

# THE *SOUTHERN SPORTS* EDITION

June 2020 Edition



# GEORGIA'S NEW-MAN



THE JAGS UPCOMING SEASON



TOP RETURNING PLAYERS



THE BRAVES' GREATEST TRIUMPH

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GET TO KNOW THE WRITERS



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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.



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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'.



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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.



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Robert is an expert on the Florida sports scene. From the Florida Gators to the Orlando Magic, Robert has you covered.



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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.

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 High School Football 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 Southeast Georgia and Northeast Florida and growing everyday.

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# GEORGIA'S NEW-MAN



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# THE EXTRA GUY

Braves' Designated Hitter Options By TJ Hartnett



**T**his might just be unwarranted optimism, but it is kind of starting to feel like January again.

Not in terms of weather, but in terms of baseball. There seems to be a feeling that a truncated MLB season could start as soon as early July, with about half as many games as normal, expanded playoffs, modified divisions, and – our subject for today – a universal designated hitter.

I'm starting to get that anticipatory excitement I always feel right before spring training. We've all felt it once this year, only for COVID to pull the rug out from under us; but that feeling is back and baseball just might be on the horizon.

What could this mean for the Atlanta Braves?

For one thing, it could mean that neither Austin Riley nor Johan Camargo sees any time in whatever the minor leagues look like this season.

They had begun battling it out for the starting third base job before spring training was suspended, but that

suspension could very well mean that neither of them needs to worry about not being on the big-league club.

Now, there's likely going to be a significantly expanded roster at the major league level this season, which might factor into the Braves hanging on to both third basemen more than the DH would. Having that extra spot in the lineup could potentially mean that both guys are essentially starting.

Camargo might get the majority of the starts at third while Riley DHs, with a switch whenever necessary.

On the other hand, a DH could mean that Camargo and Riley platoon and Nick Markakis or Adam Duvall get the DH spot instead. The righty/lefty matchup works out, in a traditional sense, and it would keep both bats from getting stale, especially with Ronald Acuna, Jr., Marcell Ozuna, and Ender Inciarte likely keeping them on the bench otherwise.

There's also the option of not having a consistent DH (or platoon). Having the extra spot in the lineup would allow manager Brian Snitker to rotate his starting eight through the designated hitter position throughout the week. That would allow rest for the likes of Freddie Freeman every half inning and replacing them on the field with their backup.

That also serves the purpose of providing relatively consistent at bats for the backups, who normally only see pinch hits and a start once every week or two.

The last option would be for the Braves to go out and get themselves a designated designated hitter (not a typo).

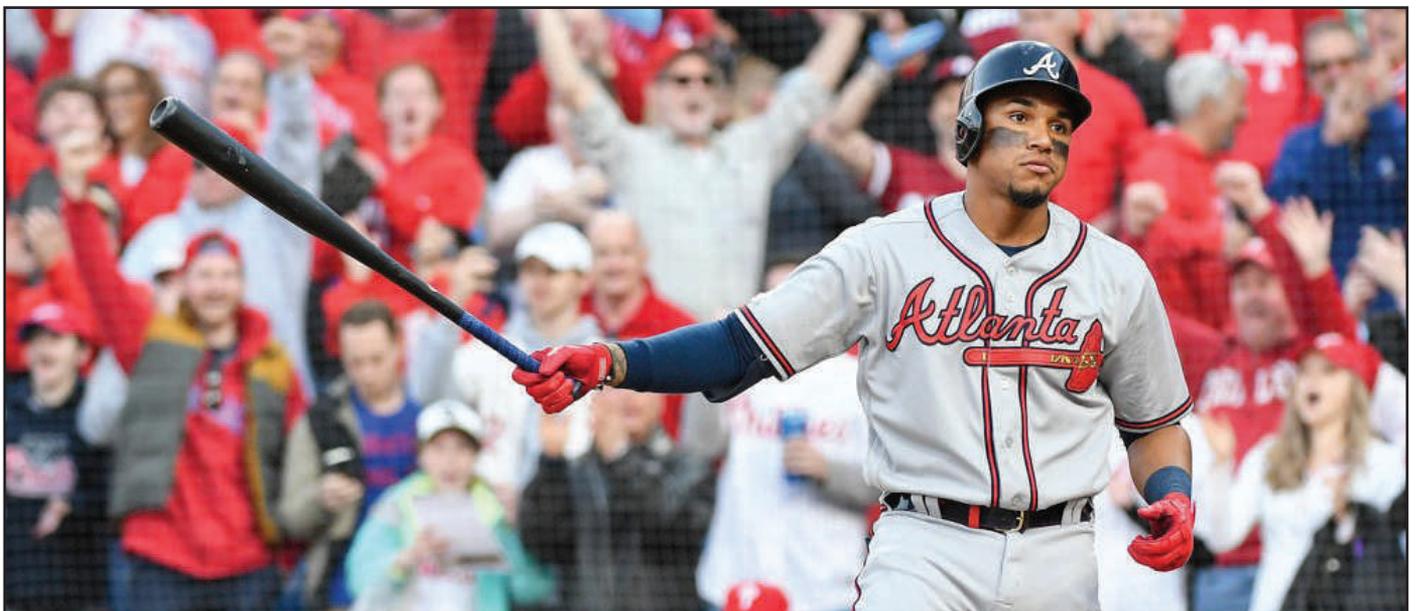
There are actually some intriguing options still on the market. For example, the Braves might not have wanted to risk the money or the potential headache of signing Yasiel Puig to a whole season for a whole season's worth of money. However, with a much shorter risk period, Atlanta could now go out and sign the outfielder to a fraction of what he's worth and make him their DH with occasional starts in the outfield.

Mark Trumbo is another guy who can be signed for cheap. He'd likely be exclusively a DH. He has lots of strikeouts but a ton of pop, too.

The point is, maybe the Braves will want a guy to show up and mash and not be required to do anything else.

Those are the kinds of possibilities having a DH for the entire season in the National League will bring for the Braves.

Waiting to see which way they go is just a part of the pre-spring-mid-summer training excitement.





# GEORGIA'S NEW-MAN

Dawgs New QB By Kipp Branch



**E**very UGA fan I know is trying to find out what they can about UGA quarterback Jamie Newman, who many expect to be the starting quarterback for the University of Georgia this fall.

Newman attended Graham High School in Graham, North Carolina. He was a four-year starter at quarterback in high school. He committed to Wake Forest University to play college football. He was rated a three-star prospect coming out of high school.

Newman redshirted his first year at Wake Forest in 2016. As a backup to John Wolford in 2017, he completed two of four passes for eight yards and an interception.

Newman entered 2018 as a backup to Sam Hartman, but started the final four games after Hartman was hurt. He was named the 2018 Birmingham Bowl MVP after throwing for 328 yards and a touchdown.

For the season, he completed 84 of 141 passes for 1,083 yards, 9 touchdowns and 4 interceptions. Newman beat out Hartman for the starting job entering 2019.

He enjoyed a breakout season as

a redshirt junior in Wake Forest's high-scoring offense, accounting for 32 total touchdowns, 2,868 passing yards and 574 rushing yards in 2019.

On January 10, 2020, Newman announced that he would transfer to the University of Georgia for his final year of eligibility.

He had a 10-6 record as a starter the last two seasons.

Newman will be counted on to replace Jake Fromm, while leading Georgia back to the SEC championship game for the fourth straight season. He brings a skill set to the position that UGA fans have not seen since the days of DJ Shockley and Aaron Murray; that is a QB who is true dual threat.

Newman at 6'4 and 225 pounds can run the football, and it's on new offensive coordinator Todd Monken to make that work.

Head Coach Kirby Smart is saying all the right things about the QB position during the most unusual offseason any football coach has dealt with during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Newman is going into the fall without the benefit of a spring practice, and some are saying that he doesn't have the reps to pick up the new offense in time for the fall. He comes to Athens with a degree from Wake Forest University so I wouldn't worry about him not picking up the system in time.

The Question that many are asking: Will Jamie Newman be a drop off from Jake Fromm?

Many will say yes to this question, but I'm going to say it will be an upgrade and that is because Newman brings two things to UGA that Jake struggled with and that is throwing the deep ball, and being a threat with his legs.

Newman plugs into one of the most talented rosters in the country and his strengths will make the UGA offense dangerous. Georgia has talented skill people; vastly more talented than what Newman had at his disposal at Wake Forest.

Quick stats for you from 2019, Jamie Newman was ranked second behind Joe Burrow last season in throwing into tight windows and on 20 yard or more throws Newman ranked second nationally in 2019.

Newman was breakout player in 2019 and the likes of Oklahoma and Oregon wanted to plug Newman into their program badly.

Kirby Smart pulled out a huge recruiting win in landing Jamie Newman. UGA may have the best defense in the country in 2020, and now they have a true dual threat QB to run the offense. And let's face, it's an offense that needs major tweaks.

If Jamie Newman does what I think he can do this fall he could be a legend in the Classic City.

He has a better skill set than any other QB in the SEC East and would start for any of those teams.



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# FROM ANKLE PAIN TO ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

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No one could accuse Susan Gibson of sitting on the sidelines. During her 36 years as a traveling nurse, she had the opportunity to live in many places. When she wasn't delivering babies for high risk mothers, she enjoyed local adventures, such as swimming with dolphins while stationed in Hawaii. After retiring, she became a full-time nanny for her three grandchildren.



She did it all with physical setbacks, including an ankle injury from a roller blading accident decades ago. “My ankle joint popped out to the opposite side,” says Ms. Gibson. A doctor stabilized the joint with a pin. That solution improved the function of her joint and relieved the pain in her ankle for several decades. As often happens after an ankle injury, arthritis eventually set in. Once again, Ms. Gibson couldn't walk without significant pain. When standard pain relief methods such as ice and anti-inflammatory medications didn't help, she began researching surgical treatment options.”

## Searching for Relief

One option was ankle fusion (arthrodesis). During this procedure, a surgeon cleans the worn joint and fuses the bones together with screws, plates and bone graft. Ankle fusion relieves pain, but limits range of motion, which can lead to further wear and tear and arthritis in the surrounding joints of the foot and ankle. Another option, ankle replacement surgery (arthroplasty), replaces the joint's damaged bone and cartilage with an ankle prosthesis. This prosthesis mimics ankle movement, allowing better range of motion, a more natural gait, less pain and less chance of recurring arthritis. “I wanted to easily walk onto the soccer field with my grandkids without being in pain and a solution that would last for many more years. So I chose ankle replacement,” Ms. Gibson says.

## A Trusted Surgeon

Once Ms. Gibson found the treatment she preferred, she needed to find the right surgeon. A fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon, Jake Porter, III, M.D., MPH specializes in foot and ankle surgery at Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery. He trained under five surgeons during his year-long foot and ankle fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. If anyone understands the importance of doctor-patient relationships, it's Ms. Gibson. “I've been around doctors for 36 years. I researched Dr. Porter and I liked his skills and his gentle bedside manner. He spent time with me and listened.”

## What Makes a Good Candidate?

According to Dr. Porter, “A person may need ankle replacement surgery to treat painful arthritis caused by a dislocation, fracture or rheumatoid arthritis.”

Regardless of cause, patients must meet certain criteria:

- Active lifestyle, but not engaged in high impact sports
- Good range of motion
- Healthy weight
- Good circulation
- No previous ankle fusion
- No co-morbidities increasing infection risk
- No significant bone deformity
- Patient is willing to follow physician instructions

“We can identify which patients will have the best outcomes and measure patients pre-operatively, so the procedures are shorter. As with hip and knee replacements, the prostheses used in ankle replacements don't last forever. If a revision is needed, the prostheses we use spare enough bone to perform a second surgery,” explains Dr. Porter.

## Managing Recovery and Expectations

Arthroplasty requires patients to wear a cast for three to six weeks following surgery versus the 10 to 12 weeks required following an ankle fusion. Physical therapy is also needed. Though replacement is meant to maintain, not gain, range of motion, most patients return to active lifestyles. “For certain patients, ankle replacement is a game changer. It increases mobility and relieves pain,” says Dr. Porter.

As for Ms. Gibson, she couldn't be happier. “I can't say enough good about Dr. Porter. More people need to consider the positives of this surgery. I have zero pain and look forward to visiting Europe this fall.”

**To schedule a consultation with Dr. Porter, or to learn more about the services provided at Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery, call 912-466-7340 or visit [sghs.org/summit](http://sghs.org/summit).**

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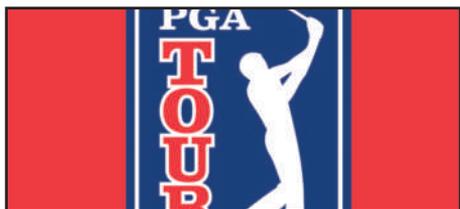
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# HOLE IN ONE

The Future For Golf By Mike Anthony



The sports world is still a far cry from being normal, but at least one item on my personal checklist returned on Sunday afternoon.

As has happened on countless spring and summer weekends, I accomplished half of the household chores my wife had asked of me, only to be lured to the television - and a nap - by golf.

In a charity event held at the esteemed Seminole Golf Club in Juno Beach, Fla., Rory McIlroy and Dustin Johnson defeated Rickie Fowler and Matthew Wolff in a skins match that raised over \$5 million.

With every sport trying to figure out what strange new features will enable them to return to play as soon as possible, golf certainly seems like it can deliver the same sort of product while adhering to safety guidelines.

The lack of a crowd didn't change my personal viewing experience. If anything, it allowed viewers to take in a spectacular Seminole Club course that had never appeared on television before.

The players wore shorts and carried their own bags, but - if anything - that made the action even more relatable to the high-handicappers watching at home who don't play with caddies and who would never show up to a course wearing slacks on a muggy Florida afternoon.

Following Sunday's event, it dawned on me that this could be a huge turning point for the sport and for how players choose to promote themselves.

To be sure, the marquee events on the PGA Tour and the four majors aren't going anywhere. Ratings will be stellar if and when the tour is able to play its amended major schedule this fall, and attendance at those events figures to remain high as soon as crowds are permitted back on the links.

But as for many other dates on the golf calendar, who's to say?

While current times are certainly an exception and not a rule, it's not hard to fathom a future where huge names are reeled in for a payday in exclusive one-off events. Years of ratings prove that viewers follow the game's biggest stars and plenty of non-pandemic TV specials have raked in tons of

money.

If the money is there to be had, it doesn't seem far-fetched to envision a golf club looking to make a name for itself ponying up the purse to put on a show.

If the television and online streaming eyeballs will be focused on the event, it seems like a no-brainer that top brands might organize an event featuring all the stars under their umbrella putting on a five-hour infomercial for the latest line of products.

Golf has been primetime viewing - at least during the biggest events - ever since Tiger Woods burst onto the scene. But prior to the late 90s, there was little hype for lesser events and nobody outside of the top 10-20 players in the world were getting rich off of the game.

And the truth is, anyone not consistently making cuts and finishing on the first few pages of the leaderboard every week still isn't exactly a legend at their local bank.

It should come as no surprise that the lowest-level tour events - or those played concurrent to majors or big overseas tournaments - feature no-name players with sparse crowds and not much on the way of possible winnings.

The world's top players already make more money in endorsements than they do through tournament checks.

If special events can guarantee big paydays - while also offering the lack of excessive media obligations, pro-ams, long days due to slow play from a 150-man field, etc. - there's little that will stop the world's top players from ditching smaller tournaments in favor of receiving top billing at a special event.

The Premier Golf League is currently trying to compete with the PGA. It aims to be a more global affair, playing only half as many tournaments while still offering huge purses.

However, many of the game's biggest names have already declined potential offers to join.

But with more singular, unaffiliated events, it would be easy for big draws to pocket more money without the hassle of worldwide travel or learning the rules and format of an entirely new tour.

The PGA isn't going anywhere anytime soon, but if Sunday's Seminole showdown proves anything, it's that there could be more opportunities soon for the world's top players might call in sick to lesser events in order to sneak out for a round of golf.



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# ON THE PROWL

The Jags' Upcoming Season By Kipp Branch



The 2020 NFL Schedule has been released. Let's take a look and predict how the season will play out for Jacksonville Jaguars.

**Week 1: September 13, Indianapolis Colts:** The Jags open up the season at home against a much improved Colts team with Philip Rivers at QB.

Colts will have a very good defense, and with Rivers at QB Indy feels like they are the favorites in the AFC South. At home in the Jacksonville heat I'm going with Jacksonville 24-20. Jacksonville is 1-0 on the season.

**Week 2: September 20, at Tennessee Titans:** Jacksonville cannot beat Tennessee and will not in Nashville.

Derrick Henry chews up the Jags run defense and the Titans roll to a 31-13 win.

Tennessee is a sleeper team in the AFC. Jacksonville is 1-1 on the season.

**Week 3: September 24, Miami Dolphins:** Tua rolls into the River City and gets pressured all day by an inspired Jags defense. Jacksonville beats the Dolphins 28-13 to go to 2-1 on the season.

**Week 4: October 4, at Cincinnati Bengals:** Jacksonville travels to Cincy to take on Joe Burrow and the Bengals.

I'm not sure how much the Bengals improve in 2020.

Let's go with Jacksonville as Gardner Minshew will out play the 2019 Heisman winner and the Jags win 27-17 on the road to go to 3-1.

**Week 5: October 11, at Houston Texans:** The Texans seem to be a train wreck, but it won't matter when Jacksonville comes to town.

Jags will find a way to lose in Houston. Texans win 24-21. Jags go to 3-2

**Week 6: October 18, Detroit Lions:** I will be in attendance when my Detroit Lions roll into Jacksonville and leave with a victory over the Jaguars.

Matt Stafford leads a game

winning drive with less than 2 minutes left in the contest to pull out a road win 31-28. Jags fall to 3-3 on the season.

**Week 7: Bye Week**

**Week 8: November 1, at Los Angeles Chargers:** Chargers will beat the Jags in LA 34-13.

This will be one of those head scratcher games for the Jags as they drop to 3-4 on the season.

**Week 9: November 8, Houston Texans:** The Jags split the season series with the Texans with a nice home win 34-23 to go to 4-4 on the season.

**Week 10: November 15, at Green Bay Packers:** Don't even think about it. Packers drill the Jags at Lambeau 38-13. Jags go to 4-5 on the season.

**Week 11: November 22, Pittsburgh Steelers:** Jacksonville seems to have Big Ben's number. Jags win a huge home game 27-24 to go 5-5 on the season.

**Week 12: November 29, Cleveland Browns:** Baker Mayfield is a bust repeat after me Baker Mayfield is a bust.

Jags win 33-21 to go to 6-5 on the season.

**Week 13: December 6, at Minnesota Vikings:** Not happening. The Vikings are a very good football team. Minnesota wins 35-17. Jags fall to 6-6.

**Week 14: December 13, Tennessee Titans:** Nope the Jags are not physical enough for the Titans. Titans win 31-10. Jags fall to 6-7 on the season.

**Week 15: December 20, at Baltimore Ravens:** I'm not wasting my time on this one. Ravens 41-13. Jags drop to 6-8.

**Week 16: December 27, Chicago Bears:** Will Nick Foles come in and put it to the Jaguars? The answer is yes 24-20.

Jaguars fall to 6-9. Jags go 0-4 against the NFC North.

**Week 17: January 3: at Indianapolis Colts:** Playoff bound Colts rest starters and Jacksonville wins 35-19 to finish 7-9 on the 2020 season.

Best case scenario is 10-6 with wins over Detroit, San Diego, and Chicago.

Worst case scenario is 4-12 with a loss at home to Pittsburgh, Houston, and Indy.

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# RUNNING BACK

Top Returning Backs In The SEC By Robert Craft



In 2019, the SEC leading rusher was wide receiver Lynn Bowden of Kentucky. It was a strange season for running backs in the SEC.

There are star running backs in the 2020 season at nearly every SEC school. There might not be the star power of Todd Gurley and Derrick Henry, and there might not be a once in a generation player like Herschel Walker or Bo Jackson.

Here is my ranking of the five

injury in the same month.

He was named to the SEC All-Freshman Team, voted on by the SEC head coaches.

**4. Rakeen Boyd, Arkansas:**

Boyd was the lone bright spot in the Arkansas offense in 2019. He rushed for 1,133 yards and scored 8 touchdowns.

He started his college career at Texas A&M before transferring to Arkansas. Boyd spent one year at Independence Community College (Last Chance U).

Boyd has been the bell cow for the Razorbacks for the two seasons. New Head Coach Sam Pittman should continue to rely on him to be a major contributor in the Razorbacks offense.

**3. Jerrion Ealy, Ole Miss:** Ealy earned second team All SEC and All SEC

D’Andre Swift leaving for the NFL, now it should be White’s time in Athens.

White gave a sneak preview in the Sugar Bowl against Baylor, with 18 carries for 92 yards.

Health is a major concern with Zamir after the two torn ACLs. He should put up huge numbers in new offensive coordinator Todd Monken’s offense.

**1. Najee Harris, Alabama:**

When Najee Harris arrived at Alabama, the five-star prospect was expected to follow in Derrick Henry’s footsteps. Three years later and Harris has not posted the huge numbers some pundits predicted.

The main reason is because Tua Tagovailoa. Tua directed one of the most prolific passing attacks in college football the past two seasons.

In 2019, Harris finished with



best running backs in the SEC heading into the 2020 season.

**5. Isaiah Spiller, Texas A&M:**

Spiller started seven games as a true freshman at A&M in 2019 and led the Aggies in rushing.

He finished the year with 946 yards and 10 touchdowns on the ground. He posted 217 yards and 3 touchdowns, tying the school’s freshman rushing record.

Spiller stepped up big time last season after the Aggies lost running back Jashaun Corbin to a season ending hamstring injury in September and Vernon Jackson to a career ending neck

Freshman accolades in 2019.

Ealy is a two-sport athlete at Ole Miss playing football and baseball.

He led the SEC in kickoff returns and fifth nationally in all-purpose yardage among freshmen.

He rushed for 722 yards and 6 touchdowns.

New Ole Miss head coach Lane Kiffin has proven he can make a star of running backs, as FAU’s Devin Singletary set school records and was drafted in the third-round pick under Kiffin’s leadership.

**2. Zamir White, Georgia:**

White was the number one running back coming out of high school in 2018. With

1,224 yards rushing and 13 touchdowns. He added 304 yards receiving and 7 touchdowns. In 2020, Alabama will have a new quarterback under center and Harris should benefit with a heavier workload.

He is a bona fide star on a team full of five-star athletes. It is not out of the realm of possibility Najee is a top Heisman Candidate.

Players just outside the top five: Larry Rountree, Missouri; Kylin Hill, Mississippi State; Trey Sanders, Alabama; Kenny McIntosh, Georgia and Eric Gray, Tennessee.

Breakout player of the year Dameon Pierce, Florida.

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# WELCOME BACK

Top Returning Players In The SEC By Kipp Branch



**I**t is starting to look like football season will go forward as scheduled in 2020.

That will be a welcome sight for a sport starved culture in the south, particularly the Southeastern Conference.

Let's take a look at my top five returning players in the SEC. Again, remember these are my top 5 selections.

**5. George Pickens WR/Georgia:** Pickens after a slow start, Pickens finished the 2019 season with 49 receptions for 8 TD's.

He topped it off with a 12-catch performance in a Sugar Bowl win over Baylor.

Pickens should have a monster season in 2020, who ever the QB ends up being in Athens. Pickens is a rare talent and people in Athens have not been this excited about a receiver since AJ Green roamed the sidelines a decade ago.

Look for Pickens to be an all-conference performer this fall. By the way, Jaime Newman will be the man tossing the ball to Pickens.

**4. Najee Harris RB/Alabama:** Najee Harris will be the best running back in the SEC this fall. I thought he was the best running back in the conference in 2019, His 1200 yards rushing and 20 total TD's back up my claim.

Harris is also a great receiver out of the backfield. Harris averaged 5.8 yards per carry in 2019, and Alabama will be the preseason favorite to win the conference in 2020. Harris could be a Heisman Trophy contender this fall.

**3. Jaylen Waddle WR/KR/Alabama:** If you watched the NFL draft last week you noticed that Alabama had two wide receivers selected in the first round, and Waddle will be the next great Alabama WR.

Waddle is also the best return man in the SEC as well, with a kickoff and punt return touchdown in 2019.

The Tide will figure out ways to get Waddle the touches he needs to be a game changer this fall. Alabama has become Wide Receiver U in college football at the moment. Their offense should be pretty salty in 2020.

Waddle is said to run in the 4.35 range which will blow the top off an opposing defense.

**2. Ja'Marr Chase WR/LSU:** Chase had 84 catches and 20 TD's and was the best WR on the National Champion LSU Tiger roster in 2019.

Chase won't have Joe Burrow tossing him the ball, but LSU will find

ways to get him the touches he needs. He could be the first WR selected in the 2021 NFL Draft.

Could Chase be a back to back Biletnikoff Award winner? I would not bet against it.

He eats up opposing defensive backs and spits them out. Chase had 9 catches for 221 yards and 2 TD's against Clemson in the national title game. He abused CB AJ Terrell of Clemson, who was selected by the Atlanta Falcons with the 16th pick in the first round.

Chase will be a future Pro Bowl WR at the next level.

**1. Derek Stingley Jr. CB/LSU:** Stingley is the best returning player in the SEC, and maybe the country.

He had 6 interceptions as a freshman in 2019. He was a game changer for LSU in the SEC title game win over Georgia as Stingley picked off Jake Fromm twice.

This kid will be at LSU for two more seasons before he can declare for the NFL, and will probably be a top five pick in the 2022 NFL draft.

Could a defensive player win the Heisman again? Coach O says Stingley will get touches on the offensive side of the ball also moving forward.

This kid is a generational cornerback and the best returning player in the SEC in 2020. I bet you opposing offensive coordinators will game plan around Stingley.



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A photograph of a basketball game in progress. A player in a black Georgia Tech jersey with the number 4 is jumping high to shoot the ball into the hoop. He has a determined expression with his mouth open. Other players in black and yellow jerseys are visible around the key, watching the play. The background shows a blurred crowd and a yellow banner with the letters 'GO'.

**GT**

# KING BEEES

The Best At Tech By Kenneth Harrison Jr



**W**hen we think of the best ACC basketball programs North Carolina and Duke come to mind. The conference has some other very good programs and once upon a time Georgia Tech was in that category. Let's look at the best players in program history.

**Mark Price (1982-86):** He was a two-time All-American and four-time All ACC player.

Price lead the Yellow Jackets to

Anderson was All ACC and All-American both years at Tech.

He averaged 23 points per game and 7 assists per game. He was a key member of the 1990 team that got to the Final Four. That team also won the ACC title. He was the second pick in the 1991 NBA draft by the New Jersey Nets.

**Stephon Marbury (1995-96):** You may have noticed a theme here since we have another point guard on the list. Marbury was a 1995 McDonald's All-American along with Kevin Garnett, Antawn Jamison, Paul Pierce and Shareef Abdur-Rahim.

He averaged 18.9 ppg and 4.5 apg and was named a Third Team All-American. Tech was 13-3 in conference play which made them the regular season ACC champs.

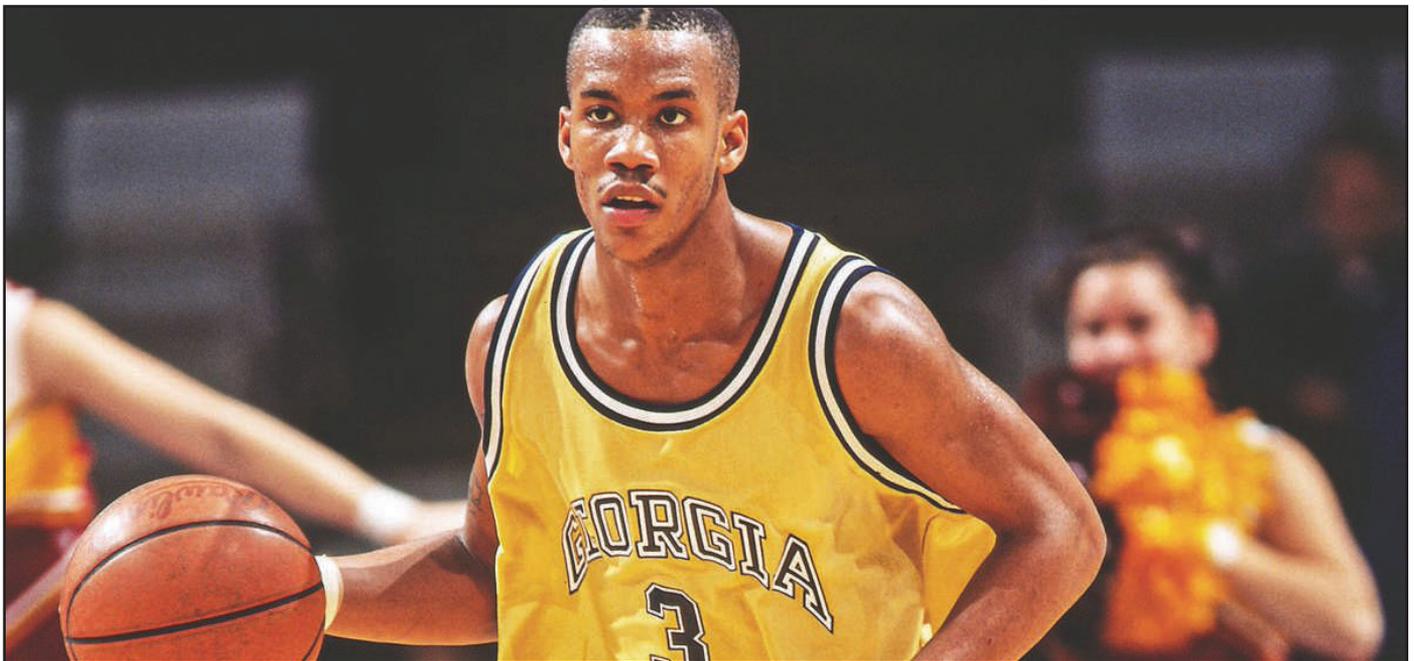
**Dennis Scott (1987-90):** He led the Yellow Jackets to the NCAA Tournament each year he played.

Scott was ACC Rookie of the Year in 1988, ACC Player of the Year in 1990 and Sporting News Player of the Year (1990). He was also a consensus second-team All-American in 1990. In his career he averaged 21.4 ppg, 5.3 rpg and 3 apg. He was the No. 4 pick by Orlando in the 1990 draft.

**Matt Harpring (1994-98):** Harpring was a four-year starter and was named First Team All-ACC three times.

He set career highs in his senior season with 21.6 points and 9.4 rebounds per game, ranking second in the ACC in both categories.

He finished his collegiate career as Georgia Tech's second all-time leader



an ACC Championship his junior year by beating North Carolina in the ACC Tournament championship game. He was the ACC Player of the Year in the 1984-85 season.

He was inducted into the school's Hall of Fame in 1991 and his jersey was retired. He holds several records and he's the All-time leader in steals (240), consecutive games started (126), minutes played (4,604) and 3-point field goal percentage (.440). He was the first pick in the second round of the 1986 draft (25th overall) by the Dallas Mavericks.

**Kenny Anderson (1989-91):** He won ACC Rookie of the Year in 1990.

They advanced to the ACC Tournament championship game but lost by one point to Wake Forest, led by Tim Duncan.

The Yellow Jackets got to the Sweet Sixteen in the NCAA Tournament. He was selected fourth overall by Milwaukee in the legendary 1996 draft.

**Chris Bosh (2002-03):** Bosh was the ACC Rookie of the Year in 2003. He averaged 15.6 points, 9 rebounds and 2.2 blocks in 31 games. Georgia Tech had a disappointing season and finished 16-15. They got to the third round of the NIT. He was the No. 4 pick by Toronto in 2003, which is another legendary draft class.

in points (2,225) and rebounds (997).

Harpring is the institute's all-time leader in free throws attempted (675) and made (508).

His jersey was retired in his final regular season home game. He was the 15th pick by Orlando in the 1998 draft.

**Travis Best (1991-95):** The McDonald's All-American led Tech to the 1993 ACC Tournament Championship.

He averaged 16.6 ppg and 5.6 apg. He was one of only three ACC players to score 2,000 points with 600 assists. He was the 23rd pick in 1995 by Indiana.



# BRAVE TITLE

The Braves' Greatest Triumph By TJ Hartnett



**F**ox Sports recently satiated our collective thirst for baseball, albeit briefly, by airing the Atlanta Braves' greatest triumph: the 1995 World Series against the Cleveland Indians.

For six straight nights, Braves Country was treated to a Braves squad at the height of their powers, barely a third of the way into their 14-straight division titles. I don't usually go for reruns – I never watch the next-day replays during the season – but this was compelling television, despite knowing the outcome.

fielded in the 90s, but they're the one that won it all. So, since they're fresh on our minds, let's look back at what made that team special.

Let's get this out of the way first: the starting pitching was firing on all cylinders. Greg Maddux captured his 4th straight Cy Young award in 1995 (going 19-2 with a freaking 1.63 ERA), and Glavine and Smoltz were in their primes (they both had sub-3.20 ERAs, plus Glavine was World Series MVP and the next season Smoltz would be the first Cy Young winner in five years who wasn't Mad Dog).

Avery was on the downside of his short career and Kent Mercker put up serviceable but not great numbers in the five spot. The three-headed monster at the top of the rotation made up for any deficiencies.

The bullpen gets little credit,

Fred McGriff and David Justice hitting fourth and fifth, respectively.

Underrated slugger, Ryan Klesko was up next (he hit .310 along with his 23 homers in 1995), then catcher Javy Lopez, who hit .315 (the two highest averages on the team, for those keeping track at home).

Bringing up the end of the batting order was light-hitting (unless it was a contract year) shortstop Jeff Blauser (who I didn't remember not playing the Series in '95 due to an injury – Rafael Belliard took over in his place.)

The interesting thing about this lineup was that it was well-constructed enough that no one really needed to rise above the rest – note that McGriff led the team with 27 home runs and 93 RBIs that year.

McGriff and Klesko were the only members of the team that slugged



The 90s and early 00s Braves went through little eras within those 14 years, but that 1995 team's pitching staff and batting lineup is usually the one people could name.

Sure, the early 90s had Otis Nixon, Terry Pendleton, and Steve Avery in his prime, but no Chipper. The early 2000s had Andruw Jones and Rafael Furcal, but that scrappy Jeff Blauser/Mark Lemke tandem was gone (and then, eventually, so was Tom Glavine).

I think the 1995 team was almost perfectly constructed. Ironically, I don't think they were the best team the Braves

but Mark Wohlers had a 2.09 ERA and led a stellar group of relievers with Greg McMichael, Brad Clontz, and Pedro Borbon. All of those guys had fantastic years on the bump.

The starting lineup was a classic baseball lineup. You had speed at the top of the order in Marquis Grissom, who won a Gold Glove in center field in 1995, followed by a scrapper in the two-hole in Lemke.

Then came the bashers: Bobby Cox thrust the weight of the three-hole onto rookie Chipper Jones, who rose to the occasion and was protected by sluggers

over .500 (in just 107 games, mind you). But the offense worked and coupled with the pitching, they won 90 games.

More impressive is how that offense got the job done when stacked up against a Cleveland Indians team that was for the ages. A young Manny Ramirez was hitting 7th. And I'm not talking about a green, unproven Manny Ramirez; this guy hit .308 with 31 home runs and 107 RBIs. From the 7-spot.

But they couldn't get it done. The 1995 Braves were a team of destiny but they were also a team of immense talent.



# NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Top QB's In The SEC By Robert Craft



**T**here's a changing of the guard taking place at quarterback in the SEC this season, following the exit of three of the top passers in the league: Joe Burrow, Tua Tagovailoa and Jake Fromm.

Ranking this year's best is a serious challenge considering all the new faces. Of my top five SEC quarterbacks entering the 2020 College Football season, two are transfers.

Despite losing a phenomenal group of quarterbacks, the conference still has elite talent returning in 2020.

**5. K J Costello, Mississippi State:** Costello should flourish in Mike Leach's Air Raid system in Starkville.

He is a transfer from Stanford, and he has shown the talent to be a top tier quarterback not only in the SEC, but nationally.

In 2018, Costello was healthy and threw for over 3,500 yards and 29 touchdowns.

He is the prototype pocket passer standing 6 foot 5 and weighing 225. He is an accurate passer and has a chance to lead the SEC in passing.

**4. Mac Jones, Alabama:** Jones is the toughest guy to predict on this list

because of his limited exposure and a bunch of first round draft picks catching passes.

Looking at the numbers 68.8% completions, 1,503 passing yards and 14 touchdowns in four and a half games. The two interceptions against Auburn in the Iron Bowl make me question his decision making.

Bottom line, he is not Tua. He will be surrounded by talent on both sides of the ball. Alabama has the number 1 returning roster.

**3. Kellen Mond, Texas A&M:**

No one questions Mond's arm strength, escapability or accuracy, but his consistency must improve.

Mond is a three-year starter under Coach Jimbo Fisher. He has shown improvement each of his seasons at A&M.

Last season, he threw for 2,897 yards, 20 touchdowns, rushed for 500 yards and 8 touchdowns. The Aggies are coming off an 8-5 season, in which they lost to Clemson, Alabama and LSU by double digits.

He has been productive but not at his best in the SEC level. Jimbo expects that to change in his senior campaign.

**2. Jamie Newman, Georgia:** A season ago, Newman had 2,868 passing yards, 26 touchdowns, 574 yards rushing and 6 touchdowns for Wake Forest.

With a better supporting cast around him and new offensive coordinator Todd Monken, Newman could potentially break out.

If the Bulldog's can tap into Newman's elite skill set while he trims down turnovers, he will be the best in the SEC in 2020.

My reason for Newman 2nd is the quarantine. He has not been able to work with Monken or his new teammates.

**1. Kyle Trask, Florida:** Trask wasn't even the starter at the beginning of 2019, sitting behind Feleipe Franks (now a graduate transfer at Arkansas).

Trask, as is well documented, didn't even start for his high school team, instead he was watching D'Eriq King (now a graduate transfer at Miami) light it up.

He got his opportunity when Franks went down and never looked back, leading the Gators to 11 wins and completing 66.9 percent of his passes for 2,941 yards, 25 touchdowns and 7 interceptions. Trask is steady and he makes the plays that win games.

He needs to work on his quickness and getting the football out faster.

Florida has to replace Van Jefferson, Freddie Swain and Tyrie Cleveland, three starting wide receivers that went in the NFL Draft.

Now, entering the 2020 season, Kyle Trask is expected to be the top-rated quarterback in the SEC.

Outside The 5: A few players right outside the top 5 are Terry Wilson, Bo Nix, and John Rhys Plumlee. My sleeper SEC quarterback is Myles Brennan.



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