

THE SOUTHERN SPORTS EDITION

April 2025 Edition



MASTERS 2025 PREVIEW



Gators Basketball Rolling



Wildcats HOF Inductees



GSU's Most Winningest Coach

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GET TO KNOW THE WRITERS



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.



COLIN LACY

Colin Lacy is the voice of the Southeast Bulloch Yellow Jackets. Colin also works with Westwood One Sports and Bowl Season radio for National College Football and NFL broadcasts across the country. Colin also calls Georgia Tech baseball for the Georgia Tech Sports Network and also works with the ACC Network.



BRIAN ALBERTSON

Brian Alberson is the former President of the Georgia PGA and is currently a PGA member.. Brian resides on St. Simons Island and is the current director of Golf at Brunswick Country Club. Brian is the founder of the GIGA Elite Golf Academy and the founder of CJGA Elite Golf Academy.



MICHAEL SPIERS

Mike Spiers is the voice of the Camden County Wildcats. Mike has been the public address announcer for Camden baseball for over a decade. Mike graduated from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, LA. Mike is heavily involved in Camden County athletics.



TEDDY BISHOP

Teddy Bishop is from south Georgia and graduated from Armstrong Atlantic University. Teddy has been the voice of the Brunswick High Pirates for almost 20 years and is an expert on Tennis, High School Football and MLB.



ROBERT CRAFT

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



JASON BISHOP

Jason Bishop graduated from Kennesaw State University and formerly worked at CNN Sports. Jason hosts "The Jason Bishop Show", south Georgia's most listened to sports talk show.

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 all across Southeast Georgia and growing everyday.

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THE MASTERS

THE MASTERS PREVIEW

PAGE 4 by Brian Albertson



CHOMPING THE HARDCOURT

GATORS BASKETBALL ROLLING

PAGE 6 by Robert Craft



CHARLIE HUSTLE

REINSTATING PETE ROSE

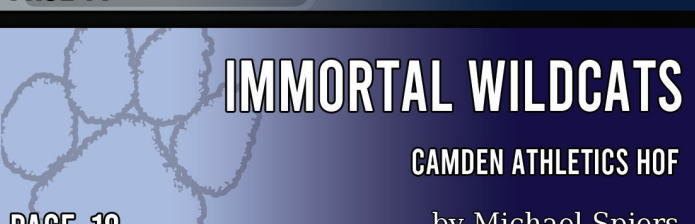
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A SOARING EAGLE

GSU'S MOST WINNINGEST COACH

PAGE 14 by Colin Lacy



IMMORTAL WILDCATS

CAMDEN ATHLETICS HOF

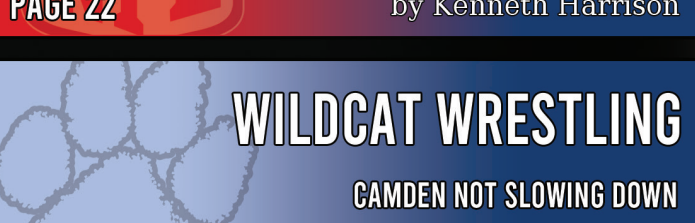
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RUNNING WILD TO NFL

TOP RB'S FOR DRAFT

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WILDCAT WRESTLING

CAMDEN NOT SLOWING DOWN

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MASTERS



THE MASTERS

The Masters Preview By Brian Albertson



For all of us golf enthusiasts, the Masters is and always will be the official start to the golf season.

We look forward to the blooming azaleas and the lush green fairways from Augusta National Golf Club.

This year's Masters is set for April 10-13. I for one always eagerly await to watch the honorary starters tee off on Thursday mornings. This year will have Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Tom Watson again doing the honors on the first tee.

The Masters has traditionally been a melting pot of the best golfers in the world coming together at the same wonderful venue every spring.

This year's Masters will not disappoint, as players from all over the world, every tour, professionals and amateurs will be competing again for the coveted Green Jacket.

This year's betting favorite is world #1 and defending champion Scotty Scheffler, followed closely by world #2 Rory McIlroy.

Several other top contenders are not as highly ranked because they have not received world golf ranking points while playing the LIV tour. Some of the top LIV players competing this year are John Rahm(2023), Brooks Koepka, Cam Smith, Joaquin Newman along with several former Masters champions, including Phil Mickelson (2004,2006,2010), Patrick Reed(2018),

Charl Swartzel(2011), Sergio Garcia(2017), and Bubba Watson(2012,2014). 5-time champion Tiger Woods will unfortunately be unable to compete this year due to a recent Achilles tendon tear.

The mystique of Augusta National Golf Club and the golf course are a huge part of the anticipation of the Masters.

Last fall, hurricane Helene ripped through Florida and Georgia on its way to devastating North Carolina. The Hurricane did extensive damage to the Augusta area with winds near 100 mph. Augusta National Golf Course lost many trees and some fell across greens.

Masters Chairman Fred Ridley has assured us all that the golf course will be in the usual pristine condition the Masters is accustomed to, just missing a few trees this year. I am hearing they have already replaced several key trees.

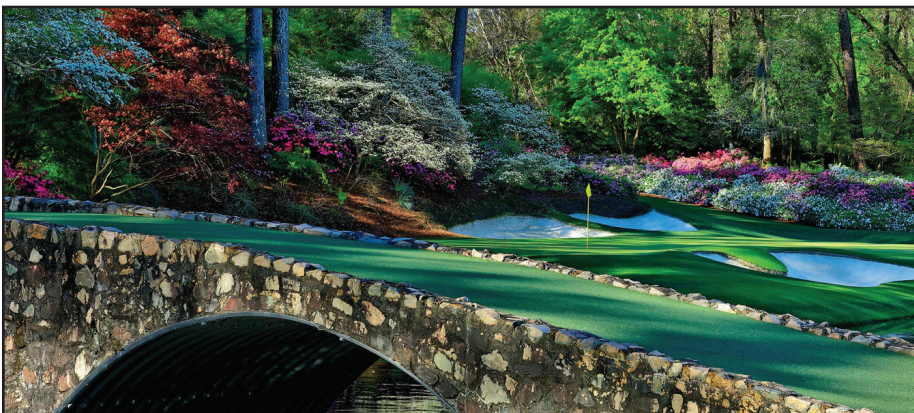
As a spectator, I have been attending the Masters every year since 1984 with the exception of the two Covid years (2020, 2021). I remember my mother taking me as a teen.

She was perfectly happy to sit in her Masters stool on 18 green waiting to see Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Seve Ballesteros finish.

I wonder how many pimento cheese and barbecue sandwiches I have eaten on those grounds over the years. I know many of you will go with the legendary egg salad sandwich.

The names change and the trees get taller, but it is by far the greatest golf tournament and sporting event in the world. I look forward to returning again cheering on several former UGA Bulldogs, and many of my fellow St Simons Island residents.

Cheers to happy spring golfing and have a fabulous Masters week!



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CHOMPING THE HARDCOURT

Gators Basketball Rolling By Robert Craft



It's been seven years since Florida Basketball finished with fewer than 10 losses. It's been 11 years since the Gators won the SEC championship, and it felt like the Gators' days as an elite basketball program were a thing of the past.

Then, Todd Golden and his Gators thumped Tennessee, 86-77,

at 36 years old. Todd Golden was six years younger than the youngest SEC coach at the time.

At the same time, Golden had three years of head coaching experience at San Francisco and had led the Dons to a 57-36 overall record (.613) before arriving in Gainesville. Golden credits Florida's quick turnaround to acquiring talent that fit a certain strand he was developing in the halls of the O'Connell Center.

The Gators are approaching a hot stretch. They beat five top-25 teams over their last six games. Star guard Walter Clayton Jr. scored a minimum of 18 points in five-straight

who score, rebound and pass at high levels. Center Rueben Chinyelu is part of a stout rim-protecting unit that teams struggle to score against. The Gators' defense ranks No. 10 nationally (KenPom) in efficiency, and it surrenders 69 points per game — an impressive mark in an explosive SEC conference.

Golden has yet to advance beyond the first round of the NCAA Tournament in his three years. A deep run this postseason would be a breakthrough for the rising star on the sideline.

For the first time in more than a decade, the SEC will win



for their first SEC Championship since 2013.

UF entered the NCAA Tournament as a No. 1 seed for the first time since Billy Donovan. It will finish with no more than five losses for only the third time in the last 50 years.

Florida went 16-17 in Golden's first season, their second losing season since the turn of the millennium. Still, confidence in Golden's direction never wavered despite obvious lack of experience

outings, but Florida's strengths go beyond the backcourt. This team possesses a deep and balanced roster that stands near the top of the national leaderboard in a number of statistical metrics.

Florida did not lose a non-conference game. All four of their losses were tournament-bound teams. Golden coaches a squad with a high floor and a high ceiling, which could be conducive to a deep run through the 68-team bracket.

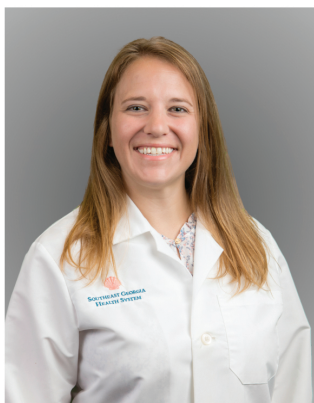
Forwards Alex Condo. And Thomas Haugh are versatile bigs

the national championship on the hardwood. Florida is arguably college basketball's hottest team and they're coming off a tournament title in Nashville.

The Gators are playing well at the most crucial time. The Florida Gators have been one of the most consistent squads this season and their elite level of competition has paved a clear path to the Final Four. From there, it's all about which team executes.



Injury Prevention for Female Athletes



Lindsay Sweat, MD

Dr. Sweat provides primary care to children and adults, including wellness physicals; non-operative orthopaedic and sports medicine services, osteoarthritis management; treatment for hypertension, diabetes, asthma and depression; and women's health exams and screenings.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Sweat, call 912-576-6355.



Women and girls have made great strides in sports. Lindsey Sweat, MD, enjoys watching them excel. As a sports medicine physician specializing in concussion management, Dr. Sweat is often on the sidelines at local athletic events. These experiences, and her medical training, give her insight into the unique needs of female athletes. "Anatomy and hormones can impact their performance and increase their risk of injury," Dr. Sweat says, adding, "Understanding these factors helps athletes, coaches and parents prepare for competition in the best possible way." In addition to her primary care practice, Dr. Sweat sees patients at Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery.

Injuries commonly encountered by female athletes include ACL injuries, jumper's knee, runner's knee, ankle sprains, stress fractures, plantar fasciitis and concussions. "Typically, female athletes are shorter and lighter than their male counterparts which can affect the physics of body movement and the chance of getting injured. A conditioning program, under the guidance of a coach, athletic trainer, physical therapist or sports medicine doctor, helps them compete at their highest level while reducing risks," Dr. Sweat says. She also advises cross training to enhance flexibility, balance and strength. "Stretching, aerobics, balance exercises and strength training develop strength across the entire body. Exercises that improve agility, reaction speed, muscle strength and movement control are also beneficial."

Working with experts allows an athlete to fine tune her training regimen. "You'll train more efficiently and effectively if you match the duration and intensity of your workouts to your performance goals," Dr. Sweat says. She recommends alternating high-intensity workouts with low- to moderate-intensity exercise.

It is equally essential to take rest days, even if you don't want to. "Every seven to 10 days, take a day off to recharge your energy and repair muscle tissues," Dr. Sweat says. This rule applies to kids, teens and adults, but children, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, should also take two-to-three-months off from their sport every year.

How do hormones impact female athletes? "Fluctuating hormonal levels can affect muscles, joints, flexibility, strength and neuromuscular control. While puberty initiates positive changes such as stronger muscles and bones, it can also increase injury risk – especially ACL injuries – and impair balance and body control. Although temporary, these changes, along with growth spurts and the onset of menstruation, take a toll on the body," Dr. Sweat says. By understanding puberty's potential impacts, athletes, parents, coaches and trainers can manage their expectations and adjust as needed. "It's important that young girls are aware of what's happening with their bodies, to understand these changes are natural and short-lived and to not be too hard on themselves," Dr. Sweat says.

Female athletes inspire awe with their determination, strength, grace and skill. "Like any athlete, with the proper training and practice, there's no limit to what they can achieve," Dr. Sweat adds.

New Issues Monthly



THE SOUTHERN SPORTS EDITION



CHARLIE HUSTLE

Reinstating Pete Rose By Robert Craft



Major League Baseball commissioner Rob Manfred is reviewing a request for Pete Rose to be removed from MLB's permanently ineligible list, which could lead to his eventual selection to the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

President Donald Trump posted on social media that he planned to posthumously pardon Rose and advocated for MLB to rescind Rose's lifetime ban, which was issued in 1989 after he was found to be betting on baseball. Rose died on Sept. 30, 2024, at age 83.

Any presidential pardon would be entirely unrelated to MLB's disciplinary process, which is what has kept Rose out of the Hall of Fame. Trump didn't specify what he would pardon.

Rose was sentenced to five months in prison for submitting falsified tax returns in 1990.

An investigation into Rose showed that he bet on baseball both as a player and a manager while with the Cincinnati Reds.

Rose served as the Reds' player-

manager from August 1984 until 1986. He continued to manage the Reds after he stopped playing.

Rose denied gambling on baseball at the time. He later claimed he had an understanding that he could apply for reinstatement a year after agreeing to the punishment.

Commissioner A. Bartlett Giamatti, died eight days after Rose's banishment. His successor, Fay Vincent, never heard Rose's appeal.

After denying illegal bets on baseball for nearly 15 years, Rose admitted it in his 2004 book, "My Prison Without Bars." Later, he signed and sold baseballs with the inscription, "Sorry I bet on baseball."

So how do we get Pete in the Hall?

The first step would be removal from the MLB's permanently ineligible list.

Rose voluntarily agreed to his punishment in 1989 after an investigation determined he violated baseball's rules against gambling on the sport.

If Rose is deemed eligible, he would not be on the ballot sent to the Hall of Fame voters from the BBWAA every November.

Instead, he would be subject to the voting process of the Era Committee, formerly and more colloquially known as the Veterans Committee. If and after that, then he

would be on the ballot.

Here are cheatin' Pete Rose's greatest contributions to the game — the NL Rookie of the Year in 1963, the NL Most Valuable Player in 1973, three batting titles, two World Series titles and two more NL pennants, the bulk of his 4,256 hits — came before 1980. Rose won another World Series with the Phillies in 1980, appeared in the World Series with Philadelphia in 1983 and broke Ty Cobb's all-time hit record in 1985.

The Classic Baseball Era committee meets every three years and will hold its next vote in December 2027, meaning Rose's next opportunity at induction will likely come in July of 2028.

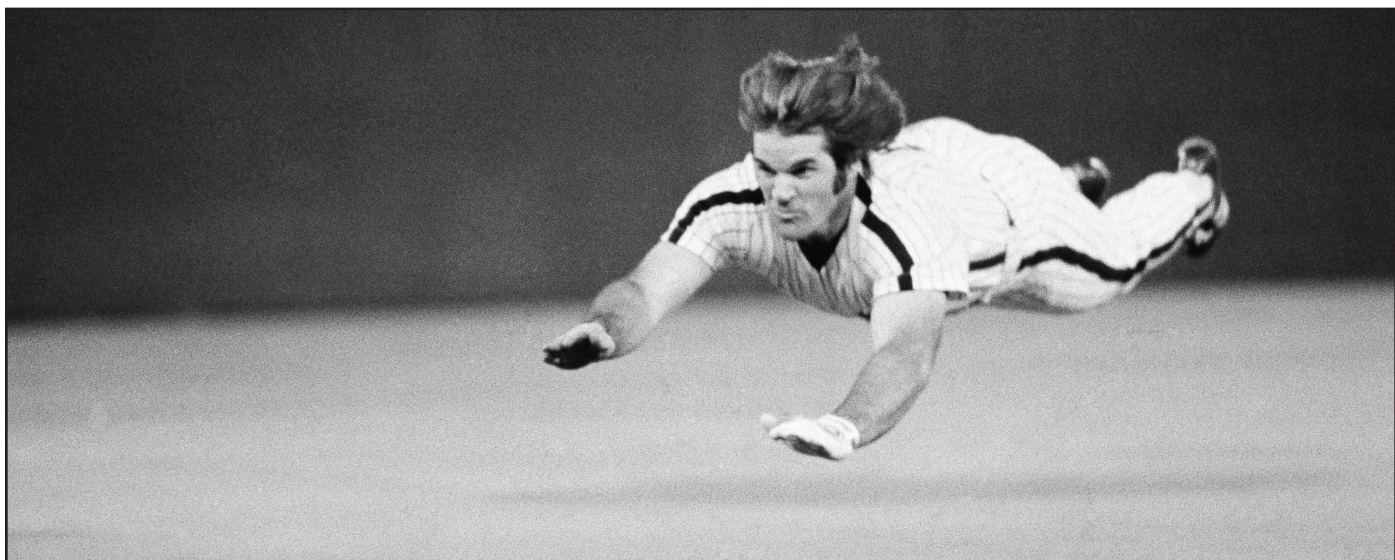
For Rose's family's appeal to be successful, Manfred will have to rescind previous statements that permanent banishment is the appropriate punishment for players, managers, and MLB staff for gambling on baseball.

Rose sent a letter to Manfred in 2022 asking for forgiveness.

It's finally time for Manfred, the 55+ baseball writers, and fans to forgive Pete.

Pete "Charlie Hustle" Rose has claimed to have paid his debt to baseball and his family wants the proper closure and the financial gain of having a hall of fame family member.

Pete to the Hall!



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2025



MARCH/APRIL

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					28 NAS 7:35PM	29 NAS 7:35PM
30 NAS 3:05PM	31	1 WOR 7:05PM	2 WOR 7:05PM	3 WOR 7:05PM	4 WOR 7:05PM	5 WOR 6:35PM
6 WOR 3:05PM	7	8 CLT 7:05PM	9 CLT 12:05PM	10 CLT 7:05PM	11 CLT 7:05PM	12 CLT 6:35PM
13 CLT 3:05PM	14	15 MEM 7:45PM	16 MEM 7:45PM	17 MEM 7:45PM	18 MEM 4:05PM	19 MEM 4:05PM
20 MEM 2:05PM	21	22 GWN 11:05AM	23 GWN 7:05PM	24 GWN 7:05PM	25 GWN 7:05PM	26 GWN 6:35PM
27 GWN 3:05PM	28	29 DUR 11:05AM	30 DUR 6:35PM			

MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1 DUR 6:35PM	2 DUR 6:35PM	3 DUR 6:35PM
4 DUR 1:05PM	5	6 SYR 7:05PM	7 SYR 12:05PM	8 SYR 7:05PM	9 SYR 7:05PM	10 SYR 6:35PM
11 SYR 3:05PM	12	13 NOR 6:35PM	14 NOR 6:35PM	15 NOR 12:05PM	16 NOR 6:35PM	17 NOR 6:35PM
18 NOR 1:05PM	19	20 MEM 7:05PM	21 MEM 7:05PM	22 MEM 7:05PM	23 MEM 7:05PM	24 MEM 6:35PM
25 MEM 6:05PM	26	27 GWN 7:05PM	28 GWN 7:05PM	29 GWN 7:05PM	30 GWN 7:05PM	31 GWN 6:05PM

JUNE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 GWN 1:05PM	2	3 DUR 7:05PM	4 DUR 7:05PM	5 DUR 7:05PM	6 DUR 7:05PM	7 DUR 6:35PM
8 DUR 3:05PM	9	10 ROC 6:45PM	11 ROC 6:45PM	12 ROC 1:05PM	13 ROC 6:45PM	14 ROC 6:45PM
15 ROC 1:05PM	16	17 SYR 6:35PM	18 SYR 6:35PM	19 SYR 6:35PM	20 SYR 6:35PM	21 SYR 6:35PM
22 SYR 1:05PM	23	24 NAS 7:05PM	25 NAS 12:05PM	26 NAS 7:05PM	27 NAS 7:05PM	28 NAS 6:35PM
29 NAS 3:05PM						

JULY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 CLT 7:04PM	2 CLT 7:04PM	3 CLT 6:35PM	4 CLT 7:05PM	5 CLT 6:35PM
6 CLT 5:05PM	7	8 NOR 7:05PM	9 NOR 7:05PM	10 NOR 7:05PM	11 NOR 7:05PM	12 NOR 6:35PM
13 NOR 1:05PM	14	ALL-STAR BREAK		16 GWN 7:05PM	17 GWN 8:05PM	
20 GWN 1:05PM	21	22 DUR 6:35PM	23 DUR 6:35PM	24 DUR 6:35PM	25 DUR 6:35PM	26 DUR 6:35PM
27 DUR 5:05PM	28	29 COL 7:05PM	30 COL 7:05PM	31 COL 7:05PM		

AUGUST

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 COL 7:05PM	2 COL 6:35PM
3 COL 5:05PM	4	5 NAS 7:35PM	6 NAS 7:35PM	7 NAS 7:35PM	8 NAS 7:35PM	9 NAS 7:35PM
10 NAS 7:05PM	11	12 NOR 7:05PM	13 NOR 7:05PM	14 NOR 7:05PM	15 NOR 7:05PM	16 NOR 6:35PM
17 NOR 5:05PM	18	19 WOR 6:45PM	20 WOR 6:45PM	21 WOR 6:45PM	22 WOR 6:45PM	23 WOR 4:05PM
24 WOR 1:05PM	25	26 ROC 7:05PM	27 ROC 7:05PM	28 ROC 7:05PM	29 ROC 7:05PM	30 ROC 6:35PM
31 ROC 6:35PM						

SEPTEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		2 CLT 6:35PM	3 CLT 6:35PM	4 CLT 7:04PM	5 CLT 7:04PM	6 CLT 5:35PM
7 CLT TBD	8	9 MEM 7:05PM	10 MEM 7:05PM	11 MEM 7:05PM	12 MEM 7:05PM	13 MEM 6:35PM
14 MEM 2:05PM	15	16 NOR 6:35PM	17 NOR 6:35PM	18 NOR 12:05PM	19 NOR 6:35PM	20 NOR 6:35PM
21 NOR 1:05PM						

OPPONENTS

CLT — CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS (CWS)
 COL — COLUMBUS CLIPPERS (CLE)
 DUR — DURHAM BULLS (TB)
 GWN — GWINNETT STRIPERS (ATL)
 MEM — MEMPHIS REDBIRDS (STL)

NAS — NASHVILLE SOUNDS (MIL)
 NOR — NORFOLK TIDES (BAL)
 ROC — ROCHESTER RED WINGS (WAS)
 SYR — SYRACUSE METS (NYM)
 WOR — WORCESTER RED SOX (BOS)

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A SOARING EAGLE

GSU's Most Winningest Coach By Colin Lacy



In this crazy business of sports media that we love, one of my favorite parts of it is the relationships that you create and grow over the years.

One that I've been blessed to grow for over a decade now is with Georgia Southern Baseball head coach Rodney Hennon.

Last week on a weekend game in Buies Creek, NC, Coach Hennon collected his 860th career win at Georgia Southern in a game against Campbell.

With that win, he passed legendary head coach Jack Stallings to become the all-time winningest coach in Georgia Southern Baseball history.

That feat for any college baseball coach raises eyebrows but for a program like Georgia Southern, that is a monumental accomplishment.

Georgia Southern Baseball has been consistently one of the best and most respected baseball programs in the mid-major ranks because of the consistency.

That consistency isn't only in wins and on-field successes (which has been plentiful over the years), but also within the staff. Rodney Hennon is in his 26th season at the helm of the Eagle Baseball program and only adds to the lore of Georgia Southern baseball of continuity at the top of the program.

Since 1949, the blue and white have only seen five head coaches. Two of those five have their names on the facility Georgia Southern calls home in J.I. Clements Stadium who was the head man from 1949-1966 and in 1968 along with Jack Stallings (Field) who manned the dugout for twenty-four years from 1976 until 1999.

The other two are Ron Polk (1972-1975) who is regarded as the "Father of SEC Baseball" with his career at Mississippi State, and Bill Spieth who led the Eagles for four years in the early 70's.

While it's impressive what Hennon has been able to do as the longest tenure head coach in Eagle history, it's the consistency of excellence that rises above.

In the 25 previous seasons under Coach Hennon, Georgia Southern Baseball has won 30 games in all but two of those and have seen 40 wins in eight seasons including 2022 when Georgia Southern secured the 16 seed in the NCAA postseason and hosted the first ever regional in Statesboro.

Although the list of accomplishments for Hennon could cover the Blue Monster wall in right field at J.I. Clements Stadium, when talking to those closest to "10" like former players, coaches, staffers, etc., the first thing that comes up is the character and the type of man Coach Hennon is day in and day out.

Getting to see and get to know Coach Hennon for the 10 years I was lucky enough to cover Georgia Southern Baseball for the Georgia Southern Sports Network and was one of the true pleasures

of my career to this point.

He truly is one of the greatest molders of young men I've been around. There's a lot of "old school" coach in him where when someone needs a wakeup call, he will get into a player, but it's always coming from a place of caring about them both as a player, but even more-so as a young man.

Coach Hennon credits a lot of his mentors to not only his dad, Lamar, but also Keith LeClair and Jack Leggett from his days at Western Carolina both as a player and coach.

The great part of this is the tree doesn't end with the branch of Coach Hennon. While we've mentioned the impact that "Skip" had on his players, it also applies to those that were lucky enough to coach with him.

Names like BJ Green, who was the pitching coach for Hennon for many years has since moved on to be the Associate Head Coach at UAB.

Recently Alan Beck was the hitting coach for the Eagles who took the head coaching job at both his and Coach Hennon's alma mater Western Carolina after the 2022 season.

Jason Richman, who was not only a standout pitcher for Coach Hennon, but also on his staff for a few years is now the Director of Pitching for Georgia Tech Baseball.

The list goes on and on of those impacted by the coach, mentor, and man of God that Rodney Hennon is and now (and likely forever) holds the distinction of the winningest coach in Georgia Southern Baseball history.





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IMMORTAL WILDCATS

Camden Athletics HOF By Michael Spiers



Camden County High School will celebrate its rich athletic history with the inaugural induction class of the Camden County Athletics Hall of Fame on Saturday, May 10, 2025.

The event will take place at the CCHS Fine Arts Building in Kingsland, Georgia, honoring individuals and teams who have made a lasting impact on Wildcat athletics.

This inaugural class of inductees represents some of the most accomplished athletes, coaches, teams and contributors in Camden County's history. This year's class will include the following five inductees:

1960 Ralph J. Bunche High School State Championship Football Team: The Ralph J. Bunche Hornets made history by winning the first high school football state championship in Camden County history.

The school, which opened in 1951 to serve Black students in the area, started playing football in 1954 as part of the Georgia Interscholastic Association.

After semifinal appearances in 1958 and 1959, the Hornets broke through in 1960, dominating Henry County Training 45-2 to claim the Class A state title. Following integration in 1970, Ralph J. Bunche High School became part of Camden County High School, but the Hornets' championship legacy remains a cornerstone of local sports history.

1985 Camden County High School Girls Track and Field Team: This team made history as the first-ever state champions in any sport at Camden

County High School.

Their victory paved the way for future Wildcats, demonstrating that Camden County athletics could compete at the highest level. Their success remains a significant milestone in the school's athletic legacy.

Frank Smith – “Mr. Wildcat”: Frank Smith was more than just a fan—he was the heart and soul of Camden County football.

Known affectionately as “Mr. Wildcat,” Smith was a dedicated supporter who never missed a game, home or away, for over 40 years until his passing in 2012.

As the longtime president of the CCHS Quarterback Club, his passion for Wildcat football was unmatched. His legacy is honored every year with the Frank Smith Classic, held at Chris Gilman Stadium during the Wildcats' first home game in September.

Jeff Herron – Legendary Head Coach: Few names in Georgia high school football carry as much weight as Jeff Herron.

Over his 32-year career, Herron built a reputation as one of the best coaches in the country, compiling an overall record of 334-69, including 312-54 in Georgia.

His remarkable 85.3% winning percentage ranks second in Georgia history and among the top 35 in national high school football history.

During his 15 seasons at Camden County, Herron transformed the Wildcats into a powerhouse, winning three state championships (2003, 2008, 2009).

Under his leadership, Camden dominated the region for 12 consecutive years, set a state record with a 58-game regular season winning streak, and was ranked in the USA Today Top 25 six times. ESPN even named the Wildcats the Program of the Decade in Georgia (2000-2010).

Beyond Camden, Herron won

state championships at Oconee County (1999) and Grayson (2016). His coaching excellence is now being recognized on a national scale—this summer, he will be inducted into both the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association (GACA) Hall of Fame and the National High School Football Hall of Fame.

Lyvonnia “Stump” Mitchell – Camden’s NFL Star: A true Camden County legend, Lyvonnia “Stump” Mitchell left his mark at every level of football. After a standout career as a Wildcat running back, he continued his dominance at The Citadel, where he still holds school records for rushing yards in a season (1,647) and career (4,062).

In 1981, Mitchell was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in the ninth round of the NFL Draft. He played in the league for a decade, spending nine years with the Cardinals (1981-1989) before finishing his career with the Kansas City Chiefs in 1990.

Following his playing days, Mitchell transitioned to coaching, leading Morgan State University (1996-1998) before taking on NFL coaching roles with the Seahawks, Redskins, Cardinals, Jets, and Browns. His long and distinguished career in professional football is a testament to the talent that has come from Camden County.

The Camden County Athletics Hall of Fame will serve as a tribute to the incredible athletes, coaches, and supporters who have shaped Wildcat sports. This inaugural class represents a mix of historic achievements, legendary figures, and community icons, each of whom played a vital role in building Camden County's athletic tradition.

With this event, Camden County will not only honor its past but also inspire future generations of Wildcats to leave their own mark on the field, track, and beyond.



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RUNNING WILD TO NFL

Top RB's For Draft By Kenneth Harrison





The 2025 NFL Draft is next month. We are going to take a look at some of the top running back prospects in the draft.

1. The top prospect is Ashton Jeanty (Boise State). Jeanty is from Jacksonville, Florida and he went to high school in Frisco, Texas.

Last season he rushed for 2,601 yards, 29 touchdowns and averaged 7 yards per carry.

In 2023 he had 1,347 yards and 14 touchdowns. He had 43 catches in 2023 and 23 in 2024.

He won the Maxwell Award, Doak Walker Award, Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award, Unanimous All-American and he finished second in the 2024 Heisman Trophy voting.

I think he can be picked as high as 6th by the Las Vegas Raiders. The Chicago Bears are picking 10th and they could trade up to pick Jeanty.

2. Omarion Hampton (North Carolina) should also be selected in the top 15 picks.

The North Carolina native is 6'0, 221 pounds so he has a great combination of size and speed.

He's been a workhorse for the past two years for the Tar Heels. In 2023 he rushed for 1,504 yards and 15 TD's. In 2024 he had 1,660 yards and 15 scores, while averaging 5.9 ypc both years.

He had 29 receptions in 2023 and 38 in 2024. He can run and catch passes out of the backfield. I don't expect him to slip past Dallas who has the 12th pick.

3. Kaleb Johnson (Iowa) is 6'1, 224 pounds. He rushed for 1,537 yards, 21 scores and averaged 6.4 ypc.

He also had 22 catches for 188 yards and 2 touchdowns. He was a Consensus All-American, First-team All-Big Ten and Big Ten Running

Back of the Year.

4. Dylan Sampson (Tennessee) is a Louisiana native. He's 5'8, 200 pounds so he's a smaller back.

Last season he ran for 1,493 yards, 22 TD's and averaged 5.8 ypc. He also had 19 receptions for 141 yards. He was the SEC Offensive Player of the Year, First-team All-SEC and a Second-team All-American.

5. TreVeyon Henderson (Ohio State) split time last season with Quinshon Judkins.

The senior rushed for 1,016 yards, 10 touchdowns, 7.1 ypc and he had 27 receptions.

Henderson is 5'10 and 202 pounds. This was his first thousand-yard season since his freshman year.

6. Brashard Smith (SMU) is a Florida native that transferred from Miami.

He was a wide receiver and kickoff returner for the Hurricanes.

Last year he ran for 1,332 yards, 14 scores and averaged 5.7 ypc. He also caught 39 passes for 327 yards and 4 touchdowns.

Smith is 5'10, 194 lbs. and he's very explosive. He was named First-team All-ACC.

8. Quinshon Judkins (Ohio State) is an Alabama native that started his career at Ole Miss.

As a freshman he rushed for 1,567 yards and 16 scores. As a sophomore he ran for 1,158 yards and 15 touchdowns.

He transferred to Ohio State for the 2024 season and split carries with TreyVeon Henderson. In 2024 he had 1,060 yards, 14 touchdowns and he averaged 5.5 ypc. Judkins is 6'0, 220 pounds and he has a nice balance of speed and power.

The depth of the defensive line in this year's draft class has been primarily what the media has focused on. The running back class has great depth. I think a player drafted in the third round or later can make an immediate impact as a rookie.

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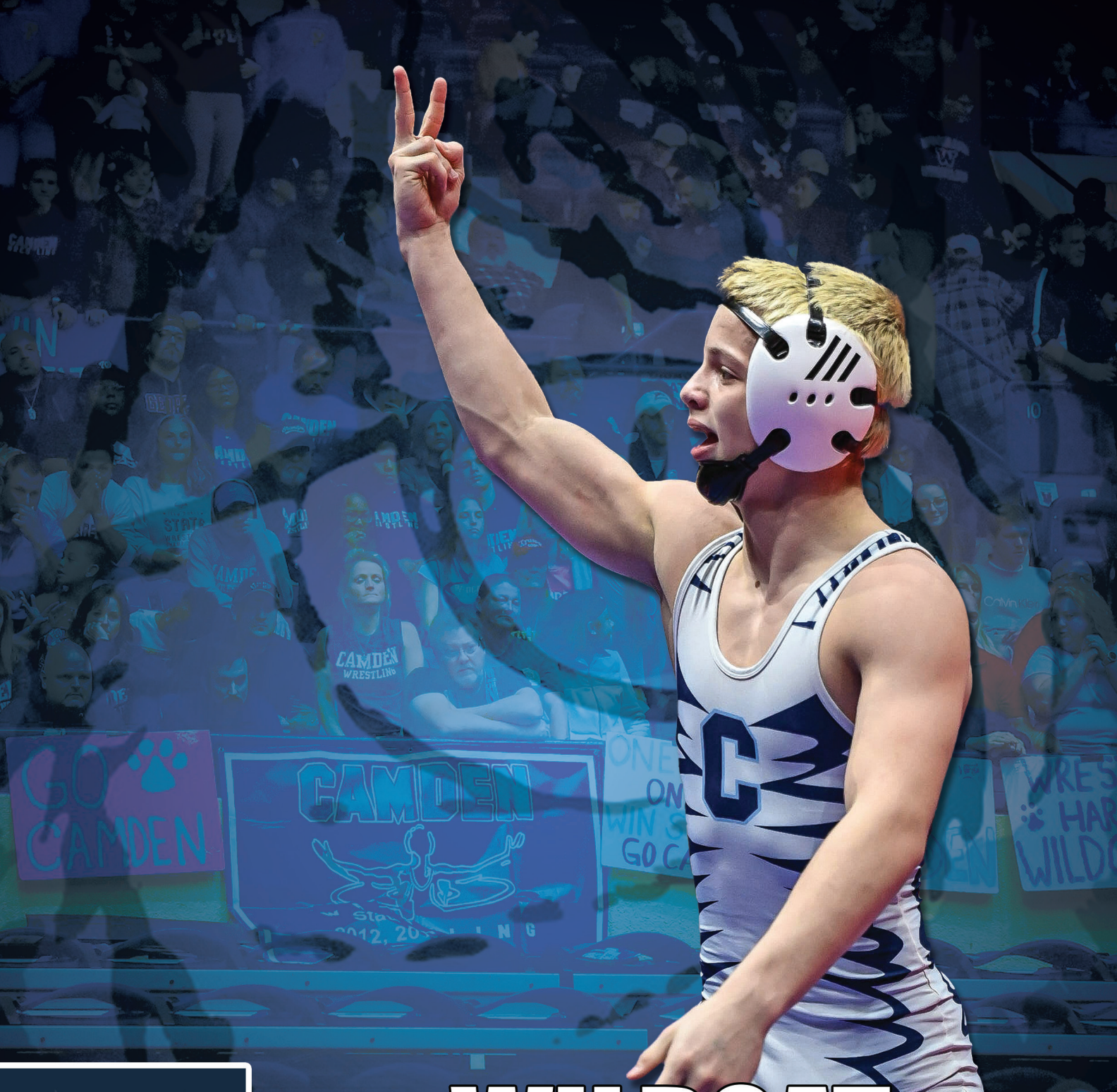


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WILDCAT WRESTLING

Camden Not Slowing Down By Michael Spiers



Camden County's boys' wrestling team isn't slowing down anytime soon.

The Wildcats dominated in Macon two weekends ago, locking up their 11th straight state championship with a runaway 303.5-point performance—more than 80 points ahead of second-place Buford.

Leading the charge were three-time champs Bradley Patterson and Ryder Wilder, along with first-time winners Isaac Santos and Brock Weaver.

This means that in the history books of Georgia high school wrestling, Camden County will remain the ONLY squad to have ever won a 7-A wrestling state championship.

Camden set the tone early and never looked back, outscoring every team across all classifications. Head coach Jess Wilder knew his team had the firepower to finish the job, but he didn't want them getting too comfortable.

"Two years ago, we were down by 28 points going into the last day, and a lot of these guys remember that because they were freshmen," Wilder said. "We came back and won that year, so we knew we couldn't take our foot off the gas."

Camden finished with four individual champions: Patterson (113), Wilder (190), Santos (120), and Weaver (157).

Wilder and Patterson were nearly untouchable. Wilder pinned his finals opponent in just 27 seconds, with his other two pins lasting 31 and 49 seconds.

Patterson was just as dominant, racking up two pins in 25 seconds total before winning his semifinal and final by technical fall, including a 16-0 shutout in the championship match.

Santos fought through a tough semifinal before rolling to a 16-0 title win, while Weaver capped off his run with an 11-3 major decision.

Other Wildcats put together strong performances as well, with Smolarsky, Zow, Coppedge, and Wright all making the finals.

Higgins had one of the fastest pins of the tournament—just five seconds—before winning third place with a clutch 3-1 decision.



But it was a full-team effort that made the difference, with 14 wrestlers earning top six finishes and eight making it to the finals.

For an understanding of Camden Wrestling's continued dominance, consider that the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) created the 7-A classification in 2016, and the Wildcats have won the state championship in wrestling every year since 2014.

The GHSA did away with the 7-A classification at the end of the 2024 school year, making 6-A the highest classification in the state.

They also had four runners-up—Cane Smolarsky (126), Rod Zow (144), Jamaal Coppedge (165), and Brian Wright (175)—plus several other key contributors. Brandon Higgins (132), Hunter Prosen (138), and Joseph Schulze (285) placed third, Waylon Rozier (150) and Caleb Gaskin (215) finished fourth, and Clayton Newton (106) took fifth.

Buford had the same number of finalists as Camden, but their lack of depth hurt them. "That's why we win state," Wilder said. "Our depth is what separates us. Our guys who battled back through the consolation rounds made a huge difference."

The boys weren't the only ones making headlines. Breanna Higgins tore through the girls' 100-pound bracket, pinning all four of her opponents to claim a state title.

She finished things off with a second-period pin in the finals after making quick work of the competition leading up to it.

With 15 total state placers between the boys' and girls' teams, Camden County once again showed why it's the top wrestling program in Georgia.

The Wildcats keep setting the bar—and they don't look like they're slowing down anytime soon.

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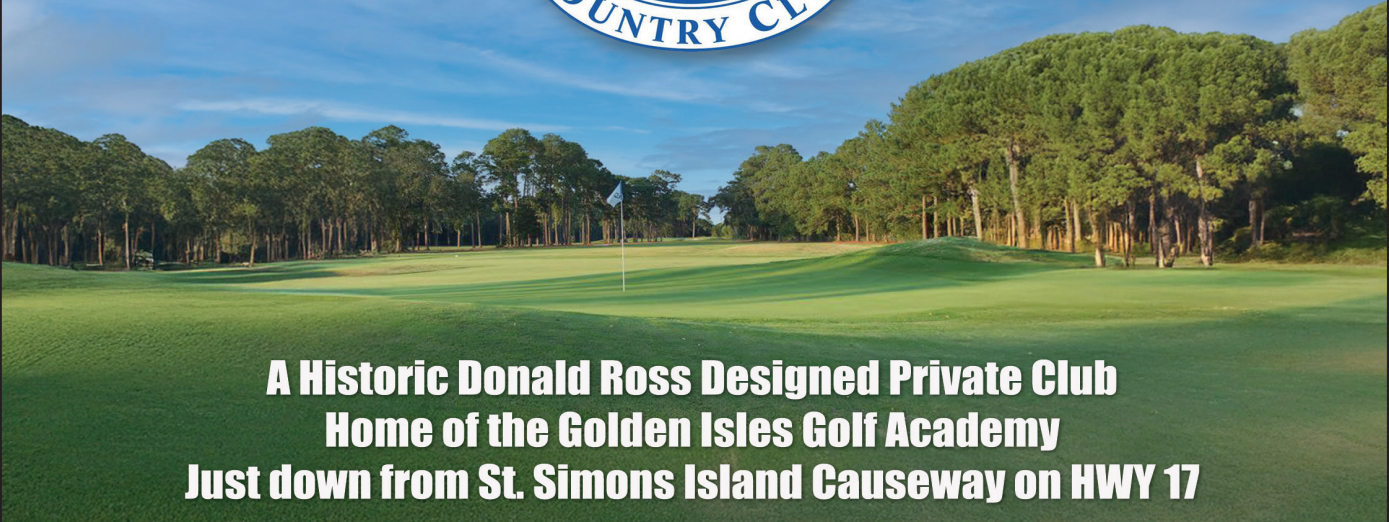


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