

SCORE

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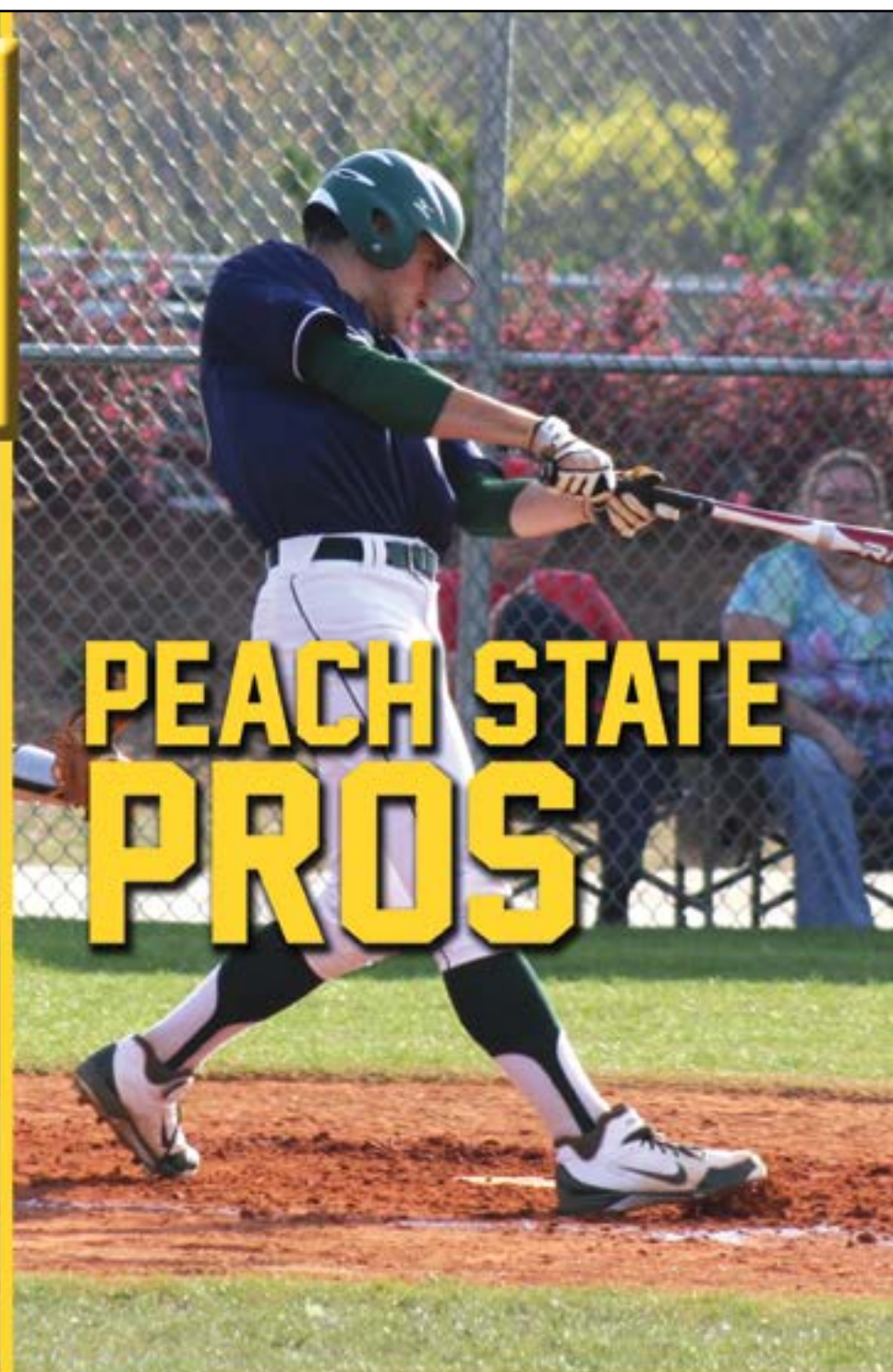
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CAN'T MISS THIS WEEK

- 4** We have a new columnist on Page 4 as Chris Nieman debuts "Screamin' Nieman."
- 5** In our cover story, Alex Ewalt reviews the bevy of local products who were taken in the MLB Draft.
- 7** Brother-sister tandem Craig and Krista Sager review a couple of recent 7-on-7 tournaments in our high school feature story.
- 8-11** Check out our prep section for previews of Class A and Class AA football teams.

TEAM SCOOP AND VOICES

COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI BLALOCK
 COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF SONNY KENNEDY, KENT STATE ATHLETICS AND MIKE COLLINS

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

SHOT OF THE WEEK...



MANO-A-MANO: Centennial's Christian Robinson lines up across from an Olive Branch (Miss.) defender during the North Gwinnett 7-on-7 tournament last weekend. Olive Branch ended up winning the title, but Centennial finished with a solid 9-3 record. Photo courtesy of Sonny Kennedy.

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RYAN'S RANT



Beachy's return crowds Braves' rotation

By Ryan Caiafa

As Brandon Beachy's return from Tommy John surgery draws near, the Braves are faced with a problem that the majority of teams would like to have: too many good starting pitchers. The Braves currently hold Major League Baseball's top team ERA and adding Beachy to the mix is a precarious situation despite his strong play in 2012 prior to his injury.

There is no obvious solution to this issue as each of the Braves' starters can each make a strong claim to remain in the rotation once Beachy returns in the coming days. Mike Minor, who nearly didn't make the final roster last season, has been the team's most consistent arm. He leads the team with an 8-2 record, along with a team-leading 2.44 ERA

through June 11. Paul Maholm has also been solid throughout the first half of the season, with a 7-4 record and 3.46 ERA.

Despite a below-average start to the season, the notion that Tim Hudson could be removed as a regular part of the starting rotation can immediately be dismissed as well. Hudson has been a model of consistency throughout his Atlanta career and has more often than not delivered in big-game situations.

Perhaps the only question marks in the rotation are about Kris Medlen and rookie Julio Teheran, but even those questions can be deemed minor in the grand scheme of things. Medlen was an absolute force in 2012 after returning to the starting rotation in July with

a 10-1 record and 1.57 ERA. The team won a MLB-record 23 consecutive games in which Medlen started. He's gotten off to a slower start in 2013 with a 3-6 record through June 11, but he has the second-best ERA amongst starters at 2.87. He's been the victim of weak run support during his starts, which is essentially just bad luck on his end.

Teheran may have seemed like an obvious choice to be moved to the thin bullpen, but his performance on June 5 against the Pirates may have permanently altered that viewpoint. Teheran took a no-hitter into the eighth inning and finished with a one-hit shutout effort en route to his fourth win of the season. He's steadily improved in each of his starts this season and has showed signs that he may be living up to the immense hype that has surrounded him throughout his young career.

Fredi Gonzalez and even Frank Wren have tough decisions to make and minimal time to do so. Maybe Beachy starts out in the bullpen with some extended relief efforts to gauge his progress and see if he has the durability to pitch starters' innings. After the losses of both Eric O'Flaherty and Jonny Venters to Tommy John surgery, the Braves' bullpen lacks the invincibility, outside of Craig Kimbrel, that it once had.

Even if only temporarily, adding Beachy to the reliever core could be a low-risk high-reward scenario for the Braves as they near the all-star break sitting atop the NL East standings. If Beachy begins to pitch close to the level that he's capable of, Frank Wren may be the guy to make an even tougher decision as he could look to make a deal to bolster the team in other areas by trading one of the current starters if Beachy is inserted back into the rotation. The bullpen issue will once again peek its head out and for the Braves to have any shot of postseason success, it must be addressed. Wren could look into dealing someone like Maholm, who despite a solid start, may be the most expendable of the Braves' arms. Trading Maholm could net them a top-tier reliever and possibly another bat, which may be necessary if B.J. Upton, Dan Uggla and Jason Heyward continue their sub-par efforts at the plate thus far.

If Wren is presented with the right deal that instantly improves the team's weaknesses, he shouldn't hesitate to pull the trigger. Wren and Gonzalez clearly have their hands tied but if the past is any indication, the duo will make the right decisions with the team's postseason aspirations and long-term future in mind.

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SCREAMIN' NIEMAN



Perno's ouster necessary, Stricklin promising

By Chris Nieman

Over the past four years, the University of Georgia baseball program has been, for the most part, a mediocre team. The results are most likely the main reason former skipper David Perno ultimately decided to resign. Some might even assume that Perno's hand was forced by UGA athletics director Greg McGarity in order to avoid Perno from having the dreaded termination label on his resume.

SLIPPERY SLOPE ...

In the last four seasons, the Diamond Dawgs accounted for a grim total of 101 wins and 127 losses — a recipe for disaster. For the fifth consecutive year, Georgia also failed to earn a berth in the College World Series. That

year (2008), the Bulldogs fell one game short of winning their first national championship since 1990, when Perno was a player. After that, the Dawgs also did not finish higher than fourth in the SEC East final standings, a prime reason behind the resignation of Perno.

Some folks might think that Perno deserved one more shot to lead the Bulldogs to glory, but I do not know how one can ignore the facts over the past four to five years. Simply put, the proof is in the pudding and it was time for the Bulldogs to move in a different direction.

With an arsenal of talent in the state of Georgia and in the southeastern region of the country, not to mention that the Georgia "G" is a premium brand, there really is not much

one can say to defend the way the Dawgs have recruited in the last few years. One main issue is the fact that Perno and the Bulldogs would recruit top MLB prospects when the chances of those kids playing in college were relatively slim to none.

Think about it. If you are a young kid and Major League Baseball scouts are stroking your ego about how great you will be in the pros and how much money you will make opposed to going to college, why in the world would you not skip college and the risk of an early career-ending injury and instead sign a nice contract that can help both you and your family?

MOVING ON ...

Most think the hiring of former Kent State head coach Scott Stricklin, the Diamond Dawgs will shine bright like, well, a diamond. Stricklin's resume is nothing short of impressive. He has been associated with winning programs such as Vanderbilt, Georgia Tech and, most recently, Kent State, where he led the Mid-American Conference team to its first College World Series appearance in school history in 2012, a feat that speaks for itself, considering Kent State competes against major programs like Ohio State.

In nine years with the Golden Flashes, Stricklin dominated the Mid-American Con-

ference, recording a gaudy 350-188 coaching record, guiding his squads to five regular season conference championships and five MAC titles. Those accomplishments also warranted him the honor as a three-time MAC coach of the year. The 41-year old is also known for his teams' academic successes where the Golden Flashes finished with a perfect score of 1,000 in the NCAA's Academic Performance Rate report for three consecutive years.

Stricklin is also known for being a solid recruiter, and that is an absolutely perfect fit for the UGA baseball program considering the Dawgs have had subpar recruiting classes the last few years due to their tunnel vision recruiting philosophy of going after top MLB prospects that won't set foot on Foley Field.

Stricklin delivers a breath of fresh air into the UGA baseball program and will resuscitate a stale atmosphere in Athens. It may take a year or two to get acclimated to the new scene, but the fact of the matter is the Dawgs made the right hire and found a diamond in the rough. The word in Athens is that the players are excited to play for him, and that usually bodes well when a coach has players believing in him and buying into his system.

Nieman can be reached at cnieman@scoreatl.com.

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CHOSEN ONES



Frazier, Meadows lead in-state MLB draftees

By Alex Ewalt



As expected, four of the top 37 players taken in the MLB first-year player draft were from the state of Georgia, one of the most prolific breeding grounds for top baseball talent. In itself, that's not extraordinary; the Peach State has produced a number of top picks in recent years. What is unusual, however, is that these four players hail from high schools in a small pocket in the Northeast metro area: Clint Frazier of Loganville, Austin Meadows of Grayson, Travis Demeritte of Winder-Barrow and Josh Hart of Parkview. Two from east Gwinnett County, one from neighboring Walton and one from nearby Barrow.

Frazier, a five-tool outfielder, went No. 5 to the Indians, while Meadows, a lefty outfielder, went to the Pirates at No. 9. Demeritte, a shortstop, came off the board at No. 30 to the Rangers and Hart, a centerfielder, went No. 37 to Baltimore in the Competitive Balance Round A. Unfortunately for the schools they pledged to, a professional baseball career

is imminent: Georgia will miss out on Frazier, while Meadows (Clemson), Demeritte (South Carolina) and Hart (Georgia Tech) will also be entering either their MLB clubs' rookie ball or low Class A teams shortly.

For Frazier, it was the culmination of a fantastic high school career that includes a state title and a school record for home runs (63). The days leading up to the draft were stressful at times, but eventually led to the realization of a life-long dream. Frazier didn't let the Sports Illustrated spreads and MLB Network interviews distract him from being a productive player for the Red Devils.

"It's been a great experience, but busy for Clint all year, and especially the last month or so has been pretty crazy," Segars said. "He handled it well and had a great year for us."

Frazier's stat-line for his senior season had him at a .485 batting average, 17 home runs and 45 RBIs. The significance of having four players drafted before the second round out of such

a small radius was not lost on his coach.

"To get that type of press just shows the ability level of the players in the state and I'm just happy that Clint was able to be a part of that," Segars said. "There's a lot of good baseball players in this area."

Grayson's Meadows was also a part of the media blitz that descended upon this small section of North Georgia. Like Hart and Frazier, he's a rangy outfielder with speed. Demeritte of Winder-Barrow projects to play third base at the pro level.

Josh Hart, a four-year starter for Parkview, was tabbed as a top pick from the beginning of his high school career. High draft selections are nothing new for the athletics powerhouse in Lilburn.

"We've been lucky enough for our kids to be seen because of other (high-profile) kids," said Parkview head coach Chan Brown. "When he was a sophomore, the scouts told us that they could see him being a very high draft pick."

Brown manages much more than just the game-to-game lineups for the Panthers. Part of the job for a coach of ultra-talented prep players is to act as a liaison between Major League scouts and the prospect and his family.

"Baltimore had been watching him all year long and they told him that if he was available, he might go with their 22nd pick, but if not and he was still around later on, he would go with that 37th pick," Brown said.

In his senior season, Hart hit .459 with 39 runs scored and 31 RBIs to go along with five home runs and 34 stolen bases in 36 attempts. Hart's another five-tool player with a high ceiling.

"He can really run 'em down in the gaps in center field," Brown said. "He's the ultimate lead-off hitter in your lineup. He can hit for power and can use his speed, he gets a lot of infield singles and bunt singles. He's just kind of a table-setter as far as your lineup goes, and defensively, he's a run saver."

These standouts weren't the only players on their teams to hear their names called on draft weekend. Chris Erwin from Grayson, Jarrett Freeland from Parkview and Dalton Carter from Winder-Barrow also were draft selections from their schools.

COLLEGE CONNECTIONS...

As always, Georgia universities and junior colleges were big producers of draft picks. Georgia Tech boasts five picks in the first 10 rounds: Daniel Palka in the third to the Diamondbacks, Zane Evans in the fourth to the Royals, Buck Farmer in the fifth to the Tigers, and Brandon Thomas and Kyle Wren in the eighth to the Yankees and Braves, respectively.

Wren, the son of Braves GM Frank Wren, passed up a 30th-round selection from the Reds a year ago to come back to school. Fortuitously, it allowed the Braves to select him last week and he quickly signed his father's contract offer. Another family tie comes in the form of Jacob Heyward, the younger brother of Braves star Jason Heyward, who was taken by Atlanta with the No. 1,153 pick out of Eagle's Landing Christian Academy.

UGA had three players drafted with Kyle Farmer (Dodgers, No. 244), Curt Powell (Tigers, No. 636) and Pat Boling (Nationals, No. 976).

Other state schools got in on the act, too. The highest non-BCS Georgia team to have a player drafted was Savannah State, with pitcher Kyle McGowin going in the fifth round to the Angels. Savannah State narrowly lost to Alabama in an elimination game in the FSU regional in the NCAA Tournament, and McGowin finished with a sub-2.00 ERA this past college season.

Kennesaw State had four draftees with Steve Janas, a right-handed pitcher, going the highest at 193 to the Braves. NAIA school Southern Polytechnic in Marietta, which has produced eight draft picks over the last seven years, had Nick Blount taken in the ninth round by the White Sox. Blount is a 6-foot-6, right-handed flamethrower and a 2009 graduate of South Gwinnett. Division II Columbus State saw Cameron Griffin go with the No. 1,016 pick to the Mets, and two-year schools Middle Georgia College, South Georgia College, Darton College and Georgia Perimeter were all represented.

Former Woodstock High-standout Kent Emanuel, a left-handed pitcher and weekend starter for North Carolina, was the first pick of the third round to the Astros.

Photo of Josh Hart courtesy of Parkview HS. Ewalt can be reached at 404-256-1572.

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WHOS HOT

THUMBS UP TO THE PEACH STATE



Local Talent

The MLB Draft took place over the weekend and several local baseball stars heard their names called. In fact, metro Atlanta had two guys drafted in the top nine picks- Loganville's Clint Frazier (5th) and Grayson's Austin Meadows (9th). In all, 55 players with Georgia connections were drafted.

Staying Home

Kudos to kids from the state of Georgia who stay in state for college. Nick Chubb is the latest example of a star from the Peach State to decide to stay home and star for an in-state team instead of crossing the border to go elsewhere. With so many talented kids from Georgia, the in-state college programs would dominate if top recruits stayed home.

US Soccer

The Yanks are once again marching towards another World Cup berth, which they have enjoyed regularly since 1990. In the past week, the Americans beat world-power Germany in a friendly, then Jamaica and Panama in qualifiers. As it stands the US is in first in the CONCACAF qualifying, making it a shoe-in for the 2014 World Cup.

Headshots

It was downright scary watching Ian Kennedy of the Diamondbacks throwing at the heads of two Dodgers players during a game on June 11. The two beanballs contributed to a massive brawl, which resulted in multiple ejections and fines. While beanballs and brawls are part of baseball, throwing at guys' heads is simply dangerous.

Eli Tri

While the US soccer team is enjoying a run of success pardon us while we snicker at the Mexican National Team, which has scored just once in its last three qualifiers. In its six World Cup qualifying matches, Mexico has scored just three times. We ultimately hope the Mexicans make the World Cup as one of the stronger sides in CONCACAF, but it is quite entertaining to watch the US team's arch rival struggle.

West Coast Trips

As the Braves prepare to face San Diego one last time out West, we are weary from staying up past midnight to watch them play over the past week. While the trips out West are always a nice change and we get to see beautiful settings like Petco Park, Dodger Stadium and AT&T Park, we prefer games that start before 10 p.m.



WHOS NOT

THUMBS DOWN TO WEST COAST BASEBALL

SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 **MINICAMP BEGINS:** OTAs have come to an end and that means the Falcons will begin minicamp on Tuesday, which is mandatory for all veterans. According to reports, the offense has looked sharp during OTAs. Can that trend continue during minicamp? Also, it will be interesting to see how new defensive players Robert Alford and Desmond Trufant work with veterans like Asante Samuel and Jonathan Babineaux.

2 **ANOTHER J-HEY:** Looks like another Heyward could be joining the Braves in the near future as Jacob Heyward, Jason's brother, was drafted by the Braves in the 38th round last weekend. Jacob won't be joining the organization right away as he will play college baseball for Miami. Good luck, Jacob! We hope you can join Jason very soon.

3 **CHUBB ROCK:** The Georgia Bulldogs scored a huge commitment Tuesday with Cedartown running back Nick Chubb, who is the top running back in the state. Chubb rushed for 2,375 yards and 33 touchdowns in 10 games last season and dominated practices for the Rising Seniors.com all-star game. Looks like the Dawgs have found a replacement for Todd Gurley and Keith Marshall.

4 **R.I.P., J.T.:** The Bulldog nation is in mourning as Joe Tereshinski passed away on Monday. Tereshinski played tight end and defensive end for the Bulldogs teams that won a national title in 1942 and SEC titles in 1942 and 1946. His two sons played for Georgia in the 70s and his grandson opened the 2006 season as the starting QB. Tereshinski was 89-years old.

5 **FOOTBALL PREVIEWS:** If you haven't checked out our high school football previews, you are missing out. For the last two weeks we have previewed 10 teams from A-Private, A-Public and AA. The previews were published in our newsletter along with scoreatl.com. We will continue the previews with 10 teams from AAA starting next week and will continue until we get to AAAAAA.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY CRAIG SAGER II

0 Football programs that repeated as state champs last year

62 Touchdowns scored by UGA commit, Nick Chubb's last two seasons

5 Touchdowns Calvin Johnson had last season despite his record-breaking 1,964-yard season

55 NFL receivers that caught 5 or more TD's last year

33 Points resulting in DeCoud and Moore takeaways last season

45 Touchbacks for Matt Bosher's franchise record kickoffs last season

143 Points scored by Matt Bryant last season

55 Players with Georgia ties taken in the MLB Draft

5 Straight road losses for Tim Hudson after Tuesday's 3-2 loss at San Diego

4 Pinch-hit home runs by Evan Gattis this season

TRIVIA QUESTION

Evan Gattis, at press time, was one homer away from tying the franchise record for pinch-hit homers in a season. Who holds the Braves' record with five pinch-hit dingers?

Answer on Page 14

SANITY AT LAST

"I think you have to constantly push yourself to physically get better, then also mentally get better. So I think it's more of a balanced approach this year to try and get in the best shape that I can and also be mentally prepared the best I can."

- Matt Ryan on offseason preparations.

OUR TWO CENTS

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

Not only do we cover popular sports like football, basketball and baseball, we also cover every other varsity sport the GHSA fields. If you like Georgia high school sports at all, sign up for our email newsletter by visiting www.tinyurl.com/scorenewsletter and enter your email address(es) that you'd like added to the distribution list.





Teams sharpen skills in summer competitions

By Craig Sager II and Krista Sager

The North Gwinnett National Select 7-on-7 qualifier featured 18 teams competing to earn a spot in the national tournament held in Hoover, Ala. The teams played six games to determine seeding for a double-elimination tournament the following day. Alpharetta, Gainesville, Cherokee, Centennial, Jefferson County, Lassiter, North Gwinnett, Shiloh, Grayson, Archer, Spartanburg, GAC, Jonesboro, Olive Branch (Miss.) and Central Gwinnett were the participating schools. The lone non-Georgia school was Olive Branch, which left the Peach State with a perfect 11-0 record.

Alpharetta earned the No. 1 seed after going 6-0 in pool play. In the second round, Grayson's A team handed the Raiders a 26-20 ticket to the loser's bracket. Facing elimination, GAC pulled off a 33-21 win to send the top seed home. GAC was later eliminated by Centennial 32-27.

Centennial had a 5-1 effort in pool play and a long run Friday. The Knights beat North Gwinnett 18-13 in the first round and then topped Lassiter 24-15. Olive Branch handed

them a 34-22 loss, but Centennial escaped the loser's bracket with consecutive wins over GAC and Grayson 16-8. Jefferson County fell to Olive Branch in the semis and played Centennial in the loser's bracket championship. A 28-27 Jefferson County win set up a championship rematch with Olive Branch, but the Warriors would fall 20-12.

Archer finished 6-3 and stifled Gainesville in the opening round 33-9 before falling to Jefferson County 23-20 and GAC 34-24 to end its run.

The qualifiers will be held at 10 different cities around the country before returning to Georgia when Lassiter hosts in mid-July.

IN THE VALLEY ...

At Walton, a more drill-based passing exhibition was taking place. The 10th Annual Atlanta Quarterbacks and Receivers camp was started by Raiders offensive coordinator Tripp Allen and was held in Raider Valley. This year's group consisted of about 160 players represented by Walton, East Paulding, Harrison, Lassiter,

Lumpkin County, Pope, St. Pius X, Tucker, Walton and several kids from Florida who were in the area for other camps. This is a unique event in the summer offseason. Quarterbacks and receivers perform as many reps as they can, and more often than not, they get matched up with a player from another school.

LIONS DEN ...

St. Pius X brought two buses full of players, including Auburn commit and safety Nick Ruffin. For host Walton, rising sophomore Karekin Brooks was one of the key players that was benefiting from the camp. Brooks has been preparing for a large role in the Walton Raiders' offense this upcoming season. After the departure of running back Tyren Jones, now a member of the Alabama football team, focus has turned to who Walton will star in its traditionally prolific backfield. Replacing Jones's 4,000-plus yards (two-season total) will have to be a collective effort by the offense.

As a freshman, Brooks was able to make a major impact on the 2012 Junior Varsity team, showing improvement with each game. By the last game of the season, Brooks rushed for over 250 yards in only three quarters while also taking defensive snaps. Great vision and breakaway speed makes Brooks a home-run back.

His touchdowns against Lassiter in the final game consisted of 50-, 61- and 32-yard scores. On the final drive, he also broke a 50-yard gain.

The St. Pius X Golden Lions had a lot to think about this offseason. After beginning playoffs against Dawson County where they scored 72 points, the Golden Lions fell to Buford in the state championship 10-3. With the disappointing loss still on the minds of the Golden Lions, Ruffin has faith in his team this upcoming season.

"A lot of guys are improving and a lot of guys are stepping up, so I'll definitely say we're about the same level [as this time last year] and I'll probably go ahead and say we'll make the state championship again this year."

Among St. Pius's list of playmakers is senior Fred Dorsey. The agile wideout won the Class AAA state championship in the triple jump this past spring.

St. Pius X looks ready to finish what the Lions were so close to achieving last year. After most teams had left the camp, head coach Paul Standard kept his players on the field and continued going over plays. Months before their season opener against Westminster, the Golden Lions are in midseason form with their preparation.

Craig Sager II can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

ELCA PREVIEW



ELCA ready to reload for title run

By Craig Sager II

Eagle's Landing Christian solidified itself among Georgia's top football programs last season when it claimed its first state championship. The wealth of talent that we have become accustomed to seeing is present with this flock and they are returning as the favorite to repeat in Class A-Private.

The 2012 offense averaged 44 points per game and the starting defense gave up just three. The Chargers overpowered defenses at times while running track meets by them at other times. Their near 40-point scoring differential per game from a year ago, gives them the luxury of dropping off slightly and still holding an incredible advantage this season.

A possible drop-off does not look to threaten this team's championship aspirations. Valuable replacements are everywhere and head coach Jonathan Gess is aiming to once again optimize his talent-laden roster.

Purdue signee Keyante Green trucked his way through defenses in 2012, but the power run game will still drive these Chargers without him.

"The power run game is who we are and what we do," said Gess.

Notre Dame signee Isaac Rochell starred as a two-way weapon at defensive end and tight end in 2012, but will have one of the most talented prospects in the state replacing him. Andrew Williams stands 6-foot-4, 231 pounds and is listed by 247sports as a top 20 recruit in the state.

"It's hard to replace an Isaac Rochell," said Gess. "But when you have a guy like Andrew Williams filling in for the role, you can make up for a lot of it."

Brad Moore will be one of the featured playmakers in the backfield this season and demonstrated his ability to make big plays last year. In the 33-0 route over Prince Avenue in the state championship, he took a reverse and broke three tackles before falling into the end zone.

Dalton Etheridge remains the quarterback after operating one of the state's most prolific offenses a year ago. Etheridge has 6-foot-3, 200-pound Jamal Tookes headlining his exterior targets.

Bryson Durden will see action at running back and defensive back this season brings the dynamics needed to replace Jevious Terry as the Chargers' return man.

Their season opener matches them up with Class AAA power Washington County, who handed them their only loss of the season last year (24-19).

"You have to be excited for the season and playing each of those 10 games," said Gess.

"There are always surprise teams and we are obviously looking forward to playing Washington County week one."

The Chargers open up region play at home against Holy Innocents' Sept. 27.

Sager can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

GAC PREVIEW



Chapple returns as GAC eyes first title

By Chris Nieman

Greater Atlanta Christian may be under a relatively new regime with head coach Tim Hardy calling the shots. However, the mentality of a winning culture has not been altered.

With the 2013 football campaign in the foreseeable future, Hardy prefers to view every season as a fresh start and to essentially start from ground zero. The No. 3 Spartans have 18 starters returning to the gridiron and that should bode well.

Of the returning starters is quarterback Rafe Chapple, offensive lineman Britt Lee, wide receiver Chris Williams and safety Ross Wood.

Chapple, who either set or tied multiple school records in 2012, including passing for 366 yards with five touchdown strikes against Heard County, is a standout player that Hardy raved about.

"He's an excellent football player and quarterback," said Hardy. "To me quarterback always starts with leadership, it starts with your competitiveness, your attitude, your drive, your example, and he excels in all those things. He can really throw a football and is very accurate. He can throw a wide variety of throws, has a really good deep ball, has got a strong arm and touch in the middle. He really drives the ship for us and our guys respond to his leadership."

Lee, who stands 6-foot-3, 273 pounds, can

play on both sides of the ball, but is more known for his physical play on the offensive line. Lee has gotten strong interest by college programs such as Air Force and Navy.

Williams should be Chapple's go-to guy as he has flashed the ability to stretch the field last season. Williams has a knack for scoring touchdowns. Ross Wood will also play a vital role for the Spartans especially in the back seven, an area on defense that should be a potential strength for the team.

The 2013 schedule sets up to be a challenge, but that is how The Spartans prefer to handle their business.

"Well, first we have an excellent region," said Hardy. "Our region is small, but the quality is really high. Any of our region games are huge for us."

GAC has the opener against Stone Mountain at Hallford Stadium circled. The Spartans want to start the season off on a positive note and a win against the Pirates will certainly steer the program out of the gates.

If all goes according to plan, the Spartans will have a formidable football team for the 2013 season and should make their fan base proud to represent the red, black and gold.

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CALHOUN PREVIEW



Calhoun tired of losing in finals

By Alex Ewalt

The Yellow Jackets made their fifth straight Class AA title game last season. But an upset loss to Jefferson, 31-14, left them with just one state championship in those five tries, a 2011 win over Buford.

"We're a little tired of losing in the championship game," Lamb said. "I know there are a lot of schools that would love to get to the state championship game, but believe me, it's not fun getting there and losing."

"In the past we've talked about getting to the championship game. But now we're talking about winning it."

Calhoun rode the arm of quarterback Taylor Lamb, the coach's nephew, to a perfect record before the title-game. Lamb has graduated and is moving on to Appalachian State. Fields Chapman will be next to keep the potent spread offense rolling. Chapman, (6-foot-2, 200 pounds) had some snaps in spot duty last season, mostly in blowout wins, and was a full-time starter in the defensive secondary.

"He knows what to do with the ball and he's a good athlete," Lamb said. "We feel like it's just a matter of him getting some experience."

The Yellow Jackets return eight starters on offense. Returning at running back is Alex Urbano, who rushed for over 1,300 yards last

season and more than 500 in the playoffs. Tydus Curtis is an experienced receiver who will also get some snaps at running back. The Yellow Jackets biggest loss on offense was wide receiver Josh Barnes, who caught 94 passes for 1,056 yards and is bound for Air Force.

CB/WR Andrew Haynes is a two-way starter that broke his leg early last season. The defense returns six starters including NG Dustyn Harris. Brandon Blaylock, the team's place kicker last season, may handle all three kicking duties this fall. According to Lamb, there is a strong 10th-grade class that may help provide depth across the board.

"We have a really good senior class, kind of comparable to the class we had the year we won it. We have some great leaders in this class and they've done a tremendous job leading. I really don't have to say a whole lot to them."

As a program that is undefeated in region play since 2001, Calhoun gets some of its biggest challenges from Lamb's non-region scheduling. Calhoun opens up this fall with Class AAAA powers Ridgeland, Dalton and Carrollton. All three were playoff teams in 2012 as well as Yellow Jacket victims.

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PRINCE AVE. PREVIEW



Wolverines look to repeat finals berth

By Craig Sager II

This past February, renowned head coach Jeff Herron left Class AAAAAA-powerhouse Camden County to accept the position at PACA, and championship aspirations were immediately restored in Bogart.

"I told these guys right away I expect us to work together and compete for championships," said Herron.

Herron has had to adapt some of his coaching methods since arriving at the smaller school. Camden's program had more than twice the players, so operating practices with the same schedule and reps was unrealistic.

"I bring the same philosophies with me," said Herron, "but early in spring I could tell that we were going to be worn out if we didn't slow things down. There just aren't enough guys to run things like I have in the past."

Having a smaller group has allowed the coach to spend more individual time with each player and he has appreciated that new perk of his job.

Richard Bell returns to his role as the Wolverines' valued defensive coordinator this season.

The Wolverines have four key two-way starters to replace from 2012, including linemen Tyler Parrish and Sam Kinnon, and running back/defensive backs Carl Mattox and Bryce Huff.

The leader of the team looks to be Christian Payne and the linebacker/tight end has earned his praise from coach Herron.

"Christian is a great player, and the type that would have been a standout for me any year at Camden."

Zach Graham, Conner Sibley and Chandler Gray are all rising seniors that Herron believes are poised for breakout years.

"This is the biggest senior class Prince Avenue has ever had with the 20 guys," admitted Herron.

Prince Avenue Christian finished third place in Region 8 last year during the regular season, before making the program's first state championship game in the postseason. Eagle's Landing Christian put an end to the storied run with a 33-0 rout.

Herron plans to implement his same wing-T offense from Camden this season, which contains a fast tempo and heavy doses of no huddle attacks. The pace wears out opposing defenses, but the smaller roster at Herron's disposal will add challenges of its own for the head coach. Almost all of the starters will be two-way players, so preserving his guys throughout the game is going to require a busy offseason of conditioning.

In Herron's 23 years as a head coach he has a career winning percentage of .843 and four state titles. His titles came at Oconee County in 1999 and at Camden in 2003, 2008, and 2009.

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CHARLTON CO. PREVIEW



Indians look to continue playoffs streak

By Lauren Goldstein

Charlton County football is preparing for a winning season, after a 5-6 record last year. Even though they ended the season with a losing record, the Indians had a record of 3-3 in region play, which gave them a seat in the playoffs, one that they have managed to clinch every year since 1990.

The 2012 season was the first time in McWhorter's tenure at Charlton County (since 1990) that one of his teams succumbed to a losing record. The competitiveness within Region 2-A last season was at an all-time high. Only two of the seven schools had a winning region record – Irwin and Wilcox.

Charlton's schedule for 2013 is going to be difficult. The Region 2-A school will have to play schools such as Brantley County (1-AAA), Ware County (3-AAAAA), Bradwell Institute (3-AAAAA), and Fitzgerald (1-AA) that are much larger than them. Due to the location of Charlton County, the reason for playing these non-region schools are to not only bring a challenge, but also to cut down on travel time. Playing larger schools, McWhorter comments, is done "more now because of location and not having to travel across the state to play a game."

Last season, Charlton won its first game of the season against Brantley 20-0. The Indians beat Bradwell Institute 12-0, and the other two

non-region games were losses to Fitzgerald and Ware County.

The "Swamp War" between Charlton County and Clinch County still remains the biggest rivalry for both schools, which dates back almost 50 years. Similarities in size and location across the swamp from one another create a competitive environment and game for both schools seasonally. In last year's game, Charlton won 21-0. The year before that was a closer game ending in a 21-14 victory for the Indians.

Returning for another season for the Charlton Indians are seniors Trae Harrington, a quarterback, Julian Roberts, a wide receiver and defensive back, and junior linebacker T.J. Wilson. Last season, the Indians' offense scored an average of 18 points per game against and the defense allowed an average of 23 points per game. Charlton's top college prospects for the 2013 season are defensive lineman Will Gowen and quarterback Trae Harrington. The colleges that have shown interest in these players include Mercer, Shorter and Valdosta State.

The Indians last made the finals in 2009. The first game of the season will be played at Charlton on Aug. 30 against Brantley County.

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WILCOX CO. PREVIEW



Patriots set to extend 10-win streak

By Chris Nieman

For the upcoming 2013 high school football season, Wilcox County plans to continue pressing forward to not only earn the program's seventh consecutive 10-win season, but also to achieve its first Class A state title since the 2009 season.

The Patriots made it to the semifinals last season and Ledford firmly believes that he has a solid team that should do some damage in 2013.

"I think we have a good chance to have a pretty good team again," said Ledford.

During spring ball the team seemed to be in high spirits and this past spring practice reflected that according to Ledford.

"In the spring the kids had a really good attitude and I think we've got a chance to have another successful year," said Ledford.

Every year teams all over the country have to adapt and overcome when it comes to replacing talent. The Patriots will have to fill the shoes of quarterback Makail Grace who was voted as the Region 2 player of the year, as well as wide receiver and UNC Tar Heel signee Jonathan Howard, who was named Region 2 offensive player of the year.

Wilcox County is returning seven players on offense and five on defense. Ledford believes the team has a strong nucleus and familiarity with the spread offense due to the fact that the

team has all but two skill players returning.

An area where the Patriots should be a force to be reckoned with is in the trenches.

"One thing that makes me feel good about where we are is that we're pretty big and athletic up front on the offensive and defensive sides of the ball," said Ledford.

The offensive line as well as junior running back Maurice Edwards, who finished the 2012 campaign with 665 rushing yards, should relinquish the pressure on new sophomore quarterback Antwan Benjamin.

Senior defensive tackle Johnny Dwight measures 6-foot-3, 300 pounds and plays on both sides of the line. He is being recruited as a defensive tackle by schools such as Alabama, LSU, Georgia, Florida and North Carolina to name a few.

The Patriots tallied an impressive 5-1 record in their region last year and look to build on that for the upcoming season.

Wilcox County's natural rival is Turner County, which the Patriots edged 27-26 last season. Another region rival is Charlton County. The Pats have not forgotten about last season's loss to the Indians and look forward to redemption.

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GEORGE WALTON ACADEMY PREVIEW



Williams keys Bulldogs' title hopes

By Jennifer Ballard

George Walton Academy has made an appearance in the state playoffs every year since joining the GHSA in 2010.

Head coach Don Williams has been leading the Bulldogs for 19 years, and has won two GISA state titles (2003 and 2009, per GHSFHA.org).

The 2012 season fell short in the semifinals against Eagle's Landing Christian Academy, the eventual state champion.

"We lost a lot of lineman last year so we have some big holes to fill in the offensive and defensive line. We have some players that have to grow up fast. So the line of scrimmage will be a big concern for us early in the season," said Williams.

Even though there are spots that need to be filled, the Bulldogs are hiding a couple of weapons that should make the transition to the 2013 season seamless.

"I see our running backs as our biggest strengths on the team and our secondary and our kicking game. We brought back our kicker (Cole Fisher) who is one of the best around so we feel really good about that," said Williams.

Stanley Williams is going to be the glue that holds this team together offensively. Williams, a former UGA commitment, has received offers from multiple SEC and ACC

schools. The plan is to put the ball into this playmaking athlete's hands as many times per game as possible.

"He is a big part of the offense this season," said Williams. "He had over 2,000 yards last year with over 200 carries in the season. We are looking for Stanley to carry the ball up to 25 times a game and do a little bit of return game for us. Stanley is our go-to guy, our big-play guy. If we win, Stanley will have a good game."

As good as Williams is on the field, he is just as important to the team off it.

"Stanley is the leader of the team," said Williams. "He does a very good job with keeping everything in perspective by not putting himself above the team. He is the total package. He is a good person and a good player."

Williams will also bring back OL/LB Patrick Stewart with offers from Texas and North Carolina to name a few, and TE/DE Josh Holton.

Each game will be important to the Bulldogs, so starting off strong will be important in order to compete for a championship. The Bulldogs will open on the road with No. 7 First Presbyterian on Aug. 8.

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ECI PREVIEW



ECI eyes repeat in Class-A Public

By Craig Sager II

The Bulldogs capped off a 13-1 season with a 47-7 blowout over Dooly County in the Class-A Public state championship. Head coach Chris Kearson's team was dominant throughout the season, but really hit its top gear midway through. The same greatness seen towards the latter part of the championship run could be present in this team from the start. The offensive line that helped ECI score 62 rushing touchdowns last season remains almost completely in tact.

"We lost Gunnar Brown," said Kearson. "All the other starters will be back and they are one talented group."

Greg Percell was the leading rusher a season ago and will need to be replaced, but James Brown and Michael Sutton are proven playmakers. Brown rushed for 1,138 yards and 13 touchdowns last season, and Sutton, who is a rising junior, scored 12 touchdowns with 585 yards on the ground.

This abundance of returning starters is something Kearson can credit to a decision he made a few seasons ago to focus on developing team depth.

"Coming into this past year we worked extremely hard on improving and developing depth, and I think that really worked out well for us last year," explained the 2012 AJC Class A Coach of the Year.

"We were more energetic towards the end of the season and had everyone contributing at a

high level."

The depth rewarded the Bulldogs last season, and a long line of state championship experience now fills the roster for 2013.

Des Williams could be the next great defensive leader at ECI, and the rising junior comes off a breakout 2012 season. Williams had 96 tackles in his 13 starts and is still filling out his frame.

"Des has gotten huge since last season," said Kearson. "He is a space eater on the field and he is probably 6-foot, about 245 pounds right now."

Jakobie Boatright is next in line to take the starting quarterback job and brings explosiveness to the position. He had eight carries for 145 yards and two touchdowns. He caught three passes for 37 yards and found the end zone in two of them. His two completions went for 60 yards and a touchdown. Zach Cowart will also see action at quarterback and brings a skillset that differ from Boatright's.

ECI opens the season Aug. 24 at Georgia Southern University against Metter in Allen E. Paulson Stadium. A bye week after the opener sets up a battle with Washington County as the Bulldogs will have an opportunity to make an early statement by toppling one of Class AAA's best programs.

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LAMAR CO. PREVIEW



Trojans begin year two of Stephens era

By Brian Jones

Lamar County made history in 2011 when the Trojans won 12 games for the first time, but when head coach Jason Strickland left to go to Fitzgerald, there was no telling if the Trojans would repeat their success in 2012.

Former Tucker head coach Franklin Stephens was hired and the Trojans tallied another 12-win season only to lose to Calhoun in the state semifinals.

"We did not do a good job against the run," Stephens said about the loss to Calhoun. "But we also need to score more points."

The Trojans will not have a key member of the defense moving forward as All-State linebacker Trey Evans has graduated. Evans had 100 tackles last year.

Ray Lyons will try to fill the void left by Evans. Lyons recorded 69 tackles last season as well as two fumble recoveries. Lyons will be one of the defensive leaders along with defensive backs Quay Searcy and Lawrence Austin. Searcy notched 68 tackles and three interceptions last year while Austin tallied 70 tackles and two interceptions.

On offense, the Trojans have six starters returning including Lance Austin, who is Lawrence's twin brother. Lance threw for 666 yards

and seven touchdowns, and he also rushed for 800 yards and 11 touchdowns. Lawrence, who rushed for 1,206 yards and 13 touchdowns in 2012, will also be a key contributor on offense. On special teams, the Trojans could possibly have one of the best kickers in the state in Tyler Scandrett. The senior kicker made eight of his nine field goal attempts, including a 47-yarder in a 24-21 win over Benedictine in the second round of the state playoffs.

All the players that are coming back have the ability to lead the Trojans to the Class AA championship, but Stephens knows that his team has a lot of work to do in order to take the next step.

"We have to get bigger and stronger," Stephens said. "We also have to do the little things correctly."

The second year of the Stephens era will begin on Aug. 30 when the Trojans face Spalding. Last year's opener resulted in a 3-3 tie.

"We worry about each game as it comes," Stephens said. "That is something I started when I was at Tucker and, hopefully, we can get better each week."

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DREAM BEAT



McCoughtry, Dream off to heady start

By Joe Deighton

The Atlanta Dream started the 2013 WNBA season with four straight wins before finally losing to the New York Liberty 76-67 last Sunday. Despite the loss, Atlanta shares the top record in the league with Chicago through five games. One reason for the loss was the absence of head coach Fred Williams, who had to undergo a dental procedure and missed the game in New York.

Another major reason was the 36 percent shooting by the Dream. Star forward Angel McCoughtry scored 15 points but shot just 4-of-16 from the field. Atlanta lost the turnover battle, giving the ball up 19 times and produced a team total of 12 assists. Atlanta beat New York at home last Friday and had a 33-32 lead at the half on Sunday, but could not complete the two-game sweep in Madison Square Garden.

EARLY IMPRESSIONS ...

This season is starting to look a lot like 2012 for forward Angel McCoughtry. She was named WNBA Eastern Conference Player of the Week last week after leading Atlanta to a 3-0 start. McCoughtry averaged 20 points, 6.3 boards, 3.7 assists and 2.7 steals in three wins for the Dream. It was the eighth time in McCoughtry's five-year career that she received Player of the Week honors. Through five games this year, McCoughtry is leading the team in scoring, assists, offensive rebounds and steals. She leads the WNBA in steals with 3.4 per game.

CAT BURGLARS ...

In the first few games this season the Dream have caused turnovers with regularity. Stealing the ball seems to be a hallmark for

this defensive-oriented unit and it has helped the team to first place in the Eastern Conference. McCoughtry, Armintie Herrington and Sancho Lyttle rank 1-2-3 in the league in steals. McCoughtry leads with 3.4, followed by Herrington's 3.23 and Lyttle's 2.8. As a team, the Dream is averaging 15.2 steals per game. This is leading to easy transition baskets and easy wins. Each of the four wins this season has been by at least 10 points and that is due in large part to the tenacious defense by the entire team.

Head coach Fred Williams has been pleased with the effort on the defensive side of the floor.

"I thought again we came out in the beginning with a game plan of really trying to establish ourselves on the offensive end with our running," Williams told the team website after the win over New York. "We had 14 steals and some of that created offensive transition."

ON THE DOCKET ...

Three of Atlanta's first five games have been on the road, but for the next few weeks, the Dream will enjoy the comforts of home at Philips Arena. The Dream will play five of the next six games at home. The Dream has won both of the home games played this year and can add to their hot start when they entertain Seattle and Chicago this weekend.

Seattle has stumbled through its first three games this year with a 1-2 record and ranks fourth in the Western Conference. The Storm has been led by veteran guard Tanisha Wright's 12 points per game this year. The ninth-year guard is not known as a high-scorer, but has had to take on that role so far for Seattle. Forward Tina Thompson is an original WNBA player and is in her 17th season in the league. Despite her age, Thompson averages 11 points per game and can still get the job done against players like McCoughtry, who she will most likely be matched up with.

The Chicago Sky will come in to play the Dream on Sunday afternoon, boasting a 4-1 record. Many fans will be looking forward to seeing the second overall pick in the 2013 WNBA Draft, Elena Delle Donne. Delle Donne has started quickly in her rookie season, averaging 19.4 points per game along with 3.3 assists and 2.0 steals. Delle Donne plays even taller than her 6-foot-5 height and can score easily inside the paint. This will be the first of three games for the Dream against Chicago this year. Chicago looks like the favorite along with Atlanta to win the East.

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BULLDOG BEAT



Dawgs hire accomplished skipper

By Chris Nieman

After the resignation of longtime baseball coach David Perno, the University of Georgia became proactive in its pursuit to hire a new skipper. Georgia settled on Kent State head coach Scott Stricklin.

"We are thrilled to have Scott leading our baseball program," said Georgia athletics director Greg McGarity. "Scott has excelled in every phase of his career as a student-athlete at Kent State, in professional baseball, as an assistant coach at Vanderbilt and Georgia Tech, and as a head coach at Kent State for the past nine years. At every step of the search process, his name was consistently mentioned as a tremendous candidate, and we are so happy to have Scott provide the leadership and direction for our program."

Stricklin is excited about becoming the 25th head baseball coach in UGA history.

"My family and I are excited to be Georgia Bulldogs," said Stricklin. "It's been a dream to coach in the Southeastern Conference, and I look forward to moving my family to Athens and getting started on the recruiting trail and building on the tradition of Georgia Baseball. I feel the Georgia Bulldogs can be a power in the SEC and a national power. I want to thank Greg McGarity for giving me this opportunity. Also, I want to thank current

Kent State athletic director Joel Nielsen and former athletic director Laing Kennedy for the confidence and support they showed for the Kent State baseball program over the last nine years."

FACILITY UPGRADES ...

Only two days after the 2013 campaign concluded, McGarity decided it was time that the baseball facilities needed a makeover. McGarity desires for his new coach to have a state-of-the-art facility at Foley Field. The infield and outfield grasses were dug up and replaced. There is also an overall plan to upgrade and give the press box seats and batting cages.

DAWGS DRAFTED ...

On day one of the 2013 MLB draft, senior Kyle Farmer was chosen by the Los Angeles Dodgers with the 244th pick in the eighth round as a catcher rather than his usual college position of shortstop.

On day two, senior infielder Curt Powell was selected by the Detroit Tigers with the No. 636 pick in Round 21 and junior pitcher Patrick Boling was chosen by the Washington Nationals in Round 32 with the No. 976 selection.

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TECH BUZZ



Baseball season ends in Nashville

By Ryan Caiafa

After dropping its first NCAA Regional game to Illinois, the Georgia Tech baseball team knew an inspired run would be needed for them to have a shot at advancing to the Super Regional round. The Jackets nearly pulled off the improbable as they won three straight against ETSU, Illinois and Vanderbilt to earn a berth in the regional championship game against the hosting Commodores.

Unfortunately for Tech, the 5-0 performance from the previous day against Vanderbilt wasn't able to be recreated as they fell 7-1 in the season finale. Buck Farmer, who was sent to the mound after throwing 58 pitches in the team's rain-shortened win over ETSU two days prior, showed fatigue early as Vanderbilt tagged him for two runs on five hits, ending his day after four innings. The short-handed offense, which was without Sam Dove and Daniel Palka for both games against the Commodores, couldn't cash in on multiple scoring opportunities, which turned out to be the difference maker as Vanderbilt took advantage. Tech capped its roller coaster of a season with a final record of 37-27.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS ...

Following the team's final game of the season, the MLB Draft began just days later

with seven Jackets being selected. Daniel Palka was the first to go as he was taken by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the third round with the 88th pick. Palka, a first-team All-ACC member, led the conference with 17 home runs this season.

Zane Evans was taken in the fourth round by the Kansas City Royals. Evans led the team with a .361 batting average and was tied for the lead in RBIs with 66. The team's ace on the mound throughout the season, Buck Farmer, was taken in the fifth round by the Detroit Tigers. Farmer finished his senior year with a 9-5 record and a 2.78 ERA. Kyle Wren, the son of Braves GM Frank Wren, was taken by the Braves in the eighth round. Brandon Thomas was selected by the New York Yankees with the next pick in the eighth round. Sam Dove and Matthew Grimes were both taken by the Philadelphia Phillies in the 14th and 31st rounds respectively.

Two Tech commits, Josh Hart, taken by the Baltimore Orioles in the second round, and Terry McClure, selected by the Colorado Rockies in the eighth round, brought the total to seven Jackets draftees.

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PANTHER PROWL



Pair of Panther athletes honored

By Jay Underwood

Panthers receiver Albert Wilson was named to the College Football Performance Awards Wide Receiver Trophy watch list. Last season, Wilson led the team in receiving with 947 yards on 48 receptions. Those numbers were good enough to earn him all-conference honors and praise as one of the best receivers in the Colonial Athletic Association.

Even with the move to the Sun Belt this season, he is still expected to be a very productive player and a leader for his Panthers as well as in the conference. This is what landed him on Phil Steele's All-Sun Belt second team at receiver as well as at return specialist. These are preseason accolades and don't always translate to the field, but the senior wide receiver has the track record to merit such high acclaim.

Wilson is also the all-time leader in receiving yards in Georgia State history with 2,013 yards and 15 touchdowns on 104 receptions. He is the definition of big-play threat as evidenced by his 19.4 yards-per-catch average and 14 of his 15 touchdowns having spanned more than 25 yards. Seven of those covered more than 50 yards.

He also made a name for himself returning the football where he averaged 25.9 yards per return last season, earning him co-Special

Teams Player of the Year honors in the Colonial Athletic Association.

ON THE DIAMOND ...

Centerfielder Josh Merrigan earned yet another honor this week. Having already been named to the Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American team, he added a second-team selection to the National College Baseball Writers Association Freshman All-American team.

These honors stem from the most productive season ever by a freshman at Georgia State. He led the Panthers offense that ranked third nationally in batting average and fifth in runs per game. From the leadoff spot, Merrigan hit for a .353 average and was also efficient on the base paths going 12-for-12 on stolen base attempts this season.

By doing his job and getting on base, the centerfielder also lead the team in runs scored with 52. Even out of the leadoff spot in the order he was able to drive in 36 runs, ranking him third on the team. All of these numbers prove that he deserved to be the Colonial Athletic Association Rookie of the Year this season, making him the first Panther to ever win the award.

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OWL OUTLOOK



Janas leads group of Owls draftees

By Brian Jones

The baseball team started the season strong and finished the season stronger as KSU made an appearance in the Atlantic Sun Championship game. And because of that, Major League scouts were taking a closer look at the Owls before the MLB Draft which was held this past weekend.

There were a few Owls that were selected in the draft and the first player to be selected was pitcher Stephen Janas who was taken by the Atlanta Braves in the sixth round.

Janas, who is originally from Marietta, posted a 1.14 ERA with a 9-1 record. He was a unanimous All-Atlantic Sun selection after posting a team-best 55 strikeouts and giving up only 10 earned runs in 78 innings. Janas is a finalist for the College Baseball Hall of Fame National Pitcher of the Year Award and holds the fifth lowest ERA in the nation.

After Janas was selected, three Owls were taken on the third day of the draft. Kevin McCoy was selected in the 24th round by the Seattle Mariners, Alan Busenitz was chosen in the 25th round by the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim and Travis Dean was chosen in the 26th round by the Texas Rangers.

With the four draft choices, the Owls tied Florida Gulf Coast for the most draft picks by one team in the Atlantic Sun Conference.

MR. ALL AMERICAN ...

Freshman shortstop Kal Simmons was not taken in the MLB draft, but it was still a good week for him as he was named to the Freshman All-American Team by the Collegiate Baseball Newspaper.

Simmons started in 52 games this season and posted a .289 batting average and a .929 fielding percentage.

"Kal had a tremendous year for us," head coach Mike Sansing told Ksuowls.com. "He did a great job for the team both offensively and defensively."

Simmons also posted 11 doubles, 27 RBIs and a .348 slugging percentage.

NEW LACROSSE COACH ...

The lacrosse team made a coaching move as Krista Bentolila was named an assistant coach on Monday. Bentolila has spent the last two seasons as an assistant coach at Queens University of Charlotte.

"I am extremely excited about the addition of Kris to our coaching staff," head coach Kristina Llanes told Ksuowls.com. "Having worked with her previously, I know she will be what our program needs."

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HAWKS HAVEN



Hawks tamper with Howard, Paul

By Ricky Dimon

Dwight Howard and Chris Paul in Hawks uniforms sounds pretty good. In fact, it sounds a little bit too good to team management.

The Hawks were fined an undisclosed amount on Monday for violating the team's NBA anti-tampering policy. It was an infraction that stemmed from letters written to potential season-ticket buyers expressing the possibility of landing both Howard and Paul via free agency this summer. Unfortunately for Atlanta (and two other offending teams, including the Houston Rockets), those two all-stars are still under contract with their respective Los Angeles franchises.

While the violations likely began in March, one of the letters was first obtained by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* on June 3. Subject line: "Hot New Player news: Chris Paul and Dwight Howard." Opening statement: "The buzz around our offseason is more than heating up. With massive cap space, 4 draft picks, and free agency rapidly approaching, we sit in the best position in the NBA. Player interest is skyrocketing as the possibilities of landing Chris Paul & Dwight Howard become more and more of a reality."

NEWS AND NOTES ...

The Hawks on Monday announced that

they will hire former University of Missouri head coach Quin Snyder to an assistant position under Mike Budenholzer. Snyder, 46, previously held similar positions in the NBA with both the Los Angeles Clippers and the Los Angeles Lakers. He most recently worked as an assistant in the Russian Professional Basketball League. Snyder's link to Atlanta is that he played with general manager Danny Ferry at Duke in the 1980s.

Although the Hawks do not disclose potential draftees whom they work out, Twitter has come to the rescue in that department. According to a post last Friday by Georgia Tech head coach Brian Gregory, former Yellow Jacket Mfon Udofia had a workout with the team as the point guard hopes to take his talents to the next level. Kyle Weems of Missouri State, the 2011 Missouri Valley Conference Player of the Year, tweeted last Thursday that he worked out with Atlanta.

Mookie Blaylock turned himself into police on Monday to face charges for a May 31 head-on car wreck that killed a 40-year-old mother of five. The former Hawks point guard, who has a history of DUIs, appeared in court on Tuesday and bond was set at \$250,000.

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FALCONS BEAT



Position battles await in mini-camp

By Craig Sager II

Three weeks of OTA's close, and the intensity cranks up with mini-camp next up on the calendar. Position battles within the offensive line and secondary created the more intriguing storylines during OTA's. The offensive line is in an open competition for the right guard and right tackle position and Philip Keith Manley, Garrett Reynolds and Lamar Holmes are the leading candidates. Todd McClure's retirement forced Peter Konz from right guard to center this year and the transition has gone smoothly.

"I think Peter's done a great job," said Matt Ryan. "We got to work together a lot last year, maybe not so much in terms of game time, but on the practice field a lot."

Defensively, rookie cornerbacks Desmond Trufant and Robert Alford are in a competition with Dominique Franks and Robert McClain for the second and third cornerback jobs.

"He's an athletic kid, that's for sure," said Ryan about Trufant. "He moves pretty well, that's probably the first thing I'm noticing."

FALCONS 101 ...

The brand-new playbook and terminology has been a lot for Steven Jackson to digest

in such a short period of time, but his focus and veteran experience has helped him adapt quickly.

"This offense has been together for a long time so they are probably moving a lot faster than other teams are moving at this time of year," explained Jackson. "That just talks to the chemistry and what Thomas (Dimitroff) has done here building this team along with (Mike Smith). I just have to catch up, but it's really helping me to stay on top of my playbook."

With plenty of offensive weapons, Jackson has shown to be versatile and flawlessly complement the system.

"The thing I like about Steven is that Steven is not just a running back, he's a receiving back as well, so he gives us a lot of flexibility in our personnel groupings. Whether or not we are putting out a run or a pass grouping, they [defenses] won't be able to tell," said Smith.

Smith and the staff will spend the rest of the offseason feeding the playbook to Jackson. Smith and offensive coordinator Dirk Koetter are careful about not wearing down the running backs in the preseason, so it may be until week 1 at New Orleans when Jackson is finally unleashed.

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CHOP SHOP



Beachy's return causes welcome problem

By Sean Conway

The Braves are sitting pretty, leading the National League East division comfortably heading into Father's Day weekend. The rival Washington Nationals are banged up with nagging injuries to pitcher Stephen Strasburg and outfielder Bryce Harper. And, an elephant is about to enter the Braves' clubhouse in the form of Brandon Beachy.

Beachy, a 6-foot-3, 215-pound right-handed starter is recovering from "Tommy John" ligament repair surgery will rejoin the team on Tuesday to face the Mets in New York.

The Braves current starting rotation of Tim Hudson, Mike Minor, Paul Maholm, Kris Medlen and Julio Teheran are pitching very well and no starter has missed his turn in 2013. Braves fans on blogs, and sports talk radio are creating all sorts of theories as to what will happen upon Beachy's imminent return. Before the injury, Beachy was dominant, averaging over six innings a start and a 2.00 ERA when he popped the elbow.

The Braves' abundance of talent in the starting rotation should take care of itself, though. One starter will likely eventually suffer an injury and land on the disabled list, that's just Murphy's (not Dale Murphy's) Law of baseball. If somehow, every starter stayed healthy, it becomes Frank Wren's issue.

What fans often forget is that Gonzalez

isn't trying to figure out a double-switch against the lowly Miami Marlins in April. Wren will eventually solve the headache of the having to manage six pitchers in a five-man rotation for Gonzalez.

Assuming there are no injuries in the rotation in the next six weeks, Maholm is an attractive trade candidate as a proven veteran in the last year of his contract. Hudson has the right of a trade refusal due to his status as a 10-year player with five years service with the Braves. If somehow one of the two vets do leave the Braves, their trade value will be above market.

Back to the newest "Young Guns." Here's what's scary: According to Baseball-Reference.com, the Braves control Medlen's rights through 2016, Beachy (2017), Minor (2018) and Teheran (2019). Short-term options include ramping-up Beachy slowly since he's coming off surgery, shuffling Teheran to the bullpen in September --he's never pitched above 175 innings in a season. Moving Medlen to the bullpen, where he has excelled, is also a temporary elixir.

The Braves have an abundance pitching, and thanks to baseball's salary structure, it's a welcome problem.

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SILVERBACKS BEAT



Silverbacks sprint out to fast start

By Donnell Suggs

The Atlanta Silverbacks of the North American Soccer League (NASL) are in second place overall, a game behind the Carolina Railhawks with an overall record of 4-2-2 (wins-losses-draws) while amassing an impressive 3-1-1 record at home. Unlike most professional soccer teams, the Silverbacks play in a soccer-specific stadium, Atlanta Silverbacks Park, that regularly sells out its 5,000 seats. The team's exciting play and winning ways have all helped the club become a must-see for the soccer fans of the city, and there are plenty of them here. According to Georgia Soccer, the game's state-recognized governing body, over 80,000 children and adults play soccer in Georgia.

TOP BRASS ...

The Silverbacks coaching staff, in particular head coach Brian Haynes, believe in an aggressive attacking style that has produced the second-most goals in league play (14) as well as the most shots taken (117) and shots on goal (47) after eight games played. There a clear method to his madness.

"That comes from the fact that we play an offensively aggressive brand of soccer," said Haynes. "We want to play the type of

game that fans want to come back to see." He continued, "Winning is the ultimate goal. If it happens as a result of our style of play, all the more better."

Haynes comes from a soccer background, having played organized soccer from the age of 5 on. Born and raised on the island of Trinidad and Tobago, he migrated to the states to follow his boyhood dream of playing professional soccer and obtaining a college degree. First at Erskine College in South Carolina where he was a three time All-American, then for the Atlanta Attack of the Indoor Soccer League, then in 1996 with Major League Soccer's FC Dallas franchise. Haynes played for FC Dallas for five years before working as an assistant coach for five more before moving on to the Houston Dynamo to take over their youth wing.

Adding to the solid results thus far this season has been the play of Danny Barrera and Ruben Luna. The two young forwards (only one player currently on the roster is over the age of 30) are some of the players the club is working to move on to bigger things. Barrera is third in the league in assists while Luna is tied for second with four goals.

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