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OCTOBER 8-14, 2010

SCORE ATLANTA | 3

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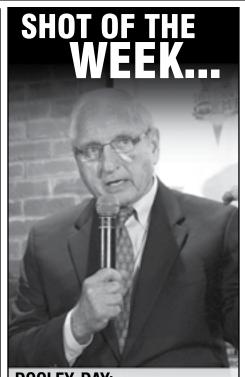
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DOOLEY DAY: Former UGA football coach and athletics director Vince Dooley spoke at the Touchdown Club of Atlanta this week and declared that he would watch the Bulldogs play Tennessee Saturday from his home – pulling for the Vois. Of course, with son Derek coaching Tennessee, Dooley has a good reason to pull against Georgia for probably the first time in more than 45 years. Photo courtesy Bill Rubin.

ANT THIS WE

In Atlanta's only sports media column our Fletcher Proctor reviews comments on Mark Richt, then gives his own opinion on Georgia's radio broadcast crew.

Former Braves beat writer and current Score President I.J. Rosenberg gives his take on the retirement of Bobby Cox.

Brian Jones breaks down the Newton @ Stephenson and Dunwoody @ SW DeKalb games.

Braves beat writer Fletcher Proctor gives a fond farewell to Cox in our cover story.

TEAM SCOOP AND VOICES

COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF POUYA DIANAT/ATLANTA BRAVES

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ATLANTA'S **ONLY SPORTS** MEDIA COLUMN Georgia fans traveled for the program, not for Richt; Howard is no Munson

The Georgia football team's struggles have Georgia before Mark Richt got there, I've loved what Mark Richt has done while he's and radio fodder in the recent weeks and last Sunday was no different. After the Bulldogs fell again, this time on the road to Big XII weakling Colorado, the boys from 790 The Zone's Ford Football show were once again at Georgia coach Mark Richt's throat. Beau Bock was saying how it was a shame that Georgia couldn't stop the Colorado offense and then shooting themselves in the foot with fumbles. He commented on how so many Buffaloes fans were storming the field and questioned why a fan base would be so excited to beat a 1-4 team. The crew also asserted that perhaps Dan Hawkins, of "it ain't intramurals, bro-tha!" fame, may be off the hotseat now that he beat Georgia in front of the home fans celebrating the 20-year anniversary of the school's last national title.

I will have to take exception with one thing Steak said on the show, however. The Mayhem in the AM co-host said on the Ford Football show that Richt's impact on the Georgia program was in full effect that, despite the record, over 7,000 fans made the trek out to Boulder, Colo., because of what he's done over his career in Athens. I must disagree. These tickets were bought at least one year ago and folks made plans months in advance, probably in the offseason when folks like Phil Steele were calling for Georgia to be a dark-horse candidate to run the table and play for the national title. These people were more or less stuck with their plane tickets, hotel reservations and game tickets just a week or two before the game and had to go.

And P.S., Steak, as a University of Georgia alumnus, I can say this: I loved

been there (at least for the first seven years of his tenure), and I will always love the Red & Black long after Mark Richt is gone. Those folks that traveled out there to Colorado did it because they love the Dawgs, not Mark Richt. They love the University of Georgia, not Richt. They love the school that they either went to or grew up rooting for even over their own alma mater. With all due respect to Steak, those folks were more likely there for the mascot than they were the coach. Please don't think Richt has THAT much of an impact at Georgia. He is not yet synonymous with Georgia like JoePa is with Penn State or Bobby Bowden was with Florida State. Not yet, anyways, and possibly he'll never get that chance if the crazy fringe is granted their wish.

HOWARD THE HOMER ...

I must say that I've never missed Larry Munson as much as I did while driving home from the Valdosta-ML King game on Saturday night and turned on the Georgia-Colorado game on the radio. Scott Howard and Eric Zeier have been the voices of the Georgia Bulldogs for the past few seasons after Munson's semi-retirement became a permanent retirement and I must be honest: as a Georgia fan, it makes my ears bleed. While Munson's homerism was adorable and requested, Howard's slant towards the Dawgs makes me scream at the radio the way I scream at the drunk Georgia "fans" that have never stepped foot on the campus on a Monday through Friday in their lives. I wanted to give him a chance after he blew his first big call in 2007, aka the Alabama "Dawg Pile" where Georgia won in OT. If you weren't watching on television you'd never have known what happened as Howard simply screamed and woohooed for 20 seconds before telling anyone the result of Stafford's pass to the endzone.

I wanted him to succeed, I really did. I knew his job would be hard as he was replacing a legend, but last week, he was still whooping it up after a tackle for a loss in the fourth quarter. Then he was going ballistic on a 12-vard run by Caleb King before gameending fumble. Zeier was fine in an analyst role, the role that Howard performed before taking over for Munson, but as far as Howard in the main chair...it has been a lot like how the Dawgs have been in recent season: lacking. While I am not his agent, let me suggest that WSB and the University's athletic department get together and make the decision to bring 680's Buck Belue into a role with the Georgia broadcasts. Belue has experience in calling Georgia games as he has served as an analyst for CSS on Georgia's coverage and he of course was the QB in 1980 when Georgia won the national championship. He might be the perfect fit to slide right in as The Man after the man after THE MAN.

SATURDAY SPECIAL ...

If you were busy watching the Georgia game or listening to the Georgia Tech game on Sports Radio 790 The Zone, perhaps you missed a special broadcast of the Valdosta/ ML King high school football game last Saturday. The two teams met at Hallford Stadium in DeKalb County and the Valdosta Daily Times partnered with Georgia Public Broadcasting to carry the game live on the web on

YOU BELIEVE CAN ...HE SAID "There are still seven games left in the season. That's enough time for Georgia to turn its season around... and send the message that this program isn't going down like Pompeii."

That was Jeff Schultz of the AJC talking about the slow demise of the Georgia football program. He went on to say that he's not "feeling it" could be possible. I must say that I tend to agree with Schultz, the last part. I don't think Richt should get the boot, but if the season doesn't turn around and SOON, I might just change my tune.

VDT.com and gpb.org/sports.

Valdosta won a shootout with MLK setting up the undefeated and No. 8 Wildcats for their huge matchup against Lowndes in the Winnersville Classic this Friday, which will air on ESPN's family of networks. The game against the Lions was back and forth but in the end Jay Rome, a huge recruit according to Scout.com, Rivals, and Score Atlanta's Score 44 and The Official Visit, caught two TDs and Malcolm Mitchell, also on the Score 44, scored twice to give the Wildcats the 43-28 victory. Demarco Robinson certainly proved he deserved his spot on the Score 44 with a 93-yard kick return for a score and a diving catch for pavdirt. He had a third TD called back on a penalty.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.



SITTING IN THE CHEAP SEATS J. ROSENBERG Saying goodbye to the Skipper brings back fond and interesting memories

The call came from Atlanta Journal-Constitution sports editor Tim Tucker on a brutally cold day in the winter of 1990.

Tucker: I.J., need you to run over to Piedmont Hospital and interview Bobby Cox. The Braves just hired John Schuerholz as their general manager and we need some reaction from the manager.

FITTING INTRO ...

At that time, I was a month away from taking over the Braves beat, one I would stay on for the next eight years, and I arrived at the hospital where Cox had just undergone two knee replacements. I remember walking into his room, with both of his legs suspended high above his body and both of his knees wrapped heavily. He was still a little groggy, but I can remember the conversation like it was yesterday. Cox had been the team's general manager, but was sent down into the dugout midway through the season and told the team would hire a new GM.

Rosenberg: Bobby, what do you think about the hiring of Schuerholz?

Cox: Great move. He will come in here and do a great job like he did in Kansas City.

Rosenberg: How do you feel the two of you will work together? Cox: There will be no is-

sues. He's the GM and I look forward to it. Whatever is best for this organization.

I think of all the stories I have about Bobby, and there are hundreds of them, those last six words describe Cox the best. While many are critical of the fact that he has won just one world championship, while there are times when I think he makes poor decisions come postseason, he has always been about what is best for the Braves.

And that is why he has been so successful as a major league manager, taking the Braves to 15 postseasons in his last 20 full seasons. And that truly is one of the great accomplishments in sports history. That is why Cox will get into the Hall of Fame and why he



WALKING AWAY: Renowned Braves manager Bobby Cox will retire at the end of this season and will eventually be voted into Cooperstown. During his career, Cox has amassed 2,504 wins, which is fourth-best all time in baseball history. Under his leadership, the Braves won a record 14 consecutive division titles. Photo courtesy of Pouya Dianat/Atlanta Braves.

"There were a few times when we would go a few days not talking to each other, but we always made up. And over the years, I spent hours with him in the dugout talking about everything but baseball."

will go down as one of the best skippers ever.

Sure, he should have won a championship in 1991 in the seven-game World Series loss to Minnesota, and again in '96 when his team led the Yankees 6-0 in Game 4 and 2-1 in the best-of-seven series.

But there is something to say about consistency in a sport where few organizations, if any, have been able to stay competitive for as long as the Braves have.

COXISMS ...

Interestingly, Cox and I rarely saw eye to eye when I covered him every day, as I was a reporter looking for a story or a good quote while Cox is a manager who protects his players and club at all costs.

I will never forget a Charlie Leibrandt performance in 1992 when the veteran lefthander gave up eight runs over two innings. Afterwards, in the clubhouse, Cox sat in his old desk and said with his right thumb and index finger ever-so-close, "He was just off that much."

Eventually, after so many of those 'just off' comments I would walk out of his office just laughing. Call it a "Coxism."

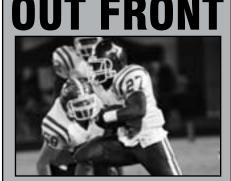
There were a few times when we would go a few days not talking to each other, but we always made up. And over the years, I spent hours with him in the dugout talking about everything but baseball. Bobby loved talking about food and could tell you exactly where to eat in every city we visited. That came in handy when you were on an AJC expense account during the go-go years.

CLASSY GUY ...

One final story about Cox

came after I left the beat but returned to spring training a few years later with my young son Chase. The Braves gave me full access to the clubhouse and players and Chase got a photo with everyone from John Smoltz to Javier Lopez to Chipper Jones to bench coach Pat Corrales. Then we walked into the dugout where Bobby was sitting and he stood up and hugged me.

The pressure was off both of us, as he knew as a reporter I was just looking for a story, but



In our prep cover story, we look at Regions 7 and 8 in Class 5A, which both consist of only Gwinnett programs. The county currently has five teams in the top 10 and three more that have been ranked at some point in the season. Please see our Score Prep insert for more on this story. Photo courtesy of Cindy Crocker.

now was there as a baseball fan with my son.

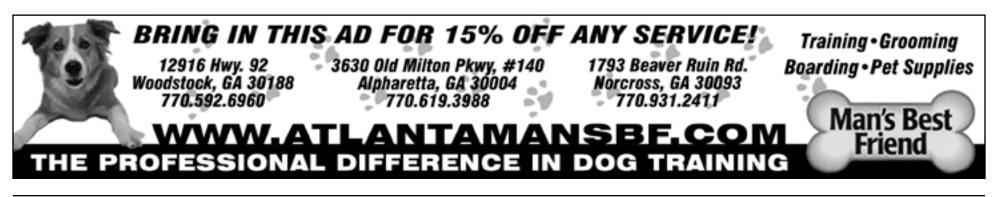
He then grabbed Chase and put him on his lap and I took a photo.

That photo, now 10-years old, still hangs on the wall of my son's room. My son was smiling from ear to ear and Cox had a big grin on his face.

In retirement, I wish Bobby the very best and, in appreciation for all these great moments and seasons, hope he is rewarded with another world championship.

It would be a most fitting end to this man's career.

Want to reach the country's greatest alltime baseball writer who some day will be enshrined into the Hall of Fame (Yeah, right!)? You can email him at ijrosenberg@scoreatl.com or call the Score offices at 404-256-1572.



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BY BRIAN JONES FALCONS FLYING HIGH: Don't look now, but the Falcons are 3-1 after earning a come-from-behind win against the San Francisco 49ers last Sunday. Atlanta now faces the Cleveland Browns who are coming off a big win against the Cincinnati Bengals. This will be another close game, but the Falcons should win. A BRAVE SUNDAY: The Braves are in the thick of the National League Division Series with the San Francisco Giants and will play Game 3 at Turner Field Sunday afternoon. The Braves were dominant at home, but can they keep up that trend in the postseason? If they don't, it will be a short postseason for the Bravos. IN THE DAWGHOUSE: There is no other way to put it: the Buildogs are not playing good football. Georgia lost to Colorado last Saturday and are now on a four-game losing streak. They take on Tennessee Saturday afternoon and, if the Bulldogs don't make mis-takes, they should win. But when are they going to stop making mistakes? NESBITT COMES THROUGH: Joshua Nesbitt came through in the clutch for the Yellow Jackets last Saturday, throwing the game-winning touchdown to beat Wake Forest and improving to 3-2. Virginia is up next for the Jackets and the Cavaliers are looking for their first conference win. The Jackets should have no problem defeating Virginia on the Flats. **BATTLE DOWN SOUTH:** There are many big high school games go-ing on in the metro area Friday night. One of the most important will be played in South Georgia as Lowndes faces hated rival Valdosta. Both teams are ranked in the top 10 and are look-ing to win the Region 1-5A title. Over 12,000 fans will be in attendance at Bazemore-Hyder stadium. OUESTION When was the last time a **Georgia football** team lost five games in a row?

Answer on Page 14



Points the Falcons have scored through four games, ninth-

Receptions by Roddy White through four games, tied for second-best in the NFL

C

ດ THUMBS UP TO HUSTLE



Roddy White

The Falcons' receiver is second in the NFL with receptions, but the play he made against the San Francisco 49ers could be season changing, stripping the ball from Nate Clements after picking off a Matt Ryan pass. That play kept the Falcons' drive alive and led to a Matt Bryant game-winning field goal.

The Braves

The Braves will host their first playoff game in five years as they face the San Francisco Giants in the third game of the NLDS Sunday afternoon. With what is basically a Triple-A lineup, the team grinded their way into the Wild Card championship after a long and injury-filled regular season.

Prep Football

There are always big high school games in the state, but this week could be one for the ages. Undefeated Norcross takes on undefeated Peachtree Ridge while Stephenson battles Newton. Oh, and let's not forget about Lowndes facing Valdosta which will be televised on the ESPN family of networks.



Get In The Game!

THUMBS DOWN TO LOSING STREAKS



Mark Richt

Things are getting worse for Mark Richt as his Bulldogs lost another game and dropped to 1-4 on the year. A lot of fans, students and alumni are not happy with the team and, if things don't get fixed in a hurry, Richt's future will be foggy by the end of the year.

Miami Heat

Karma anyone? After signing Chris Bosh and LeBron over the offseason and then obnoxiously presenting themselves to the world in an unprecedented display of ego, the Heat became one of the most hated teams in sports over night. But in their first preseason game, star Dwyane Wade hurt his hamstring. What a shame.

Nate Clements

Hey Nate- take a knee! The Niners' defensive back intercepted what should have been a game-clinching turnover against the Falcons Sunday. But Clements elected to try to score and was stripped by a hustling Roddy White. The Falcons recovered and drove for the winning score. Was it worth it, Nate?

H What a difference a week makes. After completely and getting embarrassed gainst West Forsyth, we played about as perfects a game as I've seen in my 3+ years here. We jumped the east of the way to win easily. Our boys played with a tremendous missing against West Forsyth Making your living by depending on 16-18 year olds can be gut-wrenching, and is the cause of many sleepless nights, but when things go well, it is so much fun to see how happy these young eat the many bad shots, and just when you are about to throw your clubs in the nearest water hazard and quit the game forever, you hit that perfect shot, and it keeps you coming hit hap perfect shot, and Walton are the two programs we are trying to emulate. They are rich in tradition

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and community support, and their kids play extremely hard every game. One aspect of high school football that often gets overlooked is tradition. Roswell and Walton have tremendous tradition. When kids believe they are a part of something bigger than them, and that belief is reinforced throughout the community, it has a strong positive impact on a team. We

a part of sortening organization of the community, it has a strong positive impact on a team. We are trying to build that at Centennial. Three years ago Centennial had no tradition - it was almost as if they never fielded a team. Friday night we had three former players come back and speak to the team before the game. Our performance was no doubt influenced by these former players talking to our boys. We are a long way from a Roswell and Walton in terms of tradition and longevity, and as a coach, it is really cool to see your former players come back and be around the team. Tradition has to start somewhere, and we feel like Centennial is eading in the right direction. *Centennial High School head coach Jeff Measor will his thoughts here throughout the football season*.

SANIT

"They know that you've got to put the previous play behind you and just go on to the next one and just keep battling, because in the National Football League, there are going to be some very, very tight games."

- Falcons head coach Mike Smith talking about how his players play hard every play in each game

Final batting average for Omar Infante. third-best in the Na-

Passing yards Aaron Murray has through five games, third-best

Sacks by Justin Houston through five games, second-best in the SEC

Points the Falcons have allowed through four games, seventh-

best in the NFL



PEACHTREE RIDGE-NORCROSS ...

One of the best games in the state will take place in Gwinnett County as Peachtree Ridge battles Region 7-5A rival Norcross. The winner of the contest will stay with North Gwinnett at the top of the region, while the losing team will more than likely finish as a No. 2 or No. 3 seed.

The Lions of Peachtree Ridge have gotten off to a hot start and are looking to go back to the state finals for the third time in five years. They have a great running game led by Raham Dixon and Diandre Atwater, as both rushed for 100 yards in the win against Mountain View.

But Norcross is a team not to be taken lightly because, like Peachtree Ridge, they are a team looking to make a deep playoff run. And they also have a strong running game led by Kendrix Huitt, who rushed for 175 yards against Mill Creek. If Huitt can't get going they can turn to quarterback John Russ, who threw for 226 yards in the win against the Hawks.

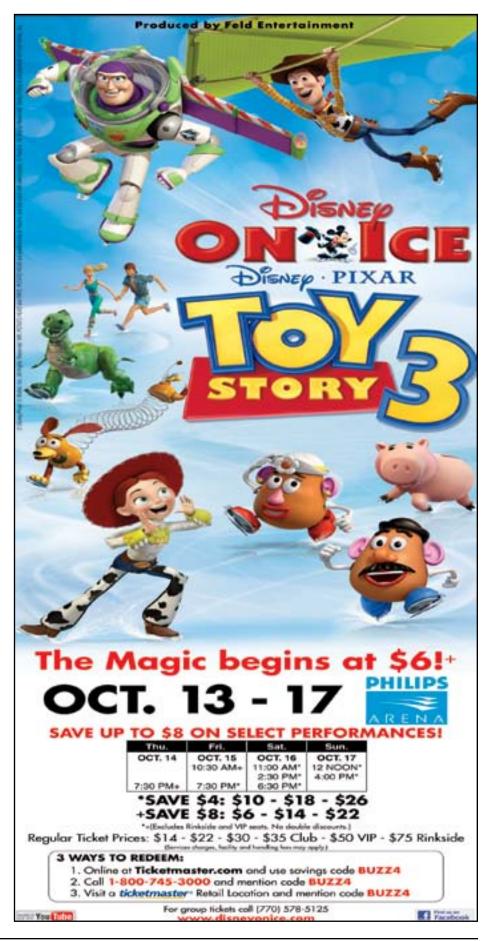
LOVETT-BLESSED TRINITY ...

Region 6B-2A is wide open and the winner of the region most likely won't be decided until the end of the season. But with Lovett and Blessed Trinity going against each other next Friday, the winner will have a huge advantage going into the final stretch of the season.

Lovett has had a good start to their season so far, losing only to Thomasville and Buford. The Lions are a team that can score points at will and average 31 points per game. Running back Zach Boden had three touchdowns in the win against Jackson (Atlanta) and quarterback Hunter Budd is one of the more proficient passers in the region.

Blessed Trinity has not reached the playoffs since 2005, and if they were to defeat Lovett, they would be much closer to reaching that goal. They are coming off two consecutive losses to GAC and Westminster, but with a massive offense line led by Jack Bradley and Jack Howard, the Titans will try beat Lovett with their size on the line of scrimmage.





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 \mathbf{F} or years, one man has sat in the Atlanta have gone to the World Series five times under his hand. Perhaps the most impressive and division races, even as the faces all around him have changed. Manager Bobby Cox was a stalwart in the Braves organization, serving two tours of duty as Atlanta's manager (and one stint as its GM) and he oversaw Atlanta's only World Series title. Cox is simply known as "The Skipper" to his players and nearly all of them would run through a brick wall if he asked them to do so.

A MAN OF RESPECT

It has been well-documented Cox was involved in the "recruitment" of closer Billy Wagner, and longtime Braves legends such as Tom Glavine. John Smoltz and Chipper Jones, all have nothing but positive things to say about their manager. In some ways, Cox was part of the reason each of those players staved with the Braves or the reason they returned to the club.

The current batch of Braves, currently in the playoffs after winning Cox's first and only Wild Card title in his final year on the bench, recognizes the importance of this final playoff appearance for the Skipper. Starter Tommy Hanson says while it isn't his only focus, he wants to give a good effort for the only manager he's ever played for in his young major league career. "When you go out there you obviously want to win the game and go out there and do well, especially with it being Bobby's last year."

The Braves' manager has had an impact on more than just Hanson, Glavine, Smoltz and Jones though over his career. Cox has transformed into an Atlanta icon in his time with the club as everyone can picture No. 6 shouting encouragement from the dugout, donning a huge, puffy jacket or maybe getting tossed out of a game. Cox has taken the Braves to the playoffs now 15 times since returning to Atlanta's bench and the Braves bullet point on Cox's resume, though, has to be winning 14 straight division titles.

WINNING GAMES ...

In 1991, just one season after finishing dead last in the National League, the Braves made the Worst-to-First run to reach Game Seven of the World Series before falling to the Minnesota Twins. At the tail end of 1990. Cox moved down to the manager's bench for the last 97 games, going 40-57 before righting the ship to 94-68 in 1991. The next season, the Braves represented the National League yet again in the World Series but again came up just short to the Blue Jays. After claiming a division title in 1993 and missing out on the World Series in 1994 due to the strike, the Braves were right back in the Series in 1995, though this time Cox and company won it all. The team sported a 2-0 series lead in 1996, but let that one slip away to the New York Yankees.

The Braves would lose again to the Yankees in the 1999 World Series but still made the postseason each year until 2006, when the playoffs were held sans Atlanta for the first time since George H.W. Bush was president in 1990. After winning 91 games this season, Cox won 90-plus games 14 times with the Braves during his tenure and compiled a record of 2149-1709 with Atlanta and 2504-2001 overall. Three times (1991, 2004, 2005) he was crowned National League manager of the year and he skippered the National League All-Star team five times in his career.

But will just numbers define Cox's impact? Probably not. Cox could be remembered, interestingly enough, for his ejection record. He has been tossed 158 times through the end of the regular season, but that particular record isn't important; the reason he was ejected was he was always sticking up for his rather sacrifice his presence in the game to keep his star pitcher or stud third baseman in the lineup. "I treat them like I'd want to be treated. I'd want my boss to stand up for me," said Cox recently about why he takes the bullet so often for one of his charges. "We're very fortunate to have found good players and to have good players," Cox says, giving his players all of the credit after a win while he takes all of the blame after a loss.

WHAT NOW? ...

With Cox retiring from his role as manager, he should have plenty of time over the next few years to visit Cooperstown, N.Y., for Hall of Fame enshrinement ceremonies. Three of his former pitchers Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz are locks for

entry and Chipper Jones, once he retires, should be up for a bronze bust. "Hopefully, I'll live long enough to see them in the Hall of Fame," Cox blushed about his former charges before adding simply a "we'll see," in regards to his own bronze bust appearing in Cooperstown.

As much as his players love giving it their all for him, his coaches may respect him even more. Pitching coach Roger Mc-Dowell has glowed when discussing his boss with the Braves.

"I'm very lucky to have gotten the opportunity to be on the staff with Bobby Cox as manager and everybody knows how great a manager Bobby Cox is but he's an

players. He respects his players and would even better person," says McDowell, who has served as Braves pitching coach for the last five seasons after Cox helped the team go after him hard to replace former pitching coach Leo Mazzone. "I've formed a tremendous relationship and good friendship (with Cox) and hopefully we'll continue that as the years go on."

Cox is a lock to get into the Hall of Fame once he is eligible and Atlanta fans should puff out their chest when he does get inducted. He has earned his spot by putting Atlanta on the map in the 1990s and the 2000s and Braves fans should be thankful for his time here.

Now he will try and make one last run to the World Series to boost his resume and ride out with a blaze of glory.

Photo courtesy of Pouya Dianat/Atlanta Braves. Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.







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HAWKS HAV IOSH BAGRIANSI Hawks, Horford working on extension

A potential extension for guard Jamal Crawford was the story of the sum-mer in Atlanta. But it appears Atlanta's 6-10 center Al Horford will be the player putting pen to paper on a new deal soon.

The team captain has spent the entirety of his four-year career in Atlanta, and has made so secret about his feel-

and has made so secret about his feel-ings regarding the team. "I feel like we are in a good posi-tion," Horford told the Atlanta Journal Constitution. "We've been playing to-gether. This is my fourth year with the team, and I love the city of Atlanta." Atlanta can offer up to five years and \$82 million for Horford's services. But

\$82 million for Horford's services. But after giving Joe Johnson a max contract this summer, it's unlikely they would of-fer a similar deal to another player. Horford averaged 14 points and 10

rebounds last season.

BIBBY WANTS TO START ...

Aging Mike Bibby's role clearly decreased last season as a Hawk. But the 12-year veteran is still a player with plenty of big game experience. While that experience and intelligence still gives Bibby a role on the team, it's unclear whether it will be as a part of the starting five. New head coach Larry Drew has planned to give second-year point guard Jeff Teague a chance to

crack the lineup. "It is up to L.D.," Bibby said. "I've started my whole life. I will see what they want to do. [But] I want to start, yeah."

Bibby played just 19 minutes per game last year, by far the lowest average of his career.

J-CRAW ...

Crawford would be a free-agent market next summer. And after a seem-ingly unsuccessful attempt to ink an exingly unsuccessful attempt to ink an ex-tension with Atlanta, that appears to be a distinct possibility. But the second-year Hawk wants to remain in Atlanta, where he played in the playoffs for the first time in his 10-year career last season. "I love being here," Crawford told ESPN. "I had a ball every time. I felt like I was at a concert performing every time I played here. It was just a lot of fun." Bagriansky can be reached at jbagriansky@scoreatl.com.



Falcons make another sweet escape

hurry how to win close games. After pulling out a 27-24 overtime thriller at New Orleans in Week 3, Atlanta again snatched victory from the jaws of defeat by overcoming San Francisco 16-14 last Sunday at the Georgia Dome. Just like when Saints kicker Garrett

Hartley lined up for a 29-yard field goal in the extra frame, the Falcons again ap-peared to be finished when Matt Ryan was picked off by Nate Clements with less than two minutes remaining and the 49ers ahead 14-13. Instead, Clements raced for the endzone rather than taking a knee and was eventually stripped of the football by Roddy White inside At-lanta's 10-yard line. Offensive lineman Harvey Dahl recovered the fumble and the rest is history.

INTO THE DAWG POUND ... The Cleveland Browns know a thing or two about close games as well,

The Falcons may have lost their first at Pittsburgh, but they figured out in a trittsburgh, but they figured out in a could easily be 3-0 just like Atlanta, but Eric Mangini's team opened its 2010 campaign with three tough losses. The Browns' most lopsided defeat was just a 24-17 setback at Baltimore and that was preceded by a pair of heartbreaking losses; 17-14 at Tampa Bay and 16-14 at home against the undefeated Chiefs.

Atlanta is set for a visit to Cleveland Atlanta is set for a visit to Cleveland on Sunday afternoon, and having received a bit of a wakeup call from a winless op-ponent, Mike Smith's squad will not be taking a 1-3 team lightly. "I'm not trying to knock San Francisco," defensive end John Abraham told the AJC. "They played their hutta off Light the Sciente orma their butts off. I just think the Saints game still had a lot to do with it. We didn't come off of it with the zing that we usually had and that made it a tough game. I think at the end of the game we won and we ended up finishing like we do.'

Dimon can be reached at rdimon@scoreatl.com.

Braves a Wild Card for first time ever

The Wild Card ticket into the play-offs was the first-ever for the At-lanta franchise, as it was first awarded in 1995. The Braves never had to worry about the Wild Card while winning the NL East each year until 2005. Atlanta claimed the playoff berth with a final regular season record of 91-71, six games back of the Phillies (97-65) but one game ahead of the Padres (90-72).

FACING THE GIANTS ...

Now that the Braves are in the playoffs, the Giants with its pitching rotation will offer a stiff task for Atlanta. In April, the Giants took two of three in San Francisco, striking Billy Wagner for a blown save in game one and then dealing Kenshin Kawakami his first loss of the season in the series finale.

The two teams met in Atlanta in August and the Braves managed to take three of four at Turner Field. Game one was Thursday and the result was not available at press deadline. The Giants were scheduled to send two-time Cy Young award winner Tim

Lincecum to the hill out on the west coast to oppose Derek Lowe, who has really come on for the Braves of late.

Game two of the Braves of late. Game two of the series should feature Tommy Hanson going to the bump for Atlanta. Hanson was 10-11 on the season with a 3.33 ERA but he has thrown well of late, allowing just one lone run in his last three starts. The young righty has thrown 202.2 innings this season, but has seemed to get stron-

ger as the season has progressed. Game three back in Atlanta is scheduled to feature 2010 Comeback Player of the Year Tim Hudson with one week's worth of rest since his last start this past Sunday in the regular season finale. Hudson's regular season stats included a 17-9 record with a 2.83 ERA and a 1-0 mark in two starts against the Giants. Hudson went seven innings in April in San Francisco before receiving a no-decision and earned the win in Au-

D)=[(+**:)**[(Preseason ends with more lineup changes

The Atlanta Thrashers will start the 2010-11 season against the defending Southeast Division Champion Washington Capitals. The Capitals pose the biggest threat to not only the Thrashers, but the entire league, especially with a star player like Alexander Ovechkin.

BYFUGLIEN TO DEFENSE...

The changes that came this offseason have turned into even more changes during the preseason. Dustin Byfuglien will apparently start as a defenseman for Atlanta. This is a position that he has played before, but he excelled as a for-ward for Chicago during their Stanley

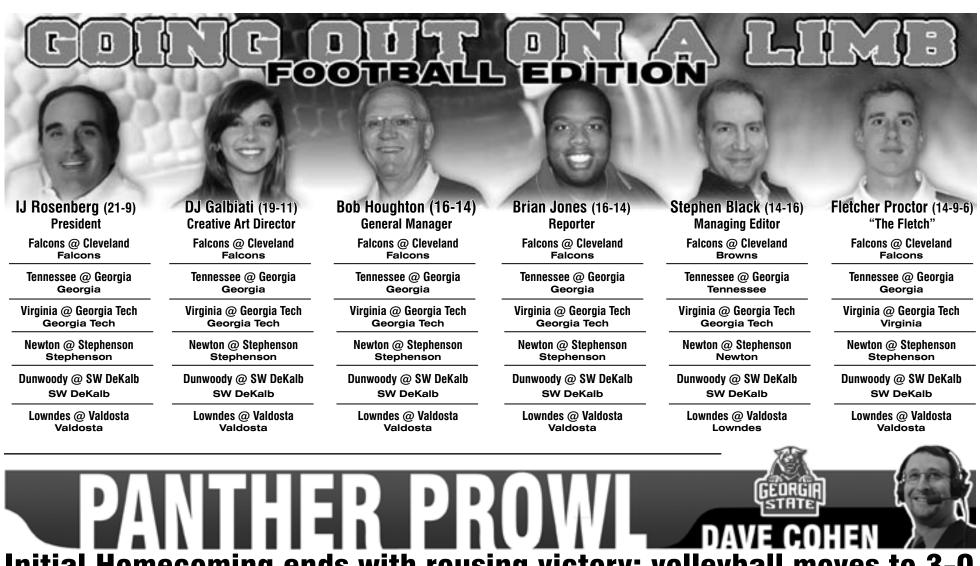
Cup victory last year. Coach Ramsay thinks Byfuglien has what it takes. "We'd like to see Buff play defense. We think he can do it. I think he brings something to the table, said the head coach.

The one thing he adds to the backend is speed. Byfuglien will be able to join the rush much faster than most defensemen. "He's got a ways to go, but he's a big body back there with a good stick, which is really nice to have," said Ramsay. "He

can jump up from there, which makes him tough to cover." Byfuglien averaged just over 16 goals per year over the last three seasons. He will not be as productive from the blueline, but he will probably stay at the forward spot on the Thrashers power play unit. There, Byfuglien can distract the goaltender in front of the net, like he did throughout the playoffs last year.

THE LINEUP ... The opening lineup should see line combinations of Nick Bergfors, Evander Kane and Rich Peverly on one of the top Kane and Rich Peverly on one of the top two lines. Nik Antropov, Bryan Little and Andrew Ladd will be on the other line. Fredrik Modin, Nigel Dawes and possi-bly Alexander Burmistrov will serve as the third line. The defenseman pairings should be Bogosian-Enstrom, Byfuglien-Hainsey and Oduya-Sopel. This will al-ways be subject to change right up until game time and throughout the regular season. Until then, Ramsay will look to see which players play well together and put his lineup together accordingly. *Deighton can be reached at jdeighton@scoreatl.com.*





ou could not have scripted Georgia Y State's first homecoming football game any better. Looking at the Morehead State stats had this reporter a little worried about the game but, after a close call at Campbell, the Panthers came out of the lockeroom ready to play, focused and intense. Georgia State wasted no time getting on the scoreboard, scoring twice on each of their first two possessions. Drew Little threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to Jordan Giles followed by Parris Lee's 4-yard scamper, set up by Little's 42yard completion to Albert Wilson.



"I am proud of the team because I think there were distractions," said Panther head coach Bill Curry. "We were anxious after the events of last week (against Campbell) and it was almost a matter of trying to calm the guys and get our heads on straight. They got it together and played about as well as we have played."

Little was on target most of the afternoon going 21 for 29 passing for 287 yards and four touchdowns.

"What I did today was because of the oline, the wide-outs, the running backs," said Little. "You have got to have the time to get it to the receivers and make a good play."

Danny Williams became the first wide receiver to go over the 100-yard mark with eight catches for 101 yards. Tight end Arthur Williams caught two touchdown passes, the first one of 11 yards in which he dragged and pushed the defender into the end zone. It was impressive to watch. Travis Evans led the rushing attack with 62 yards on eight carries. Overall, the Panthers managed to rack up 441 yards of total offense on 73 plays.

Georgia State, now 3-2, hosts Savannah State Saturday in the Georgia Dome.

MISCELLANY ...

Join us each Monday afternoon (4:00-5:00 p.m.) at STATS Restaurant on Marietta Street near Philips Arena for the Bill Curry call-in radio show on WCFO-AM, News talk 1160. ... Georgia State volleyball is off to a 3-0 start in CAA play following their 3-2 win over Delaware. Panthers are 9-8 overall heading to George Mason and James Madison.

Dave Cohen is in his 28th season as the "Voice of Georgia State Athletics" on WRAS-FM (88.5) and WCFO-AM, Newstalk 1160.





BASKETBALL

Hawks. (Preseason). October 11 at Detroit 7:30 PM. October 12 at Washington 7 PM. October 16 at New Orleans 8:30 PM. October 18 vs. Orlando 7 PM. October 21 vs. Miami 8 PM. (Regular season). October 27 at Memphis 8 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
- 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. Visit www.georgiasportsleagues.org.

Roundtable Fundamental Basketball Camp Boys and Girls. Rising 6th-10th Graders (Current 5th-9th Graders) June 7-11. 9am-2pm. St. Francis High School, Alpharetta. Contact Coach Huff stfrancisbball@yahoo.com.

BASEBALL

Braves. October 1 vs. Philadelphia 7:35 PM. October 2 vs. Philadelphia 4:10 PM. October 3 vs. Philadelphia 1:35 PM.
Prospect Watch. Ongoing - Buckhead. Baseball pitching and hitting

- Prospect watch. Orgoning Bucknead: Basebain pictining and Initiang lessons by a former college and minor league coach. For information call 404-869-7966 or visit 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. MSBL 18+ Saturday League contact info is 770-436-8114, e-mail AtlantaMABL@aol.com. MSBL 18+ Midweek Wood bat league contact info is 770-436-8114, e-mail AtlantaMABL@aol. com. MSBL 18+Fall League contact info is 770-436-8114, e-mail AtlantaMABL@aol.com. For more information about our Atlanta Adult Baseball League, please visit our website at 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.

FOOTBALL

Falcons. October 10 at Cleveland 1 PM. Georgia. October 9 vs. Tennessee 12:25 PM. Georgia Tech. October 3 vs. Virginia 3:30 PM. Georgia State. October 9 vs. Savannah State 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
- 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. 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. Visit 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. 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 Irv, Seabrook@vahoo.com.

HOCKEY

- Thrashers. October 8 vs. Washington 7:30 PM. October 10 at Tampa Bay 7:30 PM. October 12 at Los Angeles 10 PM. October 15 at Anaheim 10 PM. October 16 at San Jose 10:30 PM. October 20 vs. Buffalo 7 PM.
- Gladiators. (Preseason). October 15 at Florida 7:30 PM. October 16 at Florida 7 PM. (Regular season). October 22 vs. South Carolina 7:35 PM.
- Peachtree Booster Club. Ongoing Pickneyville Roller Hockey Rink. Fees: \$95 for 12-game season, \$30 out-of-county fee. For information visit www.pbcsports.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 Com-
- man of rame socker clinics. Origing on Priors Clarkton community Center. For under-6 through under-12 players. Fees: Free. For information call 404-508-1050 or visit www.clarkstoncommunitycenter.org. 5:30-7 PM.

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. 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 Design Designation for 1 of 9th are

- Lacrosse. Ongoing. Registration for 1st-8th grades. For information call 404-216-5870, email jasona@bagatawaylacrosse. com or visit 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.doblestixxlacrosse.com or by contacting Chris Smith at chris@doublestixxlacrosse.com or 404-550-5322.

RUNNING

3rd Annual Doraville Road Race 5K/Mile/Tot Trot. 0ct. 16. Doraville, 8:00 AM. 770-936-3850.

Monster Dash 5K. Oct. 16. Atlanta, Grant Park, 8:00 a.m.; 404-

627-9072. Peachtree City Classic 15K & 5K. Oct. 16. Peachtree City, 8:30 AM.

- 770-596-9890. Race for Salvation 5K Run/Walk. Oct. 16. Cartersville, 4:00 PM. 770-298-3176
- The Phoenix 5K & 1K. Oct. 16. Atlanta, 9:45 AM. 678-532-8822.

VOLLEYBALL

Gwinnett Sports Center. Registration ongoing. For information call Jerry Robison at 678-491-0203 or visit www.gscfun.com.

SWIMMING & DIVING

- Swimming lessons. Ongoing Alpharetta City Pool Alpharetta, Ga. 1825 Old Milton Parkway. For information call 678-297-6107.
- Dynamo Swim School. DynaBabies, Preschool, Grade School, Adult Classes. Youth Swim Team. Call us (770) 457-7946 Ext 16 www.dynamoswimschool.com
- Gwinnett Aquatics. Orgoing 2800 Quinberry Drive and Bethany Church Road. For ages 5-18. Swim team and lessons avail-
- able. 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. Tucker Youth Soccer. Ongoing - 2803 Henderson Road Tucker, Ga.

- For information call 770-414-0538 or visit 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 ptcflash@ 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, e-mail info.indoor@atlantasilverbacks.com.or.visit.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 maore! 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 ccybl1@gmail.com or visit the league's website (www.ccvbl.net).

SOFTBALL

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 AcademyolAtlanta. Ongoing - 3126 Cobb Parkway Kennesaw, Ga. For information call 770-975-8337 or visit www.gymnasticsacademyofatlanta.com. Cymnastics Classes at Gwinnett Compacting Contex Openion - 027

- 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.tlgsnellvillega.com.

RACING

Sweet Repeats Consignment Sale. Oct. 7-9 at Atlanta Motor Speedway Buck Baker Racing School. Oct. 9-10 at Atlanta Motor Speedway. EGGloberfest. Oct. 15-16 at Atlanta Motor Speedway. Speed Tech Racing School. Oct. 16-17 at Atlanta Motor Speedway. WERA Grand National Finals. Oct. 8-10 at Road Atlanta SVRA Season Finale. Oct. 15-17 at Road Atlanta.

OFFICIATING

- 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.
- Reagan at 404-213-0588 or email 9rcorp@150mail.com. Georgia Lacrosse Officials Association. Needs boys youth and High School officials for 2010 season. Games are played Spring, Summer, and Fall. Great way to earn extra money and get some fun aerobic exercise. For more information, please visit www.GALAXREF.com or email recruit@galaxref.com.
- Atlanta Peachstate Football Officials Association. High School Football Officials needed. We are in need of people who want to officiate high school football in the Atlanta Metro area. No experience is necessary. We have weekly training sessions. For more information go on our web site www.apfoa.com or call Keith @ 678.592.1194.

ATLANTA SPORTS COUNCIL

Chick-Fil-A Bowl. Dec. 31, 2010. Georgia Dome. For tickets, call 404-444-4444. To reach the Atlanta Sports Council call 404-586-8510 or visit www.atlantasportscouncil.com.

MISC.

- 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.
- GOkickball "Atlanta's Premier Social Experience". Providing social, co-ed adult kickball leagues throughout metro-Atlanta centered around having a good time, meeting new people, and playing recreational games of kickball at local parks. Registration is open now for spring season. Join the fun! For more information and to register, go to www.gokickball.com/atlanta. Special Score Atlanta 15% off discount code: "Score15".





eorgia keeps breaking streaks. Unfortu-Unately, they are the types of streaks the Bulldogs didn't want broken.

After starting 0-2 in the conference for the first time since 1993, losing to Arkansas for the first time since 1993, and dropping four in a row for the first time since 1990, the Bulldogs (1-4, 0-3) hope they can break a different sort of the streak against Tennessee (2-3, 0-2) Saturday.

Georgia has not lost five games in a row since 1953. At practice this week, head coach Mark Richt was surely hoping his team doesn't end that stretch.

"We have two teams in very similar situations," Richt said. "Both are coming off heartbreaking losses. Both are looking for a Southeastern Conference victory. Both are

teams that have tremendous fanbases and tremendous tradition and history of playing winning football so we are both, I would say, pretty desperate for a victory right now.

Not only do the Dawgs have to face an SEC East rival and nemesis, but they will have to face former head coach and athletics director Vince Dooley's son, Derek, who is head coach of the Vols. The elder Dooley will not be at the game, but will be rooting his son's team on from his Athens home.

Meanwhile, Richt will be hoping his team can summon something, anything to get past the losing streak that has gripped them since week two

"I would think it's going to be a highly-emotional game, a highly-charged game with

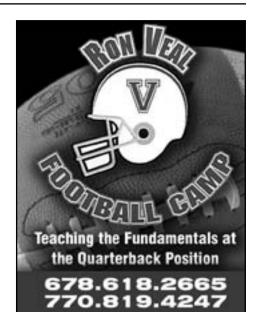
two teams really fighting like mad for a vic-tory and fighting like mad for the ability to show people that we can play football," Richt continued. "It ought to be a good one."

WOODEN NOMINATED

Junior basketball player Trey Thomp-kins was added to the John R. Wooden Award watch list, which includes 49 other college basketball stars. The award annually honors the nation's top player and is awarded by the Los Angeles Athletic Club. Thompkins was named unanimous All-outherstern Conference forst team bat age

Southeastern Conference first-team last sea-son after averaging 17.7 points and 8.3 rebounds per game.

Black can he reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.







After beating Wake Forest 24-20 Saturday. Apaul Johnson's Georgia Tech teams are 11-2 in games decided by five points or less. Since 2004, Paul Johnson coached teams are 24-9 in those games. How teams finish in the fourth quarter is what determines the winner in these close matchups and the Yellow Jackets have outscored their opponent 53-24 in the fourth quarter this season. In two ACC road victories over Wake and UNC, the defense has allowed only three points in the fourth quarter. Winning games like these are what can get a team over the hump when it comes to the divisional race to the conference championship game.

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SPECIAL TEAMS WOES ... Johnson has been extremely disappointed

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in the special teams play so far this season. "A punter dropped a snap (at Wake) and kicked it 10 yards; we had two blocking in the back pen-alties, no the special teams has not improved." Despite the short comings of certain aspects of the Jackets special teams, Johnson did have praise for his kicker, "He is as good as you can be, 7-for-7." Scott Blair was 3-3 on field goals against the Demon Deacons, all of which were greater than 40 yards greater than 40 yards.

FAMILIAR FACES ... "It really does not make a difference what color jersey the team you are coaching wears, all that counts is the result," defensive coordi-nator Al Groh said when asked about facing Virginia, his former team. The first-year defen-

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sive coordinator went on to say, "That is what I work for every week. I try to work toward the satisfaction of our team accomplishing something, and avoid that haunting feeling that causes sleepless Saturday nights. This will be the same for me as it has been for 41 years." Groh went 59-53 in his nine years as the head coach of Virginia. And the coach expects the Cavaliers to know what's coming. "They have all my playbooks and all my cut-ups," Groh said. "Those two coaches and the linebackers coach have sat through endless hours with me discussing defense, making game plans, and ana-lyzing our performance. There is no dilemma or no secret analyzing how Al Groh thinks." *Watson can be reached at* 404-256-1572.

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