomenal job, es-

pecially being as young as they are and not knowing what they are getting into," said senior wide receiver Tavarres King of the freshmen. "They have handled it well, and they are very mature for their age. They are going to have extremely successful careers here."

GURSHALL ...

Georgia's running backs face a stiff challenge this week in the South Carolina defense. The Gamecocks have only allowed two rushing touchdowns while the Bulldogs have scored 19 on the ground. Something will have to give on Saturday.

While the Dawgs will have their hands full against South Carolina's run defense, quarterback Aaron Murray will look to continue what has been a career season. Murray, who worked on footwork during the summer, leads the conference in passing efficiency and is completing a career-high 68.5 percent of his passes. His accuracy is a large part of why Georgia is ranked as the top offense in the SEC.

Murray's task will be even greater this weekend as the team will be without leading receiver Michael Bennett. Georgia announced Wednesday morning that the receiver tore his ACL in practice and will miss the rest of the year.

Lionetti can be reached at clionetti@scoreatl.com.

TECH BUZZ



Clemson awaits struggling Jackets

By Ryan Caiafa

If Georgia Tech's loss to the Miami Hurricanes could be described as disappointing, another term may have to be used to depict what happened at Bobby Dodd Stadium this past Saturday. A clearly demoralized Georgia Tech football team took the field and was soundly blown out by Middle Tennessee State, 49-28.

A team that very well could have been 5-0 is now looking at a 2-3 record with a 1-2 ACC record due to two overtime losses that could have been won in regulation. The team's inability to be resilient coming off losses has now put it in a big hole in the standings with seven games left to salvage what was expected to be a solid season.

Despite Tevin Washington tying a school record with four rushing touchdowns in the game, he became the only bright spot in a game that will be remembered for the way the defense played. The game was supposed to be a matchup that got the Jackets back on track after surrendering the Miami game away.

The Georgia Tech defense allowed more than 40 points for the second week in a row and allowed 510 yards of total offense, including 217 rushing yards from Benny Cunningham, who also scored five touchdowns for the Blue Raiders. Coach Paul Johnson's

team just never got itself together and seemingly wasn't able to shake off the disappointment against Miami to be ready to take on an upset-minded team.

TIGER TOWN ...

If the MTSU game wasn't a wake-up call for the Jackets then they could be looking at another tough contest on the road at Clemson, which will be out for revenge after last season's loss in Atlanta. The Tigers currently stand at 6-1, with their lone loss coming against the fourth-ranked Florida State Seminoles.

The Jackets will have to find ways to stop the high-powered Clemson offense, led by quarterback Tajh Boyd. The Tigers' signal-caller has been outstanding in his junior season so far, passing for 12 touchdowns and just three interceptions. Tech will also need to find a way to contain dynamic receiver Sammy Watkins, who, despite playing in just two of the Tigers' games so far, is expected to be at full strength come Saturday. The Jackets will need to play almost perfectly to get themselves back on track.

Caiafa can be reached at rcaiafa@scoreatl.com.

PANTHER PROWL



Bell throws four picks in first start

By Brian Jones

The Panthers knew that in order to beat a team like William & Mary, everyone would have to play mistake-free football.

The Panthers had trouble holding on to the ball as they committed seven turnovers, leading to a 35-3 loss on Saturday.

One of the few bright spots for the Panthers was Donald Russell, who posted 134 all-purpose yards. Russell rushed for 107 yards on 21 carries, the second straight game he has eclipsed the century mark. Ronnie Bell was able to make some plays in his first start at quarterback, but the Panthers shot themselves in the foot numerous times with four interceptions and three lost fumbles. Bell threw all four interceptions and lost a fumble on a sack. He did complete 13-of-26 passes for 147 yards and helped the Panthers convert eight of their 14 third-down plays.

The defense could not stop the rushing attack of the Tribe, who rushed for 312 yards, including 163 from running back Keith McBride.

The Panthers will come back home on Saturday to face New Hampshire at 3:30 p.m. This will be another challenging game for the Panthers as New Hampshire averages 244 rushing yards per game. The Panthers' defense has struggled to stop the run all season, surrendering more than 200 yards per game.

MEASURING UP ...

So why are the Panthers struggling? It is a number of things, but when looking at the stats, it's clear they are struggling to get anything going on both sides of the ball. The offense averages only 287 yards per game while the defense is giving up 459 yards per game. The Panthers only score 10 points per game and give up 36 points.

With those numbers, the Panthers would be ranked near the bottom of every category in the FCS rankings, but because of Georgia State's impending transition to FBS next year, the team's stats are not listed on the NCAA site.

BOYS OF FALL ...

On Tuesday, the baseball team hit the field for the first time to begin fall practice. The team worked on individual drills before ending practice with a scrimmage.

"We have a really good mixture of veterans and younger players," coach Greg Frady told gsusports.com. "The veterans have been showing the younger players what to do. We have a great group of guys and it's a very exciting time to be back on the field."

The Panthers begin the 2013 season in February.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

OWL OUTLOOK



Soccer hits the road, baseball postponed

By Brian Jones

The soccer team was looking to get its first conference win of the season last week against East Tennessee State, but the Owls came up short, falling 3-1.

Nicole Calder scored the first goal of the match for the Owls, but ETSU responded with three unanswered goals.

"I thought first half we did not play very well," coach Rob King told ksuowls.com. "We really did not connect our passes at all and we looked panicky. The ball was like a hot potato and we banded it down the field, which is not what we were trying to do. That was not the game plan. So to be tied at half time, I thought we were quite fortunate."

The Owls were able to bounce back two days later, taking down USC Upstate 3-0. Danielle Gray and Liz Blackburn scored in the first half while Kelsey Barr scored in the second half. Goalkeeper Lauren Roberts made her first start since Aug. 24 and posted four saves in 90 minutes.

"I was very pleased with the game," King said. "We controlled it from start to finish. We generated a lot of chances."

The Owls will travel to Northern Kentucky today and before heading to Tennessee to face Lipscomb.

CONTINUED SUCCESS ...

After losing to Lipscomb and Northern Kentucky last weekend, the volleyball team took down Alabama State 3-0.

Baylee Strachan recorded an attack percentage of .643 with 10 kills and three aces to help the Owls improve their record to 13-7.

"I was so happy to see Baylee and Jenna (Wilt) step up and play so well," coach Karen Weatherington told ksuowls.com. "Baylee continues to impress in her senior season and that's really due to her unselfish play, and I think that definitely shows in her numbers."

Wilt led the Owls with 11 kills and a hitting percentage of .476. Both Strachan and Wilt will look to lead the Owls to their 14th win when they face Jacksonville on Saturday.

EVENT CANCELLED ...

The baseball team was supposed to have its annual scout day this past Monday, but it was cancelled due to inclement weather.

The Owls typically hold the event at Stillwell Stadium to showcase their talent to Major League Baseball scouts. The team was prepared to perform a series of drills in front of 25 scouts before playing an intra-squad game. There has not been an official word on when the event will be rescheduled.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

HAWKS HAVEN



Hawks open camp, welcome in Heat

By Robby Kalland

The Atlanta Hawks kicked off training camp on Monday in preparation for their pre-season home opener this Sunday against the NBA Champion Miami Heat. The Hawks have spent their first few days of training camp trying to get all of their new players integrated into their system and begin building chemistry on and off the floor. The players and coaches have been keying in on the Hawks' speed and ability to run the floor at all five positions. During media day, everyone associated with the team sounded extremely excited about the offense's potential and the new up-tempo style.

UP-TEMPO OFFENSE ...

The offense will be predicated on motion and pick-and-rolls that will take advantage of this year's guards' speed, all of the new outside shooters that space the floor and the athletic, good-shooting bigs on the roster. The Hawks will apply a lot of pressure on opposing defenses with the ability of guards like Lou Williams, Jeff Teague and Devin Harris to get the ball from end-to-end as quickly as any backcourt in the league.

While the offense is expected to come around, Larry Drew is ensuring that the focus of camp is on the defensive side of the ball.

"My focus [is] to set the tone for who we're going to be on the defensive end," said

Drew. "As I told the guys [Monday night] after dinner, I think we're a very capable scoring team. We have to establish ourselves on the defensive end and that's going to be our mindset this training camp."

That defensive identity will hinge on the Hawks' speed and length. They will look to jump passing lanes, apply pressure to and harass ball-handlers, and use their length and athleticism inside to block shots.

BIG QUESTION ...

The biggest question facing Drew will be whom he plays at small forward. Drew is coming into camp without any real idea of what his rotation will be at the three and he is hoping someone steps up into that role. The options for Drew are numerous, whether he goes big with Josh Smith or Anthony Tolliver or small with Anthony Morrow or Deshaun Stevenson. None of those options represents a true small forward, though, and all will present issues, especially defensively, depending on matchups. Sunday's game will be extremely important to see where Drew will go because the best three in the league, LeBron James, will present an extremely tough challenge for the Hawks.

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FALCONS BEAT



Falcons prepare for RGIII, Redskins

By Craig Sager II

The Carolina Panthers gave the Falcons all they could handle Sunday in Atlanta's first division matchup of the season. Cam Newton and the defensive unit had the Panthers in great position to hand Atlanta its first loss of the season.

A 49-yard punt pinned Atlanta back on the one-yard line with just 59 seconds remaining in the game and no timeouts. Matt Ryan found Roddy White on a 59-yard heave out of the end zone and the Falcons took advantage of a defensive pass interference penalty and two quick completions to set up a 40-yard game-winning field goal from Matt Bryant. The kick put Bryant at a perfect 9-for-9 on the season and allowed the Falcons to escape 30-28.

"We have a lot to work still as a team and our preparation for Washington begins first thing [Monday]," said Mike Smith after the game. "Going undefeated in this first quarter of the season has been our main goal, though, so we have to be proud about that."

PROBLEM AREAS ...

Ryan was sacked seven times after going down just four times through the first three games, as the line could barely contain Carolina's Charles Johnson. The former Georgia Bulldog motored his way to 3.5 sacks. Fac-

ing a relentless Carolina pass rush, the offense implemented tactics to exploit the aggressiveness of the defensive unit. Offensive coordinator Dirk Koetter relied on Ryan's ability to handle the pressure and sent backs Michael Turner and Jacquizz Rogers out of the backfield as receivers.

"Matt did a great job of getting the ball out quick and the backs were able to keep our offense moving," said Smith.

Up until the fourth quarter, White was the only receiver who had caught a pass, and while he was having a monster game, the running backs were picking up the slack from Julio Jones and Harry Douglas. Turner took an inside screen from Ryan 60 yards and, for the first time in his career, tallied a receiving touchdown.

Ryan led the offense, completing 25 of 40 passes and a season-high 369 yards, adding three more touchdowns to his total. For the fourth straight week, Ryan posted over a 100.0 quarterback rating, leaving his season mark at a league-best 112.1. Ryan's next challenge will be an interesting matchup with Robert Griffin III, who has Washington at 2-2 early in his rookie season.

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CHOP SHOP

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Braves ready for Wild Card game

By Fletcher Proctor

Postseason play begins tonight at Turner Field as the Braves host the Cardinals in the National League Wild Card play-in game. Atlanta will send ace Kris Medlen to the hill, seeking to extend the team's MLB-record 23-game winning streak when he starts against Kyle Lohse of St. Louis.

Medlen's last time out was against the Mets last Sunday. The righty went six innings, allowing just one run on three hits to move to 10-1. Craig Kimbrel recorded his 42nd save of the year by recording just one out.

The Braves wrapped up the regular season in Pittsburgh, and after dropping the first game of the series 2-1 to waste a strong effort by Paul Maholm, Atlanta rested most of its starters in Game 2. The Pirates scratched Tommy Hanson for five runs in a 5-1 Pirates' victory. Hanson gave up single runs in the first and second before surrendering three in the fifth. Atlanta scored its lone run in the fourth on a pair of doubles.

In the final game of the regular season, Atlanta sent Ben Sheets to the hill for start No. 250 of his career. Sheets had announced earlier in the week that he would retire after the game as he was not likely to make the Braves' postsea-

son roster. Sheets entered the finale 4-4 on the year with a 3.54 ERA.

Interestingly enough, in Game 1, Jeff Locke defeated the Braves, the team that included him in a trade for Nate McLouth. Locke allowed just one run on two hits. Charlie Morton, another piece of the bounty Pittsburgh received for McLouth, has not pitched since lasting just four innings in an 8-1 loss to Cincinnati back on May 29. He required Tommy John surgery and will likely return late in 2013.

INJURY REPORT ...

Dan Uggla had to miss a game earlier this week as his right hand swelled up following the team's flight to Pittsburgh. Uggla cut the knuckle of his right index finger during the team's celebration after clinching a postseason berth. Uggla played the first few days after cutting his hand, but Fredi Gonzalez sat him Monday. Entering Tuesday's action, Uggla had been on a tear over his past 21 games, recording a .412 on-base percentage and a .471 slugging percentage with just 16 strikeouts.

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DREAM BEAT



Indiana ends Dream's season in three

By Joe Deighton

Things were going so well and then in a flash, the Atlanta Dream's season was over. After a Game 1 victory in Indiana, the Dream took home-court advantage and control of the series.

Tamika Catchings played like the MVP-candidate she is in the final two games of the series. Catchings torched Atlanta for 25 points and 13 rebounds in Game 2, as Indiana evened the three-game series. The 11-year veteran forward added 16 points and 11 rebounds in the series-clinching win in Game 3.

This series proved to be a microcosm of Atlanta's entire season. The Dream played well and was in position to win, but in the end, the Fever were just too much to handle. Game 3 was there for the taking, as Atlanta tied the game at the half, but a 6-for-18 shooting performance in the fourth quarter was the Dream's undoing.

Angel McCoughtry scored just 16 points and only two in the second half on 7-for-21 shooting. That, along with being out-rebounded by 15 boards, was the reason for the Game 3 loss.

However, Atlanta would not even have been in the postseason without the stellar play of its superstar forward all year long. It was a disappointing end to the 2012 season, but McCoughtry still had an MVP caliber season, leading the league in scoring at 21.4 points-per game.

Lindsey Harding led the team in scoring and assists throughout the series with 19 points per game and 5.3 assists. Harding felt her team had to adjust to the playoffs, but wasn't getting as many calls in Game 3.

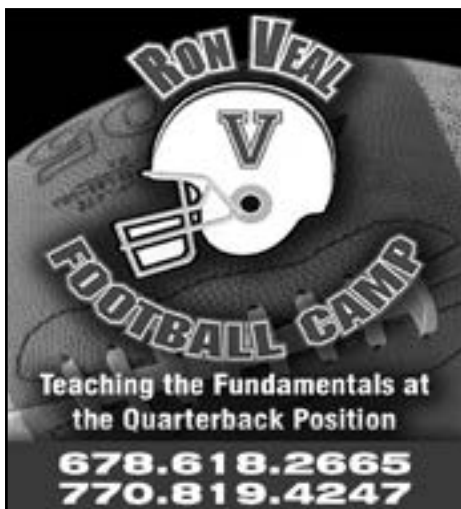
"We were getting contact and looking for calls," Harding told the AP. "And coach (Fred Williams) told us we have to play through that, this is the playoffs."

NEW CEO ...

In other news this week, the Dream named Atlanta business executive and community leader Ashley G. Preisinger as team CEO. Preisinger comes to the Dream after leading Homrich Berg, an independent wealth management firm where she was Director of Client Development and Marketing since 2008. Currently, Preisinger is on the Board of Directors at Zoo Atlanta. Her role for the Dream will be to oversee finances, sales and basketball operations.

"I look forward to using the experience I've gained as an executive and active community member in Atlanta to compliment the Dream's terrific on-court success," Preisinger told the team website.

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