



# ATLANTA'S WEEKLY FOOTBALL NEWSPAPER PLUS



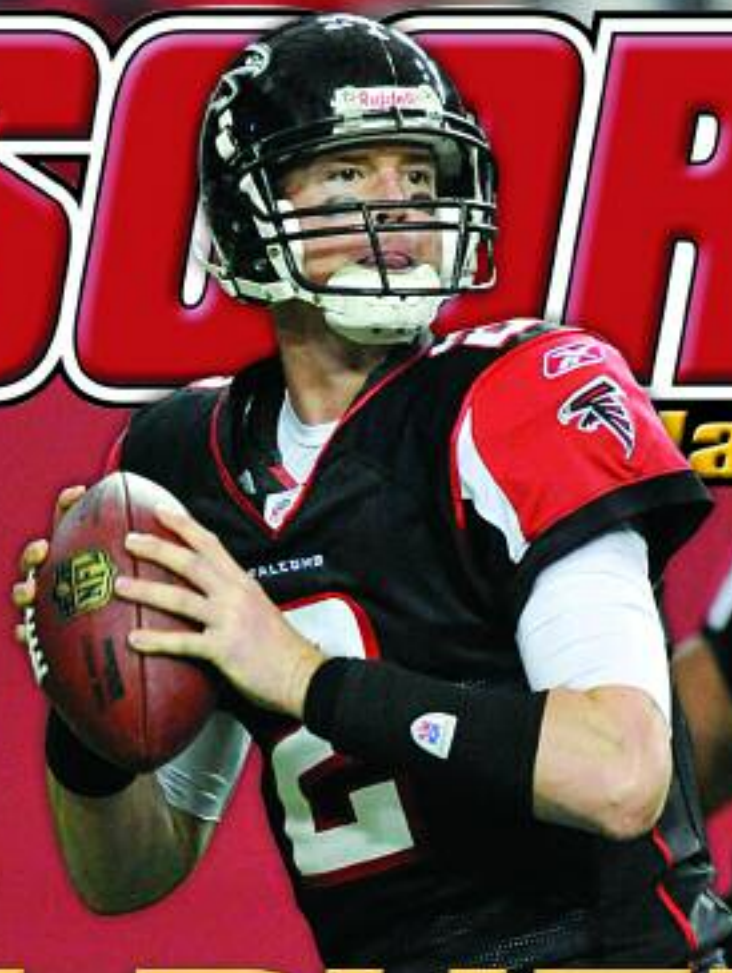
AUGUST 14-20, 2009

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VOL 5 NO 16

# SCORE

Atlanta



SCORE'S RECORD  
PREDICTIONS  
PGS. 8-9

# THE PHENOM

## Ryan ready for greatness in year two



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# THE SPIN CYCLE

A WHIRLWIND OF ATLANTA SPORTS NEWS AND COMMENTARY

**SCORE** SCOTT JANOVITZ



## Braves not far from contending and Tech's Dwyer getting national respect

Despite getting lost in what was a whirlwind NBA summer, the Hawks have had a productive offseason to date and have done enough to convince ESPN's John Hollinger they are still the fourth-best team in their conference. On Tuesday, the NBA expert wrote, "A distant fourth in the East this past season, the Hawks look to have retained that position after a successful offseason ... If Atlanta can extend Joe Johnson and add a veteran big man (Joe Smith, anyone?), it will be a near-perfect summer, with the only blemish being the Hawks' inability to convert restricted free agent Josh Childress into a usable asset." Like Hollinger wisely pointed out, the team is still desperate for help in the frontcourt, but I believe the most significant additions will prove to be that of guards Jeff Teague and Jamal Crawford — especially Teague — as they are both impressive athletes and proficient scorers at positions of need.

So many have been critical of Braves general manager Frank Wren, his missteps and the moves he never made; I can't help but hear the continuous clamoring for more bats. But, are this year's Braves really contenders and, if not, shouldn't they keep their promising nucleus together? Using a little restraint, the team can be contending within the next two years by simply adding all-

world prospects Jason Heyward (check out his AA stats), Jordan Schafer and Freddie Freeman to a squad with an already dynamic pitching staff. Championships are on the way, but not without a little patience.

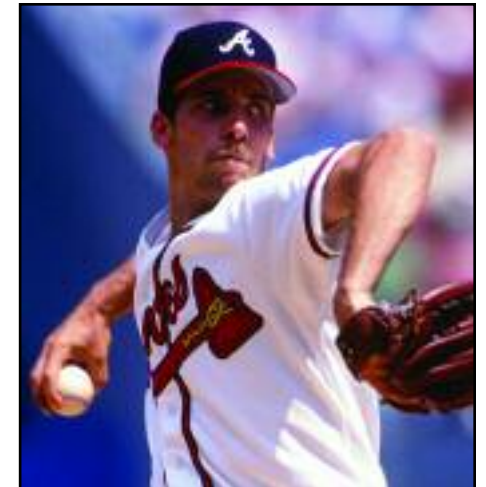
Sticking to the diamond, last Wednesday in this space I wrote the following: "for all you people who were outraged when the Braves decided not to re-sign John Smoltz, perhaps you should now consider the 42-year-old's 2-4 record and 7.12 ERA or the fact that Atlanta currently has FIVE starters who have been more productive than the future Hall of Famer." Then, a day later, Smoltz lasted just 3.1 innings against the hated Yankees, allowing nine hits and eight earned runs. With the end of the legend's career looking to be just around the corner, I have decided to fill this space in a far more positive tone. Smoltz, one of the all-time great Braves, is the only pitcher in major league history to top both 200 wins and 150 saves, his 15 postseason victories are the most all-time in baseball history, and Bobby Cox always contended that the dynamic athlete could have been a Gold Glove center fielder had he not been a pitcher. So, I'd like to take this time to personally honor Smoltz and all that he accomplished over his career; I have a feeling the folks over at

Cooperstown will be doing the very same thing five years from now.

### TO THE PIGSKIN ...

The experts at Rivals and ESPN both recently released their college football power rankings at each position and it's nice to see a certain Yellow Jacket is finally getting the respect he deserves. Both lists have Tech's powerhouse running back Jonathan Dwyer ranked second nationally at his position and both have him trailing Cal's Jahvid Best. Preseason last year, Dwyer was an afterthought outside of Atlanta, but after rushing for 1,400 yards in 2008 and providing runs of at least 58 yards in four of Tech's last five games, the bullish junior is a legitimate Heisman candidate. ... With each passing day, and largely as a result of Tony Dungy's approval, it's beginning to look more and more likely that Michael Vick will be suiting up for some NFL team in 2009. I support his right to play THIS SEASON as vehemently as anyone, but isn't it fascinating how, in less than a week, the support of a truly revered figure like Dungy has completely changed the complexion of what has been a two-year debate?

Janovitz can be reached at [sjanovitz@scoreatl.com](mailto:sjanovitz@scoreatl.com).



**END OF THE ROAD?:** John Smoltz is weighing his options after being designated for assignment by the Boston Red Sox. Shown here during his time in Atlanta, Smoltz will always have a place in Braves fans' hearts with his 15-4 postseason record. Photo courtesy of Scott Cunningham.

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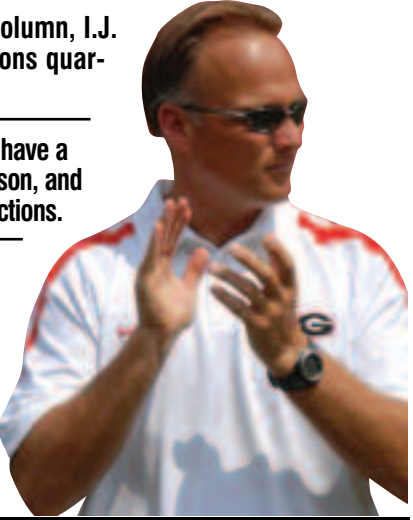
**SHOT OF THE WEEK...**



**BREAK OUT THE BODY PAINT!:** What are these fans so excited about? High school football season, of course! These Camden County fans will be cheering in the Dome soon enough, as their Wildcats will take on Grayson in the Corky Kell Classic later in the month. Photo courtesy of Photographic Arts.

**CAN'T MISS THIS WEEK**

- 5** In his 'Sitting in the Cheap Seats' column, I.J. Rosenberg has high praise for Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan.
- 8** Mark Richt (pictured) and the Bulldogs have a brutal schedule ahead of them this season, and Stephen Black offers his win-loss projections.
- 9** Georgia Tech beat writer Ricky Dimon tries his hand at predicting the Yellow Jackets' football season.
- 15** Scott Janovitz breaks down the week in recruiting and highlights some of the top in-state players to commit.



**TEAM SCOOP AND VOICES**

*COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI.  
 COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF JIMMY CRIBB/ATLANTA FALCONS.*

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# SITTING IN THE CHEAP SEATS

**SCORE**
**I.J. ROSENBERG**


## Ryan poised to go down in history as one of city's great sports figures

As someone that has watched sports in this town for 40-something years, I have seen some great players come through Atlanta. When I was 10, my grandparents took me to see Hank Aaron break the all-time home run record. I watched Dominique Wilkins on many nights at The Omni, covered first-hand the incredible performances of pitchers such as Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz, and witnessed Chipper Jones get his first major league at-bat.

But last Saturday up at Flowery Branch, as the Falcons moved through their second day of summer practice, I couldn't help but notice a certain player, one I believe will some day be remembered as one of the best athletes ever to play here.

Wearing No. 2 on his back and standing 6-foot-4, Matt Ryan appeared as a figure ready to take over this town, much like his predecessor Michael Vick once did. But while Vick thrilled us all with his incredible athletic ability, I think Ryan finally gives the Falcons a player capable of leading us to Super Bowl victory, something that has escaped the franchise in its 39-year history.

It's not that Ryan is so athletically or physically amazing. There is just this special aura around him, a trait he shares with New England's Tom Brady. Ryan was born to play quarterback, which I think is the toughest position in professional sports, and does so like a great conductor leads his symphony. Watching Ryan in the most mundane of drills, he is the master of perfection, understanding he is there to lead, to put things in motion and to let players like Michael Turner and new tight end Tony Gonzalez do the real damage.

Ryan is a thinker, a quarterback who will win more because of what he does off the field than on it. The word at camp was that Ryan spent a large part of the offseason studying tape, getting to understand other defenses' tendencies and getting his mind wrapped around



**THE NATURAL:** Matt Ryan had one of the most accomplished first seasons ever for a quarterback in the NFL, winning the Offensive Rookie of the Year award in 2008. With Ryan's intangibles and work ethic, he is poised to become one of the city's all-time sports greats. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons.


**CATCH I.J. ON SUNDAYS**

... [Matt] Ryan was born to play quarterback, which I think is the toughest position in professional sports, and does so like a great conductor leads his symphony.'

the talent he will be facing every Sunday.

He understands that being a good NFL quarterback is much different than being a good college quarterback. Think about it: How many highly productive college quarterbacks never make it in the NFL? In fact, name me 15 quarterbacks you would want on your fantasy team and, for that matter, look

around the league and consider the players who are holding down the No. 2 quarterback spot on most rosters.

Ryan, maybe even more so than Brady, is a student of the game, a coach on the field whose success will come more from his work in the film room than from throwing out routes on the practice field to Roddy White.

Gonzalez told reporters about Ryan, "He knows exactly where everybody's going. He knows where to put that ball, and he works hard. I think that's really the difference in what a great player is: somebody that works hard. That's what separates some guys, like Peyton Manning and Tom Brady. Those guys are constantly in the (film) room, trying to get better, on the field and off the field."

Interestingly, Ryan makes me feel the same way Chipper Jones did when I first saw him in West Palm Beach back in 1991. Covering the Braves for the AJC, Chipper was in the batting cage when I first laid eyes on him and despite being just 19 at the time, I felt something special watching him swing and drive a ball into the outfield. Jones was more of a physical talent, but I knew I was watching a future Hall of Famer.

There are those that wonder if Ryan had a fluke year and, now that he has played for a full season, whether the league will be better prepared to stop him.

Of course, they've said the same thing about Rookie of the Year winners who went on the following season to improve their numbers. That list includes Randy Moss (1998 with Minnesota), Edgerrin James (1999 with Indianapolis), Clinton Portis (2002 with Denver), Anquan Boldin (2003 with Arizona), Ben Roethlisberger (2004 with Pittsburgh) and Adrian Peterson (2007 with Minnesota).

Anyway, as I watched Ryan last week-

## OUT FRONT



As Matt Ryan goes in '09, the Falcons will go. The young signal-caller, who prepped in Pennsylvania and starred collegiately at Boston College, hopes to lead his team to an improvement over its '08 wild card finish in the NFC South. With an abundance of offensive weapons to choose from, "Matty Ice" should be even better in year two. The above photo and cover photo are courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons.

end, I also noticed he now has full control of the team and is a player the others are listening to, a leader who has command of his offense and the ability to push it to greater heights.

A year ago, we all wondered what No. 2 could do and the expectation for the entire team was just a couple of wins. Behind Ryan and others, the team won 11 games and went to the playoffs.

Despite a difficult schedule, there is no reason to think the Falcons can't match, or even better, last season's performance. But regardless of the final result, we are all watching something very exciting in No. 2.

Kind of makes you want Sept. 13th's opener against Miami to be here already.

Rosenberg can be reached at [ijrosenberg@scoreatl.com](mailto:ijrosenberg@scoreatl.com) and 404-256-1572.

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# SCORE LIST

BY ALEX EWALT

- 1 BRAVE NEW RACE:** Bobby Cox's bunch is trying to make it interesting, having won four games in a row at press time and pushing the Phillies in the East and the Giants in the wild card. Can the Braves muster enough offense to win the division?
- 2 ARE YOU READY?:** The Falcons play their first preseason game in Detroit this Saturday. Not only will the game give us the chance to see the new pickups in action, it will offer the first glimpse of the Lions' new Stafford-to-Calvin connection.
- 3 SCHOOL DAYS:** Back on campus, the Jackets and Dawgs are preparing for the season as well. While Georgia is still looking for a leader to emerge in the offensive backfield, Tech's Jonathan Dwyer is getting some national buzz heading into the season.
- 4 RANK 'EM:** Speaking of Tech and Georgia, the coaches weighed in on the teams in the recent preseason poll. The rankings of No. 13 for the Dawgs and No. 15 for the Jackets seem about right ... but what about UGA's questions at QB and running back?
- 5 PREP PRESEASON:** Get ready for some great games this week-end and next at the high school level — even though they won't count. The high school preseason is getting underway, which means another great season of prep football is getting closer!
- 6 MARVELOUS MOVE:** By all accounts, the Hawks have done a great job this offseason of keeping their key pieces in place, and the signing of Marvin Williams is another step in the right direction. Now if they could just find one more capable big man ...
- 7 NEW IMAGE:** Michael Vick is trying to repair his reputation somewhat before he reenters the NFL, speaking to basketball campers at Hampton University in his hometown about using him as an example of what NOT to do. ... We hope they listen.
- 8 DREAMER DEALT:** The Dream's very first draft pick, Tamera Young, was dealt to the Chicago Sky for Armintie Price. But as long as the team's winning — they were third in the East at press time — we're fine with whatever personnel moves they make.
- 9 LIFE SUPPORT:** The Arena Football League appears to be on the brink of being dissolved, as the league's creditors are pushing the organization to enter Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Hope you have some Georgia Force memorabilia to remember them by.
- 10 READY TO POUNCE:** Tiger Woods has had an amazing season so far with five TOUR wins (three more than anyone else), but he hasn't snagged a major yet. This week-end's PGA Championship could be his for the taking with the way he's been playing lately.

## WHO'S HOT

### THUMBS UP TO BRINGING BACK MARVIN



#### Marvin Williams

The four-year veteran inked a five-year deal with the Hawks that could be worth as much as \$43 million with incentives. With last year's re-signing of Josh Smith and the team currently working on an extension for Joe Johnson, Atlanta's core should be together for the foreseeable future.

#### Angel McCoughtry

The Dream have won four of their last five games and 2009's first overall draft pick out Louisville has averaged 14.8 points per game during the stretch, nearly five points above her season average. Thanks in part to the rook's contributions, the Dream currently hold the third of four playoff spots in the East.

#### The Braves

Atlanta has won four games in a row, which ties its longest winning streak of the season, and may very well be in the midst of a seven-win run if not for giving up a ninth-inning, three-run homer in a 5-4 loss to the Dodgers on Aug. 6. Thanks to the recent stretch, the Braves are now just three games back in the wild card race.

## WHO'S NOT

### THUMBS DOWN TO ACL INJURIES



#### Harry Douglas

After what was a promising start last season to his professional career, second-year wideout Harry Douglas will miss the entire 2009-10 NFL season after tearing his ACL in practice last Wednesday. In his first season with the Birds, the former Louisville Cardinal caught 23 balls for 329 yards.

#### John Smoltz

After giving up eight earned runs in a 3.1-inning outing against the Yankees last week and posting an 8.33 ERA for the season, the former Brave and future Hall of Famer was designated for assignment by the Red Sox on Aug. 7. It's safe to say the end of Smoltz's career can't be too far away.

#### Kammeon Holsey

The Georgia Tech freshman will miss the entire 2009-10 season after tearing his ACL in a recent pick-up game. Holsey, a 6-8, 199-pound forward out of Hancock Central High School, led his team to the Class A state championship in 2008 and averaged 27 points and 10 rebounds per game last season. He underwent surgery on Tuesday.

## CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

**13** UGA's 2009 preseason ranking

**4** Number of SEC teams in the 2009 preseason top 10

**6** Number of preseason top 20 opponents UGA will face this season

## MOVE IT ALONG

John Paramor might have ruined the Bridgestone Invitational, but he might have saved golf. The chief European Tour official, Paramor warned Tiger Woods and Pádraig Harrington for slow play on the 16th hole on Sunday with Tiger one shot behind. Harrington made an 8 on the hole, while Tiger made birdie to end what was a dramatic, back-and-forth battle.

But, the greater good was served. Pace of play is the number one problem facing the game of golf.



Too many people see the pros on TV taking forever to hit their shots, and then emulate them in their own rounds. No one wanted to see the tournament end that way, but Pádraig Harrington has been a slow player for quite some time. Maybe now he and thousands of others will pick up the pace and golf won't take so long anymore.

Brian Katrek can be heard on 790 The Zone's "On The Green with Brian Katrek" Sundays from 8-9 a.m. and can be reached at [katrek@790thezone.com](mailto:katrek@790thezone.com).

## SANITY AT LAST

*"It was a perfect storm. We came off of 40 days of everybody telling a young team how good we were because we won the last game [at Georgia], and we were playing a very talented (LSU) team that played very well the night we played them. And it was ugly."*

- Georgia Tech head coach Paul Johnson on his team's Chick-fil-A Bowl loss last December

# ON THE FALCONS BEAT


**BRIAN JONES**


## White inks lucrative new deal; preseason schedule opens at Detroit this Saturday

It's been an exciting two weeks for the boys in Flowery Branch at training camp. It concluded with the fans attending Brookwood High School last Friday for a scrimmage, and on Saturday, the Georgia Dome was rocking as the Falcons hosted a mock game for all in attendance. But the question on everyone's mind was, when is Roddy White coming back to the team?

That question was answered on Saturday, as White agreed to a six-year, \$50 million contract extension with \$18 million guaranteed. But prior to the White deal, the Falcons also inked two veteran receivers in Marty Booker and Robert Ferguson to help bolster the position after Harry Douglas went down with an injury.

### HEADING TO MOTOWN ...

In the first preseason game of the year this Saturday, the Falcons will travel to Detroit to take on the Lions. Usually in the first preseason game starters such as Matt Ryan and

Michael Turner only see a series and sit for the rest of the game. This will be an opportunity for the young players to show the coaching staff what they've got. Rookie cornerback Chris Owens is having a strong camp and will be a player to watch. Also, fans should keep an eye on defensive tackle Peria Jerry, as he will work with the first-team and second-team defense. But Falcons fans will want to pay close attention to tight end Tony Gonzalez to see how he works with Ryan. The two have been great at camp, but will it translate to in-game success? The action will take place on Saturday on NBC at 4 p.m.

### WHAT'S ON TAP ...

After preseason game No. 1, the Falcons will have another week of training camp practice before they go on the road again to face the St. Louis Rams. Again, it will be a game where the starters will see little playing time and the rookies will have another opportunity to impress the coaches. The Falcons will have

their first home preseason game on Saturday, Aug. 29, when they face the San Diego Chargers; that will be a nationally televised game on CBS at 8 p.m. On Sept. 1., the team will have to cut the roster down to 75 players, and on Sept. 3, the Falcons will have their final home preseason game when they face the Baltimore Ravens on NBC at 7:30 p.m. Two days later, the Falcons will make final roster cuts and will get the regular season underway on Sept. 13 when they face the Miami Dolphins at the Georgia Dome at 1 p.m.

Jones can be reached at [bjones@scoreatl.com](mailto:bjones@scoreatl.com).



**WHITE BACK IN RED AND BLACK:** Pro Bowl receiver Roddy White ended his holdout last week, but not before becoming the third highest-paid wideout in the league. Now, White and his teammates will look to excel in their first preseason tune-up in Detroit on Saturday. Photo courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons.

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# IN STORE FOR THE BULLDOGS

STEPHEN BLACK



## SEC slate plus marquee out-of-conference games mean a gauntlet for the Dawgs

The Bulldogs may have lost some top talent from last year's team, but there should still be some big moments on tap this season:

**September 5 – at Oklahoma State:** UGA opens the season against a top-ten foe in the Cowboys, who feature a high-flying offense predicated on the arm of quarterback Zach Robinson and the legs of running back Kendall Hunter. However, UGA is better on defense and has been lights out in non-conference games under Mark Richt. Prediction: WIN

**September 12 – vs. South Carolina:** The proverbial “sandwich game” between long road trips, the Gamecocks will provide a stiff test for the Bulldogs in the second week of the season. Just like 2007, the Dawgs will be coming off an impressive win over Oklahoma State and just like 2007 they will not play well against the Cocks. Carolina quarterback Stephen Garcia will throw a late touchdown pass to pull the upset. Prediction: LOSS

**September 19 – at Arkansas:** Richt's teams have been solid on the road against the SEC West and are currently on a six-game winning streak in such games. Georgia will extend this streak to seven games, but it won't be easy. Just like in Week One, UGA will have to score a lot of points to win but they will show some resiliency in beating a game Arkansas squad that is long on offense but short on defense. Prediction: WIN

**September 26 – vs. Arizona State:** After a tough three-game stretch to open the season, Georgia will return home for a game that they should win convincingly. But don't discount Dennis Erickson's ability to pull off an upset. UGA will win this game at home, but don't be surprised if the Sun Devils give them a run for their money. Prediction: WIN

**October 3 – vs**

**LSU:** For the first time in the 2009 season, Georgia will not be the more talented team on the field. LSU will squash the Bulldogs' running game and force Joe Cox (pictured) to beat them. Cox will play well but not well enough to win, as LSU quarterback Jordan Jefferson has his coming out party in Sanford Stadium. Prediction: LOSS

**October 10 – at Tennessee:** Georgia will



have plenty of motivation for this one. Their last trip to Rocky Top resulted in a 35-14 stomping that really was much worse than the score indicates. Following the loss to LSU and considering certain off-season comments by Vol head man Lane Kiffin, the Dawgs should be foaming at the mouth for this one. Prediction: WIN

**October 17 – at Vanderbilt:** Georgia better not overlook this one, and they probably won't if they remember the 2007 game in Nashville. The Dawgs needed a late fumble recovery deep in their own territory to spark a win over the pesky Dores. It may take a similar play to win this game as well. Prediction: WIN

**October 31 – vs. Florida:** Following the week off, the Dawgs fly to Jacksonville to take on the defending national champions. The Gators have won two previous national titles and UGA knocked them off each

time the following season. Look for the trend to continue in a monstrous upset. Georgia fans will not want to move the game from Jacksonville following this unexpected victory. Prediction: WIN

**November 7 – vs. Tennessee Tech:** The post-Florida party moves back to Athens for the Dawgs' first real breather of the season. Prediction: WIN

**November 14 – vs. Auburn:** Georgia has won three in a row over Auburn for the first time since 1980-1982 and has not won four in a row since the 1940's. In what has always been an unpredictable and quirky series, the Tigers will pull the upset. Auburn has a history of playing their best football of the year in Athens, and it will happen again in 2009. Prediction: LOSS

**November 21 – vs. Kentucky:** The Cats have not won in Athens since 1977 and they will not win there in 2009 either. Prediction: WIN

**November 28 – at Georgia Tech:** In the traditional season finale against the Jackets, Georgia will end on a high note by clinching an Outback Bowl bid with a rousing win over their arch rivals. This year's edition will be another tight, high-scoring affair just like the 2008 game. Prediction: WIN

Regular-season prediction: 9-3

Photo courtesy of Rob Saye. Black can be reached at [sblack@scoreatl.com](mailto:sblack@scoreatl.com).

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# THE BUZZ ON THE FLATS

GT

RICKY DIMON



## Tech to play tough '09 schedule, but double-digit win count is possible

With the season just around the corner, here's what we think will happen in the Jackets' 2009 campaign:

**September 5 – vs. Jacksonville State:** In the 2008 season opener, Georgia Tech was executing coach Paul Johnson's triple-option offense for the very first time and pummeled Jacksonville State 41-14. Now familiar with Johnson's explosive rushing attack, Tech should make this one even uglier for the little-known visitors. Prediction: WIN

**September 10 – vs. Clemson:** The Yellow Jackets will have no problem getting up for this Thursday night showdown just five days after their game against J-State. Since getting destroyed three years ago in Death Valley (also in a night game), Tech has won two straight against the Tigers, including a 21-17 road victory last season. Prediction: WIN

**September 17 – at Miami:** For the Hurricanes, home-field advantage and a new full-time quarterback (Jacory Harris) should make a difference, but will it completely turn the tide of what has become a lopsided head-to-head series? Prediction: WIN

**September 26 – vs. North Carolina:** Head coach Butch Davis and the Tar Heels are coming off a solid 8-5 season. This year's UNC team could be dangerous, but without receivers Brandon Tate and Hakeem Nicks, 2009 might not be the year in which it takes

the next step. Prediction: WIN

**October 3 – at Mississippi State:** Former University of Florida offense coordinator Dan Mullen is the new head coach of a young Bulldog squad. Mullen's presence and home-field advantage should not be nearly enough for an upset of the Jackets, who trounced visiting MSU 38-7 last year. Prediction: WIN

**October 10 – at Florida State:** The Seminoles probably won't invoke any memories of their glory days of the previous decade, but they should contend for the ACC Championship. FSU will boast a dangerous rushing attack behind an experienced offensive line. Prediction: LOSS

**October 17 – vs. Virginia Tech:**

In this decade, Georgia Tech has never finished a season undefeated at home. Accomplishing that feat in the decade's

final year will be a brutal task with the vaunted Hokies coming to town. Running back Darren Evans is out for the season (torn ACL), but Virginia Tech—as usual—will be led by an outstanding defense. Prediction: LOSS

**October 24 – at Virginia:** The Jackets suffered an almost inexplicable 24-17 home setback to Virginia last season. It was their only setback at Bobby Dodd Stadium and ended up costing them the Coastal Division title. Tech should be able to exact revenge with little difficulty against a team that ended 2008 on a four-game losing streak. Prediction: WIN

**October 31 – at Vanderbilt:** The Commodores lost six of their last seven regular-season games in 2008, including one at home to Duke. This year, Vandy's offense is expected to be futile once

again and the defense excels more against the pass than the run. Advantage: Jackets. Prediction: WIN

**November 7 – vs. Wake Forest:** Wake Forest has established itself as a consistent force in the ACC over the past few years, but the defense lost a lot during the offseason, including linebacker Aaron Curry. A retooled defense is not a recipe for success against this season's Yellow Jackets. Prediction: WIN

**November 14 – at Duke:** Under new coach David Cutcliffe, the Blue Devils won four games last season, one of which came in ACC play (31-3 over Virginia). Defensive tackle Vince Oghobaase could disrupt Tech's rushing game, so this probably won't be a blowout of astronomical proportions. Prediction: WIN

**November 28 – vs. Georgia:** These "Clean Old Fashioned Hate" rivalry games are almost always close (such as Tech's 45-42 comeback road victory last fall), but home-field advantage and Georgia's departures of Matthew Stafford and Knowshon Moreno to the NFL give the Jackets a clear edge. Prediction: WIN

Regular-season prediction: 10-2

The photo of Jonathan Dwyer is courtesy of Brad Wallace/Photographic Arts. Dimon can be reached at [rdimon@scoreatl.com](mailto:rdimon@scoreatl.com).



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# A WEEKEND FOR THE FANS

JOSH BAGRIANSKY



## Friday Night Lights offers fans an up-close look at what's in store for '09

After last year's surprising 11-5 season that surprised more than just a few people, expectations are higher than ever among Falcons fans. And those fans got a good look at one of the NFL's emerging young squads Allstate Friday Night Lights at Brookwood High School, where the Falcons put on their first full-contact session of the season, a scrimmage that featured the Atlanta offense and defense going head-to-head in front of a packed house.

In the end, the offense emerged from the matchup with a 37-34 win. But for the Falcons, this one was all about the fans.

The scrimmage began with a special teams practice of sorts for the fans to enjoy. The session was especially important for Jason Elam, who attended Brookwood High School.

"I'm fulfilling a dream here," Elam said. "It's pretty special. To be able to come back, I never dreamed that this would be able to happen."

A high-octane offense that many are calling one of the league's best was expected to star, and the unit certainly had its moments. But it was the defense that wowed the fans early, showing much promise as it made plenty of plays soon after the scrimmage kicked off.

Brent Grimes started things off by stripping tight end Justin Peelle of the football and recovering it for a 35-yard touchdown. Then there was

Jamaal Fudge's massive hit on Jason Snelling that took the backup running back off of his feet and brought a collective roar from the crowd.

Meanwhile, the offense looked somewhat rusty. But Smith was expecting the team to have some hiccups with training camp just over a week old.

"We know that there's going to be mistakes in the scrimmage," Smith said. "We want our guys to go out, communicate and play with a lot of effort."

But Matt Ryan and the Atlanta offense cranked things up after the slow start. Last season's Rookie of the Year hooked up with Michael Jenkins on a 20-yard touchdown strike over the middle to open up the scoring. Jerious Norwood starred in the first half as well, putting one of his highlight-reel runs on display as he bounced to the outside and took off for a long touchdown scamper.

The thousands of fans lined up before the gate, as well as the solid performance on the field, indicated one thing: Falcons football is back, and it's alive and well. But for Smith and many others, this one was all about building a connection with their young fans.

"I think it's very important for us to have a connection, because if young kids aren't playing midget football, Pop Warner football, junior high football, or high school football, then you're not going to have the interest that the NFL has."

### BACK IN THE GAME ...

Though the offense was a little slow to start, that can be expected with the first live action of the fall. But the preseason starts this Saturday, giving the players a chance to play against players who don't wear the Red and Black for a change.

The Detroit Lions, Atlanta's Saturday opponent, was dead last in the league in total defense, allowing over 32 points a game and over 404 total yards. So, it may not be the best indicator of how far the first-team offense has come, but it should give the players a much-needed run-through. San Diego and Baltimore in the last two preseason weeks should provide a much harder challenge.

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**HUDDLE UP:** Matt Ryan (No. 2) calls the shots during the Falcons' Friday Night Lights fan event at Brookwood High School last Friday. Though the offense looked a little rusty at first, the unit picked up momentum and ended up pulling out a 37-34 win over the defense. Photo by Mark Mayo.

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## SCORE MORE



## Phils, Mets await in crucial divisional series

After making some serious hay on the team's recent West Coast road swing, the Braves now start a big stretch within the division. By next week, the team could be nipping at the heels of the NL East-leading Phillies, right in the thick of the Wild Card race, or completely looking to 2010. The Braves welcome in the defending World Champion Phillies, whom they have owned this season (7-2 on the year), and the nation will be watching on Fox Saturday and on ESPN this Sunday. After hosting Arizona, the team heads back up to Citi Field.

With Jair Jurrjens, Kenshin Kawakami and Javier Vazquez on the bump, the Braves could take two of three from Philly. Their starting pitching is better than the Phillies', even with the addition of Cliff Lee and Pedro Martinez. While the offense favors Philadelphia, the return of Omar Infante from a broken hand should provide Atlanta with a bit of a boost. Infante was leading the team in average before a broken hand on May 20 required surgery and put the super-sub on the shelf. The nice thing about Infante

is his ability to play third base one night, switch to second the next, and then come in to left field two nights later. Infante should help spell Chipper Jones if his oblique begins to act up again, or the utility man can grab his outfielder's mitt and head to left if Garret Anderson needs some rest. Infante will also help Bobby Cox with a bat off of the bench and with matchups, as Infante can go to second and Martin Prado to first against a lefty and Adam LaRoche can pinch-hit later in the game. If the Braves do gain a game, the team would potentially sit just 3.5 games back.

After meeting up with Arizona (sitting several games below .500 and playing out the string), the Mets' new ballpark awaits. Chipper used to dominate the old Shea stadium, but the new stadium is not conducive to the long ball. The Braves do have a winning record in the new park with a 2-1 mark. The Mets have the series edge thus far this season, but the Braves have taken two straight, both at Citi Field.

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## Hawks look to shore up frontcourt depth

Zaza Pachulia and Randolph Morris. With those two names, I just summed up Atlanta's depth off the bench at both the power forward and center positions. Need I say more to convince you the team has some serious frontcourt upgrading to do? Here's a concise list of the top big men remaining on the market.

**Aaron Gray:** Gray is big at 7-0, 270 pounds, young at 24 years of age, and quite affordable (he will cost a number around the league minimum). In two seasons, he has failed to find a role in Chicago, but with the Hawks' dearth of big men, he can play a productive role in Atlanta. Though he has relatively slow feet, Gray is a good passer and a more-than-decent offensive option in the post.

**Johan Petro:** Again, the Hawks are so shallow in the frontcourt that just about any big man will do. Petro is hardly explosive, but is big (7-0, 247), physical and is a sure bet to play solid defense and rebound the basketball. However, on offense, Petro is a big liability, consistently ranking among the league's worst centers in true shooting percentage.

**Joe Smith:** Perhaps the best option on the list, the Hawks have been in pur-

suit of the former Cavalier for the last month. He will command between \$2-4 million a year, remains an efficient low-post threat and is a more-than-capable outside shooter. While he is no doubt a quality pickup for any contender, at 34, his decline can't be too far down the road.

**Stromile Swift:** Swift has been a pretty big disappointment since being drafted second overall more than nine years ago, but even as an undersized center he blocks shots and rebounds the basketball. He has, however, been known to lack focus and discipline, instead relying on his God-given abilities to get by.

### QUICK FINISH

The Hawks' 2009-10 regular-season schedule has been inspected and discussed plenty, but the team also released its pre-season schedule last week and there are some interesting details worth noting. First, the team will get the chance to test its new and improved backcourt right off the bat when Chris Paul and rookie Darren Collison of New Orleans visit Atlanta on Oct. 7. Finally, the team will close the pre-season slate in front of a national audience when its Oct. 23 showdown with the Magic in Orlando airs on ESPN.

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## CHECKING IN

# ON THE DREAM

## Dream gaining momentum for stretch run, looking to earn playoff berth

When you're coming off what was arguably the worst season in WNBA history behind a 4-30 record, .500 doesn't seem so bad. And that is exactly where a much-improved Atlanta Dream squad sits after coming out flying in the second half of the season, having won three of its first four games after the All-Star Break.

Among those victories was an impressive blowout win over the then-Western Conference-leading Phoenix Mercury, whom Atlanta simply dismantled in a 106-76 trouncing behind five players in double figures.

But Atlanta also appears to be pulling it together away from Philips Arena, an area where the team has struggled all season, by notching road victories in San Antonio and Detroit over its impressive run of good form.

Now with the stretch run of the season looming, the Dream are thinking about the postseason. And with their size in the post, impressive depth that features No. 1 overall draft pick Angel McCoughtry and experienced players like Coco Miller and Michelle Snow, and enough athleticism to run with even the fastest of teams like the Mercury, no

one will want to play them.

According to McCoughtry, "The sky is the limit for us."

### COMING UP ...

With a four-game homestand on the horizon, Atlanta has an opportunity to continue its impressive run.

But it won't be easy on Saturday, when a very strong Seattle Storm team, which features big-time scorer Lauren Jackson and dynamic point guard Sue Bird, visits Philips Arena for a 7 p.m. tipoff. Bird's presence could spell trouble for the Dream, as Atlanta

has often struggled to cover quicker guards during the season, and no one can break a defense down quite like Bird.

The Dream will have their hands full with another great point guard on Thursday, when Becky Hammon and the San Antonio Silver Stars come to town for a 7:30 p.m. start.

The homestand continues afterwards as well with two more home matchups against an underachieving Los Angeles Sparks squad and a Sacramento Monarchs team that was 5-17 at press time.

Bagriansky can be reached at [jbagriansky@scoreatl.com](mailto:jbagriansky@scoreatl.com).

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SCORE MORE



## AMS features full fall schedule of racing

The fall is jam-packed at Atlanta Motor Speedway, with all kinds of events going on for the racing enthusiast. Last week in this space, we talked about the festivities over Labor Day weekend for the Pep Boys Auto 500 on the Sprint Cup Tour. The NASCAR Sprint Cup Qualifying and the Degree V12 300 officially start that week to end the summer and welcome the fall, while the Pep Boys Auto 500 rounds out the weekend.

Although NASCAR may be leaving behind the AMS after Labor Day, there are plenty of Friday Night Drags to pick up the slack. Local competitors battle in drag races across several divisions throughout September. In addition, a Show N' Shine car show will take place before the racing begins. It is \$20 to race or show and only \$7 to sit back and watch the action.

The Sports Car Club of America returns to AMS in order to carry out time trials. Trials are held Aug. 22-23 in the Champions and Winners parking lots outside of AMS' front stretch.

Sept. 19 and 20 bring the Motorsport Nationals 2009 Super Show.

The show features numerous show cars, a huge burn contest, vendors and booths in the industry, live music, and of course a swimsuit competition to match the hot cars. This year, new classes include Hot Rods, Classics, Exotics, Motorcycles and Trucks. A must-see at the event is the drifting space featuring the best drivers and cars in the industry.

The Legends, Bandolero, and Thunder Roadsters race throughout the fall in the Winter Flurry series (10/23, 11/20, and 12/12). They compete on AMS' famous "Thunder Ring," a quarter-mile oval, in the first two races and take to the road course in the third and final race.

Want to get in on the action? AMS plays host to several programs. Whether you choose to be driven around the 1.54-mile quad oval, or to put on a fire suit and drive at speeds of over 150 mph, there is sure to be a driving school for you. Programs begin Sept. 10 and go almost every week until Nov. 28. For more information on any of the events, check out [www.atlantamotorspeedway.com](http://www.atlantamotorspeedway.com).

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## Fall schedule brings more than Le Mans

The fall season is going to be a busy one for the folks up in Braselton. Road Atlanta is the home of the Petit Le Mans, which is one of the most popular Le Mans races in the world, but there are more races for fans to sink their teeth into, especially in the month of October. Also, before Petit Le Mans in September, there is an event that will get fans ready for an exciting remaining season of racing.

From Aug. 20-23, Classic Motorsports Magazine presents the Atlanta Historic Races, where drivers of vintage sports cars will get together and compete. The event will feature the Marques of Great Britain, which showcases Jaguar, Lotus and Triumph. There will also be historic stock cars, B.O.S.S. formula cars and the Historic Motor Grand Prix. Test day will be on Aug. 20 and races will go on for the next three days.

After the Petit Le Mans, the fun at Road Atlanta is only getting started, as the WERA Grand National Finals will take place from October 10-11. This is where some of the best motorcycle racers will go at it in an intense two-day series of races.

On the following weekend, Road Atlanta will host the season finale of the SVRA, which stands for Sportscar Vintage Racing Association. If you're a fan of vintage sports cars, this is for you, as Porsche, Ferrari and Bugatti will all make an appearance.

One of the more popular events will take place from Oct. 31-Nov. 1 when the World Karting Association will have its annual race. This is go-kart racing at its finest, as the world's best kart racers compete on Halloween weekend.

The last event of the year will be the SCCA America Road Race of Champions. This is the biggest amateur sports car race of the season at Road Atlanta and more than 400 racers from 30-40 different states will compete in the event.

So there you have it. Adding these great events to the wildly popular Petit Le Mans race on Sept. 26, the most prestigious of the American Le Mans series races, you have quite a schedule of fast fun. For more information on any of the races, go to [www.roadatlanta.com](http://www.roadatlanta.com).

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## First prospect game less than a month away

Although it may not feel like it outside, the truth is that hockey is just around the corner for the Atlanta Thrashers and the rest of the NHL. With arbitration now in the rear-view mirror, the teams across the league are now all but set with their groups of players for training camp and upcoming prospect games.

Atlanta will host two prospect games against the Nashville Predators at the Duluth IceForum on Sept. 14 and 15. The games will be the fans' first chance to see some of the future stars of Atlanta for possibly the first time. While the roster of players is not set for the game, one can assume that fans will be able to see for the first time Atlanta's No. 4 overall draft choice, Evander Kane. He will most likely join another first-round draft choice, Angelo Esposito, who spent last year playing junior hockey.

Esposito, a reported scoring machine, will be looking to make his first NHL roster. He and Kane could be

a dominant offensive combination with the strength of Kane and the marksmanship of Esposito. This, however, will depend on where Kane is used during the camp, as he has the ability to play both at the left wing and center positions, Esposito's position of choice.

### RETURN IN QUESTION ...

A few weeks ago Kari Lehtonen had surgery to repair a herniated disc in his back. Lehtonen said the injury goes back to last season when he struggled through back injuries in the middle part of the year. Originally, the plan was to have Lehtonen back at the beginning of training camp. Now that the calendar has changed to August, there hasn't been any further word on when Lehtonen will return to the ice. Hopes are that the Thrashers' all-time leader in wins as a goalie is still on track to return by the end of this month.

Boral can be reached at [jboral@scoreatl.com](mailto:jboral@scoreatl.com).



## Georgia colleges gearing up for fall sports

Believe it or not, Georgia and Georgia Tech have some great teams participating in sports other than football this fall. Here's a quick look at some of the most noteworthy recent news and notes.

Georgia named Jimmy Frebes their assistant equestrian coach this week. Frebes was a competitor and coach at the University of Findlay (Ohio) and won the IHSA championship in Advanced Western Horsemanship in 2007. ... The Bulldogs' volleyball pre-season is underway. The team will have 14 practices before classes start on Aug. 17, and 12 more leading up to its season opener against Georgia Tech.

Speaking of the Yellow Jackets, the school recently named Tonya Johnson its new head volleyball coach. Johnson was the associate head coach during the University of Texas' most recent Final Four run.

### OTHER COLLEGES ...

Georgia State recently named Todd Reeses their Senior Associate Director of Athletics for Development. Reeses spent the last four years at UCF under the same title, and was in charge of fundraising, gift giving and priority seating. ... Exciting news was released this

week at Kennesaw State, as the women's soccer team will host Mexico's women's national team after it opens its season at home against Georgia. ... On the Mercer beat, school president Bill Underwood will succeed Dr. Randy Lowry as the Atlantic Sun Conference president, a news release announced earlier this week. ... Peter Howell, Oglethorpe University's assistant athletic director, was chosen recently for induction into the Georgia Tennis Hall of Fame. The honor is awarded to those who have succeeded on and off the court and have brought recognition and honor to themselves and to tennis in Georgia. ... Emory recently inducted Liana Roman Merz (volleyball), Jessica Levy Santucci (women's tennis) and Diana Spock Adebulehin (women's soccer) into its Sports Hall of Fame. ... Morehouse football has had a noteworthy offseason, as eight of its returning players were named to the SIAC pre-season All-Conference team. ... Finally, in Valdosta State football news, the Blazers closed out their first week of practice Monday, as the team held its final split squad practice of the 2009 pre-season.

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SCORE MORE

# OUR MAN ON RECRUITING




SCOTT JANOVITZ

## More Georgia recruits announce their decisions; top tight end gets invite

It was another busy week along the Georgia recruiting trail and Westlake offensive tackle Tony Jacob got the ball rolling early when he gave the Knights of UCF his verbal pledge. The massive 6-8, 310-pound recruit had offers from Middle Tennessee State, Alabama State, Savannah State, Indiana and New Mexico and is the third Georgia recruit to commit to UCF in this class. Calhoun linebacker Cody Ralston and Crisp County linebacker Tommy Sanders are the other two.

Stephenson's Raymond Sanders was the next recruit to take his name off the market, as the 5-8, 175-pound running back gave the Kentucky Wildcats his pledge. Sanders also received offers from East Carolina, Georgia Southern, Louisiana Tech, Marshall and Middle Tennessee State, to name a few.

Last Monday was a big day for recruiting in the Peach State, as two top recruits committed to schools. Georgia Tech reaped the benefits first when Union Grove defensive

end Anthony Williams committed to the Yellow Jackets over offers from LSU, Ole Miss, N.C. State, Oklahoma State, South Carolina and Stanford, to name a few. Williams, a four-star recruit according to Rivals.com, represents Tech's 10th commitment for the class of 2010 and keeps the all-Georgia flavor to the class alive.

Also on Monday, Lowndes linebacker Telvin Smith gave Florida State his verbal pledge over offers from Georgia and LSU. The 6-3, 205-pound Smith is the third Georgia recruit to pick the Seminoles in the class of 2010, joining Columbia's Tank Sessions and Lowndes offensive tackle Ed Christian. Two 2009 Lowndes recruits, defensive backs Greg Reid and Gerald Demps, also are at FSU.

On Tuesday, Heritage cornerback Garry Peters picked the Clemson Tigers over offers from Florida State, Maryland, Ole Miss, Alabama, and Auburn, to name a few. The 6-0, 173-pound Peters is the sixth Georgia

recruit to commit to Clemson in the class of 2010; the Tigers have also received commitments from defensive end Corey Crawford, offensive lineman David Beasley, defensive back Martin Jenkins, defensive back Darius Robinson and offensive lineman Reid Webster. ... Also on Tuesday, Kori Gaines, a 5-10, 174-pound safety out of Grayson, gave BYU his commitment.

Last Wednesday, Lowndes athlete Khary Franklin chose the Troy University. The 5-7, 165-pounder also had offers from Arkansas State and Georgia Southern.

Finally, on Saturday, Westlake linebacker Michael Taylor gave his commitment to the University of Tennessee. The 6-1, 205-pound Taylor chose the Vols over LSU and Stanford.

### GOING TO DISNEY WORLD ...

Last week was also an exciting one for Brookstone tight end and Alabama commit Brian Vogler. That's because the 6-7, 248-

pounder received an important call from ESPN, as he was given an invite to the network's 2010 Under Armour All-American game to be held at Disney's Wide World of Sports in Orlando. The massive tight end becomes the 11th Georgian to make this year's team.

### LAST WEEK ON THE VISIT ...

Blessed Trinity dual-sport athlete Jake Skole announced that Georgia and Georgia Tech lead for his services. Wherever the 6-1, 185-pound athlete decides to go, he hopes to play both baseball and football. Since he has long held that he is more comfortable on defense, it is important to note that Tech is recruiting Skole as an A-back, while the Bulldogs are looking for him to line up at safety.

*Listen to Janovitz on Score Atlanta's Official Visit, the south's only all-recruiting radio show, on 790 The Zone from 2-4 on Sundays. Janovitz can be reached at [sjanovitz@scoreatl.com](mailto:sjanovitz@scoreatl.com).*

# PRESEASON SHOWCASE




ALEX EWALT

## Weeks before regular season offer chance to see top teams in unique settings

Until the Corky Kell Classic kicks off the high school football regular season, preseason scrimmages are a great way to get a look at your favorite teams in action before the games start to count. Scrimmages, like a lot of teams' early-season non-region games, give us a chance to see squads pitted against each other that normally wouldn't ever meet. Without further ado, here are five intriguing scrimmage matchups taking place next weekend. (Thanks to the Georgia High School Football Daily and Steve Slay for the complete list of scrimmages around the state.)

**Aug. 21 – North Gwinnett vs. Bob Jones (Ala.):** Leave it to North Gwinnett to schedule yet another interesting preseason contest. This is a team that has played the likes of Prattville, Ala., and Byrnes, S.C., both defending champs in their state's highest clas-

sifications at the time of the meetings, the past two years (Bob Jones made the second round in Alabama's 6A last season). The Bulldogs lost a lot of offense, including do-it-all running back Tyler Jarry, who walked on at Georgia Tech.

**Player to watch – North Gwinnett QB C.J. Uzomah:** He played sparingly under center last season as a sophomore, but shone brightly when he did. Uzomah has been a top wide receiver for the Bulldogs thus far, but he will use his 6-5, 210-pound frame to pick up right where Mikey Tamburo (now at Boise State) left off. With a handful of offers from top-tier ACC and SEC schools, Uzomah is already one of the nation's top QB recruits.

**Aug. 21 – Stephenson vs. Tucker:** Some people were calling this matchup the unofficial DeKalb County championship game

when the two teams met last year. Tucker, the defending Class 4A champion, may not be quite as dominant this time around with the loss of so much talent, but Stephenson could be the most talented team in Region 2-A AAAA. RB Raymond Sanders (Kentucky commit) will lead Stephenson's potent ground attack, and junior DE James Vaughters, one of the top 2011 recruits in the country, will be a headliner for Tucker on defense.

**Player to watch – Tucker RB/DB/KR/PR Devin Scott:** The senior will have to be "the man" this season after the graduation of dynamic running backs Jonathan Davis (Central Florida) and Drayton Calhoun (LSU). The 5-8 jitterbug made some huge runs in the title game against Marist, so he's battle-tested. It will be a bit of a rebuilding year for the Tigers, and Scott's play will go a long way in determining how they handle it.

**Aug. 21 – Peachtree Ridge vs. Southwest DeKalb:** The runner-up in Class 5A last season (Peachtree Ridge) takes on the team (SWD) that could very well be the champion in Class 4A this season. Southwest coach Buck Godfrey hopes to put up to 25 players on college football rosters next year (no joke). The Ridge lost some talented players, but should be right in the thick of it again this season in Region 7-A AAAA.

**Player to watch – Southwest DeKalb RB Kendrun Malcome:** The Peachtree Ridge run defense is usually rock-solid, but the Panthers' feature back is a bowling ball with good speed. It will be interesting to see if the Georgia commit can find success against the Lions, who won't be able to just load up the box against a very diversified Southwest offense.

*Ewalt can be reached at [aewalt@scoreatl.com](mailto:aewalt@scoreatl.com).*

# ON THE PANTHER FOOTBALL BEAT



DAVE COHEN



## Football era ready to kick off as players report for first week of practice

Mark Hogan, Jr. is no longer the only Panther football player on campus, as this past Tuesday more than 70 student-athletes moved into The Commons on campus to begin getting ready not only for the academic side of things but for practice as well. Georgia State has 27 scholarship athletes as well as walk-ons to get things started. The squad will hold its inaugural practice on Friday, Aug. 14 at an interim site located near campus. "That first week is going to be a blur," said head coach Bill Curry. "We're going to get them up early. We'll be dealing with academic orientation, physicals, equipment issues, and of course

we'll begin to learn the football part, what we expect in the meeting room and on the practice field. The most important part of the orientation is the academic phase so they can learn how to be successful at Georgia State and learn the systems that support each student-athlete through the process."

Among the signees are three members of the AJC's Georgia 150: quarterback Drew Little from Henry County H.S. in McDonough; Kelton Hill, a quarterback from Lithia Springs H.S.; and Nathan Anthony, a running back from Columbia H.S. Also arriving was Parris Lee, a running

back from Jacksonville, Fla., who was named to the Florida Times Union's postseason "Super 24." Also reporting is a pretty good linebacker in Karl Williams from Eastside H.S. in Covington, Ga., as well as defensive back K.J. Morton from Northside H.S. in Warner Robins, Ga. Some big linemen are here as well, including 6-6 Harrison Clotey from Grayson H.S. in Gwinnett County, 6-7 Ramel Davis from Calhoun County, Ga., and 6-3 Michael Davis from Chamblee H.S. in DeKalb County.

Georgia State is not the only school getting ready to debut its college football pro-

gram. Fellow CAA member Old Dominion, as well as South Alabama, play their inaugural seasons in 2009, while Lamar begins in 2010 and Texas-San Antonio expects to kick-off in 2011. UNC Charlotte is also exploring the possibility of playing football. ... Tune in Friday, Aug. 14th from 2-3 p.m. for our Panther football preview show on WRAS-FM (88.5) live from the team's first practice.

*Dave Cohen is in his 26th season as the "Voice of Georgia State Basketball and Baseball on WRAS-FM (88.5) and works on the football radio crew at Furman University in Greenville, S.C.*



## GEORGIA STATE FOOTBALL

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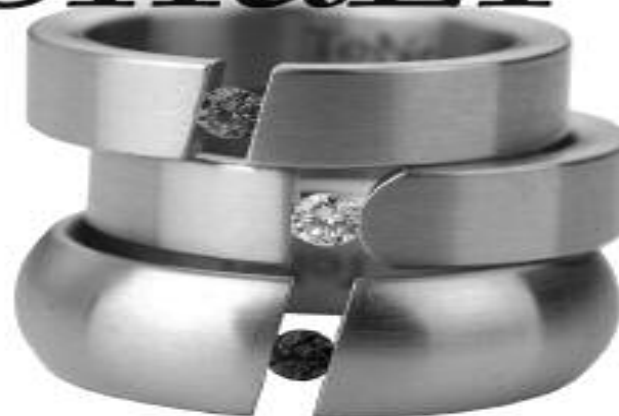
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# THE WEEKLY GAME PLAN

ATLANTA'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE WEEKLY SPORTING EVENT LISTING

## BASKETBALL

**Dream.** August 15 vs. Seattle 7 PM. August 20 vs. San Antonio. August 23 vs. Los Angeles 3 PM. August 25 vs. Sacramento 7:30 PM. August 27 at Detroit 7:30 PM.

### Club Sport, "Where Atlanta Comes To Play!"

Registration Ongoing - Men's League plays on Sunday evenings at the Brookhaven Boys & Girls Club. For more info or to register visit [www.usclubsport.com](http://www.usclubsport.com)

**Suwanee Sports Academy.** Ongoing. Basketball training and development for boy and girls grades K-12. Rising Stars, Future Stars, Suwanee Basketball League, On Court Player Development, nationally-recognized year-round comprehensive player development program. For more information contact Mike Brown at 678-541-0176 or visit [www.ssasports.com](http://www.ssasports.com).

**Mark Price Shooting Lab.** Ongoing: Personalized professional shooting instruction through one-on-one coaching and state-of-the-art technology at Suwanee Sports Academy. For more information, contact Mike Brown at 678-541-0176 or visit [www.ssasports.com](http://www.ssasports.com).

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

## BASEBALL

**Braves.** August 14 vs. Philadelphia 7:30 PM. August 15 vs. Philadelphia 4 PM. August 16 vs. Philadelphia 1:30 PM. August 18 at New York Mets 7:10 PM. August 19 at New York Mets 7:10 PM. August 20 at New York Mets 7:10 PM. August 21 vs. Florida 7:30 PM. August 22 vs. Florida 7 PM. August 23 vs. Florida 1:30 PM. August 25 vs. San Diego 7 PM. August 26 vs. San Diego 7 PM. August 27 San Diego 7 PM.

**Gwinnett Braves.** August 14 vs. Pawtucket 7 PM. August 15 vs. Pawtucket 7 PM. August 16 vs. Pawtucket 2 PM. August 17 vs. Pawtucket 2 PM. August 18 at Norfolk 7:15 PM. August 19 at Norfolk 7:15 PM. August 20 at Norfolk 7:15 PM. August 21 at Norfolk 7:15 PM. August 22 vs. Charlotte 7 PM. August 23 vs. Charlotte 2 PM. August 24 vs. Charlotte 6 PM. August 26 at Charlotte 7:15 PM. August 27 at Charlotte 7:15 PM.

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

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

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

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

## FOOTBALL

**Falcons.** (Preseason). August 15 at Detroit 4 PM. (Regular season). September 13 vs. Miami 1 PM.

**Collins Hill Athletic Association.** Ongoing. Accepting applications for qualified coaches in all age groups. For information email Craig Deneau at [deneauc@charter.net](mailto:deneauc@charter.net)

**Grayson Athletic Association.** Ongoing. Football coaches needed for eighth grade and all age groups. For information call Duane Davis at 678-300-0282 or visit [www.gaasports.org](http://www.gaasports.org).

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

**Arena Indoor Football.** Ongoing. Youth and Adult Leagues. Youth 7 vs. 7; Adult 6 vs. 6. For information, call 678-714-7454 or e-mail [info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com](mailto:info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com). [www.atlantasilverbacks.com/indoor](http://www.atlantasilverbacks.com/indoor).

**Capitol City Officials Association.** CCOA is accepting ongoing registration for the upcoming GHSA High School season in football. We hold weekly training meetings. For more information, contact Irvin Seabrook at 404-957-3331 or e-mail [lrv\\_seabrook@yahoo.com](mailto:lrv_seabrook@yahoo.com).

## HOCKEY

**Peachtree Booster Club.** Ongoing - Pickneyville Roller Hockey Rink. Fees: \$95 for 12-game season, \$30 out-of-county fee. For information visit [www.pbsports.org](http://www.pbsports.org).

## SOCCER

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

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

**Competitive Amateur Soccer in Atlanta** For more information, visit [www.majesticoccer.com](http://www.majesticoccer.com).

## TENNIS

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

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

## LACROSSE

**Lacrosse.** Ongoing. Registration for 1st-8th grades. For information call 404-216-5870, email [jasona@bagatawaylacrosse.com](mailto:jasona@bagatawaylacrosse.com) or visit [www.bagatawaylacrosse.com](http://www.bagatawaylacrosse.com).

**Double Stixx Lacrosse.** Ongoing - Leagues, Travel Teams and Tournaments for youth, high school and adult's boys and girls. More information about the best lacrosse programs in Georgia can be found at [www.doublestixxlacrosse.com](http://www.doublestixxlacrosse.com) or by contacting Chris Smith at [chris@doublestixxlacrosse.com](mailto:chris@doublestixxlacrosse.com) or 404-550-5322.

## RUNNING

**Gary Tillman Memorial Clocktower 5K.** Aug. 15. Rome. 706-346-9348.

**ATC Grand Finale 5K.** Aug. 15. Atlanta, 7:30 AM. [www.atlantaatcclub.org](http://www.atlantaatcclub.org).

**Bulldog Dash 5K/Mile.** Aug. 15. Suwanee, 8 AM. 770-271-4492.

**Panther Prowl 5K.** Aug. 15. Fayetteville, 8 AM. 770-631-9040.

**Titan Twilight 5K and Little Titan Races.** Aug. 15. Bogart, 5:30 PM. 706-769-6593.

**Inaugural Arcade Encore Centennial 5 Miler.** Aug. 15. Arcade, 8:00 AM. 706-575-5263.

**The Pacemaker 5000.** Aug. 15. Hampton, 8:00 AM. 678-795-0115.

## CAMPS

**Nike Basketball Camps.** Camps located in Snellville, Roswell, Kennesaw, Oxford and 0894-4297 to find out which dates suit your campers best.

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

**Harlem Legends.** The Harlem Legends have scheduled their 2008 Shoot for the Stars Basketball & Physical Fitness Camps. The "Shoot for the Stars Youth Basketball Camps and Clinics" are a unique form of learning experiences geared towards young basketball players of all skill levels. There are two Gwinnett County camps this year. Please visit our website ([www.harlemlegends.com](http://www.harlemlegends.com)) or call 404-837-6719 for additional camps.

## VOLLEYBALL

**Gwinnett Sports Center.** Registration ongoing. For information call Jerry Robison at 678-491-0203 or visit [www.gscfun.com](http://www.gscfun.com).

**Suwanee Sports Academy.** Ongoing. Volleyball training and development for boys and girls grades 3-12. VolleySkills, VolleyStars, VolleyTraining, and OnCourt Player Development, a year-round comprehensive player development program. For more information, contact Mary Carnell at 770-614-6686 x108 or visit [www.ssasports.com](http://www.ssasports.com).

## SWIMMING & DIVING

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

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

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

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

## YOUTH REGISTRATION

**Soccer-Soccer Alley.** Ongoing - 3265 Roswell Road-Atlanta. For information call 404-266-0762 or visit [www.starsoccerclub.com](http://www.starsoccerclub.com).

**Tucker Youth Soccer.** Ongoing - 2803 Henderson Road Tucker, Ga. For information call 770-414-0538 or visit [www.tysa.com](http://www.tysa.com).

**Track and Field - Peachtree City Flash Youth Track Team registration.** Ongoing - Riley Field - Peachtree City, Ga. For ages 6-14. For information call 770-631-3552 or email [pcf@bellsouth.net](mailto:pcf@bellsouth.net).

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

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

**Youth Soccer Training.** Ongoing. Start age 3 and up. For information, call 678-714-7454 or e-mail [info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com](mailto:info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com). [www.atlantasilverbacks.com/indoor](http://www.atlantasilverbacks.com/indoor).

**Corpus Christi Youth Basketball League.** Registration is now underway for our 29th season! Boys and girls ages 5 through 14, any skill level, are welcome. Cost: \$90 per child/\$85 for siblings. Fee includes uniforms, field trips, skills clinics, 9 games and more! Register while space is still available Saturdays October 11 & 18, 2008, 10 AM to 12 PM. Location: Corpus Christi Church Sports Arena, 600 Mountain View Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30083. For info, call 770-469-0395, email [cycybl1@gmail.com](mailto:cycybl1@gmail.com), or visit the league's website ([www.cycybl.net](http://www.cycybl.net)).

## SOFTBALL

**Club Sport, "Where Atlanta Comes To Play!"** Registration Ongoing for Men's & Coed Leagues League games played at multiple locations throughout the Metro Area. For more info or to register visit [www.usclubsport.com](http://www.usclubsport.com)

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

## GYMNASTICS

**Gymnastics Classes at Gymnastics Academy of Atlanta.** Ongoing - 3126 Cobb Parkway Kennesaw, Ga. For information call 770-975-8337 or visit [www.gymnasticsacademyofatlanta.com](http://www.gymnasticsacademyofatlanta.com).

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

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

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

## RACING

**Sweet Repeats Consignment Sale.** August 20-22 at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

**Super Bike Motorcycle Show-N-Shine.** August 21 at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

**Sports Car Club of America Time Trials.** August 22-23 at Atlanta Motor Speedway.

**Atlanta Historic Races.** August 21-23 at Road Atlanta.

## OFFICIATING

**Club Sport, "Where Atlanta Comes To Play!"** Flag Football, Softball, Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball. Earn money officiating. Training provided. For more info email [atlanta@usclubsport.com](mailto:atlanta@usclubsport.com) or visit [www.usclubsport.com](http://www.usclubsport.com).

**Football - Lanier Football Officials Association.** Ongoing. GHSA member accepting applications with weekly training meetings. For information call Tom Tipton at 770-967-3197, ext. 239 or visit [www.lanierofficials.org](http://www.lanierofficials.org).

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

**Georgia Lacrosse Officials Association.** Needs youth and High School officials for 2008-2009 season. Training and mentoring provided for free. Great way to earn some extra money and get some fun aerobic exercise. For more information, visit [www.GALAXREF.com](http://www.GALAXREF.com) or call Jim Westbrook at 770-753-9059.

## ATLANTA SPORTS COUNCIL

**Chick-Fil-A Bowl.** Dec. 31, 2009. Georgia Dome. For tickets, call 404-444-4444.

To reach the Atlanta Sports Council call 404-886-8510 or visit [www.atlantasportscouncil.com](http://www.atlantasportscouncil.com).

## MISC

**Pool Tournament.** Nightly - Ongoing - Sean Patrick's Bar & Grill - Buckhead. Fees: No cover. For information call 770-650-5723. 8 PM.

**Suwanee Sports Academy.** Pre-K Athletics for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds introduces the basic skills needed to play basketball, soccer, and t-ball. Also, there is a unique after school program that provides students with a weekly sports curriculum along with the after school classroom setting. For more information, call 770-614-6686 or visit [www.ssasports.com](http://www.ssasports.com).

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

# SCANNING THE DIAL

SCORE  
FLETCHER PROCTOR



## Greene, Butler join Bulldog radio team; Vick on '60 Minutes'

This time of year is often referred to as "the dog days of summer," and while not a whole lot is going on in the sports world, the sports world is prepping itself for a busy fall. Football is right around the corner and several local media outlets are preparing themselves for pigskin season.

Two former Georgia Bulldog players have been added to the radio broadcast of the games this season. David Greene and Kevin Butler will both be involved with the broadcast team and will join forces with Jeff Dantzler for the pregame and postgame programming. Greene, a former quarterback under head coach Mark Richt, will join Dantzler on road trips and will co-host the first hour of the pregame as well as the two-hour postgame call-in show. The former All-America kicker Butler will serve as Dantzler's co-host for home games, as well as the Sunday morning "Bulldog Brunch" radio program. Butler has experience, having done some radio and TV work. Dantzler and his weekly partner will broadcast from the Hotel Indigo in downtown Athens.

Having former players on the broadcast team should bring some insight into the program, but that should come with a caveat. The American viewing audience has been subjected to too many athlete-turned analysts that are not ready for primetime. With Butler's experience, he should be ready to fully contribute; but Greene will have to learn on the fly, as he has been on NFL practice squads the last few seasons and hasn't done much on-air work. Just because an athlete has played the game does not mean he or she is immediately ready to step into a broadcasting job. Many athletes today are majoring in communications or journalism, and some are going to broadcasting schools or programs before getting behind the mic. Learning on the fly is certainly difficult, and

unfortunately not all athletes can successfully make the switch. Georgia fans can only hope that Greene can handle the broadcast as well as he handled the play-action fake.

### BACK IN PRIME-TIME ... SORT OF ...

From one left-handed quarterback to another ... Michael Vick was in Atlanta recently, visiting the New Life Community Center where he urged youth of the dangers of dogfighting. Vick is teaming with the Humane Society of the United States to travel around the country to speak to youth. A three-person CBS 60 Minutes crew followed Vick around and the news magazine will reportedly get the first major interview the former Falcon has conducted since his 23-month prison sentence ended. The date of the piece has not yet been released.

### AROUND TOWN ...

Fans of the ESPN and 680 The Fans "The Herd with Colin Cowherd" will get more Colin weekdays. Colin Cowherd will co-host SportsNation weekdays at 4 p.m. on ESPN2 after a successful debut several weeks ago. On the show, Cowherd and a co-host discuss various topics for a specific length of time before a national vote on the subject is revealed. Cowherd's show can be heard weekdays on 680 The Fan from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. with the remainder of the program airing after the Buck and Kincade show at 7 p.m.

Speaking of ESPN, College Gameday will once again open up the college football season in Atlanta at the Chick-fil-A Kickoff Classic. Lee, Chris and Kirk will set up shop in Centennial Olympic Park and will base the show on the Virginia Tech-Alabama game, a match-up of two preseason top-10 teams. If ESPN wanted to, the show could go with a state-of-Georgia theme as Georgia

Tech opens up the year with great expectations and Georgia opens up in Stillwater, Okla., against the Cowboys. Georgia State also will be practicing at that point, with former ESPN analyst Bill Curry serving as its coach. Let's hope ESPN gives the Peach State a big nod considering it is setting up camp in the state's borders but not at one of the campus sites.

The Brookwood Bronco football program has always seemed to be ahead of the curve in terms of implementing new technology, and fans of the football program can now get updates via Twitter. To follow the Broncos, visit the school's football website [www.brookwoodbronzos.org](http://www.brookwoodbronzos.org) or search for Brookwood Sports on Twitter. Head coach Mark Crews and his staff know what interests kids and how to get them involved; that's probably why Brookwood always has a strong following.

Finally, the SEC rules college football, but perhaps the power the conference holds is getting out of hand. According to an Alabama news outlet, the SEC has handed down its new media policy and access to video is essentially being limited to local television stations. The new rule, if enacted, would limit highlight clips to three minutes and would only be shown up to 72 hours after the conclusion of a game. In essence, a Friday night preview of a Saturday game would not be able to have highlights from last Saturday's game since it would be past the 72-hour time limit. The SEC would rather force stations or fans to log on to an SEC website or an SEC affiliate to get highlights. While I can see the conference deciding to strike (for cash) while the iron is hot, it will cost some of the smaller stations money. Big business wins and the mom and pop businesses once again get the shaft.

Proctor can be reached at [fproctor@scoreatl.com](mailto:fproctor@scoreatl.com).

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## Life after football sweet for Bulldog great

It was Sept. 17, 2006, and it was supposed to be just another day at the office for David Pollack. Play defense, rush the quarterback, and hit anything moving. But on that Sunday three years ago, Pollack's life changed forever. The Cincinnati Bengal and former UGA All-American moved in for what was supposed to be a routine tackle, but wound up being carried off the field on a stretcher.

A broken vertebrae, a halo brace for three months and the uncertainty about always being one hit away from possibly being confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life are the reasons why one of the most decorated defensive college football players in the game's history walked away from it all. Most athletes would have had a hard time leaving the game they love, but to this 27-year old husband and father it was a blessing in disguise.

"Breaking my neck was the best thing that could have ever happened to me because I was always one of those ADD guys playing all over the place and getting into everything," Pollack says. "If I had extra time, I was always running, working out, or training. I remember reading a passage of scripture when I was in my halo and it was 'Be still and know that I am God.' I had never done that, just sat back and relaxed."

After the injury occurred, Pollack planned on using a history degree to become a high school teacher so he could coach football. However, the former first-round draft pick decided to step behind a microphone instead of a desk. Originally starting at CSTV, Pollack now has a home at Atlanta's own AM 790 The Zone.

"I got my first gig with CSTV doing an SEC pre-game show," Pollack says.

"I started to really like it and I wanted to find something that kept me close to the game. My agent ended up contacting 790, and I really enjoyed it there so I just decided to sign on with them.



"Basically I'm a sports junkie, I love talking sports and I'm very opinionated and that is why I wanted to do this."

The transformation from being a high-profile athlete into a "media guy" was something that Pollack had to get used to over time.

"It was a tough transition because I got annoyed with the media sometimes (while I was playing) and didn't necessarily like it all the time," he explains. "So I just kind of figured out what I did and didn't like when I was a player."

With some experience under his belt and a fan base in the metro area, Pollack is looking to broaden his horizons in the near future. "I'm doing ESPN this year and I'll be working with them doing SEC programming. Probably a pre-game and post-game show, stuff like that."

The passion that Pollack displays on his show can be linked to the competitive fire that still burns within him. In fact, the former superstar claims he hasn't lost a step. "Oh I still got it," he says. "It's just too many screws, rods and plates in the neck."

However, if asked how much he misses the game on a scale of 1-10, his answer might surprise you. "Depends on the day. Some days zero, and some days 10. When you go out there and it is 100 degrees outside when you're playing golf, you don't have the desire to put the pads on and beat the crap out of somebody. But it all depends on the moment."

Even though he never got to deliver on the promise of his great college career, Pollack says he likes his story just the way it's turned out. "I wouldn't mess with anything. I have been so blessed in my life and career. I was a first-round draft pick. Everything has made me so much better. I wouldn't change a single thing, I'm very blessed to be where I am and I'm just very happy."

It doesn't get much better than that.

Phillips can be reached at [cphillips@scoreatl.com](mailto:cphillips@scoreatl.com).

**NEW DIRECTION:** David Pollack sustained a career-ending injury in just his second year with the Cincinnati Bengals, but has become a star in a different arena — the 790 The Zone studios — since stepping away from the game. Photo courtesy of Doug Jackson/Photographic Arts.

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