

FANS



GUIDE

RISE UP





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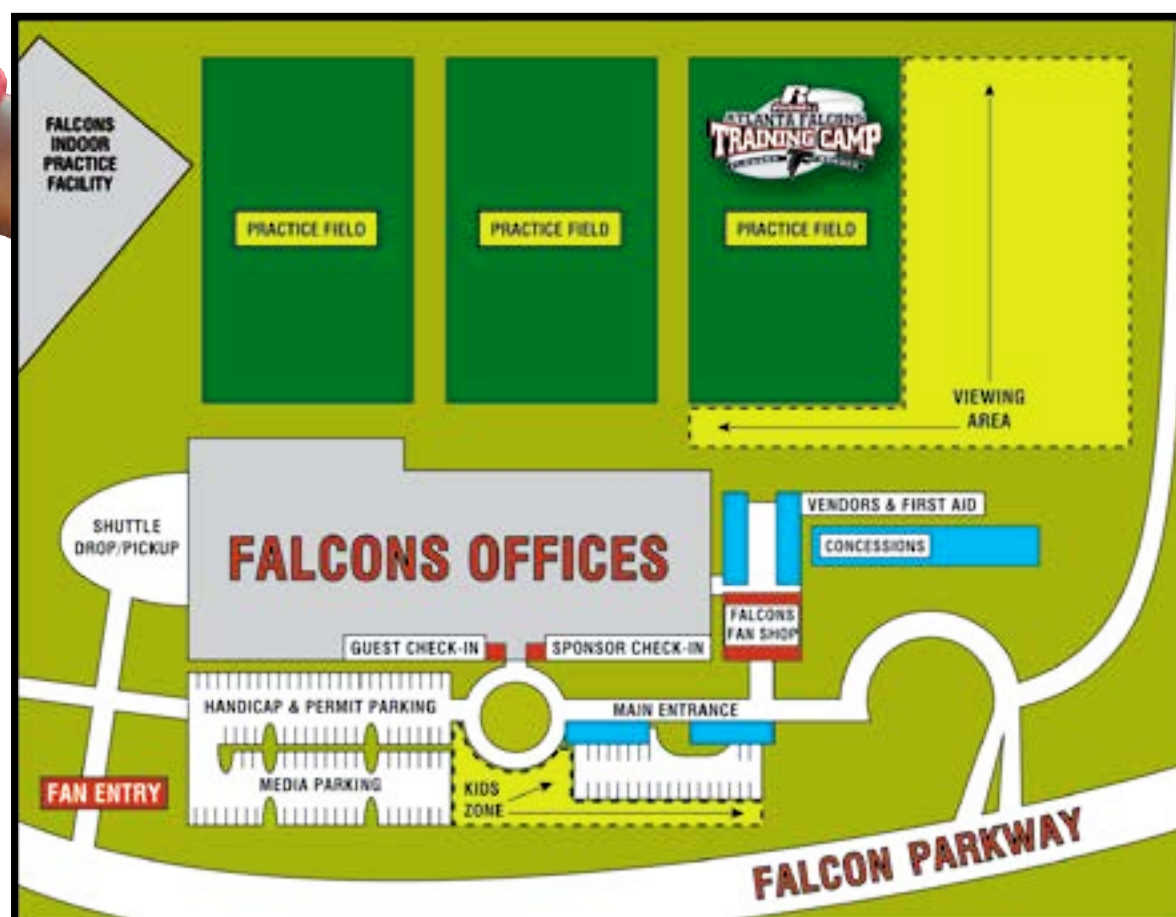
WELCOME BACK TO THE BRANCH!

WHEN AND WHERE TO GO

HOW TO GET TO FLOWERY BRANCH

From the south: Take I-85 north. Exit to the left on I-985 toward Gainesville. Take exit 12 (Spout Springs Road). Turn left off the exit ramp onto Spout Springs Road. Go under I-985, travel 1/4 mile and turn right on Thurmond Tanner Road. Proceed on Thurmond Tanner Road for about one mile to the stoplight, then turn right on Atlanta Highway (Ga. 13). Go about a mile on Atlanta Highway (which becomes Falcon Parkway) past the Wrigley plant on the left and back over I-985. The Falcons complex will be on the left (4400 Falcon Parkway).

From the north: Take I-985 south. Take exit 12 (Spout Springs Road). Turn right off the exit ramp onto Spout Springs Road. From here, use the same directions as above.



TRAINING CAMP PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Jul. 26	3:30 p.m.	Aug. 3	6:45 p.m. Friday Night Lights at Peachtree Ridge HS
Jul. 27	3:30 p.m.	Aug. 5	3:30 p.m.
Jul. 28	3:30 p.m.	Aug. 6	4:30 p.m. Combined practice with Tennessee Titans, Coahulla Creek HS, Dalton, GA
Jul. 29	3:30 p.m.	Aug. 7	3:30 p.m.
Jul. 30	3:30 p.m.	Aug. 11	3:30 p.m.
Jul. 31	3:30 p.m.	Aug. 12	3:30 p.m.
Aug. 2	3:30 p.m.		

PRESEASON SCHEDULE

 **Aug. 9**
vs. Baltimore 7:30 p.m. (CBS)

 **Aug. 16**
vs. Cincinnati 8:00 p.m. (FOX)

 **Aug. 24**
at Miami 7:30 p.m. (CBS)

 **Aug. 30**
at Jacksonville 6:30 p.m. (CBS)

LOOKING FOR AUTOGRAPHS?

Player autographs will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for 15 minutes following practice. Autographs can be obtained on the viewing hill or at the Falcons merchandise booth (select days only). Please call the hotline number below if you have any questions.

**FALCONS
HOTLINE**

770.965.2752



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TRAINING CAMP FAQs

THE 411 ON THE BRANCH

PARKING INFORMATION ...

Training camp general parking is available at the Hog Mountain Sports Complex and C.W. Davis Middle School across the street from the Falcons complex. Fans with disability parking permits may park at the Falcons training complex. Permits must be properly displayed for law enforcement officials to grant entry. A designated seating area will also be provided for fans with disabilities.

WHAT YOU CAN BRING TO CAMP ...

Hats, jackets, rain gear, sunglasses, sunscreen, binoculars, blankets, umbrellas, lawn chairs and strollers are permitted at camp. Coolers are NOT permitted at Falcons Training Camp, unless they are being used to carry critical medical supplies (e.g., insulin for diabetics). Alcoholic beverages and glass containers are prohibited. In addition, please do not bring noisemakers, loud radios, large signs or wear inappropriate attire. Backpacks and bags larger than 8.5 inches wide by 13 inches long by 5 inches deep are not permitted at training camp. All people, bags and purses are subject to inspection. Any individual who refuses an inspection will be denied entry.

CAMERAS ...

Still cameras with lenses less than 12 inches and without flash attachments are permitted during all training camp workouts. Flash photography is not permitted at any time. Audio or video recording devices, including camcorders and cellular phones with video capabilities, are not allowed.

WEATHER INFORMATION ...

Check the Falcons website at www.atlantafalcons.com for updates or call the Atlanta Falcons Training Camp Hotline at 770-965-2752. Practice times are subject to change without notice.

INFORMATION BOOTH ...

Any questions about training camp may be directed to associates at the Falcons365 trailer.

FALCONS MERCHANDISE ...

Get your Falcons merchandise at the Falcons365 trailer at camp and at Kia Motors Friday Night Lights. The trailer will be open before, during and after practice, and special Falcons training camp merchandise can be found here. The lost-and-found area is also at this location.

CONCESSIONS ...

The main concessions are located in the sponsor activation area.

BEATING THE HEAT ...

In an effort to ensure comfort for all fans who attend a Falcons practice during training camp, the club has a 10-foot-by-10-foot area at the top of the spectator hill for fans to get out of the sun and cool off.

SAFETY AND SECURITY ...

For your safety and protection, Atlanta Falcons security personnel — along with the Flowery Branch Police Department, Hall County Police Department and other local law enforcement officials — will be present at training camp. In serious cases of rowdy behavior or profane/abusive language, security will first issue a warning. If the disruptive behavior continues, the fan will be subject to removal or arrest. Multiple violations may result in the individual being banned from the Falcons complex.

FIRST AID ...

A Falcons first-aid station will be set up adjacent to the training camp fan field's main entrance. Authorized medical personnel from the Falcons and Hall County will be available one hour before each practice through one hour after each session.

KIDS ACTIVITIES ...

The Atlanta Falcons invite youth ages 17 and under to experience Youth Weekend at Falcons training camp in Flowery Branch Saturday, July 28 and Sunday, July 29. Activities both days include the Atlanta Falcons

Cheerleader Autograph Zone and Look Like a Pro, where kids will have the opportunity to try on authentic equipment used and worn by Falcons players. There will also be unique activities taking place on each day, such as Rise Up and Football Flurry (July 28, 3:30-6:05pm) and Helmet and Jersey Frenzy (July 29, 3:30 - 6:05pm). Youth Weekend Activities open one hour prior to each practice session.

SMOKING ...

For the comfort and health of all fans, the Falcons training complex is a smoke-free environment. There is no smoking allowed anywhere on the grounds or inside the buildings.

DAILY UPDATES ...

Check the list of daily activities on the club's website (www.atlantafalcons.com), inquire about events in the Falcons365 trailer, or call the training camp hotline number at 770-965-2752.

SPECIAL GUESTS AND VIPs ...

Special guest, VIP and sponsor check-in sites are located near the main building entrance of the Atlanta Falcons training complex.



Russell Brands, LLC is proud to sponsor Russell Athletic® Atlanta Falcons Training Camp each year at the Falcons training facility in Flowery Branch.

This sponsorship includes designating Russell Athletic as a preferred supplier of promotional apparel and premium items and presenting sponsor of all preseason games on WGCL-TV and its affiliates, radio spots during 20 Atlanta Falcons games on Falcons Flagship radio stations Star 94 and 790 The Zone, and dominant signage presence throughout the interior of the Georgia Dome including the high-profile branded fan zone where fans will receive one-of-a-kind Russell Athletic apparel. Russell-branded products will also be available for purchase at all Falcons home games.



For the fifth year, Friday Night Lights (at Peachtree Ridge High School in Suwanee, Aug. 3, 6:45 p.m.) will once again bring the team to the fans. This grassroots event includes a fan fest with interactive inflatable games, sponsor activation, a post-event autograph session and a spectacular fireworks show. During the live scrimmage, several players including the Falcons quarterbacks and certain positions will be mic'd so fans can get an "under the helmet" look at the action on the field.



The Falcons Training Camp Guide was produced and published by Score Publishing, a division of Score Atlanta. The publisher is I.J. Rosenberg, editors are Stephen Black and Fletcher Proctor and creative art director is DJ Galbiati. The photos in the Guide were taken by Falcons team photographer Jimmy Cribb. Score is a full-service marketing company and can be reached at 404-256-1572 and SCOREATL.COM.



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Q&A WITH ARTHUR BLANK

Score Atlanta founder and publisher I.J. Rosenberg spoke with Falcons Owner Arthur Blank this summer about the upcoming 2012 season. Here is the transcription of that interview.

The team made its second straight trip to the playoffs last year, something that had never been done before in team history. Was this satisfying or did the disappointment of the loss take away from the accomplishment?

AB: It certainly was satisfying; the fact that we had four back-to-back-to-back-to-back winning seasons and three out of four making the playoffs after 42 years of never having back-to-back winning seasons is certainly an accomplishment. We understand that to be an "elite team," we have to not only get to the playoffs, but we have to win in the playoffs, so I think that was a disappointment – a disappointment for me, a disappointment for our coach, general manager, team president and certainly for our players, coaches and fans. So we've got to turn it up an additional level, and we are committed to doing that and we're certainly poised to do that. I definitely think we improved our team this offseason with coordinator and coaching changes, some additional players and the maturing of other players, so I think we're in a really good position heading into the 2012 season. Thirty-one other owners probably feel the same way at this time of the year, but I think we're in a good position to turn it up an additional notch.

After years of stability with the same coordinators, Head Coach Mike Smith will be working with both a new offensive coordinator and defensive coordinator. How has the new coaching staff approached the offseason?

AB: What's great is that both coordinators came in without any biases towards any scheme or players. They are taking a look at the talent we have and thinking about schemes and ways to put our players in the best position to win. That's what great coaches do. Sometimes it can be difficult for a coordinator or coach that's been in the same position for many, many years to have the ability to develop a fresh perspective. Coach (Brian) VanGorder and Coach (Mike) Mularkey did an excellent job for us and got us to where we are, but we think the addition of Mike Nolan and Dirk Koetter and Pat Hill and others will provide a little different view scheme-wise and with how we use certain players. I think that will be to our advantage this year. So far they've been very positive, and the players have responded well to their thinking and their creativity. I think we're in a good place.

Falcons fans seem really excited about the possibility of a new stadium, especially one with a retractable roof. Where are the Falcons in this process, and how much time will be spent during the season with planning and discussion?

AB: We're making progress. We've had a close, collaborative relationship with the Georgia

World Congress Center since I bought the team in 2002, and we've been working with them for several years now on a stadium solution. We're currently working on a multi-purpose retractable roof stadium, which we think, politically and for our fans, is the best way to go so we can enjoy the benefits of playing football and having other events outdoors where it makes sense to do that, while also providing the indoor environment for all the events that are so important to the Congress Center and probably more important to the city, such as the Final Four. We're moving in the right direction. Rich McKay, our team president & CEO, is at the point on this, and he's spending a great amount of his time working on this. The season itself will not slow us down in that regard. We continue to have meetings with the appropriate people from the Georgia World Congress Center Authority board and with Frank Poe, the executive director who keeps state and other political leaders in touch with what's going on so we understand their sensitivities as well. We feel good about the direction of our talks, and hopefully we'll be able to get something more definitive in place soon.

Since 1992, the Dome has offered a special home field advantage for the Falcons. Will we have the same advantage in a new stadium?

AB: Sure. I don't think that the stadium is what provides the home field advantage. At the end of the day, it's the environment, it's the team on the field, it's the game day experience, it's the tailgating experience, it's the fan amenities that we offer, it's the inclusiveness and the loyalty of the fan base we earn by consistently winning games and competing in the postseason. It's important that we do whatever we can to add value to the fan experience, to make them feel valued and an integral part of the team's success, which they are. All of these things are critical to our relationship with our fans and to giving our team a home field advantage.

While the Falcons did not have a first-round pick in April's draft, the team made several moves and brought in some serious talent. How would you grade your GM's offseason?

AB: I think it was excellent. I think we did the things we wanted to do. We primarily wanted to extend the talent we have. The best teams in the NFL consistently identify their talent early; they don't wait until they become free agents. They identify them early and they extend them early. That's the model that we try to follow here, and it's a model that this last year really came into play, as we extended a number of our players' contracts. We were able to bring in some critical free agents, starting with Asante Samuel, and we think we had an excellent draft. You have to look at these draft classes several years later. You can look back and see if it was a great draft class or not quite as good as you thought. But Thomas' record over the last four years has been outstanding, both as a result of his efforts and the result of collaborating with Coach Smith.

The Falcons were in the discussion for HBO's Hard Knocks and the team will appear on national television four times this season. It appears the Falcons' national brand is growing. What else can be done to increase the Falcons' popularity and brand?

AB: That's a very good question. At the end of the day, the most important thing is that you create a winning, sustainable franchise, and we've done that now. What happens then is you get the national games. This season we have four national games, and we could end up with more than that depending on the flex schedule and how we're doing as the season goes on. That's an indication, an unbiased indication, from the League and our media partners, CBS, ESPN, NBC, Fox, etc., that we're doing well and they want to see our product on national TV. So as long as we continue to win and support the team as the national brand it can be, we'll continue to make progress in this regard.

You are very much involved in the community with service projects, and many of your players also take time to get involved with charitable organizations. Is this something you encourage your players to do with their free time?

AB: We do. We make certain that they understand that when they join the NFL they have not only a responsibility, but an opportunity, to make a difference in people's lives. I tell the players every year that there are two Super Bowls: one on the field, which is the obvious one, and one off the field. The one off the field, we've got nobody against us, nobody keeping us from doing the things we want to do in the community to make a difference. Our players' job is not just to represent the team well on Sundays on the field, but also to represent us well in the community - to make sure that we're saying thank you to our fans and showing appreciation to the community in a variety of ways. Our players find that once they start giving back, they enjoy that experience so much that they continue to give back. It's a very positive thing.

There's so much concern in the NFL about players' safety recently. What more can the NFL do to combat concussions?

AB: I think the NFL, as a matter of history, has always made player safety a strong priority and there have been numerous actions taken over the years to protect players and advance science and medical understanding and treatment of concussions. Commissioner Goodell has made player safety his first priority in all these areas.

What are your expectations for the 2012 Falcons?

AB: I wish I could tell you what our record will be. Obviously, the League is based on competitive balance. We do whatever we can to tilt the playing field in our favor in terms of the coaches, the environment, the atmosphere, the equipment, the facilities, and the variety of things we do to make sure that we have the best talent and the coaches have gotten the players ready in the best possible way. My expectation is that the team will be very competitive again. My expectation is they will play hard. My hope and aspiration is that we'll get deep into the playoffs in 2012. If you ask every player or coach on the team, they would say the same thing.





ATLANTA FALCONS 2012 REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

Compiled By Fletcher Proctor

Sept. 9 1:00 p.m. FOX		@ Kansas City Arrowhead Stadium Kansas City, MO	The Falcons will open up the 2012 season at one of the toughest venues in the NFL: Arrowhead Stadium. While the Chiefs offense has fallen on some tough times since the salad days of Priest Holmes, the defensive secondary is full of playmakers including Brandon Carr, Brandon Flowers and Eric Berry.
Sept. 17 8:30 p.m. ESPN		vs. Denver Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	The Falcons make their first appearance on national television as Matt Ryan matches wits with new Denver Quarterback Peyton Manning. After passing for 4,700 yards and 33 touchdowns in 2010, Manning missed all of last year and was released by Indianapolis. Denver's defense got to the opposing teams' quarterback 41 times last year.
Sept. 23 4:05 p.m. FOX		@ San Diego Qualcomm Stadium San Diego, CA	Few teams can light up a scoreboard quite like the San Diego Chargers. Last season, San Diego posted 406 points, second-most in the AFC, as Chargers Quarterback Philip Rivers passed for 4,426 yards. The defense is paced by the dominating linebacker Antwan Barnes, who racked up 11 sacks in 2011.
Sept. 30 1:00 p.m. FOX		vs. Carolina Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	Last season the Carolina Panthers ebbed and flowed with rookie quarterback Cam Newton, who guided the division rival Panthers to the fifth-most total yards in the NFC. Newton passed for 4,051 yards and ran for an additional 706. He finished with 35 touchdowns and a Rookie of the Year trophy.
Oct. 7 1:00 p.m. FOX		@ Washington FedEx Field Landover, MD	Robert Griffin III, the 2011 Heisman Trophy winner, should be firmly entrenched as the Redskins' quarterback when the Falcons travel to just outside of the nation's capital. The real threat will be the opportunistic defense, which is led by Ryan Kerrigan, who came away with four forced fumbles last year.
Oct. 14 1:00 p.m. CBS		vs. Oakland Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	The Raiders will bring a potent rushing attack that ranked No. 7 last year with Darren McFadden looking to run his way over, around and through would-be tacklers. He averaged 5.4 yards per carry before missing time with injuries. Carson Palmer is also back to work with some talented receivers.
Oct. 28 1:00 p.m. FOX		@ Philadelphia Lincoln Financial Field Philadelphia, PA	The Falcons finally took down the Eagles last year, but Michael Vick is back under center, leading an offense that averaged nearly 400 yards one year ago while lighting up scoreboards to the tune of 24.8 points per game. LeSean McCoy rushed for 1,309 yards last year with 17 scores.
Nov. 4 8:20 p.m. NBC		vs. Dallas Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	Tony Romo is still trying to make his way into the "elite quarterback" conversation, and he piled up 4,184 yards last year with 31 touchdowns despite not having much of an offensive line. The Cowboys have Dez Bryant on the outside, who hauled in 63 receptions for 928 yards last year.
Nov. 11 1:00 p.m. FOX		@ New Orleans Mercedes-Benz Superdome New Orleans, LA	The Saints have Drew Brees but will be without head coach Sean Payton when the Falcons take on the defending division champions. The Saints could also be without several members of its defense due to suspensions, but the offense led the league in total yards last year. Atlanta leads the all-time series 46-40.
Nov. 18 1:00 p.m. FOX		vs. Arizona Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	Pro Bowler Larry Fitzgerald will make his way to the Dome, ready to match up with the new-look Falcons secondary. The question of who will get Fitzgerald the ball will be one to watch as no Arizona quarterback cracked 2,000 yards last season. The defense managed 42 sacks in 2011.
Nov. 25 1:00 p.m. FOX		@ Tampa Bay Raymond James Stadium Tampa, FL	The new-look Bucs welcome in a host of playmakers that should immediately improve Tampa's offensive attack. Vincent Jackson hauled in 60 catches and nine scores last year for San Diego and gives Josh Freeman another receiver to work with. First-round pick Mark Barron could shore up the defensive secondary.
Nov. 29 8:20 p.m. NFL Network		vs. New Orleans Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	The Falcons have perhaps the greatest tight end in NFL history in Tony Gonzalez, but Jimmy Graham set a tight end record with 1,310 yards on 99 catches in the regular season. Keep an eye on RB Darren Sproles, who ran for 603 yards and hauled in 710 more receiving yards.
Dec. 9 1:00 p.m. FOX		@ Carolina Bank of America Stadium Charlotte, NC	Steve Smith had a resurgence last year, catching 79 passes for nearly 1,400 yards and seven scores. Smith was brought back to work with Newton, the outstanding second-year quarterback. Meanwhile, the defense should be improved with first-round pick Luke Kuechly, an inside linebacker out of Boston College.
Dec. 16 1:00 p.m. FOX		vs. New York Giants Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	The defending Super Bowl champions dispatched the Falcons en route to the title, becoming the third NFC team in four years to make the Super Bowl after beating the Falcons in the postseason. Eli Manning passed for 295.9 yards per game last year, and the team drafted running back David Wilson.
Dec. 22 8:30 p.m. ESPN		@ Detroit Ford Field Detroit, MI	The Lions are coming off of a rare playoff appearance after Matthew Stafford (300.9 yards per game) and Calvin Johnson (96 receptions, 1,681 yards) blossomed on the offense. Stafford threw for 41 scores last year, including 16 to Johnson, and the running game racked up just 95 yards per game.
Dec. 30 1:00 p.m. FOX		vs. Tampa Bay Georgia Dome Atlanta, GA	The Bucs visit Atlanta in the regular-season finale, a game the Falcons hope will be a playoff tune up. Freeman took a step back last year, throwing 22 interceptions and just 16 touchdowns, and taking 29 sacks. Freeman must improve his 74.6 QB rating or the Bucs will be sunk.

NEW DIGS



Falcons deserve outdoor nest

By Fletcher Proctor

Few things in life are as nice as sitting outside with grills discharging mouth-watering aromas and friends engaging in revelry. The weather is seasonably warm with a hint of a crisp breeze blowing every so often to help move those grill smells across the vast space of Falcons fans gathered around cars and RVs, anticipating an Atlanta victory. Soon the fans will pack up the grill and head to their seats to watch the Falcons put a hurting on the day's opponent. Wouldn't it be nice if fans didn't have to leave the sunshine in the process to watch the home team win?

WARM WEATHER ...

The Falcons are in the process of negotiating for a new stadium, one with a retractable roof that could open up and invite the outdoors in. As quickly as they can, Falcons fans should wrap their arms around the idea of a new, retractable roof stadium in the heart of Atlanta. Imagine attending a football game while the sun shines overhead. Take a second to ponder the possibility of sitting in a brand new, state-of-the-art facility that can open up to let fans take advantage of Atlanta's beautiful fall weather. There is a reason people move to Atlanta, and one of them is the fall weather.

BRIGHT LIGHTS ...

If those Thursday night Georgia Tech games have taught us anything, it is that the city's skyline view is incredible at night. Imagine Sunday Night Football taking place in the Falcons' new stadium with a view of downtown Atlanta just beyond the highest reaches of the upper deck. During MNF's aerial shots from the blimp, imagine seeing the inside of the new stadium, packed full of screaming Falcons fans inspiring the defense.

And in case anyone needed another reason to push for a new stadium, especially one that has a retractable roof, look no further than Indianapolis, Detroit, New York and Glendale. These cities and teams all built new stadiums within the last few years, and all have been rewarded with the honor of hosting a Super Bowl. Glendale's University of Phoenix Stadium will actually be hosting a second one in 2015 since its grand opening back in 2006. If Atlanta wants to host another Super Bowl, it appears that a new stadium will be the only way to bring football's grandest event back to the ATL.

Proctor can be reached at fproctor@scoreatl.com.

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FALCONS OFFENSE



QB

Matt Ryan, No. 2 (6-4, 220) – The Falcons signal caller established career highs last season by throwing for 4,177 yards and 29 touchdowns. His 92.2 QB rating was also a personal best. Ryan has led Atlanta to three playoff appearances in four seasons.

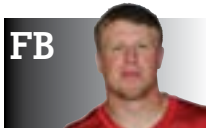
Backups: Chris Redman, No. 8 (6-3, 229) – The 10-year NFL veteran played in five games last season, completing 18 of 28 passes for 188 yards. ... John Parker Wilson, No. 4 (6-2, 218) – Wilson started two preseason games in 2011, completing 28 of 52 passes for 257 yards. ... Dominique Davis, No. 14 (6-3, 210) – The rookie free agent threw for 3,225 yards and 25 touchdowns during his senior year at East Carolina.



RB

Michael Turner, No. 33 (5-10, 244) – The Falcons battering ram was third in the NFL last season with 1,340 yards rushing and sixth with 11 rushing touchdowns.

Backups: Jason Snelling, No. 44 (5-11, 223) – A reliable veteran, Snelling has been with the team since 2007. He has scored seven times and rushed for 1,193 yards in his career. ... Jacquizz Rodgers, No. 32 (5-6, 196) – Rodgers saw action in every game last season, and scored rushing and receiving touchdowns while compiling 205 rushing yards and 188 receiving yards. ... Antoine Smith, No. 35 (5-9, 190) – The FSU product has been with the Falcons since 2009. ... Dimitri Nance, No. 30 (5-10, 219) – a second-year product out of Arizona State. ... Robbie Frey, No. 40 (6-0, 203) – Frey is a rookie free agent from Kutztown University.



FB

Mike Cox, No. 42 (6-0, 252) – In his fifth year out of Georgia Tech, Cox could markedly increase playing time in 2012. Cox has played on special teams as well as offense in stints in Atlanta and Kansas City. A threat in the passing game, Cox has caught 24 passes in his brief career.

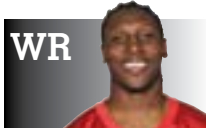
Backups: Bradie Ewing, No. 34 (5-11, 239) – Ewing was named special teams player of the year during his senior season at Wisconsin. The former Badger was Academic All-Big 10 three times. Ewing will challenge for the starting fullback spot and can contribute on special teams. ... Lee Meisner, No. 43 (6-0, 245) – Meisner is a rookie free agent out of Colorado State-Pueblo where he was an All-American.



TE

Tony Gonzalez, No. 88 (6-5, 243) – Gonzalez is simply the best when discussing the tight end position. The former Cal All-American holds NFL tight end records for most receptions (1,149), touchdowns (95) and receiving yards (13,338). Gonzalez is a 12-time Pro Bowler and nine-time All-Pro.

Backups: Michael Palmer, No. 81 (6-5, 260) – Palmer caught 10 balls last season for 72 yards and a score. ... Tommy Gallarda, No. 86 (6-5, 262) – Gallarda is a rookie free agent out of Boise State. ... Adam Nissley, No. 86 (6-6, 267) – Nissley is a rookie free agent out of Central Florida. ... Aron White, No. 49 (6-4, 239) – White is a rookie free agent out of Georgia. ... Lamark Brown, No. 85 (6-3, 220) – Brown is a rookie free agent out of Minnesota State-Mankato.



WR

Roddy White, No. 84 (6-0, 212) – The UAB product was eighth in the League in 2011 with 1,296 yards while catching eight touchdowns. He was also second in the League with 100 receptions. White was rewarded by being named to his fourth consecutive Pro Bowl.

Backups: Harry Douglas, No. 83 (6-0, 183) – The Jonesboro native set career highs last year in receptions (39) and receiving yards (498). Douglas also contributes on special teams. ... Kerry Meier, No. 80 (6-2, 224) – Meier was starting QB at the University of Kansas. ... Drew Davis, No. 19 (6-1, 205) – Davis was signed in 2011 as a rookie free agent. ... James Rodgers, No. 18 (5-7, 188) – Kenny Stafford, No. 89 (6-4, 204) – Rodgers and Stafford are both rookie free agents.



LT

Sam Baker, No. 72 (6-5, 301) – The USC product has started 41 games in his four years with the Falcons. A dependable blindside protector, the former Trojans All-American was the No. 21 overall draft choice in the 2008 draft. The 27-year-old was a three-time All-American at Southern Cal, and was named to the Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award watch lists.

Backups: Will Svitek, No. 77 (6-6, 309) – A native of the Czech Republic, Svitek played his college ball at Stanford, where he played defensive end and tight end. In six NFL seasons, Svitek has played in 61 games and started 16 of them. Svitek was drafted in the sixth round at pick No. 187 of the 2005 draft. Svitek attended high school in Newbury Park, Calif., where he was a three-sport athlete.



LG

Justin Blalock, No. 63 (6-4, 326) – The reliable guard has started in all 71 games in which he has participated. A second-round pick in the 2007 draft, the former Texas Longhorn never missed a game in college, becoming the first UT player ever to start 50 games.

Backups: Mike Johnson, No. 79 (6-5, 312) – The native of Pensacola, Fla., was drafted 98th overall by the Falcons in the 2010 NFL Draft. In college, Johnson was a consensus All-American in 2009 while helping lead Alabama to the national championship. Johnson has played in two games during his Falcons career. ... Phillip Keith Manley, No. 68 (6-5, 309) – Manley is a rookie free agent from Toledo.



C

Todd McClure, No. 62 (6-1, 296) – The longest-tenured Falcon, McClure has been a rock at center since being drafted in the seventh round of the 1999 draft. The former LSU Tiger started 13 games last season after entering 2011 with 148 consecutive starts. In his NFL career McClure has played in 182 games, starting 179 of them. McClure proved his durability in his second year when he rebounded from knee surgery to start in every game.

Backups: Joe Hawley, No. 61 (6-3, 297) – A native of Anaheim, Calif., Hawley will move over to center in McClure's stead should the need arise. ... Tyler Horn, No. 64 (6-4, 305) – Horn is a rookie free agent from Miami (Fla.).



RG

Joe Hawley, No. 61 (6-3, 297) – A fourth-round selection in the 2010 draft, Hawley has played in 31 games for Atlanta. Hawley started at right guard last season in 10 games. The former UNLV Rebel played both center and guard in college, and his versatility remains a major strength.

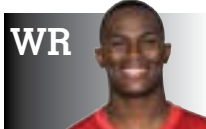
Backups: Garrett Reynolds, No. 75 (6-7, 317) – The former North Carolina star started seven times in 2011. He has played in 20 games in three years with Atlanta. ... Vince Manuwai, No. 65 (6-2, 333) – The former Hawaii Rainbow Warrior was signed by Atlanta in the offseason. ... Peter Konz, No. 66 (6-5, 315) – The Wisconsin graduate was named Academic All-Big Ten three times.



RT

Tyson Clabo, No. 77 (6-6, 329) – The former Wake Forest Demon Deacon was originally signed as a rookie free agent by Denver in 2004. After a year in NFL Europe, Clabo was signed by Atlanta in 2005. Clabo has played in 85 games and started all of them in six years with Atlanta. The Knoxville, Tenn., native was named to the Pro Bowl in 2010. In college, Clabo started the final 36 games of his career.

Backups: Lamar Holmes, No. 76 (6-6, 333) – The Southern Miss product was drafted in the third round of this year's draft. Holmes is returning to practice after an injury. ... Andrew Jackson, No. 69 (6-6, 299) – Jackson was the Falcons seventh-round pick in 2011. ... Bryce Harris, No. 70 (6-6, 300) – Harris is a rookie free agent from Fresno State.



WR

Julio Jones, No. 11 (6-3, 220) – The sixth overall in the 2011 NFL Draft, Jones caught eight touchdown passes and accumulated 959 receiving yards. He was named Rookie of the Month for December. Jones finished third among rookies in receptions and receiving yards, and caught more touchdowns than any other rookie. While in high school, Jones was named the top player in America by Sports Illustrated.

Backups: Kevin Cone, No. 12 (6-2, 216) – In 2011, Cone was signed as a rookie free agent and was a practice squad player. ... Michael Calvin, No. 15 (6-2, 215) – Calvin is a rookie free agent from Cal. At his college pro day, Calvin ran a 4.32 in the 40-yard dash. ... Marcus Jackson, No. 16 (6-1, 195) – Jackson is a rookie free agent from Lamar.



K

Matt Bryant, No. 3 (5-9, 203) – In his 12th year out of Baylor, Bryant has kicked for five teams in his NFL career. In three seasons with Atlanta, Bryant has not missed an extra point, making 99 consecutive. The Texas native has made 62 of 70 field goal attempts for the Falcons. Bryant began his professional career with the Iowa Barnstormers of the AFL before being signed by the Frankfurt Galaxy of NFL Europe in 2002.

Backups: Erik Folk, No. 1 (5-11, 185) – The University of Washington product was a semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award in 2011 and set a school record by making 124 of 124 PATs. With the Huskies, Folk kicked field goals to beat USC in 2009 and 2010.



KR

Jacquizz Rodgers, No. 32 (5-7, 188) – Rodgers rushed 57 times for 205 yards with one touchdown and caught 21 passes for 188 yards and added another score during a productive rookie season. He will get an opportunity to return kicks in 2012. At Oregon State, "Quizz" was named offensive player of the year for the Pac-10 in 2008 and was all-conference in three consecutive years (2008-2010). After the 2010 campaign, Rodgers received first-team All-American honors after being third team the two previous years.

Backups: Harry Douglas, No. 83 (6-0, 183) – The Louisville product will be the main backup early in camp. Douglas is also back-up wide receiver and first-team punt returner.



FALCONS DEFENSE

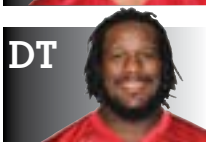
DE



John Abraham, No. 55 (6-4, 263) – The Predator enters his 13th season in the NFL after appearing in 15 games last year with the Falcons. Abraham racked up 9.5 sacks in 2011 while forcing four fumbles. In 2008, Abraham set the franchise's single-season record for sacks with 16.5.

Backups: Lawrence Sidbury, No. 90 (6-3, 265) – The four-year vet enters the season fresh off his best year as a pro when he got to opposing quarterbacks four times. Sidbury is a former Richmond Spider, and was drafted by the Falcons in the fourth round. ... Cliff Matthews, No. 98 (6-4, 257) – The former South Carolina Gamecock was drafted in the seventh-round of the 2011 NFL Draft.

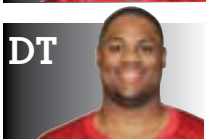
DT



Jonathan Babineaux, No. 95 (6-2, 300) – The eight-year Falcons veteran has 19 career sacks in 106 games. The Port Arthur, Texas native made 21 tackles in 2011 and managed to deflect two passes at the line of scrimmage. Babineaux was a second-round selection in 2005. The former Iowa Hawkeye will turn 31 in October.

Backups: Peria Jerry, No. 94 (6-2, 294) – The 2009 first-round pick started four games one year ago and registered double-digit tackles for the first time in his career. Jerry also recorded a forced fumble in 2011. The Ole Miss product has played in 34 total games for Atlanta. ... Travian Robertson, No. 92 (6-4, 302) – The 2012 seventh-round pick will step into the mix at tackle after starring at South Carolina.

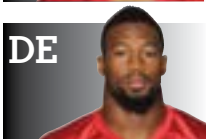
DT



Corey Peters, No. 91 (6-3, 295) – The 2010 third-round pick has taken the NFL by storm, grabbing a starting spot as a rookie and not letting go. In 2011, Peters appeared in 15 games, registering 26 tackles, three sacks, one interception, one fumble recovery and a touchdown. In college at the University of Kentucky, Peters was named All-SEC. Peters is a native of Louisville, Ky.

Backups: Vance Walker, No. 99 (6-2, 307) – The four-year pro out of Georgia Tech notched the first two sacks of his career in 2011 while appearing in all 16 regular season games. ... Micanor Regis, No. 67 (6-3, 305) – The former Miami Hurricane is a rookie free agent.

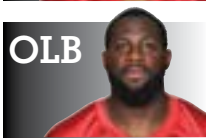
DE



Ray Edwards, No. 93 (6-5, 268) – The 27-year-old Edwards enters his second year with the Falcons looking to improve on his 3.5 sacks from 2011. Edwards has the ability to get to the quarterback consistently, as shown by his 33 career sacks. He heated up towards the end of the season, recording 11 of his 35 tackles after Dec. 1.

Backups: Kroy Biermann, No. 71 (6-3, 255) – The fifth-year pro recorded his second career touchdown last year on an interception return. Biermann also recorded 2.5 sacks and 37 tackles. In his career, Biermann has 12.5 sacks. ... Jonathan Massaquoi, No. 96 (6-2, 264) – The fifth-round draft pick got to the quarterback 19.5 times the over the last two seasons at Troy.

OLB



Stephen Nicholas, No. 54 (6-3, 230) – In five seasons with the Falcons, Nicholas has started 32 games and registered 246 tackles. Last season, the South Florida product appeared in 10 games and forced two fumbles.

Backups: Spencer Adkins, No. 59 (5-11, 236) – Adkins enters his fourth season with Atlanta having seen action as an outside linebacker as well as on special teams. The former Miami Hurricane has 15 career tackles in 24 games with the Falcons. ... Jerrell Harris, No. 49 (6-3, 242) – Harris is a rookie from Alabama who helped the Tide win a BCS title last year. ... Pat Schiller, No. 53 (6-2, 235) – The rookie played linebacker at Northern Illinois.

MLB



Lofa Tatupu, No. 51 (6-0, 250) – Tatupu will make his Falcons debut this season after six standout years with the Seattle Seahawks. In Seattle, Tatupu recorded 549 tackles, 8.5 sacks, 10 interceptions and seven forced fumbles. He is a three-time Pro Bowler and earned All-Pro honors in 2007.

Backups: Akeem Dent, No. 52 (6-1, 242) – The former Georgia Bulldog appeared in 16 games as a rookie last year, recording 20 tackles and two forced fumbles. Dent will battle Tatupu for the starting spot at middle linebacker. ... Rico Council, No. 43 (6-1, 255) – The Tennessee State standout signed as a free agent with the team after recording 87 tackles in college.

OLB



Sean Weatherspoon, No. 56 (6-1, 239) – Selected with the No. 19 pick in 2010, Weatherspoon racked up 115 tackles and four sacks in 2011. The former Missouri Tiger also deflected eight passes and recovered a fumble.

Backups: Robert James, No. 50 (5-11, 235) – The 2008 fifth-round pick has risen from the practice squad to see action in two different seasons. Last year, the 28-year old appeared in the season finale against Tampa Bay and also on special teams. ... Max Gruder, No. 46 (6-2, 230) – The rookie recorded 116 tackles his senior season at Pitt. ... Matt Hansen, No. 30 (6-1, 230) – The Falcons signed Hansen out of the University of Rhode Island in 2011.

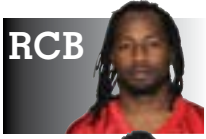
LCB



Brent Grimes, No. 20 (5-10, 181) – The former rookie free agent made the Pro Bowl in 2010 and has 13 interceptions in five seasons with the Falcons. Grimes signed with the Falcons out of Shippensburg and recorded his best year in 2010, when he notched 82 tackles while starting all 16 games.

Backups: Dominique Franks, No. 24 (5-11, 194) – The former Oklahoma Sooner had a career year last year, recording 15 tackles and two interceptions. ... Darrin Walls, No. 29 (6-0, 190) – The second-year standout out of Notre Dame intercepted one pass last year. ... Robert McClain, No. 27 (5-9, 195) – McClain appeared in 16 games for the Carolina Panthers in 2010 and made 16 total tackles.

RCB



Asante Samuel, No. 22 (5-10, 185) – The 10-year vet will make his Falcons debut this season after spending the last four years with Philadelphia. Samuel has 45 interceptions over his career, including 23 with the Eagles. The former Central Florida standout has five career pick-sixes.

Backups: Dunta Robinson, No. 23 (5-10, 182) – The ninth-year pro is in his third season with the Falcons. The Athens native will start at nickelback this season. ... Christopher Owens, No. 21 (5-9, 179) – Though just 25-years old, Owens has 104 career tackles. He appeared in 14 games in 2011. ... Peyton Thompson, No. 37 (5-11, 180) – Thompson is a rookie free agent from San Jose State.

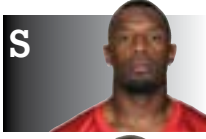
S



Thomas DeCoud, No. 28 (6-2, 192) – The 27-year-old California Golden Bear enters his fifth season with the Falcons. Last year, DeCoud appeared in 16 games, recording 86 tackles and nabbing four interceptions. In his career, DeCoud has eight picks.

Backups: Chris Hope, No. N/A (6-0, 204) – Hope was signed in the offseason after spending six years with Tennessee and four years with Pittsburgh. ... Shann Schillinger, No. 39 (6-0, 202) – In his third season with Atlanta, the former Montana Grizzlies standout racked up 11 tackles one year ago and has 19 in his two years with the team. ... Chad Faulcon, No. 40 (6-0, 190) – Faulcon is the first Montclair State player to sign with an NFL team since 2003. He was a two-time NJAC Defensive Player of the Week last year.

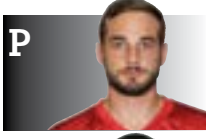
S



William Moore, No. 25 (6-0, 218) – Since being drafted out of Missouri in 2009, Moore has been a star in the Falcons defensive secondary. Moore broke out in 2010 with five interceptions and played in 12 games in 2011, racking up 54 tackles and two picks. He has also registered 17 pass defenses in the last two years.

Backups: Charles Mitchell, No. 26 (5-11, 202) – The 2012 sixth-round pick out of Mississippi State played in 50 games during his time in Starkville. Mitchell was named Gatorade Player of the Year in Mississippi during his senior year of high school. ... Suaesi Tuimaunei, No. 41 (6-1, 205) – The former Oregon State Beaver attended training camp with the Falcons in 2011 and was signed to the practice squad. Tuimaunei is a native of Hawaii.

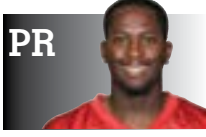
P



Matt Boshier, No. 5 (6-0, 208) – The second-year pro out of Miami (Fla.) handled punting and kickoff duties last season for Atlanta. The 24-year old had 70 punts for an average of 42.7 yards per kick last season. His longest was 59 yards, and he pinned opponents inside the 20-yard line 27 times. Boshier will kick off again for Atlanta this year and back up field goal kicker Matt Bryant.

Backups: Dawson Zimmerman, No. 9 (6-2, 205) – The rookie from Clemson was named Academic All-ACC twice, and was team specialist of the year the same season. The former Brookwood Bronco had 24 punts of 50-plus yards. Zimmerman was the holder on field goals in 2011.

PR



Harry Douglas, No. 83 (6-0, 183) – Douglas was selected in the third round of the 2008 NFL Draft and contributed immediately to the Falcons by rushing 12 times for 69 yards and a touchdown while also catching 23 passes for 320 yards and a score. In 2011, Douglas caught a career-high 39 balls for 498 yards. Douglas returned a punt 61 yards for a touchdown and was named NFC Special Teams Player of the Week for his efforts as a rookie.

Backups: Dominique Franks, No. 24 (5-11, 194) – Franks returned 29 punts for 346 yards in college, good enough for an 11.9 yards-per-return average. The team has allowed him to return punts in practice the last few seasons.

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Q&A WITH THOMAS

Score Atlanta founder and publisher I.J. Rosenberg recently discussed the upcoming 2012 season with Falcons General Manager Thomas Dimitroff.

How was this offseason compared to past offseasons in terms of the new collective bargaining agreement put into place last year?

TD: Last year was incredibly tumultuous and precarious at every turn as far as what to expect. This year it's a major relief to go into this season with most everything in place, and not only from the standpoint of the coaches and players, but also from the standpoint of admin-

istration. We are relieved to be heading into the season again with everything in a solid place.

Unlike last year when the NFL had a work stoppage that went into the summer, everything is back to normal for getting ready for the season. How much does this help the two new coordinators you brought in?

TD: Last year was unprecedented. This year everything was in place to bring in a new offensive coordinator, defensive coordinator and offensive line coach, who are major cogs within a coaching system. They're all adept and we're looking forward to working with these gentlemen going into this season.

Each offseason has featured a big signing or trade and you were able to keep the Asante Samuel trade under wraps for quite some time. Did bringing in a player like that relate to having no first-round pick?

TD: Well, we lightheartedly stated that that was one of our first-round picks and we were excited about and encouraged about having a player of Asante's caliber join our football team. He's going to help our secondary and our defense and he's going to bring an ele-

ment of swagger and confidence to our defense and help contribute to what we already have in place. We think we have a nice foundation here and we think Asante can just help us take our defense to another level.

Talk about Asante's swagger.

TD: In my mind, Asante's got some of the best confidence, self-confidence, in our League. He's got some of the best anticipatory skills in the League and his ability to get his hands on the football with 45 interceptions throughout his career is indicative of his ability to make plays. When you have someone like that who knows how to get to the ball and get around the ball, he just adds that element of confidence within a defense and secondary that his teammates will believe in. He can help make plays on the ball and help turn the ball over.

Before your arrival, the team had never finished with back-to-back winning seasons and had never been to the playoffs in consecutive years. Four seasons later, both of those items have been accomplished. How have the expectations changed as you enter season No. 5?

TD: Our bar continues to be set higher and higher, and our expectations too, obviously. Our owner, Arthur Blank, our head coach, Mike Smith, and myself as a general manager all believe we have the football team that will continue to take us to new levels. It will take a lot of focus, dedication and passion from our entire organization to help bring us to another level, and we are confident that we can do that.

The team spent its first two picks in the draft on offensive linemen when flashy playmakers were still available on the board. Is the mindset of building the offensive line something you brought with you from New England?

TD: We believe that we need to continue to fortify our offensive line and provide a very strong pocket for Matt Ryan to step up and deliver the ball to our playmakers. The only way we are going to be able to do that is if we continue to focus and continue to get more and more gritty and more stout along the offensive line. The ability to move the ball in the run game and get those tough yards was something that we focused on in the offseason. Another focus in the offseason was definitely directed towards making sure we're sound in all of the areas along the offensive line that I've mentioned.

The team brought back several free agents that you selected from your first few drafts. How do you decide on which players to bring back (for example Harry Douglas) vs. which players you decide to let walk (for example Curtis Lofton)?

TD: We felt that we were very, very active in free agency contrary to what was discussed. We had over 15 moves that we deemed were free agency moves by signing back the majority of our core of football players. Our desire was to make sure we got back every player that we felt that was going to be important for us moving forward and to continue to break through the proverbial door.



Q&A WITH MIKE

Head Coach Mike Smith enters the 2012 season with a sparkling 43-21 record with three playoff appearances and a division title. Entering his fifth season in Atlanta, Smith will attempt to take Atlanta back to the postseason for the fourth time. Score Atlanta founder I.J. Rosenberg sat down with Coach Smith earlier this summer.

For the first time since you were hired, you will have an offensive coordinator not named Mike Mularkey and a defensive coordinator not named Brian VanGorder. How have the two new hires taken to the job thus far?

MS: Both Dirk and Mike have come in and given us a new set of eyes on our football team, and I think they've done a very nice job through the OTAs and our minicamp in terms of installing the new offense and defense. Both of those guys have great resumes, and I am looking forward to seeing the schemes fill out in terms of what our players are capable of doing. In terms of coaching, I think you have philosophies that you believe in but you have to sometimes put those philosophies on the back shelf and make your decisions based on what your players are capable of doing and what their strengths and weaknesses are.

Mike Nolan is a respected defensive mind in the NFL, but you paid your dues on the defensive side of the ball, too. How involved will you be with the defensive game plan week-to-week or even play-to-play?

MS: As a head coach, you hire a defensive coordinator to call the plays on game day. I think that I am more of a macro-manager than a micro-manager. Mike and his staff, just like the last four years, will spend much more time evaluating the opposing team's offense

and will put together the game plan. I will be involved during the week, but on game day, I will let both the coordinators call the game, and I think that's very important.

Julio Jones has all of the makings of the next great superstar wide receiver in this league. What is Jones' ceiling in your eyes?

MS: It's a very high ceiling. He's going to be much more comfortable and is going to have a full offseason with us. Last year, it was a very unique situation in terms of our offseason and not having an opportunity to work with the rookies until the start of training camp. So I think that you are going to see Julio continue to go through a maturation process to be a very good wide receiver in the NFL. His run-after-catch ability is outstanding, and he also has a very unique skillset.

The schedule is interesting this year with the team never having back-to-back road games or home games. How difficult will this be on the coaching staff and on the players in terms of finding a rhythm?

MS: I think that it's unique because to the best of my recollection I don't believe I've ever had a schedule that was home-away-home-away all the way through. You usually would get a couple of road games then a couple of home games. The difficult part of that is going to be that we do have some Monday night, Sunday night, Thursday night games, so we're going to have to have four or five

different schedules that we are going to have to go through this season in our weekly sequence. We are used to that. We have played national games in the last couple years.

The sign of a great franchise is the chain of command from the owner to the GM to the coach to the quarterback. This will be your fifth year together. How does that synergy work?

MS: Well, I think it's a very positive synergy. And I think that it starts, as you mentioned, at the top with Mr. Blank and philosophically what he believes in terms of running an organization. And I think that we've been successful in our first four years and I don't think that there are going to be any changes. I am very confident that we will continue to grow as a team and as an organization, even though many parts have changed since the first day Thomas and I were hired to run the football operations. We've just got to continue to stay the course with how we're building our football team. We believe in filling through the draft and supplementing with free agents.

How do you see the 2012 season playing out and what would be considered a successful year? Should Falcons fans pack for the Super Bowl?

MS: To put it in one sentence, we want to be a better football team in 2012 than we were in 2011.

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Q&A WITH RICH

Score Atlanta founder and publisher I.J. Rosenberg sat down with Falcons President & CEO Rich McKay earlier this summer to discuss the current state of the franchise.

After making the playoffs two years in a row, something that's never been done in franchise history, is the next logical step for the franchise to reach the NFC Championship game?

RM: I don't know if there is such a thing as the next logical step. I think that all of us in the organization feel the pressure to keep get-

ting better. And "keep getting better" means to take the next steps, but every year is a new year. You have to build a football team and you have to reconstitute your players because the modern game has such a high turnover. We're incorporating two new coordinators this year, so we feel the pressure to keep moving.

When it comes to the fans, they've seen the success you've had the past couple years. How does a team President & CEO look at it from the perspective of what the fan demands and how you listen to what's written and said about that?

RM: I've been in the League long enough to know that fans raise their expectation bar every year, but the number one thing they want to see is consistency. They want to see you consistently be competitive in December and January and that is what Mike (Smith) and Thomas (Dimitroff) have helped us achieve. They're always going to want to see you do better than whatever last year was and however last year ended. I think their first requirement and expectation is that we want to be a competitive team that's relevant in Decem-

ber, that's playing for division championships and competing in the playoffs. That's the first expectation for every fan across this League and, as an organization, we have taken that challenge on and Mike and Thomas have helped us meet that challenge. Now we just want to be raising the bar.

As a chairman of the NFL's competition committee you hear a lot of proposals that involve the safety of players, but it seems the average fans are just starting to hear about all that these days. Have teams been concerned with the safety of the players for a while?

RM: I've been on the competition committee since 1994. I don't remember any meeting that I've been to where safety wasn't the first point discussed. It always has been about safety. I think we put defenseless receiver rules in place in 1995. People tend to think the safety discussion and the safety rules are recent, in the past couple years, but that's not the case. That has been the point of emphasis and the point of discussion in the League for an awfully long time. But the game evolves and so do the athletes and, as it does and as they do, you have to continue to evolve the rules and that's what we've been trying to do.

With all of the talk of a new stadium, how do you go about putting that talk away once training camp starts, or do you continue to pursue additional plans during the season?

RM: I think you let football take precedence. That's what should take precedence, and that's what will take precedence. My charge is to work behind the scenes with the Georgia World Congress Center on finding a long-term stadium solution that can be a win-win for all of our stakeholders. As an organization though, we're always focused on putting football first. It's what our fans want, it's what our team wants and it's what we should do.

What are realistic hopes/goals for the 2012 season? What is a success?

RM: I have never been one that got too worried about what the ultimate goal was. I'm more worried about preseason Week 1 and, certainly, regular season Week 1 rather than what the end of the season looks like. I think the most important thing we can do is build a really good football team during training camp, which the fans will be a part of and get an opportunity to watch, and then focus on taking it one game at a time. There are 32 teams in this League and every single one of them wants to win every single week. We have an incredibly competitive League. So I think when you start setting goals by number of wins or what will happen, you end up, sometimes, being bitterly disappointed. I think in our case, what we've done in the last four years is do it the right way, which is we set some internal goals but the main thing we've done is shown up and play consistently and won a lot of home games. It's a good formula for success.

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THE NEW FALCONS

By Stephen Black

C/G Peter Konz

Drafted: Second Round, Pick No. 55

College: Wisconsin

The Skinny: The Falcons' first pick in the 2012 Draft, Konz will be looked at to play guard or center. He was considered by some experts to be a late first-round selection, as well as the best center prospect in the draft. Konz graduated early, leaving the Badgers after his junior year. Scouts say he has a wide base off the snap, plays with consistent pad level, has excellent balance for pass protection and is a physical run-blocker. The 6-foot-5, 314-pounder picks up stunts well and works well with the rest of the interior offensive line. In college, Konz played 30 games for Wisconsin and helped lead his team to three straight bowls, including two Rose Bowls.

OT Lamar Holmes

Drafted: Third Round, Pick No. 91

College: Southern Miss

The Skinny: The 6-foot-6, 334-pound road-grader began his college career at Itawamba Community College in Mississippi prior to transferring to Southern Miss. Holmes carries prototypical size for an NFL tackle and carries it well. He impressed scouts with his athleticism, strength and foot movement. Holmes has college experience playing both

tackle positions and will be looked upon by the Falcons to add depth and potentially develop into an NFL starter. As a tribute to his leadership ability and character, Holmes was voted team captain in 2011 by his Golden Eagles teammates. The Gastonia, N.C., native was named all-Conference his senior year while protecting quarterback Austin Davis' blindside. The Southern Miss offense was quite potent last season, as Davis threw for 3,496 yards and 30 touchdowns while the Eagles ran for 205.1 yards per game.

FB Bradie Ewing

Drafted: Fifth Round, Pick No. 157

College: Wisconsin

The Skinny: In four years at Wisconsin, Ewing made the Academic All-Big Ten team three times. Ewing was a part of the Badgers' offensive backfield, as well as the punting and kicking units. During his college career, Ewing returned eight kickoffs for a 17.38-yard average and made 17 tackles. While blocking for Heisman candidate Montee Ball, the Richland Center, Wisc., native had 30 touchdown-resulting blocks his senior season after having 18 his junior year. Ewing also caught 28 passes during his career at Wisconsin including two scores. In addition to his skills as a blocker and receiver, Ewing is proficient on special teams, as the for-

mer walk-on was named Wisconsin's Special Teams Player of the Year in 2011.

DE Jonathan Massaquoi

Drafted: Fifth Round, Pick No. 164

College: Troy

The Skinny: Massaquoi is from nearby Central Gwinnett High School, where he began playing organized football for the first time during his junior season – and he made a big impression. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution named him to its list of top 60 juniors in the state. After his senior year with the Black Knights, Massaquoi enrolled at Butler Community College in Kansas. From there, he transferred to Troy where he continued to impress. After his first season at the Alabama school, Massaquoi was named to the All-Sun Belt Conference team. During that season, the native of Liberia, West Africa, had 13.5 sacks and 20.5 tackles-for-loss. Massaquoi followed up that season with a senior year in which he again led the team with six sacks and 10.5 tackles for loss.

S Charles Mitchell

Drafted: Sixth Round, Pick No. 192

College: Mississippi State

The Skinny: Mitchell will join three returning safeties in the Falcons defensive backfield. A former cornerback, Mitchell displayed solid coverage skills in college while also being stout in the running game. The native of Clarksdale, Miss., started all 50 games in his career with the Bulldogs while making 188 tackles and snatching four interceptions. Like Ewing, Mitchell was a standout special teams player in college. Scouts have said he diagnoses plays well and is always in position to make plays. Known as a sure tack-

ler, Mitchell is also good in zone coverage. As a senior at Clarksdale High School, Mitchell was named the state's Gatorade Player of the Year.

DT Travian Robertson

Drafted: Seventh Round, Pick No. 249

College: South Carolina

The Skinny: The 6-foot-4, 310-pound big man is known for his ability to mobilize offensive linemen, which frees up linebackers to make plays. Robertson brings a lot of leverage to his game and has shown the ability to play low. His hands and his physical strength are above average for players at his position. While competing in the SEC, Robertson played all four seasons for a total of 56 games, one behind the school leader. Like Mitchell and Holmes, Robertson was voted team captain by his peers. The native of Laurinburg, N.C., led the Gamecocks defensive line with 49 stops in 2011.

ROOKIE FREE AGENTS: LaMark Brown, WR, Minnesota-Mankato; Michael Calvin, WR, California; Rico Council, LB, Tennessee State; Dominique Davis, QB, East Carolina; Chad Faulcon, S, Montclair State; Robbie Frey, RB, Kutztown; Max Gruder, LB, Pittsburgh; Bryce Harris, T, Fresno State; Jerrell Harris, LB, Alabama; Josh Harris, LS, Auburn; Tyler Horn, C, Miami; Marcus Jackson, WR, Lamar; Phillip Keith Manley, G, Toledo; Marty Markett, CB, South Carolina; Adam Nissley, TE, Central Florida; Louis Nzegwu, DE, Wisconsin; Micanor Regis, DT, Miami; James Rodgers, WR, Oregon State; Pat Schiller, LB, Northern Illinois; Peyton Thompson, CB, San Jose State; Dawson Zimmerman, P, Clemson

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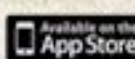
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