

SCORE

Vol. 8 | Iss. 23 | Dec. 7-20, 2012

atlanta

POSTSEASON PREPARATION

**A RECRUITER'S
DREAM**

HOOTERS

THE FALCONS AND HOOTERS -
BIRDS OF A FEATHER!



SPORTS RADIO
790 THE ZONE

CHECK OUT OUR PREP
COVERAGE ON PAGE 7!

hawks.com



**HAWKS
VS
THUNDER**

WEDNESDAY, DEC 19 @ 7:30

HAWKS VS BULLS
SATURDAY, DEC 22 @ 7:00



CHICK-FIL-A SATURDAY
FAMILY NIGHT
4 TICKETS
4 COMBOS **\$149**

MORE ATHLETES WHO TAKE ONE FOR THE TEAM GO TO CHILDREN'S.

As the leader in pediatric sports medicine, we see and treat every type of injury. So if your child gets hurt, count on us to help him get back in the game. Learn more at choa.org/sportsmed.



Children's™
Healthcare of Atlanta

Dedicated to All Better



SCORE
atlanta**STARTING
LINEUP**

PUBLISHER/EDITOR I.J. Rosenberg
ART/CREATIVE DIRECTOR DJ Galbiati Blalock
SENIOR MANAGING EDITOR Stephen Black
ASST. MANAGING DIRECTOR Fletcher Proctor
BUSINESS MANAGER Marvin Botnick

BEAT WRITERS

Chris Lionetti (UGA), Brian Jones (GSU, KSU),
 Craig Sager II (Falcons), Ricky Dimon (Hawks),
 Joe Deighton (Gladiators),
 Fletcher Proctor (Braves), Ryan Caiafa (Tech)

STAFF WRITERS

Jay Underwood, Sean Conway

TO ADVERTISE IN SCORE ATLANTA:
404.256.1572

Copyright 2012 Score Atlanta Publishing, LLC. All rights reserved. Score Atlanta is published every other week on Fridays. Views expressed in Score Atlanta are not necessarily the opinion of Score Atlanta, its staff or advertisers. Score Atlanta does not knowingly accept false or misleading editorial content or advertising nor is Score Atlanta responsible for the content or claims of any advertising or editorial in this publication. No content (articles, photographs, graphics) in Score Atlanta may be used for reproduction without written permission from the publisher.

**CAN'T MISS
THIS WEEK**

4 Joe Deighton weighs in with his UGA-heavy column, while the Fletch discusses Chuck Oliver's controversial line of questioning.

5 In our cover story, Ricky Dimon tells us what the Falcons need to do in the closing weeks of the regular season to clinch the NFC's top seed.

7 Fletcher Proctor gives a rundown of the blue chip recruits who will be playing in the prep football semifinals.

8 Stephen Black reviews recent swimming and wrestling action in the high school notebook.

**TEAM SCOOP
AND VOICES**

COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI BLALOCK
 COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF SONNY KENNEDY
 AND JIMMY CRIBB/ATLANTA FALCONS

- 6** Score List - Numbers
12 GSU, KSU, UGA, Tech
13 Braves, Falcons, Gladiators, Hawks

INSIDE AT SCORE

ON THE Score Atlanta is looking for writing and graphic design interns. 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 for more information.

**SHOT OF THE
WEEK...**

GENERAL GREGORY: Georgia Tech coach Brian Gregory instructs his players during the Jackets' 62-54 win over rival Georgia Tuesday night. It was the first Tech-Georgia game in the new McCamish Pavilion. It is the first time Tech has won back-to-back hoops games over the Bulldogs since 1993-94. Photo courtesy of Jon Barash.

Joseph & Friends
AVEDA Lifestyle Salon & Spa
Est. 1989

ROSWELL
 1570 Holcomb Bridge Road
 Roswell, GA 30076

MILTON
 13057 Highway 9 North
 Alpharetta, GA 30004

JOHNS CREEK
 11720 Medlock Bridge Road
 Duluth, GA 30097

CUMMING
 5735 Clarion Street
 Cumming, GA 30040



770.993.0058
JosephAndFriends.com

THE FLETCH



Oliver issued a King-sized apology to Richt

By Fletcher Proctor

Immediately following the SEC Championship loss to Alabama, Georgia head coach Mark Richt was met with a confrontation that escalated quickly, and for all of the wrong reasons. Chuck Oliver, 680 The Fan's King of College Football and co-host of the afternoon drive program Chuck & Chernoff, got into it inadvertently with Richt in the post-game press conference.

Oliver: There are some people whether it's fans, media or whomever else that will maybe want to make further conclusions about you or your quarterback, specifically, in big games. Would you have any response to those people?

Richt: I don't know what you're saying. Why don't you just say it straight up what

you're trying to say.

Oliver: People will say that you and Aaron Murray specifically come up short on the biggest stage against the biggest opponents.

Richt: Is that what you're saying or everybody else? If that's what you're saying. Are you saying that?

Oliver: No, I'm saying I hear that every day ...

Richt: Well, that's for you to worry about then. If that's what you say, then I'll answer the question. If you think other people are saying that, I'm not worried about that. ... I want to say something else, if anybody thinks our guys didn't play their tail off and Aaron Murray didn't play his tail off, they are crazy. That's unbelievable somebody would even bring that up.

The King responded this past Monday on 680 The Fan that it was "awful, terrible, wretched, horrid judgment" to ask that initial question immediately after a game that left many Georgia players and coaches drained and unable to leave the field after the game. Oliver apologized in his own way, and said that he had already spoken with Richt, who apologized as well.

THE TRUE PROBLEM ...

While the timing was questionable, the question itself wasn't too over the line. Where The King lost even more footing was when he didn't own up, saying that he believed the opinion, merely that it was what he heard each day on his radio show. Oliver spent most of the prior week questioning when Murray, Richt and company would win a big game such as this one, but to place all of the blame elsewhere when an emotional Richt fired back was something that likely made many listeners lose a modicum of respect for the King of College Football.

Do I believe that Oliver hears that opinion on a daily basis? Probably. But then again, having worked in radio, I understand that you don't always put the rational person on the air; most of the time it is WAY more

fun to put the lunatic that speaks for .0001 percent of the population because it is fun to laugh at the crazy person.

I listen to Chuck & Chernoff every day on my way home as it is the best afternoon drive show on in Atlanta by a long shot. I have a logical opinion, but I wouldn't call in and voice it, because likely, I make too much sense and it wouldn't be good radio. Sports radio is a business and you have to do what gets listeners and/or consumers. Being normal is boring and that doesn't drive the needle.

THE BEST OPTION ...

Oliver is only really at fault for poor timing and trying to pawn what may or may not have been his opinion onto the lunatics that call in with off-the-wall opinions. I am hoping it was just poor timing and not a stunt for ratings. The show certainly doesn't need ratings as it is better than any other offering the station has and better than most every thing else on Atlanta's sports talk radio scene. I have enjoyed listening to 92.9 The Game on Saturdays when Mac McDonald and Ovie Mughelli discuss college football. They have really created a strong chemistry in a short amount of time.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

CUP OF JOE



Dawgs demoralized; Matty Nickname

By Joe Deighton

Alabama won the game, but Georgia was the better team last Saturday. The Bulldogs stood toe-to-toe with the defending national champions and had the Tide gasping for air late in the fourth quarter. A spike to stop the clock, a dropped pass by Chris Conley or just five more yards would have put Georgia in the BCS National Championship Game.

So many moments gave us thrills and disappointment in this game for the ages. There was the fake punt that the Bulldogs executed after Nick Saban's crew failed at the same tactic. The blocked field goal and Alex Ogletree's scoop-and-score sent much of the Georgia Dome crowd into delirium. The relentless running of halfback Todd Gurley showed how dominant the Georgia offense could be. Quarterback Aaron Murray was

magnificent, as he has been all season. The Crimson Tide eventually wore down line-backer Jarvis Jones and the Georgia defense, but the Bulldogs were worthy opponents in an SEC Championship that will go down as one of the greatest games ever played.

CAPITAL OFFENSE ...

The consolation prize for the SEC East champions wasn't what they wanted: a match-up with Nebraska in the Capital One Bowl. Many Georgia fans choked on their eggnog when they saw that pairing. The Cornhuskers were destroyed by an average Wisconsin team in the Big Ten title game. Nebraska gave up 70 points. Not exactly what Georgia was hoping for, but blame Ohio State and Penn State for that. The Buckeyes and the Nittany Lions will not be going bowling this year for

obvious reasons. The scandals at both schools watered down the Big Ten this year and gave rise to Wisconsin gaining a spot in the title game, in which the Badgers dismantled Nebraska.

Adding insult to injury, Florida, a team that Georgia beat, will be playing in the Sugar Bowl. On top of that, Northern Illinois from the "formidable" Mid-American Conference will be going to the Orange Bowl against Florida State. Again, blame Ohio State and Penn State.

Can someone please explain why Murray is not one of the finalists for the Heisman Trophy? A whopping 3,466 yards and 31 touchdowns on the season doesn't seem to cut it these days. In summary, the college football season produced the top two teams, but outside of that, it was a big mess in 2012.

MATTY ICE ...

There has been talk about Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan's nickname. Some have called it childish and have clamored for a new nickname. Matty Ice seems to fit, though. How many times has the fifth-year star put the game on ice with his scrambling completions this season? Announcers used to refer to players having ice water in their veins when handling pressure situations. Certainly, Ryan fits that description.

Matty Ice has thrown for more yards this year than Tom Brady, Peyton Manning

and Aaron Rodgers. His quarterback rating is higher than Drew Brees', and he has thrown more touchdowns than Tony Romo, Matthew Stafford and Eli Manning. Most importantly, Ryan has led the Atlanta Falcons to the league's best record and a shot at doing major damage in the playoffs. At this point of the season, Ryan has to be considered the leading candidate for NFL MVP. Could the Falcons win without him?

LOCKED OUT ...

Hockey isn't a very popular subject in this part of the country or in any part of the country this year. The owners have locked out the players and the season is in jeopardy for the second time since 2005.

Gary Bettman is ruining the sport by not putting the NHL on ESPN and moving teams anywhere at any time. Remember the Thrashers? He is ruining the sport that I have loved my whole life and he is ruining Christmas for NHL fans everywhere.

The signature event of the NHL season, the Winter Classic, was supposed to be played in my home state of Michigan, at the "Big House" in Ann Arbor on New Year's Day. Now, thanks to Bettman's ego, we will not have that game. I'd rather have the Grinch as NHL commissioner than Bettman. At least his heart grew at the end of the story.

Deighton can be reached at jdeighton@scoreatl.com.



BRING IN THIS AD FOR 15% OFF ANY SERVICE!

3630 Old Milton Pkwy, #140
Alpharetta, GA 30004
770.619.3988

1793 Beaver Run Rd.
Norcross, GA 30093
770.931.2411

WWW.MANSBESTFRIEND.COM

THE PROFESSIONAL DIFFERENCE IN DOG TRAINING

Training • Grooming
Boarding • Pet Supplies

Man's Best Friend

DIVISION DOMINANCE



Falcons conquer South, set sights on NFC

By Ricky Dimon



Traditionally one of the most competitive divisions in all of football, the NFC South is defined by a relatively bizarre stat that is both hard to believe but also easy to explain. Not once since its inception in 2002 has the South been won by the same team on back-to-back occasions. Counting this current 2012 campaign, the list of champions has gone Bucs, Panthers, Falcons, Bucs, Saints, Bucs, Panthers, Saints, Falcons, Saints and Falcons. For those counting, that's two titles for the Panthers, three for the Bucs, three for the Falcons and three for the Saints.

Parity may be the story of the NFC South from a historical perspective, but this season the name of the game was complete domination. The Falcons, owners of an NFL-best 11-1 record, clinched the division title last Sunday—with a whopping four weeks to spare. While their single loss came at the hands of a despised division rival (New Orleans), the Falcons' overall body of work—plus a statement revenge win last Thursday, 23-13 over the Saints—more than made up their lone hiccup.

This race was never close. Siphoning the

suspense out of the division as rapidly as air from a balloon, Atlanta led Tampa Bay by one game after two weeks, had a three-game lead through four weeks, built it to 3.5 by the end of Week 5, and held a four-game advantage after seven weeks when no other division leader led by more than 2.5 games. Now 12 contests into the season, the Falcons are five up on the Bucs, six up on the Saints and eight up on the Panthers. They made a mockery of their division to an even greater extent than New England in the AFC East and Denver in the AFC West.

NOT DONE YET ...

With four games remaining, the Falcons have not yet clinched homefield advantage throughout the NFC playoffs, nor have they secured a first-round bye. That they have a mathematical chance to accomplish both feats as early as Week 14 (in other words, this Sunday) suggests it is ultimately inevitable barring an unmitigated disaster. Still, for now there is work to be done.

"The last time we won the division I was too amped," third-year linebacker Sean

Weatherspoon wrote earlier this week on Twitter, referring to 2010, when the Falcons clinched the NFC South (and the No. 1 seed) after their final regular-season game only to flame out immediately in the playoffs by receiving a beatdown at home by Green Bay. "This time, it's just like... Ok, now let's accomplish the next goal!"

Four games remain—two against division rivals Carolina and Tampa Bay, one against defending Super Bowl champion New York and another at a Detroit team whose 4-8 record belies its true talent. The Panthers, whom Atlanta visits this Sunday, are out of playoff contention at 3-9 after losing in Week 13 to an emotional Kansas City squad that shares the NFL's worst record with Jacksonville at 2-10. Still, they won't be taken lightly. In the Georgia Dome on Sept. 30, Carolina led 28-27 with just over a minute left and had all but pinned the first loss of the season on Atlanta until Cam Newton fumbled away what would have been a game-ending first down. Instead, the Panthers punted and promptly lost on a last-second Matt Bryant field goal.

"We've certainly got to play better than we did the first time that we played them," head coach Mike Smith said in a Tuesday press conference. "Obviously, we're taking a good hard look at what we did last time and what we need to do this week. They are a team that can create explosive plays in both the run game and the pass game. They have a quarterback (Newton) that we have to account for as a runner."

Over its final four games, Atlanta may only have to account for one team that will still have postseason aspirations for which to play. The Giants, who travel to face the Falcons on Dec. 16, are 7-5 and suddenly locked into a division battle with Dallas and Washington, who are 6-6. They have no chance of clinching prior to facing Atlanta. Detroit is still on life support but must win out to have any prayer at the playoffs. With a game at Green Bay in between now and Dec. 22, Matthew Stafford, Calvin Johnson and company will almost certainly be eliminated by the time the Falcons cruise into the Motor City. Atlanta's regular-season slate ends with Tampa Bay coming to town on Dec. 30. The Bucs, who suffered a tense 24-23 loss to the Falcons on Nov. 25, are 6-6 and may be playing for a wild card.

MAGIC NUMBERS ...

As it stands right now, the other NFC contenders are playing for second place (in

the regular season, of course). That's because not only have the Falcons been taking care of their own business, but they have also been getting help. Chicago and San Francisco, their closest pursuers of late, are struggling. The Bears have dropped three of their last four games and the 49ers have won only two of their last four contests. The Giants have also lost three of four and, although the Packers have won six of their last seven, they are still just 8-4. Atlanta has a 2.5-game lead on the rest of the conference and will clinch the top seed with two more wins regardless of what anyone else does.

"We try not to think that far ahead," Matt Ryan said in his press conference after beating the Saints. "One of things I've learned in my five years is that if you worry about what you're going to do in January, you're wasting your time. We still have four games to go and we try to take them one game at a time."

That is the necessary attitude, especially because Week 14 likely won't bring further clinching. Explaining the permutations and combinations of what has to happen for Atlanta to wrap up a bye, or better yet the No. 1 seed (also mathematically possible), would confound even Albert Einstein. The bottom line, therefore, is that the Falcons would do well simply to keep doing what they've been doing: win.

Photos courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons. Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.



Personal TOUCH
LAWN CARE, INC.
A · T · L · A · N · T · A

Now is the time to get your preemergent applied to all warm season turfgrasses and to any fescue yards that will not be aerated and seeded this fall. Personal Touch can be your one-stop shop for all chemical and maintenance needs.

• Design and consultation	• Irrigation design/installation/repair	• Sod installation
• Retaining walls and walkways	• Tree and shrub installation	• Soil Testing and pH correction
• Patios and outdoor fireplaces	• Fertilization and weed control	• Mulch and annual installation

• Long term property maintenance & more! Call today for a free estimate.

WWW.PTLCATLANTA.COM • 770.908.1238

WHO'S HOT

THUMBS UP TO GETTING THERE



Conference championship games

Sure the air is out of the balloon, but the Yellow Jackets and Bulldogs made their respective conference championship games in the same year for the first time. Both teams had a chance to win their games in the final minute. Give some credit where credit is due.

Jonathan Babineaux

The Falcons defensive tackle is having a monster season. Much has been said and written about coordinator Mike Nolan's amoeba defense, but to run Nolan's scheme you need versatile, athletic smart football players like Babs. Babineaux sacks the quarterback, stuffs the run, plays all over and has even grabbed an interception in 2012. Pro Bowl, anyone?

High School Playoffs

Another winter approaches, and it's the same story across the state. Some of the top prep football in the country is being played literally in our backyards. Cinderella stories reign supreme. In AAAAAA alone, no one expected semifinal playoff runs (or better) out of Norcross, Colquitt County, Lovejoy and North Cobb.

Tech and Georgia

Losing just hurts, and sometimes it's okay to feel the pain. Tech and Georgia played hard but ultimately didn't grab their conferences' top prize. They were so close to a pair of upsets ... but nada. Let's hope both teams learn from these scars and hoist their conference hardware next December.

Rodney Harrison

After being in the building for the Falcons home win over the Saints, the former Charger and Patriot All-Pro bashed your Atlanta Falcons on national radio. Harrison poo-pooed defensive line play and quarterback Matt Ryan. Good news Rodney, 'looks like you can come back to the Dome and see them again ... in the playoffs.

The BCS formula

As college football moves toward a mini-playoff, this year is evidence of just how bad the current system is. Northern Illinois (yes, Northern Illinois) qualified for the BCS FedEx Orange Bowl with a signature victory over Kent State in the MAC championship game. Don't forget your popcorn for when they face Florida State on January 1.



WHO'S NOT

THUMBS DOWN TO BAD SYSTEMS

SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 **SO CLOSE:** In what could be called the greatest SEC game ever played, Alabama outlasted Georgia in the SEC title game 32-28. Georgia had a chance to win the game, but came up five yards short. The Bulldogs now have to pick up the pieces and get ready for Nebraska in the Capital One Bowl.

2 **OLIVER UNDER FIRE:** Current 680 the Fan host and former Score contributor Chuck Oliver felt the wrath of Mark Richt after the game as Oliver asked a question Richt did not like. It caused Richt to storm out of the press conference. Cooler heads prevailed and both parties apologized, but the tirade made headlines all across the country.

3 **RISE UP:** For the second time in three years, the Falcons have clinched the NFC South and will host at least one playoff game. Now the Falcons will look to clinch homefield advantage throughout the playoffs when they face Carolina on Sunday. The Panthers will look to get revenge on a rested Falcons squad after losing to them earlier in the season.

4 **NEW PANTHER ERA:** Georgia State has a new head coach in Trent Miles. Miles spent the last five years at Indiana State when he led the Sycamores to three straight winning seasons. This is a good move for the Panthers because Miles got Indiana State out of the cellar in a short amount of time. There is no reason he can't do it here in Atlanta.

5 **FINAL FOUR:** It's the semifinals for the high school football state playoffs and there are a few surprise teams that have made their way to the final four. In AAAAAA, North Cobb looks to be the first team from west Cobb since Harrison of 2000 to reach the state championship. Make sure to check out Scoreatl.com, gpb.org/sports and GHSA.tv for complete state semifinal coverage.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY RICKY DIMON

2	The Falcons' magic number to clinch homefield advantage throughout the NFC playoffs
44	Points scored by the Falcons on their opening possessions this season, most in the NFL
169	Season-high yards for Roddy White, plus two touchdowns, against Carolina in Week 4
12	Consecutive times the Panthers have lost (without winning) the opening coin toss in 2012
13	Consecutive coin tosses the Panthers have lost this season, including one in overtime
7	Georgia's final ranking in the BCS, highest among all teams not going to a BCS bowl game
350	Rushing yards gained by Alabama in its 32-28 SEC Championship win over Georgia
5	Previous appearances made by Georgia in the Capital One Bowl (formerly the Citrus Bowl)
254.5	Rushing yards per game being averaged by Nebraska, most in the Big Ten
70	Points allowed by Nebraska in the Big Ten Championship in its 39-point loss to Wisconsin

TRIVIA QUESTION

The Georgia Bulldogs are 3-1-1 in the Capital One/Citrus Bowl. What team beat the Dawgs and what team tied them?

Answer on Page 14

SANITY AT LAST

"We all played together, grew up together, and we're still friends. Dad would be very proud if still alive, and I know he's still watching over all of us now."

- Norcross coach Keith Maloof told the AJC's Todd Holcomb. Maloof's father, George, coached Maloof, Ware County coach Ed Dudley and St. Pius X coach Paul Standard in high school, all three of which are still alive in the football semifinals.

COACH'S DIARY

New Centennial football coach Jeffrey Carlberg is quickly putting his fingerprints all over the Knights program, and he has invited Score along for the ride during his first year at the helm. Here are highlights from last week:

Even though we missed out on the playoffs, we had an incredibly successful season and several of our players were recognized on the Region 6-AAAAAA all-region teams. Christian Robinson, Vincent Calhoun and Lorenzo McWilliams were all recognized to the first team while Chase Rosenberg, Reggie Ben-Asemota, Ryan Bennett, Kola Balogun, Brett Schrafft and Michael Lopez were recognized on the second team.

Robinson led Region 6-AAAAAA with 1,053 yards and 11 touchdowns on 72 catches. Rosenberg was second in the region with 2,293 passing yards. Alpharetta's Josh Dobbs was named offensive player of the year and West Forsyth's

A.J. Erdely was honored as the first-team quarterback, but it was Centennial's Rosenberg that received the nod on the second team after really turning it on down the stretch. He finished with more yards than Erdely, Johns Creek's Skye Overton, Lambert's Brock Maxwell and Chattahoochee's Travis Marshall, all outstanding players.

Finally, former Centennial offensive lineman David Yankey was named to the 2012 AFCA All-America first-team. Yankey started all 12 games at left tackle for Stanford this season. He helped the line lead the Pac-12 in fewest sacks allowed despite coming into the season with just 37 combined starts. Yankey had been graded out at 86 percent this season after allowing just one sack. He was featured at four of the five line positions in 2012 and was also used at tight end during the year by David Shaw. His brother Alexander played for Centennial this season.





Semifinals stacked with next-level talent

By Fletcher Proctor

Recruiting experts from across the nation have listed Georgia among the top four states each and every year for producing college football players and this 2012 football season is no different. The semifinals are loaded with players that will put pen to paper either this February or next February on National Signing Day.

In Class AAAAAA, Norcross boasts perhaps the top running back in the state in Alvin Kamara. The Blue Devils' running back has been explosive all season long, and last week added "wildcat quarterback" to his impressive resume. Kamara has rushed for more than 1,900 yards and 24 touchdowns this year and is trying to decide between Alabama and Georgia. Norcross also boasts running back/receiver Myles Autry, cornerback Shon Akins and defensive end Lorenzo Carter.

Colquitt County has its own set of playmakers in quarterback Cole Segraves and wide receiver Bobby Hill. Segraves is mulling over his options while Hill has already pulled the

trigger on a pledge to Ole Miss. In the trenches, Octavius Jackson, Rush Propst's big offensive tackle, is headed to Florida.

On the other side of the AAAAAA bracket, Lovejoy's offense will give the fax machine a workout on National Signing Day. QB Alejandro Bennifield is headed to UT-Chattanooga while TE Arshad "A.J." Jackson is for now headed to Auburn. WR Jumichael Ramos has committed to Georgia Tech along with RB Travis Custis.

STATE'S BEST JUNIOR ...

In Class AAAAA, Gainesville boasts the best player in the classification and perhaps the state, regardless of grade. Junior quarterback Deshaun Watson has accounted for 68 touchdowns on the year. Last week against Harris County, Watson tallied 572 total yards with seven scores. He has given a pledge to Clemson, but after this incredible season, he could be tempted to look around.

Northside-Warner Robins' Keshun Hill and

Whitewater's Kendall Conley are other special offensive standouts that should be followed throughout the semifinal action.

The talent in Class AAAA is spread out across all of the teams as Sandy Creek, Monroe Area, Marist and Ridgeland each have interesting prospects. Sandy Creek's Shaq Wiggins, a defensive back headed to Georgia, and junior wide receiver Demarre Kitt are at the top of the list, but don't sleep on lineman Alan Knott and junior quarterback Cole Garvin. Knott is headed to South Carolina while Garvin will certainly begin to see his recruiting process pick up over the next year.

Marist boasts a pair of stud prospects in tight end Greg Taboada (Stanford) and quarterback Myles Willis (Boston College). Each have helped the War Eagles get in a position to earn Alan Chadwick his third state title.

DEFENSIVE STARS ...

Ridgeland has an interesting player in Vonn Bell. While Bell projects as a defensive back at the next level, he has been used on offense this season with great success. He is trying to decide between Alabama, Tennessee and Ohio State.

St. Pius X has a pair of outstanding juniors in Nick Ruffin and Nick Glass that have coach Paul

Standard dreaming of state titles. Glass, a defensive back, has pledged to Georgia while Ruffin, who is starring at wide receiver in addition to defensive back, has offers from Georgia Tech, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina.

In Class AA, the 2012 Gatorade Georgia Player of the Year Taylor Lamb will try and help Calhoun reach the finals yet again and win a second straight title before departing for South Alabama. This season, Lamb has passed for 34 touchdowns and more than 3,150 yards while running for another 300 yards and 11 scores.

SMALL, BUT MIGHTY ...

Class A may be the smallest classification, but that doesn't mean it is devoid of talent. George Walton Academy's Stanley Williams has pledged to Georgia and has been running wild all season. Another junior back to watch is Landmark Christian's Jeremiah Kirkland. ELCA boasts a pair of elite prospects in defensive lineman Isaac Rochell (Notre Dame) and Keyante Green (Purdue). Finally, Dooly County's Montravius Adams is considered by several recruiting services to be the top defensive tackle in the country.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

PREP NOTEBOOK



Archer wrestling wins Southern Slam

By Stephen Black

Class AAAAAA No. 2 Archer won the Southern Slam meet Saturday in Greenville, S.C., for the Tigers' fourth tournament win this season. Fellow Georgia squad, Class AAA No. 3 Woodward Academy, took third while Class AAAAAA No. 8 Parkview came in fifth. Alexander (15th place), Buford (18th place) and Kell (26th place) also competed in the 42-team tournament. Vinny Artigues (106) and Zach Wright (152) each won their respective weight classes for Archer while Grant Aycox, Sam Bullard, Daniel Bullard, Thomas Bullard, Robby Kwarteng and DaQuan Olbert each came in second for the Tigers. Buford's Chip Ness won the 182-pound weight class while Chad Pyke of Woodward won his third Southern Slam title in a row, and this time, brother Chandler won his weight class as well. Harrison Schmid of Parkview won the 195-pound weight class.

Woodward Academy won the recent Eastside Duals, a meet that was also held in Greenville. The War Eagles finished the tournament 4-0, which included an impressive win over defending South Carolina Class AAAA champion Hillcrest.

Class AAAAAA No. 5 Brookwood and Johns Creek each went 4-0 at the Duluth Duals last Saturday. Andrew Collins, Drew McCorkle, Thanh Nguyen and James Pham each went 4-0 at the meet for Brookwood.

In other action, Class AA No. 1 Jefferson won the 19th Annual Panther Invitational held at Jackson County. Class AAA No. 6 Oconee County came in second. Creekview upended host Sprayberry 58-4 at a dual meet between the two programs. Finally, at the Walton Duals in Marietta, Class AAAAA No. 1 Pope won the meet for the third consecutive year. The Greyhounds defeated No. 2 Loganville 63-12 in the final.

FAST POOL TIMES ...

Brookwood and Peachtree Ridge split a recent meet at Mountain Park. The No. 3 Broncos won the boys meet 174-111, while the No. 5 Peachtree Ridge girls edged No. 2 Brookwood 157-150. Brookwood's boys won the 200-free relay and the 400-free relay, while the girls won the 200-free relay. Individual winners for Brookwood included Alex Taylor in the boys 200-meter freestyle and the

100-meter backstroke, Alex Thebeau in the 100-meter butterfly and Nick LaMontagne in the 100-meter freestyle and 100-meter breaststroke. Becky Bass of the Brookwood girls won the 100-meter freestyle.

For Peachtree Ridge, Kent Yang (500 freestyle), Brett Kester (50 freestyle) and Guido Saccaggi helped the boys team with individual wins while Christina Wang (100 backstroke, 50 freestyle), Carrington Bevier (100 breaststroke, 200 IM), Savannah Ruedt (200 and 500 freestyle), Haley McNery (100 butterfly) and Anna Cate Miller (1-meter dive) had wins. The girls team also won the 400 freestyle and 200 medley while the boys won the 200 medley.

The No. 4 Alpharetta boys beat Class A-AAAAA No. 2 Wesleyan 208.5 to 105.5 Thursday at Davidson Natatorium. Wesleyan's No. 8-ranked girls, however, outdid Alpharetta 197-118. Winners for the Alpharetta boys were Trent Lusby (200 freestyle, 500 freestyle), Patrick Cusick (200 IM, 100 butterfly), Jay Wellman (100 backstroke), Perry Brandes (50 freestyle, 100 freestyle), Brain Cai (100 breaststroke), and diver Jack Nyquist. For the Raiders' girls team, Kelly Hogan (200 freestyle), Rachel Koch (200 IM), Danielle Bordes (50 freestyle) and Addie Craver (100 backstroke) each won races. Alpharetta's boys won the 200 medley relay and the 200 and 400 freestyle relays, while the girls won the 200 medley and 400 freestyle.

Wesleyan's Carrie Ciccotello (100 freestyle), Rachel Koch (200 IM, 500 freestyle), Lillie Baker (100 breaststroke) and Camille Roy (100 butterfly) all won races while diver Taylor Panthers won the girl's 1-meter dive.

Photo courtesy of Scott Karlins. Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.



SCORE FOOTBALL RANKINGS ENTERING POSTSEASON

Class AAAAAA

1. Camden County
2. Lassiter
3. Grayson
4. Norcross
5. Lovejoy
6. North Gwinnett
7. Lowndes
8. McEachern
9. West Forsyth
10. Langston Hughes

Class AAAA

1. Sandy Creek
2. Marist
3. Burke County
4. Griffin
5. Jonesboro
6. Cairo
7. Ridgeland
8. Monroe Area
9. Stockbridge
10. Westside-Macon

Class AA

1. Calhoun
2. Brooks County
3. Vidalia
4. Lamar County
5. Jefferson
6. Heard County
7. Fitzgerald
8. Screven County
9. Washington-Wilkes
10. Cook

Class AAAAA

1. Northside-WR
2. East Paulding
3. ML King
4. Kell
5. Whitewater
6. Flowery Branch
7. Ware County
8. Thomas Co. Central
9. Tucker
10. Allatoona

Class AAA

1. Thomson
2. Carver-Columbus
3. Cartersville
4. Buford
5. Peach County
6. Pierce County
7. Washington County
8. St. Pius X
9. North Oconee
10. Blessed Trinity

Class A

1. ELCA
2. Lincoln County
3. ECI
4. Athens Academy
5. Calvary Day
6. Wilcox County
7. Walker
8. Prince Ave. Christian
9. Savannah Christian
10. Seminole County

SWIMMING RANKINGS

BOYS

Class AAAAAA

1. Parkview
2. Lassiter
3. Brookwood
4. Alpharetta
5. Milton
6. North Gwinnett
7. Collins Hill
8. Chattahoochee
9. Mill Creek
10. Johns Creek

Class A-AAAAA

1. Marist
2. Wesleyan
3. Westminster
4. Dalton
5. Sequoyah
6. St. Pius X
7. Woodward Academy
8. Oconee County
9. Pope
10. North Hall

GIRLS

Class AAAAAA

1. Parkview
2. Brookwood
3. Kennesaw Mountain
4. Walton
5. Peachtree Ridge
6. Etowah
7. Lassiter
8. Mill Creek
9. North Gwinnett
10. Archer

Class A-AAAAA

1. Westminster
2. Marist
3. Woodward Academy
4. St. Pius X
5. North Paulding
6. Calvary Day
7. Pope
8. Wesleyan
9. Greenbrier
10. Rome

HAWKS VS THUNDER

WEDNESDAY, DEC 19 @ 7:30

hawks.com



HAWKS VS BULLS
SATURDAY, DEC 22 @ 7:00
CHICK-FIL-A SATURDAY
FAMILY NIGHT
4 TICKETS
4 COMBOS **\$149**

Owned and Operated by the:
KATZ FAMILY



TOTAL CAR CARE! TOTAL CUSTOMER CARE!

•BRAKES •OIL CHANGES •ALIGNMENTS •TIRES •SHOCKS •STRUTS •EXHAUST
•FACTORY SCHEDULED MAINTENANCE •ENGINE DIAGNOSTICS •REPAIRS AND MORE

6 Convenient Locations

820 Holcomb Bridge Rd. (East of Alpharetta Hwy.) Roswell, GA 770-998-2974	2730 Town Center Dr. NW (Across From Town Center Mall) Kennesaw, GA 770-425-5300	453 Glynn St. N. (Hudson Plaza) Fayetteville, GA 770-461-7731
920 Northside Dr. NW (Across From GA Tech.) Atlanta, GA 404-876-5879	1764 Cobb Parkway S. (North of Windy Hill Rd.) Marietta, GA 770-952-0151	1105 Johnson Ferry Rd. (2 Miles South of Merchant Walk) Marietta, GA 770-509-1838

OIL CHANGE & TIRE ROTATION
*Up to 6 qts CONVENTIONAL OIL • 4in-Stock Oil Filter • Courtesy Check including visual brake check

Not valid with other offers. High mileage, synthetic & synthetic blends extra. Plus tax. Valid at above locations.
Expires 12/31/2013

\$17⁹⁹

SA - L O F

SCORE HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS NEWSLETTER

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS, 6 DAYS A WEEK, RIGHT IN YOUR INBOX!

SIGN UP TODAY!

TEXT SCORENEWSLETTER TO 22828



Produced by Feld Entertainment

Disney Live!

MICKEY'S MUSIC FESTIVAL



With Special Guests



Tickets Start at \$15!
Sun. DEC. 16 ★ 1:00, 4:00 & 7:00 PM

PHILIPS ARENA

Buy tickets at **Ticketmaster.com**, **ticketmaster®**
Retail Locations, Philips Arena Box Office
or call **1-800-745-3000**
Groups of 10 or more call (770) 578-5125

Regular Ticket Prices: \$15 • \$25 • \$40
\$55 VIP Floor • \$70 Front Row
Additional fees may apply.

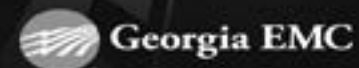
disneylive.com

KAPLAN KIDS
kaplankids.com

Facebook YouTube

TRIUMPHS WORTH SHARING

GPB salutes the accomplishments of student athletes, coaches, parents, schools and communities participating in the GHSA Football Championships, and thanks our corporate partners for their support in making these events available to all the people of Georgia.



BULLDOG BEAT



Dawgs preparing to take on Huskers

By Chris Lionetti

After a heartbreaking loss to the Alabama Crimson Tide crushed their hopes of a BCS Bowl, the Georgia Bulldogs sat Sunday night awaiting word of which bowl they would be attending. They did not wait long as athletic director Greg McGarity announced a little after 5:30 that the Bulldogs had accepted a bid to play in the Capital One Bowl located in sunny Orlando. Georgia will be opposed by the Nebraska Cornhuskers, members of the Big 10.

For a team that was five yards away from a possible championship, anything less than a BCS bowl is disconcerting. From Georgia fans to Alabama's Nick Saban, there are many who believe the team should have received a better bowl bid. McGarity was one of these supporters.

"There's absolutely no question that we are deserving of a BCS bid," Georgia's athletic director said. "I know Florida finished third, and by way of them finishing third in the BCS, that locked out us without any discussion. There's no question that we played great the last half of the season, and just to see the way that we laid it on the line yesterday and to prove that we're right there along with the best

in college football. I know we are all still hurting a little bit right now, but the sun still came up this morning and there's nothing we can do about it but learn and move forward, and we're really excited to be in Orlando."

CORN DOGS ...

The Bulldogs will resume practice after taking a break for finals and hope to get 12-15 practices in before their game against the Cornhuskers. The matchup between the two teams is the first since the 1969 Sun Bowl and the second in their history.

While playing a team for a second time does not usually produce a storyline, this matchup is different. What's the storyline? Georgia head coach Mark Richt was born in Nebraska.

"It's kind of personal for me in that I was born in Omaha, and my mom and dad grew up in Nebraska," Richt said. "All of my cousins on that side of the family are big Husker fans, but they like the Bulldogs too. They call themselves the Corn Dogs, actually, as a combination of Cornhuskers and Dogs."

Lionetti can be reached at clionetti@scoreatl.com.

TECH BUZZ



Jackets fall to Seminoles in title game

By Ryan Caiafa

It was a game that nobody felt the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets had any business being in, but coach Paul Johnson and his team gave Florida State everything they had and nearly erased a 21-6 halftime deficit before falling to the Seminoles 21-15 in the ACC Championship game in Charlotte.

The game had the makings of a blow-out early on after the Jackets couldn't stop the Florida State rushing attack, but halftime seemed to wake the defense up as they forced two turnovers and held the opposition scoreless for the final 30 minutes as they attempted to rally from the early deficit. A Tevin Washington rushing score with just under seven minutes to play cut the Seminoles' lead to 21-15. The Jackets' offense was able to get the ball back with just over two minutes to play, but Washington was intercepted by Karlos Williams to foil the upset bid.

Washington finished with 76 passing yards, 20 yards on the ground and the Jackets only touchdown, while Chris Tanner knocked in three field goals. James Wilder Jr. led Florida State with 69 rushing yards and two touchdowns. The win sent the Seminoles to

the Orange Bowl, while the Jackets fell to 6-7 on the season. Tech remained bowl-eligible thanks to an NCAA waiver granting them eligibility despite a losing record.

TROJAN TEST ...

Next up for the Jackets is another trip to El Paso on New Year's Eve to take on Lane Kiffin's USC Trojans in the Hyundai Sun Bowl. High expectations plagued the Trojans this season as they were ranked No. 1 by the AP to start the year before tumbling to a 7-5 record. Don't let the record fool you, as this Trojans team has the potential to put up points in bunches.

Fortunately for the Jackets, USC also has that same level of potential to give them up, making the matchup prime for an offensive-minded team such as the Jackets to take advantage. Matt Barkley is expected to play for USC, which could spell trouble for Tech, who has struggling at stopping a potent passing attack throughout the season. In last year's Sun Bowl, the Jackets were shocked by Utah 30-27 in overtime.

Caiafa can be reached at rcaiafa@scoreatl.com.

PANTHER PROWL



Miles named new football coach

By Brian Jones

The football team will begin a new era as Trent Miles has been named the new head coach of the young program. Miles spent the last five seasons at Indiana State where he led the Sycamores to three consecutive winning seasons. Back in 2010, he was named Missouri Valley Football Conference coach of the year and was a finalist for the Eddie Robinson national coach of the year as well as the Liberty Mutual coach of the year awards.

"I am extremely honored and excited to be the new head football coach at Georgia State University," Miles told georgiastatesports.com. "I want to thank President Mark Becker and Director of Athletics Cheryl Levick for the opportunity to lead this program into the FBS and the Sun Belt Conference."

Miles has also spent time as an assistant at Stanford, Notre Dame and Washington. His first head coaching job was at Indiana State, his alma mater. He was a wide receiver for the Sycamores from 1982-86 and twice helped his team reach the FCS playoffs.

"I'd be crazy for not thanking Indiana State University for giving me my first head coaching job and most importantly the players who believed in what we were doing and went out and did it," Miles said during his

press conference. "We had a great team meeting and the first thing I told the players was 'it's time to win.' We expect to win on and off the football field."

On offense, Miles likes to run multiple sets that will feature different personnel groups. During his time at Indiana State, his team featured a predominately passing offense the first three years before turning to a running offense the last two. On defense, it's unclear what Miles will run for the Panthers, but he said he will blitz a lot. It worked for the Sycamores as they averaged less than 300 yards per game.

Miles signed a contract that will last through the 2017 season.

BREAKING EVEN ...

The men's basketball team is now 4-4 on the year after sliding past Liberty 67-66 earlier this week. Manny Atkins and Devonta White each scored 17 points while Rashard Richardson scored the game-winning three-pointer with less than three seconds left in the second half. The Panthers will look to get over .500 for the second time this year Saturday when they face Southern Poly.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

OWL OUTLOOK



Hoops teams struggling early

By Brian Jones

After a nine-point loss to Tennessee to open the 2012-13 season, things looked promising for the men's basketball team as the Owls look to improve upon last year's 3-28 record. The team recorded its first win of the year on Nov. 12, taking down South Carolina State; the results have not been stellar since.

The Owls last suited up this past Saturday, falling to Tennessee-Martin 65-63. The game was tied with 6.8 seconds left in regulation, but UT-Martin made the go-ahead layup to hand the Owls their seventh loss of the year.

Despite the disappointing loss, several Owls stepped up when their number was called. Senior forward Aaron Anderson recorded 15 points and 10 rebounds while the other senior forward, Markeith Cummings, scored a team-high 17 points. Delbert Love added 12 points, six rebounds, five assists and four steals in the loss.

The Owls will now have nearly two weeks off before they play again. Their next game is on Dec. 16 when they face Charlotte at the Convocation Center at 4 p.m.

SAME ISSUES ...

The women's team is not having much more success on the hardwood. The Lady

Owls followed up a 51-50 win over Jacksonville State with a loss 63-42 loss to Georgia State in Atlanta.

Sametria Gideon led the Lady Owls with 12 points and nine rebounds while Kristina Wells added 11 points and four assists, but the KSU defense could not stop the Georgia State offense as the Lady Panthers led 33-15 at the half and shot 50 percent from the floor.

"We did some things well," Kennesaw State head coach Nitra Perry told ksuowls.com. "We need to work on our mental toughness and on putting a whole 40 minutes together. We were close in rebounds and they only took four more shots than we did. It just comes down to finishing on some of those layups and free throws."

NEW BASEBALL COACH ...

The Owls have a new assistant coach for baseball as Derek Simmons will help head coach Mike Sansing this upcoming season. Simmons spent the last two years at Central Michigan as the infield coach. He will serve as KSU's hitting coach while assisting in recruiting and other offensive facets.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

HAWKS HAVEN



Long layoff for Hawks after rough loss

By Ricky Dimon

Outside of the Atlanta Hawks' own locker room, few expectations accompanied the team as the 2012-13 season arrived. As a result, they are widely considered to be one of the NBA's most surprising teams after five weeks. A 9-5 record would put Atlanta comfortably in the playoffs if they began today and it has the Hawks in second place in the Southeast Division—well ahead of everyone other than Miami.

While a number of down-to-the-wire victories suggest the record could be worse, it also could be better. The Hawks had to sit around for four days—their longest break of the season not including in February for the All-Star Game—after losing a 113-111 heartbreaker to Cleveland (4-14) last Friday night at the Highlight Factory. Louis Williams tied the game at 111-111 thanks to a three-pointer with 13 seconds remaining only to see the Cavs answer via a stroke of good fortune. Dion Waiters airballed his game-winning attempt, but the ball fell right into Alonzo Gee's hands and he put it in at the buzzer.

"As I told the guys after the game, maybe we needed a game like this," head coach Larry Drew told the Atlanta Journal Constitution following his team's surprising loss. "We've been home for a while. We dodged a couple of bullets with some teams, Washington came in here and we were in a similar scenario. Charlotte

came in here in a similar scenario. Maybe we needed a game like this. I don't know."

NEWS AND NOTES ...

Multi-faceted stars Al Horford and Josh Smith have been lighting up the stat sheet for Atlanta. Horford is averaging 15.9 points, 9.5 rebounds, 3.5 assists and 1.08 blocks per game; Smith is averaging 16.1 points, 7.6 rebounds, 3.7 assists and 2.38 blocks. In their last two outings, Horford has two double-doubles, 32 points, 22 rebounds, 11 assists and four blocks; Smith has 42 points, 21 rebounds, nine assists, eight blocks and five steals.

The Hawks designated rookies John Jenkins and Mike Scott for assignment to the D-League last weekend. Playing for Atlanta's affiliate team, the Bakersfield Jam, Jenkins scored 22 points in a 102-95 win over the Santa Cruz Warriors on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Hawks finally returned to action on Wednesday with a home game against Denver, but results were not available at press time. They have back-to-back games on Friday and Saturday against Washington and Memphis, respectively. The latter begins a three-game road trip that includes a showdown at Miami next Monday.

Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.

FALCONS BEAT



Falcons focusing on No. 1 seed

By Craig Sager II

The Atlanta Falcons are cruising into the final quarter of their 16-game season to face a 3-9 Carolina team in a rematch of the thrilling 30-28 comeback win in Week 4. The Panthers find themselves in the basement of an underachieving NFC South this season that awarded Atlanta with its second division crown in three years with four games still to play. Next on the list for head coach Mike Smith and the 11-1 Falcons is to secure home-field advantage and a first-round bye in the playoffs. With San Francisco and Chicago both losing last weekend, the division champs moved one step closer to their final regular-season goal. Winning two of the last four games would secure the top seed regardless of how the rest of the NFC finishes 2012.

TEAM GOALS ...

Getting healthy is going to be a big part of the final stretch of the season, and many eyes will be on cornerback Asante Samuel, whose health will be a priority after a recurring shoulder problem sidelined him over the last few games. The secondary has had its share of injuries, but the unit continues to pass the cerebral and physical tests of defending the league's top quarterbacks and offensive attacks. The defense is coming off its best

performance of the season after forcing Drew Brees to throw a career-high five interceptions.

Safeties William Moore and Thomas DeCoud have impacted games all season, and Moore's physical tackling and playmaking, combined with DeCoud's acrobatics, has created a safety net for the aggressive Mike Nolan defense. The duo has combined for nine interceptions. The three-year pro Moore is leading the Falcons with 59 solo and 16 assisted tackles and doing it from the safety spot. John Abraham leads the rush with 10 sacks on the season. After the offensive side of the football grabbed the attention in the earlier part of the season, big defensive performances in big games have helped build a solid reputation around this unit.

PANTHER PRIDE ...

The Carolina offense found success against the Falcons in their last matchup and defensively sacked Matt Ryan seven times. The Panthers are coming off a disappointing loss against the Kansas City Chiefs in what was a grief-stricken Arrowhead Stadium. They are expected to be a focused and hungry opponent for the Falcons this Sunday.

Sager can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

CHOP SHOP

PRESENTED BY



Braves add Upton to potent lineup

By Fletcher Proctor

The Atlanta Braves can now close the door on bringing back Michael Bourn as the team announced last week the signing of free agent center fielder B.J. Upton. The 28-year-old spent the last eight seasons with the Tampa Bay organization after being selected No. 2 overall in the 2002 draft. Last season, Upton appeared in 146 games, racking up 141 hits with 28 home runs and 78 RBIs while hitting .246. He did strike out 169 times, but he managed a .298 on-base percentage with a .454 slugging percentage. Upton also showed some speed, stealing 31 bases in 37 attempts.

Conversely, Bourn, who will turn 30 on Dec. 27, managed a .348 on-base percentage with 42 stolen bases in 55 chances. His slugging percentage paled in comparison, registering just .391, and Bourn struck out 155 times. His power numbers were nowhere as close as he finished with just nine home runs and 57 RBIs.

Upton will be an upgrade over Bourn after becoming the only player in Major League Baseball since 2007 to hit at least 100 home runs and steal 200 bases. He has averaged 19 home runs, 71 RBIs and 36 steals per year over the past six seasons.

"We are thrilled to add B.J. Upton to our club," said Braves GM Frank Wren in a release put out by the team. "B.J. is an outstanding defensive player who also adds the power dimension to our offense from the center fielder position. We have been working to increase the speed and athleticism across our team and B.J. gives us another young, dynamic player."

OTHER CHANGES ...

The Braves didn't stop making moves after signing Upton. The team re-upped short-stop Paul Janish to a one-year deal to avoid arbitration. Janish was acquired last year when Andrelton Simmons went down with an injury. He played well defensively, but recently had surgery on his left shoulder. He is expected to be back possibly by late April.

The Braves also traded pitcher Tommy Hanson to the Angels for former All-Star set-up man Jordan Walden. He recorded 32 saves in 2011 but served in middle relief last season. Finally, the team chose not to tender contracts to Peter Moylan and Jair Jurrjens.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

GWINNETT GLADIATORS



Glads slump, but stay in first

By Joe Deighton

The Gwinnett Gladiators dropped two of three games last week but maintained the top spot in the ECHL's Eastern Conference. The two losses dropped the Glads to 15-6-1-0 on the season, still good enough to lead Greenville by four points in the division.

Gwinnett managed to defeat Fort Wayne 3-1 Friday after losing to the Komets Nov. 28. Dallas Jackson scored his fifth goal of the year on a power play to open the scoring. Special teams were clicking on both sides, as Evan Bloodoff gave the Glads the lead with a short-handed goal midway through the second period. Goalie Louis Dominique tallied two assists in the game, something that is rarely achieved by a net minder. Forward Corey Fienhage finished off the scoring with an empty net goal with under a minute to play. Fienhage also collected two assists.

For just the second time all season, the Gladiators were shut out on Saturday, as they dropped a game to South Carolina 2-0.

Despite not playing up to their capabilities this week, there should not be much concern for Gwinnett fans, as the Glads hold a four-point lead in the conference standings.

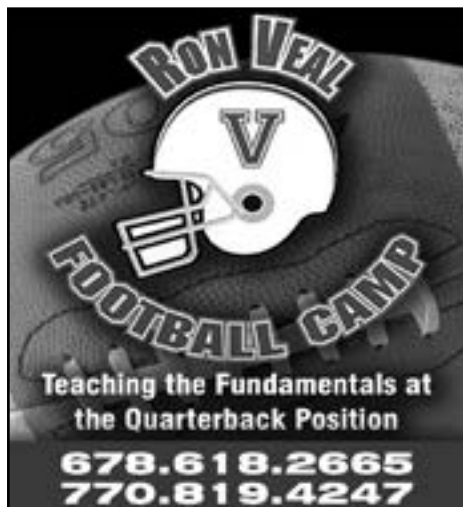
LEE CALLED UP ...

Successful play in the ECHL usually means a move to the AHL or NHL and that is the case again for goalie Mike Lee this week. Lee leads all rookie netminders with a 1.87 goals against average and a .926 save percentage. Those numbers are good enough to rank him second overall in the league. The Portland Pirates called Lee up to be their starter this week. Lee has been fantastic for the Glads this year, posting two shutouts and earning nine victories in 15 games played.

ON THE DOCKET ...

The first-place Gladiators will be back at home this weekend to take on division-rival Greenville on back-to-back nights, Friday and Saturday. Gwinnett has struggled against the Road Warriors this season, losing two of the three games played. This will be another test for Gwinnett against its closest competition and fiercest rival. If the Glads can pick up both wins, it will go a long way towards cementing their position as the best team in the Eastern Conference.

Deighton can be reached at jdeighton@scoreatl.com.



Teaching the Fundamentals at the Quarterback Position

678.618.2665
770.819.4247

TRIVIA ANSWER

Miami (OH) beat Georgia in 1974, the Dawgs' first-ever Citrus Bowl appearance. Florida State tied Georgia in the 1984 game.

MIKAEL'S AUTO SPA

ATLANTA'S #1 CAR WASH AND DETAILING DESTINATION

LOCATED IN THE HEART OF SANDY SPRINGS ON ROSWELL RD.
6380 Roswell Rd. • Atlanta, GA • 30328 • 404.252.0376

How To Get Your Career Off To A Fast Start!



Want to get a leg up on the competition? Then take some career advice that will put you on track: join the National Guard. In exchange for your part-time service, you'll get:

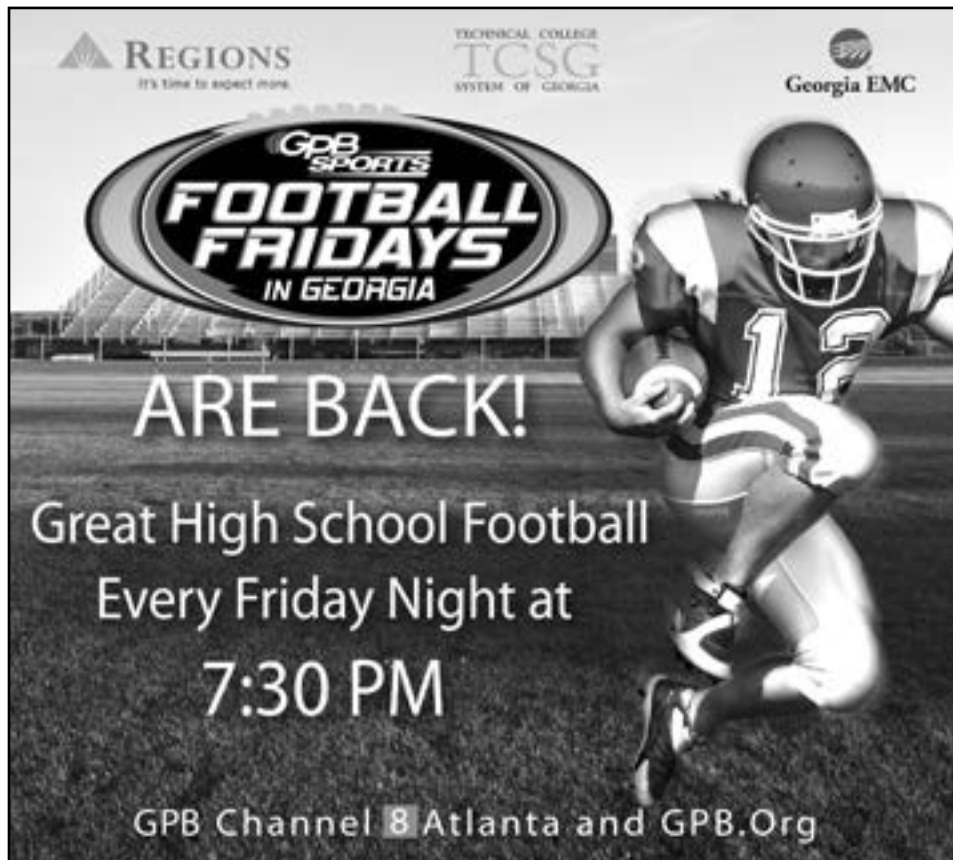
- Paid expert training while you learn valuable job skills
- Up to 100% Tuition Assistance*

If you're looking for a rewarding profession, make it your business to know what the Guard has to offer.

Call 1-800-GO-GUARD or visit us at www.NATIONALGUARD.com

* Up to \$4,500 per fiscal year (1 Oct - 30 Sep)

Georgia
**NATIONAL
GUARD**
NATIONALGUARD.com



REGIONS
It's time to expect more.

TECHNICAL COLLEGE
TCSG
SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

Georgia EMC

**GPB SPORTS
FOOTBALL
FRIDAYS
IN GEORGIA**

ARE BACK!

Great High School Football
Every Friday Night at
7:30 PM

GPB Channel 8 Atlanta and GPB.Org

Before you buy or sell a car, call us!



**MERLIN
AUTO GROUP**

- Local family owned and operated
- Complete Satisfaction Guaranteed
- Over 100 cars in stock

merlinautogroup.com | 770-457-2699

IT'S GOOD TO BE TOP DOG.

SONIC® IS A PROUD SPONSOR OF HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL IN ATLANTA.



Good Luck in the coming season!

TM & © 2012 America's Drive-In Brand Properties LLC



2013 SEASON TICKET
PRIORITY LIST

SIGN UP NOW AT WWW.ATLANTAFALCONS.COM/TICKETS