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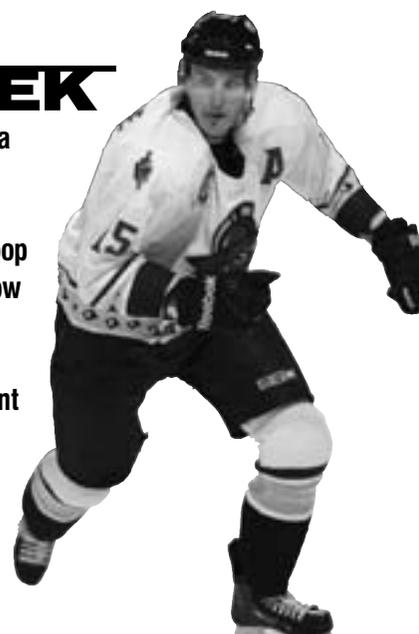
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**CAN'T MISS  
THIS WEEK**

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- 5** Josh Bagriansky looks at the four NCAA hoop programs in the metro area and notices how they are all in some type of transition.
- 7** Fletcher Proctor breaks down the current Regions Directors Cup standings.
- 9** On this page, you can find our preseason high school hoops polls. Check them out and let us know what you think!

**TEAM SCOOP  
AND VOICES**

*COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI  
 COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF GA TECH ATHLETICS, STEPHEN  
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**SHOT OF THE  
WEEK...**

**COACH SPEAK:** Tech coach Paul Johnson argues with an official during the Yellow Jackets game with Virginia Tech on Nov. 10. A personal foul call on Tech's Jeremiah Attaochu changed the complexion of the game.

*Photo courtesy of Jon Barash.*

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# THE FLETCH



## Rush Propst's Packers coming to town

By Fletcher Proctor



The postseason kicks into high gear this week as the second round will feature two great games on the GPB family of networks. Just one week after GPB Sports gave you three games including an amazing performance from ML King, a domination by Walton and Kell ending Marist's home dominance, GPB will be at it again for round two.

GPB TV has an incredible Atlanta vs. South Georgia matchup as North Gwinnett hosts Colquitt County, while GPB.org has Lassiter looking to knock off another highly seeded opponent in McEachern. This will be North Gwinnett's third appearance on GPB TV and fourth time on GPB this year, while Rush Propst and the Packers will make their first appearance on GPB TV since last year's AAAA finals in the Georgia Dome. The Packers are 1-2 this season on the GPB.org webcast.

Meanwhile, Eddie Printz and the rest of the loaded Lassiter Trojans managed to spring the upset in overtime of No. 1 seed Alpharetta and now head to McEachern to face a ranked Indians squad. GPB.org viewers will get to see a matchup of two of the top quarterbacks in the state with Printz and McEachern's Trent Thompson.

### GET ON THE BUS ...

I was disgusted listening to sports talk

radio on Monday after Matt Ryan threw for a pair of scores and more than 350 yards in a loss to Drew Brees and the Saints. Ryan passed for more yards than Brees and, if not for several drops, would have blown him out of the water more than he did. Still, though, people are saying that the Falcons "still don't have a quarterback," or that he "throws too many interceptions."

Get on the bus already, people. Matt Ryan is a high-quality quarterback who is putting this team in a position to make the playoffs in back-to-back season for the first time in franchise history. Ryan has already led the team to three straight winning seasons in his three years in the league with a fourth straight season well within striking range. I am not certain who these Ryan-haters want under center...wait I DO know who they want.

They want a guy with fewer touchdowns and MORE interceptions who has led his team to a 3-6 record this year despite leading a "Dream Team" up in Philadelphia. I don't get why people aren't embracing Ryan. I guess I never will understand why Falcons "fans" would rather see an injury-prone guy under center for 11 games a year over a guy who should be out right now with a broken ankle, but is instead out-playing Brees.

### GOING FOR IT ...

The Falcons fell to the Saints in overtime and many folks on local sports talk radio questioned Mike Smith's decision to go for it in overtime deep in his own territory. On ESPN's Grantland, however, it was interesting to see Bill Barnwell give Smith credit for his gusto on a "bold decision."

"If there were ever going to be a situation that called for (going for it on fourth-and-very-short from your own 29-yard line in overtime), this would be it," said Barnwell in his column that focused on "some of the week's braver and more appealing decisions." Barnwell pointed out that the Saints had the worst run defense in football, allowing teams to succeed "80 percent of the time in power situation," which was the third-worst rate in football. Barnwell also noted that the Falcons had already converted four such situations earlier in the game, all "without much difficulty."

Barnwell did question the play selection as did the guys from 680 The Fan, but Barnwell wasn't killing Smith like some of the other football experts and callers did the morning after. The crew from Mayhem in the AM went so far to say that Smith didn't trust his defense to stop Brees yet again and he didn't trust his special teams. Earlier this season, Nick Cellini and Chris Domino predicted that the Falcons punter Matt Boshier would cost the Falcons a game. I liked going for it because I will agree with the age-old adage that if you cannot get a few inches in crunch time, you don't deserve to win.

I found it interesting that 790 The Zone's Mayhem in the AM Producer and sometimes fill-in sports update guy John Newton decided to weigh in recently (and well after the fact) on Mark Richt hugging his son twice on CBS's telecast of the Georgia/Florida game in Jacksonville. Apparently this show of emotion by the normally stoic coach was a bit much for Newton. Really? You have a problem with it? Are you serious? He wasn't parading his son out there and looking for the camera before hugging him. And what was Richt supposed to do when his son approached him for a hug after a big win for Richt and Georgia, deny the hug? Dave Archer from Archer & Bell was flabbergasted after Mike Bell told him of Newton's stance a few days later. Newton may want to stick to producing and occasionally filling in on the updates. You want to give

a controversial take on something, cool. But picking on a guy for hugging his son?

### MADE FOR TV ...

One of the afternoon drive radio hosts noted that last week's Georgia Tech/Virginia Tech game is what Georgia Tech football was made for. I cannot agree more. When you turn on your television and see the Atlanta skyline lit up behind Bobby Dodd Stadium, you cannot help but get goosebumps. The scene is cool with the city lights welcoming the college football world to Atlanta. The point was made that the skyline is so much prettier at night opposed to a random 12:30 kickoff on Saturday morning when folks aren't necessarily jumping to fill up the stands. The crowd and "buzz" at night is really something. It ALMOST makes me wish I had gone to Georgia Tech. Almost. After I turned on CBS live from Athens, Georgia, on Saturday afternoon to see Sanford Stadium in a full-froth as the SEC East title was in play, I knew that the Atlanta nighttime skyline is great for Thursday, but give me SEC football on a Saturday.

Photo courtesy of Colquitt Co. HS. Proctor can be reached at [fproctor@scoreatl.com](mailto:fproctor@scoreatl.com).

## CAN YOU BELIEVE... ...HE SAID THAT?

*"I'd have gone for it. I'd go for it again. I might call a different play the next time, but I find no fault with Mike Smith's reasoning."*

That was the AJC's Mark Bradley agreeing with me over Falcons coach Mike Smith going for it on fourth down in overtime against the Saints. I cannot fault the coach for rolling the dice, and isn't it nicer to have a coach that wants to gamble to try and get his team a victory over a coach that just sits back and plays conservative, boring by-the-book football?



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# PEACH STATE HOOPS



## Changes a-plenty at area college programs

By Josh Bagriansky



“In transition.” That’s a phrase you’d use for several college hoops programs across the Peach State this year. Whether it be breaking in a new coach or having to replace a pair of stars, there are plenty of changes expected in Athens, Atlanta and even Kennesaw.

### TEACHING TECH ...

Last year was not a good one at Georgia Tech. The team experienced a horrid season, finishing a disappointing 5-11 in the ACC and 13-18 overall amid constant pressure on then-head coach Paul Hewitt. When the smoke cleared, Hewitt was out of a job, and Tech looked down an unlikely path to replace him. Brian Gregory, who compiled a 174-94 record and two NCAA Tournament appearances at Dayton, takes on the job of rebuilding the program.

Things won’t be easy for Tech, especially with last year’s leading scorer Iman Shumpert leaving early for the NBA. But Gregory’s offense, which is based around getting good shots up quickly, might be hard to defend.

“The one thing I’ve found in teaching that system is guys love to play it, but they don’t

realize how difficult it is to do because you have to be committed every time,” Gregory said. “All five guys have to be committed. If one guy isn’t fulfilling his job description, it will affect the other four.”

Gregory does have a little bit to play with in his first season. Glen Rice Jr. seems like a perfect fit for his system if he can become more consistent, and Mfon Udofia could be a decent backcourt mate although the highly-touted Miller Grove product struggled in his first two seasons.

The Gregory hire may have surprised some, but the 44-year old has also learned from the best, coaching under Michigan State head coach Tom Izzo twice in the past.

“He can have discipline yet still be a player’s coach,” Izzo said. “The hours he is going to work, that’s the only area I can say for sure that he’s No. 1. No one can outwork him. At the end of the day that’s the most important thing. Do you work your way through the good times, the bad times, the in-between times?”

### THE FOX HOUNDS ...

At the University of Georgia, there are

plenty of new faces to go around this season. Gone are last year’s top two leading scorers, high-flier Travis Leslie and silky-smooth big man Trey Thompkins. Both bolted early for the NBA after leading the Dawgs to the NCAA Tournament last year.

A slew of young players will try and continue the program’s progress under head coach Mark Fox. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope, the No. 1 high school player in the state last season, certainly has the most pressure on his back to do so. The former Greenville Patriot averaged 28.2 points and five assists in high school. A do-it-all shooting guard, the sharp-shooter has finished in double digits in each of the Bulldogs’ first two games. And the combination of he and senior Dustin Ware (44 percent from outside last year) could be a deadly one-two punch from deep.

While everyone hopes for continued improvement from Caldwell-Pope, Fox points to the freshman’s attitude as a reason to expect him to do just that.

“He has come in with the attitude that he has joined our team, not that the team has joined him,” Fox said. “He’s very coachable and listens to everything I say, while paying great attention to detail, and the fact that he’s very vocal and very talented and really has a chance at a great future.”

The x-factor might be Marcus Thornton. The uber-athletic sophomore set foot on campus last year as Mark Fox’s most-prized recruit after starring at Westlake, but was mainly a disappointment last season, struggling on both ends of the floor and falling out of the rotation altogether late in the season.

“I definitely have to step up in terms of a leadership role,” he said. “Donte (Williams) and I are really the only experienced guys in the frontcourt, including a couple of other people. But we just have to lead by example and try to get the young guys to do the right things and play the right way early on.”

Clearly, there are plenty of questions about the Bulldogs this year. But with plenty of young talent to go around, there could be some more very positive answers.

### PANTHERS PROWLING ...

Ron Hunter makes it two new head coaches in downtown Atlanta this year. The former IUPUI head coach oversaw a program that was in the NAIA ranks when he took over, and then had them finishing .500 or above in the Summit League over nine of the past 10 seasons.

Hunter became the Panthers’ head man and implemented plenty of changes, including a switch to a faster-paced offense that forces defenses into mistakes resulting in open looks.

“We want to score more points than our opponents, and we will do that,” Hunter said. “We want to take more shot attempts than our opponents and we will do that. We want to shoot more free throws than our opponents, and we will do that, but we want to play at such a pace that everyone understands we are playing at a fast pace. We will wear our opponents down and not wear us down.”

### PREACHIN’ PRESTON ...

The Kennesaw State Owls are looking to improve on last season’s dreadful 8-23 record, which saw them lose to Division III LaGrange in preseason, and then finished 6-14 in the Atlantic Sun. They’re picked to finish 11th out of 12 teams this year. Meanwhile, rising sophomore Markeith Cummings, who averaged 17.4 points per game last season, was suspended by first-year head coach Lewis Preston.

The suspension puts the program in a tight spot, but at least the Owls can take solace in the fact that they have a fully committed man leading the way.

“The thing that I have to do is be patient, and the reason is, because it’s a process,” Preston said. “Sometimes I can jump ahead of myself. All the first-year coaches can come back and tell you that. It was a process to get there, and the beautiful thing about that process is you got to understand you’re going to have some tough days. You’re going to have great days. You can’t get too high on the highs, and you can’t get too low on the lows.”

*Photo courtesy of Tom McConnell. Bagriansky can be reached at jbagriansky@scoreatl.com.*

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# WHOS HOT

## THUMBS UP TO ROOKIE STARS



### Craig Kimbrel

It's official the Alabama native has begun collecting post-season hardware after a record-breaking rookie year. Kimbrel set a major league record for saves by a rookie with 46 and struck out 27 batters in just 77 innings. Teammate Freddie Freeman finished a distant second in the baseball writers' vote.

### Aaron Murray

The Georgia quarterback's improved play has helped the Bulldogs turn their season around. Over the last four games (including wins against Florida and Auburn), the sophomore has thrown 14 touchdowns and just two interceptions.

### Harry Douglas

With Julio Jones sidelined again Sunday in the Falcons' 26-23 loss to the Saints, HD made the most of the opportunity. He led the team with eight receptions for 133 yards. On the drive that sent the game into overtime, he had three grabs for 86 yards.

### Weems' penalties

A special teams player's job requirements are to help their team in the battle of field position. Eric Weems did the opposite on Sunday for the Falcons. He was lost, getting penalized for unnecessary roughness on a punt he didn't return and was later flagged for running into the Saints' punt return man.

### Tech's crash and slow burn

The Yellow Jackets started out perfect at 6-0 (with a No. 12 ranking) but have now lost the last three of four games. The prospects of an ACC championship game and meaningful bowl game have faded away. Their lone win in the past month, against then ranked No. 5 Clemson, points to chronic inconsistency.

### Our former hockey team

It's really too bad hockey didn't work out in Atlanta, but let's be realistic. Here are a couple brain teasers. In what division and conference does the team formerly known as the Thrashers play? Can you even name the team's new city or new nickname? Did you know they had a new nickname?



# WHOS NOT

## THUMBS DOWN TO THE NHL

# SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

- 1** **TAME THE CATS:** The Georgia Bulldogs play their regular season finale Saturday against Kentucky in Athens. If the Dawgs win, they will clinch the SEC East and will play at the Georgia Dome on Dec. 3 for the SEC Championship. A loss to the Cats and South Carolina would go to the Dome. Head coach Mark Richt has done a great job getting his players focused after losing their first two games of the season. So does that mean he is off the hot seat?
- 2** **BOUNCE BACK:** After a tough loss to Virginia Tech, the Yellow Jackets will look to get back on the winning track with a win against Duke on Saturday. The Blue Devils are much improved from last year, but it's a game Tech should win. Even if they can't play for the conference title, the Jackets can still win 10 games this season which is something they have not done often.
- 3** **TITANIC SUNDAY:** The Falcons lost to the Saints last week, but they are not out of the NFC South race yet. Atlanta hopes to gain a half game on the Saints as they face the Tennessee Titans at the Georgia Dome on Sunday. This is a game the Falcons have to win because being 6-4 is a lot better than 5-5. If they play their game, the Falcons should come away with an easy win and move on to Minnesota.
- 4** **TOP ROOKIE:** It's official. In the race for NL Rookie of the Year, Craig Kimbrel edged teammate Freddie Freeman for the honor. Kimbrel had an amazing season in striking out 127 batters, earned an ERA of 2.10 and tallied a rookie-record 46 saves. Freeman finished in second place, which makes it the first time since 1989 two teammates finished in the top two spots.
- 5** **WE READY:** The second round of the high school football playoffs will take place this weekend, and Score as well as GPB will bring you wall-to-wall action. The TV game will pit Colquitt County vs. North Gwinnett at 8 p.m. and the web game will be between Lassiter and McEachern at 7:30 p.m. You can watch both games online at GPB.org/sports.

# CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY SCOTT ST. LIFER

- 1989** Last time a team finished with the top-two finishers in the Rookie of the Year race before Craig Kimbrel and Freddie Freeman of the Braves
- 27** Aaron Murray's current amount of touchdown passes thus far breaking Matthew Stafford's school record of 25.
- 12:00** Kickoff time for the Tech-Georgia game in Atlanta
- 5** Games Georgia Tech's men's basketball team will play at the Arena at Gwinnett
- 40:55** Georgia's time of possession against Auburn
- 32** First-place votes Craig Kimbrel received for Rookie of the Year, a unanimous decision
- 7** Consecutive wins Georgia Tech has over Duke entering Saturday's game
- 21** Hawks games already cancelled due to the lockout
- 195** Total yards allowed by Georgia's fourth-rated defense against Auburn
- 10** Interceptions thrown by Matt Ryan this season, one more than last year's total

# TRIVIA QUESTION

**Craig Kimbrel was awarded the NL Rookie of the year honor this week. Four other Atlanta Braves have also captured the honor - can you name them?**

**Answer on Page 14**

# SANITY AT LAST

*"I'm a little shocked. I thought we were prepared. We made too many mistakes. They are a good team, but we played poorly."*

- Auburn wide receiver Emory Blake after his team's 45-7 loss at Georgia.

# MY TWO CENTS

Twitter is awesome. I love it. Reading what celebrities, famous athletes, sportswriters and friends have to say about something almost simultaneously is about as cool as it gets. When you log on, you may see what your brother thought about the hit Quintavious Harrow put on that poor Auburn kick returner. Then, a second later, Jeff Schultz will tweet about the same hit. And if you follow the right people, you may read a tweet by either Harrow or the kick returner later that night.

Where else can you communicate with people in such an all-encompassing manner? Saturday, while I was covering the Georgia-Auburn game in Sanford Stadium, I was a tweeting machine. There were so many interesting stats from the

game that I almost didn't have enough time to fire them all off before the game ended.

And apparently some of our @scoreatlanta followers liked them, because several tweets got "re-tweeted." I wrote one about UGA's wide receiving corps and none other than Tavarres King, UGA WR, re-tweeted it later that night.

If you are a tweeter, check us out during any major Atlanta sporting event. We're likely to have someone tweeting about it. If you aren't on twitter, you're missing out. Join the party! After you sign up, and you should sign up, follow us at @scoreatlanta.

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# SCORE

PREP



**RAIDERS IN THE RACE**



**WOLVES LEAD THE PACK**

# REGIONS DIRECTORS CUP STANDINGS

## Familiar faces atop early rankings

By Fletcher Proctor

Several state titles have already been decided and six programs took home cheerleading crowns over the weekend. With only football remaining before the end of the fall sports season, the Regions Directors Cup standings have been updated and some familiar names sit at the top.

In Class AAAAA, Brookwood, last year's overall winner, is currently the leader while Harrison is atop the girls standings in AAAAA after winning that category one year ago. Mill Creek is in second place overall but could jump the Broncos thanks to its victory in the cheerleading championships. The Norcross boys figure to get a boost come winter, but the Blue Devils may already be looking up with Brookwood just 10 points back entering the football playoffs. The Broncos could make a serious run, and the Walton boys are also lurking. Walton, after winning the girls volleyball

title, appears ready to battle Lassiter, Brookwood and Harrison all year long. Peachtree Ridge fell short of winning the co-ed cheerleading championship, finishing in third place.

### HAUGHTY HOUNDS ...

In AAAAA, Pope is on top of the overall standings with Marist leading the boys category and Whitewater on top in the girls category. Whitewater was runner-up in both softball and volleyball. Meanwhile, Northgate sits in 16th place overall with its softball title, and the Lady Vikings will receive a boost after winning their fifth straight cheerleading championship. Marist has won the AAAAA overall title the last 11 seasons while winning the AAA crown in 1999-2000 school year. Marist's surprising loss in the first round of the football playoffs could allow the Greyhounds to stretch its lead out a

bit for the overall lead after Pope finished runner-up to the War Eagles one year ago. The two schools tied for the boys championship. Flowery Branch also has a shot at leading the boys race with a state title run after finishing in 17th place last year.

### LOFTY LIONS ...

Seeing St. Pius X atop the AAA overall standings isn't much of a surprise, but Allatoona leads the girls category in AAA. The Golden Lions are on top in the boys standings and sits second in the girls. The race in AAA is the closest overall race with St. Pius X leading by just five points. With both football teams competing for a state title thanks to region championships, the race will heat up as the temperature drops.

### TITANS TOPS ...

Blessed Trinity leads the overall and the girls categories in Class AA with Lovett claiming the other spot. The Buford Wolves should be an interesting school to watch. The softball team has already won a state title and the football team doesn't appear to be losing anytime

soon in the playoffs. Right now Buford sits in 11th place overall, but a state crown in football could move the Wolves closer to Blessed Trinity. Lovett currently leads the boys race, but Blessed Trinity's victory in the first round could help the Titans catch up and pass the Lions.

### WOLVES WINNING ...

Just because Wesleyan competes in the state's smallest classification doesn't mean the Wolves' achievements are small. In fact, Wesleyan has claimed the last three Class A overall Directors Cups, and this year has a healthy lead over Athens Academy for the overall title. Wesleyan and First Presbyterian are splitting the girls and boys categories, respectively. Athens Academy will pick up some points for making the football playoffs but the real mover may turn out to be Savannah Christian. SCPS has made the finals the last two years and appears primed for another extended football run which could lead to a jump from its current spot at No. 20 overall.

*Photos courtesy of Amanda Ryan and Brian Phillips. Proctor can be reached at [fproctor@scoreatl.com](mailto:fproctor@scoreatl.com).*



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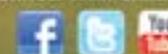
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# SCORE

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## HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL RANKINGS

### BOYS

CLASS AAAAA	CLASS AAAA	CLASS AAA	CLASS AA	CLASS A
1. Milton	1. Miller Grove	1. Columbia	1. Buford	1. Wilkinson Co.
2. Norcross	2. SW DeKalb	2. Carrollton	2. East Hall	2. Terrell Co.
3. Wheeler	3. Lovejoy	3. Woodward Acad.	3. Thomasville	3. Whitefield Acad.
4. Shiloh	4. Chattahoochee	4. Franklin Co.	4. South Atlanta	4. Wilcox Co.
5. N. Gwinnett	5. North Clayton	5. Thomson	5. GAC	5. Paideia
6. S. Gwinnett	6. Rockdale Co.	6. Gainesville	6. Laney	6. Wesleyan
7. Tift Co.	7. Fayette Co.	7. Eagles Landing	7. Rockmart	7. Athens Christian
8. Harrison	8. Jonesboro	8. Butler	8. Kendrick	8. Providence Chr.
9. Hillgrove	9. Bainbridge	9. Washington Co.	9. Rabun Co.	9. Pace Acad.
10. Berkmar	10. Hardaway	10. LaGrange	10. Dublin	10. Turner Co.

### GIRLS

CLASS AAAAA	CLASS AAAA	CLASS AAA	CLASS AA	CLASS A
1. Norcross	1. Fayette Co.	1. Washington Co.	1. Buford	1. Wesleyan
2. N. Gwinnett	2. Forest Park	2. Columbia	2. GAC	2. Pace Acad.
3. McEachern	3. Chamblee	3. Sandy Creek	3. East Hall	3. SW Atl. Chr.
4. Mill Creek	4. Redan	4. Carrollton	4. Laney	4. Calvary Day
5. North Cobb	5. Statesboro	5. St. Pius X	5. Thomasville	5. Darlington
6. Hillgrove	6. Clarke Central	6. Dalton	6. Morgan Co.	6. St. Francis
7. Campbell	7. Miller Grove	7. Crisp County	7. Lovett	7. Holy Innocents'
8. Parkview	8. Alcovy	8. Drew	8. Rabun Co.	8. Charlton Co.
9. Westlake	9. Douglas Co.	9. North Hall	9. NE-Macon	9. Bryan Co.
10. Alpharetta	10. Hardaway	10. Westover	10. Kendrick	10. Turner Co.

## REGIONS DIRECTORS CUP OVERALL STANDINGS

CLASS AAAAA	CLASS AAAA	CLASS AAA	CLASS AA	CLASS A
1- Brookwood	1- Pope	1- St. Pius X	1- Blessed Trinity	1- Wesleyan
2- Mill Creek	2- Union Grove	2- Allatoona	2- GAC	2- Athens Academy
3- Harrison	3- Whitewater	3- Columbus	3- Lovett	3- First Presbyterian
4- Walton	4- Marist	4- Woodward Academy	4- Westminster	4- Providence Christian
5- Milton	5- Chapel Hill	5- Riverwood	5- Bleckley County	5- Athens Christian
6- North Cobb	6- Lakeside, DeKalb	6- Veterans	6- Jefferson	6- Darlington
7- Collins Hill	7- McIntosh	7- North Hall	7- North Oconee	7- Holy Innocents'
8- Kennesaw Mountain	8- Greenbrier	8- Oconee County	8- Thomasville	8- Landmark Christian
9- Peachtree Ridge	9- Creekview	9- Sandy Creek	9- Pike County	9- Brookstone
10 Etowah	10- Flowery Branch	10- Central, Carroll	10- Dawson County	10- Our Lady of Mercy

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# BASKETBALL NEWS



## Metro teams headline early polls

By Ryan Caiafa

High school basketball has officially begun with many teams playing non-region scrimmages and preparing for early-season tournaments. While there have been several intriguing early season matchups, none have stood out more than last Thursday's showdown between national powerhouses Miller Grove and Milton. Coming off the heels of last season's Beach Ball Classic game which put Miller Grove in the national spotlight when the Wolverines took down then top-ranked Milton 71-61, the Wolverines enter this season with monumental expectations.

### MAJOR SCRUM ...

The scrimmage, although meaningless in terms of standings, was won by the Wolverines 75-72 and certainly contained a competitive spirit unlike any ordinary scrimmage. The game featured several of the state's top prospects as ESPN No. 2 Miller Grove boasts highly-touted big man Tony Parker, who is being recruited by programs such as Duke and Ohio State, to go along with Georgia-commit Brandon Morris, while Milton is led by Virginia-commit Evan Nolte, Auburn-commit Shaquille Johnson, and Charles Mann, another Georgia-commit.

Miller Grove's schedule includes show-

downs against the nation's top-ranked team Simeon Career Academy and third-ranked Oak Hill Academy. Milton will face several tough in-state games against teams such as Buford and Wheeler.

### MORE POWERS ...

Aside from the two national powerhouses, the metro Atlanta area features other teams looking to re-establish their dominance throughout their respective regions. Defending AAAAA champion Norcross brings in transfer Harold Givens, who is ESPN U's No. 1-ranked junior to join a Blue Devils squad that lost two starters from its championship team to graduation.

The always-dangerous Wheeler Wildcats are also expected to compete for a state title. Although not boasting the same level of talent as in years past, Wheeler is led by highly-regarded center Charles Mitchell, who is being recruited by top programs such as North Carolina, Kentucky and Ohio State, and guard Justin Seymour, who has already committed to Utah. The Wildcats fell to the eventual state champions, Norcross, in last season's quarterfinals.

*Caiafa can be reached at 404-256-1572.*

# FOOTBALL NEWS



## Upsets highlight first round of playoffs

By Fletcher Proctor

The beauty of high school football is that champions are crowned on the field to conclude a month-long playoff. The only downside to a 32-team field in each classification is that every year, a few region champions bite the dust early on and 2011 was no different.

### 5A UPSETS ...

Lassiter took Alpharetta to overtime before nipping the Raiders on a blocked extra point. Eddie Printz passed for a pair of scores before Niles Clark blocked the game-tying extra point in the extra frame. Newnan also was able to spring the upset of Region 1-5A champion Valdosta with a 17-7 decision in Winnersville. J.K. Britt scored twice for the Cougars and Austin Hurler kicked a field goal in the win.

No. 3 seed South Cobb earned an upset with a 32-28 decision over second-seeded Windsor Forest, but the other big upset in 5A was Lowndes over Stephenson. The Vikings got a huge effort from Mike Moore as the senior rushed for 105 yards in the first half and scoring the game's lone touchdown. Moore finished with 123 yards, but Stephenson was able to muster just 155 yards of total offense.

### DEVILS DOWNED ...

In Class 4A, No. 2 Statesboro was shown the door by Thomas County Central 31-28. The

Yellow Jackets will now hit the road to face Flowery Branch, Region 8-AAAA co-champion, yet No. 3 seed. The Falcons needed a Hail Mary connection on the game's final play to defeat Johns Creek 41-38. The only other real "upset" from AAAAA was Kell ending Marist's 28-game home playoff winning streak with a 30-7 victory.

In Class 2A, Cook and Elbert County each pulled off upsets, discharging No. 10 Pierce County and Region 7-2A No. 2 seed Pepperell, respectively. Those two will square off this week in the Granite Bowl, Class A saw No. 10 Holy Innocents' fall to Bowden as well as No. 8 ECI to Greenville. Greenville now faces No. 4 ELCA. Darlington also fell to Landmark Christian, knocking the Region 6-A champion out of the playoffs.

### NEW NAME ...

The Executive Committee of the GHSA recently voted to name its football championships the GHSA-Tommy Gullebeau Football Championships. The former GHSA Executive Director served in that position from 1992 until 2001. It was under his urging and vision that the GHSA began playing the semifinal football games at the Georgia Dome in 1994.

*Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.*

# SWIMMING NEWS



## Trojans seek fifth straight girls title

By Scott St. Lifer

Lassiter has the ability to pull off a fifth consecutive girls state swimming championship, but will have to do it without three top contributors to those teams. The core from the championship teams - Sammie Bosma (Texas A&M), Kim Carducci (North Carolina) and Shannon O'Malley (Georgia) - have move on to collegiate swimming, but the Trojans believe they have enough talent to take them back to the top.

Seniors Sarah Williford (Georgia Tech commit), Allie Crenshaw and Kylie Dickman hope they can lead the Trojans back to the gold with their strengths in the 200-yard individual medley.

"Those three seniors, along with a huge group of young swimmers we have this year, hopefully will lead us to the promise land again," said coach Glenn Meeden.

The boys team also has a shot at winning the state title this year behind seniors Drew Cuttic and Henry Loong and juniors Jimmy Yoder and Zach Bunner. Cuttic and Yoder are tremendous freestylers while Loong and Bunner can backstroke in a class by themselves.

Brookwood's girls and boys swimming teams hope to take the gold this season after finishing second and third respectively last season. Freestylers Aidan Sweeney, Michael Trice and Keenan Sweeney help maintain the

Broncos' core. Last season, Trice finished runner up in the 50-meter freestyle.

With the foursome of Kelsey Gouge, Rachel Muller, Elizabeth Garreau and Morgan Duncan returning, the girls may have what it takes this year to finally emerge from Lassiter's shadow. Gouge and Muller specialize in freestyle while Garreau swims breaststroke and Duncan swims backstroke.

"Both teams should compete to be in the hunt for a state championship," exclaimed Brookwood coach Greg Puckett. "Time will tell."

### POOL HAWKS ...

Another girls team hoping to finish near the top again is Mill Creek. Rachael Dudley and Frederique Lefebvre help to make up an experienced group of Hawks. Last weekend, the Hawks held a meet with Parkview where Dudley and Lefebvre earned top finishes and set new state qualifying times. Dudley won the 200-yard individual medley (2:11.31) and the 100 butterfly (58.40), while Lefebvre came up on top in the 200 free (1:56.24) and 500 free (5:09.72) to help guide the girls team to a 172-137 victory. Next up for the Hawks is a meet between Central Gwinnett and Mountain View on Saturday.

*St. Lifer can be reached at sstlifer@scoreatl.com.*

# WRESTLING NEWS



## Opening weekend features important meets

By Robby Kalland

Wrestling season will officially begin this weekend, and all of the top teams will be in action around the state. The Alexander Duals is one of the weekend's biggest tournaments as Alexander High School in Douglasville plays host to some of the state's top teams. Collins Hill, Pope, and host Alexander highlight the list of participating schools.

### SOARING EAGLES ...

Collins Hill will be looking to assert itself once again as the dominant team in Class AAAAA coming off of the Eagles' fourth consecutive sweep of the state team duals and traditional wrestling championships. The Eagles return another stacked team and will be looking to see how their young wrestlers perform early in the season, especially the highly-touted sophomore tandem of Ryan Millhof and Sean Russell.

### GRAPPLING GREYHOUNDS ...

Pope will look to prove that it is once again going to be a force in Class AAAA after winning the traditional wrestling state title and placing third in the team duals. However, Alexander will provide stiff competition for the Greyhounds as the Cougars placed second in the team duals and fifth in traditional wrestling. Pope will be look-

ing to utilize its depth that includes two state individual champions and show that they are the team to beat in Class AAAAA.

### HORNS HOST ...

Lambert High School will host the Shane's Rib Shack Duals on Saturday as well, and the field includes Peachtree Ridge, North Gwinnett and Locust Grove. Peachtree Ridge placed fourth in the Class AAAAA traditional wrestling last year. State champion Tsvetomir Petrushev, who was 30-0 last year in winning the 171-pound class, will miss the year after an offseason car accident. Despite the loss of Petrushev and Michael Chapman, the 51-0 215-pound state champ, the Lions look tough again this season.

### BATTLING BULLDOGS ...

North Gwinnett has high hopes for the season and will look to improve on their sixth place finish in the traditional wrestling championship last year. Locust Grove placed third in Class AAA in the traditional wrestling. Opening weekend of the season will provide a good measure of what the top teams in the state are, and also which teams could be the surprises of the year.

*Kalland can be reached at 404-256-1572.*

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# PANTHER PROWL



## Panthers lose tight one at West Alabama

By Dave Cohen

A season that was already spiraling out of control continued to do so Saturday night in Livingston, Ala., when the Panther football team dropped a 30-23 decision to West Alabama at Tiger Stadium.

Quarterback Kelton Hill rushed for 152 yards and two touchdowns and passed for 228 yards and one touchdown. Defensively,

the Panthers had no answer for Tiger running back Matthew Willis, who rushed for 171 yards and two scores, the second one being the go-ahead touchdown with 2:12 remaining in the game. The loss dropped Georgia State to 2-8 on the season with one game remaining on the schedule.

Turnovers were a problem as well, as the

Panthers committed five with three fumbles lost and two interceptions. The other frustrating aspect, even with the turnovers, is that the Panthers had opportunities.

"We were down inside the 10 four times in the second half and came away with nothing, and if you do that, you're going to get beat," said head coach Bill Curry. "We fought valiantly, and we did a lot of good things on both sides of the ball, but ball security is the most important factor in football."

Albert Wilson caught a career-high eight passes for 120 yards and was on the receiving end of a 33-yard scoring pass from Hill. That effort raised his career total to 1,058 receiving yards as he became the second Panther in as many weeks to reach the 1,000-yard mark. Danny Williams, who broke 1,000 yards last week, had one catch, extending his streak of

consecutive games with a reception to 21. Jake Muasau had another big day for the GSU defense with six tackles, two tackles for loss and an interception. Georgia State hosts Campbell Saturday in the Georgia Dome at 2:00 p.m. (WCFO-AM, 1160)

The Panther volleyball team is headed to the CAA Tournament this week as the No. 4 seed and will face No. 5 seed James Madison in the opening round in Delaware. GSU honored its five seniors last Sunday in a 3-1 win over Hofstra to head into the tournament with an 8-6 CAA mark, including wins in four of its final six matches. GSU's Vinece Verdun leads the CAA in hitting percentage and is No. 4 in kills.

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



# BULLDOG BEAT



## Auburn win comes with many firsts

By Stephen Black

By now everyone knows that Georgia crushed Auburn 45-7 Saturday. But it was a landmark win for the Bulldogs for a variety of reasons.

Most importantly, Georgia set itself up with an opportunity to finish 7-1 in the SEC with the Eastern Division championship if it can beat hapless Kentucky Saturday.

Here are some other interesting notes from the game:

- Aaron Murray was 13-for-16 with 216 yards and four touchdowns in the first half.
- Receivers Tavarres King, Michael Bennett, Bruce Figgins and Malcolm Mitchell each had touchdown grabs in the first half.
- In the opening half, Georgia had 326 total yards to 89 for Auburn.
- Tigers quarterback Clint Mosely was sacked four times in the first half.
- Murray threw only two second-half passes.
- Georgia ran for 304 yards including 194 in the second half. Contrarily, Auburn rushed for minus-12 yards in the first half and finished with 51.
- The Dawgs held the ball 40:55 to Auburn's 19:05.
- Total yardage in the game was 528 to 195.

### SOME FIRSTS ...

- The win marked the first time Georgia has beaten Auburn three straight times in Athens. The series was played in Columbus until 1959.
- It was the first time since the 2003 Alabama game that Georgia had posted 35 points or more in a half against an SEC opponent.
- For the first time since 1981, the Dawgs have beaten SEC rivals Tennessee, Florida and Auburn in the same season. It is just the second time since 1982 that Georgia has beaten both Auburn and Florida in the same year. Georgia has played Auburn and Florida yearly for decades and picked up Tennessee regularly in 1992.
- Bacarri Rambo's first half pick-6 was the first defensive score of the year for Georgia. The Bulldogs are the last SEC team to have scored defensively.
- Murray became the first UGA quarterback to throw for more than 25 TDs in a season. His four TD passes pushed him past Matt Stafford's 25 from 2008. He now has 27 this year.
- It was Thomas' first 100-yard game of his career.

*Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.*

# TECH TALK



## Attaochu out for first half against Duke

By Thomas Watson

After beating Clemson, Georgia Tech's season took a mighty blow with the 37-26 loss to Virginia Tech eliminating the Jackets from ACC-title contention.

Head coach Paul Johnson was quite sullen in the postgame press conference, but on Tuesday, after going back and watching the film, Johnson was pleased with the way his team played.

"I thought that we had our chances," said Johnson. "We just didn't get it done. We came back in the second half and actually took the lead for a brief time there in the third quarter but just couldn't seem to get over the hump."

There are still a few goals the Yellow Jackets can reach this year, including reaching 10 wins. That feat has been accomplished at Tech only three times in the last 50 years.

"That's one of the things that I talked to them about. There's a lot to play for. Every team that played probably had a goal to get to the ACC Championship game and out of 12 there's only two that are going to get there," said Johnson. "When that goal goes off the board you don't quit. You compete and you try to do the best

you can do. Certainly, this team could accomplish a lot if they can win 10 games."

### ATTAOCHU SUSPENDED ...

The same penalty that turned the momentum of the game against Virginia Tech is now going to hold Jeremiah Attaochu out of the first half against Duke. This week, the ACC handed down the additional punishment for the attacking punch thrown at Virginia Tech quarterback Logan Thomas. Johnson felt after the game that the penalty was the biggest turning point in the loss, but with some time to distance himself from the game, it seems he is backing off that stance.

"I think it can be misleading," said Johnson. "After that drive, the first play we came out and we had third and one or two, and that's when we didn't make it on fourth down. The very next drive I think we were down eight, and we had to start throwing the ball and we got sacked a couple of times. After the first drive on fourth down, we kind of got away from what we had to do."

*Watson can be reached at twatson@scoreatl.com.*

# HAWKS HAVEN



## New owner falls through, ASG returns

By Josh Bagriansky

Last week's NBA labor talks saw rumors emerge from the meeting that the sale of the Atlanta Hawks was in trouble. Turned out those rumors were true, as the \$300 million deal intended to give California-based businessman Alex Meruelo complete control of the team fell through.

"Basketball is my passion, but professional basketball is a business," Meruelo said in a statement Friday. "Although all parties negotiated in good faith, we were not able to reach a satisfactory agreement on some key issues, given the current uncertainty surrounding the labor issue."

### SAME OLD SONG ...

The Hawks' owners remain the Atlanta Spirit Group, who also owned the Thrashers before losing to them to Winnipeg and put the team up for sale last year. But ASG insist they are still 100 percent committed to the cause.

"The Atlanta Hawks are no longer for sale," Levenson said in a statement. "We're excited to remain as owners of the Hawks and are committed to building on our string of four straight playoff appearances."

### BASKETBALL DESERT ...

It may be some time before the Hawks

actually take the court this season. The latest proposal from the NBA to the players was rejected by the players, further jeopardizing the 2011-12 season and forcing the league to cancel games through Dec. 15 in the process.

The league's latest proposal included a 50-50 split of all revenue, and also featured several changes in salary cap rules, many of which constricted player movement.

"There will ultimately be a new collective bargaining agreement, but the 2011-12 season is now in jeopardy," Stern said in a statement released by the league later in the day.

### GETTING LITIGIOUS ...

Meanwhile, the NBA Players Association plan to file an anti-trust lawsuit against the league, hoping to force the owners' hand in the process.

"We've arrived at the conclusion that the collective bargaining process has completely broken down," Hunter said.

But the owners say that the last deal offered would be the best the players would get, now claiming they will revert back to their previous stance over the summer, which included a 53-47 split in revenues in their favor.

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

# FALCONS FLIGHT



## Three steps forward, one step back

By Sean Conway

Through 60 minutes of regulation plus four minutes and 23 seconds of overtime, Falcons fans saw one of the greatest games in franchise history. The Falcons rallied to score 10 points in just over four minutes to force overtime against the division-leading New Orleans Saints.

But then, running back Michael Turner was stopped cold on fourth and inches, and the Saints (6-3) kicked an easy field goal moments later for a 26-23 win, and also tightened their grip on the NFC South. Head coach Mike Smith was visibly disturbed after the game.

Smith was not about to punch a wall or throw stuff. He was too busy trying to review the game in his head. Since Sunday, several media outlets and statistic providers have presented multiple scenarios suggesting that by the numbers, Smith's decision to go for the first down in that situation was the correct call.

Three times in his press conference after the game, Smith said, "I take full responsibility (for the loss)." After watching film and analyzing the stat sheet, Smith will solve the problem. History proves he will. The Falcons are 15-3 after a loss during his tenure.

### MOVING FORWARD ...

Four NFC teams are currently on the

NFC postseason "bubble." The Detroit Lions and Chicago Bears are "inside" with 6-3 records, while the Dallas Cowboys and Falcons are "outside" with 5-4 records.

Smith will get his team ready to play the Tennessee Titans (5-4) this Sunday at 4:15, and the rest of the schedule. Also, quarterback Matt Ryan proved again his competitive fire in the fourth quarter comeback. After the game, Ryan looked and sounded like a kid that wanted to play the game again, fully believing in his mind that the Falcons would find a way to win. The Falcons clearly need his leadership as much as — or more than — his arm for a playoff push.

### TITAN TIME ...

When the Falcons' defense faces the Titans, the game plan will be simple; they'll focus on stopping All-Pro running back Chris Johnson. Johnson has had a poor year by his standards (only 496 yards and two touchdowns), but played his best game Sunday. In the 30-3 win over the Carolina Panthers, Johnson rushed for 130 yards on 27 touches.

On offense, Turner (sixth in the NFL with 788 rushing yards) should have room to run against the Titans' 22nd-ranked rushing defense.

Conway can be reached at [sconway@scoreatl.com](mailto:sconway@scoreatl.com).

# CHOP SHOP



## Kimbrel named NL's rookie of the year

By Fletcher Proctor

The Atlanta Braves racked up yet another award this offseason as closer Craig Kimbrel was unanimously named the National League Rookie of the Year by the Baseball Writers Association of America, securing all 32 first-place votes.

"I was definitely surprised by the unanimous decision," said Kimbrel hours after winning the award. "It makes it that much more special. I never expected anything like that to happen."

Kimbrel recently won the NL Rookie of the Year award from The Sporting News as well as the Players Choice Award for NL's Most Outstanding Rookie. During his first full season with the team, Kimbrel set a new rookie save record with 46 while closing out a league-high 64 games. The all-star posted a 2.10 ERA and struck out 127 batters in 77 innings of work. First baseman Freddie Freeman finished second after slugging 21 home runs while batting .282 with a .795 OPS. He also played well enough for Gold Glove consideration, committing just six errors in 1,456 chances over 156 games. His .996 fielding percentage was better than the league average and equal to that of Joey Votto, the Gold Glove winner in the National League at first base.

Last season, outfielder Jason Heyward finished runner-up to San Francisco catcher

Buster Posey. The last Atlanta Brave to win the award was Rafael Furcal in 2000. The franchise has had seven in its history, five while based in Atlanta.

### TRIO AWARDED ...

Three Braves claimed inaugural MLB.com honors, adding to the Braves' long list of accolades this postseason. Brian McCann was named the Braves' player of the year after winning his fifth Silver Slugger award recently. Tim Hudson was named the team's pitcher of the year after winning 16 games with a 3.22 ERA. Kimbrel was recognized as the team's breakout player of the year.

### A CLOSER LOOK ...

Many just assumed that the Derek Lowe trade to Cleveland was merely a salary dump, but the Braves did receive left-handed pitcher in return for Lowe. The 23-year-old Chris Jones was 7-1 in 43 appearances one year ago for Class A Kinston. The reliever managed 66 strikeouts in 72.1 innings of work while holding left-handed hitters to just a .145 average. The 7-1 average could mean that Jones is turning the corner. His career mark is 22-16 with a 3.47 ERA across three different minor league levels.

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

# GWINNETT GLADIATORS



## NHL goalie hit registers in Gwinnett

By Joe Deighton

The reality of minor league hockey is that at any point during the season, whether a player is playing well or not, moves will be made. The majority of moves made by minor league hockey teams come after injuries occur. Many who don't regularly follow the NHL probably missed the hit on Buffalo Sabers goalie Ryan Miller courtesy of Boston Bruins left wing forward Milan Lucic last week. It was a controversial hit because it involved a goalie that had come out to play the puck. However, by rule, it was a legal hit.

Miller was injured on the play and the repercussions have been felt all the way down to the ECHL. The Gladiators sent starting goaltender Jeff Jakatis to the AHL's Rochester Americans after their goalie Drew MacIntyre was sent to Buffalo. Jakatis was playing well for the Glads, posting a 2.27 goals against average to go along with a 5-2-0 record.

In addition, Gwinnett sent goalie Marc Cheverie to the Phoenix Coyotes' AHL affiliate Portland Pirates due to injuries to that squad. Cheverie had a 2.47 GAA with a 2-1-4 record for Gwinnett. Another transaction came this week with the move of forward Mike Bartlett to the AHL's Binghamton Senators. Bartlett scored two goals and added

four assists in six games with the Gladiators.

### NEW GOALIE ...

It is not out of the question that both of the goalies lost this week could return in time for Gwinnett's next game with South Carolina on Friday. However, if neither of the goaltenders return, the Gladiators are looking into filling the void with rookie Nick Eno. The 22-year old was originally drafted by Buffalo in the seventh round of the 2007 NHL Draft. Eno then spent four years as the starting goaltender for Bowling Green State University. The six-foot-three goalie is currently starting for the Mississippi Surge of the SPHL and has a 3-3-0 record with a 1.98 GAA. Eno grew up playing hockey in Howell, Mich.

### SEASON SHAPING UP ...

The goalie situation could shape the rest of the Gladiators season. Everything depends on who is starting in net Friday. Eno would be a good addition, but Jakatis and MacIntyre have more experience. The Glads are currently in first place of the ECHL's South Division with 18 points.

Deighton can be reached at [jdeighton@scoreatl.com](mailto:jdeighton@scoreatl.com).

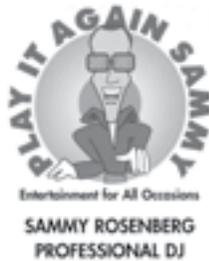
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## TRIVIA ANSWER

Aside from Kimbrel, Earl Williams (1971), Bob Horner (1978) and David Justice (1979) were the other Atlanta Braves to win Rookie of the Year honors.

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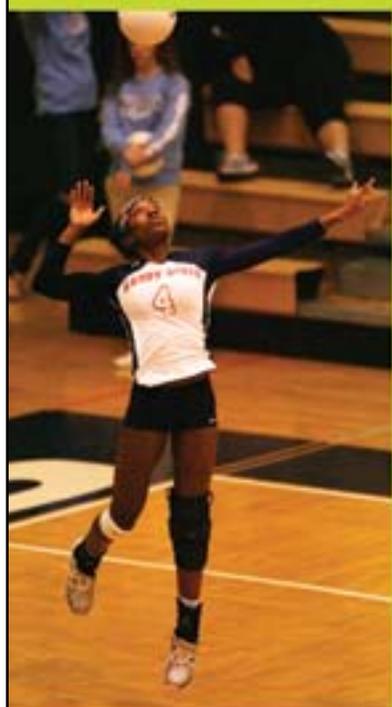


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