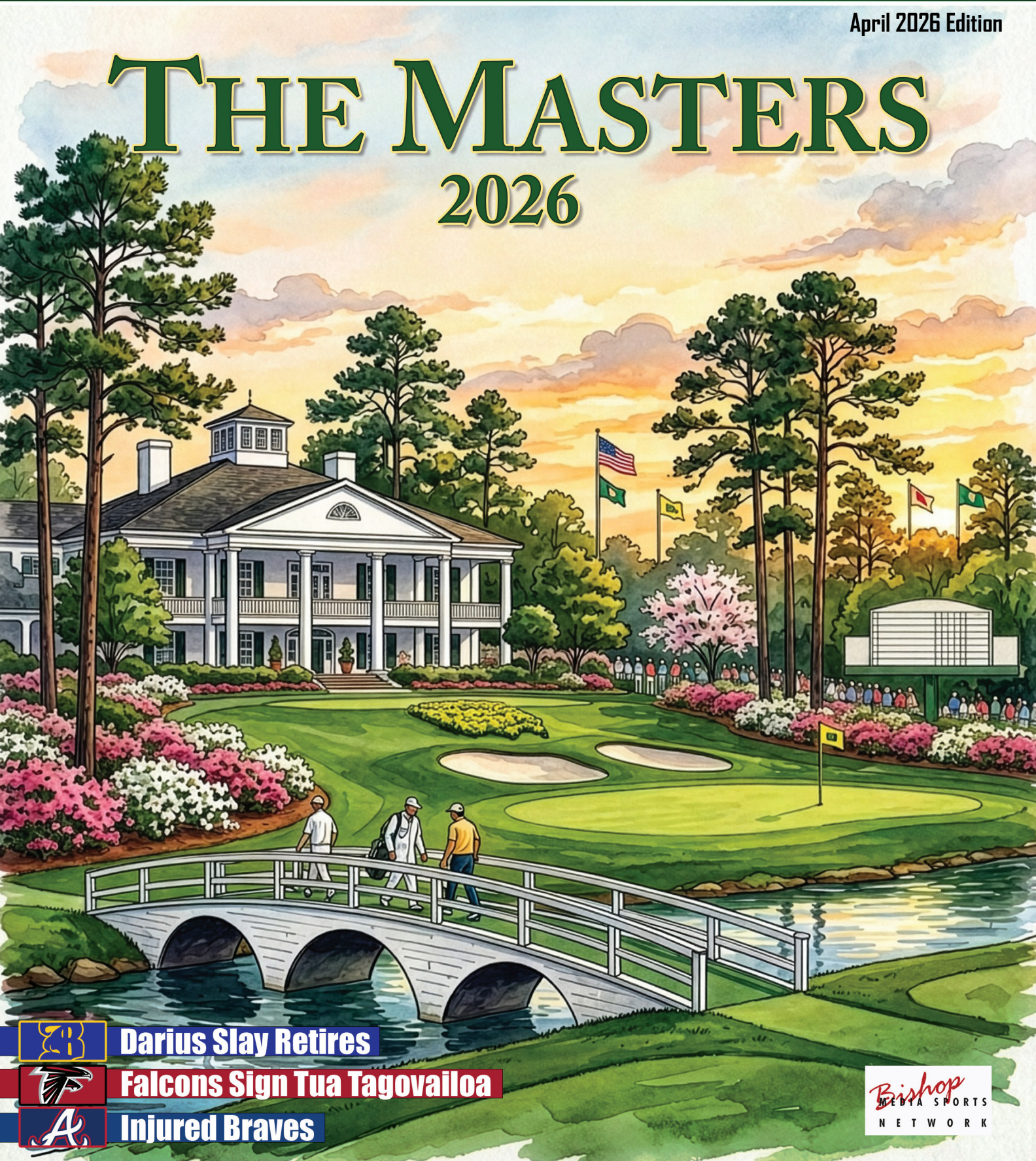


THE SOUTHERN SPORTS EDITION

April 2026 Edition

THE MASTERS 2026



Darius Slay Retires



Falcons Sign Tua Tagovailoa






Injured Braves





EST. 1916
CUNNINGHAMS
FINE JEWELRY • CHINA • GIFTS

1510 Newcastle Street, Historic Downtown Brunswick
cunninghamjewelers.com • 912.265.8652   

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.

**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 over 20 years and is an expert on Tennis, High School Football and MLB.

**ROBERT CRAFT**

Robert Craft graduated from the University of Central Florida and 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.

SSE STAFF**Publisher**

The Bishop Media Sports Network

Editor

Jason Bishop

Graphic Design

Keith Martin

Columnists

Kenneth Harrison, Jr

Colin Lacy

Robert Craft

Michael Spiers

Brian Albertson

Teddy Bishop

Jason Bishop

Photographers

Mike Brinson



OTHER CONTRIBUTORS: JEFF DOKE, JOE DELANEY, BRIAN ALBERTSON

THE WALKING DEAD?

BRAVES START SEASON WITH INJURIES

PAGE 6

by Michael Spiers

ROUND TABLE KNIGHT

FREDERICA'S JC WESSEL

PAGE 10

by Jeff Doke

A PIRATE'S FAREWELL

DARIUS SLAY RETIRES FROM NFL

PAGE 14

by Teddy Bishop

OWL MADNESS

KENNESAW STATE'S SEASON

PAGE 18

by Kenneth Harrison

TUA TO THE RESCUE?

FALCONS SIGN TUA TAGOVAILOA

PAGE 22

by Kenneth Harrison

THE WRONG IMPACT

PROFAR SUSPENDED AGAIN

PAGE 26

by Michael Spiers

SAME OLD TRICKS

CROSSROADS FOR UGA BASKETBALL

PAGE 28

by Colin Lacy

PAGE 4

MASTERS



AVAILABLE AT

THE **SOUTHERN SPORTS** *EDITION.COM*

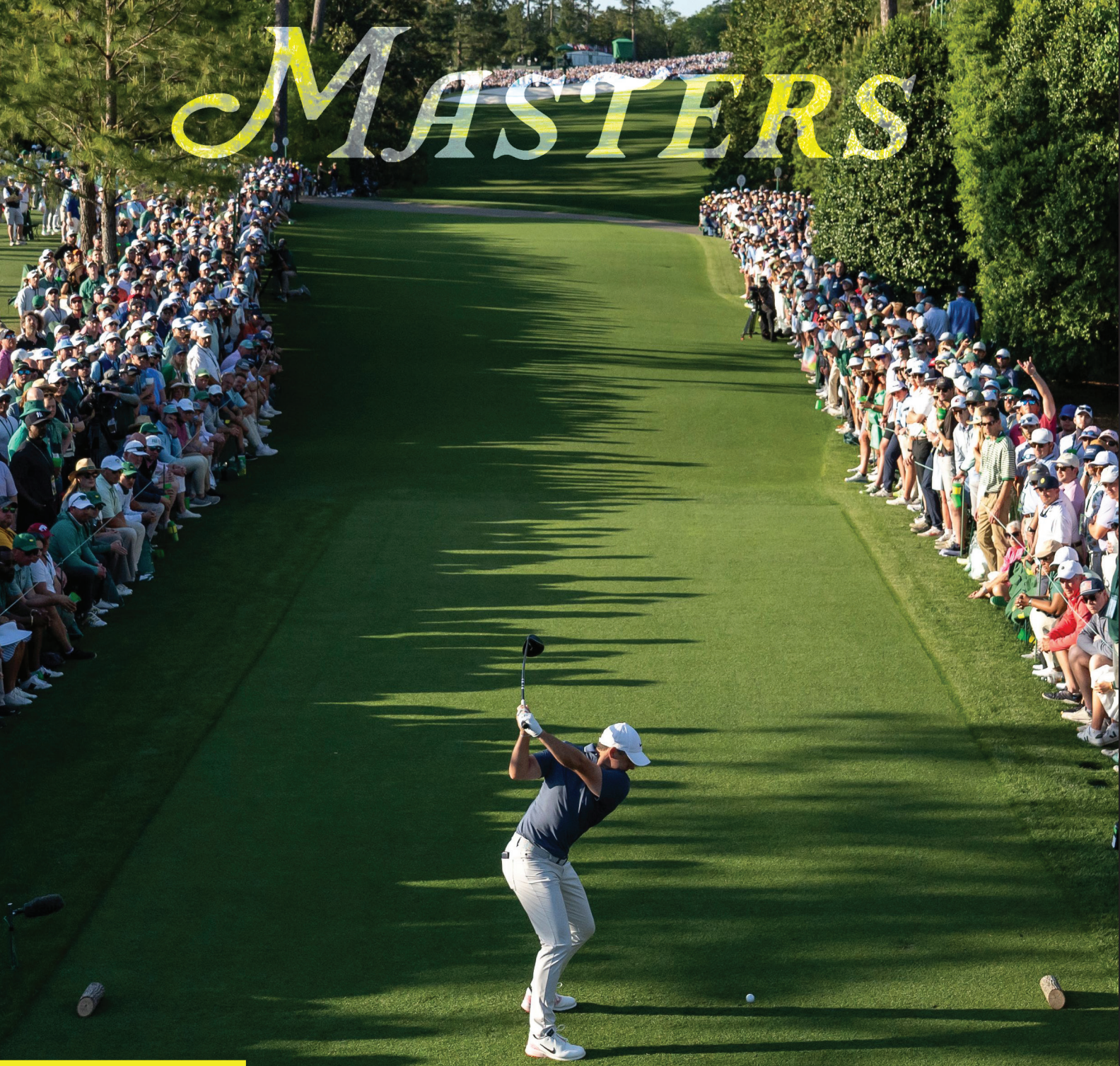
CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS



SOUTH GEORGIA'S #1 SPORTS SHOW



MASTERS



THE MASTERS

The Masters Preview By Brian Albertson



THE WALKING DEAD?

Braves Start Season With Injuries By Michael Spiers



For the past couple of seasons, it has felt like the Atlanta Braves have been playing two opponents at once: whoever is on the schedule and the relentless injury bug.

Unfortunately for Braves fans, the second opponent is already winning again in 2026, and the season hasn't even officially begun.

Spring training is supposed to be a time for optimism. It is when teams fine tune their rosters, build momentum, and dream about October baseball.

strikeout pitchers in baseball when healthy and a cornerstone of Atlanta's pitching plans. But the real problem is that he's just one name on a growing list.

Spencer Schwellenbach is already on the 60-day injured list after elbow surgery earlier this year. Hurston Waldrep is also sidelined following elbow surgery. Joey Wentz tore his ACL during a spring training game and will miss the entire season.

Suddenly the Braves are entering the season with a rotation that looks very different than what the front office envisioned when camp opened.

Chris Sale will almost certainly take the Opening Day start, but the rest of the rotation already feels like it is being assembled on the fly.

Reynaldo López is attempting to return after shoulder surgery and has shown a concerning drop in velocity during recent outings, though he insists it was simply mechanical issues.

the regular season even begins. Teams expect to deal with injuries during a long 162 game season. They do not expect their roster to look like a triage unit in March. Even the position player group has not been spared from setbacks.

Newly re-signed shortstop Ha Seong Kim is expected to miss time following finger tendon surgery, while catcher Sean Murphy is still recovering from hip surgery.

As we all know, Jurickson Profar will miss the entire season due to a PED suspension, and I hope he is never given the chance to put on a Braves jersey again.

Add it all together and the Braves are entering the year already short-handed.

The frustrating part is that this roster, when healthy, still looks like a legitimate contender. The core talent is there. The lineup can still produce runs and the pitching staff still has high end arms.

But baseball seasons are not played



Instead, the Braves once again find themselves scanning medical reports and patching together a pitching staff before Opening Day.

The latest blow came when Spencer Strider was scratched from his final spring start and placed on the injured list with an oblique strain.

Strider had shown encouraging signs this spring after working his way back from surgery and other injuries that affected the previous season.

Now he will begin the year on the shelf, leaving a major hole in the rotation before the first real pitch of the season is even thrown.

On its own, losing Strider would be a concern. He is one of the most dominant

Behind him are pitchers like Grant Holmes and Bryce Elder, with depth options such as José Suárez or Didier Fuentes potentially being forced into action earlier than expected.

It is the type of situation that makes Braves fans feel like they have seen this movie before. Over the last few seasons, Atlanta has had the talent to compete for championships, but injuries have repeatedly disrupted the plan. When one key player returns, another seems to go down.

The pitching staff in particular has been hit hard, and the cycle is continuing in frustratingly familiar fashion.

If you ask me, the thing that makes this year especially concerning is the timing.

These injuries are piling up before

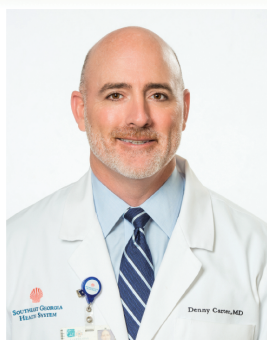
on paper, and championships rarely go to the team with the best roster on opening day. They go to the team that survives the grind of six months.

Right now, the Braves are already grinding before the real games even start. Of course, there is still a long season ahead. Some of these injuries may turn out to be minor setbacks rather than long-term problems.

Pitchers will return. Young arms may step up. Baseball seasons often take strange and unpredictable turns. But the early signs are impossible to ignore.

For a team that has spent the last few years battling bad injury luck, the Braves appear to be picking up right where they left off.

Common Orthopaedic Injuries in Young Athletes



Denny A. Carter, MD

A board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Dr. Carter specializes in Total Joint Replacements and serves as the team physician for the Frederica Academy Knights.

Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery has offices in Brunswick, St. Simons Island and St. Marys.

To make an appointment with Dr. Carter, call 912-466-7340.



Sports are an excellent outlet for youthful energy. However, as more and more children participate in year-round sports, they are vulnerable to injury. To understand why, we asked Denny Carter, MD, a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, to explain some challenges unique to young athletes. Dr. Carter is medical director of Outpatient Rehabilitation Services at Southeast Georgia Health System. He sees patients at Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery in Brunswick and St. Simons Island.

“Unlike an adult’s fully developed bones, pre-pubescent children have softer, spongier cartilage at the bone ends – the area that forms a joint with other bones. The top of the femur, for example, is a bone end. In children, bone end areas are called growth or epiphyseal plates. These plates do not mature or harden until puberty ends. Growth plates are essential in bone development; fractures and stress injuries in these areas can severely impact bone alignment and growth,” Dr. Carter explains.

Are certain athletes more vulnerable to growth plate injuries? “Knee and heel growth plate injuries happen more often in sports that require running and jumping. Soccer and basketball players, as a result, have a higher risk of knee and heel pain, swelling, tenderness and injuries. Track and field athletes can also stress the heel bone growth plate,” Dr. Carter says.

While pre-pubescent kids (typically 12 and under) are more vulnerable to growth plate injuries, with proper prevention strategies, they are not inevitable. “It’s important to balance rest with activity and alternate high-impact sports seasons with lower impact activities,” Dr. Carter says.

Pre-game warm ups and post-game cool downs help stretch tight, overworked muscles. Dr. Carter also emphasizes the importance of load management. “Condition the muscles and tendons gradually, especially after seasonal breaks. This is particularly helpful for athletes who focus on one sport.”

Good nutrition and regular hydration, especially during growth spurts, also creates resilient muscular tissues. Finally, consider working with an athletic trainer or physical therapist. “They will assess and correct any improper body mechanics,” Dr. Carter explains.

Despite these efforts, some youthful athletes still experience growth plate issues. What should coaches, trainers and athletes watch for? “Limping, swelling and pain are signs of a problem. Left untreated, they can lead to alignment issues and uneven growth. If any of these symptoms surface, see a physician,” Dr. Carter says. While a family doctor is a good start, an orthopaedist, especially one who treats pediatric patients, can perform an in-depth exam, diagnostic imaging and treatment.

“Early intervention is crucial to reduce the likelihood of lifelong problems or deformities,” Dr. Carter says. When caught early, symptoms can be managed with ice, over-the-counter pain medications, rest and limiting painful activities. Supportive athletic footwear helps manage heel pain.

“If the growth plate sustains damage, I may recommend physical rehabilitation and/or surgery. Physical therapists and orthopaedic surgeons work together to supervise the recovery process. We are vigilant in our management of growth plate issues to ensure that young athletes can resume their sport without risking further injury. Every child deserves a healthy future; proper bone development is key to that outcome,” Dr. Carter says.

STRETCH ZONE
STRETCH. WORK. PLAY. REPEAT.

STRETCH
SOUNDS LIKE SOMEBODY'S
SOUNDING OFF. IT'S NOT. IT'S
IT'S SIMPLE. BRACE. OR CONTAIN.
THEN HEAD TO WORK, PLAY AT YOUR
EAT WELL. HYDRATE AND ENJOY.
THEN STRETCH A

STRETCH ZONE
STRETCH. WORK. PLAY. REPEAT.

BOOK YOUR FIRST
**STRETCH
FREE**

SCAN ME

- + **FEEL**
LIGHTER & YOUNGER
- + **RELIEVE**
STIFFNESS & SORENESS
- + **ENHANCE**
PHYSICAL & ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE
- + **INCREASE**
& MAINTAIN RANGE OF MOTION

STRETCH ZONE | SSI

600 Sea Island Rd Suite 9B SSI, Ga 31522
912-268-2495

Shifters

TRANSMISSION

Trusted for over 25+ years
"We Fix It Right"

Transmission Specialist

Golden Isles Plaza Off The Spur
912.289.9496

ShiftersTransmissions.com

PERSONAL INJURY & WRONGFUL DEATH

**KILLIAN
LAW FIRM**

KILLIANLAWFIRM.COM
(912) 263-9520



WESSEL



ROUND TABLE KNIGHT

Frederica's JC Wessel By Jeff Doke



Lit is a common turn of phrase to say that someone that is ahead of others in their chosen field is “head and shoulders above the rest.”

Usually, this is a figurative statement. In the case of #88 for the Frederica Academy Knights football team, it is literal as well.

John Cannon Wessel - known as JC to everyone but his mother and his quarterback - is a rising junior that is drawing attention from sources local, regional, and national.

Entering his third year as a starter for the Frederica Knights, Wessel is building on a sophomore season that saw a significant statistical uptick from his freshman campaign.

After seeing action in 6 games his freshman year with 142 all-purpose yards, the 6'7" 225 lb. TE prospect more than doubled his stats with 338 yards on 18 receptions for 3 TDS over 12 games.

Not bad for someone sharing receiving time with Jaylen Baldwin, Jaylen Gibson, and Braxton Sykes. Wessel puts a lot of that growth on the improved chemistry with Knights starting quarterback Stanton Beverly.

“Stanton and I are really good

friends,” JC describes the relationship. “...The summer between freshman and sophomore year, we did a lot of work on just going to camps, and I learned a ton, just was trying to develop more and more.”

Add to that the fact that he hadn't played football since Pop Warner, it's no surprise that he's noticeably working his way up the recruiting boards.

“I had played basketball the whole time,” says JC about his gap between time on the gridiron, “(but) I knew that I kinda wanted to try out football again just because my dad played football and see what I could do. I just started playing, and it was just super fun, and I loved the physicality of it.”

His family knows a thing or two about football. Not only did his uncle play for West Point after graduating from Colquitt County High School, his father Tadd Wessel won an Ivy League championship in 1995 with the Princeton Tigers. JC might just wind up following some of those footsteps.

As of mid-March, On3.com reports JC as having offers from Princeton as well as a dozen other D1 schools including 5 from the SEC, 4 from the ACC, and 2 from the Big 10.

With two seasons yet to play before graduation, JC hasn't started narrowing down his choices yet, much less whether he actually wants to play past high school.

“I definitely have a lot interest in going that route, especially because my parents pushed me super hard towards

that kind of path, but I have to take into account everything about the future and about my chances and about what I wanna actually do when I grow up,” says Wessel. “So as, as of right now, I have no idea, but hopefully as I go through high school, I'll get a better understanding.”

The needle seems to be pointing in the collegiate ball route regardless. After earning all-region honors in his second season, words from his Head Coach Brandon Derrick are succinct and unmistakable; “He's only going to get better.”

With the schedule the Knights face in 2026, hopefully better happens sooner rather than later. Even though he understands that he's not supposed to look past the next opponent, Wessel is making some exceptions to that rule.

“I'm looking forward to Charlton County because I haven't played them... Stratford because we should have won that game last year...and Valwood because we hate them. Same for Bulloch.”

From a fan's perspective, it's hard to say he doesn't have his priorities in order. The biggest payback he's looking forward to is against the boys from the shores of Lake Sinclair.

“I don't really remember that much of the (John Milledge) game. I was mad during the game. If we face them again in the playoffs, we've got a good chance this year.”

The Knights begin their 2026 March to Mercer with a home opener against Bethesda Academy on August 14th.



The Strike Zone



Brunswick's Premier Family Fun Center

912-265-6600
www.tgistrikezone.com



Gutterball Arcade



The Filling Station
Snack Bar





**DBM
ROOFING**

912.326.5337
blowe@dbmroofing.com

DBMRoofing.com  FOLLOW US ON  **facebook**

Find us on FB and Instagram for specials

*Locally Owned
and Operated*



*Lunch
and Dinner*

315 Village at Glynn Place
912.264.4227
ShanesRibShack.com



1525 Newcastle St. • Downtown Brunswick
912.289.2392

 & 

vampenguin.com

Strawberry Cheesecake




912-265-8674

485 Warren Mason Blvd
Brunswick, GA
(Behind KFC and Racetrack on 341)

Tires - Brakes - A/C - Suspension - Minor Mechanic Work



**GOLDEN ISLES
PHARMACY**

DRIVE-THRU • PRESCRIPTIONS • COMPOUNDING

Conveniently located right down from the hospital
Free Delivery To Brunswick and St. Simons



912.266.8140

3010 Altama Ave • Brunswick, GA 31520

GoldenIslesPharmacy.com

BIG PLAY SLAY



A PIRATE'S FAREWELL

Darius Slay Retires From NFL By Teddy Bishop



Former Brunswick High School standout Darius “Big Play” Slay has announced his retirement from the National Football League after 13 seasons.

Slay was a 2nd round draft pick by the Detroit Lions in 2013—the 36th player chosen overall. He played for the Lions for seven seasons before

quarterbacks often opted not to challenge his prowess as a cornerback, instead throwing to receivers who were covered by other defensive players.

In his senior year of high school, Slay led the Brunswick High Pirates to a region championship (6-0, region record; 9-3, overall). In addition to playing cornerback for BHS, Slay also played running back, rushing for over 1300 yards and 15 touchdowns his senior season.

Even as a sophomore, Slay was ticketed for big plays, as he ran for 1100+ yards and scored 13 touchdowns.

After a playoff loss on the road during Slay’s sophomore season, I was descending the steps from the press box

year in high school, Slay played two seasons as a defensive back at Itawamba Community College in Fulton, Mississippi, earning All-MACJC (Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges) honors both years.

After Itawamba, Slay went to Mississippi State for his final two years of college, where he recorded 64 tackles, six interceptions and two touchdowns. His defensive coordinator, Geoff Collins, nicknamed him “Big Play Slay.” Slay was also chosen 2nd- team All-SEC following his senior season at MSU.

Slay has been married to the former Jennifer Williams since 2018. Jennifer is also an athlete, having played collegiate basketball at Southwestern



being traded to the Philadelphia Eagles, where he played for five seasons and was instrumental in the Eagles victory in Super Bowl LIX, beating the Kansas City Chiefs, 40-22.

Slay was released by Philadelphia in March of 2025 and signed a one-year deal with the Pittsburgh Steelers but was released by the Steelers after 10 games of the 2025 season. He was claimed off waivers by the Buffalo Bills, but Slay elected not to join the Bills, hinting that retirement was eminent.

In 187 career games in the NFL, “Big Play” recorded 655 tackles, 163 pass breakups, 28 interceptions, and 5 defensive touchdowns, earning him six Pro Bowl selections.

At the height of Slay’s career,

when an opposing fan stopped me. Even though BHS had lost, Slay had had a big game.

“That Slay kid,” the opposing fan said, “is only a sophomore?”

“Yes, sir,” I confirmed, “only a sophomore.”

The opposing fan shook his head as he commented, “I hope we don’t play y’all the next two years!”

Slay was on pace his junior year for another 1000 yards rushing, but, unfortunately, his season was cut short after five games due to an injury.

Slay was also a multi-sport athlete at BHS, running track and lettering in basketball.

Following his stellar senior

Oklahoma State.

Slay announced his retirement on Instagram, saying, “Dear football, I wanna thank you for all you’ve done for me. I’ve been blessed to play the game I love since I was 5 yrs old. Football was my peace, my joy, everything.”

“It’s hard to say goodbye, but God has a new chapter for me and I’m ready to turn the page and start my new journey.

“To all my BigPlay fans, I will always appreciate the love and support y’all have given me. I couldn’t have done it without you.”

Slay signed off by saying, “Just a kid from Brunswick, GA with BIG dreams.”

THE **SOUTHERN SPORTS** EDITION
.COM

DAILY

**Insight, Columns and Opinions
on your favorite
Southern Sports Teams**

www.thesouthernedition.com



SAUNDERS
LANDSCAPE SUPPLY CO.
3313 Glynn Avenue Brunswick, GA

**Landscaping Supplies
Outdoor Furniture
Outdoor Decor
Nursery
Water Features/Fountains**

**3319 Glynn Avenue in Brunswick
Across From JP's
912.275.7072**

like us on facebook

Home Of The World Famous Mack's Fries

912.275.8271 912.342.7967
6900 New Jesup Hwy 3421 Cypress Mill Rd

MacksBarbeque.com Like us on Facebook

Altama Pharmacy
Brunswick, GA

Welcoming New Customers Daily

5711 Altama Avenue • 912-264-2622

SWIM LESSONS

912.279.2800 or 912.279.2836
www.glynncounty.org/recreation

Ages 6 months & up
Neptune Park Pool & Selden Park Pool

FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC CARE

Dr. Harry C. Broyles

Most Insurances Accepted

3607 Community Road, Brunswick, GA
912.265.0311



OWL MADNESS

Kennesaw State's Season By Kenneth Harrison



The Kennesaw State Owls men's basketball team punched their ticket to the NCAA Tournament.

They won the Conference USA championship on Saturday, March 14th. KSU (21-13) was the No. 6 seed and they beat No. 4 Louisiana Tech (20-14), 71-60 to claim their first-ever Conference USA title.

The Owls beat No. 3 Western Kentucky and No. 2 Sam Houston to advance to the championship game. They were 10-10 in conference play during the regular season, so this was very surprising.

KSU played their best defensive game of the season against LA Tech, holding them to under 27% from the floor.

The Bulldogs were held to 22-of-72 (26.3%) for the night from the field, and 9-of-37 in the second half for 24.3%. KSU's defense was even better on the outside, as the Bulldogs made just 2-of-28 (7.1%) from three-point range.

Senior guard Jaden Harris finished with a game-high 18 points on 5-of-9 shooting, including 4-of-6 from three-point range, double the number of made threes that LA Tech had as an entire team.

Freshman forward Amir Taylor had 17 points, 6 rebounds, 1 assist, 2 steals and 1 block. Sophomore guard RJ Johnson scored 13 points, 6 rebounds, 4 assists and 2 steals. Johnson was named the Tournament MVP after his third-straight double-figure scoring game in the tournament.

"We played a tough, gritty competitive team in LA Tech. Talvin Hester is one of the best coaches in this league. He does a tremendous job, and we talked before the tournament and said, hey, we hope we meet each other in the championship, and we

knew if we met each other, it was going to be a battle, and today was it. I thought we guarded these dudes really well. Defense and rebounding is what carries you in March. We were able to hold their two guards, [DJ] Dudley and [AJ] Bates, to, I think, 0-15 from three. And we knew that was going to be a tremendous challenge, because they are really, really dynamic players, and they go as they go. Our guys stood up to the challenge, and we were able to win the game. A great, great victory for our university, for our community, for our students. And how about our fans? I mean, we painted this place black and gold, man. Kennesaw showed up in a major way," KSU head coach Antoine Pettway said after the game.

"Truly blessed and truly thankful I get to live out a dream and coach young men like these two sitting up here every single day. We going to keep going, man. We got practice at home on Monday, and we're getting ready to go play in the NCAA tournament. God is so good. God is so good. This is what we prayed for, this is what we dreamed about."

This was Kennesaw State's second-ever trip to March Madness in the school's Division I era, and first since the 2023-24 season.

They were selected as the No. 14 seed in the West Region. They played the No. 3 Gonzaga Bulldogs (30-3) at the Moda Center in Portland, Oregon, about 350 miles away from Gonzaga's campus in Spokane, Washington. This is Gonzaga's 27th consecutive NCAA Tournament appearance and 28th overall.

Kennesaw State built an early lead on the Bulldogs but Gonzaga ended the first half on a 10-0 run to head into the locker room with a six point advantage.

Gonzaga would build a double digit lead in the second half and stage off a late comeback attempt by the Owls to eliminate KSU in the first round of the NCAA Tournament, 73-64.

**FLOYD
KENNEDY
TIRE
COMPANY**

Brakes

Oil Changes

**Alignments/
Front End Work**

Tire Rotations

And More



**2928 Norwich St
Brunswick, GA**

912-264-6578

Refrigeration • Marine • Air Conditioning
Heating • Residential • Commercial
Duct Cleaning • Service & Installation

AIR ADJUSTERS



(912) 264-9747
www.airadjusters.com



7535 BLYTHE ISLAND HWY
BRUNSWICK, GA 31523
912.289.2362

NEW TIRES FAST!

- Tires
- Brakes
- Oil Changes
- Alignments



3603 Frederica Rd • St. Simons, GA
912.357.2357

Immunizations • EzPz Pak Adherence

FredericaPharmacy.com



Named Top 20 Golf Course in Georgia by Golf Magazine



**A Historic Donald Ross Designed Private Club
Home of the Golden Isles Golf Academy**

Just down from St. Simons Island Causeway on HWY 17

call 912.264.4377 or visit Brunswickcountryclub.com

BUYING OR SELLING?

Meet

Sherrye Gibbs,
Associate Broker



**COLDWELL
BANKER**
ACCESS REALTY



Experienced Realtor offering outstanding service, expert negotiation skills, and personalized guidance.

Coldwell Banker Access Realty
507 Ocean Blvd • Suite 102, St. Simons Island, GA 31522
912-634-0404 (O), 912-617-1063 (M)



**Window Tinting
Lift Kits
Wheels
Tires
Truck Accessories**

3694 Community Road (Across from Ellis Marine)
912.456.3514 • SoutheastAutoAndTruck.com

TO WIN YOU NEED *A STRONG DEFENSE*



CALL US: (912) 267-7123

T&B

TUCKERANDBROWNING.COM



TUA TO THE RESCUE?

Falcons Sign Tua Tagovailoa By Kenneth Harrison



There's a famous phrase; one man's trash is another man's treasure. How does that relate to NFL free agency you may ask? Well, the Atlanta Falcons have signed quarterback Tua Tagovailoa to a one-year deal. I think this is a terrible move but I understand it.

Releasing Tua will cost the Dolphins an NFL-record \$99.2 million

believe he will play next season.

Prior to his injury, Penix was inconsistent. He was only a second-year player but I did hope the Falcons would sign a QB to replace him.

At times Tua has shown flashes of being a good player. He is also very prone to injury. He did make the Pro Bowl in 2023 after throwing for 4,624 yards, 29 touchdowns and 14 picks. This was also the only season that he did not miss a game.

In 2024 he missed six games due to concussions. At that point, I thought he should have retired from football.

Tagovailoa is only 28 years old so he does have time to get better in his career. I believe he should be compared

like Joe Flacco, Russell Wilson, Tyrod Taylor and Jimmy Garoppolo. The only advantage I give them over Tua is injury history.

Money is an important consideration for the Falcons. They will only have about \$20 million to spend under the salary cap once Cousins is officially released.

Signing a veteran backup QB for cheap means more money available to spend on free agents at other positions.

I wanted Atlanta to sign Kyler Murray but that would mean signing him to a longer contract. That move would also end Penix's time in Atlanta.

The Falcons have a talented roster but I think it will get wasted



in dead money against the salary cap. That's an absurd amount of money to get rid of a player.

He struggled last season, passing for 2,660 yards, 20 touchdowns and 15 interceptions in fourteen games. He averaged 6.9 yards per attempt.

I'm not sure if that can be blamed on being on a bad team or just poor play from Tagovailoa.

This move does show Atlanta is invested in Michael Penix Jr. Penix tore his ACL in November so I don't

to the backup QB options on the market. From a financial standpoint, this was a great move.

The Dolphins still owe Tagovailoa \$54 million. He plans to sign with the Falcons for just over the league minimum, reportedly about \$1.3 million. That's a great price for a good, veteran backup.

A good veteran backup QB salary is about \$5 million. The Falcons could have spent more to sign guys

again next year. I'm not a fan of hiring Kevin Stefanski as head coach, then adding Tagovailoa as the QB is the cherry on top.

They also don't have a first-round pick in the 2026 NFL Draft because they traded it last year to move up and select DE James Pearce. He has some recent off-field legal problems so he might not be on the team this upcoming season.

New Issues Monthly



THE SOUTHERN SPORTS EDITION



BRUNSWICK'S PREMIERE CHILDREN'S THEATRE

ENCORE KIDS

PERFORMING ARTS

www.encorekidsclass.com
912-771-6005

DAILY LUNCH SPECIALS

MARSHSIDE
GRILL



1200 GLYNN AVENUE • BRUNSWICK, GA
912.342.7981

www.MARSHSIDEGRILL.com



UGA

apparel available at

Gentlemen's
&
Lady
OUTFITTERS
est. 1983

600 Sea Island Rd, Ste 8 - St. Simons - 912.634.1521



GOLDEN ISLES

COLLISION CENTER



912-263-4422

301 CANDLER DR. BRUNSWICK, GA 31523



THE WRONG IMPACT

Profar Suspended Again By Michael Spiers



Here we go again.

For the second straight March, the Atlanta Braves are opening camp with a Jurickson Profar suspension hanging over the franchise.

Only this time it is not 80 games. It is 162. A full season. Gone.

And at this point, it is fair to ask a simple question: what exactly did the Braves buy?

When Atlanta signed Profar to a three year, 42 million dollar deal after his career year in San Diego, it felt like a savvy move.

He had just hit .280 with 24 home runs, 85 runs batted in, an All Star nod and a Silver Slugger. The Braves needed another professional bat to lengthen the lineup behind Ronald Acuna Jr., Matt Olson and Austin Riley.

Profar looked like a veteran piece who had finally figured it out. Instead, what Atlanta has received is chaos.

Last season, four games in, Profar was suspended 80 games for testing positive for human chorionic gonadotropin. He returned midseason, hit .245 with 14 home runs, and the Braves tried to turn the page.

They publicly expressed disappointment but support. They hoped he would learn from it. Now this.

A second positive test. A full year

ban. Fifteen million dollars forfeited. Ineligible for the postseason. Ineligible for the World Baseball Classic. And perhaps most damaging, ineligible for trust. Major League Baseball increased penalties for repeat offenders in 2014. Since then, only six players have received a 162 game suspension, and now Profar joins that list. That is not company any organization wants to keep.

And this is not just about numbers on a stat sheet. This is about credibility in the clubhouse.

Whit Merrifield, who finished his career in Atlanta just months ago, posted a pointed question on social media: what other profession can you get caught cheating to gain an unfair advantage on your peers and still keep your job?

That sentiment is likely not isolated. I believe ballplayers understand slumps. They understand injuries. They understand bad luck. What they do not tolerate easily is a teammate cutting corners and putting the team in jeopardy. Especially twice.

From a purely baseball perspective, the Braves can try to spin this as manageable. They have some depth.

Sean Murphy's return could allow Drake Baldwin to spend more time as a hitter. The lineup still features Acuna, Olson, Riley, Ozzie Albies and Michael Harris II. Mike Yastrzemski was brought in to help.

But that misses the larger point. The Braves are not simply replacing a designated hitter. They are replacing stability.

This franchise entered the offseason trying to rebound from a 76 and 86 win season.

Injuries to Spencer Schwellenbach and Hurston Waldrep have already thinned the pitching depth. Questions linger around Spencer Strider's velocity. And now, before Opening Day, another major storyline overshadows everything.

Profar was supposed to be a bounce back story. Instead, he is a cautionary tale.

It is also fair to wonder about the 2024 breakout that earned him the contract in the first place. Fair or not, suspicion will follow. That is the cost of multiple violations.

Financially, the Braves save the 15 million dollars he forfeits this season. But they cannot recoup the lost momentum, the distraction, or the erosion of trust.

And practically speaking, his time in Atlanta feels finished. Even if an appeal reduces the penalty, how does the organization sell that return to its fan base? How does the clubhouse welcome it?

The Braves have built a culture over the past decade around professionalism and internal development. This situation cuts directly against that identity.

Championship windows do not stay open forever. They require talent, health and trust. Right now, Atlanta is battling injuries, facing roster uncertainty, and dealing with a self-inflicted wound that never needed to happen.

Jurickson Profar was supposed to help extend the Braves' contention window.

Instead, twice now, he has helped shrink it.





SAME OLD TRICKS

Crossroads For UGA Basketball By Colin Lacy



Stop me if you've heard this before, but the 2025-26 Georgia Men's basketball season will be looked at with multiple conflicting feelings.

On one hand, this rendition of Bulldog's Basketball was the winningest and highest scoring team in program history with a 22-11 record and averaging 89.4 points per game, but on the flip side, Georgia's season ends with another embarrassing loss in the first round of the NCAA Tournament in the 8/9 matchup.

Georgia got off to a red hot start out of the gate and carried it thru the first half of the season with a 14-2 thru the first sixteen games of the season.

That said, the start of the questions began in late January when Georgia lost five of the next six games, with the only win in that four-week stretch came at LSU who finished in the cellar of the SEC standings.

So, what do you take away from Georgia hoops in 2025-26? Let's break it down:

Positive: First and foremost, even with the tough four week stretch, 22 regular season wins are the most ever in the regular season in the 121 seasons on the hardwood in Athens.

With those 22 wins, it earned

the Dawgs a second straight NCAA bid for just the fourth time in Georgia history and the first since the 2001 and 2002 postseasons.

The biggest change in the Dawgs program this season was the offensive prowess. Again, this Georgia team could almost score at will. 89.4 points per game were the most in the history of the Dawgs and shattered the old record of the 89-90 squad by 6.7 points per game.

The nickname of "Dunkyard Dawgs" spawned because of the proficiency for rim-rattling dunks. Georgia led the country in percentage of field goals that were dunks at nearly 20% of the buckets were dunks. Somto Cyril led the way of all Division 1 players with 83 regular season dunks.

The Negative: The negative boils down to 2 different portions of the season. From January 24th through the February 14th matchup at Oklahoma, Georgia went 1-5.

At the beginning of the stretch, Georgia was flirting with the top of the SEC and looking to have turned a corner in the history of Georgia Basketball.

It began with three straight losses on the road at Texas and home against Tennessee and Texas A&M.

While disappointing for Georgia fans, its somewhat understandable with all of those teams making the NCAA tournament but compiled with losses at home against rival Florida (who did win the SEC regular season), but the big blow came with a loss at Oklahoma 94-78 who was near the bottom of the SEC standings.

While you could chalk that stretch as just a tough portion of the schedule, the ending is tough in postseason play for the Dawgs.

In the SEC Championship, Georgia saw the opening matchup with the 15 seed Ole Miss and fell 76-72.

Ok..Ole Miss got hot and the matchup wasn't the best... Then we get to March Madness.

Georgia was announced as an 8-seed in the tournament and drew a match-up with the 9-seed St. Louis Billikins.

The Billikins out of the A10 Conference flat out dominated. SLU throttled the Dawgs 102-77 making back-to-back years that Georgia has been embarrassingly knocked out of a first round matchup in the NCAA Tournament. Last season ended with a #8 Gonzaga knocking off the #9 Georgia 89-68.

The last 5 NCAA Tournament appearances have seen the Dawgs bow out in the first round with the last NCAA Tournament win coming back in 2002 as a 3-seed in the West.

It would be ignorant to say that Head Coach Mike White hasn't elevated the Georgia program back into prominence after missing the tournament altogether from 2015 until 2025, but the tough part to swallow for Georgia fans and supporters is the abysmal performances in the postseason.

In the day and age of the transfer portal, Mike White and company will be scouring the portal to find the next group of Dawgs to help get them over the hump.



What's Your Summit?

Our team of experts will help you get there.

Whether your “summit” is an epic comeback just in time for the championship game or winning a medal for the best cut grass in the neighborhood, Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery is here to help you ascend to new heights.

OUR ORTHOPAEDIC EXPERTS INCLUDE:



Jason G. Bowman, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon
Foot and Ankle
Surgery



Denny A. Carter, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon
Sports Medicine;
Hip and Knee
Replacement



Jason M. Dancy, MD
Interventional Physiatrist
Physical Medicine
and Rehabilitation;
Non-Surgical Spine Care



Gregory R. Kelley, MD
Physiatrist
Physical Medicine
and Rehabilitation;
Non-Surgical Spine Care



Beau Sasser, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon
Sports Medicine;
Shoulder, Hip and
Knee Replacement



Michael J. Sullivan, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon
Hand, Wrist and
Elbow Surgery



Lindsey E. Sweat, MD
Concussion
Management;
Sports Medicine



Christopher Yonz, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon
General Orthopaedics;
Sports Medicine;
Shoulder, Hip and Knee
Replacements



SUMMIT
Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery

A strategic affiliate of
Southeast Georgia Health System

BRUNSWICK

912.466.7340

ST. SIMONS ISLAND

912.466.5570

ST. MARYS

912.576.6255