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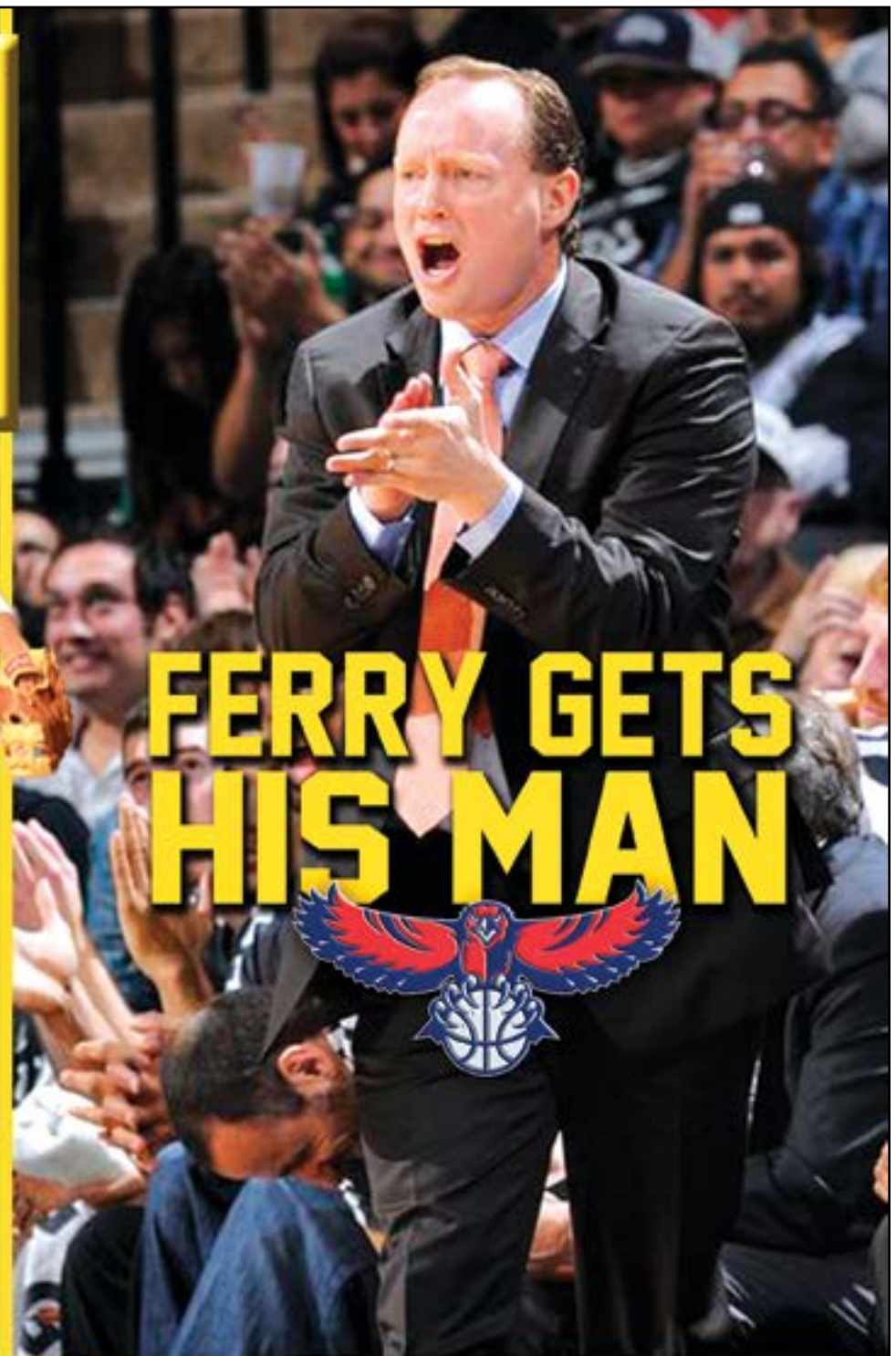
Vol. 9 | Iss. 11 | May 31 - June 13, 2013 **atlanta**



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CAN'T MISS THIS WEEK

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- 5** Score Atlanta veteran Alex Ewalt gives you all the information you can handle on the Hawks' hiring of Mike Budenholzer.
- 7** Fletcher Proctor pays homage to the great history of baseball in Georgia by looking at some star player who trace their roots to the Peach State.
- 8-11** Our prep section, where we give you our rankings and the latest high school sports stories.

TEAM SCOOP AND VOICES

COVER DESIGN BY DJ GALBIATI BLALOCK
COVER PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIMMY CRIBB,
MILTON HS AND NBA PHOTOS

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SHOT OF THE WEEK...



RAIDERS ROMP: Redan swept to the Class AAAA baseball title over the weekend for the school's first baseball championship. Redan has seen Major Leaguers like Wally Joyner and Brandon Phillips walk through its hallways, but never won it all. That all changed Monday as Brandon Baker and coach Marvin Pruitt got it done. Photo courtesy of Mark Brock.

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DIMON CLUB



Ferry gets his man, Braves still have theirs

By Joe Deighton

Larry Drew wasn't bad. In three seasons as head coach of the Atlanta Hawks, Drew compiled a regular-season record of 128-102. His teams had three winning seasons, three playoff appearances, two runner-up finishes to Miami in the Southeast Division and one playoff series victory (over Orlando in 2011). They did it without a superstar (Josh Smith? Hahaha) and with their most consistent player for the most part playing out of position (Al Horford has primarily suited up at the five instead of the four due to a lack of a true center on the roster).

No, Larry Drew wasn't bad. He simply wasn't Danny Ferry's guy. Ferry became the Hawks' general manager almost exactly one year ago, inheriting Drew after the former as-

sistant's first two seasons as head man. Drew was a Rick Sund guy. Mike Budenholzer is a Danny Ferry guy.

Budenholzer has spent the last 19 seasons with the San Antonio Spurs, 17 as an assistant to Gregg Popovich. Five of the years included Ferry as a member of the organization; three as a player and two more at the middle management level. It looks like Atlanta sports franchises may be taking an "if you can't beat 'em, raid 'em" approach. The Falcons took notes from the New England dynasty and hired away general manager Thomas Dimitroff. Now it is the Hawks' turn to continue plundering San Antonio, which has won all four of its NBA titles since 1999 (all with Budenholzer) and is back in the NBA Finals.

The jury is out on Budenholzer, obviously, because he has never been an NBA head coach. The jury is still out on Ferry, too, for that matter. He is heading into what will likely be a make-or-break offseason for the future of the franchise. Not only has there already been a coaching change, but the 12-man roster is in an unprecedented state of flux.

But is there any reason not to trust Ferry? So far, no. The former Duke Blue Devil swindled New Jersey into taking Joe Johnson and his outrageous contract and he also got Utah to trade for Marvin Williams. He has cap space coming out of the woodwork this summer. Atlanta is still a work in a progress and has a ton on its plate this summer with so few players under guaranteed contracts for 2012-13, but there is finally stability at the top. Counting Budenholzer, the Hawks have had three head coaches since 2010 and five since 2002. By contrast, the Spurs have had one since 1996. Could something similar be in store for Atlanta? Who knows, but it's not out of the question. Budenholzer is just 43 years old.

He could be around awhile. So could winning.

GATTITUDE ...

While the Hawks got their man on May 28, the Brave got theirs on March 31 when

they purchased the contract of someone named Evan Gattis from Double-A Mississippi. That someone was a guy who was almost derailed by a minor problem with drugs and a major problem with depression. Now, at 26 years old, the Dallas native is finally a Texas-sized problem for big-league pitchers.

As of Wednesday afternoon, Gattis is tied for third in the National League with 12 home runs, trailing only teammate Justin Upton and altitude-aided Carlos Gonzalez of Colorado. He has done it, too, in a mere 133 at-bats. Of the 16 other National League hitters with at least nine home runs, none has fewer than 150 at-bats and only one (Washington phenom Bryce Harper) has fewer than 159.

This is "Linsanity" 2.0, minus the turn-overs (errors) and minus the injuries (knock on wood). This is the best story in baseball right now, period. How does the story end? We may not know for five more months, but that's a good thing because the journey may be more fun than the destination. After all, the Braves aren't favored to win the World Series nor are they even expected to get out of the National League.

But who cares? These Braves are being led by a man who knows a thing or two about defying the odds.

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JAY'S JOURNAL



Gattis wows baseball world, earns key role

By Jay Underwood

The story of Evan Gattis continues to grow and it is starting to garner some national attention. With his performance this past week it has even become international after he homered in back-to-back games in Toronto. Much has been made of what to do with the surplus of catchers the Braves posses and how to get Gattis optimal at-bats with a team that has finally gotten healthy after a variety of injuries to begin the season.

Right now, Gattis leads all rookies in Home runs, extra base hits, RBIs and slugging percentage. Knowing that this has come in a limited role many would think that this would garner more playing time, but if you look at the positions that he is capable of playing the whole story may become more clear. His natu-

ral position, catcher, is occupied by the resident leader of the clubhouse, Brian McCann. McCann is back from shoulder surgery and is looking like the 6-time all star of his past posting .281 batting average driving in 14 runs and knocking six home runs. While these pale in comparison to the 12 homers and 32 RBIs of Gattis you have to look at the at-bats and they break down to very comparable numbers.

The next position that he worked in during his years in the minor leagues was left field the past season and in winter ball. While is defense isn't spectacular, he isn't going to embarrass himself and his offense should more than make up for his lack of defensive prowess. The only issue is that Justin Upton came over in a blockbuster trade this offsea-

son and has been putting up MVP-type numbers upon his arrival.

When Freddie Freeman went down with a groin injury early in the year, it gave Fredi Gonzalez a chance to plug Gattis in a first base to see how he would adapt and he provided the same results as in left field. He proved to make the routine plays, but was a downgrade defensively from Freeman. When Freeman did return and resumed his position at his corner of the infield Gattis was yet again sent back to the bench.

This left the rover position that was invented on the fly by this Braves team. Built like an American League team the Braves are now able to take advantage of the Designated Hitter in interleague parks. They also have a player who have spell three of its stars periodically throughout the week to keep them fresh throughout the season. More importantly Gattis provides them with a powerful bat off the bench who can change the complexion of the game by just walking into the batters box.

Eight of Evan's 12 homers have either tied the game or given the Braves the lead. His is also tied for the league lead in go-ahead homeruns after the seventh inning. He gets in done in clutch time and it doesn't matter how or why he is in the game. The popular thing to do is to speculate what will happen after

this season with Brian McCann hitting free agency and the emergence of Evan Gattis as a possible replacement, but it appears that the guys actually playing the game are just enjoying their time together and making the most of this season.

There are many things to like about this Braves team and Evan Gattis is only part of the story, but its hard not to cheer for the guy who essentially went from nobody to a national storyline almost overnight. He may not have a defined position, but he is the 10th guy in the opposition's head when the game is close and time is running out.

It is early, but Gattis has to be in the consideration for National League Rookie of the Year. He may not win the award and he may not continue this torrid pace to the end of the season, but to be in the consideration at this point has to be an accomplishment that no one saw coming, except maybe him. The game of baseball is changing and the importance of players like Evan Gattis is the perfect example. You don't have to play the same position everyday to make an impact and that is exactly what he is doing. He makes his impact where he is needed and has no problem with being the wild card.

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HEAD HAWK



Ferry brings in longtime Spurs assistant

By Alex Ewalt



Danny Ferry just made the move we have all been waiting for.

Hired nearly a year ago, he quickly rid the franchise of Joe Johnson's anchor-like contract and cobbled together a team that exceeded expectations. The next and most important move was to find a coach that would take the Hawks to the next level.

SPURRING CHANGE ...

Earlier this week, Ferry got his man when he hired Mike Budenholzer away from the San Antonio Spurs, convincing perhaps the league's top assistant to take a shot with Atlanta just as Ferry did last June.

The process was not necessarily a smooth one. Ferry took the unorthodox approach of announcing that he would begin a coaching search with Drew still onboard and never publicly ruled him out as a candidate, although many assumed his ouster was inevitable. Retreads Nate McMillan and Stan Van Gundy came up as possible hires (Van Gundy ostensibly to lure Dwight Howard back to his

hometown), as did CSKA Moscow coach Ettore Messina, which had fans scratching their heads. Now we see that Ferry was targeting his former colleague from the beginning, reportedly meeting with Budenholzer both after the Spurs' Golden State series win and after their recent sweep of the Memphis Grizzlies.

And so Atlanta nabs Gregg Popovich's right-hand man, who Ferry had observed from above during two different stints in the Spurs' front office. Budenholzer even helped coach Ferry to a championship when he was a reserve with San Antonio in 2002-03, the last year of his playing career. Budenholzer is one of the high priests of the Spurs' basketball religion: tough defense, ball movement, smart basketball and fundamentals. He may not have the name recognition of some of the other coaches on the market, but he has the track record and the championship rings to make up for it.

"I'm definitely not a sexy hire," Budenholzer joked at Wednesday's press conference. "Thankfully, that wasn't on Danny's

shopping list."

It's noteworthy that Ferry and Budenholzer, both immensely respected, had options before they chose Atlanta. Ferry was seemingly all but gone for Philadelphia before coming to town, and Budenholzer had his pick of job openings this offseason. One need only listen to the Spurs' players, coaches and front office to know how much they will miss the man they refer to as "Coach Bud." Popovich, in a statement released after the hire was announced, referred to Budenholzer as "more of a co-head coach than an assistant." Tony Parker and other players heaped praise on him. Not bad for a guy who started as a video assistant for the team back in 1994.

Most importantly, the Hawks now have a GM and a coach that share a basketball philosophy, and there has been no philosophy more consistent and productive over the last 15 years than the Spurs'.

"Part of what's exciting about this for me is he has a great understanding of the league," Ferry said. "He's been part of San Antonio. He wasn't just in San Antonio (for a while) like some of us were, he's been there for the duration. He's seen how it evolved. He's seen how it has grown."

THE SYSTEM ...

Hawks fans watching the NBA playoffs just saw a team made up of aging stars like Tim Duncan, Manu Ginobili and Tony Parker completely dismantle the younger Grizzlies, previously a hot pick to win the series, in four games in the Western Conference Finals. Budenholzer is staying with San Antonio for the rest of the playoffs, and might very well help the Spurs to their fifth title since 1999.

Contrast San Antonio's march through yet another playoff season with the Hawks' performance in the first round against the Indiana Pacers: Exciting and effective at times, but downright unwatchable for long stretches. Turnovers, timidity and Jeff Teague looking lost on the court ... a 30-percent three-point shooter, Josh Smith, taking a crucial trey inside a minute to play in Game 6 and having it blocked...

The Spurs have a system, and they stick to it. Heck, they even released former Hawk and noted troublemaker Stephen Jackson midseason because he didn't fit in with the plan.

Budenholzer will bring to Atlanta his 17 years of experience as an assistant under that system's architect, Popovich, who is widely considered the finest head coach in the game

today. He will provide some much needed structure to the arena dubbed "The Highlight Factory." Fans are ready to see some discipline mixed in with the dunks.

This is not to diminish the Hawks' achievements this season, their sixth straight with a playoff appearance. The roster must have led the league in one-year contracts, and it was assumed to be a transition season. Instead, the team was a true surprise in the East even with a rash of injuries. Larry Drew, as of the publication of this issue, was hitting the interview circuit hard and will possibly have another head coaching job in 2013-14. He leaves with the third-highest winning percentage for a head coach in franchise history. By all accounts, he is a good basketball mind and well liked.

But Ferry's goal is true contention, not a first- or second-round exit. As it's the 25th anniversary of the classic Dominique vs. Bird showdown in Game 7 of the conference semis (a crushing 118-116 loss in Boston, of course), we are reminded of the fact that the Hawks, in Atlanta, have never reached the third round. Budenholzer knows what it's like to be the second in command on championship-caliber teams.

It will be a battle to compete in the East with the likes of the Miami Heat superteam, the emerging Pacers, the Chicago Bulls (with Derrick Rose, at some point) and both Big Apple squads. They are all positioned for long-term success with bona fide stars on the court. There will be personnel challenges and the possibility – barring the signing of one of the league's marquee free agents like Dwight Howard or Chris Paul – of another season with a roster in transition.

There are only three players with contracts through next year: big man Al Horford, and guards Lou Williams and John Jenkins. Teague and Smith are the team's top free agents, and no doubt Ferry and Budenholzer will hit the meeting room this summer to determine who stays. Will the Hawks keep Teague and hope he develops into a top-flight NBA point guard? Will the team re-sign Smith and let the new man in charge try to corral – at long last – the volatile star, something the previous two coaches couldn't manage to do? Or will they start from scratch? The immediate future holds many, many questions for the Hawks, but the biggest one was just answered resoundingly.

Photo courtesy of NBA Photos. Ewalt can be reached at 404-256-1572.



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BY STEPHEN BLACK

WHO'S HOT

THUMBS UP TO NEW COACHES



Budenholzer

You may not recognize his name, but new Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer made waves around the NBA when he accepted the Hawks' coaching position. Budenholzer and Hawks GM Danny Ferry were together with the Spurs for several seasons and they look to bring the San Antonio model of success to Atlanta.

The White Bear

El Oso Blanco, Evan Gattis, has homered in five of the last eight games for the Braves. A total nobody prior to the season, the bare-handed hitting sensation has turned into a cult sensation over night in not only Atlanta, but the entire nation. A tremendous story, Gattis is also a key cog in the first-place Braves.

NCAA Golf

If you get a chance, head out to the Capital City Club Friday or Saturday for the NCAA men's golf championships. A wonderful event for the metro area to land, the golf tournament matches the best college golf teams in the nation. Tech and UGA are there as are many SEC and ACC programs.

Yankees and MLS

So the New York Yankees and Manchester City have combined forces to purchase an MLS team. We are not sure how that will make any money for the two superpower clubs but one thing is for sure, we now have an MLS team we can root against. Frankly, we're shocked the MLS is still around.

Hockey Playoffs

Unless you're from Canada or a large, northern city, does anyone even realize the hockey playoffs are on? We honestly could care less as the NHL took our hockey teams away twice and disparaged our city despite poor ownership groups and little backing from the league. We'll watch anything but hockey these days.

UGA Drug Policy

In the ultra-competitive SEC, Georgia forces its athletes to comply with the strictest drug policy in the league - one offense and you miss 10 percent of your team's games. Such a stringent policy simply does not make sense in this day and age of a win-at-all-costs league. Why try to compete at a disadvantage?



WHO'S NOT

THUMBS DOWN TO DUMB RULES

SCORE LIST

BY BRIAN JONES

1 NEW HAWK: Danny Ferry made a huge move on Tuesday as he hired San Antonio Spurs assistant Mike Budenholzer as the new Hawks head coach. Budenholzer has been with the Spurs the last 17 years and has helped them win four championships during that time. Can he do the same thing with his first head coaching job and with a virtually new roster next season?

2 BULLDOG SUSPENDED: UGA safety Josh Harvey-Clemons was suspended for one game for a violation of the school's drug policy, which means he will miss the Clemson game on Aug. 31. Very tough loss for the Bulldogs as they need all the help they can get on defense in the season opener. Let's hope he's the only player that gets suspended the entire year.

3 BASEBALL CHAMPS: It was a great weekend for baseball as the GHSA State Championship series played out through the state. Congrats goes out to Milton, Pope, Redan, Cartersville and Lovett for taking home the state crown in their respective classes. Now it's time for football season which is only 14 weeks away when the Kell Classic kicks off at the Georgia Dome.

4 BACK AT IT: The entire Falcons squad took the field for the first time since the NFC Championship game on Wednesday as they participated in OTAs. This was not a physical workout session because the NFL mandates teams not to have any blocking, tackling or even any one-on-one drills. Sounds boring, but it's still good to see the Falcons back at work as they get ready for the 2013 season.

5 CONCERT AT THE TED: Have nothing to do Saturday? Then head to the Braves game and see them take down the Washington Nationals. But don't leave after the game because Run DMC will hit the field for a free concert. Okay, so a Braves game against a major division rival and a Run DMC concert in one night all in one place? Oh yeah. I'm so there.

CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

BY STEPHEN BLACK

0 Number of times the Atlanta Hawks have reached the third round of the playoffs

4 Number of selections the Hawks have in this year's draft

6 Consecutive playoff appearances by the Hawks

16 Consecutive playoff appearances by the Spurs

17 Years new Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer spent in San Antonio

12 Coaches the Hawks have employed while in Atlanta

11 Number of homers by Braves rookie Evan Gattis

13 Times Westminster and Marist have won the Directors Cup

88 Games won in eight years by former Carver-Columbus head football coach Dell McGee

2 New members of the KSU football staff: Tim Glanton, assistant coach, and Jay Bailey, director of football operations

TRIVIA QUESTION

In 17 seasons in San Antonio, how many times did the Spurs make the playoffs with Mike Budenholzer as an assistant coach?

Answer on Page 14

SANITY AT LAST

"Atlanta is a unique situation in that they have great ownership, a great GM and a roster full of a young core and a lot of flexibility going into the summer. It was going to take something special for me to leave (the Spurs), but this is something special."

- New Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer on taking the Hawks job.

OUR TWO CENTS

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

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





MLB standouts have Georgia on their mind

By Fletcher Proctor

Ever since Ty Cobb strapped on the spikes and stepped into the batter's box, the state of Georgia has produced some of Major League Baseball's best talent. Players such as Wally Joyner, Ray Knight, Jackie Robinson, Rondell White and Kevin Brown were all born in Georgia and many current Major League players once suited up for GHSA action.

FIRST-ROUND TALENTS ...

When the Montreal Expos selected Michael Barrett out of Pace Academy with the No. 28 pick in the first round of the 1995 draft, the National League East power was selecting one of the most decorated players to come from the Peach State in years. As a shortstop for the Knights, Barrett led Pace to three straight GHSA Class A titles before winning the 1995 Georgia Gatorade Player of the Year Award. He would play for four teams during his MLB career and won the 2005 Silver Slug-

ger award as the National League's best-hitting catcher. He also played for Team USA in the 2006 World Baseball Classic.

Parkview's Jeff Francoeur led the Panthers to back-to-back Class AAAAA titles in 2001 and 2002, as well as three football state championships. Before being selected No. 23 overall by the Atlanta Braves, Francoeur impressed scouts with his .433 average, 55 home runs and 164 RBIs. His high school home run clips on YouTube are the stuff of legends and those around the Parkview program still get chills talking about the 2002 Georgia Gatorade Player of the Year.

Many around the state of Georgia recognize the name Gordon Beckham as the player that led the University of Georgia to within just a few innings of a College World Series title, but Westminster Wildcats fans know Beckham as a two-sport star that held several football records and who is now in the school's hall of fame. Beckham started on the varsity of Westminster

at shortstop as a freshman and would eventually earn All-State honors.

BUSTING BIG ...

Buster Posey never led Lee County to a GHSA state title, but he has seemingly won everything under the sun since then. Posey was a pitcher and shortstop for Lee County, setting the school record for batting average (.544) as a junior. Over his final two seasons, Posey was 22-1 with a 1.06 ERA his senior season to go with 108 strikeouts. He also clubbed 14 home runs and drove in 40 RBIs his senior year.

The Giants took Posey with the No. 5 pick in the 2008 draft, and Posey would win the 2010 Rookie of the Year award, the 2012 NL MVP, the 2012 NL Hank Aaron Award, the 2012 Silver Slugger and the 2012 NL Comeback Player of the Year Award. He has also won a pair of World Series titles with the Giants.

OLYMPIC DREAMS ...

Dexter Fowler may be one of the few Georgia baseball standouts to boast a GHSA state championship and an Olympic medal on their resumes. Fowler helped Milton to the 2004 Class AAAAA state title, and in the same

year, he was named Georgia Gatorade Player of the Year. Fowler then turned down both Miami and Harvard after the Colorado Rockies selected him in the 2004 draft. After spending time in the minor leagues, Fowler was selected to the 2008 U.S. Olympic team that earned a bronze medal in Beijing. He made his debut with the Rockies later that season.

Other names that have experienced success on the GHSA diamonds as well as the MLB diamonds include Adam Wainwright (Glynn Academy), Macay McBride (Screven County) and the Sprayberry tandem of Marlon Byrd and Kris Benson.

Benson was named Gatorade Player of the Year in 1993 as Sprayberry reached the GHSA championship series. He attended Clemson University from 1993-1996, and led the Tigers to the 1996 College World Series. He picked up multiple amateur awards that season as well as a bronze medal in the 1996 Olympic Games before being selected No. 1 overall in the 1996 draft. Byrd, meanwhile, would help Sprayberry win the 1995 Class AAAA title before heading off to Georgia Tech.

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HOOPS UPDATE



Crump heads to west Cobb County

By Stephen Black

All good things must come to an end. That is the case at Eagle's Landing as former boys basketball coach Clay Crump, who had been at the school for 12 years, will be coaching Harrison next year after a wildly successful tenure with the Golden Eagles, which included the 2013 AAAA state championship.

"I just felt like it was a great time to evaluate where I was professionally and with my family, and just thought it was a good time to transition to a new challenge," said Crump this morning in a phone interview. "I've loved Eagle's Landing and greatly enjoyed coaching these kids, but Harrison is a school with a lot of tradition and community support. That's very attractive to me."

GOALS ACCOMPLISHED ...

Before taking over as head coach, the Valdosta State graduate was an assistant with the boys and girls basketball teams at Eagle's Landing. He then was tasked with building a winner when given the head coaching reigns of the boys team in 2004-2005. The past four seasons saw the fruit of Crump's labor as the Golden Eagles won 101 games, three region titles and went to three final fours. The 2013 championship was the first boys basketball

title in Henry County history.

"I've been at Eagle's Landing for a long time and felt like we had finished what we set out to do," Crump added. "I think we represented the county well."

After accepting the job Friday, news of Crump's new position hit the social media world very quickly as congratulations from near and far went to his twitter account. Crump will meet with the new team at Harrison Wednesday at 6 p.m. before practicing at 7.

Former coach Jermaine Bigham lasted just one year at the west Cobb school after replacing Robert Churchwell, who led the Hoyas to the semifinals in 2012.

Crump is looking forward to the challenge of leading a Class AAAAAA program in a tough region.

"There are good coaches in every classification in Georgia, but in basketball, the classification matters, but all you need is five," said Crump. "It's not quite as indicative of talent as football or something that needs numbers."

Harrison finished 7-19 last season under Bigham after going 23-8 in 2012 under Churchwell.

Black can be reached at sblack@scoreatl.com.

DIRECTORS CUP REGION WINNERS

1A 2A 3A 4A 5A 6A

1 Baconton	5 Holy Innocents'
2 Irwin County	6 Gordon Lee
3 Savannah Christian	7 First Presbyterian
4 Brookstone	8 Athens Academy
1 Thomasville	5 Bremen
2 Vidalia	6 Westminster
3 Screven County	7 Calhoun
4 Bleckley County	8 Jefferson
1 Pierce County	5 Cartersville
2 Pike County	6 St. Pius X
3 Dodge County	7 Buford
4 Chapel Hill	8 Oconee County
1 Westover	5 Carrollton
2 Veterans	6 Marist
3 South Effingham	7 Dalton
4 Eagles Landing	8 Chestatee
1 Northside, Columbus	5 Allatoona
2 Lakeside, Evans	6 Lakeside, Dekalb
3 Ware County	7 Pope
4 McIntosh	8 Gainesville
1 Tift County	5 Walton
2 Rockdale County	6 Lambert
3 East Coweta	7 Mill Creek
4 Harrison	8 Brookwood

DIRECTORS CUP OVERALL WINNERS

	Overall	Male Division	Female Division
Class 1A	Gordon Lee	First Presbyterian	Gordon Lee
Class 2A	Westminster	Westminster	Westminster
Class 3A	St. Pius X	St. Pius X	St. Pius X
Class 4A	Marist	Marist	Marist
Class 5A	McIntosh	Starr's Mill	McIntosh
Class 6A	Walton	Brookwood	Walton

DIRECTORS CUP



Usual suspects earn all-sports honors

By Craig Sager II

The Directors Cup has been awarded to the top athletics programs in the GHSA each year 1999-2000. The standings are made up of schools that saw varsity athletics teams earn points through the year in each sport. A top eight finish garnered points.

TIGHT RACE ...

Walton and Brookwood have combined for nine titles and, each year, the competition always seems to be a photo finish. Walton leads the Broncos after winning this year for their sixth total cup (Brookwood has three). The Raiders edged them 1110.5 to 1108.0 (just 2.5 points). A top eight finish awards points. They earned points in 18 different sports and received a full 100.0 for the girls volleyball and girls tennis state titles.

This was the first year that six classifications divided the field. McIntosh finished seventh in points last year in AAAA, but dominated its new Class AAAAA field. McIntosh topped Starr's Mill with a total of 1175.0. A trio of state titles in boys cross country, track and soccer helped give them the edge.

Class AAAA saw a familiar juggernaut return to the podium as Marist racked up its 13th straight overall title. The War Eagles topped second-place Carrollton by nearly 400

points scoring 1366.5. Three boys state titles and four girls titles elevated them this year.

St. Pius X saw its three-year winning streak ended a year ago by Woodward Academy, but reclaimed the cup this year. The Class AAA Golden Lions have won four of the last five cups and six state titles and 90.0 points from their runner up finish in football this year marked a great year.

If you watched any Class AA sports this year it is no surprise that Westminster took the cup. The Wildcats were this year's most dominant team and accumulated 1513.0 points in the standings. Like Marist, Westminster claimed its 13th overall cup this year. 11 state titles and four runner-up finishes accounts for one impressive school year.

If there were an award for most improved, it would be this year's Class A cup winner. After a 13th-place finish last year, Gordon Lee tallied 1188.00 total points, almost doubling last year's total of 553.00. Softball and girls basketball won state titles for Gordon Lee. The boys earned full points for their titles in wrestling and golf. Holy Innocents' finished second with 992.0 points in the overall.

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FOOTBALL TRANSFER



Milton star QB heads to Norcross

By Craig Sager II

Norcross won the 2012 Class AAAAAA title after going a perfect 15-0 while trusting the leadership and consistent play of quarterback Joseph Wilber. With Wilber graduated the Blue Devils are still loaded with talent, making them a favorite to claim the 2013 title. Replacing a graduated quarterback was a question Norcross was going to have to answer heading into spring practice, but the arrival of Milton quarterback A.J. Bush changed that. Bush transferred the week before spring ball to play his senior season with the Blue Devils.

Safety Chauncey Hazelton is a rising senior and joined Bush in the move. Hazelton is 6-foot, 180 and just recently started making noise on the scouting radar at offseason camps. Hazelton's father is overseas and while living with Bush, district rules kept Hazelton from participating last season at Milton.

COLLEGE INTEREST...

The 6-foot-4 dual threat quarterback is reported to have offers from Kansas State, Marshall and Troy. Bush led a Milton offense that averaged 34 points per game last season. Although the mid-semester move seemed sudden, Milton head coach Howie DeCristofaro explained that they had been prepared for this to happen.

"He [Bush] did not live in the [Milton] district

and was given a third deadline and ultimatum by the county to move, or he would no longer be allowed to attend [Milton]. Finally the week before spring practice the decision was made," explained DeCristofaro. "We knew for three or four months that this would be a possibility."

Filling in at quarterback for Bush will be Cody Sant, Austin McLeod or Clint Winter who all shared reps in spring.

"We were hoping that one would separate himself," said DiCristofaro. "Summer will be huge for all of them."

Norcross opens its season on Aug. 24 hosting Washington Miami, Fla. All eyes will be on Bush in his new role, as ESPN2 broadcasts the matchup. Playing on a national stage is something Bush got an opportunity to do last season. On ESPNU in 2012, Bush and Milton fell 27-7 to Walton in a late-season loss.

There have already been surprise transfers this offseason, with Wheeler's Emmanuel Beal going to Hillgrove and Wesleyan quarterback Will Anderson heading to Lassiter. The season is less than three months away, but more transfers could still happen. It was July last year when Chris Murphy of Harrison made his move to Lassiter.

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SOCCER RANKINGS

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BOYS

GIRLS

CLASS AAAAAA

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Berkmar | 6. Centennial |
| 2. Collins Hill | 7. Lambert |
| 3. East Coweta | 8. Brookwood |
| 4. Harrison | 9. Central Gwinnett |
| 5. Lassiter | 10. South Gwinnett |

CLASS AAA

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. St. Pius X | 6. Cartersville |
| 2. Woodward Acad. | 7. Savannah Arts |
| 3. East Hall | 8. Blessed Trinity |
| 4. Oconee Co. | 9. Islands |
| 5. West Hall | 10. North Murray |

CLASS AAAAA

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. McIntosh | 6. Clarke Central |
| 2. Houston Co. | 7. Gainesville |
| 3. Starr's Mill | 8. Glynn Academy |
| 4. Pope | 9. Lakeside-Dek |
| 5. Allatoona | 10. Windsor Forest |

CLASS AA

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Westminster | 6. Atkinson Co. |
| 2. Calhoun | 7. Toombs Co. |
| 3. GAC | 8. Vidalia |
| 4. Lovett | 9. Fitzgerald |
| 5. Benedictine | 10. Murray Co. |

CLASS AAAA

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Dalton | 6. Alexander |
| 2. SE Whitfield | 7. Carrollton |
| 3. NW Whitfield | 8. Chestatee |
| 4. Johnson-Gainesville | 9. Marist |
| 5. Spalding | 10. Grady |

CLASS A

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Paideia | 6. First Presbyterian |
| 2. Hebron Chr. | 7. Fellowship Chr. |
| 3. AIS | 8. Aquinas |
| 4. Holy Innocents' | 9. Our Lady of Mercy |
| 5. Savannah Chr. | 10. Pinecrest Acad. |

CLASS AAAAAA

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Mill Creek | 6. Collins Hill |
| 2. Parkview | 7. Brookwood |
| 3. South Forsyth | 8. Grayson |
| 4. Lassiter | 9. Tift County |
| 5. Harrison | 10. Hillgrove |

CLASS AAA

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. St. Pius X | 6. Pike County |
| 2. Blessed Trinity | 7. Central-Carroll |
| 3. Buford | 8. Savannah Arts |
| 4. Woodward Acad. | 9. Lakeview-Ft. Og. |
| 5. Chapel Hill | 10. Pierce County |

CLASS AAAAA

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. Northgate | 6. Pope |
| 2. Whitewater | 7. Riverwood |
| 3. McIntosh | 8. Allatoona |
| 4. Starr's Mill | 9. Lakeside-DeKalb |
| 5. Northview | 10. Flowery Branch |

CLASS AA

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Westminster | 6. Putnam County |
| 2. GAC | 7. Vidalia |
| 3. Lovett | 8. Dublin |
| 4. Wesleyan | 9. Oglethorpe Co. |
| 5. St. Vincent's Acad. | 10. Thomasville |

CLASS AAAA

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Marist | 6. River Ridge |
| 2. Columbus | 7. Wayne County |
| 3. Veterans | 8. Locust Grove |
| 4. Heritage-Catoosa | 9. Grady |
| 5. Cairo | 10. Lanier |

CLASS A

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Paideia | 6. Hebron Christian |
| 2. Fellowship Chr. | 7. Calvary Day |
| 3. First Presbyterian | 8. Savannah Ctry Day |
| 4. Aquinas | 9. Mt. Paran |
| 5. Holy Innocents' | 10. Providence Chr. |

COMEBACK ATHLETE



Children's helps kids recover from injuries

What do volleyball players, football players, baseball players, tennis players, cheerleaders and gymnasts all have in common?

When they, or any other young athlete, are injured, they can be treated at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Sports Medicine Program. They also happen to represent the variety of sports in which the eight nominees for the Children's Comeback Athlete of the Year award compete.

Starting in the fall of 2012, Children's named eight Comeback Athletes of the Month. Each young athlete was treated at a Children's hospital or neighborhood location and successfully returned to the sport he or she loves. Visit choa.org/comeback to see their stories.

Their injuries and illnesses were as varied as the sports they played. The campaign featured athletes with common sports injuries like torn anterior cruciate ligaments (ACL), lifelong conditions like diabetes and life-threatening conditions like brain tumors. One Comeback Athlete returned to football after recovering from injuries sustained during a tornado.

With the help of Children's, each athlete was able to recover and get back to the sport they love to play. In most cases, they came back better than ever.

The Children's Sports Medicine Program doesn't just treat a young athlete's pain. It also helps him prevent future injuries and perform on the field, mat or court better than he did before.

With 11 neighborhood locations, Children's offers convenient access to its Sports Medicine Program all over metro Atlanta. Its programs and services are designed to help children, adolescents and teens prevent sports injuries and learn proper technique. Those services include:

- ACL injury prevention
- Concussion
- Dance medicine
- Motion analysis technology
- Post-surgery strength testing
- Running
- Sports nutrition
- Sports physical therapy
- Wrestling weight management

The multidisciplinary Sports Medicine team is led by sports medicine doctors, physical therapists, certified athletic trainers, certified sports specialists, strength and conditioning specialists and a registered dietitian. Specialists from cardiology, pain management, hand and upper extremity, pulmonology, orthotics and prosthetics also participate in the program.

Together, they combine to make up one of the few programs in the country dedicated to keeping young athletes doing what they love.

Recognizing young athletes that have successfully come back from an illness or injury is just one of the ways the program shows that dedication.

One of the eight fearless athletes Children's featured will be named the Sports Medicine Program's first Comeback Athlete of the Year. Starting June 1, Children's will open voting at choa.org/vote for two weeks.

Be sure to go online and vote for your favorite Comeback Athlete.

Some physicians and affiliated health-care professionals on the Children's Healthcare of Atlanta team are independent providers and are not our employees.



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BASEBALL RANKINGS

LACROSSE RANKINGS

BOYS _____ GIRLS _____

Class AAAAAA

1. Milton
2. Parkview
3. Roswell
4. Walton
5. McEachern
6. East Coweta
7. Lambert
8. Tift County
9. Lowndes
10. Marietta

Class AAAA

1. Redan
2. Marist
3. Crisp County
4. Troup
5. Veterans
6. Columbus
7. South Effingham
8. Stephens County
9. Locust Grove
10. Carrollton

Class AA

1. Lovett
2. Westminster
3. Pepperell
4. Benedictine
5. Westside-Augusta
6. Wesleyan
7. GAC
8. Jefferson
9. Toombs County
10. Calhoun

Class AAAAA

1. Pope
2. Greenbrier
3. Starr's Mill
4. Loganville
5. Whitewater
6. Gainesville
7. Winder-Barrow
8. East Paulding
9. Evans
10. Riverwood

Class AAA

1. Cartersville
2. North Hall
3. Blessed Trinity
4. St. Pius X
5. Chapel Hill
6. Woodward Acad.
7. Pierce County
8. Pike County
9. Pierce County
10. Appling County

Class A- Private

1. Charlton County
2. Gordon Lee
3. Treutlen
4. Trion
5. Baconton Charter

Class A- Public

1. ELCA
2. Mount Paran
3. George Walton Acad.
4. Darlington
5. First Presbyterian

Class AAAAAA

1. Centennial
2. Lambert
3. Harrison
4. Lassiter
5. Roswell
6. Milton
7. Chattahoochee
8. Walton
9. Mill Creek
10. North Gwinnett

Class A-AAAAA

1. Decatur
2. Westminster
3. Northview
4. Lovett
5. Blessed Trinity
6. Holy Innocents'
7. Pope
8. Allatoona
9. Whitefield Academy
10. Marist

Class AAAAAA

1. Milton
2. Lassiter
3. Walton
4. Mill Creek
5. Centennial
6. West Forsyth
7. Chattahoochee
8. Alpharetta
9. Harrison
10. Kennesaw Mountain

Class A-AAAAA

1. Westminster
2. McIntosh
3. Northview
4. Starr's Mill
5. Sprayberry
6. Kell
7. Woodward Academy
8. St. Pius X
9. Cambridge
10. Marist

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BULLDOG BEAT



Dawgs search for new baseball coach

By Chris Nieman

The writing was on the wall all season long. After a horrendous 2013 campaign that nobody would have expected, Georgia head baseball coach David Perno resigned on May 20 according to UGA Director of Athletics Greg McGarity.

"I have accepted David's resignation and would like to express our appreciation to him for his numerous contributions to our baseball program over the last two decades as a player, assistant and head coach," said McGarity. "David was a part of our baseball program when it won a national title and helped Georgia advance to the College World Series five times during his playing and coaching career. We wish him the very best in his future endeavors. He has been a great representative for UGA. We have begun the process of finding the next head coach to lead our program and will do so as quickly as possible."

Perno was a staple in Athens for quite some time. He played for the Diamond Dawgs in 1988, 1990-91, while helping Georgia win a National Championship in 1990. In 2001, Perno took over the reins as head coach and lead the Dawgs to three College World Series appearances as well as being awarded SEC Coach of the Year honors in 2004 and 2008.

"It's been a privilege to wear the Bulldog uniform and represent the University of Georgia as a player, assistant and head coach," said Perno. "I love the University and, I'm very appreciative of the many players, coaches and support staff with whom I've had the opportunity to work with in Athens. I would like to thank Coach Vince Dooley for providing me with the opportunity of a lifetime because it was a dream come true to lead the Georgia program. I'd like to thank Dr. Michael Adams for his support during his tenure. And I'd like to tell all my former and current players that I love them and appreciate all that they have done for this program."

SEC HONORS ...

On a more positive note, UGA senior third baseman Curt Powell was selected to the All-SEC Second Team for the second consecutive year -- a testament to Powell's work ethic. Powell was also chosen as team MVP as well as providing Georgia with an eye-popping .376 batting average. The Dawgs will have big shoes to fill at the hot spot.

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TECH BUZZ



Jackets seeded second in Nashville regional

By Ryan Caiafa

In search of their second straight ACC title, the Jackets looked to bounce back from an up-and-down season and make a statement in Durham in the conference tournament. After stunning Florida State in the opener 4-3 behind home runs from A.J. Murray and Mott Hyde in the top of the ninth inning, the Jackets had an opportunity to advance to the championship game with a win over Virginia.

Despite an early 1-0, Tech struggled to keep the Cavaliers off base as Dusty Isaacs surrendered six runs on six hits and Virginia won 8-2. Even with the loss, the Jackets had one more chance to make it to the title game with a win against Virginia Tech. They got a strong start from Jonathan King, who pitched a career-high 6.1 innings, allowing three runs on nine hits. King left the game with the score tied at two before the Hokies took the lead for good, eliminating the Jackets with a 3-2 win. After scoring on a pair of RBI groundouts, the Jackets couldn't take advantage of runners in scoring position as well as the wind pulling back a deep fly ball off the bat of Mitch Earnest that seemed to be heading out of the park.

The Hokies went on to lose to North Carolina in the championship game.

NASHVILLE-BOUND ...

Hoping to earn their 29th all-time berth in the NCAA Tournament, the Jackets' fate was left in the hands of the selection committee. Fortunately, despite a roller coaster of a season, they were selected into the Nashville Regional as the second seed, where they will take on third-seeded Illinois on May 31. The Vanderbilt Commodores, the host team and nation's No. 2 overall seed, takes on East Tennessee in the region's other game on Friday.

The regional format is a double-elimination tournament, with the winner advancing to take on the winner of the Louisville Regional winner in the Super Regionals from June 7-10. The Jackets will take on the Illini for the first time since 1930 and are 3-1 all time against them. They last met the Commodores in the 2006 Atlanta Regional, winning two games against them prior to advancing to the College World Series.

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PANTHER PROWL



Doubles pair makes GSU history

By Jay Underwood

Georgia State athletics has achieved many firsts in recent years and there will be more to come, but one that won't make headlines occurred this past weekend in Illinois. Georgia State's duo of Lucas Santa Ana and Victor Valente took the tennis world by storm with their upset win over Kentucky's sixth-ranked doubles team in the NCAA doubles tournament. It was the first time any Panthers had qualified for the tournament and also the first time one had come out victorious. It was their second victory over a top-ranked team this season. The previous victory occurred when the Panthers squared off with the third-ranked team in the nation from Georgia Tech.

TENNIS HEROES ...

While Santa Ana and Valente have since been eliminated from the tournament, that does not diminish the successful careers they both had at Georgia State. Both members of the pair were seniors and finished their final career match in the quarterfinals of the NCAA tournament when they lost to sixth-ranked Auburn. Santa Ana finished his career as the All-time wins leader for Georgia State and Valente finished right behind him in second place. These pioneers of the Panthers' tennis program have put GSU on the map in the

tennis world and began the process to build a program to be reckoned with in years to come.

On the links, a freshman took over the season and stole the show. He finished sixth at the NCAA regionals which is the second-best finish for a GSU golfer ever and it capped of a season where he began rewriting the record book for the Panthers, taking every freshman record with ease. With his No. 39 finish in the final collegiate rankings, Jonathan Grey earned a PING Division I All-Region honor that is only given to the best in the country.

Grey led the Panthers to a second-place finish in the Sun Belt Conference Championship tournament, which should help the program attract more national attention. He has now returned home to join the English national team where he will compete in tournaments around Europe honing his game to hopefully qualify for the Walker Cup. His inclusion in the Walker Cup would legitimize him as one of the top amateurs in the world and would not only bring national attention to Georgia State and the city of Atlanta, but worldwide attention to a golf program trying to find the place in an expanding university.

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OWL OUTLOOK



Owls make tournament finals but fall

By Brian Jones

The regular season for the baseball team was a roller-coaster ride to say the least.

After starting the season 4-0 which included a 2-1 win over Georgia, the Owls had high aspirations. But once they got into the meat of their schedule, the Owls cooled off but were still hovering around .500.

The Owls qualified for the Atlantic Sun Tournament and made a memorable run as they won four of their five games including three straight to face East Tennessee State in the championship game. In the end, the Owls ran out of magic as ETSU came away with the 7-2 win. East Tennessee State struck first with one run in the second, one in the third and never looked back. The Owls cut the lead 2-1 but ETSU added one run in the fifth, two in the sixth and two in the seventh.

Before the championship game, the Owls took on North Florida in the semifinal game and won 4-2. Bo Way led the Owls with three hits while Peyton Hart, Jacob Bruce and Max Pentecost each had two.

The Owls finish the season with a 30-30 record. Bruce, Chris McGowan and Pentecost each earned a spot on the All-Tournament team.

BECK HONORED ...

KSU golfer Jimmy Beck was named to the PNG Division I All-Southeast Region

Team by the Golf Coaches Association of America on Tuesday.

Beck was a key piece in the Owls' success this season as they earned a spot in the NCAA Regional for the third consecutive year and averaged a 72.4 stroke average in 12 of the Owls' tournaments.

Beck is one of 26 players to be named to the Southeast Region. He is also the third KSU player to be honored by the GCAA since Kennesaw joined Division I. The other two are Jeff Karlsson (2011) and Matt Nagy (2011, 2012).

FOOTBALL UPDATE ...

Football head coach Brian Bohannon is still putting together his coaching staff and he recently found a coach that will mentor the quarterbacks/B-backs. On Tuesday, KSU announced that Brett Gilliland will be the quarterbacks/B-backs coach when they take the field for the first time in 2015.

Gilliland recently spent the last three seasons at Georgia Southern where he was a B-backs, tight end and offensive lineman coach. Before that, Gilliland spent three seasons at Georgia Tech where he was a graduate assistant.

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HAWKS HAVEN



Drew out, Budenholzer in as coach

By Ricky Dimon

The Hawks did not wait until June 30—when Larry Drew's contract officially expires—to make their move. Atlanta on Tuesday hired new head coach Mike Budenholzer, a long-time assistant to Gregg Popovich with the San Antonio Spurs. Terms of the multi-year agreement were not disclosed. Budenholzer was introduced at a Wednesday morning press conference inside Philips Arena, while the Western Conference Champions enjoy a nine-day break before their finals opener next Thursday against either Miami or Indiana.

"We are thrilled to have Mike as the next coach of the Atlanta Hawks," general manager Danny Ferry said in a statement. "He has an incredible basketball acumen and has a keen awareness of the league and what it takes to be successful. His experience and four championships over the last 17 years provide a tremendous foundation for his leadership of our team."

Budenholzer also issued a statement, saying, "I have been extremely fortunate to be a part of the San Antonio Spurs organization for the last 19 years. I knew it would have to be a tremendous situation for me to leave and clearly coming to Atlanta as the head coach of the Hawks is perfect for me."

Although a deal may have come sooner

than expected, it was never a secret that Drew would be on the way out. Ferry, who is newer to the organization and therefore inherited Drew, obviously wanted his own guy. Drew, either seeing the writing on the wall or wanting a new start to begin with, had a second interview with the Milwaukee Bucks on Wednesday.

WHO IS BUDENHOLZER? ...

The 43-year-old Budenholzer has spent almost all of his professional life with the San Antonio Spurs. He has been part of that organization for the last 19 seasons, the most recent 17 of which have come as an assistant to Popovich. Budenholzer served—and will continue to do so through the upcoming NBA Finals series—as the team's No. 1 assistant for the past six years.

Hailing from Holbrook, Az., Budenholzer attended Pomona College in Claremont, Ca. and graduated in 1993. After lettering four seasons in both basketball and golf, he played professional hoops in Denmark and also got his coaching start in the same league. Budenholzer and his wife, Mary Bet, have four children; two sons and two daughters.

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FALCONS BEAT



OTA's start Falcons' preparation

By Craig Sager II

The Atlanta Falcons began their organized team activities (OTA's) Wednesday and will continue them until June 14. Finally fans can witness the Falcons take the field together start preparation for the challenging season ahead. The OTA's will include workouts, 7-on-7's and heavy doses of fundamental work.

With key veterans from last year's NFC South Champion team not on the roster anymore, OTA's are expected to be the first chance for the new leaders to solidify their roles and separate themselves from the pack. Todd McClure, John Abraham, Michael Turner and Dunta Robinson were all key starters that will be replaced. The Falcons were the least penalized team in the league last season, and veteran leadership was a key part in that.

The already thin linebacker corps will be especially slimmed down during OTA's while Stephen Nicholas and Sean Weatherspoon nurse surgically their repaired injuries. Nicholas had a sports hernia operation and Weatherspoon had arthroscopic knee surgery. The Falcons have a mandatory minicamp June 18 to June 20 in which the linebackers are expected to practice.

POTENTIAL BARGAINS ...

The pool of NFL free agents is swimming with veteran talent and valuable pieces that Falcons could insert into the 2013 roster. A factor for Atlanta's hesitation has been the salary cap space that will inflate to \$6 million starting June 1. Rumors have circulated around defensive tackle Richard Seymour showing interest in coming to Atlanta. The seven-time Pro Bowler turns 34 this year, but could be a valuable piece to add into the defensive line rotation. Seymour played at University of Georgia and is familiar with Thomas Dimitroff from his days with the New England Patriots. Whether or not a deal is made, it is clear that the management is still combing the market for potential roster improvements.

SPEND THE CHEESE ...

The city of Atlanta issued \$200 million worth of public funds to help get the Falcons' new stadium built, and last week the NFL owners approved an additional \$200 million load that will go towards the stadium. The plan to open it in 2017 will land Atlanta a future Super Bowl.

Sager can be reached at csager@scoreatl.com.

CHOP SHOP



"Minor" ace for Braves pitching staff

By Sean Conway

Memorial Day weekend marks the first benchmark of the Major League baseball season for many fans, coaches and media types. Heading into June, the Braves have a respectable lead in the National League Eastern Division over their rival (and the pre-season consensus "it" team) Washington Nationals.

The stability of the Braves' pitching staff is a big part of how the Braves have proven that they will be a force to be reckoned with in early fall. Miraculously, the Braves have only used the five starters they slated for the rotation when they left spring training in late March.

The ace of the staff has clearly been emerging lefthander Mike Minor. After 7.1 scoreless innings and scattering just three hits while racking up 10 strikeouts in a win at the New York Mets over the weekend, Minor is 6-2 with a 2.47 ERA this year. Minor's ERA is a half run per game better than the Braves' second-most efficient pitcher, Tim Hudson. Against the Mets, Minor also roped his first career home run.

Minor is putting his name in contention for All-Star consideration. He's tied for fifth in the National League in wins, and is eighth

in pitchers' earned run average this season. His WHIP (walks plus hits per inning pitch) is 0.93, fourth best in the league.

BIG MAC ATTACK ...

While much well deserved praised has been heaped on uber-rookie sensation Evan Gattis, Braves fans should also admire the start of six-time all-star Brian McCann. The start of Gattis combined with his folklore ascent to the major leagues, distinctive bent crouch in the batter's box and bare knuckles grip on the bat have lifted him to rock star status. But McCann has been better.

Since being activated from the disabled list on May 6, McCann had been mashing baseballs. McCann belted two home runs including the game-winner in extra innings at Toronto on Tuesday. Through the two games in Toronto, the left-handed hitter had six home runs in his first month in only 57 at bats. Those numbers are even more impressive that Gattis' 12 home runs in 133 at bats. Despite the disparity in at bats McCann had just two fewer walks but 26 less strikeouts through the series in Toronto.

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DREAM BEAT



Dream lead early, win season opener

By Joe Deighton

The 2013 WNBA season started nicely for the Atlanta Dream, winning the opener against the Tulsa Shock, 98-81 at Phillips Arena last Saturday. Forward Angel McCoughtry picked up right where she left off last year by scoring 16 points, with four assists and four rebounds. Forward Sancho Lyttle scored 18 points in 32 minutes and second-year guard Tiffany Hayes scored a team-high 21 points for the victorious Dream. Lyttle added a game-high 10 rebounds.

The Dream jumped out to a quick 7-0 lead in the first two minutes of the game and built as much as a 19-point advantage while never trailing the Shock all night. The opening-night win was Atlanta's first since winning the season-opener in 2010. The Dream won the first six games that season en route to an Eastern Conference title.

RUNNING THE POINT ...

The key difference for the Dream coming into the 2013 season is at point guard. Lindsey Harding had been the starter for the past two seasons, but signed with the Los Angeles Sparks in the offseason. Harding was legitimately the best player on Atlanta's squad in 2011 and 2012.

Many questions still surround the position of point guard, but through one game, at

least, the problem looked to be solved. The 13th overall pick in last year's draft, point guard Alex Bentley played a strong game against Tulsa with three assists, five points and more importantly zero turnovers off the bench. Starter Jasmine Thomas dished out six assists in 22 minutes.

It has yet to be determined who will run the offense, but Bentley and Thomas will share the responsibility until one of them solidifies the position. In the meantime, they will play equal minutes.

ON THE DOCKET ...

After a successful home-opener, the Dream will try to pick up their first road-win of the season against the defending WNBA Champions on Friday night. The Indiana Fever ousted the Dream in last year's playoffs and have been one of Atlanta's biggest rivals over the past few years. Indiana won their season-opener on the road in San Antonio. The Fever will raise the 2012 championship banner before the game, which should serve as added motivation for Atlanta. This game is a great early test and should gauge where the team is at this early point of the season.

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