

SCORE

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SEASON PREVIEW



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PREVIEW



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**CAN'T MISS
THIS WEEK**

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**TEAM SCOOP
AND VOICES**

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

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INSIDE AT SCORE**ON THE
NO**

Score Atlanta is looking for writing interns. Please e-mail **Stephen Black** at sblack@scoreatl.com or call **404-256-1572** for more information.

**SHOT OF THE
WEEK...**

FOOTBALL TIME: Kell players celebrate a touchdown in last year's Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic. The Longhorns are in the event once again, which includes five big-time high school games on Aug. 24 at the Georgia Dome. Photo courtesy of Deanna Fiveash.

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OFFENSIVE PREVIEW



One of NFL's top units led by Ryan

By Stephen Black

The Falcons had one of the top offenses in the NFL last season. Almost everyone from that unit is back for 2013, but this time, running back Steven Jackson is also in the fold.

Replacing Tyson Clabo and Todd McClure on the offensive line won't be easy, but the Falcons do have capable players in those spots battling for the starting job. The rest of the group will look familiar to Falcons backers, with Matt Ryan leading the band, Tony Gonzalez starring at tight end, and wide receivers Roddy White and Julio Jones catching Ryan's rockets.

Here is an in-depth look at the 2013 Falcons offense.

QUARTERBACK ...

What can you say about the Falcons' starting quarterback? Since his rookie season in 2008, Ryan has led Atlanta to the playoffs

four times. The Falcons had been just eight times in the previous 42 seasons.

Last year, Ryan set career bests in passing yards (4,719), passing touchdowns (32), completion percentage (a League-best 68.6) and even rushing yards (141). He also guided the Falcons on seven game-winning drives, including the dramatic surge down the field in the final minute in the playoff win over Seattle.

Behind Ryan, there are three signal-callers. The immediate backup is Dominique Davis, who, ironically, was Ryan's backup at Boston College for a year. Davis stands 6-foot-3, 210 pounds, and completed 33 of 56 passes for 402 yards last preseason.

RUNNING BACK ...

Jackson, the Rams' career rushing leader, will start at running back this year for

Atlanta and brings an added dimension that many backs do not possess: the ability to be a weapon out of the backfield on passing plays.

"The thing I like about Steven Jackson is that he isn't just a running back, he's a receiving back as well," said Head Coach Mike Smith.

Backing up Jackson is another Oregon State product, Jacquizz Rodgers. In two years with Atlanta, "Quizz" has run for 567 yards and caught 74 balls for 590 yards. And at 5-foot-6, 196 pounds, Rodgers provides a change of pace in the backfield from the hulking Jackson.

Jason Snelling, entering his seventh year as a Falcon, provides another alternative in the backfield. He has run for 1,256 yards and had 1,033 receiving yards.

Bradie Ewing and Patrick DiMarco will play fullback. Ewing, a 2012 draft pick, missed last season due to injury.

WIDE RECEIVER ...

Atlanta has an embarrassment of riches in this position group. Roddy White has been one of the League's top pass-catchers since 2005. Atlanta traded quite a bit to earn the rights to the No. 6 pick in the 2011 draft and used it to take Julio Jones, who has blossomed into one of the League's top playmakers. White and Jones form what has been called the top wide receiver duo in the NFL. As if that wasn't enough, Harry Douglas plays the role of the Falcons' third option at wideout. Douglas is a player many NFL teams would value a No. 2 receiver.

TIGHT END ...

Tony G is back. That is all Falcons fans need to know about the tight end situation in Flowery Branch. After seriously considering retirement, the 37-year old decided to come back for one more shot at the Super Bowl. And that made a lot of people happy in the state of Georgia.

OFFENSIVE LINE ...

McClure and Clabo are gone, but one of the Falcons best lines in recent memory returns for the 2013 season. Position battles have ensued at center and right tackle and, regardless of who wins the starting job, it is certain the Falcons are talented and deep at each position.

Peter Konz and Joe Hawley are competing for McClure's former position at center. Konz, a Wisconsin product, has started 10 NFL games while Hawley has started 12.

At guard, Garrett Reynolds will man the spot on the right side of the line. Reynolds, a UNC product, has started 13 NFL games, all with Atlanta. At left guard, Justin Blalock has turned into an ironman of sorts for the Falcons. In six years in the League, Blalock has started all 94 games he has played in.

Veteran Sam Baker begins his sixth year with Atlanta and has started in 53 games, mostly at left tackle.

Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.

DEFENSIVE PREVIEW



Draft picks energize Nolan's unit

By Craig Sager II

Mike Nolan enters his second season as Atlanta's defensive coordinator and carries 26 years of NFL coaching experience to a unit that gathered talent in the offseason to bolster its production. Atlanta was the oldest team in the NFC last year, but six of its eight 2013 draft picks were on the defensive side of the ball.

The Falcons added the master of the sack-fumble play in defensive end Osi Umenyiora. The former Giant set an NFL record in 2010 for most forced fumbles in a season with 10.

DEFENSIVE LINE ...

The Falcons gained Super Bowl experience with the addition of Umenyiora this off-season and the end will try to lead Atlanta's pass rush. Kroy Biermann, Jonathan Massaquoi and Cliff Matthews have received the

most work at defensive end in training camp.

Biermann is a versatile option who can play in an array of defensive alignments. Biermann had a career-high 53 tackles last season. Rookies Malliciah Goodman out of Clemson and Stansly Maoponga out of TCU add quality depth at end.

At the tackle position is veteran Jonathan Babineaux, who showed the ability to play some end last season. Babineaux had a career-high six sacks in 2009 and finished the 2012 season with 42 total tackles. The former Iowa Hawkeye will work with Travian Robertson, Peria Jerry and Corey Peters to bolster the defensive front.

LINEBACKERS ...

The Falcons' linebacking corps has three fast and talented starters, but the depth behind

them is still developing at this point. The off-season has been used to find reliable backups. Since the start of training camp, key undrafted free agents have been battling for a spot on the 53-man roster.

The clear leader of the linebackers is former 2010 first-round pick Sean Weatherspoon. In 2012, "Spoon" had 114 tackles, three sacks, one forced fumble and an interception. The former Missouri Tiger is one of the best young linebackers in the League, and brings speed and energy to the defense on every play.

Akeem Dent starts at middle linebacker and continued to improve each week last season. In the final two playoff games, Dent recorded 17 of his 79 total tackles. Nolan likes to switch to nickel packages and Dent was often sidelined on passing downs.

Stephen Nicholas had a solid 2012 season and recorded a team-high 116 tackles. The former South Florida Bull also added two sacks and an interception to the stat sheet. Stopping offenses at the point of attack and forcing long passing downs will be a goal of this talented starting group.

Paul Worriorow is an undrafted free agent out of Delaware who notched a game-high 12 tackles in the first preseason game. The rookie has shown to be one of the surest tacklers on the field in preseason games. Joplo Bartu, an undrafted rookie out of Texas State, and Brian Banks are fighting for roster spots.

DEFENSIVE BACKS ...

The secondary helped set the tone last season in some of the most critical matchups. The group forced three Peyton Manning interceptions in the first quarter of the Falcons' win over Denver on Monday Night Football. Safety William Moore is a game-changer and had Atlanta's best defensive performance last season in the home win over the Saints.

Adjacent to Moore is free safety Thomas DeCoud, who joined Moore in the 2013 Pro Bowl after a team-high six interceptions. Rookie safeties Kemal Ishmael, out of UCF, and Zeke Motta from Notre Dame were both drafted in the seventh round and are excellent tacklers and ball hawks.

This year's first-round pick, Desmond Trufant, will step in opposite starting cornerback Asante Samuel. Robert Alford was taken in the second round of the draft, and adds another rising star to the Falcons' pool of cornerbacks.

Robert McClain was the surprise of Atlanta's defense last season as he filled in at the crucial nickel back position. The fourth-year pro had 55 solo tackles and added one interception and two fumble recoveries to his breakout performance. Veteran Dominique Franks adds another option at cornerback.

Samuel, McClain, Trufant and Alford will give Nolan plenty of flexibility with his personnel groupings, and there will likely be a rotation between the group.

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SEASON PREVIEW



Franchise has one goal left to accomplish

By Stephen Black



The Falcons have been one of the most consistently successful teams in the NFL the past five seasons. They've made the playoffs four times. They've won the NFC South division twice. They've had winning records each year.

But a casual observer during OTAs and minicamp could tell this team isn't complacent. With position battles taking place, rookies trying to earn respect and veterans perfecting their crafts, it was obvious the Falcons were looking for something more.

"Last year was last year," said wide receiver Julio Jones. "This is a whole new year. Nobody's gonna give us anything. We've got to work for everything. Everybody's great (in the NFL). It's on (us) to make that decision if we want to get back there (NFC championship) or get further than that."

The one thing missing for the Falcons is the Super Bowl. Watching the intensity of this team in the offseason shows the pursuit of that goal is the only thing that matters.

The players and coaches aren't resting on their laurels and neither is the front office. General manager Thomas Dimitroff pulled off two of the biggest free-agent signings of the offseason when he brought star running back Steven Jackson and veteran pass rusher Osi Umenyiora to Atlanta.

"As a coach, you want to put your guys in position to be successful," said head coach Mike Smith during OTAs. "And the more flexibility that we have with the skill sets of our players, it's going to give us an opportunity for a whole lot of different things. Each year, through the process of building this team, Thomas and his staff have provided us

with the players that we need and we're going to continue to get better. I don't anticipate taking a step back."

ROCKY ROAD ...

While last year's schedule featured an abnormally consistent rotation of home and away games, the 2013 slate features imposing road games and a bevy of quality opponents. Road games at Green Bay (in December, no less) and defending NFC champion San Francisco stand out as do home tilts with Seattle and New England. The season-opener at New Orleans does nobody in Flowery Branch any favors and the Falcons also face an odd late-season trip to play the Bills in Toronto.

But in the NFL, players get used to overcoming challenges. That is what pro football is all about.

"We always take it one game at a time and week to week," said veteran defensive tackle Jonathan Babineaux. "No matter if it's home-home, or away-away, it really doesn't matter as long as we prepare week in and week out and get ready for Sundays. ... So as long as we prepare well and do the necessary things and show up to win on Sunday, I think we'll be alright."

NEW BLOOD ...

Players like Umenyiora and Jackson get Falcons Nation excited just on name alone. Jackson, a proven NFL running back, shouldered much of the offensive load in St. Louis during his career. In Atlanta, however, he provides the Falcons with another dimension out of the backfield.

"The thing I like about Steven Jackson isn't just at running back, he's a receiving back as well," said Smith. "So it gives us flexibility in our personnel groupings in terms of we're putting out a run or a pass grouping, you're not going to be able to tell."

In his final eight seasons in St. Louis, Jackson rushed for more than 1,000 yards. He also accounted for an average of 48.5 receptions per year, starting with his second season in the League.

While Jackson has certainly provided a lot to the offense, Umenyiora brings a different element to the other side of the ball. The native of London, England has averaged more than nine sacks per season since 2004 and helped lead his former team, the Giants, to two Super Bowls behind a suf-

focusing pass rush.

But, like Jackson, Umenyiora brings more than just physical skills.

"Our younger guys and some of the older ones have gravitated towards him," said Smith about his new defensive end. "From an impact standpoint, we know what he's done on the field. Everybody can see that and I'm aware of that too. Off the field, those little things are appreciated and will help us."

In addition to the two major free-agent signings, a talented group of rookies will also be on the squad this year. That gaggle of youngsters is led by cornerbacks Desmond Trufant and Robert Alford. The rookie duo have the luxury of learning the ropes against some of the best wideouts in the League.

"Just coming from Southeastern (Louisiana) to the NFL, there's a lot that I need to learn," said Alford. "Going against Julio and Roddy everyday is getting me better. Both of them are Pro bowl-caliber receivers. I'm going against the best and that's the only thing I can do to help me get better as a player."

In all, six of eight draft choices by Atlanta were defenders. The Falcons' offense is one of the best in the League, so it was evident to most who follow the team where it needed the most new blood, which will fight with veterans for starting jobs.

"This is probably going to be the most competitive offseason that we've had since our first season," said Smith. "Defensive back is one of the first areas where there will be competition. Not only at the corner position but at the safety position and the backup roles because of the way we addressed it in the draft."

While many of the jobs that are up for grabs lie on the defensive side of the ball, the offense has some competition brewing as well. The skill positions are pretty much set in stone with Pro Bowlers all over the place but in the trenches, a couple positions remain unclear.

All NFL teams have to compete under the same rules and guidelines, but the Falcons have put themselves into an elite class that is expected to win every year. From the ownership to the front office to the coaching staff and the players, it seems Atlanta has everything it needs to take that next step and be the last team standing.

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

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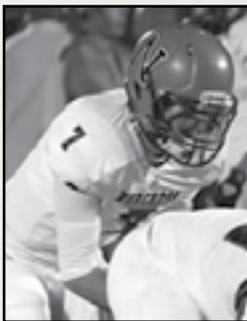
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BY CRAIG SAGER II

WHO'S HOT

THUMBS UP TO WINNING STREAKS



Norcross

The Blue Devils scrimmaged Colquitt County in a preseason game and stormed back from a 14-0 hole to dominate the visiting Packers. Norcross went on to score 28 points before the half and the defense held the Packers to minus-15 yards rushing and forced four sacks. Norcross enters the season having won 15 games in a row.

Paul Worrilow

The unknown and undrafted Falcons rookie free-agent recorded a game-high 12 tackles on the Monday Night Football broadcasted preseason opener. Worrilow, who did not receive a single scholarship offer out of high school, got increased reps with Weatherspoon sidelined and might have secured his spot on the final 53-man roster.

Chris Johnson

The third baseman drove in 12 runs during the Braves' epic 14-game win streak this month and had eight consecutive multi-hit games to spark the streak. Johnson has 26 doubles this season and holds a .337 batting average, which leads the National League. Johnson was acquired from Arizona in the offseason.

Falcons O-Line

Atlanta took a big hit when starting right tackle Mike Johnson suffered a season-ending injury days before the preseason. Lamar Holmes replaces Johnson and behind Holmes is a quartet of undrafted free-agent rookies. The four inexperienced hopefuls will have a chance to compete for the backup role, which will have to be earned during the preseason.

Johnny Football

Since winning the Heisman Trophy last year, Johnny Manziel has been in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons. Currently he is under investigation for profiting off autograph signings. Georgia Tech head coach Paul Johnson made light of the situation by saying "I don't think anybody wants any of our guys' autographs."

Meaningless loss

Atlanta has posted the most wins in the NFC since Matt Ryan and Mike Smith came aboard in 2008, but the high-flying Falcons have struggled during the preseason. After the Bengals' 24-10 win over Atlanta, Smith moved to 7-14 all time in his exhibition contests.



WHO'S NOT

THUMBS DOWN TO PRESEASON STRUGGLES

SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 **PRESEASON ACTION:** The Falcons are in the thick of the preseason as they faced Cincinnati last week and Baltimore this week. Next Saturday, the Falcons will be on the road again to take on the Tennessee Titans. The starters should play into the second half. Finally, football is back and I can't wait for the regular season to begin.

2 **BRAVE EYE:** Dan Ugla has been struggling at the plate and it could be because of his vision. The Braves recently placed Ugla on the 15-day DL so he could have Lasik eye surgery. I hope this can get Ugla out of the slump because with the playoffs fast approaching, the Braves need all the help they can get.

3 **TRAGEDY AT THE TED:** There was tragic news from Turner Field on Monday as a fan fell from a railing and 85 feet to the ground. The fan passed away in the hospital and the police have ruled it an accident. We may never know what caused the accident, but let's all hope an incident like that will never happen again.

4 **HOT TICKETS:** The hottest sports ticket in town may come from Kennesaw where there have been over 1,000 season ticket deposits for the upcoming KSU football season. All fans have to do is put down a \$20 deposit and earn points to guarantee a seat for the inaugural season of KSU football. I put down my deposit and I can't wait for the Owls to take the field.

5 **KELL CLASSIC:** Next weekend will mark the beginning of the high school football season and there is no better way to start the season than having five games on Saturday at the Georgia Dome for the Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic. Some of Georgia's best teams such as Camden County, Grayson and North Gwinnett will be in action and it all begins at 9 a.m. Go to corkykell.com for more information.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY CRAIG SAGER II

82 Runs scored by the Braves during their 14-game win streak

.352 Batting average of Braves third baseman Chris Johnson at home this season

1 Chris Johnson's rank in the National League batting race with a .337 average

44 Bases stolen by Buford softball lead-off hitter Bria Bush last season

17 Total commitments so far in UGA's 2014 football recruiting class

9 Teams in the 2013 Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic that reached the post-season last year

90 New head coaches in GHSA football this season

6 Receivers in Georgia return after 1,000-yard receiving seasons (Daniel Clements, Demarre Kitt, Xavier Harper, Jahmai Jones, Christian Robinson, Ben Johnson)

1,286 Receiving yards for Alpharetta's Clements last season in just 11 games

760 Rushing yards by Norcross running back Josh Boyd last season while he suited up for South Gwinnett

TRIVIA QUESTION

Chris Johnson currently leads the NL in batting with a .337 average. Who was the last Brave to win the batting title and in what season did it occur?

Answer on Page 14

SANITY AT LAST

"These guys have been working on this all their life. From Pop Warner to high school to college, this is what they've been doing. For them to accept me and let me be a part of it and just get out here and play and show what I can do is more than I can ask for."

- Falcons LB Brian Banks, on his first-ever NFL action.

OUR TWO CENTS

Our email newsletter is something we take a lot of pride in at Score. If you aren't familiar with it, it is a high school sports-heavy publication that we produce each day to fill in our readers on the latest happenings in Georgia prep sports. We send it out Monday through Friday throughout the year and Monday through Saturday during the fall.

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Five intriguing matchups highlight Classic

By Craig Sager II

When the 2013 Metro PCS Corky Kell Classic tees off Aug. 24, it will mark the year's biggest football event. No other site this year will see five football games in a single day. Ten of the best teams in the state pair off, and the winning traditions of each school give the participants the confidence that the game can go their way. The action will be broadcasted live on GPB Sports, as well as on the radio waves with Atlanta's 92.9 FM picking up the coverage for the first time this year.

Kell and Chattahoochee will take the field first in the 9:00 a.m. kickoff. In the 2012 Classic, the Longhorns won 19-8. UAB commit Collin Lisa lines up at receiver for Chattahoochee, which averaged just south of 30.0 points per game last season. The Kell secondary looks to be strong once again and will have Jay Moxey, Julian Burris, Errol Breaux and Kennesaw State-commit Taylor Henkle leading the group. Senior quarterback Mat-

thew McGuigan returns under center.

Walton and Peachtree Ridge play in the second game, and Walton head coach Rocky Hidalgo will be without Alabama signees QB Parker McLeod and Tyren Jones, as well as last season's best lineman, Georgia signee Brandon Kublanow. Louisiana Tech pledge Price Wilson takes command of the Raiders' offense at quarterback and has the gifted DJ Smith to spark plays when needed. Peachtree Ridge will use UGA commit Nick Glass to disrupt the Walton offense, and offensively will be led by standout offensive tackle Orlando Brown, running back Jordan Ellis and quarterback Chance Thrasher. Peachtree Ridge was the only one of the 10 teams that fell short of the playoffs last year.

In the middle matchup, Grayson plays Colquitt County. The Packers were a semifinalist last season and Grayson won the state title in 2011. Colquitt County head coach

Rush Propst admits the Moultrie school might have "bit off a little more than they can chew" with their schedule this season. Quarterback Daniel Mobley takes over a young offense and has Sihiem King as his go-to playmaker. Propst believes Ole Miss commit Jamiyus Pittman is one of the best defensive tackles in the state. Grayson replaces a defense that allowed less than 9.0 points per game over the past two seasons.

The fourth game is the second north vs. south showdown as North Gwinnett faces Camden County. The Wildcats have flown under the radar with legendary head coach Jeff Herron's departure to Class A Prince Avenue Christian this season. Welton Coffey is the new head coach and has five starters returning to each side of the ball. Under Herron, the 2012 offense scored 39 points per game and the defense allowed 10 points per game. North Gwinnett is led by quarterback Hayden Spire and his all-state receiving corps. Nate Brown, Caleb Scott and Daniel Imatorbhebe form perhaps the best receiving trio in the state, and defensively 4-star end Dante Sawyerr torizes the backfield.

In the final game, Brookwood will take

on McEachern. Brookwood saw Walton's Jones carried the ball for five touchdowns and 302 yards in the 2012 Classic. Brookwood responded by beating the No. 1 ranked Lassiter Trojans in the playoffs nine games later that season and improved throughout.

Keeping the Indians from repeating what Walton did last year will be tough, because of the speed of McEachern's offense. Junior Taj Griffin is a 5-star running back that teams up with the speedy quarterback Ty Clemmons. This duo rushed for more than 250 yards routinely last season. Defensive end Henry Famurewa is a Louisville commit and is force on the line of scrimmage for McEachern.

Brookwood head coach Mark Crews commented recently in an exclusive interview with Score on how Brookwood plans to slow down the Indians: "Sometimes the best defense is good offense. We are going to try and control the ball and make plays on offense to keep the ball out of their hands."

In terms of matchups and talent, the Corky Kell Classic always delivers.

Photos courtesy of Walter Pinion. Craig Sager II can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

STATE'S TOUGHEST FOOTBALL SCHEDULES

Class AAAAAA

1. Colquitt County
2. Grayson
3. Peachtree Ridge
4. Walton
5. Brookwood

Class AAAAA

1. Thomas Co. Central
2. Flowery Branch
3. Gainesville
4. Clarke Central
5. ML King

Class AAAA

1. Monroe-Albany

Class AAA

2. Veterans
3. Crisp County
4. Baldwin
5. Cairo

Class AA

1. St. Pius X
2. Swainsboro
3. Thomson
4. Jefferson County
5. Washington Co.

Class A - Private

1. Lovett
2. Westminster
3. Thomasville

Class A - Public

4. Brooks Co.
5. Calhoun
1. Pace Academy
2. Our Lady of Mercy
3. Eagle's Landing Chr.
4. Aquinas
5. Holy Innocents'
1. Clinch County
2. Wilkinson County
3. Wilcox County
4. Charlton County
5. Irwin County

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PRESEASON FOOTBALL RANKINGS

Class AAAAAA

1. Norcross
2. Colquitt County
3. North Gwinnett
4. McEachern
5. Lowndes
6. North Cobb
7. Mill Creek
8. Walton
9. Lovejoy
10. Peachtree Ridge

Class AAAAA

1. Gainesville
2. Northside-WR
3. Thomas Co. Central
4. Stephenson
5. Flowery Branch
6. Tucker
7. Kell
8. M.L. King
9. Whitewater
10. Ware County

Class AAAA

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

Class AAA

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

Class AA

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

Class A - Private

1. ELCA
2. George Walton Acad.
3. Prince Ave. Chr.
4. Savannah Chr.
5. Landmark Chr.
6. Brookstone
7. First Presbyterian
8. Darlington
9. Athens Academy
10. Holy Innocents'

Class A - Public

1. Lincoln County
2. Wilcox County
3. Irwin County
4. Wilkinson County
5. Seminole County
6. ECI
7. Marion County
8. Miller County
9. Charlton County
10. Dooly County

CROSS COUNTRY RANKINGS

BOYS

Class AAAAAA

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Mill Creek | 6. Milton |
| 2. Marietta | 7. Walton |
| 3. Brookwood | 8. Wheeler |
| 4. Norcross | 9. Collins Hill |
| 5. Peachtree Ridge | 10. North Cobb |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. McIntosh | 6. Lakeside-DeKalb |
| 2. Flowery Branch | 7. Lakeside-Evans |
| 3. Pope | 8. Winder-Barrow |
| 4. Greenbrier | 9. Sequoyah |
| 5. Starr's Mill | 10. Allatoona |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Marist | 6. Pickens |
| 2. Alexander | 7. Hephzibah |
| 3. Wayne County | 8. Sandy Creek |
| 4. LaGrange | 9. Veterans |
| 5. Perry | 10. Eagle's Landing |

Class AAA

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. St. Pius X | 6. Oconee County |
| 2. Woodward Acad. | 7. Cartersville |
| 3. North Hall | 8. Chapel Hill |
| 4. Blessed Trinity | 9. Hart County |
| 5. North Oconee | 10. Buford |

Class AA

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Westminster | 6. Riverside |
| 2. Wesleyan | 7. Murray County |
| 3. Bleckley County | 8. Pepperell |
| 4. Lovett | 9. Benedictine |
| 5. Model | 10. Jordan |

Class A

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Athens Academy | 6. Athens Christian |
| 2. Darlington | 7. Whitefield Acad. |
| 3. Landmark Chr. | 8. Lakeview Acad. |
| 4. Mt. Pisgah | 9. Holy Innocents' |
| 5. Galloway | 10. Georgia Military |

GIRLS

Class AAAAAA

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. Brookwood | 6. Lambert |
| 2. Walton | 7. Norcross |
| 3. Peachtree Ridge | 8. Johns Creek |
| 4. Milton | 9. Lowndes |
| 5. Mill Creek | 10. Roswell |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Dunwoody | 6. Winder-Barrow |
| 2. Lakeside-DeKalb | 7. Whitewater |
| 3. Flowery Branch | 8. Northview |
| 4. McIntosh | 9. East Paulding |
| 5. Lakeside-Evans | 10. Starr's Mill |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Marist | 6. Grady |
| 2. Heritage-Catoosa | 7. Northwest Whitfield |
| 3. Alexander | 8. Veterans |
| 4. Chestatee | 9. Westover |
| 5. Pickens | 10. Carrollton |

Class AAA

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. St. Pius X | 6. North Oconee |
| 2. Blessed Trinity | 7. Chapel Hill |
| 3. White County | 8. Savannah Arts Acad. |
| 4. Woodward Acad. | 9. West Hall |
| 5. North Hall | 10. Oconee County |

Class AA

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Wesleyan | 6. Thomasville |
| 2. Westminster | 7. Union County |
| 3. Lovett | 8. Coosa |
| 4. Bleckley County | 9. Model |
| 5. Jefferson | 10. Bremen |

Class A

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Landmark Chr. | 6. First Presb. Day |
| 2. Providence Chr. | 7. Paideia |
| 3. Darlington | 8. Athens Academy |
| 4. Mount Pisgah | 9. Mount Paran |
| 5. Pace Academy | 10. Towns County |

SOFTBALL RANKINGS

Class AAAAAA

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Archer | 6. Mill Creek |
| 2. Collins Hill | 7. Harrison |
| 3. Kennesaw Mtn. | 8. Brookwood |
| 4. Hillgrove | 9. Alcovy |
| 5. North Gwinnett | 10. Lassiter |

Class AAA

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Buford | 6. Pike County |
| 2. Central-Carroll | 7. Blessed Trinity |
| 3. Ringgold | 8. Pierce County |
| 4. Jackson County | 9. Fannin County |
| 5. Chapel Hill | 10. Franklin County |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Union Grove | 6. Greenbrier |
| 2. Pope | 7. South Paulding |
| 3. Allatoona | 8. Heritage-Conyers |
| 4. Whitewater | 9. Ola |
| 5. Northgate | 10. Loganville |

Class AA

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Wesleyan | 6. Cook |
| 2. Dade County | 7. Calhoun |
| 3. Heard County | 8. Bremen |
| 4. Bacon County | 9. Harlem |
| 5. Vidalia | 10. Jeff Davis |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. NW Whitfield | 6. Columbus |
| 2. Madison County | 7. Carrollton |
| 3. Heritage-Catoosa | 8. South Effingham |
| 4. Wayne County | 9. Rutland |
| 5. West Laurens | 10. Marist |

Class A

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Gordon Lee | 6. George Walton Acad. |
| 2. Mt. Pisgah | 7. Seminole County |
| 3. Prince Ave. Chr. | 8. Mt. Zion-Carroll |
| 4. Savannah Christian | 9. Schley County |
| 5. Georgia Military | 10. Darlington |

VOLLEYBALL RANKINGS

Class AAAAAA

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Walton | 6. South Forsyth |
| 2. Harrison | 7. Hillgrove |
| 3. Johns Creek | 8. Chattahoochee |
| 4. North Cobb | 9. Roswell |
| 5. Mill Creek | 10. Woodstock |

Class AAA

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. Blessed Trinity | 6. Sonorville |
| 2. St. Pius X | 7. Cartersville |
| 3. Woodward Acad. | 8. Ringgold |
| 4. Oconee County | 9. Islands |
| 5. Buford | 10. North Murray |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 1. McIntosh | 6. Northview |
| 2. Whitewater | 7. Northgate |
| 3. Lakeside-DeKalb | 8. Greenbrier |
| 4. Starr's Mill | 9. Harris County |
| 5. Pope | 10. Allatoona |

Class AA

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Westminster | 6. Westside-Augusta |
| 2. Wesleyan | 7. Calhoun |
| 3. Lovett | 8. Kendrick |
| 4. GAC | 9. Spencer |
| 5. St. Vincent's Acad. | 10. Rabun County |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sandy Creek | 6. Veterans |
| 2. Columbus | 7. Carrollton |
| 3. SW Whitfield | 8. River Ridge |
| 4. Marist | 9. Heritage-Catoosa |
| 5. Woodland-Stockbridge | 10. South Effingham |

Class A

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Landmark Christian | 6. Savannah Ctry Day |
| 2. Walker | 7. Holy Innocents' |
| 3. Savannah Christian | 8. ELCA |
| 4. Hebron Christian | 9. Brookstone |
| 5. George Walton Acad. | 10. North Cobb Christian |

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DREAM BEAT



Falcons Ryan makes Dream games a habit

By Joe Deighton

The Dream suffered their first loss at home this season when they lost to the New York Liberty 88-82 on Sunday night. Atlanta had won eight straight home games to start the year and was the final WNBA team without a loss in its own arena before being defeated by New York.

BRIGHT SPOT ...

Angel McCoughtry was up to her usual high-scoring ways, pouring in a game-high 30 points in the loss. Erika de Souza led the team in rebounds and had a double-double with 23 points and 10 boards.

The game was close throughout with neither team gaining a double-digit lead. The Liberty took a five-point edge at halftime and matched Atlanta shot-for-shot in the second half to salt the win away.

Free throws proved to make the difference with New York knocking down 19 of 20 from the charity stripe, while Atlanta missed six. Erika de Souza missed four free throws that probably cost the team a chance at a win. Despite the loss, Atlanta put forth a good effort on the defensive side of the floor, causing 16 New York turnovers. The loss was the second to New York in three games this season. The Dream will have a chance to even up the season-series on Sept. 6 when they travel to "The Big Apple".

Since a 10-1 start, the Dream have lost seven of their last eight games. Atlanta has fallen into second place in the conference, now two and a half games behind first-place Chicago.

Injuries have taken their toll, especially in the front court. Center Sancho Lyttle was lost for 6-to-8 weeks back on July 9 and the team misses her low-post presence. Lyttle was averaging 14.3 points and 8.5 rebounds per game. Without those numbers, Atlanta has been scrambling to find points and finding it tough to get good percentage shots.

The Dream can take solace in the fact that six of the seven losses in recent games happened on the road. Three of the next four games will be at home where Atlanta has been stellar.

At 11-8, the team is still in a good spot to make the playoffs, but if the avalanche of losses continues, the early season hopes of a title could roll away quickly.

CELEBRITY SIGHTING ...

Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan and his wife have regularly attended Atlanta Dream games ever since the Ryan's moved to Atlanta. Now, Sarah Ryan will be working with the team as a sponsorship sales consultant. Last month, Ryan was hired by the Dream. She holds a degree in communications from Boston College, as well as a passion for basketball.

Ryan played college basketball while at Boston College, starting at point guard for three years. She ended her college career ranked second in school history in assists.

"Sarah has played women's basketball at an elite level. She has a true passion for the game and knowledge of everything that goes into it," CEO Ashley Preisinger told the team website. "She could do many different things at this stage in her life, and we are thrilled to have her as a part of our team."

Ryan has held several administration positions since graduating. Most recently, she has volunteered with the Boys and Girls Club after-school programs in Atlanta.

"It's a thrill to return to basketball, even in a non-playing capacity," said Ryan. "I'm passionate about sports and bringing attention to the women who play them. I hope my perspective as a former player can open people's eyes to how great this team and the WNBA are."

ON THE DOCKET ...

Atlanta will play a home-and-home with Connecticut this week and will entertain Washington on Sunday afternoon.

Beating the Connecticut Sun has been easier this year than in previous seasons. The Dream beat Connecticut in both matchups so far, but Atlanta won't sleep on this team that features high-scoring center Tina Charles. Charles averages 18.3 points and 11 rebounds per game this season. Charles could take advantage of the Dream's thin lineup at center. Ruth Riley was signed for insurance, while Lyttle was out, but has yet to contribute big numbers for Atlanta.

Atlanta should take advantage of the next three games against teams that are below .500.

Deighton can be reached at jdeighton@scoreatl.com.

BULLDOG BEAT



Houston, Dawgs in midst of fall practice

By Chris Nieman

For the past two weeks of August, head coach Mark Richt and the fifth-ranked Georgia Bulldogs have steadily increased the intensity on the practice fields to reacquaint themselves with the gridiron before the start of the 2013 schedule when the Dawgs travel to Death Valley to take on No. 8 Clemson.

Accompanying the Bulldogs at his first practice was offensive lineman Kolton Houston, who was indefinitely suspended by the NCAA for testing positive for an anabolic steroid. This steroid was injected into fatty tissue of Houston's shoulder after a surgery in 2009 to help speed up the recovery process. However, the steroid ultimately lingered inside Houston and essentially cost him precious time.

After more than three years of the wait-and-see game and another test by the NCAA, Houston received some happy news on his birthday; the level of the substance had decreased to 1.8 ng/ml, measuring just below the NCAA's limit of 2.5 ng/ml, meaning it was finally time for Houston to live out his dream, play football for the Red and Black.

Richt seemed relieved and also excited to find out that Houston was cleared to play.

"The fact that we're not wondering any-

more is a great thing for him and for us," said Richt. "Right now he'll work at a guard spot. I don't know if Coach (Will) Friend has totally nailed down where everybody is going to be, but starting out he'll be at the left guard position. He's going to cross train, and he'll know the right guard position. He's athletic enough to play tackle as well. We don't want to give him too much, but day one he's sitting at No. 2 left guard right now."

FESTIVITIES ...

After 11 consecutive tough practices, Richt and his coaching staff decided to surprise the team with a day at the pool to celebrate the end of two-a-day practices.

Despite receiving hip replacement surgery during the offseason, Richt showed some bravado by completing his annual high dive from a towering 10-meter platform.

The players appreciated Richt's gesture. "Today meant a lot to us," junior offensive lineman Mark Beard said. "A lot of guys are tired, and this was Coach's way to show us some love. We really enjoyed it."

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TECH BUZZ



Jackets gear up for 2013 campaign

By Donnell Suggs

The 2013 season can't start soon enough for the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets, actually it begins with a home game on Aug. 31 to be exact. The 2012 season ended on a good note at the Sun Bowl, a 21-7 victory over USC on New Year's Eve. That said, the 7-7 overall record (5-3 in the ACC) needs to be a stepping stone for head coach Paul Johnson's 2013 squad.

There were highs and lows from last season that will undoubtedly teach his players many lessons. The 21-point home loss to Middle Tennessee State immediately followed by a 47-31 drubbing at Clemson clearly is to be considered a low moment. So was the Jackets' 42-10 loss in Athens to end the regular season. Back-to-back road wins at Maryland and North Carolina showed the kind of fight Tech fans were used to seeing under Johnson.

The best part of a new season is the opportunity to have a clean slate. Here are a few things fans can expect to see from the Rambolin' Wreck in the coming season.

IMPROVEMENT ...

This season starts with a home game against Elon unlike last season's 20-17 loss in Blacksburg to Virginia Tech. Tech will play

Virginia Tech and rival Georgia at Bobby Dodd this year. There will also be the added benefit of not having Florida State on the schedule. However the Jackets will have to play at Miami and at BYU, which they lost to at home last season, 41-17. Three of their final four home games will be at 150 Bobby Dodd Way, with back-to-back games against Alabama A&M and UGA finishing the regular season.

QB CONSISTENCY ...

Both senior Tevin Washington and red-shirt sophomore Vad Lee played solid football for Tech at the quarterback position last year and should come into 2013 much improved. Washington started the beginning of last season as the definite starter before Lee came on strong during the second half of the year, garnering more playing time as a result of his surprising maturity behind center.

Both players run Johnson's flexbone offense with skill, but neither gentleman will be counted on to throw a whole lot, so their feet have to figuratively carry a heavy load this year once again.

Suggs can be reached at [404-256-1572](tel:404-256-1572).

PANTHER PROWL



Panthers release 2013-14 hoops schedule

By Jay Underwood

While football practice heats up and the season draws near, coach Ron Hunter and the basketball team don't want to be forgotten. The Panthers released their schedule Wednesday and there are a few interesting games to watch for the upcoming season. After tipping off the season against NAIA foe Southern Poly, Hunter will lead his squad to Nashville in order to square off with the Vanderbilt Commodores. This will be a tough test early in the season, and the Panthers will look to use it as a springboard for the season.

After their date with Vanderbilt, Georgia State will be making its first-ever appearance in the Preseason NIT with a chance to make it to New York City for the finals if they win the first two games. While they don't know which host site they will play at, the Panthers are still excited about the experience. The hosts this year are Alabama, Arizona, Duke and Rutgers. Since the sites are determined geographically, look for an appearance in Tuscaloosa or a return trip to Durham for the second straight year.

Other highlights of the schedule is a stretch of five games against teams from Conference USA which many people associate as

the Sun Belt's biggest rival. This should allow Hunter and his players to get a feel for the level of competition in the conference before actually playing a conference game.

Conference play will begin in January when Troy comes to town, beginning a new era in Georgia State basketball. The old rivals of VCU, George Mason and Towson have been replaced by rivalries yet to be forged. The conference schedule lines up with each team squaring off at home and on the road for an 18-game slate. This should be the part of the schedule where the Panthers should excel, since they are entering the season as one of the favorites. They will conclude the season with a date at home with the other favorite to win the conference, Western Kentucky. This should be a thrilling match-up to watch for years to come and the first installment could decide who the regular season champion is.

With tough tests early on the Panthers will have to prove themselves in hostile ground, but that will prepare them for what's to come later in the season.

Underwood can be reached at junderwood@scoreatl.com.

OWL OUTLOOK



Soccer kicks off 2013-14 season for Owls

By Brian Jones

With the start of the school year fast approaching for Kennesaw State, the fall sports season will kick off before fans can blink.

The women's soccer team will be the first team to get thing going when they take part in a tournament at the University of Tennessee next weekend. But before the Lady Owls travel to Knoxville, they'll have to prepare for the tournament with a couple of exhibition matches.

The Lady Owls took part in their first exhibition match of the year last Friday and fell to Wofford 3-0. KSU was able to outshoot Wofford 12-5, thanks to opportunities on free kicks and corner kicks, Wofford was able to jump on the Lady Owls and never look back.

KSU will have its second and final exhibition match on Friday when they take on Clayton State. Kickoff will be at 7 p.m. and will be played at Fifth Third Bank Stadium.

TENNIS HONORED ...

Last week was a good one for the women's tennis team. For the second consecutive year, the women's tennis team has been honored by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association as an All-Academic Team. And to go along with the team award, five players were rec-

ognized as ITA Scholar Athletes including junior Alexandra Apostu, sophomore Virginia Stein, freshman Isabela Castro and sophomores Jana Hueckinghaus and Tamara Plocher.

"With a team GPA of 3.64 and five players being honored individually, it really shows the commitment from the entire group," head coach Jeff Kutac told ksuowls.com. "This is what being a student-athlete is all about."

The Lady Owls will get the 2013-14 season started in September.

FOOTBALL UPDATE ...

Since KSU made the announcement of starting a football team earlier in the year, the feedback from the community has been positive. And proof of that is in ticket sales as there have been over 1,000 season ticket deposits, which represents 33 percent of available tickets at Fifth Third Bank Stadium.

The Letter of Intent Program is a request where a fan is required to deposit \$20 into the priority seating program. All seats will be \$99 plus a donation to the KSU fund.

The Owls' inaugural football season will kick off in the fall of 2015.

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.

HAWKS HAVEN



Season taking shape for Hawks

By Ricky Dimon

The Hawks found out what may be in store for them when the NBA revealed its 2013-14 schedule last week. It should come as no surprise that Atlanta has several games against opponents with whom it has ties given that the team underwent so much change in the offseason. Josh Smith returns to Atlanta with the Pistons on Nov. 20 while the Bucks (with head coach Larry Drew and center Zaza Pachulia) visit on March 13. Hawks head coach Mike Budenholzer will go back to San Antonio on December 2. Budenholzer was an assistant with the Spurs for 19 seasons.

Atlanta's campaign will begin at Philips Arena on Oct. 30 against the Dallas Mavericks. Among the dates on a tough November schedule are road contests at the Lakers, Heat, Knicks and Rockets.

The Hawks also announced their pre-season slate on Wednesday. Fans will get a chance to see their new-look squad at the Highlight Factory on Oct. 17 (vs. San Antonio), 20 (vs. Memphis), and 22 (vs. Indiana). Atlanta has neutral-site contests set for Asheville (vs. Charlotte) and Biloxi (vs. New Orleans).

BEBE TO SPAIN ...

First-round draft pick Lucas "Bebe"

Nogueira will go back to Spain next season, the Hawks announced earlier this week. Nogueira, selected 16th overall, will once again play for Asefa Estudiantes Madrid. Atlanta, of course, retains his rights in the NBA. The Brazilian, who is just 19-years old, appeared in five games during Summer League action and averaged 6.4 points and six rebounds.

"If I stay here, I'm happy," Nogueira told the Atlanta Journal Constitution last month. "But if I need to go back I'm happy too, because in Spain everybody believes in me. I've lived in Spain and I know my club and everybody knows me. I'm happy. I know I can improve my game in Spain. I improved so much this year from last year."

In other personnel news, second-round choice Mike Muscala signed a deal with the Hawks but will also play in Spain. DeMarre Carroll, a former member of the Utah Jazz just like new Hawk Paul Millsap, officially signed a contract last Friday. Needless to say, Carroll will be in Atlanta, not Spain. Also last Friday the Hawks added Jim Thomas to their assistant coaching staff. Thomas recently worked as a college scout for the Thunder.

Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.

FALCONS BEAT



Jones, Spoon return, rookies improving

By Craig Sager II

Julio Jones and Sean Weatherspoon returned to practice after being sidelined for the pre-season opener, which visiting Cincinnati won 34-10. Weatherspoon dislocated his finger on Aug. 5, and Jones rested with soreness in his hamstrings. On Aug. 6, starting right tackle Mike Johnson was injured for the entire 2013 season during a combined drill with the Bengals. Johnson was moved to injured reserve and Atlanta signed rookie tackle Jeff Nady. The college free agent was originally signed by Jacksonville following the 2013 NFL Draft.

BIG HOLMES ...

Second-year pro Lamar Holmes is the new starting right tackle. Holmes and undrafted rookie free-agent Ryan Schraeder are both seeing a lot of action in the remaining pre-season, and Holmes has three weeks to prepare for New Orleans. Matt Ryan worked well in the first offense last week and posted a 98.8 passer rating on six of nine attempts in his return to the Georgia Dome.

Five different receivers caught passes from Ryan, including third-year receiver Drew Davis. The former Oregon Duck was promoted out of Atlanta's practice squad before last season and eventually caught his first NFL touchdown against the Eagles. Davis continues to impress his quarterback and stretched a screen pass into

a 31-yard gain against the Bengals.

"Drew has been doing that all camp," said Ryan. "I think he's improved a lot this training camp."

ROOKIES IMPRESS ...

Desmond Trufant and Robert Alford saw valuable snaps and combined for four tackles in their first NFL quarter. The linebackers had big games against Cincinnati. Linebacker Paul Warrilow is an undrafted rookie from Delaware that posted a game-high 12 tackles.

"Paul has done a really nice job for us," said Smith. "There's been a couple of young guys who have really showed up on the scene through OTA's and through this first pre-season game they did some nice things, so it is going to be fun to watch them get more reps and get more reps different times in the games."

Starting middle linebacker Akeem Dent is preparing for an increased role this season.

"Look for Akeem to take the next step in being a three down linebacker," hinted Smith. "That is progression for him, to be able to come in and play three downs."

The Falcons took on the Super Bowl champion Ravens in Baltimore Thursday in the second pre-season game of the year.

Sager can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

CHOP SHOP



Young staff showing no ill effects

By Sean Conway

As Major League Baseball teams enter the final six weeks of the regular season, the young stars of the pitching rotation are proving that they're doing just fine transitioning from top-tier prospects into young aces. Mike Minor, Julio Teheran and Brandon Beachy have each been praised for their potential beginning with their minor league years and, lately, their short time with the big club.

YOUTH MOVEMENT ...

Now, the young players are becoming stars before Braves fans' eyes and carrying the team full speed ahead toward the post-season. Braves country hoped that these three could take the pressure off veteran starters Tim Hudson, Paul Maholm and Kris Medlen. Hudson and Maholm have been reduced to cheerleader status as they recover from injuries, and while Medlen has been good often this year, he has not been able to replicate last season's success.

The young righty from Colombia, Julio Teheran, has gained momentum since a rocky April when he posted a 5.08 ERA. Every month since, Teheran has allowed almost two runs less per nine innings while pitching more innings each month. He's become a workhorse that always gives his team a chance to win. In

18 starts the beginning of May, he has allowed two runs or less 12 times.

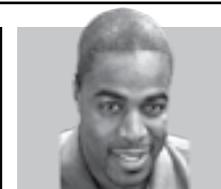
Lefthander Mike Minor has simply just been fantastic all year. Minor's projected stats for the year include a 16-7 record with 214 innings pitched. His WHIP (walks plus hits per innings pitched) is fifth in the league at 1.04 and his ERA is 10th among starters at 2.87. Those are the numbers of an ace. Since May, his record is 9-3.

Brandon Beachy started the season on the disabled list recovering from Tommy John elbow ligament replacement surgery. He is quickly regaining his 2012 form when he led the Braves with a 2.00 ERA before the injury. The Braves have won all of his first three starts since he came off the disabled list, and he was simply dominant in his third start against the Miami Marlins, allowing only three hits over eight shutout innings.

Not only has the trio been efficient, they're economical. Consider this: Teheran, Minor and Beachy will make a just over a combined \$1.5 million this season. Medlen, Maholm and Hudson will make over a combined \$18 million. Yeah, the kids are all right and doing just fine, thank you very much.

Conway can be reached at sconway@scoreatl.com.

SILVERBACKS BEAT



Silverbacks are back, draw with Carolina

By Donnell Suggs

The Atlanta Silverbacks return from the spring break to start the fall session of the NASL season with a win and a draw. The Silverbacks opened the fall season with a 1-0 win at Minnesota United in Blaine, Minn. It was their second win in Minnesota in a month. Defender Mike Randolph scored what would become the deciding goal in the 22nd minute.

Following that contest, the Silverbacks drew 1-1 with the visiting Carolina Railhawks before they were presented with their spring season title trophy by the league commissioner following the match. Atlanta midfielder Pedro Mendes gave his team the lead in the 27th minute, scoring off an assist from striker Borfor Carr. The Railhawks evened the score minutes before the game ended resulting in a draw, earning a point for both teams in the standings. Prior to their initial score, the 'Backs had believed they scored during the fourth minute before it was called back due to an offside call by the referee. Carolina was awarded a penalty kick in the ninth minute, but was turned away by Silverbacks goalkeeper Joe Nasco. The Silverbacks will travel across the border to next play FC Edmonton on Aug. 18.

NEW SIGNINGS ...

The Silverbacks signed two new players this past week, defender Josh Suggs (no relation to this reporter) and midfielder Ferrey Sousa. Suggs, a native Californian, played his professional soccer for the L.A. Blues of the USL as well as the NASL's Tampa Rowdies before signing a deal with the San Jose Earthquakes of the MLS. He returned to L.A. before signing with the Silverbacks. Sousa comes to the NASL champs from overseas having played for FCM Aubervilliers, a fourth-level professional side in France.

SOCCER BOWL ...

The NASL's equivalent of the Super Bowl will be held on Nov. 9, 2013 at the home of the Silverbacks, Atlanta Silverbacks Park. The Silverbacks earned the right to host the championship due to their spring championship. In the event that Atlanta wins the fall season (which began this past weekend) they will not have to play in the championship game and will effectively be awarded the trophy. This new format, spring and fall seasons, was introduced this season by the league.

Suggs can be reached at 404-256-1572.

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Chipper Jones led MLB in hitting in 2008, when he hit .364 for the season.

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