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04 | COLUMNISTS**06** SCORE LIST | NUMBERS**12** GEORGIA STATE | KENNESAW STATE
GEORGIA | GEORGIA TECH**13** BRAVES | FALCONS
HAWKS | SILVERBACKSCOVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI BLALOCK
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MY TWO CENTS

DAWGS DREAM SEASON COLLAPSES UNDER AVALANCHE OF POINTS, INJURIES

BY STEPHEN BLACK | SBLACK@SCOREATL.COM



In just two weeks Georgia went from, as Jim Donnan used to say, "the penthouse to the outhouse". A No. 6 ranking after the LSU win and gratuitous goodwill from the national media for playing arguably the toughest early schedule in the nation has given way to two straight losses to SEC East foes and a free fall out of the rankings.

BLAME GAME ...

Predictably, the Bulldog Nation is split when it comes to scapegoats. But most agree that Georgia's extensive injury list has a lot to do with it. However, even at the start of the season, Georgia's defense struggled to stop opponents. Teams have scored 30 or more points in every game except North Texas.

Also, special teams have killed the Dawgs,

from a crucial missed field goal in the season-opening loss to Clemson to the fumbled punt and botched long snap in last week's devastating defeat at Vandy.

The Dawgs rank an even 100th in the NCAA in points given up per game with 33.3. While Georgia was admittedly saddled with having to start three freshmen in the secondary and replace several starters from last year's unit, giving up that many points is simply not acceptable to a program that considered itself a national title contender.

The secondary has been confused throughout the season, and players have openly questioned the complicated playbook. Giving up 38 to Clemson's high-powered, veteran unit in the opener was understandable, but continually giving up more than 30 each week

is galling to the Georgia fanbase.

Rumors abounded about defensive coordinator Todd Grantham being dismissed during the bye week, but nothing happened. The thought is that he will not be retained after the season, but will continue to coach through the end of the year. But is it all his fault?

Some Georgia fans maintain that coach Mark Richt needs to be held accountable and is to blame for the season's collapse. While he is in charge of the program, it is tough to blame Richt when the top two running backs and top four receivers on the team have been seriously injured. Not only that, but the struggles on defense have not helped matters.

It can be argued that the strength and conditioning program needs work since there have been so many leg injuries. But Richt has been consistently successful in his 13-year tenure in Athens and brought the program back from the depths of the 2009-2010 seasons in which his teams lost a total of 12 games. He will make the right changes during the offseason.

Last year, Richt's group was one play from the BCS national title game. In 2007, there was a good argument that Georgia belonged in the title game. As it stood, the Bulldogs won the Sugar Bowl and finished No. 2.

In his tenure, Georgia has two SEC titles, six Eastern Division crowns and has made

bowl games each year. His winning percentage (.745) is tops among Georgia coaches who have coached any significant amount of games. Seven of Richt's teams have finished the season ranked in the top 10 just short of Vince Dooley's eight, which came in 25 seasons.

THE VERDICT ...

The Dawgs need to do something about the defense. Even with a bevy of future NFL draft picks starting in 2012, Georgia still gave up yards by the bushel and more than 30 points in each of its losses (38 to South Carolina and 32 to Alabama). The Tide, in fact, ran for 350 yards on Georgia. It got so bad in the SEC Championship game that Alabama simply ran the ball up the middle unmolested for a two-point conversion that ended up being a major play in the game. And that Georgia defense was as talented as any in college football.

While those problems were sometimes overshadowed last season by the heroics of stars like Jarvis Jones and Alec Ogletree, they have gotten much worse this season. The special teams have not been good and the injuries are concerning on many levels, but Richt deserves the chance to fix them in the offseason.

The defense, however, needs a new leader.
Photo courtesy of Rob Saye.

THE A-TRAIN

FALCONS NOT OUT OF PLAYOFF RACE JUST YET

BY ALEX EWALT | AEWALT@SCOREATL.COM



Two weeks ago in this space, after the Falcons' home loss to the New York Jets, I bemoaned the team's lack of a pass rush and inability to protect Matt Ryan. I lamented the loss of Julio Jones for the year to a recurring foot injury. I also noted the team's five-percent chance, based on statistics since 1990, of making the playoffs at 1-4.

(Two weeks ago, I also called out the Atlanta Braves for a heartbreaking defeat at the hands of the Los Angeles Dodgers...but, statistically, those boys still have exactly a zero-percent chance of succeeding at anything baseball-related the rest of this offseason, unless you count Evan Gattis potentially dominating another Latin American winter league.)

That unfavorable percentage has a lot to do with this quote from Bill Parcells: "you are what your record says you are."

But since 2008 and the start of the new regime under head coach Mike Smith, we haven't had a bad NFL team in town. Even in the playoff-less 2009 season, the team fought back from a 6-7 record to finish with a winning mark for the second straight year.

BACK ON TRACK ...

The Falcons' 31-23 victory over the winless Buccaneers last Sunday didn't exactly put the Falcons back on the playoff radar, but it was a step in the right direction. It also showed us that the Falcons are not hapless, hopeless or

completely overmatched. (If you were among the surprisingly robust audience to take in the Monday Night Football game earlier this week between the Giants and Vikings, you now know what "hapless" looks like.) In fact, they've lost their combined four games by an average of just under five points, with only a few plays standing between the Falcons and a winning record at this point.

I'm not calling a playoff berth for the Falcons, but I would be surprised if they don't end up back in the conversation. And, hey, maybe that five-percent playoff chance will turn out to be charmed, like the remainder after Tony Gonzalez claimed to be "95-percent sure" he was retiring after last season.

Pundits get ridiculed - and rightly so - for attempting to make predictions game-by-game before the season starts, but at 2-4, the number of scenarios for a playoff push are diminishing by the week if our Birds don't keep winning. So here goes the remainder of the schedule and a look at what the Falcons need to do to be contenders again.

PLAYOFF PUSH ...

First thing's first: beat Arizona. The Falcons' ability to return to the conversation is dependent on winning on the road against a team

that is trying to end a two-game skid of its own and get to 4-4 to stay in the hunt. With a win at Arizona (which would make them 3-4), the Falcons would also need to win at Carolina to pull even. A loss in either of these two difficult road games, and things start to look rough. Week 10 brings the Seattle Seahawks, now 6-1, to town. Can't call a win here.

Even if the Falcons fall to 4-5, they would get back to .500 at Tampa Bay and will hold serve at home against New Orleans. They win at Buffalo against a team that should still be missing starting quarterback E.J. Manuel.

A 7-5 record at this point means they have a chance: the remainder of the regular season brings games at Green Bay (likely loss), home against Washington (toss-up with a fully healthy Robert Griffin III), at San Francisco (likely loss), and home against the Panthers, who haven't won in Atlanta since 2007 (win). Best-case scenario, as I see it: 9-7.

The NFL is notorious for quick turn-arounds, as we saw in 2008, but that inevitably means that the mighty will fall from time to time. The Falcons still have a chance to make sure they aren't in that latter group, but they're on thin ice.

Photo courtesy of Jimmy Cribb/Atlanta Falcons.

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ON THE COVER



YOUR ATLANTA HAWKS

NEW COACH, NEW PLAYERS, NEW FUTURE FOR HAWKS

BY RICKY DIMON | RDIMON@SCOREATL.COM



You may not be all jazzed up for the 2013-14 Atlanta Hawks. You may not even be inspired to read an article on the Atlanta Hawks. But you also likely don't know very much about this year's squad. You may also be forgetting, perhaps conveniently, the not-so-distant past. Consider, briefly, what transpired on the hardwood in Atlanta under the team's previous two head coaches. In three years with Mike Woodson at the helm, the Hawks finished with a winning record only twice and they never advanced past the Eastern Conference semifinals. The story was a similar one during Larry Drew's three-year tenure as head coach. Atlanta compiled solid, but unspectacular, winning percentages between .537 and .606 in the three seasons, twice lost in the first round of the playoffs and reached the second round once. That's all well and good, but it will not do much for a fan base that is accustomed to watching its baseball and football teams win

division titles and compete for championships.

BELIEVE IN BUD ...

When the 2013-14 campaign begins next week, it will officially usher in a new era of Atlanta Hawks basketball. While the roster is not entirely different from that of years past, a team's identity starts at the top—and this season the top has a new face. Mike Budenholzer is on board as head coach, the first head coaching job in his NBA coaching career.

Budenholzer is not, however, inexperienced. Far from it. The 44-year-old spent 19 seasons with the San Antonio, where he was an assistant to Gregg Popovich for the past 17 years and also connected with current Hawks' general manager Danny Ferry during Ferry's two management stints in San Antonio. Budenholzer was Popovich's No. 1 assistant in each of the last six seasons, including most recently in 2012-13 when the Spurs reached the

NBA Finals and fell in seven games to the Miami Heat. He was on hand for all four of the franchise's NBA championships: 1999, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

"When you look as a head coach you look at three things: Ownership, GM and roster," Budenholzer explained of his interest in the job during his introductory press conference. "Here in Atlanta, they have all three things going in an awesome direction.... We're going to bring a system here where we're organized defensively, organized offensively, we're going to execute, they'll know their roles and we'll hold them accountable. My coaching style, it starts with being good defensively. That's got to be a priority. There's a cycle that's part of basketball. I want to be great on both ends and start with a defensive identity and have that carry over to our offense."

GIVE ME FIVE ...

The Hawks' anticipated starting five should be well-suited to executing Budenholzer's plan. Familiar faces Jeff Teague, Kyle Korver and Al Horford are expected to man the floor at point guard, shooting guard and center, respectively. They will likely be joined by a pair of former Utah Jazz standouts in Paul Millsap and DeMarre Carroll. Atlanta did not land a high-profile center that could have moved Horford to his preferred position of power forward, but Millsap gives the Hawks another big body who can bang down low at the No. 4 spot on the floor and relieve at least some pressure on Horford at both ends.

The abilities of Teague, Korver and Horford are well known. Teague led the Hawks in steals each of the past two seasons (1.61 per game in 2011-12 and 1.46 in 2012-13) despite averaging fewer than 34 minutes per contest on both occasions. Korver is recognized as a three-point specialist, but his wingspan allows him to be a factor on defense despite not having the swiftest of feet. Horford averaged more than a steal and a block per game last season.

Don't be surprised, though, if Atlanta's two best defensive players this year are Millsap and Carroll. Millsap led the Jazz in steals every one of the last three seasons since becoming

a full-time starter in 2010. He was second on the team in total rebounding and defensive rebounding behind center Al Jefferson during the same span. After four NBA seasons, Carroll has become respected for incredible effort, defensive tenacity and complete disregard for his body—in a good way. The former Missouri Tiger may be a smaller, faster and more offensive-skilled version of former Atlanta fan favorite Ivan Johnson. Carroll averaged almost a full steal per game last season in Utah, despite playing a mere 16.8 minutes per outing. "I'm a junkyard dog," Carroll told the Atlanta Journal Constitution at media day earlier this month. "I'm a blue collar guy. I'm a physical guy. I get up and down the floor. I'm a nitty-gritty guy."

LAYING THE FOUNDATION ...

These Hawks may not have any superstars, but they also won't have guys who try to play like superstars. This roster is comprised of players like Carroll who will do whatever it takes to win. When Atlanta wins this season, it will be as a result of basketball IQ (what Budenholzer calls the strength of the team) and depth. Ferry also brought in a 14-year veteran in power forward Elton Brand, a heralded rookie point guard in Dennis Schroder and a backup center in Gustavo Ayon, who dominated an international tournament with his native Mexico earlier this fall. Shooting guard and ever-clutch Lou Williams, who suffered a torn ACL in January, may return before the all-star break.

"At the end of the day there were some great situations and it was a tough decision," Korver told the AJC when asked about his decision to re-sign this summer. "But we wanted to be in Atlanta and we wanted to help build what Danny started to build last year."

Fans should feel the same way. The Hawks may not capture the NBA Championship this season, but that is no reason to scorn the Highlight Factory. If Budenholzer, Ferry and the core group of players eventually bring a title to Atlanta, don't you want to say—truthfully—that your chips were in the center of the table from the start? Now is the time to ante up.

Photos courtesy of Atlanta Hawks.



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WHO'S HOT

By Ricky Dimon

The Win Column



It wasn't pretty nor was it out of reach until late in the fourth quarter, but the Falcons—who beat Tampa Bay 31-23—will take a win any way they can get it right now. Three of Atlanta's next four opponents and four of its next six do not currently have winning records, so the record may soon improve even more. Now is the time to make a move.

Tech Turnaround



What a difference a week makes. On Oct. 12, the Jackets were busy getting blown out at BYU for their third straight loss. Last Saturday, though, Tech massacred Syracuse 56-0. Paul Johnson's team rushed for 394 yards at the expense of the Orange, much more than what it averaged in its recent setbacks. Suddenly, Tech's season looks bright.

Low Expectations



The Braves fizzled in the playoffs and injuries are crushing both Georgia and the Falcons, two teams that had championship hopes to start their campaigns. Hoops season is right around the corner as a chance to give fans something to cheer. Both GT and UGA are young and have the potential to surprise people. No matter what, they won't disappoint.

WHO'S NOT

Fourth-Quarter Woes



While the Bulldogs almost certainly would have defeated Vanderbilt with all hands on deck, injuries were no excuse for this one. UGA led 27-13 only to get outscored 17-0 over the final 15 minutes. The Dawgs botched a punt snap in their own territory then fumbled on their final full possession after also fumbling a punt in the third quarter.

Preseason Problems



The Hawks were 1-5 through their first six preseason games as of press time and they went winless at Philips Arena (0-3). While records do not matter at all prior to the real thing, injuries do. Both Al Horford and Paul Millsap are out for Atlanta's final tune-up game. Lou Williams is still sidelined and Gustavo Ayon may miss six more weeks.

Monday Night Football



Monday's Giants-Vikings game was one of the worst NFL contests in recent memory. It may not get much better in primetime anytime soon because much of the remaining MNF slate appears to be dismal. Only four more games pit teams currently with winning records against each other. Atlanta visits San Francisco in Week 16 to conclude the MNF schedule.

SCORE LIST

By Brian Jones

DAWG GONE

The Bulldogs have the week off and it's needed after stumbling against Vanderbilt last week. The offense is injury-riddled and the defense has not improved. Georgia need to get healthy during the bye week so it can finish the season strong and win its last five games of the regular season. It starts next week when the Bulldogs face Florida.

NEEDED WIN

The Falcons got an important victory when they took down the Tampa Bay Buccaneers on Sunday. Now they have to travel to Arizona to face the Cardinals. The good news is Steven Jackson should be available, so the running game is likely to be more effective. If Jackson is back and shows the burst he had to start the season, the Falcons will win.

KEEP IT GOING

The Jackets posted a dominant win last Saturday as they blew past Syracuse 56-0. But they have to keep the momentum going because Virginia is waiting for Tech in Charlottesville. I think the Syracuse win against gave Tech a much-needed boost and it should have no problem taking care of the Cavs. Then again, there's no telling with this Tech team.

GETTING CLOSER

Georgia State will win its first football game soon. After enduring two consecutive seven-point losses, the Panthers travel to Louisiana-Monroe Saturday looking for their first win. The Warhawks have lost three of their last four games, so this is a good opportunity for the Panthers to finally come out on top after close calls the past two weeks.

BATTLE IN SUWANEE

There's only three weeks left in the high school football regular season and the competition is getting more intense. One huge game Friday is Collins Hill traveling to Suwanee to face undefeated North Gwinnett. Be sure to catch that game on CSS and follow the rest of the high school football action on ScoreAtl.com, CSSsports.com and AJC.com.

OUR TWO CENTS

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



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TRIVIA QUESTION

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME GEORGIA HAD A THREE-GAME WINNING STREAK AGAINST FLORIDA?

ANSWER ON PAGE 14

SANITY AT LAST

"This is huge. We are going to try to feed off of this, work hard in practice this week so we can be successful next week."

Falcons WR Harry Douglas on Atlanta's win over Tampa Bay.

NUMBERS

By Craig Sager II

149

Receiving yards by Harry Douglas in Atlanta's win over Tampa Bay, a career high

148.4

Passer rating by Matt Ryan last Sunday, a career-best

8

Times in the last 10 games Matt Ryan has thrown multiple passing touchdowns

4

Career receiving touchdowns by Jacquizz Rodgers after his two scores against Tampa Bay

2

Shutouts this season by Georgia Tech's defense after topping Syracuse last week

2006

The last time Georgia lost to Vanderbilt prior to last Saturday's 31-27 defeat

28

High school football teams with undefeated records heading into Week 10

29

High school football teams without a win heading into Week 10



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PREP SPORTS

SOFTBALL, VOLLEYBALL PLAYOFFS REACH SECOND ROUND

BY STEPHEN BLACK | SBLACK@SCOREATL.COM



In the Class A volleyball playoffs Tuesday, Hebron Christian swept Landmark Christian 3-0 to advance to the final field of six. Landmark Christian's bid for a repeat state title ended, but in the other five classifications the reigning state champions all advanced. Class AAAAAA Walton swept McEachern (25-9, 25-11, 25-10). Lindsay Seagraves and Jessica Sloan each had 13 kills in Walton's second round win while sophomore Celeste Fitzgerald added a team-high 39 assists.

Class AAAAA Whitewater survived Creekview in five sets 3-2 and Class AAAA Sandy Creek grabbed a 3-1 road win over Veterans. Class AAA Blessed Trinity cruised past Savannah Arts 3-0 and Class AA Lovett swept Westside-Augusta 3-0.

Savannah Country Day had a notable sweep (25-19, 25-15, 25-21) over Walker, a

team that entered the playoffs as a state title favorite. Natalie Ourhaan had 12 of Savannah Country Day's 30 kills and junior Chandler Royal had five serving aces. In Class AAAAA, all eight home teams advanced into the Elite 8 and Sequoyia topped Starr's Mill 3-1 in a top 10 showdown. Top seeded McIntosh swept Pope (25-16, 25-12, 25-23).

IN THE CIRCLE ...

The second round of the softball playoffs began Wednesday for Class AA-AAAAAA. Class A, meanwhile, begins its initial playoff action. Buford is the odds-on favorite in Class AAA, one of the top teams in the state regardless of classification.

Tony Wolfe's Wolves have won a state championship each year since 2006 (AA from

2006-2011 and AAA in 2012). Buford scored 317 runs this year for an average of 9.91 runs per game while accumulating a 31-1 regular season record and a 6-0 record thus far in the preseason. The Buford pitching staff has held opponents to a .181 batting average while maintaining a 1.07 ERA.

Danielle Downs of Hiram led metro Atlanta players with a .605 batting average and 20 doubles. The Hornets season, however, ended in the Region 5-AAAAA tournament. ... Grayson junior catcher Stephanie Snyder is hitting .566 with seven homers, near top of the leaderboard in both areas. Snyder's third-seeded Rams are playing at top seeded North Gwinnett tonight.

ON THE TRAILS ...

Every single state championship contender on both the boys and girls sides in Class AAAAAA participated at the Nike/Fleet Feet Coach Wood Invitational last Saturday in Gainesville.

Facing the stiffest of competition, the Harrison boys continued their hot streak after winning the prestigious Gene Mullin Invitational at Furman University one week earlier. The Hoyas dominated the Coach Wood field with a winning score of 96 points to runner-up Brookwood's 140. They placed no runners in the top 10 but showcased their depth with all five point-scorers finishing in the top 27 of a 256-man competition. Austin Sprague of St. Pius X earned top

individual honors with a time of 15:54, just a few tenths of a second ahead of Marist's Michael Thurston. St. Pius X came in third as a team with Marietta and Peachtree Ridge rounding out the top five. Peachtree Ridge was led by Kevin Mills in fifth place at 16:03.

The girls championship heat saw Marist prevail with 108 points. Brookwood and Peachtree Ridge tied for second, well back with 153 points but also way ahead of fourth-place Harrison (211). The victorious War Eagles were paced by overall champion Morgan Ilse, who clocked a time of 18:49. No other runner broke the 19:00 barrier, as Northview's Lindsay Billings was second in 19:01. Walton's Avery Bussjager (19:04), Brookwood's Lauren Brennan (19:05) and Mill Creek's Lauren Hovis (19:08) also ran to top-five finishes.

This weekend's Carrollton Last Chance Invitational will offer a state preview of just about every classification as teams get a final look at the state meet course two weeks in advance of the ultimate event. Featured in a loaded field of schools are Darlington, Etowah, Landmark Christian, Lovett, Marietta, North Hall, Parkview, Peachtree Ridge, Wesleyan and Westminster. Region championships begin in earnest next week, including the 6-AAAA competition on Monday at Marist. Dunwoody is hosting the Region 6-AAAAA meet this Saturday.

Photos courtesy of Sonny Kennedy, GAC, Tami McQueen and Collins Hill.

Score Atlanta Football Rankings

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Northside-WR | 6. Gainesville |
| 2. Tucker | 7. Creekside |
| 3. Kell | 8. North Paulding |
| 4. Stephenson | 9. Ware County |
| 5. Thomas Co. Central | 10. South Paulding |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. North Gwinnett | 6. McEachern |
| 2. Colquitt County | 7. Hillgrove |
| 3. Camden County | 8. Lovejoy |
| 4. Norcross | 9. Archer |
| 5. North Cobb | 10. Peachtree Ridge |

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Sandy Creek | 6. Marist |
| 2. Carrollton | 7. Mary Persons |
| 3. Griffin | 8. Stockbridge |
| 4. Statesboro | 9. Cedartown |
| 5. Monroe Area | 10. Burke County |

Class AAA

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Buford | 6. Hart County |
| 2. Washington County | 7. North Hall |
| 3. Cartersville | 8. Callaway |
| 4. St. Pius X | 9. Appling County |
| 5. Carver-Columbus | 10. Elbert County |

Class AA

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Lovett | 6. Brooks County |
| 2. GAC | 7. Benedictine |
| 3. Lamar County | 8. Jefferson |
| 4. Calhoun | 9. Bowdon |
| 5. Washington-Wilkes | 10. Heard County |

Class A-Private

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. ELCA | 6. Darlington |
| 2. Landmark Chr. | 7. Mount Pisgah |
| 3. Aquinas | 8. George Walton Aca. |
| 4. Mount Paran | 9. Calvary Day |
| 5. Prince Ave. Chr. | 10. Pacelli |

Class A-Public

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Marion County | 6. Trion |
| 2. Seminole County | 7. Charlton County |
| 3. Johnson County | 8. ECI |
| 4. Irwin County | 9. Dooly County |
| 5. Clinch County | 10. Commerce |

Pre-Playoff Score Atlanta/AJC High School Volleyball Rankings

Class AAAAAA

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Walton | 6. Roswell |
| 2. South Forsyth | 7. East Coweta |
| 3. Johns Creek | 8. North Gwinnett |
| 4. Harrison | 9. North Cobb |
| 5. Chattahoochee | 10. Centennial |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. McIntosh | 6. Northgate |
| 2. Sequoyah | 7. North Springs |
| 3. Starr's Mill | 8. Union Grove |
| 4. Pope | 9. Harris County |
| 5. Whitewater | 10. Apalachee |

Class AAAA

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Marist | 6. Sandy Creek |
| 2. Columbus | 7. Carrollton |
| 3. River Ridge | 8. Southeast Whitfield |
| 4. Veterans | 9. Woodland-Stockbridge |
| 5. Heritage-Catoosa | 10. South Effingham |

Class AAA

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. St. Pius X | 6. North Hall |
| 2. Blessed Trinity | 7. North Oconee |
| 3. Woodward Academy | 8. Oconee County |
| 4. Buford | 9. Hart County |
| 5. Sonoraville | 10. Morgan County |

Class AA

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Westminster | 6. Kendrick |
| 2. Wesleyan | 7. Calhoun |
| 3. Lovett | 8. Westside-Augusta |
| 4. GAC | 9. St. Vincent's Academy |
| 5. Jefferson | 10. Coosa |

Class A

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Landmark Christian | 6. ELCA |
| 2. Walker | 7. Mt. Paran |
| 3. Holy Innocents' | 8. Savannah County Day |
| 4. Hebron Christian | 9. Athens Academy |
| 5. Savannah Christian | 10. Fellowship Christian |

Pre-Playoff Score Atlanta/AJC High School Softball Rankings

Class AAAAAA

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| 1. Lassiter | 6. Lambert |
| 2. Brookwood | 7. Archer |
| 3. Kennesaw Mountain | 8. Hillgrove |
| 4. Collins Hill | 9. Mill Creek |
| 5. North Gwinnett | 10. Lowndes |

Class AAAAA

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. Allatoona | 6. Pope |
| 2. Northgate | 7. Sequoyah |
| 3. Ola | 8. Creekview |
| 4. Greenbrier | 9. Union Grove |
| 5. Heritage-Conyers | 10. Miller Grove |

Class AAAA

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Madison County | 6. South Effingham |
| 2. Heritage-Catoosa | 7. River Ridge |
| 3. Northwest Whitfield | 8. Columbus |
| 4. Veterans | 9. Wayne County |
| 5. Locust Grove | 10. Marist |

Class AAA

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Buford | 6. Rockmart |
| 2. Ringgold | 7. Blessed Trinity |
| 3. Tattall County | 8. Jackson County |
| 4. Pierce County | 9. Chapel Hill |
| 5. Central-Carrollton | 10. Dodge County |

Class AA

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Heard County | 6. Bowdon |
| 2. Wesleyan | 7. Westminster |
| 3. Jeff Davis | 8. Jefferson |
| 4. Bacon County | 9. Harlem |
| 5. Calhoun | 10. Social Circle |

Class A

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Gordon Lee | 6. Pace Academy |
| 2. Georgia Military | 7. George Walton Acad. |
| 3. Eagle's Landing Chr. | 8. Prince Avenue Chr. |
| 4. First Presbyterian Day | 9. Hawkinsville |
| 5. Savannah Christian | 10. Schley County |



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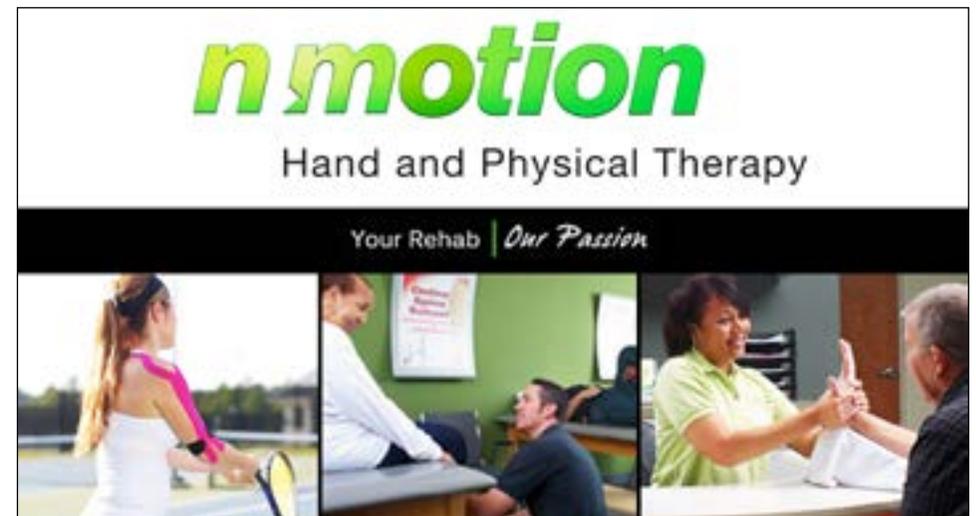
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S A - L O P

DREAM BEAT

**WILLIAMS OUT
AS DREAM HEAD
COACH**

BY JOE DEIGHTON | JDEIGHTON@SCOREATL.COM

Fred Williams is no longer the head coach or the general manager of the Atlanta Dream. The front office confirmed with Williams that his contract would not be renewed for next year. "Coach Williams has been an instrumental part of our success since the team's inception and although we have decided to move in a different direction, we appreciate Fred's dedicated service and ensuring that the Dream remained among the top teams in the WNBA," co-owners Mary Brock and Kelly Loeffler told the team's website. "He is a great teacher of the game and is well-respected by his peers."

Williams served as the Dream's head coach and general manager from mid-season last year until the end of the 2013 season. In that time, he compiled a 20-24 regular-season record and a 5-6 mark in the postseason while leading the Dream to the WNBA Finals this year. Williams will likely take on a consulting role with the successful WNBA franchise as it looks for a new voice from the bench.

WHO'S GOT NEXT? ...

The search for a new head coach is already underway. Whether the next coach will also serve as the GM is still up for debate. The team is looking for an experienced WNBA coach to take over one of the league's top jobs and bring a championship to Atlanta. A name that has been rumored to be interested is recently fired Tulsa head coach Gary Kloppenburg. Kloppenburg had a 20-49 record in two years with the Shock.

STAR ROOKIE ...

One of the surprising bright spots for the Dream this season was the play of rookie guard Alex Bentley. She scored double-digit points in 12 of the team's 34 games despite coming off the bench most of the season. The second-round pick out of Penn State ranked third among all WNBA rookies in assists with 2.8 per game. Bentley also finished fourth among rookies in points with 8.3 per contest. Bentley's minutes and numbers increased in the playoffs and especially in the finals. In three WNBA Finals games, Bentley averaged 9.7 points and turned in a valiant effort in Game 3 with 18 points. Her performance in the regular season was good enough to earn WNBA All-Rookie Team honors. Bentley became the third Dream player to receive such an accolade, following Angel McCoughtry in 2009 and Tiffany Hayes in 2012.



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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

DAWGS HAVE SEEN BETTER DAYS

BY CHRIS NIEMAN | CNIEMAN@SCOREATL.COM

Times are tough in Athens for the Georgia Bulldogs, who have dropped two straight games and are unranked in the polls for the first time in two years (Oct. 15, 2011). The Dawgs were dealt their second loss in 14 meetings against the Vanderbilt Commodores last Saturday in Nashville.

Head coach Mark Richt's squad has been victim of misfortune time and time again. Injuries are a common occurrence in 2013 and the Dawgs' "next man up" theme is falling short of team expectations. However, Richt is optimistic that both wide receiver Michael Bennett and tailback Todd Gurley will be ready for the Georgia/Florida game on Nov. 2 in Jacksonville following a bye week. Bennett tore is meniscus against Tennessee and Gurley suffered a high-ankle sprain against LSU.

"We feel pretty good that Michael Bennett can make it back and we're thinking there's a pretty good shot that Gurley will be ready to play," Richt said. "I'm hoping they can get at least one full week of practice with this open date. To really be ready to play, you need

a week of practice."

Strong Safety Josh Harvey-Clemons, who has made his presence felt this season, suffered a foot injury in the Vanderbilt game. Wide receiver Chris Conley also endured an ankle injury. Fortunately, according to Richt, neither player will need surgery.

ODDS AND ENDS ...

Having an extra week of rest and preparation is an advantage in many different facets. Hence, the team coming off of a bye week in the Georgia/Florida series tends to fall under the 'win' column in the World's Largest Outdoor Cocktail Party. Florida, however, is also off this weekend. Under Richt, Georgia is 13-4 after a bye week—which bodes well for a crippled Bulldogs squad that has not been able to catch a break.

UGA's special teams have been far from special this season, from giving up blocked punts, to mishandled snaps, to high snaps, to muffed punts, etc. Georgia is actually one of two SEC teams that doesn't have a special teams coordinator—Missouri being the other team. Richt has suggested that tight ends coach John Lilly is technically the special teams coach since he oversees those meetings and practices.

Fun fact when you desperately need one: Richt is one of five SEC coaches to register four consecutive 10-win seasons (2002-2005) along with Alabama's Bear Bryant, Georgia's own Vince Dooley, Tennessee's Philip Fulmer and Florida's Steve Spurrier.

GEORGIA TECH

JACKETS END SKID, POWER PAST ORANGE

BY STEPHEN BLACK | SBLACK@SCOREATL.COM

It's not done yet. Tech salvaged its season with a rousing 56-0 win over new ACC rival Syracuse Saturday in Atlanta. With the win, Tech ended a three-game losing streak and got back over .500 overall (4 -3) and in ACC play (3-2).

Syracuse was held to just 208 total yards by a ferocious Tech defense. Tech played nearly perfect, causing three turnovers and committing no penalties. The Jackets ran for 394 yards as 14 ballcarriers carried the ball and four of them scored. Zach Laskey rushed for three scores and 75 yards while freshman quarterback Justin Thomas led the Jackets with 95 yards on the ground including a 50-yard scoring jaunt in the third quarter.

The Jackets held the ball for 37:39 and led 28-0 at the half. Tech passers threw the ball just five times and completed three of them for 88 yards.

"One of the things that we wanted to do, something that we really try to focus on every week, was limit the other team's ability to run

the ball," said coach Paul Johnson during his midweek press conference. "I have a strong belief that if you look at the stats on Sunday of all of the games, a high percentage of the teams who run for more yards than their opponent are the ones who win."

ON THE DOCKET ...

Next up for the Jackets is a road trip to Virginia. Tech has won three of four against the Cavaliers, including last year's 56-20 drubbing. Virginia, however, has won nine of 10 games against the Jackets in Charlottesville.

Virginia (2-5) has lost four straight games and is still looking for its first conference win. Last week, the Cavaliers lost to Duke 35-22 in a game in which Virginia jumped out to a 22-0 second-quarter lead only to watch it slip away.

Cavs quarterback David Watford has thrown for 1,339 yards and five scores with eight interceptions. Kevin Parks leads Virginia with 560 rushing yards and eight touchdowns. Parks also leads the Cavs with 270 receiving yards while receiver Jake McGee has 31 catches for 270 yards and two touchdowns.

Virginia's defense ranks 75th in the nation in points against it, giving up 28.4 per game. The Cavs' defense is 47th in total defense with 377.6 yards per game. More importantly for the Tech game is Virginia's rush defense. The Cavs are 54th nationally against the run by giving up 151.7 yards-per game.

GEORGIA STATE

FOOTBALL TEAM SADDLED WITH ANOTHER CLOSE LOSS

BY CHRIS SCHUTTER | CSCHUTTER@SCOREATL.COM

Georgia State football fell to 0-7 on the year after a close loss to Texas State. The Panthers held the edge in total yards, outgaining the Bobcats 368-343. Georgia State's offensive attack was even more impressive considering the Panthers were missing three starters from the offensive line. Travis Evans led the way with 71 yards rushing bringing him to 1,403 career rushing yards and he is now nine yards away from being Georgia State's all-time leading rusher. The Panthers have another road conference game this Saturday when they face Louisiana-Monroe.

HOOPS NEWS ...

Hoop Day was a roaring success for the Panthers this past Saturday as Georgia State played a 20-minute scrimmage as well as putting on a dunk contest for the fans. Freshman Isaiah Dennis is listed at 5-foot-11 and his winning dunk was one in which he jumped over 6-foot-9 Curtis Washington. The play was impressive enough that it was featured as the No. 5 play on SportsCenter's Top 10 plays on Sun-

day. Dennis and the Panthers tip off their season on Nov. 9 at home against Southern Poly.

LADY PANTHERS ...

Panthers volleyball picked up their first Sun Belt conference win by sweeping Louisiana-Monroe 3-0 at home. Underclassmen helped lead the team to victory as sophomores Dede Bohannon and Eliza Zachary combined for 24 of GSU's 41 kills. Freshman Kristina Stinson had nine kills of her own. GSU has had a rough stretch, losing 10 games in a row, and it now hopes to use this sweep of a conference opponent as momentum for the rest of the season. The Panthers will face off against Louisiana-Lafayette and Louisiana-Monroe this weekend, and they will hope to repeat their efforts against Louisiana-Monroe while gaining revenge for a tough 3-2 loss to Louisiana-Lafayette earlier in the season.

Georgia State's women's soccer team lost its match Sunday in extra time to Arkansas State. Stephanie Kolwicz and Ashley Nagy both scored goals for GSU, but the Panthers still fell to 5-9-1 on the season. After 45 minutes the match was tied 1-1 with Arkansas State edging Georgia State 7-5 in shots. Both teams were aggressive to start the second half, knowing that the game would probably be decided by one goal. After 90 minutes it was 2-2, and Arkansas State's Loren Mitchell scored in the 93rd minute to lift them over GSU 3-2. The Panthers head to Western Kentucky on Oct. 25 for the regular season finale.

KENNESAW STATE

SOCCER TEAM TIED FOR THIRD PLACE

BY BRIAN JONES | BJONES@SCOREATL.COM

Kennesaw State's soccer season is coming to an end and the Owls are looking to finish on top half of the Atlantic Sun Conference standings. They helped themselves with a strong weekend as they defeated Stetson 1-0 last Friday and played Florida Gulf Coast to a scoreless tie on Sunday.

Elizabeth Johnson was the hero for the Owls on Friday, scoring the game-winning goal with fewer than two minutes remaining in the first half. Freshman goalkeeper Olivia Sturdivant collected three saves in the win and earned her fifth shutout of the season. The game, which was played at Fifth Third Bank Stadium, was also Senior Night for the Owls and celebrated the careers of defenders Tasia Williams and Kelsey Barr as well as forward Katrina Frost. All three played their final home game on Sunday in a game during which the defense came up big. The Owls were able to fend off 21 shots by conference leader FGCU in the double-overtime thriller. Sturdivant once again rose to the challenge as she collected five saves.

The Owls are currently tied for third in the conference with Mercer and Stetson. Jacksonville is in second place but has just a two-point advantage over the Owls. Kennesaw State will look to climb up the standings when it faces Jacksonville on Friday and North Florida on Sunday.

OCTOBER MADNESS ...

More than 2,000 fans came out to the second annual Flight Night hosted by the men's and women's basketball team. The event took place at the Convocation Center and some of the activities that went on were three-point and slam-dunk contests in addition to a scrimmage by the men's team. The three-point contest was won by the team of sophomore Nigel Pruitt and freshman Deandrea Sanders, while the slam dunk contest was won by red-shirt sophomore Orlando Coleman. The men's scrimmage was divided between the Black and Gold teams. The Gold team won 33-29 and was led by Junior Tanner Wozniak, who scored 14 points. Coleman added eight points in the win.

One of the other main attractions of Flight Night was the revealing of the name of the KSU live owl. Following a naming contest that started in late September, the owl will be known as Sturgis, named after KSU's first president—Horace Sturgis.

Both basketball teams will open with pre-season games in two weeks. The men will host Covenant College on Nov. 2 and women will face Talladega College on Nov. 3. Both games will be played at the Convocation Center.

ATLANTA HAWKS

ROSTER ALMOST COMPLETE FOR REGULAR SEASON

BY JAY UNDERWOOD | JUNDERWOOD@SCOREATL.COM

James Johnson was released from his contract with the Atlanta Hawks earlier this week. The move could be envisioned a week ago when general manager Danny Ferry signed Cartier Martin. Martin will now serve as the primary backup small forward and could also slide to the power forward spot if other players are injured or depending on matchups.

Johnson's release reduces the roster to 17 players and it must be trimmed down two more by 5 p.m. Monday. Many people close to the Hawks feel that three players will be released, leaving room for midseason moves such as trades and 10-day contracts. This means the players in the most danger of not making the opening-night roster are Shelvin Mack, Royal Ivey and Eric Dawson. The fate of Mike Scott, who is in the second year of his rookie deal, also hangs in the balance. He could fall victim to salary-cap numbers and positional needs.

INJURY ISSUES ...

Much of the rosters construction could depend on the health of Louis Williams and when he can be expected back in the lineup. So far he has looked good in the action he has seen in practice and in drills against teammates. Once his presence is felt in the lineup, the backcourt could be altered to coincide with his strengths. Even with a healthy Williams, the Hawks are still likely to carry a third point guard—meaning either Ivey or Mack would make the team in that role.

While Mack has been with the team longer, so much has changed offensively that his experience with the team may not be as important as it seems. Head coach Mike Budenholzer has stated that the competition is still open and he is looking at the roster as a whole to see who gives the team the most versatility.

The Hawks' premier offseason acquisition, Paul Millsap, has been battling a sore Achilles' during the last week of the preseason but should be ready to go for the regular-season opener. Millsap is still trying to develop the necessary chemistry with Al Horford to take this team to the postseason. By missing time with this injury, the chemistry could take longer to develop, but the Hawks are still confident with the new offensive philosophy and how it fits the players Ferry has acquired during his first year with the organization. The finished product will be on display next Wednesday in Dallas.

ATLANTA FALCONS

FALCONS EYE ROAD WIN VS. ABRAHAM'S CARDS

BY CRAIG SAGER II | CSAGER@SCOREATL.COM

Atlanta moved to 2-4 with its 31-23 Week 7 victory over Tampa Bay. Quarterback Matt Ryan threw three touchdown passes and recorded a career-high passer rating of 148.4. Wideout Harry Douglas embraced the No. 1 receiving role with a sidelined Julio Jones and Roddy White and paced the offense with a career-high 149 yards and a 37-yard touchdown. The 149 receiving yards marked the most ever by a Falcons player against the Buccaneers.

"He stepped up to the plate and did an extremely good job," head coach Mike Smith said of Douglas.

CATCH AND RUN ...

The Falcons were awful in the run game against Tampa Bay, posting a season-low 18 yards on 18 carries, but running back Jacquizz Rodgers was outstanding in the passing attack. Rodgers hauled in a team-high eight receptions for 46 yards and two touchdowns out of the Atlanta backfield.

"I thought we put together a very good plan to utilize the strengths of our players,"

said Smith. "We talked during the bye week, if you had a Falcons logo on your helmet you were expected to step up and make plays...and I thought we did that."

Defensively, William Moore and Thomas DeCoud helped set the tone early. Moore came in on the blitz and caused a sack-fumble that DeCoud ran in for a 30-yard touchdown.

"It was a great play call by coach (Mike) Nolan," Moore said of his defensive coordinator. "He called it and we executed it perfectly and got a big turnover."

ARIZONA ABE ...

Atlanta will hit the road to take on the 3-4 Arizona Cardinals this Sunday. The Falcons are 0-2 away from the Georgia Dome this season and have not been on the road since Week 3 when they fell to the Dolphins 27-23 in South Beach.

Former Falcon John Abraham will be suiting up for the Cardinals. Arizona picked up the three-time All-Pro defensive end after the Falcons released him this offseason. Abraham started seven seasons for the Falcons (2006-2012) and his 124.0 career sacks are the most among all active players. Abraham posted 2.0 sacks and two forced fumbles last week against Seattle and this will be a significant game for the motivated 35-year-old.

Ryan threw a career-high five interceptions in last season's 23-19 win over Arizona and enters this game with multiple passing touchdowns in all six games this season compared to only three interceptions.

ATLANTA BRAVES

WREN TALKS UPTON, UGGLA FUTURES

BY RICKY DIMON | RDIMON@SCOREATL.COM

It was not supposed to be this way. Dan Uggla was expected to be a rock of the franchise when he was acquired via trade from the Marlins prior to the 2011 season. The same was anticipated for B.J. Upton when he signed as a free agent last offseason. Three years later for Uggla and one for Upton, they are now two of Atlanta's biggest question marks heading into 2014. That's what happens with season batting averages of .184 (Upton's) and .179 (Uggla's, which was the worst in Major League Baseball among qualifying starters).

"What I hope happened to B.J. and what I'm theorizing is that he fell into the same trap that so many free agents fall into; trying to do too much, trying to justify and win over a new fan base," general manager Frank Wren told the Atlanta Journal Constitution when asked what he thought happened to the older Upton brother. "It's a deep hole that gets deeper the harder you try. B.J.'s very talented, he's

young, he can do a lot of things on the baseball field. We've got to help him get back on track. There's a reason why there were a lot of clubs after him last winter."

Wren was vaguer in discussing Uggla. "Nothing's really changed in that regard," he answered after being asked about the second baseman's future in Atlanta, which especially came into question after he was left off the 25-man ALDS roster. "I think we made a decision, who was our best 25? And he wasn't on that roster. We need him to perform better. I mean, that's plain and simple."

MARKET WATCH ...

Upton has four years and \$59.8 million remaining on his contract. Uggla has two years and \$26 million left on his deal. The Braves are going to have more money tied up with Freddie Freeman, Kris Medlen, Jason Heyward and Chris Johnson in 2014 than they did last season. Freeman and Kimbrel are entering their first arbitration-eligible seasons and both Heyward and Johnson are entering their second. Paul Maholm is a free agent, expected to depart, so his \$6.5 million will come off the books. Tim Hudson (\$9 million in 2013) is also a free agent, although there is a chance he could return. The Braves are likely to use available funds to go after a bona-fide starter or retain Hudson while also adding pitching depth.

ATLANTA SILVERBACKS

LOPSIDED DEFEAT PRECEDES UPCOMING SOCCER BOWL

BY CHRIS SCHUTTER | CSCHUTTER@SCOREATL.COM

Atlanta suffered a lopsided defeat this past Saturday losing to Fort Lauderdale 6-2. The Silverbacks were only down 2-1 at halftime but collapsed in the second half after having a player ejected. Following a red card in the 52nd minute, the match got out of hand in a hurry as the Strikers put up four second-half goals.

The visiting Silverbacks responded well to an early 1-0 deficit by attacking the box and scoring a goal. Ruben Luna capitalized off a ball played by midfielder Milton Blanco, firing the Silverbacks first goal into the net in the 34th minute. Ft. Lauderdale responded with a header from Yakiel Perez to make it 2-1 at the half.

In the 52nd minute, Mike Randolph received a red card for tackling an opposing player in the penalty area. This penalty reduced the Silverbacks to 10 players for the rest of the match. The Strikers took advantage of the ensuing penalty kick as Carlos Salazar used it to give his team a 3-1 lead in the 54th minute. Fort

Lauderdale's Perez scored his second goal of the game in the 63rd minute, and Salazar found his second goal in the 68th to make it 5-1.

The Silverbacks' Mendes managed to convert a meaningless penalty kick in the 86th minute to score the game's final goal.

SOCCER BOWL ...

This Silverbacks squad is the same one that won the Spring Season outright and will be hosting the Soccer Bowl on Nov. 9 at Silverbacks Park. But before that, they head back on the road to face-off against the Carolina Rail-Hawks this Saturday. They should hope now more than ever to get a good win against Carolina so they can gain some momentum against the probable Fall Champion New York Cosmos. New York is undefeated in September and October including a draw against Atlanta earlier in September. The Cosmos have outscored opponents 6-1 in October compared to Atlanta's 5-8 goal differential.

What jumps out about the way New York plays is that the Cosmos just do not give up many goals. The Cosmos have allowed a league-low 11 goals, including five shut-outs. Atlanta will struggle against this defense as they are fifth in goals scored and have only scored 14 goals this fall. We will get a clearer picture on how the Soccer Bowl will play out when Atlanta hosts New York in the season finale on Nov. 2.

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