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Tuesday, Aug. 3, 2010

In The News

Camden County leads six teams from state in National Prep Poll

Camden County is the first of six Georgia teams ranked in the top 101 of the [preseason National Prep Football Poll](#), which was released Monday.

Three of the Georgia teams will be playing nationally ranked out-of-state teams this season in what is probably the best inter-state schedule Georgia has ever played.

The six nationally ranked Georgia teams are two-time defending Class AAAAA champion Camden County (No. 18), Lowndes (28), Colquitt County (40), North Gwinnett (73), Northside of Warner Robins (85) and Sandy Creek (101). Tucker is ranked No. 23, one spot behind Sandy Creek, in the Southeast regional rankings.

Four games this year will match nationally ranked Georgia teams and nationally ranked out-of-state teams:

- **Aug. 28:** No. 5 South Panola (Miss.) at No. 40 Colquitt County
- **Sept. 3:** No. 77 Crenshaw (Calif.) at No. 73 North Gwinnett
- **Sept. 3:** No. 29 Miami Central (Fla.) at No. 18 Camden County
- **Oct. 1:** No. 18 Camden County at No. 7 St. Thomas Aquinas (Fla.)

Spotlight: Coaching Hires

Class AAAA

Of the 405 football-playing schools in the Georgia High School Association, 80 have hired head coaches in the off-season, and one more job - Miller Grove - remained open as schools started practice this week.

This week, GHSF Daily is reviewing each coaching hire. Today we



Cool new hat and T for the Falcons

Wherever you may be - floating on an iceberg outside Alaska or the sandy shores of Key West - everyone knows what the ATL stands for. So the Falcons, the NFL team that is making Samuel L. Jackson a household name (just kidding), have added to their look by combining the ATL with the team logo. You can be one of the first ones to purchase the hat and T-shirt by clicking [here](#) for the hat and [here](#) for the T-shirt or go to [falcons365.com](#). Rise Up!



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In This Issue

In The News: Camden County the highest-ranked Georgia team in

look at Class AAAA.

Number of hires: 22 (one job remains unfilled)

Best hire: Rick Tomberlin, Effingham County

Hardest to replace: Conrad Nix, Northside-Warner Robins (retired)

Best job: Northside (Warner Robins)

Toughest job: Osborne

***Alexander** promoted receivers coach Matthew Combs, 32, to replace veteran coach Kenny Palmer, who was 14-26 in his four years as head coach. Combs, 32, had been defensive coordinator at another Douglas County school, Lithia Springs, before joining Palmer at Alexander in 2009. Combs coached for eight years in his native Arizona and is a University of Arizona graduate. Alexander has not had a winning season since 1997.

***Chamblee** of DeKalb County hired Carver of Atlanta assistant James Soza, a Yale graduate, to replace Michael Collins, who took the head coaching job at Wheeler in Marietta. Soza, 27, grew up in Tulsa and became Carver's offensive coordinator and assistant head coach under Darren Myles Sr. Chamblee's first game, on Aug. 27, will be against Carver at North DeKalb Stadium.

***Douglass**, an Atlanta city school, hired former Westlake coach Dallas Allen to replace Kenny Barrow, who went 4-16 in two seasons. Allen was 110-66 in 16 seasons at Westlake, a metro Atlanta school known for producing NFL players, including Keyaron Fox, Adam "Pacman" Jones and Keith Adams. Allen left after the 2007 season for an administrative job. Douglass had just three losing seasons from 1985 to 2007 but has struggled with declining enrollment and has dropped to AAAA this season.

***Dunwoody** of DeKalb County hired Northview head coach Jim Showfety to replace Michael Youngblood, the former Tucker assistant who was unexpectedly fired after a 7-5 record in his only season. Showfety was 0-10 and 2-8 at Northview after leading Chamblee to a 12-2 finish and the semifinals in 2007. Showfety was a longtime assistant at Marist before becoming a head coach.

***Effingham County** hired former Valdosta coach Rick Tomberlin, whose contract was not renewed after posting a 22-21 record in four seasons. Tomberlin has a record of 222-101 in a career that began in 1983 and includes stops at Treutlen, Jenkins, Jonesboro, Lowndes and Washington County before moving to Valdosta. In 14 seasons at Washington County, he took his team to the state final five times, winning three championships. Tomberlin served as an assistant coach at Effingham County in 1981 and '82. He replaces Jack Webb, who was 22-29 in five seasons. Effingham is a southeast Georgia school north of Savannah.

***Forest Park** promoted linebackers coach Jajuan Wright to replace Rod Perrymond, who was let go after a 1-9 finish in one season. Forest Park originally hired Rockdale County offensive line coach Nick Mrvos, but Clayton County ultimately failed to offer him a

preseason National Prep Poll

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List

Longest-tenured coaches

Most years at the same school in Class AAAA:

- 28 - Buck Godfrey, SW DeKalb
- 26 - Alan Chadwick, Marist
- 10 - Steve DeVoursney, Griffin
- 10 - Al Hughes, Lovejoy
- 9 - Lee Shaw, Flowery Branch
- 9 - Kirk Warner, Liberty County
- 9 - Mike Falleur, NW Whitfield
- 8 - Rick Casco, Cass
- 8 - Marty Jackson, Evans
- 8 - Tommy Webb, Fayette County

Scrimmages

Help needed on preseason games

With the help of our friend, master high school football researcher Steve Slay, we will publish the schedule of scrimmage games to be played leading up to the regular-season openers. Let us know if you have scrimmage information on any of the following schools. We were able to take five schools off the list from e-mails received on Monday:

teaching contract when forced to reduce its workforce. Wright has been a teacher at Forest Park for six years, but most of his coaching experience has been in youth leagues around Clayton County.

***Lakeside**, a Region 2-AAAA school in Evans, promoted offensive coordinator Jarrett Troxler to replace Jody Grooms, who took the head job at Wayne County. Troxler previously coached with Grooms at Anson County in North Carolina (2004-06) and was interim coach for two games in 2008 when Grooms was suspended. Troxler's first coaching jobs were at Southampton Academy (Va.) in 2002 and his high school alma mater, McBee (S.C.) in 2003.

***Lithonia** of DeKalb County hired interim head coach Marcus Jelks to the permanent job. Jelks, a 2000 Stephenson graduate, had been Lithonia's offensive coordinator under Earl White, who was fired in mid-season. Jelks also had been an assistant at Stephenson before coming to Lithonia. Lithonia forfeited five of its victories last season under White, who was exonerated in February of charges that he knowingly used ineligible players. Without the forfeits, Lithonia would've finished 6-4, its first winning season since 2002.

***Miller Grove** of DeKalb County has not named a replacement for Jasper Jewell, who took a job in July as athletics liaison for Atlanta Public Schools. Jewell had coached Miller Grove from its first season in 2005 and was 18-30-1. His final two seasons were 5-4-1 and 6-4. Georgia Tech WR Stephen Hill was Miller Grove's most prominent player. The team has begun practice this week with assistant coaches in charge.

***Morrow** hired Miller Grove defensive coordinator Niketa Battle, a Tifton native who is returning to Clayton County, where he was the defensive coordinator at Mount Zion of Jonesboro in 2007. Morrow was 1-19 the past two seasons under Larry Mortonson.

***Northgate**, a Region 3-AAAA school in Coweta County, hired Crisp County head coach Tommy Walburn to replace Bill Luckie, who was 20-31 in five seasons. Walburn is 62-40 as a head coach at Crisp (2006-09) and Troup (2001-05). He's returning to Coweta County, where he was an assistant at Newnan (1997-97).

***Northside** of Warner Robins promoted defensive coordinator Kevin Kinsler to succeed Conrad Nix, who retired with 300 victories and two state titles. Kinsler is a former Northside quarterback who had been a Northside assistant for 22 seasons, the past 15 as the defensive coordinator. Northside won state titles in 2006 and 2007 under Nix and was Class AAAAA runner-up in 2009.

***Osborne** hired Keary Dias last week to replace Troy Jones, who was 7-43 in seven seasons at the Marietta school that hasn't had a winning season since 1994. Dias, an Atlanta native who played on Brown's 1990 state runner-up team, has been at Osborne for five seasons, but as a teacher and not a coach. He's been an assistant

Albany
Avondale
Brookwood
Calhoun County
Central (Talbotton)
Chattahoochee County
Central (Macon)
Clarkston
Cross Keys
Columbia
Dougherty
Douglass
Early County
Fannin County
Forest Park
Hancock Central
Heritage (Ringgold)
Josey
Kendrick
Laney
Lanier
Lithonia
Luella
Meadowcreek
Miller Grove
Monroe Area
Morrow
North Atlanta
Osborne
Our Lady of Mercy
Pace Academy
SW Atlanta Christian
Randolph-Clay
Redan
Savannah
Social Circle
South Atlanta
Spencer
Stewart County
Terrell County
Therrell
Towers
Towns County

They Said It ...

"Fifteen years ago, teams spent the first two weeks of practice in August installing a basic offense and defense along with building a solid conditioning base. Now, the goal is to already be at that point when you begin the first

at Grady, Riverdale, Mays and Osborne (2004). Dias, 38, was head coach of an Atlanta middle school from 1995 to 1999. At the time he resigned, Jones was the longest-tenured head coach in Cobb County. The 3-7 finish of 2009 matched the school's best record since 1994.

***Paulding County** hired Brent Miller, who improved Elbert County from 1-9 to 4-6 to 7-4 in his three seasons. Miller is well-traveled, with head coaching stops at Chamblee (2004-06), Berrien (1991-94, 1998-2000), Tattnall County (1995-97, Claxton (1988-90) and Greenville (1987). He's 118-95-1 in 20 seasons. Miller replaced Rick Sauls, who was 32-51 in eight seasons.

***Redan** hired Banneker offensive line coach Clinton Lawrence to replace Ronnie Fleetwood, who was 18-33 in five seasons. Lawrence was an assistant at Redan (2002-04) and Meadowcreek (2005). He came to Banneker in 2008 after completing his Master's degree at Central Michigan. A Redan graduate, Lawrence played at Fort Valley State.

***Rome** promoted 13-year assistant Franco Perkins to replace Sid Fritts, who took the head job at Elbert County. Perkins is a Rome native and West Rome graduate who has spent his entire coaching career at Rome High. Fritts was 46-15-1 in five seasons, although Rome finished 4-6 last season after being picked to win its region.

***Salem** of Rockdale County hired John Starr, who won 106 games in stints at Josey and Chattooga. Josey won a state title under Starr in 1995, and Starr had several playoff seasons at Chattooga from 1997 until his unexpected early season firing in 2008. Starr will replace Chad Estes, who was 27-14 in four seasons. Salem was 6-4 last season with a 23-20 loss to Class AAAA runner-up Clarke Central.

***South Effingham** promoted defensive coordinator Donnie Revell to replace Greg Manior, who left to become head coach at Screven County. Revell has been an assistant coach for 27 years, the past nine at South Effingham. Manior was 23-18 at South Effingham in four seasons.

***South Forsyth** of Region 7-AAAA hired Valdosta defensive coordinator Jeff Arnette to replace Wendell Early, who was 4-16 in two seasons. Arnette was head coach at Oconee County (2000-01) and Elbert County (2002-05) and has a 45-24-1 record in Georgia. He joined Valdosta's staff under Rick Tomberlin in 2006.

***Starr's Mill** of Fayette County promoted offensive coordinator Chad Phillips to replace Mike Earwood, who took the head coaching job at Our Lady of Mercy. Phillips had come to Starr's Mill with Earwood in 1997, and the two were together beginning with Cartersville's 1991 state championship team. Earwood left in part because his job as a part-time teacher was endangered by budget cuts.

***Union Grove** hired Luella head coach Paul Burgdorf to replace

official day of practice."

- Lumpkin County coach **Tommy Jones**, to Bill Murphy of the Gainesville Times

Correction

In a story in Monday's edition about schools putting in artificial turf, we referred to Ridgeland's head coach, Mark Mariakis, as Nick Markakis. Mariakis led Ridgeland to Region 6-AAA titles in 2008 and 2009. Markakis is a right fielder for the Baltimore Orioles.

Steven Collins, who was 17-6 in two seasons before stepping down to spend more time with family. Burgdorf built Luella, also a Henry County school, from scratch and was 28-38 in seven seasons and made the playoffs in 2008.

***Wayne County** of Jesup in southeast Georgia hired Westside of Augusta head coach Jody Grooms, who was 20-12 in three seasons at Westside and led the school to its first playoff victory since 1992. Grooms was head coach of Anson County (N.C.) for three seasons before taking the Lakeside job. Grooms replaced Mark Daniel, who was 4-16 in two seasons.

***Winder-Barrow** of northeast Georgia hired David Wagner, defensive coordinator the past four seasons at county rival Apalachee, to replace Ben Corley, who was 3-17 in two seasons. Under Wagner, Apalachee allowed 14.8 points per game last season and finished 12-1. Wagner previously had been an assistant at Elbert County.

Coming Wednesday: Class AAA's 19 hires.

Newsire

Barron Stadium's new field almost ready

Renovations to Barron Stadium, including new artificial turf, are almost complete and will be ready for Rome's season opener Aug. 27 against Johns Creek and its Aug. 20 scrimmage against Calhoun.

Barron Stadium is getting new lighting, a scoreboard, a video board, dressing rooms and concessions stands.

Improvements were made to the press box and home-side entrance. That required taking out old Memorial Gym.

Barron Stadium, a county-owned facility that has been a sports field for more than a century, is home to Rome High and Shorter College football teams. It also is the site for the NAIA college national championship game.

The project, which cost \$3.67 million, was paid for with SPLOST funds.

"The new field is one of the best artificial surfaces I have ever seen," said John McClellan, the public address announcer for Rome's games at Barron since 1999. "The scoreboard is about halfway up and the new lights will be turned on for testing this week. I like the improvements."

Devils come down to Georgia

How many Devils are there in Georgia? There are 19 GHSA schools with Devils or Demons in their nickname, including Warner Robins.

A pastor in Warner Robins made news all the way to USA Today last month because he's got a petition to have Warner Robins High's mascot, Demons, replaced because he believes it sends a bad message to students.

GHSF Daily's Todd Holcomb wrote a [story](#) for MaxPreps this week that offers some background on

Georgia's devilish nicknames, both past and present.

You get bonus points for knowing which high school's nickname was the Satans until 1959.

Briefly ...

There's no blocking and tackling in 7-on-7 passing leagues and camps, so don't make too much of the results, but they're becoming almost essential in getting high school teams ready for the fall season. "The biggest thing you get out of it is the cohesion - a lot of coaches talk about that," Hephzibah coach John Bowen told Matt Middleton of the Augusta Chronicle [in this story](#) about Augusta-area schools' summer passing workouts. "It's something other than the lifting or the running. It's football." ... Fewer teams this year held midnight madness practices, those that begin at 12:01 a.m. on the first day the GHSA allows teams to hit the field for mandatory supervised workouts. That's because the first day, Aug. 1, fell on a Sunday, and this is the Bible Belt, after all. But among those teams that did get the earliest allowed start was Haralson County, 0-10 last season. [This video](#) from Fox 5 Atlanta in shows new coach Davis Harvey, a linebackers coach last year at Woodstock under Mike O'Brien, with his players just past midnight Sunday night to open a new era in Rebels football.

Classifieds

Score Atlanta looking for TV, Web and writing interns

Sports marketing company Score Atlanta, which is working closely with Georgia Public Broadcasting as well as doing work for other media companies around the state, will be producing a large amount of high school content this season for TV, Web, print and social Web-based media. Interns looking for hands-on experience in such areas as camera work, working on a weekly high school show and live games on TV and the Web, or writing sports as well as marketing it and selling it should e-mail info@scoreatl.com or call the Score offices at 404-256-1572 and ask for managing editor Stephen Black.

Please send information for the Classifieds to GHSFdaily@bellsouth.net.

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About Us

Georgia High School Football Daily is a free e-mail newsletter produced by Todd Holcomb and Chip Saye. Holcomb is a former lead high school football writer for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and co-founder and primary researcher behind the Georgia High School Football Historians Association. Saye is a 25-year veteran of the newspaper industry who has covered high school sports for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Athens Banner-Herald, Anderson (S.C.) Independent-Mail and Gwinnett Daily News.



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