

# THE *SOUTHERN SPORTS* EDITION

July 2026 Edition



# US OPEN



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# GET TO KNOW THE WRITERS



## KENNETH HARRISON, JR.

Kenneth Harrison, 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.



## BRIAN ALBERTSON

Brian Albertson is the former President of the Georgia PGA and is currently a PGA member. Brian is the current director of Golf at Brunswick Country Club. Brian is the founder of the GIGA Elite Golf Academy and CJGA Elite Golf Academy.



## 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.



## JOE DELANEY

Joe Delaney grew up in the Golden Isles and was a multi-sport athlete at Glynn Academy. Joe has a pulse on everything Glynn Academy Red Terrors and Georgia Bulldogs.



## 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.



## JEFF DOKE

Jeff Doke was born and raised in Brunswick, GA. Jeff graduated from Georgia College in Milledgeville, GA. He has been the voice of the Frederica Academy Knights since 2011.



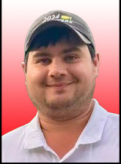
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Teddy Bishop is from south Georgia and graduated from Armstrong Atlantic University. Teddy has been the voice of the Brunswick High Pirates for over 20 years and is an expert on Tennis, High School Football, and MLB.



## GARRISON RYFUN

Garrison Ryfun was born and raised in Brunswick, GA. Garrison graduated from the College of Coastal Georgia with a Bachelor's Degree in American Studies with a concentration in Communications. Garrison has been the Glynn Academy Red Terrors Football Radio Color Analyst since 2016.



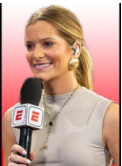
## JOSEPH STUCKEY

Joseph Stuckey is the voice of the Bulloch Academy Gators. Joseph is a Bulloch County native and graduated from Georgia Southern University. Joseph is an expert in high school football and all things Bulloch County Sports.



## THOMAS TEDDER

Thomas Tedder is a Brunswick resident and former High School Football Coach. Thomas graduated from Edinboro University in Pennsylvania where he played football. Thomas coached High School Football for 27 years and won 3 State Championships. Thomas recently retired from coaching and was the Defensive Coordinator for The Brunswick High Pirates for 7 years before retiring.



## CAPERS CHILDS

Capers Childs is from St. Simons Island, Georgia. Capers is currently a student at Georgia Southern University and does sideline reporting for GATA Productions and ESPN for Georgia Southern Eagle sporting events.



## RON REAGIN

Ron Reagin is currently the voice for Valdosta Wildcats Football and has called Valdosta Football for a decade. Ron graduated from Colquitt County High School and went to college at Valdosta State University. Ron is an expert on high school and college football.



## JASON BISHOP

Jason Bishop graduated from Kennesaw State University and formerly worked at CNN Sports and CSS 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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# US OPEN BELONGS TO WYNDHAM CLARK

Clark Wins Second U.S. Open in Four Years By Brian Albertson



**T**he 2026 U.S. Open delivered everything golf fans expect from a championship at one of the game's most iconic venues: demanding conditions, dramatic leaderboard movement, and a champion who demonstrated remarkable resilience under pressure.

Wyndham Clark captured his second U.S. Open title in four years and the fifth PGA Tour victory of his career, earning the championship trophy and the winner's prize of \$4.5 million.

While the final margin was only one stroke, Clark's victory was built over the first three rounds, where he established a commanding position that ultimately proved too much for the field to overcome.

Clark's championship was largely won before Sunday. Rounds of 64, 69, and 70 gave him a six-shot advantage entering the final round at 7-under par, an extraordinary score on a Shinnecock Hills layout that was playing every bit as difficult as a U.S. Open venue should.

The key to Clark's dominance was his putting. Through the first three rounds, he had holed more than 250 feet of putts, including over 50 feet of par-saving putts.

Sunday was anything but easy. World number 1 golfer, Scottie Scheffler played his way into the final pairing but could never mount his customary charge.

Clark appeared vulnerable early and struggled on the front nine, allowing several challengers to close the gap.

However, championship golf often comes down to recovering when your best game isn't present, and Clark repeatedly relied on his putter and experience under pressure to steady himself. He ultimately posted a final score of 4-under par, enough to secure the title by a single stroke.

If there was one player who looked capable of catching Clark, it was

Sam Burns. Burns electrified the crowd during the final round, reaching 4-under through his first eight holes and applying real pressure to the leader.

His aggressive play and confident putting created genuine suspense as Clark's lead continued to shrink. Burns ultimately signed for a superb 67, one of the best rounds of the day, finishing at 3-under par for the championship.

Despite his remarkable Sunday charge, he was left one shot short of forcing a playoff. It was a performance that showcased Burns' ability to contend on golf's biggest stages and one that will likely serve as motivation in future major championships.

The only other player to finish under par for the championship was Tom Kim, whose steady play throughout the week earned him a place among the tournament's elite performers.

Kim's ability to navigate Shinnecock's firm fairways, penal rough, and lightning-fast greens further reinforced his status as one of the brightest young stars in professional golf.

It was nice to see two local Saint Simons Island residents, Keith Mitchell and J.T. Poston finish Tied 4th in the Open. This marked the best finish in a major for both players.

The championship setup at Shinnecock Hills was exceptional. The course demanded precision, patience, and imagination. Players faced narrow landing areas, unpredictable winds, and some of the most challenging greens seen all year.

By week's end, only three players finished under par, underscoring just how difficult the test was. Rather than producing a birdie-fest, Shinnecock rewarded complete golfers who could manage their way around the course and remain mentally disciplined through four demanding rounds.

One of the most talked-about aspects of the championship was the reaction of the galleries toward Clark. Following his third-round comments that it was "unfortunate" the crowd seemed "flat" during his round, portions of the gallery appeared to turn against the

eventual champion.

Throughout Sunday's final round, spectators were noticeably more vocal in support of Burns and, at times, reacted favorably when Clark missed putts or greens.

Reports indicated that several patrons were escorted from the property for heckling Clark, an unusual development for a major championship and a disappointing distraction from what was otherwise a memorable week of golf.

To Clark's credit, he never appeared rattled by the atmosphere. Instead, he maintained his focus, handled the pressure, and ultimately earned the championship despite competing in front of crowds that were often rooting for the pursuers rather than the leader.

As the round progressed and Clark moved closer to victory, the tone of the galleries softened, and many spectators ultimately acknowledged the quality of the performance they were witnessing.

In the end, Wyndham Clark proved once again that he belongs among the game's premier major championship players. Winning a U.S. Open requires more than talent—it requires patience, toughness, and the ability to withstand relentless pressure.

At Shinnecock Hills, Clark demonstrated all three. His combination of elite ball-striking, timely putting, and mental fortitude carried him through one of the sternest tests in championship golf.

With two U.S. Open titles before the age of 35 and five PGA Tour victories to his name, Clark has firmly established himself as one of the defining players of his generation.

The 2026 U.S. Open will be remembered for Shinnecock's demanding challenge, Sam Burns' thrilling pursuit, Tom Kim's impressive finish, and, above all, Wyndham Clark's ability to withstand both the golf course and the pressure of a crowd eager for a different outcome.

Champions are often measured by how they respond when things become uncomfortable, and at Shinnecock Hills, Clark responded like a true U.S. Open champion.

# Growing Pains

## The Impact of Growth Spurts on Today's Young Athletes



Frank Clements, PA-C, CAQ-OS

Young athletes have many challenges, from learning the ins and outs of their chosen sports to honing their skills and performance on the field of play. Adding to the pressure is the fact that their bodies are still growing, sometimes creating a mismatch between what they want to do and what they can do. The potential for injury is always there, and in many cases, issues aren't the result of something that occurred during a game. Instead, they can be related to the way the athletes' bodies are changing.

"Twens and teens can experience a variety of physical complications when they regularly participate in sports," explains board-certified physician assistant Frank D. Clements, PA-C, CAQ-OS, with Summit Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Surgery in St. Marys. "Growth spurts cause their bones to lengthen quickly, and the muscles and tendons that surround them often can't keep up. This leads to a higher risk of overuse injuries."

Two common conditions may be overlooked as young athletes try to play through the pain. However, it's important to be mindful of these ailments, as they can be managed so players can keep bringing their A-game to every competition.

### Sever's Disease: "Heel" the Pain

It's not uncommon for athletes to complain of heel pain. However, in young players, the discomfort can be associated with the growth plate that sits at the back of the heel, leading to a diagnosis of Sever's disease.

"Coaches and parents may be concerned that their athlete has a tear or a fracture, but often that's not the case. It's actually an inflammation of the growth plate, which is made of soft cartilage," Frank says. "Irritation occurs when the heel bone lengthens rapidly and the Achilles tendon, which connects the calf muscles to the growth plate, struggles to keep pace. Running and jumping stress the tendon, pulling on and irritating the growth plate."

This can cause pain, tenderness, swelling and redness around the heel. Girls typically experience the condition between the ages of 7 and 13; boys, who have growth spurts later, tend to develop Sever's disease between 10 and 15. One or both heels can be affected, and the discomfort can linger for two to three months. Fortunately, there are options for treatment.

According to Frank, start by icing the heels after activity and use over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen or acetaminophen when necessary. If the pain persists, your provider can order an X-ray and recommend physical therapy, which stretches the calf muscle and strengthens the leg muscles and tendons. Additionally, proper footwear, including inserts that cushion the heel, should be used to absorb shock and support the growth plate.

### Osgood-Schlatter Disease: A Knee-Jerk Reaction

Another common—and temporary—condition affects the area just below the kneecap, causing pain, swelling and a noticeable bump on the shin. This is Osgood-Schlatter disease, and it involves irritation and inflammation of the patellar tendon, which is located on the front of the knee. The condition is a stress response to repeated pulling on that still-developing area of the knee.

Frank notes that young male and female athletes between the ages of 10 and 15 are prone to developing Osgood-Schlatter disease, especially if they play sports that involve running, jumping, kicking, and quick movements, such as football, soccer, basketball and volleyball. Cross country runners and gymnasts also can be at risk. Because symptoms can resemble those of other knee injuries, it's important to visit your child's provider for an exam and official diagnosis.

"Osgood-Schlatter disease typically resolves on its own, but it can take more than a year. The condition goes away when growth spurts end and the knee fully hardens. But there are steps you can take to help alleviate discomfort," Frank says, noting that R.I.C.E. (rest, ice, compression, elevation) is a key part of treatment. Taking over-the-counter NSAIDs can reduce pain and inflammation, while wearing a knee wrap will cushion the knee. Physical therapy and stretching regularly can help as well. And while young athletes don't have to stop playing, they should modify their approach, reducing intensity and taking breaks when needed so they can continue to leave it all on the field.



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

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# FINDING HIS WAY

Heze Kent at Florida By Thomas Tedder



**T**here is a quiet confidence about freshman tight end Heze Kent as he walks the practice fields at the University of Florida.

The former high school standout is no longer the biggest or fastest player on the field simply because of his talent. Now, he is learning what it means to be a complete football player in the rugged world of Southeastern Conference football. And that journey may be exactly what helps the Florida Gators climb back into relevance.

At 6-foot-5 and approximately 280 pounds, Kent possesses the size, athleticism, and natural hands that made him one of the most intriguing prospects in the Gators' recruiting class.

Yet, as he quickly discovered, college football demands far more than raw ability.

"On the field, the biggest adjustment has been playing faster," Kent said. "The college game is a lot faster."

That statement reflects the reality facing every freshman entering the SEC. The windows are tighter. The defenders are bigger and stronger. The margin for error disappears quickly.

For Kent, adapting to the speed of the game has become his primary focus as he works to earn the trust of Florida's coaching staff.

The adjustment hasn't ended when practice is over. "Off the field, just watching what I eat," Kent explained. "I need to watch my weight

and keep it down. I am currently 280."

That maturity is encouraging for a Florida program attempting to reclaim its place among the SEC's elite.

Championship programs are built on players who embrace the daily disciplines that occur behind the scenes—the nutrition, conditioning, recovery, and film study that transform talented athletes into dependable contributors. Kent appears to understand that process.

Perhaps the biggest transformation has come in his approach to playing tight end itself. "I take pride in blocking now," Kent said. "I wasn't attached in high school and at Florida I am now an attached TE. If you don't block, you are going to be taken out the game."

That mentality could make him invaluable to the Gators moving forward. Florida has long been known for explosive offenses and dynamic skill players, but in the SEC, championships are often won at the line of scrimmage. Tight ends who can block defensive ends, seal the edge in the running game, and still create mismatches in the passing game are worth their weight in gold.

Kent is embracing the physical nature of the position rather than avoiding it. That willingness to do the dirty work is precisely the type of culture Florida must cultivate as it attempts to compete with perennial conference powers.

The Gators have shown flashes of brilliance in recent years but have lacked the consistency and physical identity that once defined the program. Players like Kent can help change that narrative.

More importantly, his

development extends far beyond football. When asked who has had the greatest impact on his life, Kent doesn't mention a famous athlete or coach. Instead, he points to his spiritual mentor. "My Pastor, Mark Baker, has always told me that my life is like walking on a mine field," Kent said. "I can't go everywhere, and I can't hang around the wrong crowd."

Those words reveal a young man with perspective—a freshman who understands that success at Florida will depend as much on his character as his athletic ability.

That mindset matters.

The SEC is filled with gifted athletes. What separates the great ones is often their discipline, humility, and ability to remain grounded amid enormous expectations. Kent's reliance on faith and wise counsel gives him a foundation that should serve him well as his role expands.

Florida fans may have to be patient as he continues to adjust to the speed and physicality of college football. Freshman seasons are rarely perfect.

But there is something promising about watching a young player embrace the difficult aspects of his position. There is something encouraging about hearing a freshman talk about blocking before touchdowns and discipline before accolades.

Heze Kent is still finding his way at the University of Florida. And if his growth continues at this pace, the Gators may discover that their path back to prominence in the SEC runs right through the development of a young tight end who is learning to embrace every challenge placed before him.



# GEORGIA'S TOP RECRUITS

The Best In The State By Kenneth Harrison, Jr.



**T**he Georgia high school football season will start in August. We are going to take a look at some of the most talented recruits in the state. NIL has made a huge difference in recruiting because most of the elite players are not committed to Georgia.

**Edge DJ Jacobs, Blessed Trinity Catholic (Roswell, GA):** Jacobs is listed at 6'5 and 235 pounds. He's a five-star recruit and the top-rated player in the nation. He's currently committed to Ohio State.

He finished last season with 102 tackles (24 TFL), 16 sacks and 2 FF in 11 games. Jacobs participated in both the Under Armour All-America Game (1 TFL) and the Polynesian Bowl (1 sack, 1 TFL) as an underclassman.

The Titans were 7-5 in 2025 and they lost in the second round of the AAAA playoffs. We will see if they can become state championship contenders this season.

**Edge KJ Green, Stephenson (Stone Mountain, GA):** Green is 6'4, 230 lbs. and a five-star recruit. He's the second ranked player in Georgia and sixth nationally. He's an LSU commit.

He had a monster junior year, with 129 tackles (40 TFL), 18 sacks, 4 FF and 1 FR. Also caught 1 pass for 10 yards and 1 TD on offense.

Green was the Region 5-AAA Defensive Player of the Year. He also participated in the Polynesian Bowl (1 tackle) as an underclassman.

The Jaguars were 11-2 in 2025 and only lost one regular season game

by one point.

**S Kamarui Dorsey, Hampton (Hampton, GA):** Dorsey is committed to Texas A&M. The 6'3, 200 lbs. safety is a four-star recruit.

In 2025 he had 61 tackles, 2 TFL and 4 interceptions. As a sophomore in 2024 he had 58 tackles, 4 TFL and 3 interceptions.

He helped lead the Hornets to an 8-3 record last season.

**WR Jaden Upshaw, Lee County (Leesburg, GA):** We have our first offensive player on the list. Upshaw is the fourth ranked recruit in the state and a four-star player. He's also committed to play for Texas A&M.

He finished his junior season with 47 catches for 902 yards (19.2 YPC) and 8 TD in 10 games after missing a few contests due to injury. Upshaw also played in the Navy All-American Bowl (3 catches for 19 yards on 5 targets) as an underclassman. He's 6'1, 200 pounds so he has good size for a receiver.

The Trojans were 8-4 last year. In 2024 they made it to the AAAA state championship game.

**OT Kennedee Jackson, Lithonia:** Jackson is the fifth ranked

recruit in Georgia and he's committed to UGA. He's 6'6, 297 pounds so he has perfect size for an offensive tackle.

He also plays on the defensive line full-time and he plays basketball. He's a very good athlete and he's good when pulling and climbing.

The Bulldogs were 10-3 in 2025 and they got to the third-round of the AAAA playoffs.

**ATH AJ Tillman Jr., Lithonia:** He's a four-star player like his teammate that we talked about previously. Tillman has committed to Louisville. He plays running back and defensive back. I believe he wants to play on offense at the next level.

As a junior, Tillman ran for 461 yards on 61 carries, averaging 7.6 yards a pop. He also managed to reach the end zone five times.

At DB, Tillman had 22 tackles, 6 passes defended, and a fumble recovery. He combined for over 1,500 rushing yards and 17 TD's the last two seasons.

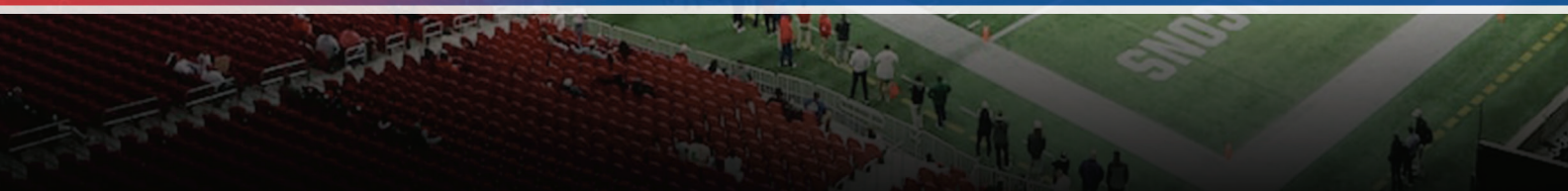
He has taken an official visit to Virginia Tech after committing to Louisville, so we will see if he changes his mind.





# THE FORMULA

GHSA Playoff Changes By Ron Reagin





**S**tarting in 2026, GHSAA football playoffs will use the Post-Season Ranking Formula (PSRF): 35% team winning percentage, 35% opponents' winning percentage, and 30% opponents' opponents' winning percentage.

Just statewide, data-driven seeding.

The formula is straightforward:  $PSRF = (\text{Your Winning Percentage} \times 0.35) + (\text{Opponents' Winning Percentage} \times 0.35) + (\text{Opponents' Opponents' Winning Percentage} \times 0.30)$

This system replaces the old region-only qualification model, ending the era of weak-region champions advancing easily while statistically stronger teams from stacked regions were left out.

Now, a 7–3 team with elite opponents can outrank a 10–0 team that plays lower ranked and lower classification teams. Region champions still earn automatic bids and favorable top-16 seeds, preserving motivation for region play.

PSRF shines in its fairness and predictive power. Simulations suggest it offers 15–20% better playoff forecasting than the previous system.

For example, Colquitt County's 2025 8–2 regular season with several national-level games would have earned a No. 1 seed under PSRF — something that was impossible before as they were not region champs, but they defeated the region champs.

The main fallacies with this

method are easy to identify but harder to measure: ignoring margin of victory (a one-point win counts the same as a 50-point blowout and close losses to top teams earn no credit), assuming all games are played on a neutral field, inconsistent data from some programs, and the reality that high school teams rarely stay the same strength throughout an entire season.

Also, late season upsets could cause wild swings in rankings mainly due to a chain reaction of all aspects of the formula with few games to recover.

For 2027-2028 and beyond, GHSAA should consider refinements: a capped margin of victory (up to 24 points), a simple home/away factor (road win = 1.1× credit), and a slight boost to OOWP weight.

These tweaks would better reward dominance and the courage to play top tier teams without sacrificing simplicity and transparency as suggested by Loren Maxwell.

Whatever modifications GHSAA makes, the loudest protests will come from programs most negatively affected.

The best way to judge PSRF's real impact in its first season is to examine the schedules of the teams complaining the most and the teams they are complaining about.

Coaches and athletic directors will now need to incorporate statistical formulas into their scheduling strategies to avoid being penalized for weak non-region slates and avoiding upsets.

The 2026 PSRF is a bold, objective, and merit-based upgrade. No method is flawless, but with smart refinements, Georgia has a chance to lead the nation in the playoff ranking system ecosystem.

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# WHAT COLTON NUSSMEIER WILL BRING TO THE GEORGIA BULLDOGS

UGA's New Quarterback Recruit By Colin Lacy



**N**ussmeier. It's a name that has been around the SEC for over a decade in multiple different roles and now the third Nussmeier will be entering the SEC in 2027. Colton Nussmeier committed to play for Kirby Smart and the Georgia Bulldogs.

Colton carries on the Nussmeier legacy after his older brother Garrett Nussmeier played quarterback for the LSU Fighting Tigers.

The older Nussmeier brother finished his 5-year LSU career with over 7,500 yards and 52 career scores. Garrett Nussmeier was the 7th round selection of the Kansas City Chiefs in the 2026 NFL Draft and is now learning as the backup to Patrick Mahomes.

The Nussmeier brothers learned under their father Doug Nussmeier, who is currently the New Orleans Saints Offensive Coordinator and a veteran assistant in the NFL and College Football. He also worked with Kirby Smart under Nick Saban at Alabama from 2012-2013.

Colton has blazed his own trail as a standout quarterback as he enters his senior season of high school. Nussmeier is a four-star quarterback and ESPN's No. 4 pocket passer for the 2027 class. The 6-3, 190 Texas native chose the Bulldogs over Arkansas and UCLA that had made up his "Final Three Teams."

The rising senior will suit up for a new team for his final season in the high school ranks as earlier this year he transferred from Flower Mound Marcus Hs to the Dallas-Fort Worth powerhouse Denton Ryan Hs after injuries limited his junior season

with Flower Mound Marcus.

As a first-year freshman starter in 2024, Nussmeier threw for over 1,900 yards, 16 touchdowns, with only 3 interceptions. Last season, Colton was hampered by a knee injury that limited his junior season to just eight games.

The commitment from the 4-star quarterback prospect closes the Bulldog's search for a QB in the 2027 class that was a longer than normal search but marks the 4th top-300 pledge in the class.

Georgia has already landed commitments from the top running back in the class with Kemon Spell. The Dawgs also have one of the top tight ends Jaxon Dollar (#82 in the ESPN Top-300) and offensive tackle Kelsey Adams (#109 in the ESPN Top-300).

While the older Nussmeier (Garrett), took a lot of flack at times at LSU, there was consistency with him as a solid leader for the Tigers in his career (no surprise with his dad's tutelage).

I know at times the "family heritage" playing a factor can get

overblown, but this is one that feels that it has some legs.

The impact that Garrett had on the Tigers program on and off the field shows what this family is about, and while it can't fully predict what Colton will be, it gives a great glimpse of where the upbringing started.

Pair that with the coaching from Kirby Smart and Mike Bobo in Athens, and even as someone that's not a Georgia Fan, I'm excited to what Colton Nussmeier can turn into for the Bulldogs in a few years.

Georgia will have returner Gunner Stockton leading the offense in 2026.

Stockton has a 24-5 record as a starter for the Dawgs last few seasons. Next season (when Colton Nussmeier will be a Freshman in Athens), it's expected to be Ryan Puglisi's offense after serving as the backup to Stockton in 2025-2026.

The line of Georgia Quarterbacks has been a long and illustrious history and looks like the line continues with the newest Dawgs slinger committing last week.





# HARD NOSED

Alan Rodemaker Joins Camden County By Michael Spiers



When Tucker Pruitt arrived at Camden County High School earlier this year, one of the biggest questions surrounding the Wildcats football program was how quickly the new coaching staff could come together and establish its identity.

Pruitt's track record spoke for itself. The veteran head coach built championship programs at Fitzgerald and Appling County and arrived in Kingsland with a reputation for developing tough, disciplined football teams.

But no successful head coach does it alone. Building a staff is just as important as building a roster. That is where Alan Rodemaker enters the picture.

The new Camden County defensive coordinator brings a wealth of experience, championship credentials, and perhaps most importantly, an unmistakable passion for the game.

For football fans across South Georgia, Rodemaker is a familiar name. He served as head coach at Valdosta High School from 2016 through 2019 and immediately made an impact, guiding the Wildcats to the 2016 state championship.

That title was Valdosta's first football state championship in 18 years and cemented Rodemaker's reputation as one of the area's top defensive minds.

Prior to joining Camden County, Rodemaker also spent time at Colquitt County, serving as defensive coordinator and safeties coach while continuing to build a reputation

for fielding aggressive, disciplined defenses.

His coaching résumé is impressive, but those who have spent time around Rodemaker will tell you that statistics and championships only tell part of the story. What truly stands out is his energy.

All you have to do is listen to Rodemaker following a practice or a game to understand how deeply he cares about football and the young men he coaches. If you've ever heard his voice, you won't forget it.

Years ago, I remember hearing Coach Rodemaker call in to a radio show focused on Valdosta football. You could tell just how demanding his practice had been simply by listening to his voice. The intensity was unmistakable. You could literally hear the passion.

That same passion is now making its way into the Camden County football program.

I saw a recent social media post where he was asked why he coaches, and Rodemaker's answer reveals exactly what motivates him.

"I coach to compete in the greatest team sport ever created since I can't play anymore. I love to help raise young men and help them achieve more than they ever dreamed of and I get the biggest thrill of seeing a young freshman grow into a senior ready to take on life."

That perspective aligns perfectly with the culture Pruitt has emphasized since arriving at Camden. Winning football games matters but developing young men remains the ultimate goal.

Competition has been a recurring theme throughout Pruitt's first several months on the job.

Throughout spring practice and the Blue-White Game, Pruitt stressed eliminating mistakes, improving fundamentals, and creating

a culture where players compete every day for improvement. Rodemaker appears to be a natural fit within that philosophy.

As Camden County continues navigating a unique transition following the coaching changes that occurred during the offseason, having experienced leaders on staff becomes even more valuable.

Rodemaker has coached in some of the biggest football environments in Georgia and understands the expectations that come with leading a high-profile program.

The Wildcats still have plenty of work ahead before the season kicks off this fall. New schemes are being installed. Players are learning new responsibilities. Coaches are continuing to evaluate personnel. But one thing already seems clear. The Camden County defense is being led by a coach whose passion for football is impossible to miss and whose championship experience speaks for itself.

For Tucker Pruitt, and all of us with Camden-blue blood, that makes Alan Rodemaker exactly the kind of coach you want helping build the next chapter of Wildcat football.



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# HE NEEDS A RAISE?

Ronald Acuña Jr. the Face of the Braves Franchise By Capers Childs



Every time Ronald Acuña Jr. steps to the plate, Braves fans are reminded that Atlanta may have one of the best deals in baseball. He's one of baseball's biggest stars, and he can change a game with just one swing or one stolen base.

However, injuries have repeatedly threatened his career. And the question remains: Should the Braves pay him more despite the risks?

Ronald Acuña Jr. is a star outfielder for the Braves. He made his MLB debut in 2018 and quickly established himself as one of the most talked about players in the sport.

He is best known as the only player in baseball history to hit more than 40 home runs and steal more than 70 bases in a single season.

Acuña is also a five-time All-Star, a three-time Silver Slugger Award winner, and the 2018 National League Rookie of the Year. His power, speed, and athleticism make him a rare talent that few players are able to match.

Acuña's impact goes far beyond statistics. Whenever he is in the lineup, the Braves have a greater chance of winning.

Fans enjoy watching him play, and his jersey is one of the most recognizable in baseball. As the face of the franchise, he has become a huge part of the Braves' success over the past several seasons.

Players who can influence games like this are difficult to

replace, making Acuña one of the organization's most valuable assets.

However, a major risk of keeping Acuña on the team is his injury proneness. In both 2021 and 2024, he tore his ACL and that forced him to miss significant playing time.

An injury like this can affect a player's speed, agility, and overall athleticism, which is detrimental to someone whose game relies heavily on his quickness and explosiveness.

Just as Acuña seemed unstoppable, another injury would strike, raising questions about his future durability. Because of this, some people argue that giving him a larger contract could be a gamble.

Still, elite players are rare, and Acuña has consistently shown that he can overcome adversity. After recovering from his first ACL

injury, he returned to have one of the greatest seasons in baseball history and won the National League MVP Award.

His ability to bounce back demonstrates his talent, his determination and work ethic.

The Braves know exactly what kind of player and teammate they have in Acuña, which makes investing in him less risky than taking a chance on an unknown player.

Injuries may always be part of Ronald Acuña Jr.'s story. But when he is on the field, few players can match his talent, energy, or influence on a game.

For the Braves, paying Acuña more would not simply reward past success...it would be an investment in the future of the franchise and the player who has become its face.



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# 2026 SCHEDULE

HOME

AWAY

## MARCH/APRIL

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

## MAY

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1 DUR 6:45PM	2 DUR 6:45PM
3 DUR 1:05PM	4	5 CLT 7:05PM	6 CLT 12:05PM	7 CLT 7:05PM	8 CLT 7:05PM	9 CLT 6:35PM
10 CLT 2:05PM	11	12 MEM 7:45PM	13 MEM 1:05PM	14 MEM 12:05PM	15 MEM 8:05PM	16 MEM 7:35PM
17 MEM 2:05PM	18	19 NOR 7:05PM	20 NOR 12:05PM	21 NOR 7:05PM	22 NOR 7:05PM	23 NOR 6:35PM
24 NOR 6:35PM	25	26 CLT 6:35PM	27 CLT 6:35PM	28 CLT 7:04PM	29 CLT 7:04PM	30 CLT 6:05PM
31 CLT 1:05PM						

## JUNE

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

## JULY

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

## AUGUST

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

## SEPTEMBER

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

- THIRSTY THURSDAY
- MILITARY APPRECIATION
- DOG DAYS
- FIREWORKS
- BUSINESS PERSON SPECIALS
- SPLASH DAY
- EDUCATION DAY

## OPPONENTS

- CLT — CHARLOTTE KNIGHTS (CWS)
- DUR — DURHAM BULLS (TB)
- GWN — GWINNETT STRIPERS (ATL)
- MEM — MEMPHIS REDBIRDS (STL)
- NAS — NASHVILLE SOUNDS (ML)
- NOR — NORFOLK TIDES (BAL)
- ROC — ROCHESTER RED WINGS (WAS)
- SUG — SUGAR LAND SPACE COWBOYS (HOU)
- SWB — SCRANTON/WB RAILRIDERS (NYY)
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# ALL-TIME ACC PLAYERS

The Conference's Best By Kenneth Harrison, Jr.



**W**e're going to take a look at some of the best ACC players of all time.

I want at least one player to represent each team. Some of them may have played in a different conference before their respective school joined the conference. This will also be part one because there are 17 schools and I can't fit them all in one article.

**Boston College:** Doug Flutie (1981-84) won the Heisman Trophy and was a Unanimous All-American in 1984.

He led the Eagles to a 10-2 that season and they finished ranked #4 in the Coaches Poll. That also features one of the most famous game winning Hail Mary's at #12 Miami.

In his career he passed for 10,579 yards and 67 touchdowns. He also rushed for 739 yards and 7 scores.

**Cal:** Marshawn Lynch (2004-06) was the Pac-10 Offensive Player of the Year and a First-team All-American in 2006. In 2005 he rushed for 1,246 yards and 10 TD's.

In 2006 he rushed for 1,356 yards and 11 touchdowns. For his career he averaged 6.6 ypc. He also caught 68 passes for 600 yards and 6 scores.

**Clemson:** Deshaun Watson (2014-16) was a 2x Davey O'Brien Award winner, 2x Manning Award (2015-16), Johnny Unitas Golden Arm Award (2016), ACC Player of the Year (2015), 2x ACC Athlete of the Year (2015-16) and First-team All-ACC (2015).

In 2016, he led the Tigers to a National Championship win over #1 Alabama. He was named the CFP National Championship Offensive MVP.

In his career he passed for 10,163 yards and 90 touchdowns. He also rushed for 1,934 yards and 26 touchdowns.

**Duke:** Clarkston Hines (1986-89) is the only player in ACC history to lead the league in receiving yards three consecutive seasons. He had over a thousand yards and double-digit touchdowns in his final 3 seasons. As a Blue Devil he caught 189 passes for 3,318 yards and 38 scores.

He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2010. Hines was a Unanimous All-American (1989), First-team All-American (1988), ACC Male Athlete of the year (1990), ACC Player of the Year (1989) and 3x First team All-ACC (1987-89).

**Florida State:** The Seminoles have several players that could be considered the best in program history. I'm going to go with Peter Warrick (1995-99).

He helped lead the 1999 Seminoles to an undefeated season

and the national championship. He played in 9 games that year because he was suspended for 2 games. He still had 71 catches, 934 yards and 8 TD's. He also rushed for 96 yards and 3 touchdowns.

He won the Paul Warfield Trophy (1999), Unanimous All-American (1999), Consensus All-American (1998) and 2x First-team All-ACC (1998-99). In his career he had 207 receptions for 3,517 yards and 32 touchdowns.

**Georgia Tech:** Joe Hamilton (1996-99) was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2014. He won the Davey O'Brien Award (1999), NCAA Quarterback of the Year (1999), ACC Player of the Year (1999), Consensus All-American (1999), ACC Offensive Player of the Year (1999), 2x First team All-ACC (1998-99) and 2x Gator Bowl MVP (1999-00). He also finished second in 1999 for the Heisman Trophy.

Hamilton passed for 8,862 and 65 scores. He also rushed for 1,758 yards and 18 touchdowns.

**Louisville:** Lamar Jackson (2015-17) won the Heisman Trophy in 2016. He was a Unanimous All-American (2016), ACC Athlete of the Year (2018), 2x ACC Player of the Year (2016-17) and 2x ACC Offensive Player of the Year (2016-17).

Jackson had 9,043 passing yards and 69 TD's. He rushed for 4,132 yards and 50 touchdowns.



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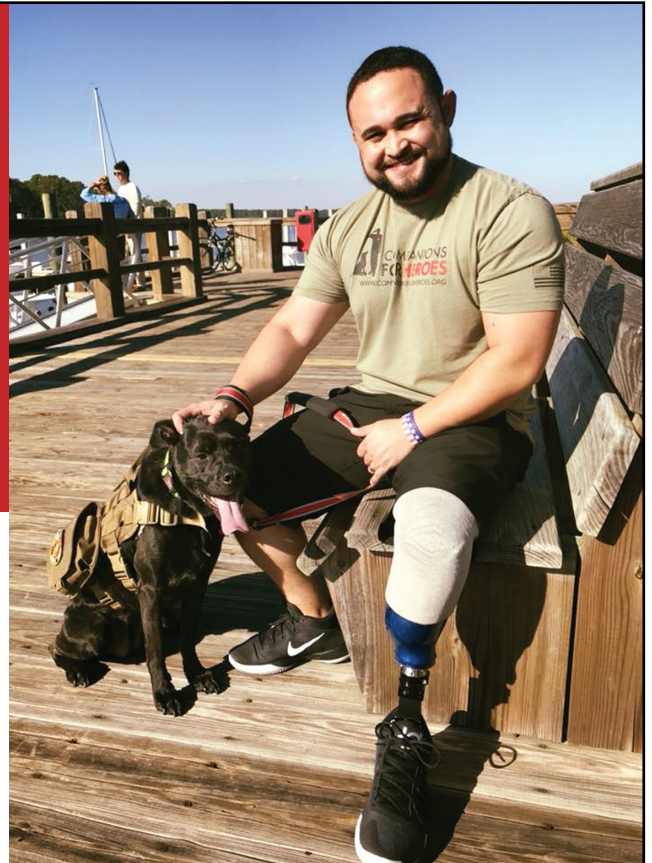
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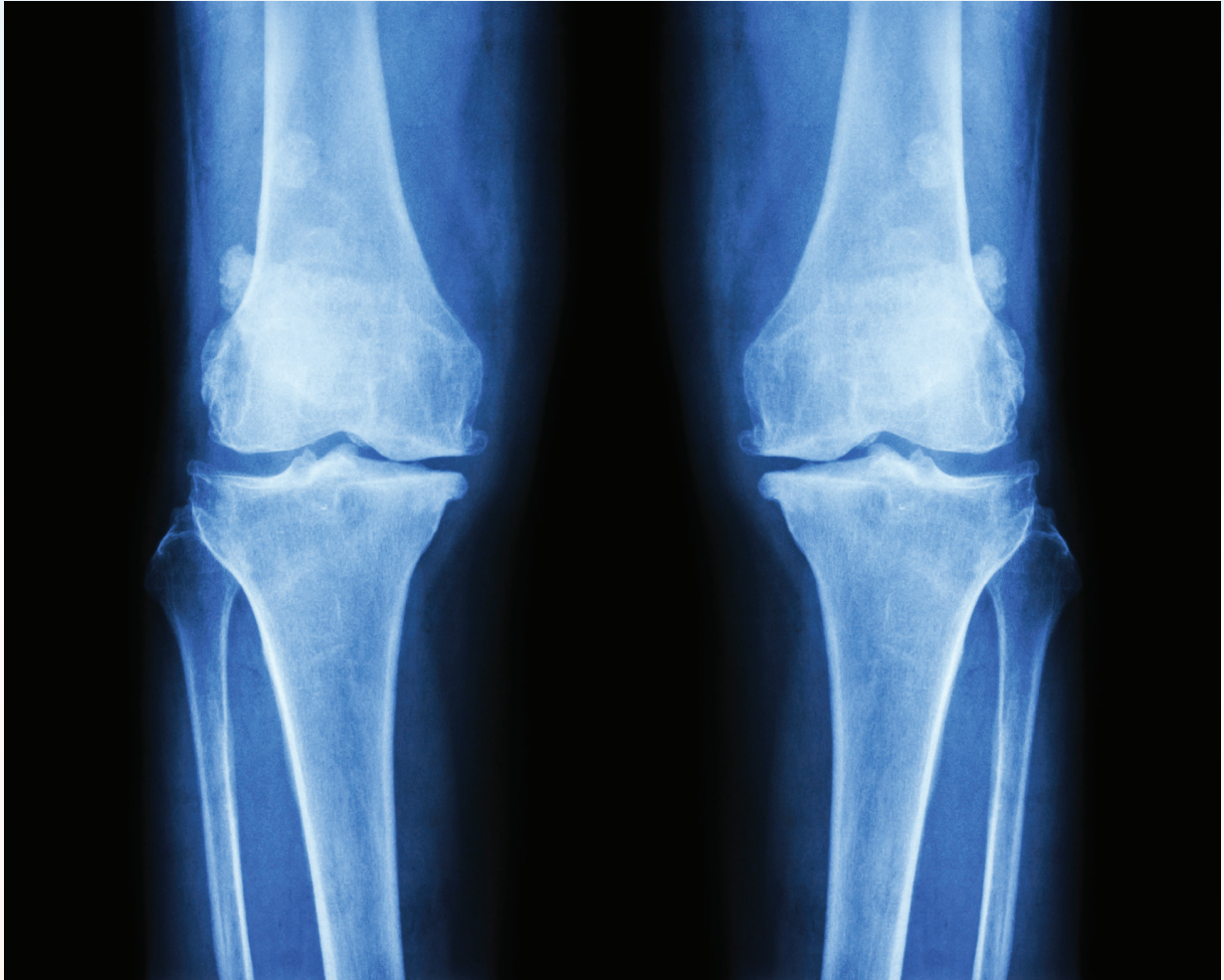
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