



Tuesday, Aug. 1, 2017

## Greetings!

Welcome to the first issue of GHSF Daily's ninth season of covering high school football in e-mail newsletter form.

In the coming days, we will feature the top 10 players at each position, provide preseason all-state teams and document the more than 100 offseason coaching changes. Next week, we'll begin reporting Maxwell Ratings' predictions of all 56 regions.

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## In The News

### Former Harrison coach Cobleigh dies

Bruce Cobleigh, who started the Harrison football program in 1991 and led it to 125 wins, four region titles and a state-championship appearance in 2000, died on Monday. He was 67.

Cobleigh was being treated for Stage 4 pancreatic cancer at the Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. He was diagnosed on July 11.

Cobleigh retired as a head coach after the 2007 season but kept his hand in the game at Harrison and later at Roswell, where he was offensive coordinator for the 2015 Class 6A runner-up team to Colquitt County. Cobleigh was the national director of speakers for the nationally known Glazier Football Coaches Clinics.

Cobleigh and his wife, Janet, moved to Athens in April, and the coach was serving as offensive coordinator at Prince Avenue Christian under Greg Vandagriff, whom Cobleigh befriended when the two were head coaches in Cobb County.

"He was always just a gentleman, a first-class guy," Vandagriff said Monday night. "He was a coach's coach, a guy that provided leadership, taught you the right way. And he was a technician, always on the cutting edge of offensive game-planning. You ask college coaches, and they'll tell you he was one of the Wing-T gurus in the country, not the county, but the country."

[Cobleigh's record](#) at Harrison from 1992 to 2007 was 125-58. Only McEachern's Jimmy Dorsey, with 219, had more victories in Cobb.

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Cobleigh, a Boston-area native who had made his mark in New Jersey and Florida before being hired at newly opened Harrison, was head coach of 14 first-team all-state players in Georgia. His 2000 team lost to Parkview in the Class 5A championship game. His 2002 team featuring Paul Oliver and Jon Abbate was ranked No. 2 and finished 12-1. From 1995 onward, Cobleigh's teams made 11 consecutive playoff appearances and had 13 straight winning seasons.

Harrison's stadium was named in Cobleigh's honor in 2008.

## Projected Top Players By Position

### State remains hot for QB prospects

Georgia has been the hottest state for quarterback prospects since Deshaun Watson's days at Gainesville. The former Red Elephant led Clemson to a national title last season.

A year ago, the state produced the No. 1 and No. 3 pro-style QB prospects nationally in Davis Mills of Greater Atlanta Christian (signed with Stanford) and Jake Fromm of Houston County (Georgia), respectively, according to 247Sports' Composite Ratings.

This season tops even that.

Georgia now has the No. 1 pro-style QB (Trevor Lawrence) and the No. 1 dual-threat QB (Justin Fields) in the class of 2018. Both are among the top three prospects at any position nationwide.

GHSF Daily will be publishing its 10 best at each position for the next nine issues. The players' status as recruits is a factor, but the choices are made largely on their production as high school players.

**\*Harrison Bailey, Marietta (6-4, 215):** A MaxPreps Freshman All-American last season, Bailey passed for 2,812 yards and 21 touchdowns with seven interceptions for a 3-7 team. He completed 208 of 363 attempts (57.3 percent). Florida and Georgia reportedly are early favorites to land Bailey, who could become the latest in a string of five-star recruits from Georgia at this position.



**\*Michael Barrett, Lowndes (5-11, 205):** Barrett was the state's most productive dual-threat QB in 2016, when he led Lowndes to a 10-3 finish and a school-record 594 points (45.7 ppg) and became Lowndes' first all-state quarterback since Barrett Wilkes in 2001. Barrett was 132-of-213 passing for 2,753 yards and 27 touchdowns with six interceptions last season. He rushed for 1,170 yards and 21 scores on 168 carries. Barrett has offers from Georgia Tech, LSU, Michigan and Tennessee, among others.

regarding MaxPreps, please contact Kylie McLarty at [kmclarty@maxpreps.com](mailto:kmclarty@maxpreps.com) or 916-397-8600.

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## Michael Barrett

(Photos by 247 Sports)

**\*Bailey Fisher, Rabun County (5-11, 180):** Rabun County has finished 11-2 and 11-1 in Fisher's two seasons as a starter. In 2016, when he was first-team Class 2A all-state, Fisher was 166-of-239 passing for 2,671 yards and 26 touchdowns with six interceptions. He rushed for 1,001 yards and 21 touchdowns. Not a Division I recruit because of size, Fisher has offers from Presbyterian and West Georgia.

**\*Justin Fields, Harrison (6-3, 220):** Fields had the best offseason of any Georgia senior while emerging as the top-rated dual-threat QB prospect in the nation. In 2016, he was 158-of-231 passing (68.4 percent) for 2,278 yards and 19 touchdowns with only five interceptions. He rushed for 851 yards and 13 touchdowns. He led Harrison to its first winning season since 2008 and first 10-win campaign since 2002. Fields' college leaders are Georgia and Florida State, with a decision likely by mid-September.

**\*Emory Jones, Heard County (6-4, 180):** Jones, an Ohio State commit who is rated the No. 2 dual-threat quarterback prospect in the country behind Fields, played in only 6.5 games last season. He was 57-of-101 passing for 1,037 yards and nine touchdowns. He rushed for two touchdowns. He has nearly 4,000 passing yards for his career with 40 rushing or passing touchdowns.

**\*Trevor Lawrence, Cartersville (6-6, 195):** Lawrence is the consensus No. 1 recruit at any position nationally. He committed to Clemson in December. He has led Cartersville to consecutive 15-0 finishes. In 2016, Lawrence was 250-of-406 passing for 3,904 yards and 51 touchdowns with nine interceptions and was the AJC all-class player of the year. Lawrence needs 2,477 yards and 40 touchdown passes to break the Georgia career records of 13,077 and 159 held by Deshaun Watson.

**\*Luke Shiflett, Northwest Whitfield (6-2, 180):** Shiflett may never make first-team all-state thanks to Lawrence's co-existence in Class 4A, and that's a shame. Shiflett, a Middle Tennessee commit, was 175-of-265 passing for 2,234 yards and 24 touchdowns with six interceptions for an 8-4 team. He rushed for 733 yards and nine touchdowns on 128 carries. Shiflett is also probably the best basketball player in Region 6-AAAA.



Luke Shiflett

**\*Justin Tomlin, Southwest DeKalb (6-0, 170):** Southwest DeKalb hasn't had an all-state quarterback since Quincy Carter in 1995. Spoiler alert: Tomlin will be GHSF Daily's preseason all-state pick at QB for Class 5A. In 2016, for a 6-5 team, Tomlin was 136-of-185 passing for 2,233 yards and 18 touchdowns. He rushed for 582 yards. Tomlin has offers from Valdosta State and a handful of other Division II schools.

**\*Gunnar Watson, Taylor County (6-2, 175):** Watson was 129-of-195 passing for 2,166 yards and 23 touchdowns with seven interceptions last season for a 10-2 team that was Taylor County's best in nearly 20 years. Watson and Lyn-j Dixon form the best QB/RB pair in Class A.

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## Longest-tenured coaches in Class 7A

Rush Propst is his 10th season at Colquitt County. That's the longest that Propst - once called the most famous high school coach in the country - has been at any one place as a head coach in his 30 seasons as a head man. Propst came to fame a decade ago as the head coach of Hoover High in Alabama for nine seasons.

- 19 - Keith Maloof, Norcross
- 16 - Randy McPherson, Lowndes
- 14 - Shannon Jarvis, Mill Creek
- 12 - Shane Queen, North Cobb
- 12 - Phillip Ironside, Hillgrove
- 10 - Rush Propst, Colquitt County
- 10 - Kyle Hockman, McEachern
- 9 - Andy Dyer, Archer
- 8 - Todd Wofford, Central Gwinnett
- 8 - Jep Irwin, Lassiter
- 8 - Michael Collins, Wheeler
- 8 - Brent Budde, Woodstock
- 8 - Jeff Arnette, South Forsyth
- 6 - Dave Svehla, Etowah
- 6 - Josh Shaw, Cherokee
- 6 - Andy Scott, Kennesaw Mountain
- 6 - Scott Jones, North Paulding
- 5 - Terrance Banks, Newton

## Four Questions

Rated one of the top 50 pro-style QB prospects in the nation, Watson is committed to Troy.

**\*Jarren Williams, Central Gwinnett:** Williams was 188-of-314 for 2,618 yards and 26 touchdowns with only four interceptions last season. He rushed for 396 yards and nine touchdowns. He led Central to the Class 7A quarterfinals. Williams is committed to Kentucky.

**Coming Wednesday:** Running backs

## Trivia

Deshaun Watson of Gainesville became the sixth former Georgia high school quarterback in 40 years to lead a school to a major NCAA national championship when he led Clemson to the title last season. Who are the other five? (Answer Wednesday)

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## Preseason All-State Teams

### Class 7A

**\*Best player:** Five rising seniors earned multiple first-team all-state recognition in the highest class last season. They are Matthew Hill of Brookwood, Warren Ericson of North Gwinnett, Thurman Geathers of North Cobb and Robert Cooper and Justin Mascoll of South Gwinnett and. Hill was the best all-around as a high school player. The now-senior wide receiver had 41 catches for 849 yards



GHSF Daily asked Georgia head coaches to answer these four questions. We'll report from a different head coach each day.

### Hal Lamb, Calhoun

**1. What is the real difference-maker in winning and losing in Georgia high school football?** "I think it's a combination of talent, coaching and chemistry. However, I think chemistry is most important to get you to the top."

**2. Which player that you've coached is memorable mostly for his character or inspiration?** "I have coached and am coaching A LOT of incredible young men. Jireh Wilson stands out the most. He is a sophomore linebacker at Wofford. His intangibles are incredible. He was a tremendous leader with great character. Our team fed off of his leadership and intensity every single day. It didn't matter if it was the weight room, locker room, classroom or practice field. He demanded the best from everyone."

**3. What is the best atmosphere for a high school game that you've experienced away from home?**

"I would say the Georgia Dome and Benedictine."

**4. As a player or coach at any level, which game do you wish you could play again?** "I would say the Blessed Trinity semifinal game in 2015. I thought it was two very good teams playing at a high level."

and nine touchdowns, 98 rushes for 625 yards and eight touchdowns and 19 kick returns for 512 yards. He also had 24 tackles, broke up three passes and returned a fumble for a touchdown.

**\*Best position:**

Wide receiver. Making this list are Hill, Woodstock's Louis Hall (two straight seasons with more than 1,000 yards receiving) and Marietta's Ramel Keyton (1,347 yards receiving in 10 games). Snubbed were Walton's Dominick Blaylock (No. 2 WR prospect nationally among juniors) and Mountain View's Malachi Carter (1,012 with 11 touchdowns), among others.

**\*Highly recruited:** Colquitt County LB J.J. Peterson, a reported Alabama lean, is the consensus No. 7 prospect among Georgia seniors, according to 247Sports' Composite Ratings. Cooper (No. 10, committed to Florida State), Mascoll (No. 16, Clemson) and Hill (No. 18) are right there along with Lassiter CB/S Derrik Allen (No. 9, Notre Dame), Westlake CB Myles Sims (No. 14, Michigan) and Central Gwinnett QB Jarren Williams (No. 22, Kentucky). But the most coveted player is a junior, Grayson LB/DE Owen Pappoe, rated No. 6 nationally in his class.

**\*Lowly recruited:** Parkview's Tommy Rogers was first-team all-county in Gwinnett last season per the TD Club there, the only junior linebacker to make it. Undersized at 5 feet, 8 inches and 185 pounds, Rogers has no offers but is a tackling machine. He had 85 solos last season. He'll play a hybrid LB/S position this season.

**\*What else is new?** Max Guggemos of Lakeside (Atlanta) has only one offer, from Pikeville, an NAIA school in Kentucky's coal country. But the 5-foot-9 senior is the leading returning rusher in the highest class. He put up 1,334 yards and 16 touchdowns in just eight games last year. Lakeside has not had a first-team all-state player since TE Michael Lindsey in 1997.

**OFFENSE**

QB - Jarren Williams, Central Gwinnett, Sr.  
 RB - Max Guggemos, Lakeside (Atlanta), Sr.  
 RB - Travis Tisdale, Lowndes, Jr.  
 WR - Louis Hall, Woodstock, Sr.  
 WR - Matthew Hill, Brookwood, Sr.  
 WR - Ramel Keyton, Marietta, Jr.  
 TE - Chigoziem Okonkwo, Hillgrove, Sr.  
 OL - Warren Ericson, North Gwinnett, Sr.  
 OL - Jalen Goss, Lowndes, Sr.  
 OL - John Harris, Mill Creek, Sr.  
 OL - Casey Holman, Brookwood, Sr.  
 OL - Ches Jackson, Tift County, Sr.  
 ATH - Michael Barrett, Lowndes, Sr.  
 PK - Will VanPamelen, Grayson, Sr.

**DEFENSE**

DL - Robert Cooper, South Gwinnett, Sr.  
 DL - Thurman Geathers, North Cobb, Sr.  
 DL - Darnell Jefferies, Newton, Sr.  
 DL - Azeez Ojulari, Marietta, Sr.

Blessed Trinity was a very well-coached team with great talent, and the game came down to the wire. I felt like we were good enough to win the state championship that year, but it didn't happen."

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LB/DE - Justin Mascoll, South Gwinnett, Sr.  
 LB - Owen Pappoe, Grayson, Jr.  
 LB - J.J. Peterson, Colquitt County, Sr.  
 LB/DB - Tommy Rogers, Parkview, Sr.  
 DB - Derrick Allen Lassiter, Sr.  
 DB - Kenneth Dicks III, Lambert, Sr.  
 DB - Myles Sims, Westlake, Sr.  
 DB - Malik Washington, Parkview, Jr.  
 P - Jake Camarda, Norcross, Sr.

**Coming Wednesday:** Class 6A

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## Spotlight: New Coaches

### Class 7A

GHSF Daily is chronicling the many coaching changes in the offseason. We begin today with Class 7A.

**Number of hires:** 13

**Best hire:** Chip Walker, Newnan

**Hardest to replace:** Bob Sphire, North Gwinnett

**Best job:** Grayson

**Toughest job:** Campbell

**Most interesting:** Five plumb jobs opened in Gwinnett County this offseason. Lenny Gregory, the former Centennial coach who got the Collins Hill job, cited his "competitive nature" for returning to Gwinnett (he was on Grayson's staff for the 2011 state title). "My belief is that Gwinnett County football is the best in the country," he said. Gregory might be right. Gwinnett teams have won 11 state titles in the past 21 seasons in the highest class, including 2016, when Grayson took the crown. But it's also interesting that all five openings came after head coaches with winning records opted out of Gwinnett. Those were Jeff Herron from Grayson to T.L. Hanna in South Carolina, Bob Sphire from North Gwinnett to Camden County, John Small from South Gwinnett to East Coweta, Mark Fleetwood from Peachtree Ridge to Huntsville in Alabama and Kevin Reach from Collins Hill to Monroe Area. Reach just wanted to be closer to his Walton County home, but he acknowledged the unpopular trend of high-profile transfers associated with Gwinnett in recent years. "Some of the things going on in Gwinnett did get a little nerve-racking," Reach said. "People are looking at what program is hot and what is not. That's not what I think high school football is about. I'm not saying that can't happen in Monroe, but at the same time, a lot of teachers and other people there grew up in Monroe. I do like that small-town feel."



#### Region 1

\***Camden County** hired North Gwinnett head coach Bob Sphire to replace Welton Coffey, who remained as athletics director. Sphire won five region titles and averaged 10 wins in his 11 seasons at North Gwinnett, which existed for 45 years without a 10-win season or a region title before his arrival from Kentucky in 2006. Camden had two 10-win seasons under Coffey before bottoming out at 2-7 in 2016.

#### Region 2

\***Campbell** hired Pope head coach Kyle Adkins to replace Ryan Brady, who was 5-25 in three seasons, 0-10 last year. Adkins' teams at Pope were 0-10 and 3-7. A native of Americus, Adkins previously was at Shaw in Columbus, where he went 14-17 in three seasons. Brady is now a defensive line coach at Wheeler.

\***East Coweta** hired South Gwinnett head coach John Small to replace Steve Pardue, who retired from

public schools and became head coach at LaGrange College. Small was 68-62 in his 12 seasons at South. His 2016 team, which finished 8-4, was a big turnaround from a 2-8 campaign and ended the Comets' streak of losing seasons at three. East Coweta has been 8-3 each of the past three seasons and has reached the playoffs each year since 1997, the longest active streak in the highest class.

**\*Newnan** hired Sandy Creek head coach Chip Walker to replace Mike McDonald, whose teams were 56-37 in eight seasons, including 3-7 in 2016. Under Walker, Sandy Creek was 127-26-1 in 12 seasons and won state titles in 2009, 2010 and 2012. McDonald is now defensive backs coach at Newnan's arch-rival, East Coweta.

#### **Region 4**

**\*Roswell** hired Johns Creek head coach Matt Kemper to replace John Ford, who took the Buford job. Kemper, the first Roswell coach not promoted from the Roswell staff since 1954, led Johns Creek to an 8-3 finish and the school's first region championship last season out of 7-AAAAAA. An Ohio native who played football at Miami of Ohio, Kemper came to Georgia in 2008 to become head coach at Pope and won a region title. Kemper also has been a head coach in Ohio and Florida. Roswell has finished 14-1 each of the past two seasons and was runner-up in the highest classification to Colquitt County in 2015 and Grayson in 2016.

**\*Walton** promoted defensive line coach Daniel Brunner to replace Mo Dixon, who resigned in the spring and became defensive coordinator at Colquitt County. Brunner has been on Walton's staff since 2014 and also served as special teams coordinator last season. He has been defensive coordinator at alma mater Roswell and Centennial.

#### **Region 5**

**\*Milton** hired Adam Clack from region rival West Forsyth to replace Howie DeCristofaro, who was let go despite a 39-28 mark over six seasons. Clack's West Forsyth teams were 20-12 in three seasons and 7-4 each of the past two. He had been at West since its opening in 2007. West Forsyth beat Milton 31-6 last season. DeCristofaro is now the defensive coordinator at Etowah.

**\*West Forsyth** hired Lanier offensive coordinator Shawn Cahill to replace Adam Clack, who took the Milton job. Cahill had been on Lanier's staff since 2011. Lanier won region titles in 2014 and 2015. Cahill, a North Dakota native, has been an assistant coach at Duluth, Newton, Santa Margarita in California and Harvey in North Dakota. West Forsyth has finished 7-4 the past two seasons and made the playoffs six of the past seven.

#### **Region 6**

**\*Collins Hill** hired Centennial head coach Lenny Gregory to replace Kevin Reach, who took the Monroe Area job. Gregory was 5-5 and 8-3 in two seasons at Centennial. The 8-3 finish was the Fulton County school's best season since 2003 (8-2). Gregory, a California native and former Brigham Young standout player, was on Grayson's staff from 2008 through 2014, the last two seasons as defensive coordinator.

**\*North Gwinnett** hired Mill Creek defensive coordinator and former Etowah head coach Bill Stewart to replace Bob Sphire, who took the Camden County job. Mill Creek was 33-6 and racked up 12 shutouts in Stewart's time there. Stewart was Etowah's head coach from 2006 to 2011 (41-26 record) and a Parkview defensive coordinator from 2003 to 2005. North Gwinnett has won five region titles in the past 10 years but went 5-5 and 6-5 the past two years.

**\*Peachtree Ridge** hired Norcross assistant Reggie Stancil to replace Mark Fleetwood, who became head coach at Huntsville in Alabama. Stancil was an all-state football and baseball player at Colquitt County and went on to star at quarterback at Jacksonville State. Stancil has been at Norcross the past 11 years and was part of the 2012 and 2013 state-championship teams. He most recently worked as quarterbacks coach and also headed up recruiting as Norcross had 38 alumni in college football last season, seventh-most in the state. Peachtree Ridge was 49-39 the past six seasons under Fleetwood, including 6-6 in 2016.

**Region 8**

**\*Grayson** hired East Jackson head coach Christian Hunnicutt to replace Jeff Herron, who left in February for T.L. Hanna in Anderson, S.C. Hunnicutt's East Jackson team was 4-6 after having won only three games total in the previous four seasons. Hunnicutt also has assisted at Peach County and Lowndes but is best known for his time at Buford, where he was the program's offensive coordinator from 2004 to 2011. Herron, who replaced program starter Mickey Conn, led Grayson to a state title in his only season there.

**\*South Gwinnett** hired Woodland (Stockbridge) head coach Steve Davenport to replace John Small, who took the East Coweta job. Davenport was 24-9 in three years at the Henry County school, which had finished 2-8 each of the three previous seasons. Davenport, a former star player at Southwest DeKalb and Georgia Tech, led Woodland to its first 10-win football season and playoff victories in 2016. Davenport also has been head coach at Savannah State (2011-12), Decatur (2003-04) and Redan (1998-01). South Gwinnett was 8-4 in 2016.

**Coming Wednesday:** Class 6A

**About Us**

Georgia High School Football Daily is a free e-mail newsletter produced and owned by Todd Holcomb and Chip Saye. Holcomb is a former lead high school football writer for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and co-founder of the Georgia High School Football Historians Association. Saye is a 30-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.

