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CHEROKEE/FORSYTH'S HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS NEWSPAPER

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SCORE

PREP

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DECATUR HIGH SCHOOL

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A LOOK AROUND CHEROKEE/FORSYTH COUNTY SEE PG 6

Decatur AD ushering in new era at historic school



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SCHOOL LISTING

CHEROKEE/FORSYTH: Cherokee, Creekview, Etowah, Forsyth Central, North Forsyth, Sequoyah, South Forsyth, West Forsyth, Woodstock
COBB: Allatoona, Campbell, Harrison, Kell, Kennesaw Mountain, Lassiter, Marietta, McEachern, N. Cobb, N. Cobb Christian, Pebblebrook, Pope, S. Cobb, Sprayberry, Walton, Wheeler
DEKALB: Chamblee, Columbia, Decatur, Druid Hills, Dunwoody, Lakeside, Marist, Miller Grove, M.L. King, Paideia, Redan, St. Pius X, Southwest DeKalb, Stephenson, Stone Mountain, Tucker
FULTON: Alpharetta, Blessed Trinity, Centennial, Chattahoochee, Douglass, Grady, Lovett, Mays, Milton, North Springs, Northview, Riverwood, Roswell, Tri-Cities, Westminster, Woodward Academy
GWINNETT: Berkmar, Brookwood, Buford, C. Gwinnett, Collins Hill, Dacula, Grayson, Greater Atlanta Christian, Meadowcreek, Mill Creek, Norcross, North Gwinnett, Parkview, Peachtree Ridge, South Gwinnett, Wesleyan
GORDON: Calhoun, Gordon Central, Sonoraville

THE HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS OF THE WEEK



RYAN HARROW

WALTON HIGH

The state's top point guard and a signee with N.C. State, Harrow connected on six three-pointers in the third quarter alone to power the Raiders past Pope last Tuesday, 93-61. Harrow also poured in 20 points in a win last week over Kell, and scored 29 in a win over Campbell on Jan. 29. Harrow has led the Raiders to a 16-7 overall record heading into Friday's matchup against Wheeler.



KAYLA LEWIS

SOUTHWEST DEKALB

Signed with the University of Florida, Lewis is the star of the show for the highly ranked Lady Panthers. The senior is ranked the No. 91 overall prospect in her class by ESPN's HoopGurlz, and is a member of the prestigious Georgia Metros team. A big part of the last two state champion teams as a sophomore and junior, Lewis has SWD at a solid 18-4 record at press time.

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MARCH
FLORIDA, 7PM

SUNDAY 7
MARCH
CAROLINA, 5PM

THURSDAY 4
MARCH
NEW YORK ISLANDERS, 7PM

TUESDAY 9
MARCH
NASHVILLE, 7PM

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With leadership of longtime native, historic Decatur HS continues moving forward

Carter Wilson knows Decatur High School better than just about anyone. The longtime coach and athletic director at one of Georgia's oldest schools, Wilson looks at his role at Class 2A Decatur as much more than just a job.

"For me, this is home," Wilson says. "I grew up here in Decatur and went to Decatur High School."

Home, as it turns out, has been undergoing some drastic changes as of late. Decatur is a school that is closely tied into its surrounding community, blending in seamlessly with the small-city atmosphere. But several years ago, in looking at the athletic facilities that had been on campus for many decades, it was clear the school district had to move into the new millennium.

"It was a very emotional time for us because the stadium had been in use since [the 40s], the gym had been in use since the 30s, and there was a lot of emotional attachment from a lot of people. Decatur isn't one of those schools that's just a few years old, we have well over 100 years of history here.

"When we actually made the decision to tear down the stadium, it was made strictly because we had looked at all the angles and there was no way we could renovate the stadium and have it guaranteed for more than five years before we would have to go back and do work again."

Not without controversy, Wilson led the charge to replace the outdated facilities on Decatur's campus in an effort to get up to speed with the schools it competed with year in and year out: Buford, Greater Atlanta Christian, Blessed Trinity and the like.

"Having new facilities on campus has given all of our sports a shot in the arm," Wilson says. "To the outsider, they can say, 'Well, having a new gymnasium is going to make you have a better basketball program?' Well, no, not that in itself. But what it's done is it's eliminated a lot of those negatives, all of those reasons why coaches can't do what they need to do or players can't do what they need to do."

The new football stadium, which has been in use for two seasons and replaces the old Decatur Stadium, seats approximately 4,000 and has brand new synthetic turf. The basketball gym seats 2,600 and sports a scoreboard suspended from the roof at mid-court. New weight training facilities and many other new developments have helped to completely overhaul the athletics program on Decatur's campus. Wilson knows the sacrifice — both financial and emotional — was completely necessary.

"We felt as a school district it was our obligation to make sure the kids have everything that they possibly need, the same way that we would make sure that the kids got everything in a science class or a math class," he says. "So we did that for athletics, and now teams are able to put in the required amount of work on the practice field or the practice floor, and we see it making a difference."

THE COACHING LIFE ...

The first time Wilson roamed Decatur's campus as a coach was in 1979, when he became an assistant basketball coach. As an assistant, Wilson was part of two state championship teams at Decatur, viewed as a state power-

house. He was named the head boys coach in 1983 for his first stint at that position, leading the Bulldogs program to three years of success before entering the world of college coaching.

After serving as an assistant at Georgia State from 1985-94, Wilson earned his chance at the Panthers' head coaching gig, staying on in that capacity for three years.

But after his time as a Division I basketball coach was up, Wilson decided to return to his roots, high school coaching, settling down as Tucker's head boys coach for three more years. But the allure of his alma mater was too strong, and in 2000 Wilson came on as head boys coach and athletic director at Decatur, which he considers to be one of the top environments anywhere in high school athletics.

"If you're going to work in a high school setting, this is the greatest place in America to work," Wilson claims. "It's a small setting where you can get all the way to the top, if you need to, to have questions answered. And it's a very hands-on place. If you're one of those coaches who doesn't like to communicate and have conversations with parents in the community, it's probably not quite the place for you.

"On Friday nights, whether it's a football game or a basketball game, people come down

from the square. The mayor is here, the city commissioner is here. It's a special place because the success of Decatur High School is important to more than just the kids at Decatur High School, it's important to the entire community."

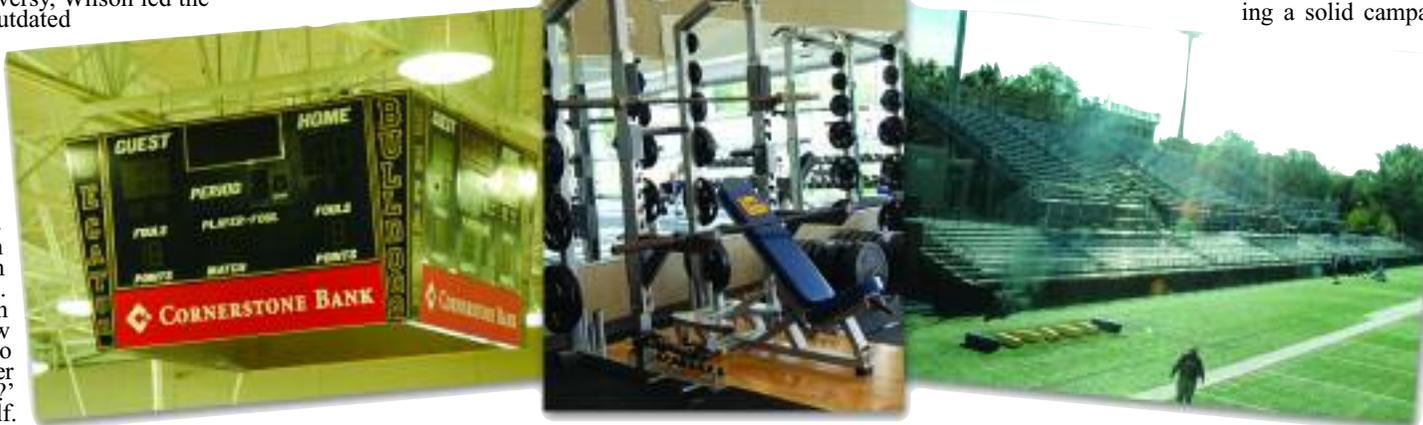
But while his coaching career at DHS has spanned over parts of four decades, Wilson will be stepping down as head boys basketball coach after the season in order to focus on his duties as athletic director and as president of the Georgia Athletic Directors Association, an organization he first became involved with in the early 2000s. Though he sees it as a necessary step in order to continue to move Decatur athletics forward, it will be difficult to exit the world of clipboards and after-school practices.

"I've had a wonderful run here as the head basketball coach here at Decatur High School," Wilson says. "It's a very emotional time for me personally, but we're trying to win as many games as we can and finish the season up on a high note."

As of Feb. 10, his team's prospects looked good for a run in the postseason. At 19-3 and ranked No. 4 in Class 2A by the AJC, the Bulldogs exemplify the "defense first" philosophy of their head coach. And the girls program, which made the state playoffs for the first time in years last season, is having a solid campaign at 15-7 in one of the state's toughest leagues, Region 6-AA.

Though after this season he won't be strolling the sidelines of the new gym he was so instrumental in building, Wilson is eager to continue on as athletic director and as president of the GADA. Through it all, he'll get to continue doing what he does best: moving athletics towards a brighter future at Decatur High School, and beyond.

All photos courtesy of InDecatur staff photography. Ewalt can be reached at awalt@scoreatl.com.



ONWARDS AND UPWARDS: With a new football stadium, gymnasium and workout facilities, Decatur High School is seeing positive results across the board in the athletics program. Athletic director and longtime Decatur coach Carter Wilson, president of the Georgia Athletic Directors Association, is responsible for much of the progress of the last few years.



TWO FOR TUESDAY

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ON THE PREP BEAT

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BRIAN JONES


Westlake takes over top spot in rankings; Stephenson sending 29 to college

It was the battle of North Fulton County last week as two of the top teams in the state, Milton and Centennial, danced on both Tuesday and Friday. The Eagles were able to hold off Centennial on in the first game 73-66 despite a 33-point effort by Centennial's Devonta White. But Milton did not have the same success on Friday, with the Knights dominating 77-55. White had another big game for Centennial, scoring 23 points while teammate Adrian Rogers added 17.

Over in 4A, Rockdale County is still hot, as the Bulldogs defeated Heritage-Conyers 65-52. Darion Clark led the Bulldogs with 15 points and 12 rebounds. Bernard Thompson added 14 points in the win. Rockdale County has clinched the No. 1 seed in Region 8-AAAA.

WESTLAKE ON TOP ...

With Milton losing a tough contest to Centennial on Friday and Westlake winning its last six games, the Lions are now atop the Rankings in Class 5A while Milton drops to No. 3. Centennial moves up one spot from No. 3 to No. 2 and Walton, which was ranked No. 6 last week, is now out of the top 10 after losing to Campbell on Friday 87-85 in overtime.

The Bulldogs of Rockdale County continue to dominate and hold on to the top spot in 4A. Miller Grove and Richmond Academy are still No. 2 and No. 3 in the rankings, respectively. Hillgrove drops down from No. 5 to No. 9 while Statesboro, which was at No. 10 last week, is now out of the rankings, losing to Glynn Academy 79-69 on Saturday.

With a convincing win against McNair and an emotional win against Alcovy the following day, Columbia is still standing strong at No. 1 in 3A while LaGrange comes in at No. 2 and Monroe at No. 3. LaGrange is the only team in the top 10 that has a perfect record at press time with 23 wins and zero losses.

Greater Atlanta Christian head coach Eddie Martin is looking to win another state

title (he won three at Norcross), and he has the talent to do so as the Spartans are No. 1 in 2A. They had a big win last Saturday, defeating No. 5 Blessed Trinity 70-52. GAC has clinched the No. 1 spot in the Region 6-AA tournament.

Whitefield Academy is the No. 1 team in 1A and it looks like they are their way to another state title with dominating wins over Pace Academy and East Hall. Wilkinson County is a team to watch, though, with a perfect record at press time. They are No. 2 in the rankings and they could finish the regular season 25-0 if they defeat Randolph-Clay on Saturday.

For the girls rankings, two new teams are now on top as Rome is now the No. 1-ranked squad in 4A and Vidalia is the No. 1 in 2A. Redan is still on top in 5A, Kendrick is No. 1 in 3A and the top team in A is Wesleyan. The Lady Raiders of Redan will put their prefect streak on the line on Friday when they take on Greenbrier on Friday and Tri-Cities in the regular season finale on Saturday. Rome is another team that has clinched a top spot in the region tournament and will play its first game of the tournament next week.

A LOOK AT WRESTLING ...

The wrestling season is coming to an end and that means the individual state championships are just around the corner. Collins Hill is by far the clear favorite to win another individual title in 5A. All 14 wrestlers could qualify for the state tourney but some wrestlers to watch for on the Eagles' roster are T.J. Mitchell and Drew Ferguson, who turned in great performances at state duals last month. One team that could prevent Collins Hill from winning its third consecutive title is Pope, which was runner-up at the duals. Thomas O'Reilly, Charlie Farr and Hudson Power are a few wrestlers that could qualify for the state tournament and the Greyhounds will look to get revenge against

the Eagles. Brookwood, Camden County and Grayson are a few more teams to keep an eye on that could rival the Eagles for the crown.

DUNWOODY COACH OUT ...

In shocking news out of DeKalb County, Dunwoody High School football coach Michael Youngblood was fired by officials last week. There has been no official reason given for his dismissal, but Youngblood said in an interview with the AJC that his firing could have stemmed from an incident during a game last year when Dunwoody principal Kevin Harris tried to pull some of Youngblood's players out of a meeting during halftime to take part in on-field activities. Youngblood resisted, but the players did leave the locker room to participate. Youngblood was written up the next day for insubordination, and the relationship further deteriorated from there. Youngblood was only there for one season and compiled a 7-5 record and a state playoff berth.

In other football news, Stephenson had a big signing day as 29 players signed their letters of intent. It is believed that it's the most signees by one school in Georgia high school football history. RB Raymond Sanders, DT Michael Thornton and LB Tyrone Cornelius led the class of signees with Sanders going to Kentucky, Thornton signing with Georgia and Cornelius

heading to Miami. Other notables from Stephenson to sign are Jabari Johnson (Kentucky), Kenny Landler (Vanderbilt) and Ronnie Shields (Kentucky).

Jones can be reached at bjones@scoreatl.com.



BULLDOGS STAY STRONG: Rockdale County continues its great run in boys hoops, as the team is still No. 1 in Class 4A. Bernard Thompson is hoping he can lead the team deep into the state tournament for the first time in a while for the program. Photo courtesy of Nat Carter/SydCamVisions.

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NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTY



RAJESH GUPTA

Region standings crucial as county hoops teams move closer to tournaments

The Sequoyah boys basketball team got back on track, pushing its current win streak to five as the region championships are quickly approaching. After an impressive start to the new year, highlighted by a key win over Region 7-AAAA leader Hillgrove, the Chiefs fell on hard times, suffering a tough 55-54 loss to Osborne which triggered a four-game losing streak. However, after beating Creekview on Jan. 23, the team went on to win five straight, most notably a recent win on Saturday night over Allatoona, 56-50. The five-game win streak is the team's longest of the season and coupled with a four-game streak in December, the Chiefs are currently 16-7. Against Allatoona, senior point guard Tyler Deihl was at it again scoring 19 points, while senior shooting guard James Clark added 14. Allatoona battled all game, but a late 7-0 run by Sequoyah ultimately sealed their fate. Looking ahead to the region tournament, Sequoyah surely must feel as though they still have much to prove as they lost to Dalton, Hiram and Sprayberry to round out that four-game losing streak. All three teams are currently ahead of the Chiefs in the standings, yet at times this season, the team has proved that it has the talent to compete with anybody in the region.

After playing region leader McEachern close, but eventually losing 63-59, it would have been tough to foresee a Friday night let-down for Woodstock against Harrison. However, the Wolverines fell to the Hoyas 76-71, leaving the team in third place behind Etowah and McEachern. Woodstock had an early edge against Harrison, but lost its lead in the second quarter and never regained a grip on the game. Junior power forward Cedric Bowen led Woodstock with 27 points and senior small forward Kent Emanuel had 13. Senior guard Ryan Blumenthal scored 26

for Harrison along with sophomore shooting guard Julian Lavender, who netted 16. Woodstock wraps up its regular season on Friday night against Kennesaw Mountain on the road. In one previous matchup earlier this year, the Wolverines won 71-63.

Kennesaw Mountain has struggled as of late, losing to North Cobb by three points in overtime and falling in an 18-point decision to 4A Hillgrove. With the regular season going down to the wire as another big region matchup will take place the same night in Etowah vs. McEachern, there is sure to be some shakeups in the standings with teams looking to move forward.

ON THE GIRLS SIDE ...

With the victory over Lakeside-DeKalb to the tune of 58-35, the Forsyth Central Lady Bulldogs have the opportunity to finish second in region 6A-AAAA. However, it will have to come by ending the season strong against some of the area's top competition. Central's last game of the regular season will be against region leader Chamblee on the road. Chamblee has lost only three times this season, twice to Southwest DeKalb and once to 5A Stephenson by four points. In one previous matchup in December, Chamblee beat Forsyth Central 58-48. Nonetheless, like the games above, this season finale could have an important effect on region championship seeding, so hopefully all teams will be playing with a sense of urgency.

West Forsyth continues to earn accolades during its current wrestling season by qualifying 11 wrestlers for the state sectionals. Cody Westray (103 lbs), Robbie Kudella (112 lbs), Garrett Tedone (119 lbs), Tyler Lott (125 lbs), Evan Burchett (135 lbs), Will Dickman (145 lbs), Ross Anderson (152 lbs), Tyler Everton (160 lbs), Colton Cloud (171 lbs), Reice

Thompson (189 lbs), and Jeff Sayer (275 lbs) all earned spots by qualifying through the Area 7-AAA tournament. West Forsyth finished second as a team to Gilmer at the tournament.

Etowah had three wrestlers win individual titles and the team finished third at the Area 5-AAAAA tournament over the weekend. Walter Leyva (119 lbs), Zach Rogers (135 lbs), and Jarrod Thomas (285 lbs) won titles. By winning individual area titles these individuals have qualified for the state sectionals. They will also be joined by teammates Jeremiah Lutz, Hudson Rechsteiner, Maveric Rechsteiner and Jake Smith. Lutz and Rechsteiner were area runners-up. The three area titles are a great

accomplishment considering that last year the team had only one area champion.

Cherokee also qualified six for the sectionals out of the same area tournament. John Manous was runner-up in the 152-pound division and was the highest finisher of the Warriors. He lost to defending area champion and state champion Jonatan Rivera of Kennesaw Mountain. Nick Walker (112 lbs), Cole Anderson (119 lbs), Dylan Barone (145 lbs), Brady Sandercock (160 lbs), and Patrick Beal (285 lbs) qualified for the sectionals as well for Cherokee.

Gupta can be reached at rgupta@scoreatl.com.

BASKETBALL REGION STANDINGS

(AS OF FEBRUARY 10)

| BOYS | | | GIRLS | | |
|-----------------|------|------|-----------------|------|------|
| 5-AAAAA | | | 5-AAAAA | | |
| Etowah | 11-6 | 2nd | Etowah | 12-5 | 3rd |
| Woodstock | 10-6 | 3rd | Cherokee | 9-8 | 5th |
| Cherokee | 8-9 | 7th | Woodstock | 6-10 | 7th |
| 7-AAAAA | | | 7-AAAAA | | |
| North Forsyth | 2-11 | 9th | South Forsyth | 4-12 | 8th |
| South Forsyth | 1-14 | 10th | North Forsyth | 3-13 | 10th |
| 6A-AAAA | | | 6A-AAAA | | |
| Forsyth Central | 2-9 | 5th | Forsyth Central | 8-3 | 2nd |
| 7-AAAA | | | 7-AAAA | | |
| Sequoyah | 9-4 | 6th | Sequoyah | 8-5 | 6th |
| 7A-AAA | | | 7A-AAA | | |
| Creekview | 7-4 | 2nd | Creekview | 9-2 | 2nd |
| 7B-AAA | | | 7B-AAA | | |
| West Forsyth | 2-8 | 6th | West Forsyth | 7-3 | 3rd |
| Lambert | 1-8 | 7th | Lambert | 3-6 | 5th |

All records according to Gasports.com



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AJC GIRLS BASKETBALL RANKINGS

Class AAAAA

1. Redan (22-0)
2. Parkview (23-0)
3. Norcross (19-3)
4. Mill Creek (19-4)
5. Westlake (16-3)
6. Bradwell Institute (22-1)
7. North Cobb (20-3)
8. McEachern (19-4)
9. Campbell (17-5)
10. Stephenson (17-5)

Class AAAA

1. Rome (24-0)
2. Southwest DeKalb (18-4)
3. Northwest Whitfield (21-2)
4. Mays (16-4)
5. Fayette County (20-4)
6. Bainbridge (21-2)
7. Statesboro (20-2)
8. Forest Park (20-3)
9. Douglas County (19-4)
10. Clarke Central (16-4)

Class AAA

1. Kendrick (23-0)
2. Columbia (16-3)
3. Carver-Atlanta (18-4)
4. Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe (18-5)
5. Washington County (20-2)
6. Westover (20-3)
7. Chestatee (18-4)
8. East Hall (17-5)
9. Pickens (19-5)
10. Jackson-Atlanta (16-6)

Class AA

1. Vidalia (23-0)
2. Greater Atlanta Christian (18-4)
3. Buford (20-2)
4. Northeast-Macon (20-2)
5. Laney (21-2)
6. Fannin County (17-3)
7. Dodge County (20-3)
8. Thomasville (20-3)
9. North Oconee (19-3)
10. Rabun County (19-1)

Class A

1. Wesleyan (19-4)
2. Randolph-Clay (21-3)
3. Calvary Day (22-1)
4. Taylor County (22-1)
5. Paideia (21-2)
6. Gordon Lee (21-1)
7. Southwest Atlanta Christian (14-5)
8. Emanuel County Institute (18-0)
9. Warren County (20-4)
10. Holy Innocents' (21-3)

AJC BOYS BASKETBALL RANKINGS

Class AAAAA

1. Westlake (21-2)
2. Centennial (16-7)
3. Milton (19-4)
4. Wheeler (18-4)
5. Norcross (20-2)
6. Meadowcreek (20-3)
7. McEachern (19-4)
8. Central Gwinnett (21-2)
9. Groves (21-1)
10. Newton (22-1)

Class AAAA

1. Rockdale County (23-1)
2. Miller Grove (18-6)
3. Richmond Academy (21-1)
4. Fayette County (19-4)
5. Chamblee (17-6)
6. Bainbridge (20-4)
7. North Clayton (22-2)
8. Glynn Academy (19-3)
9. Hillgrove (19-4)
10. Lithia Springs (19-4)

Class AAA

1. Columbia (17-5)
2. LaGrange (23-0)
3. Monroe (20-1)
4. Elbert County (21-2)
5. South Atlanta (21-2)
6. Liberty County (23-1)
7. Dunwoody (17-4)
8. Westover (20-3)
9. Washington County (19-4)
10. Hart County (19-4)

Class AA

1. Greater Atlanta Christian (22-1)
2. Northeast-Macon (21-1)
3. Laney (23-2)
4. Decatur (18-3)
5. Blessed Trinity (16-7)
6. Dade County (21-2)
7. Thomasville (20-3)
8. Dublin (17-5)
9. Jefferson (17-6)
10. McIntosh County Academy (17-6)

Class A

1. Wilkinson County (24-0)
2. Whitefield Academy (18-3)
3. Wesleyan (18-4)
4. Wilcox County (19-2)
5. Lanier County (20-3)
6. Terrell County (18-5)
7. Claxton (21-2)
8. Greenville (17-5)
9. Gordon Lee (17-5)
10. Paideia (17-6)

Rankings based on results through Sunday, February 7 and were compiled by Todd Holcomb and Chip Saye.

Creativity Defined.

Open House

Saturday, February 15, 2010

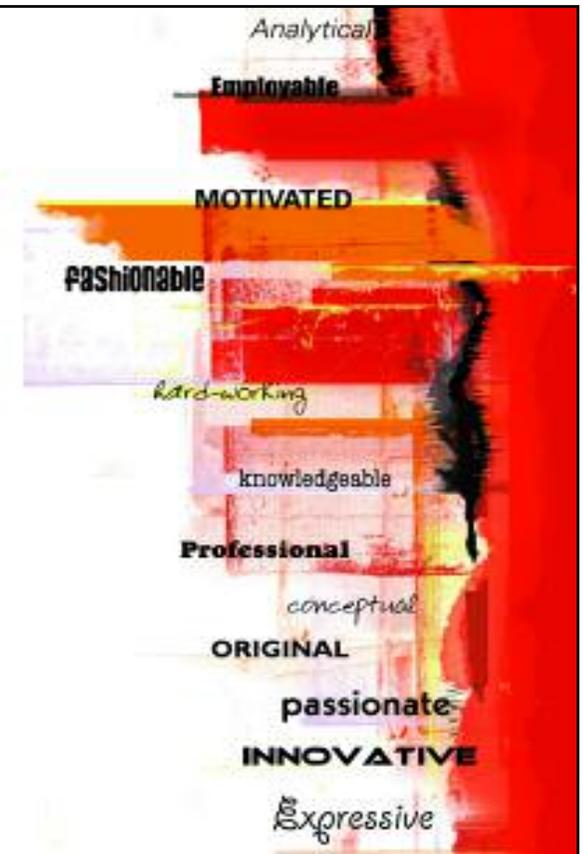
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