

# The GEORGIA

*Sports Edition*

January 2019 Edition



# CHAMPIONS



**ATLANTA UNITED WINS MLS CUP**



**SUGAR BOWL PREVIEW**



**FREDERICA STATE CHAMPS**

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## GET TO KNOW THE WRITERS



### JJ LANIER

JJ Lanier is a native of North Carolina and studied communications at Appalachian State University. JJ currently resides in Asheville, North Carolina. JJ is an expert on the NFL and college basketball. JJ is also an insider on all things ACC.



### KIPP BRANCH

Kipp Branch has been inside the Brunswick High Pirate Program for over a decade and is affectionately called Mr. Brunswick High. Kipp serves as one of the voices on the Pirates Radio Broadcast and pitched at Valdosta State University. Kipp is knowledgeable about all things 'Southern Sports'.



### TJ HARTNETT

TJ Hartnett currently resides in Atlanta and graduated from Kennesaw State University. TJ has been an Atlanta sports fan his whole life and has an inside beat on all Atlanta sports teams.



### KENNETH HARRISON, JR.

Kenneth Harison Jr is a long time Atlanta native and graduated from Kennesaw State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. Kenneth has a pulse on not only the Atlanta sports scene but the entire southern sports scene as well.



### MIKE ANTHONY

Mike Anthony is a Georgia Southern grad and currently still lives in Statesboro. Mike covers the Eagles on regular basis in all sports as a beat writer. Mike also has vast expertise on MLB.



### RICH STYLES

Rich Styles currently hosts his own golf radio show called the Back9Boys. Rich graduated with a Bachelors in Communications from Southern Illinois University. Rich know all things about golf from around the state of Georgia.



### JASON BISHOP

Jason Bishop has spent time at CNN Sports and CSS Sports in Atlanta and is currently host of The Jason Bishop Show with Kipp Branch, southeast Georgia's most listened to sports talk show. Jason is from the Golden Isles and no one knows more about area high school football.

*OTHER CONTRIBUTORS: RICH BONTRAGER*

The Southern Sports Edition was created to offer sports opinions from a southern perspective. The Southern Sports Edition offers some of the top sports minds and opinions from around the South. From coverage on the Glynn Academy Red Terrors, Camden County Wildcats, Brunswick High Pirates, Frederica Academy Knights, the McIntosh County Academy Buccaneers, to a beat on the Atlanta Braves, the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets, SEC, ACC and all southern sports with actual southern opinions. The Southern Sports Edition is currently distributed in three counties...Glynn County, Camden County and McIntosh County and growing everyday.

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JANUARY 2019 EDITION

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Sports Edition

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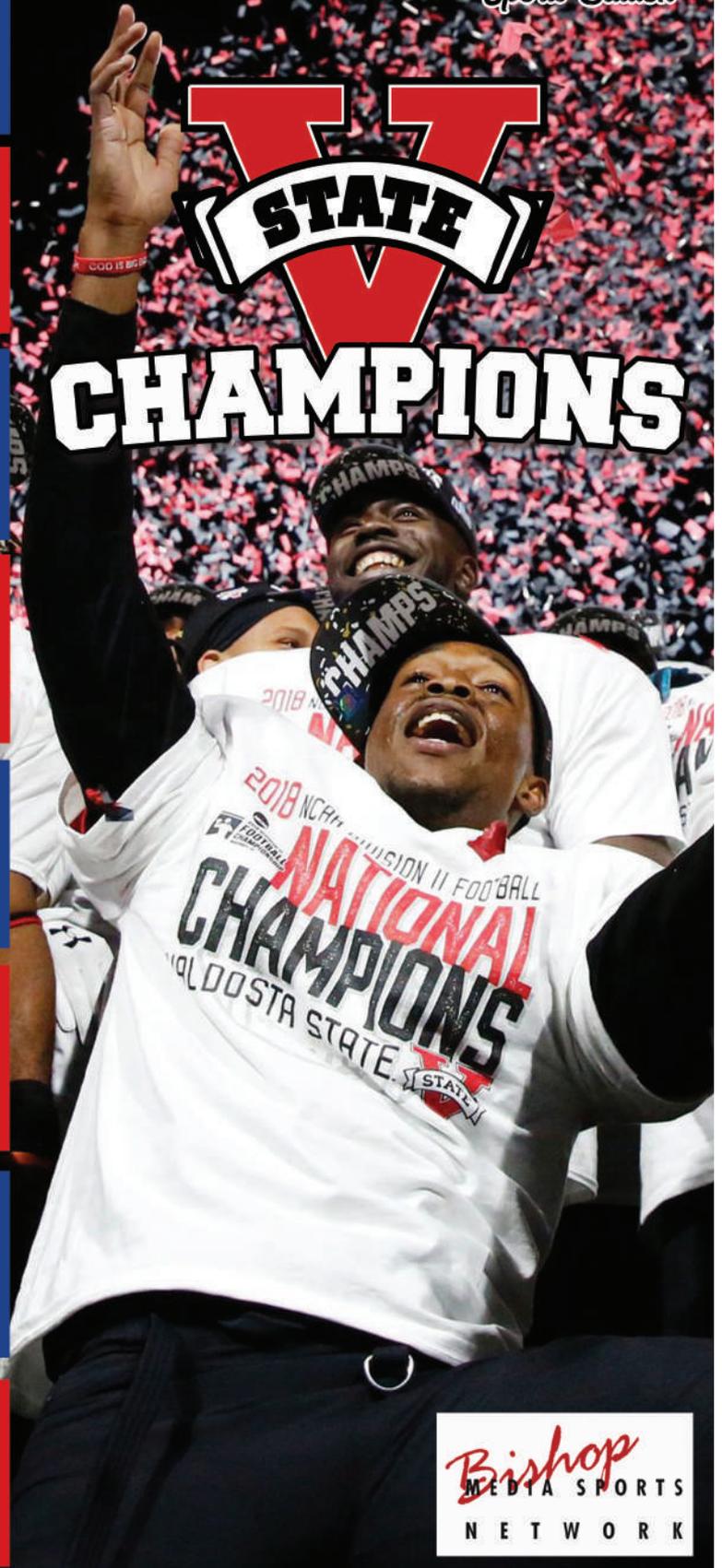
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**STATE**  
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# SUGAR BOWL



# PREVIEW

UGA vs Texas By Kipp Branch



**I**t has been an interesting football season. Georgia won the SEC East and came up just short in the SEC title game against Alabama. Georgia led Alabama for 58 minutes and 51 seconds and just missed the

college football playoff.

Texas has a proud football history, but has struggled as of late. Tom Herman is building the Longhorns back into a national brand. The Longhorns lost to Oklahoma in the Big 12 title game 39-27. Texas beat Oklahoma during the regular season.

The two blue bloods meet in the Sugar Bowl on New Year's Night in New Orleans.

Georgia is coming into the game as a 13 point favorite against the 9-4 Longhorns. The last time the two teams matched up was the 1984 Cotton Bowl where Georgia beat Texas 10-9.

Both teams have just finished signing top 10 recruiting classes during the early signing period.

Georgia is led by QB Jake Fromm and a pair of 1,000 rushers in Swift and Holyfield. Will Georgia feel the effects of the SEC title game loss, or the saga of Justin Fields and his potential transfer?

Sam Ehlinger has given the Longhorns a consistent, quality player at quarterback for the first time in 8-10 years. He was responsible for 38 touchdowns. Only Longhorn legend Vince Young has produced more in a single season.

He's smarter with the football (only five interceptions vs. seven last year) and he's a great option in the run game, using his legs to get many key first downs.

Texas has two big-time receivers on the outside in Collin Johnson and Lil'Jordan Humphrey. They are two big, physical pass-catchers who have given opponents problems all season. It's still on Ehlinger to get the ball to them, which he has done consistently.

Georgia is going to run the football in this contest and Texas, like most teams in their conference, struggles at time against the run. Georgia has the best defense Texas will see this season.

Texas is looking for its first 10-win season in almost a decade, and I think the Longhorns will come in highly motivated to show the country they belong in this contest. Texas is always going to have great athletes and UGA better come into this game expecting a 60-minute fight to the end. Keys to the game: The Texas run defense. Can Texas slow down the power run game of UGA?

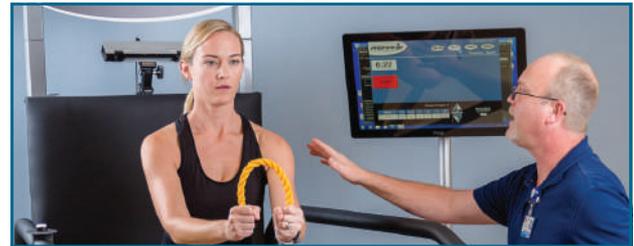
Georgia's motivation. Will the Dawgs be motivated to play at peak level?

Can Texas exploit the Georgia secondary?

Will Georgia open up and attack the Longhorn secondary?

I think this will be a great contest that UGA wins 41-28 and finishes 12-2. This may set up a national championship run in 2019.

Texas is on its way back in being a national power. UGA is a national power. Enjoy these times Dawg Nation.



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# BLAZING FIRE

National Champions By JJ Lanier



**I**t's difficult in any sport to finish a season undefeated. Sure, with a shorter schedule and in certain cases, a large discrepancy in talent, it does take place in football more often than others. Still, that doesn't take away from a team accomplishing it; there's a reason why the '72 Dolphins are still popping champagne 46 years later.

When it comes to Valdosta State's national title this past season, I'm not sure what I'm more impressed by, the fact they were able to finish the season undefeated, or the sheer dominance they displayed in etching their names in history.

There are two types of dominating feats. The first is when you see something unexpected, calmly nod your head in approval, and mumble "Huh, that was pretty cool." The second takes place when the act is so nonviolently vicious that you scrunch your face, look away from the carnage, and yell "DAMN". Valdosta's season was the second.

Over the course of the season Valdosta State averaged 52 points and scored less than 47 only once. That was time when they put up a measly 30 points in the national semifinal game.

Now, you may be saying to yourself "Hey, scoring lots a of points is terrific, but if the Blazers couldn't stop anyone, all it proves is they're a smaller version of a Big 12 team."

Well, their defense allowed an average of only 22 points per game. For all us mathematicians out there, that makes the average margin of victory 30 points for the entire season.

And believe it or not, that margin is actually a little skewed because they won their last two games by 6 and 2 points. Take away those games and it's even more dominating.

To have an offense put up the type of numbers they did, which in turn increases the number of offensive possessions the opposing team receives, only allowing 22 points a game is pretty incredible.

It's not like they didn't play anyone either. In 5 out of the 14 games they played, and three out of their last five, their opponents tasted defeat for the first time.

All of this just intensified the difficulty Valdosta State faced in actually finishing their miraculous season off with a national title.

Sports history is filled with teams that couldn't finish an undefeated regular season off with a title; the '08 New England Patriots and '15 Kentucky Wildcats immediately come to mind.

To have a group of 18-22 year old kids stay that focused and be able to perform at that high of a level week in and week may be the most underrated part of their accomplishment.

As the bowl season winds down and an FBS champion is crowned there will be a lot of talk about where that particular team ranks among the greats, especially if it winds up being Alabama or Clemson.

There will be a lot of discussions about which conferences performed more admirably in the bowl games, as well as debates about whether or not to expand the playoffs to eight teams; all worthy topics.

It's a shame though there won't be more made of this Valdosta State Blazers team. A team picked in the preseason to finish fifth in their conference, yet steamrolled through an undefeated season on their way to a national championship; their fourth in the last sixteen years.

A team that broke records on a school, conference, and national level. The one team that made me look up and say "Damn!"



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# SEVEN EXERCISES TO PREPARE FOR SKI SEASON

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Beau Sasser, M.D.

Whether you're skiing on a bunny hill or a double black diamond, it's important to both dress the part and prepare your body. Before zipping up your winter coat and locking in your skis, Beau Sasser, M.D., board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery, has some advice. "One of the most important activities to prepare for a ski trip is to strengthen the lower body and core to withstand days on the slope," says Dr. Sasser. "Exercise will greatly diminish the chance of injury while skiing due to fatigued muscles."

## Seven exercises to prepare for ski season:

- 1. Leg Blasters:** A four part, dynamic set that combines squats and lunges. Perform a full set—squats, alternating lunges, jump lunges and jump squats. Rest 15 seconds and repeat six times.
- 2. Russian Twists:** A core-specific exercise to build the abdominal muscles. Sit on the ground with your knees flexed. Hold a dumb bell, medicine ball or weighted plate away from your chest. With your feet off the ground, engage your core and rotate your upper body, touching the weight to the floor. Return to center, and twist to the other side. Do three rounds of 10 to 20.
- 3. Lateral Hops with Tuck Hold:** This combines both isometric and dynamic movements for stamina. Start with a wide stance. Jump laterally over a low step or foam roller. Concentrate on landing softly and jumping quickly. Continue for 30 seconds then rest in a squat or tuck position with knees bent and back flat. Repeat four to eight times.
- 4. Front Squats:** This low-rep, high weight move is meant to improve your core and lower body strength in order to ski upright. Lifting either a kettle bell or dumb bell up to your jaw, lower your bottom to the ground, keeping your back straight. Do six rounds of four to six reps.
- 5. Lower Back Complex:** This three-part movement helps combat lower back pain by strengthening the lumbar musculature. First, stand with your feet shoulder width apart, spine arched and lower back contracted. Raise arms upward above your head and hold for 20 seconds. Next, perform a lunge. Once in the lunge position, raise your arms up for 20 seconds. Finally, kneel with legs about six inches apart. Keep your back arched while raising your arms above your head. Hold for 20 seconds. Repeat three times.
- 6. Single-Leg Deadlifts:** A great body stabilizing exercise focusing on glutes, hamstrings and core. Standing upright, extend your hands and slowly lean forward. Slowly lift one leg as you lean over, keeping your back straight. Come back to neutral, and repeat six times. Switch legs.
- 7. Jane Fonda:** A four-part exercise that activates the glutes to improve balance. First, lie down on your right side with your right arm tucked under your head. Raise your left leg and lower it to the floor behind your right leg. Next, bring your left leg to your chest, activating your core. Then, with your left leg straight, slowly kick behind you. Finally, with the left leg straight, lift and make small circles clockwise for 15 seconds. Then repeat, but counterclockwise. Perform the series two to three times, then switch legs.

According to Dr. Sasser, the whole set of exercises listed above takes about 20 to 25 minutes. "A light jog afterwards or even jumping rope is a good way to increase stamina," adds Dr. Sasser. "Yoga is also great to aid in flexibility and can be utilized before a ski trip and after a day on the slope to stretch out tired muscles." The average skier can burn close to 400 calories an hour, so it is important to stay hydrated and well fed. However, Dr. Sasser says that with a little preparation, the soreness and risk of injury can be kept to a minimum.

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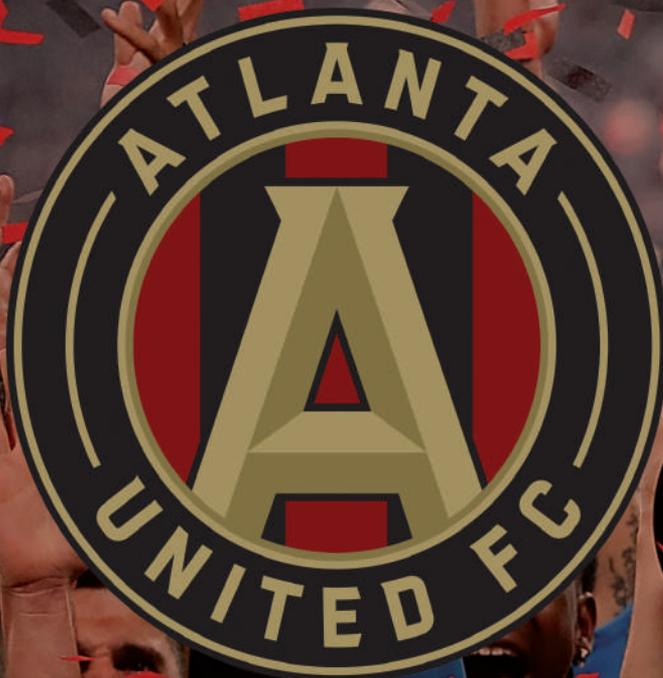
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# KICKING IT BIG

Atlanta United MLS Cup By TJ Hartnett



**T**he Hawks have been in Atlanta for half a century and haven't won a single NBA Championship. The Falcons have been in Atlanta for 52 years and haven't won a single Super Bowl. The Braves have been in Atlanta the same amount of time and have one World Series Championship to their credit, 23 years ago.

The city of Atlanta broke through seasons and years of futility and heartbreak and was delivered a second championship by Atlanta United, who defeated the Portland Timbers 2-0 to win the MLS Cup. It was their second year of existence.

It is a triumph in so many ways for the team and for the city. Aside from the brevity of the club's tenure in the league and ending of Atlanta's championship drought, there was the passion with which the state's capital embraced a new professional sports franchise. This is no easy feat for a town where pro sports come in a distant second to college athletics.

But the fans showed up for Atlanta United since the beginning, with Mercedes Benz Stadium housing six of the seven best-attended regular season games in MLS history, not to mention setting a new MLS All-Star Game attendance record this past summer. They did that again, breaking the previous attendance record for an MLS Cup Finals game – by over 10,000.

As with any major championship, there were storylines aplenty. Among the biggest going into the match was the imminent departure of United's Coach Tata Martino.

Martino announced that he would not be renewing his contract following the season's conclusion (he's been strongly linked with the Mexican National Team's vacant head coach position).

It also seems somewhat likely that it was the final match for Miguel Almiron, the young star who finished second in the MLS MVP voting this year. He left the match in stoppage time and the goodbye seemed to mean a little more than a usual sendoff, unofficially confirming the rumors that he'll be making the move to Europe.

The man Almiron finished behind in that MVP vote, Josef Martinez, scored Atlanta's first goal in the 39th minute of the game.

It couldn't have been written better. Martinez has been the face of this team, a superstar who led the league in scoring, bringing constant energy to the club and the city of Atlanta since its inception. He added another trophy to his mantle; the MLS Cup MVP went home with him as well.

There was also the story of Michael Parkhurst, who in four previous attempts in an MLS Finals match failed to come away with the big win. He was brought to Atlanta to be a leader and was made the club's first-ever captain. He led them to that elusive win, feeding the ball to Martinez for that first goal.

Veteran goalkeeper Brad Guzan played a starring role in United's victory on Saturday as well, making several stellar saves, including a gasp-inducing save on what would have been the equalizer in the 43rd minute.

Franco Escobar doubled the score in the 54th minute and the Five Stripes cruised to a well-deserved and exciting victory in front of a hometown crowd that may still be celebrating in the streets as you read this.

Atlanta has suffered its fair share of heartbreak. Arguably several shares of heartbreak when it comes to pro sports, but the newest kid on the block did not disappoint when it came time to shine on the big stage.

It's a cathartic moment for the city and one that can only cause an already thriving fanbase to grow. Atlanta will never stop being a football town but it may find the term "football" to be a little more encompassing now.

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# FREDERICA GETS KNIGHTED



**Knights Win State Title By Rich Bontrager**



The Frederica Academy Knights had one goal all season; to finish what they started last season and actually make it to Mercer University for the State Championship.

Six years to the day that the Knights earned their first Championship in the GISA, they did so again but this time in the AAA Class.

The match up was built as

an intense defensive battle. Instead, the Knights would tack on another 21 points before half-time and show that they clearly were in control of the game.

Second quarter scores were all rushing touchdowns. Simpson, Veal, and Jackson all found their way to the end zone, as each point after the kick was successful. Frederica went into the locker room at the half stunning most of the fans with a 28-0 lead.

Much of the scoring in the first half was made possible by exceptional defensive plays and stops that forced the Trojans to punt or turn the ball over on downs.

The first half defense featured outstanding plays by Deke Jernigan

play a lot, but never really completed it well enough. Tonight, we did it just perfect." Simpson completed the game executing 14 of 15 pass attempts.

In the third quarter the Knights would add on another 13 points to extend their lead. John Milledge threatened briefly as they got the to the 5-yard line, but once again the Knights defense held. The Trojan's would miss the field goal attempt and the Knights would again get the ball on a turnover of downs.

Overall this game was a total team effort that showcased how unselfish play can make a great team even greater. The defense got an interception, sack, and kept Brandon Bellflower (QB) of John Milledge on



a potential grudge match with John Milledge Academy. The Knights had lost to the Trojan's only a month ago on a questionable call that cost them a 1-point loss.

However, in this rematch for the GISA title, there would be no doubt! The Knights dominated in all aspects of the game as they shut out John Milledge 48-0.

Frederica would score the only points in the first quarter on an explosive 7-yard TD run by Patrick Brunson (Sr). After that score, it looked like the two may be ready for

(Jr), Patrick Brunson, and Cameron Gardner (Sr). The only bright spot for John Milledge was the 46 yards rushing by sophomore running back Amaad Foston.

The second half exploded with a trick play on the very first play from the line of scrimmage, as the Knights ran a double reverse flee-flicker route and scored. Patrick Brunson was left wide open down the middle of the field, as the double reverse unfolded, and caught a 52 yard pass from Jaylin Simpson.

After the game Coach Brandon Derrick said, "We have practiced this

the run all night long.

The defense made stop after stop. Five different Knights would score on offense and eight different players would rush for yardage. Frederica wraps the 2018 season with a 10-3 record and Championship trophy coming home to Saint Simons Island.

Congratulations to Coach Brandon Derrick, his coaching staff, players and entire team for overcoming early season adversity to make the "March To Mercer" and achieve the goal of winning the GISA title. This will be a season to remember.

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# The GEORGIA Sports Edition

## WRITER'S TOP 10

- |   |            |    |            |
|---|------------|----|------------|
| 1 | ALABAMA    | 6  | UCF        |
| 2 | CLEMSON    | 7  | OHIO STATE |
| 3 | NOTRE DAME | 8  | MICHIGAN   |
| 4 | OKLAHOMA   | 9  | WASHINGTON |
| 5 | GEORGIA    | 10 | FLORIDA    |



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# COMING IN FLOCKS

Eagles Win Camillia Bowl By Mike Anthony



**B**owl games often promote themselves as an entire week of fun and a celebration of what the competing teams have accomplished over the course of a long season.

Maybe some teams and fan bases out there play favorites with their bowl games and destinations, but for a Georgia Southern team that suffered through a pair of losing campaigns that ended without a postseason, there was never a doubt that the Eagles' bowl would serve as an early Christmas present to everyone.

Well before the season had ended, Georgia Southern fans were making their bowl plans. As soon as the Eagles hit the six-win mark, hotel rooms in Mobile, Montgomery, New Orleans and Orlando began to fly off the shelves. The destination was ultimately Montgomery and Eagle Nation paid its first visit to Alabama's capital city.

Montgomery could have easily been mistaken for Statesboro over the weekend. Not only did Georgia Southern set a record for Camellia Bowl tickets sold through a school's athletic department, but most corners of downtown Montgomery were sporting blue and white, both before and after the game.

The party started before most fans even set off for Montgomery. In fact, it was how some fans made the trip

that grabbed the early headlines.

When a bus chartered for students by Georgia Southern head coach Chad Lunsford quickly filled up, Eagle alumnus and country music star Cole Swindell stepped in and got another bus in on the action. And then a GSU booster chipped in for even more seats to be made available. By the time all was said and done, it wasn't just bus seats, but also tickets and t-shirts that had been donated by various sponsors and organizations.

Montgomery got its first taste of the full force of Georgia Southern 24 hours before kickoff. A week's worth of soggy and cool weather did nothing to dampen Eagle spirits, nor did it keep anyone from taking full part in the festivities.

According to one Twitter account, an Eagle fan made his way to a designated fan meetup following a Friday evening pep rally for the team. In keeping with a competitive nature that seems to bridge the gap between Eagle players and fans, the supporter was about to ask a bartender how the fan participation compared to Appalachian State's previous appearances in the Camellia Bowl, only to be told that Eagle fans had already topped their Sun Belt rivals in that category.

I awoke on the morning of the game to photographic evidence that proved Saturday would be an even more overwhelming showing of support by Eagle fans. Numerous emails sent to tailgaters stressed that the parking lots wouldn't open until 9 a.m. On Friday, more emails stated that 8 a.m. was the absolute earliest anyone should show up.

The photo I received showed my friend's tents and flags already assembled

in the tailgating lot with a grill warming up. It was 6 a.m.

By the time the team arrived at the stadium, Eagle Nation was in a fever pitch. Once again arriving in style in some yellow busses borrowed from local schools, the team had to stop short of its designated drop-off. The sea of Eagle fans was too thick to drive through, but the players were happy to walk the rest of the way while doling out high-fives.

The game offered its own excitement that can be diagnosed and debated, but if the purpose of a bowl game is really to celebrate a good season, Georgia Southern fans and players were winners well before Tyler Bass split the uprights for the Eagles' 23-21 victory.

All through the winter, spring and summer of 2018 the Eagles put in the work that was necessary to turn a 2-10 squad into a 10-3 bowl winner.

During the offseason, the fans were relegated to nervous optimism on the sidelines, but came forward in droves to spur the team on once it became evident that winning football was back in Statesboro.

In the end, both groups had every reason to celebrate - and they did.

From chartered bus trips, to late-night parties, to several clutch plays that will be recounted again and again, Georgia Southern took everything that bowl season had to offer.

And after a week's worth of Georgia Southern fans and players doing what they do best, it might be Montgomery - and any future bowl destinations for the Eagles - that is left wanting more.



A photograph of Georgia Tech football players in white jerseys celebrating on the field. The players' names and 'JACKETS' are visible on their jerseys. A large, stylized 'GT' logo is overlaid on the image.

# MORE STING?

Geoff Collins New Tech Coach By Kenneth Harrison Jr





**B**y now, we are all aware the Paul Johnson has stepped down as Georgia Tech's head coach. He was replaced by Geoff Collins. I'm not sure how I feel about this hire so let's take a look at Collins and his coaching history.

Collins is from Conyers, Georgia so he's back in his home state. He played linebacker at Western Carolina (1989 - 1992). After graduation, he coached at his alma mater during the 1993 and 1994 seasons.

Following a year coaching high school, Collins became the linebacker coach for Fordham in 1996 before becoming the defensive coordinator at Albright College from 1997 through 1998. Collins would leave Albright to become a graduate assistant at Georgia Tech under George O'Leary for the 1999 and 2000 seasons.

He was promoted to tight ends coach at Tech for the 2001 season. Collins would return to his alma mater to become Western Carolina's

defensive coordinator from 2002 through 2005 before returning to Georgia Tech in 2006 as the Director of Player Personnel. The following year he became Director of Player Personnel at Alabama.

He became a defensive coordinator at FIU (2010), Mississippi State (2011 - 2014) and Florida (2015 - 16). Then he took over as head coach at Temple for the past two seasons.

One good thing is that Collins has experience coaching at Tech. He's also a much better recruiter than Paul Johnson. The current recruiting class ranks 48th nationally and 10th in the ACC. For Johnson's recruiting classes that is typical. The highest recruiting class under him was 41st.

Collins is aware that there are recruiting challenges unique to Georgia Tech but he is already aware and prepared for that. As the Yellow Jackets director of player personnel his 2007 recruiting class was ranked 15th nationally and included Morgan Burnett, Jonathan Dwyer, Derrick Morgan and Joshua Nesbitt.

The Ramblin' Wreck has been outmatched from a talent standpoint under Paul Johnson. The gap in talent has only gotten wider between them and the upper echelon programs like Clemson and Georgia. If Collins can consistently bring top 20 recruiting

classes in, he can close that gap and make them more competitive against their rivals.

In his two seasons coaching the Temple Owls his record was 15 - 10. That does not sound very impressive on the surface. Temple has been a struggling football program for as long as I can remember. They have only become respectful recently. In his first year in 2017 they were 7 - 6. In 2018 he improved to 8 - 4.

From strictly a coaching perspective, I think Collins is slightly above average. His Owls lost the season opener to an FCS team, Villanova. They are cross-town rivals but he should never lose to FCS competition.

I think this is a good hire mainly because the fan base has grown tired of Paul Johnson and it's time for a change. His triple option scheme has hindered recruiting. Collins is bringing a pro-style offense and that will help with gaining recruits that want to play in the NFL.

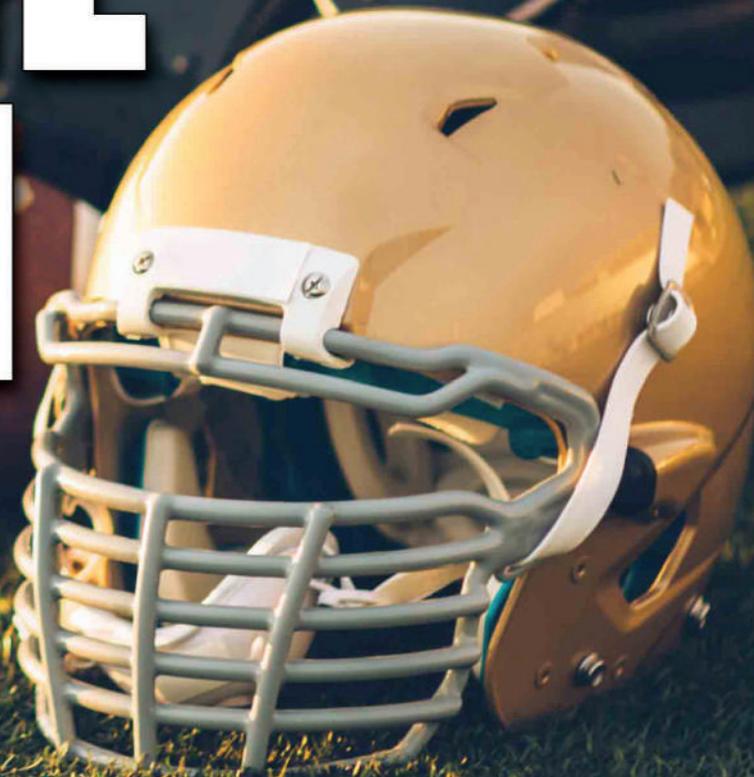
He is also a defensive coach and the Jackets have been abysmal on D. In 2018 Temple ranked sixth nationally in yards per play and are tied for third in takeaways. Only time will tell but I believe Georgia Tech should improve under Collins.





# LUCK OF THE IRISH

A Free Pass? By Kipp Branch





Championship Saturday in College Football started and ended with questions regarding who would be in the top four when the college football playoff starts on December 29th. The semi-final matchups would in the Orange Bowl and Cotton Bowl to determine who will play for the National Championship the following week.

Going into Championship Saturday you had Alabama, Clemson, Notre Dame, and Georgia holding the top four spots. Alabama, Clemson, and Georgia all had to participate in conference championship games.

Notre Dame got to sit on the couch with a bye while everyone else in contention for a playoff spot Alabama, Clemson, Georgia, Oklahoma, Ohio State, and even UCF had to win to stay alive in the playoff hunt.

Are conference championship games even needed anymore is the question? Alabama didn't win the SEC in 2017 or even make the SEC championship game, but got selected as a playoff team and ended up winning the national championship.

The goal of the playoff is to select the best four teams correct? At least I thought it was. I just don't

think we are talking apples to apples unless Notre Dame is made to join a football conference.

Yes, the Irish play basketball in the ACC, but get the easy way out during football season by being an independent. Do you think an undefeated BYU playing Notre Dame's schedule would have been selected as one of the top four teams in the country? Let me answer that for you, absolutely not.

Championship Saturday looked like this:

Clemson played a five loss Pitt team in the ACC title game and blew them out while Notre Dame sat home and was given a playoff spot. Now we get an ACC title game in Dallas with ND and Clemson in the Cotton Bowl. Clemson will beat ND by three TD's. Oklahoma played a three loss Texas team in the Big 12 title game and won by 12.

Ohio State played a four loss Northwestern team in the Big 10 title game and won by 21.

Then you had #1 Alabama and #4 Georgia in an epic SEC title game that Alabama, who was regarded by many as the greatest college football team ever, had to rally to overcome a 4th quarter deficit to pull out the game 35-28.

All of this went down as Notre Dame sits at the house with a bye and punches a ticket into the playoff.

Oklahoma, Georgia, and Ohio State are all better football teams than Notre Dame, but yet Georgia and Ohio State get left out all because

Notre Dame gets the easy way out because they beat a six loss Vandy team 22-17, six loss Pitt team 19-14, and a seven loss USC team 24-17.

Don't forget the Irish beat Michigan 24-17, a team Ohio State hung 62 points on the last week of the regular season. Georgia beat Vanderbilt 41-13, and Clemson beat Pitt 42-10.

The solutions are simple:

1. Make Notre Dame commit to joining the ACC in football and win a conference championship game.

2. Do away with conference title games all together and level the playing field with Notre Dame.

3. Have an 8, 16, or 32 team playoff like all other college football divisions, and crown a real champion.

Georgia and Ohio State would be undefeated playing Notre Dame's 2018 schedule. The playoff committee always says the goal is to get the four best teams, but it failed miserably in 2018. Notre Dame may not even be the best football team in Indiana.

So, we are stuck with Notre Dame with their weak slate. So, in 2018 we have the top 3 and Notre Dame.

Address the Notre Dame elephant in the room. The football playoff committee needs scrap this system for a true playoff like everyone else does or make Notre Dame join a conference.

There may be 3-4 teams in the SEC that would beat Notre Dame. Politics won the day on the playoff selection committee.





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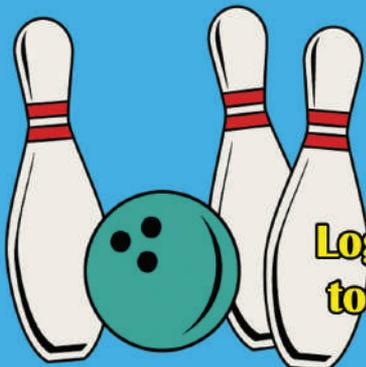
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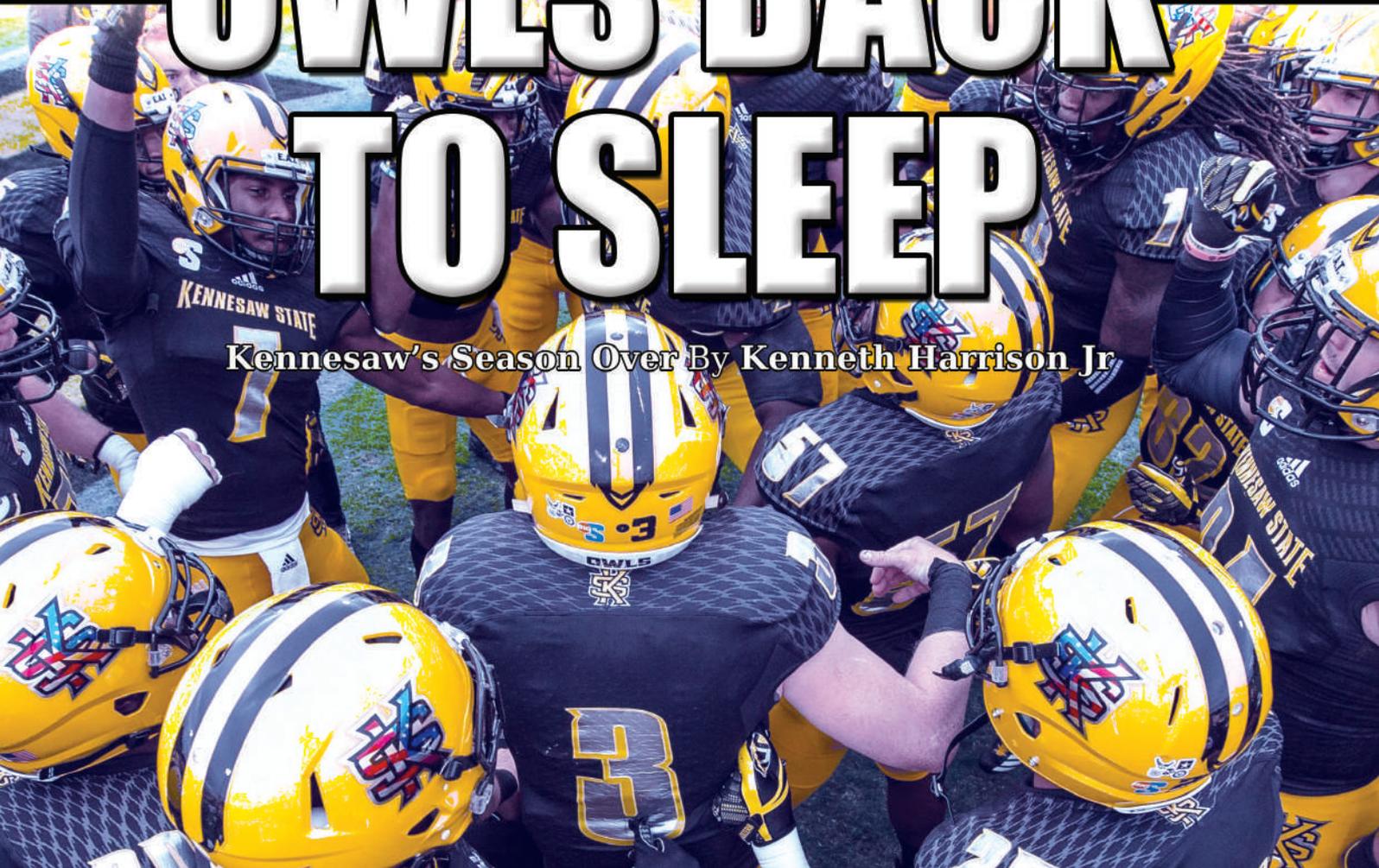


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# OWLS BACK TO SLEEP

Kennesaw's Season Over By Kenneth Harrison Jr





The Kennesaw State Owls football team saw their season come to an end earlier this month. The Owls finished the regular season 10-1 and ranked No. 2 in the FCS Coaches Poll. The only loss was to an FBS team, Georgia State.

KSU did not receive much respect for their great season because they were the No. 4 seed in the Playoffs. They lost to No. 5 South Dakota State (10-2) 27-17 in the quarterfinals.

The Owls have only been playing football since 2015 and they are becoming a powerhouse at the FCS level. Despite that, attendance has been declining since the program's inception.

"I'm passionate about this school and I don't know why you wouldn't be. ... We got 35,000 students," coach Brian Bohannon said. "Let see if we can get a couple thousand to come to the game. Let's raise some heck and have some fun. Let's see if we can help the Owls win. We've got over a million people in this community. Let's see if we can get a couple thousand to come to the game."

While attendance was announced at 3,242, there were clearly no more than 1,000 fans actually in the stands.

The Owls lost the season opener to Georgia State 24-20. KSU held a three-point lead with 2 minutes remaining in the fourth quarter before the Panthers scored the winning touchdown.

After that game, they reeled off 10 consecutive wins against other FCS competition. They dominated their opponents and won their games by double digits except for the season finale.

The scores against non-conference competition were 49-10 at Tennessee Tech, 62-13 versus Alabama State, 70-13 versus Clarke Atlanta and 24-10 over Samford.

They also breezed through Big South conference opponents beating Presbyterian 56-0, Gardner-Webb 56-17, Charleston Southern 38-10, Campbell 49-0 and Monmouth 51-14. They won the conference title for the second year in a row.

The season finale was against No.6 Jacksonville State. The game was a classic, going to five overtimes. They defeated the Gamecocks 60-52.

Kennesaw State runs the triple option so they have a powerful rushing attack. The leader of the team is quarterback Chandler Burks. Burks rushed for 905 yards and 29 touchdowns. He also threw for 1,043 yards, 10 TD's and completed 57% of his passes.

Senior running back Darnell Holland ran for 949 yards with an amazing 11.9 yards per carry average. He finished the season with 9 touchdowns. Shaquil Terry was the third leading rusher with 576 yards, 5 TD's and averaged 7.4 ypc.

KSU had a bye in the opening round of the playoffs so their first game was in the second round against Wofford. They are two of the best rushing offenses in the country and it was a tough game. KSU beat the Terriers 13-10. The win put Kennesaw State at 24 wins in their last 26 games.

The season ended in the quarterfinals for the second year in a row. I really hoped they would win this game because they would have played North Dakota State in the next round.

The Bison have been a juggernaut for the last seven years. That would have been a good way to really see where the Owls stack up against elite competition.

The season was very successful and the goal in 2019 is to advance further in the playoffs.



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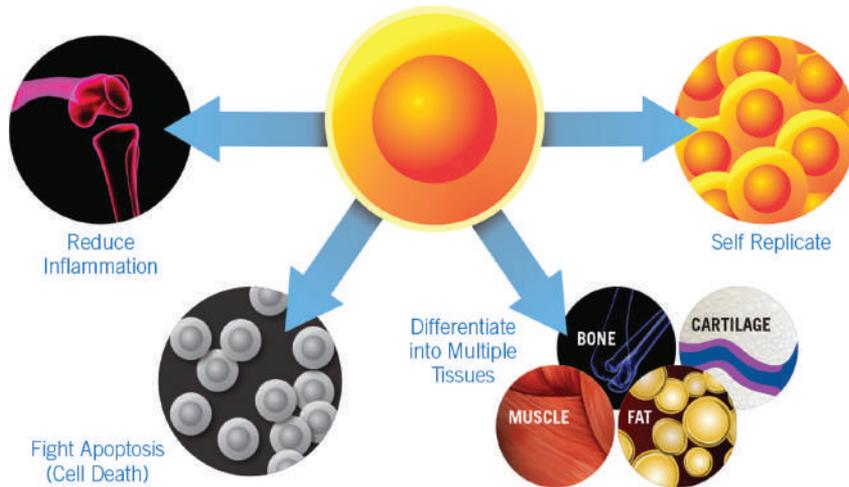
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